

CORVUS BELLI iNFiNiTY[®]

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME



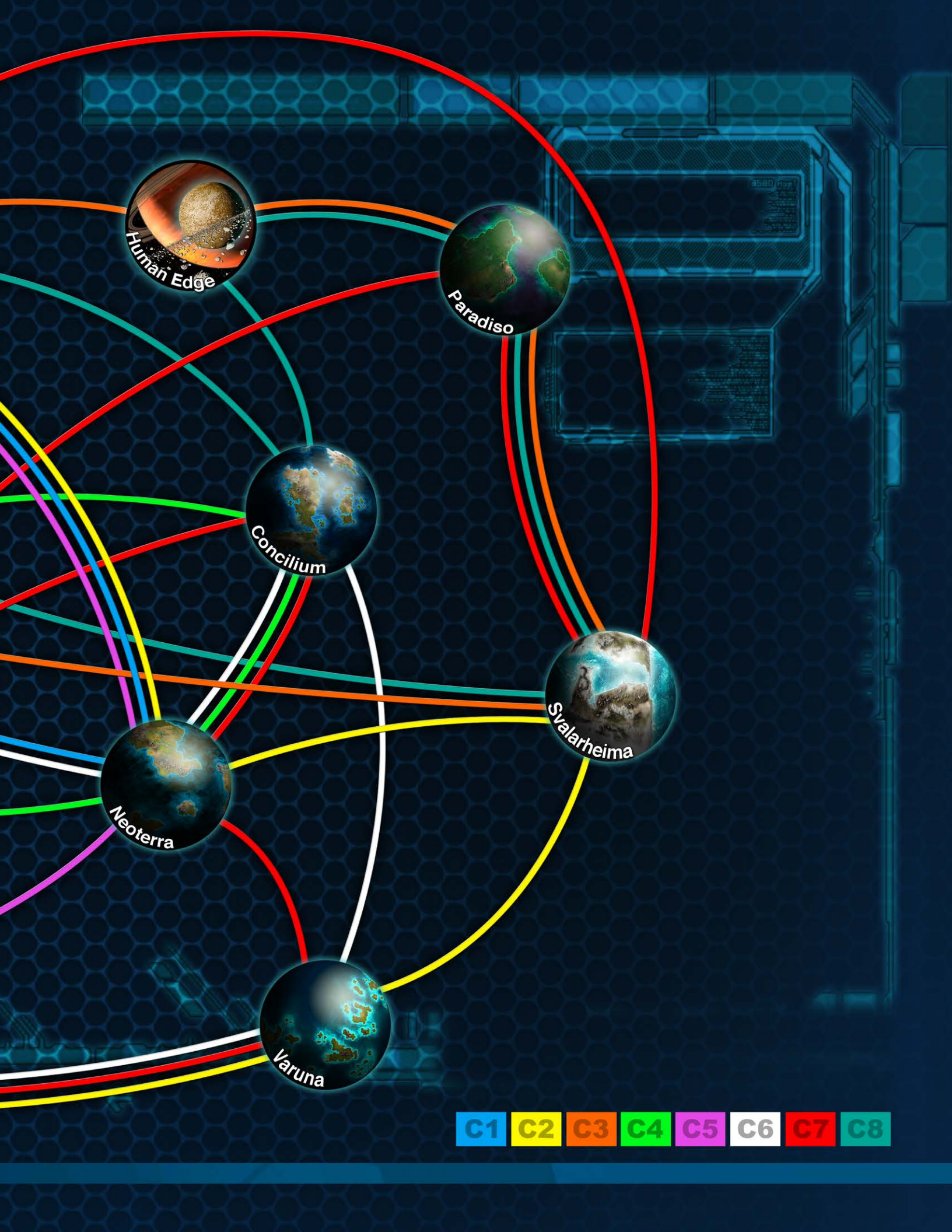
MÖDIPHÜS[™]
ENTERTAINMENT

ADVENTURES IN
THE HUMAN SPHERE

FFFI[™]



The Human Sphere



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MODIPHIOUS
ENTERTAINMENT

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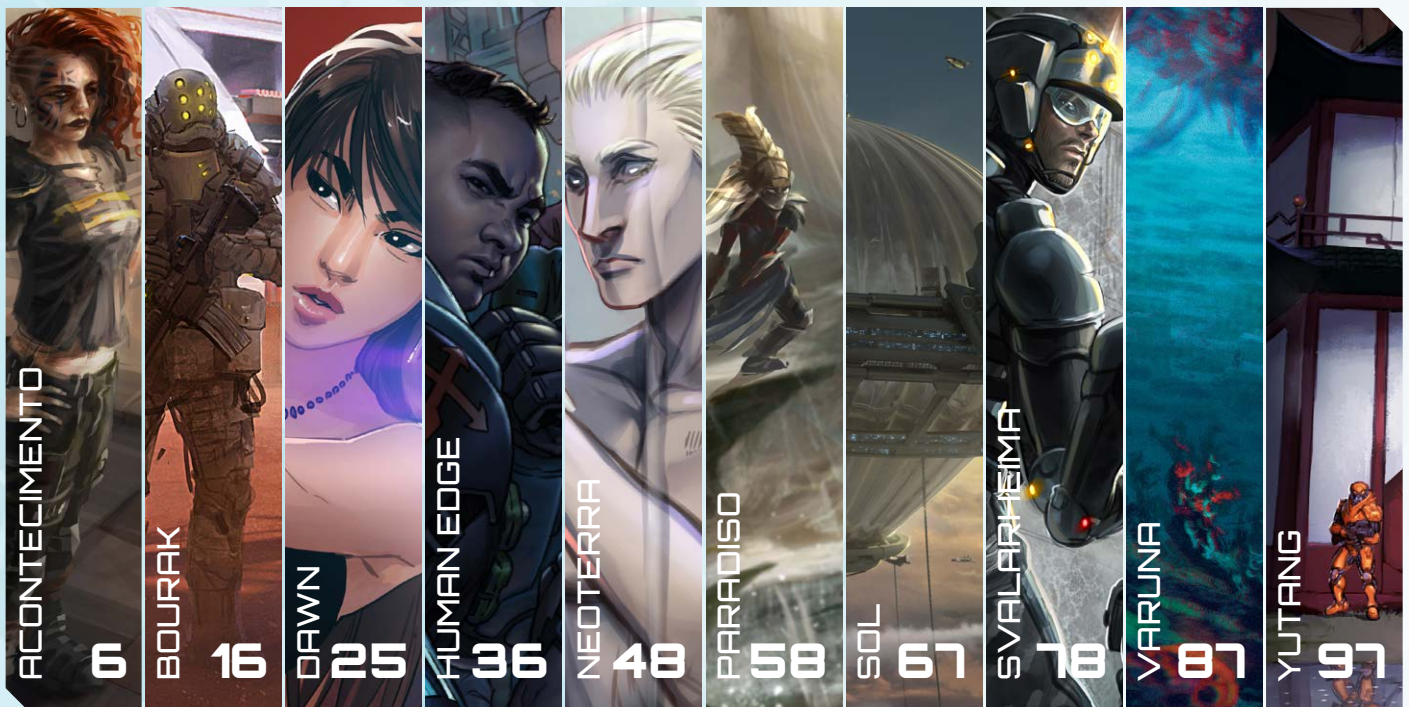
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INTRODUCTION ADVENTURES IN THE HUMAN SPHERE

Welcome to *Adventures in the Human Sphere*, a compendium of ten short adventures designed to provide agents with missions set across the length and breadth of human-inhabited space. Each adventure has been designed to draw players into the multiple mediums of conflict and subterfuge engaged in across the boardrooms and battlefields of the first century of the New Calendar. The future is a bright, but often murky affair. These adventures offer an opportunity to make a positive difference in maintaining the fragile balance that binds humanity together.

FROM SOL TO PARADISO

For ease of reference, the ten adventures are presented alphabetically by system, rather than by hypercorps or adventure title. The adventures are summarised below:

ACONTECIMENTO – OPERATION: HONEYWASP

A once in a decade celebration on this decadent planet has drawn millions from across the entirety of the Human Sphere. Some seem intent on creating their own spectacle, however, which could spell disaster for the millions flocking to the planet.

BOURAK – SILKWORM

The Kyrgyz Mafia are a law unto themselves, but serious action needs to be undertaken when they cross the *Hachib* of Haqqislam and threaten to unleash a horrific new drug. Production must be halted at all costs.

DAWN – RIOTS AT DAWN

The Caledonians are renowned for their pride, fierce independence, and rich heritage. They are also a major source of Teseum. When that supply slows to a trickle, everyone takes notice.

HUMAN EDGE – AWOL

A decorated Bureau Noir agent went missing some time ago on the Paradiso front, but has recently been detected on an orbital in Human Edge. He hasn't reported in, but questions need answering.

NEOTERRA – A CULT OF ONE

Much to the Bureau's disgruntlement, a Hypercorp executive has called in a favour and requested assistance in finding her missing son. The case soon spirals from one of a missing person to something much more sinister.

PARADISO – FALLEN ANGEL

The Altstadt district of Damburg has rapidly declined into the fluid frontline of Coordinated Command's efforts to retake the shattered city. The agents are dispatched to survey the lines for an imminent offensive.

SOL – THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

The terrorist organisation named The Sons of Tomorrow have previously only ever served as a minor irritant at best. Their sudden organisation and possession of a dirty bomb have sent alarm bells ringing.

SVALARHEIMA – THE WRECK OF THE ARCHON

The O-12S Archon recently disappeared within the Svalarheima system, but has since been buried under the ice by the crew of a melt rig. What really happened to the ship and her crew?

VARUNA – THE BREAKING OF A WAVE

An isolated PanOceanian laboratory has recently been the victim of a terrorist attack. PanOceania claim Yu Jing involvement, though the StateEmpire categorically deny this. The Bureau step in to defuse rising tensions.

YUTANG – INDULGENCE

Missing O-12 equipment has been discovered in the hands of a smuggling ring on Yutang. Investigating the matter reveals a plot that could destabilise the sanctity of the StateEmpire.

There are two notable omissions from the list in the form of Concilium and Shentang. Technically, the Shentang-Yutang system could be said to be covered by the Indulgence adventure, but as the entire mission takes place on Yutang it seemed necessary to list it by planet rather than system. Fear not! This doesn't mean they won't get representation, just that some difficult calls were made due to space constraints. These planets will feature elsewhere, but there is only so much we could pack into one-hundred and twelve pages – and we think you'll agree there's a lot crammed in!

Although it barely scratches the surface of concepts, themes, and beliefs of the setting, this entire book is a show of appreciation for the vast scope of the Human Sphere and the adventures that are to be had therein.

"Bureau Noir is adapting and evolving. Into what exactly, and whether for better or worse, only time will tell. I don't mean a surface change or a re-branding either, but a grass roots evolution that is absorbing agents at a rate that makes it impossible to monitor. Is the bureau achieving its goals and working within mandates? Yes, for now. I predict, however, that it won't be long before it becomes bloated and unwieldy – and worse yet for a bureau that prides itself on secrecy and covert operations – graceless and blunt in its application. What are our options for when that day arrives? That is the task of this committee to establish."

– Tomas Avura, Deputy Director for Bureau Trimurti, addressing the Amikeco Initiative Oversight Committee in Edda, on Concilium Prima.

SEEDS & CONTINUITY

Rather than representing one large campaign, the adventures within this book are designed as stand-alone missions. GMs can pick and choose where to send their players, or slip any of these adventures into their current campaign as a side-plot or addition to the overall objective. That doesn't mean, however, that the plots need to remain aloof of each other. Any good campaign will feature moving parts and alter with the flow of time; both our own and the New Calendar's. With a little preparation, any number of hooks and tidbits from unused missions can be seeded into the players' current adventure.

GMs should never feel constrained by the plot or scenario. Each adventure and individual scene can be tweaked, added to, shortened, or altered to suits their group's playstyle and requirements.

RANDOM SELECTION

Some GMs may have a hard time selecting a mission from those contained within, or it may be necessary to provide a filler between plot points within a current campaign. The Random Scenario table, below, can be used to let the dice decide.

RANDOM SCENARIO TABLE

D20 ROLL	SCENARIO
1-2	Acontecimiento: Honeywasp
3-4	Bourak: Silkworm
5-6	Dawn: Riots at Dawn
7-8	Human Edge: AWOL
9-10	Neoterra: A Cult of One
11-12	Paradiso: Fallen Angel
13-14	Sol: The Day After Tomorrow
15-16	Svalarheim: The Wreck of the Archon
17-18	Varuna: The Breaking of a Wave
19-20	Yutang: Indulgence

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

The default setting for the *Infinity* RPG places the PCs as agents of O-12's Bureau Noir. Though supposedly shorn of former allegiances, old allegiances die hard and past ties can continue to provide a strong influence on each characters' decisions. Each scenario therefore provides a full set of suggested Wilderness of Mirrors objectives that represent the influence applied by a character's former faction. The Agent Handlers section of the *Player's Guide* provides an excellent resource.

Establishing any faction handlers beforehand, determining how they make contact and receive responses, and what influence they offer the narrative beyond the requests made of each character helps provide depth and authenticity to the Wilderness of Mirrors agendas. Also, as with any mission element, additional goals can be tailored to wider aims as part of a larger campaign arc.

HEAT SOURCES

In addition to the Wilderness of Mirrors intrigue, each mission offers several Heat spends relating to specific scenes or parts of the narrative. These should not be considered the only options available to GMs throughout the entirety of the adventure, or indeed a limitation for each specific scene. Inventive or Machiavellian GMs can and should spend some time during the preparation stages to plan suitable Heat spends that provide additional spice for any scenes that lack them. The Heat spends don't need to be overwhelming, but should certainly strive to maintain the flavour of the overall mission and be in context with the scene that they relate. GMs should try to be creative and subtle rather than overpowering (unless the scene demands it of course.)

A NOTE ON CARTOGRAPHY

This book is also overflowing with maps across all three modes of conflict offered within the *Infinity Corebook*; social, quantronic, and physical maps abound. Even so, not every eventuality could be catered for. When preparing to run one of the adventures, GMs should take note of any locations they feel will benefit from additional representation – whether across, one, two, or all three of the spectrums of conflict – and prepare accordingly.

So that events and goals interlink seamlessly, preparation of additional maps and network can also be tailored to incorporate Heat spends and Wilderness of Mirrors agendas. This also means that GMs can amend the maps contained within this book to better suit any alterations made by themselves to the overall narrative.

LET MAYHEM COMMENCE

We hope you enjoy the adventures that await. Pulling so many threads together into a cohesive whole that provides a taster of the Human Sphere has been an incredible ride for everyone involved, and extremely rewarding; your group's enjoyment of them is the icing on the cake. Enjoy!

CHAPTER 1

OPERATION: HONEYWASP

Acontecimento's 300th day festival is a once-in-a-decade spectacle that has attracted millions to the celebration, but also stretched security forces paper-thin; a fact that many different elements are keen to use to their advantage.

O-12 has dispatched agents to assist the beleaguered security forces with a view to assessing the growing number of threats. Is there a connection between these seemingly-unrelated incidents? And when faced with compromising secrets, what choices will the agents make?

BACKGROUND

Acontecimento is renowned for its public holidays. Alongside a number of local traditions, observance of significant dates and traditions from every corner of the Human Sphere has led to Aconteccans

priding themselves on finding new and innovative ways to celebrate. Even by their standards, the 300th Festival is set to be a spectacle that far surpasses all others.

Once a decade – on the 300th day of Acontecimento's leap year – the colossal celebration captivates the entirety of the globe. Carnivals, parades, and public concerts begin as much as three weeks prior to the day, then subside over a winding down week affectionately called "the afterglow". With no expense spared, the spectacle attracts a massive influx of tourists seeking to lose themselves in the jubilant chaos of the global phenomenon. There are also some who plan to exploit it, including one Timoteo Bakshi.

An executive in WarTechWorks' Orujo Minor division and an entrepreneur with more ambition than sense, Timoteo's success in marketing Ramhorn-327



TAGs to the Human Edge has emboldened him; he envisions a future in which WarTechWorks is a major player in personal defence, with himself as the driving force who made it happen.

A polar opposite of war-torn Paradiso, however, the peaceful planet is watched over by the Order of Montesa and Shock Army of Acontecimiento. People feel safe, which is bad for business. Bakshi's taken it upon himself to create panic, or maybe even a cold war. Unbeknownst to him, he's close to starting a real one.

TIMOTEO BAKSHI

APPEARANCE

Tall and handsome, his soulful eyes and wood-grain-streaked hair make a stronger impression than even his dark violet suits.

ROLEPLAYING

- Smooth, charming, and too clever by half.
- Nods and points to the speaker when responding to a question.
- Treats social interactions as negotiations; always trying to find the best terms.

BACKGROUND

Bakshi popularized the Ramhorn in PanOceanian banana republics, then made his fortune by providing off-the-books TAGs to private citizens, mercenaries, and others. Well-heeled, and highly educated, there's no problem he feels incapable of solving.

KEY INFO

- Use the Corp Exec stats on p. 427 of the *Infinity Corebook*.
- Takes risks with other people's welfare, but believes himself to be in control – always able to salvage disasters.
- Knows that Rosália López – an independent Mayacaster in BomJesus – is actually undercover Yu Jing operative, Io Makoto. She's seeking to manipulate him into increasing unrest, but Bakshi intends to claim himself a victim of Yu Jing treachery.

MISSION BRIEFING

During the weeks leading up to the tercentennial celebrations, the characters are summoned to Acontecimiento. Bureau Aegis wants trusted agents on the ground for the event, and a local contact, Mei Li Silva, will fill them in on the mounting crisis when they arrive.

The GM may read or paraphrase the following:

The glistening spires of Cidade BomJesus' skyscrapers are alive with light as you make your descent. Always a gorgeous sight, the city is positively vibrant with festival celebrations. Despite the 300th day being a few weeks away, the party's already in full-swing.

Once disembarked, an encrypted message informs them that their contact is awaiting them in a Hesperya Consulting office suite. Silva will greet them there personally before taking them to a conference room overlooking the city.

While more than content to play host, Silva knows the characters' time is valuable so will get right to the briefing.

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: The Nomads appear to be increasingly interested in various events transpiring across the planet. Find out what has captured their attention and prevent any particularly disruptive plans bearing fruit.

Ariadna: Maya's crown jewel, Go-Go Marlene, and her staff are covering the planet-wide festivities. Convincing her agents to visit Dawn would mean a temporary reduction in PanOceanian campaigning; they'd never risk harming the pop idol. Do whatever you can to get Ariadna onto her itinerary.

Haqqislam/Minor Nations: Eco-Aktion has seized cutting-edge terraforming research, which will be on their local servers – if still in existence. Retrieve either the data or a cell member's cube (living host optional).

Nomads: Sources suggest that one Oscar Schäfer – wanted by the Moderator Corps' Sport Crimes Division for illegal possession of genetically-enhanced weapons-grade creatures – is planet-side. Bring him in or silence him, but under no circumstances can the existence of his "pets" be made public.

PanOceania: The 300th day festival is more than just a holiday – it's a showcase of PanOceania's superior quality of life. Minimise the fallout from any incidents or ensure there is a scapegoat if it can't be contained.

Yu Jing: An undercover agent – Io Makoto – is currently undercover as Mayacaster Rosália López. She briefly went dark, so her loyalty needs to be determined. Acquire her comlog for study and do not allow it to fall into PanOceanian hands.

Corporations: Someone at WarTechWorks' Orujo Minor office is undertaking questionable activities. Find out who, find out what, then discreetly leak it to the press.

Submondo: Pockmarked Kepu sold out his old crew and left his boss for the authorities. He's currently running with the Blade-Tongues in Bhai Gurdas. Show him the price of treachery: kill him and get rid of his Cube.

Mercenaries: An old contact sourced a Druze Shock Team contract for a group in Portobelo. Unfortunately, that group turned out to be Ateks Out! which violated the terms of another contract. The Druze are unlikely to go quietly; erase any trace of their presence.

MEILI SILVA**APPEARANCE**

Fluid as a river, her lavender-hued Bantu knots and asymmetrical white suits project an aura of sophistication.

ROLEPLAYING

- Savvy, confident, and well-connected; Silva takes pride in her work with O-12.
- Blessed with a melodic voice and quick to laughter, she has a knack for making people feel comfortable.
- Lazily sips herbal tea before answering questions.

BACKGROUND

A *Loganto Confidente* with Hesperya Consulting, Silva is also an information source and go-between for O-12 assets in Bomjesus. She is a consummate professional where the bureau is concerned – a fact reflected in her consultation rates.

KEY INFO

- Use the Information Broker profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 440.
- Silva maintains an extensive network of contacts, including surreptitious circles. If the characters need an introduction, Silva can arrange it.
- She's on retainer throughout the festival season. If her assistance is needed, she can provide information and context as required.

PENDING ISSUES

Silva is aware of six pending issues that might be worth investigating.

1. Atek Unrest

The Atek populace is becoming increasingly agitated. Rioting is a certainty.

2. Eco-Aktion

The Dushyanta CFZ has become the target of Adarsanan grass-bombing, which will be massively disruptive if allowed to continue.

3. Smugglers

Orujo is awash in smugglers right now. Some of them peddle restricted weapons and ammunition.

4. Tensions in Punta Norte

Over the past month, the stone city of Punta Norte has seen a massive influx of Submondo. Residents are becoming increasingly nervous.

5. Disappearances on Bharatavarsha Island

People have been going missing on the island. It could just be the sabre-toothed bears, but the

disappearance of high-profile individuals has everyone on edge.

6. Dissent in Bhai Gurdas

Around the same time that gang activity increased, several Nomads became active in the sprawling city's most-neglected neighbourhoods. Coincidence, or an attempt to stir dissent?

After going over the leads, the GM may read or paraphrase the following:

"Time to get to work. I can provide intel, but decision-making falls on you," Silva states with a crack of her knuckles. She hesitates and sighs. "Word of advice? You'll be kicking multiple hornets' nests all at once. Occasionally, some idiot messes with wasps and we all get stung. Watch yourselves out there". With a mirthful smile, she adds: "And if you can, try to enjoy the festival."

**SCENE ONE:
ATEK UNREST**

Nestled in scenic Magalhães, the city of Portobelo is the ultimate tourist destination. Beautiful Portobelo has it all: white sands, blue waters, hot springs, and hotter residents.

Currently, it also has impoverished, angry Ateks on its doorstep. Their leader, an activist named Vera Vermillion, has been making them increasingly bold. Nobody knows how they got set up this close to the city, but they resist being rounded up and Ateks Out! is getting increasingly brazen in harassing them. The situation is a powder keg.

VERA VERMILLION**APPEARANCE**

Her lanky frame and blood-orange hair set Vermillion apart from a crowd, as do the ugly scar over one eye and facial tattoos.

ROLEPLAYING

- Atek life has left her with an incredibly dark sense of gallows-humour, which applies whenever possible.
- Scratches at the base of her skull when thinking something over.
- Warily cynical, but with good reason: she's used to disappointment.

BACKGROUND

Vermillion was like any other slum rat, until overzealous police shot some of her friends down after mistaking them for gang members. Dead

PLAYTEST TIP**RED HERRINGS**

Even though leads 3, 4, and 6 aren't tied into Bakshi, that doesn't mean they can't be compelling diversions. Think of them as an adjustable dial; resolve them quickly if you don't want to tarry on Acontecimiento, or flesh them out into full side-plots if you would like more mileage from the assignment. Either way, they still hold potential clues.

Atek teenagers mistakenly labelled as dangerous criminals didn't warrant an investigation, and that was that. She's been an activist ever since.

KEY INFO

- Use the Activist profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 419.
- Originally from outside Puerto La Guardia, Vermillion and her crew were smuggled in at the behest of Timoteo Bakshi. He worked with her directly; after all, an Atek's testimony holds no consequence.
- Vermillion has surreptitiously recorded her interactions with Bakshi. He relentlessly coaxes her on, pushing her to "get what she deserves."
- Between the police, hate groups like Ateks Out!, or even Atek bio-purists with no room for a transgender woman in their worldview, people have been trying to kill Vermillion her entire life. Not normally a violent person, this protest is her chance to strike back – if hit, she'll hit back with all her strength.
- Though resigned to becoming a martyr, Vermillion is no zealot. She will cut deals if given a chance.

THE LANDSCAPE

In stark contrast to the wealth and avarice on display inside the city limits, the Ateks have set up a favela on the outskirts of Portobelo. The slums are a jarring reminder that poverty still exists, even on Magalhães.

Matters are already hitting a fever pitch by the time the characters arrive, as Ateks Out! Members have begun antagonizing several victims who are hunkered down behind makeshift cover. Without immediate intervention, escalation is inevitable.

The riot can be treated like a social zone (event, antagonistic, Insular 2, Enmity 2 toward the opposing side), which will dissipate by either inflicting a Metanoia effect on Vermillion – provided she's still breathing – or against Ateks Out! (Resolve 6, Morale Soak 2).

AFTERMATH

There are two major clues to be taken from this scene once the dust settles, each of which has several routes to discovery:

Bakshi's involvement with the Ateks:

- Vermillion will happily incriminate Bakshi.
- If Vermillion doesn't survive, her recordings of Bakshi can incriminate him. Figuring out how to operate her archaic touch-screen device requires a **Challenging (D2) Education** or **Tech test**.
- Searching through the shanty town reveals shipping containers used in its construction. A hastily

SLUM-SIDE SHOWDOWN

At the first sign of violence, the scene erupts into pandemonium. Between the Ateks and their assailants, Ateks Out!, there's a combination of rioting, panic, and fleeing for one's life, with the central compound rapidly degenerating into a pitched battle.

If the characters take a side in this conflict, the opposition will summon reinforcements. Whatever their agenda, they're going to need backup.

ATEKS

While not initially looking for a fight, they are absolutely prepared to defend themselves. Vermillion and four Ateks take part in the conflict. If the characters side with Ateks Out!, another Atek joins the fray for each character in the party. Use Thug A (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 459) for the Ateks, though they lack weapons.

ATEKS OUT!

Unlike the Ateks, they showed up expecting to throw down. Unbeknownst to the larger Ateks Out! contingent, a woman named Rosália López has hired a small Druze Shock Team (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 433) to escalate the situation. The Shock Team consists of four members, plus one additional member for each character should they side with the Ateks.

TACTICS

Once hostilities commence, the action is hectic and fast-paced. Neither side trusts the characters, with any opposition (correctly) identifying them as the biggest threat. If the characters avoid choosing a side, both parties will regard them as hostile – because why else would they be there?

defaced WarTechWorks logo can be discerned with a **Daunting (D2) Observation test**.

López's hired Druze Shock Team:

- Whether through conversation or interrogation, inflicting a Metanoia effect on one of the team will cause them to reveal the nature of their job.
- An **Average (D1) Analysis test** will identify the troops as a Druze Shock Team.
- Hacking into their comlogs will reveal the contract with Rosália López.

Whatever the characters decide to do, there are fires – both figurative and literal – to contend with. The Ateks weren't acting illegally until the riot, while the Druze were just carrying out a contract. PanOceania, however, will demand a scapegoat.

SCENE TWO: ECO-AKTION AND REACTION

An Eco-Aktion cell has taken it upon themselves to halt the alteration of Dushyanta's native biome. Acontecimento's native grasses are a super-weed. Attacking the Dushyanta CFZ with grass-bombing runs and introducing them to the continental

HEAT

1 Heat: The jostles and shoves of the agitated crowds spill over onto a random character, who must succeed at an **Average (D1) Athletics test** to avoid falling prone.

2 Heat: Flying debris from an unknown assailant amongst the crowd targets a character. A **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** is required to avoid 1+4 **IN** damage with the Knockdown quality.

SUBMONDO

To represent Struktura like Red Wolf, Blade-tongues like Barbosa (in *Scene Six*), or other Submondo leaders, use the Gang Enforcer (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 437) flanked by 2-4 Gang Members (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 437).

farming zones could functionally destroy the island's agricultural output, setting it back decades.

This Eco-Aktion cell is particularly tech-savvy; the entire operation is run through remotes. Putting a stop to it will require an Infowar response.

Accessing the remotes will not only allow the characters to shut down the remotes, but provide the information to make the tactic non-viable. Getting there, however, will take some work.

Staffed by two Wardrivers and a selection of Activists (*Infinity Corebook*, pp. 461 and 419), the Eco-Aktion network is based out of a warehouse in the hills of Shakuntala. Accessing the network is possible through Maya, the guards' comlogs, physically accessing the warehouse (granting access to the lobby), or the remotes themselves. Additionally, the admin node can be used to grant superuser access and the communications node taps into the larger Eco-Aktion network. The data storage node contains proprietary and potentially lucrative terraforming research seized during their last raid, as well as incomplete blueprints for the BomJesus Square Clock-Dome – a unique festival monument.

SMUGGLERS

Use the Arms Dealer (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 421) to represent Batista or his compatriots.

LEADS

The data storage and communication nodes both contain conversations with a "benefactor" who provided the security codes they've used to avoid detection,

which were exchanged for an escalation of their activities near the festival's zenith. The cell narrowed their benefactor's identity down to dummy accounts used by either Timoteo Bakshi or Rosália López.

**SCENE THREE:
SMUGGLERS IN
ORUJO PORT**

Due to their unique legal status, the factory complexes of Orujo Minor are less like a community, and more like a string of micronations. A tangle of unique laws combined with an overworked port authority has created an opportunity for smugglers to ply their trade.

Locating the smugglers is relatively straightforward; a successful **Challenging (D2) Thievery test** will lead the characters straight to Rafael Batista. At two metres tall and extremely garrulous, he's easy to spot. While Batista can't speak for everyone, he's not here on anybody's orders and he's not looking for trouble. Provided they turn a blind eye to his business, inflicting a Metanoia effect will ensure he's more than willing to work with the characters.

For the record, the Smugglers are absolutely trafficking in illegal contraband, including DA, DT, and Viral ammunition.

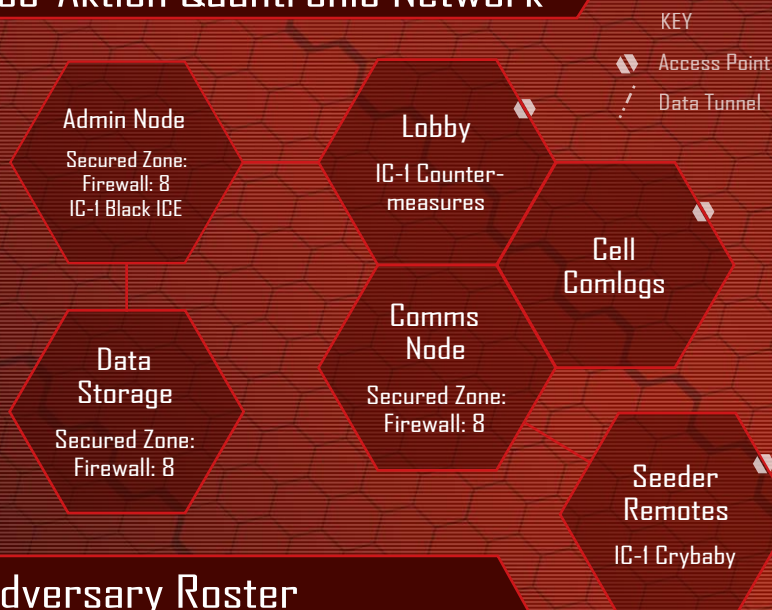
**SCENE FOUR:
TENSIONS IN
PUNTA NORTE**

The GM may read or paraphrase the following:

The Camôen city of Punta Norte has always been a must-see, but appears perfectly heavenly during the festival season. The pearlescent stone construction is bathed in a gentle sweeping light – as though Earth's Aurora Borealis was hewn from stone.

The wealthy community is currently hosting a variety of Submondo. While most of the citizenry have yet to catch on, local authorities are getting anxious.

Though some leads can be found here, the confluence of criminals has a fairly transparent motivation: the 300th day festival is good for business and Submondo like money. Rather than rely on PanOceanian security to ensure that nothing untoward happens to the millions of potential customers gathered here, however, they've taken matters into their own hands.

Eco-Aktion Quantronic Network**Adversary Roster**

- 1 Security Geist, cycling through Lobby (60%) and Communications (40%)
- (If alerted) 1 Wardriver enters through the Admin Node, and searches for intruders



If the characters are careful and clever, they might find themselves an unlikely ally in the form of Vladyyaka "Red Wolf" Volkov; an enterprising Struktura who's happy to get her hands dirty, provided that O-12 is willing to play nice with her family during their stay.

SCENE FIVE: LIARS, FIGHTERS, AND BEARS

The Vishwan capital of Bharata is positively aglow thanks to the custom of hanging paper lanterns in welcome. The night sky is lit up with hundreds of thousands of tiny lights, beckoning travellers in.

Ominously, however, all is dark outside the metropolis' city limits. Largely due to the sabre-toothed bears that stalk its mountain streams and lush hillsides, Bharatavarsha Island's biome remains relatively intact in a balance that has endured for centuries. With disappearances occurring, that balance is in now jeopardy – as is the secret enclave of Bakunian outcasts, hidden away in the mountains.

FINDING CANDICE

With the festival in full swing, it's no surprise that Go-Go Marlene is here to take in the sights. She's currently in BomJesus, though her location scouts are – quite literally – scattered across the globe, diligently seeking out locations for the hit travel programme.

But something's gone wrong: bright-eyed location scout Candice Meehan has gone missing. An endless string of episodes demanding new locations means a military search party is going to be deployed if she doesn't turn up soon; something everyone involved would prefer to avoid. The clock is ticking, but tracking the missing scout should solve the mystery of the other disappearances.

Locating Candice will require some legwork; a Psyop is likely the best approach. Bharatavarsha contains the following social zones of interest:

Dance of the Floating Lights: Held weekly leading up to the 300th day; if you're looking to contact Go-Go Marlene's staff, this outdoor gala is a good place to start.

Go-Go Marlene! Expeditionary staff (Loyalty 4: Marlene): Consummate professionals putting on a brave face, concern for their colleague bubbles just beneath the surface. While they're anxious to locate Meehan, they're also concerned about Marlene's safety – anyone posing a threat to the pop idol will have a difficult time ahead.

Adventure! Excursions: The safari company that took Meehan for an expedition through the uncharted natural preserve in hopes of spotting a sabre-toothed bear. More successful than intended, they stumbled upon a den that scattered the group. They haven't returned, but can set the characters on Candice's trail.

Uncharted Preserve: This part of the island is wild and untamed, but a successful **Challenging (D2)**

ADDITIONAL ZONES

If the characters have completed *Scene Three, Four, or Six* before searching for Candice, there are additional options open to them:

- The East End Blade-Tongues escorted one of Go-Go Marlene's scouts through Bhai Gurdas – they can make an introduction
- Rafael Batista has clandestinely supplied Adventure! Excursions with gear – he can get the characters an introduction, from which they can head to the Uncharted Preserve
- A professional associate of Batista's, "Red Wolf" Volkov, can make an introduction
- If a character has gained the support of both Batista and Volkov, the latter will confess to supplying the Runenwald Sanctuary and provide a location

MEANER THAN THE AVERAGE BEAR

While they won't hunt humans, sabre-toothed bears will viciously defend their territory, and are more than capable of doing so. Use the stats for Ariadnan Brown Bears, *Infinity Corebook* p. 480.

PUPNIKS

In the halls of Vaudeville, science and debauchery both run virtually unchecked. Nowhere is this more evident than in "Pupniks" — genetically engineered animal-human hybrids with deliberately stunted, sub-sapient intellects. Illegal throughout the Human Sphere — including parts of the Nomad Nation — Pupniks are frequently used as underworld status symbols, in violent gladiatorial bouts, or for even darker purposes.

Bred for violence, trained for aggression, and distressingly humanoid in appearance, most Pupniks are ill-suited to civilized society. Use the Antipode Warrior's profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 462.

If the characters attempt to fight or sneak their way out, assign one Pupnik per character to oppose them.

HEAT

1 Heat: The Pheromones of a random character set the Pupniks on edge; they vociferously express their displeasure. **Persuade or Command tests** that target the Pupniks are made at +1 difficulty by that character.

2 Heat: One Pupnik has taken a shine to Meehan and insists on leaving with her. The PCs need to establish dominance to convince the creature otherwise, either defeating her in single combat, or inflicting a Metanoia with Psywar.

Analysis or Survival test will reveal a path to the Runenwald Sanctuary. Characters will need to succeed at a series of **Challenging (D2) Observation or Survival tests** to avoid the sabre-toothed bears — otherwise, they infringe on their territory and spark an attack.

Runenwald Sanctuary (Antagonistic): Despite being wildly out of place on Acontecimento, this hidden enclave of Pupniks blends into the local biome

OSCAR SCHÄFER**APPEARANCE**

At two metres plus change, his tousled brown locks, unruly beard, and angular canid features add to his striking countenance; even for a Chimera, he stands out in a crowd.

ROLEPLAYING

- Growls when he's angry, happy, and introspective. Schäfer growls a lot. Expressively.
- Distrustful of strangers, tends to assume the worst until proven wrong.
- Trying to eke out a peaceful existence, he'll kill without question to protect his charges.

BACKGROUND

A former Submondo pit fighter, Schäfer is a member of Puption; an activist group dedicated to halting the unethical treatment of Pupniks. He infiltrated his former employers and liberated the Pupniks there. Having been on the run with them ever since, he leapt at WarTechWorks' offer of relocation to a PanOceanian paradise world as it would allow them to shake their pursuers. It sounded too good to be true — and it undoubtedly was — but Schäfer saw a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and acted accordingly.

KEY INFO

- Use the Chimera profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 423.
- The sanctuary was established with the help of WarTechWorks, who smuggled in the Pupniks at no charge. Schäfer has no idea why.
- He stumbled upon the injured Meehan while out hunting. Her severe injuries meant there was no way she'd make it back to civilization in one piece, so he brought her to the enclave to recover. Meehan's presence is a conundrum; she's done nothing wrong, but exposing the Sanctuary — essentially her job — could mean death for them all.
- In addition to accessing his dyadic link to Meehan, gaining Schäfer's trust will remove the Antagonistic quality from the Sanctuary.

quite well. Too aggressive to peacefully exist near most settlements, the wild expanse is a utopia for the harried creatures; even the sabre-toothed bears are content to leave their fellow apex predators alone, and Schäfer has fully embraced the back-to-nature lifestyle.

Discovery could mean exile or death, so Schäfer's hardly thrilled to see the characters. A dozen or so Pupniks lounge among the log cabins and prefab habitats, though their exact numbers are difficult to ascertain.

Candice Meehan: Battered, bruised, and nursing a broken arm, Meehan is palpably thrilled to see another human face. Not that she has anything against Schäfer and the Pupniks, other than his occasionally threatening to let the creatures eat her. Which is a joke. Right?

Her comlog and recorders having been destroyed, Meehan is desperate to leave. Keenly aware that there aren't supposed to be Pupniks on Acontecimento, and bound by a debt of gratitude to Schäfer, she's conflicted about what to do. Either way, she can't stay here. If they promise to get her out, she readily agrees to cooperate with the characters. Schäfer is touchy over a journalist knowing their location, but whether through diplomacy, stealth, or combat, she wants out.

AFTERMATH

Candice will share what she knows with the characters, both from her time at Runenwald and the lead up to it:

- An old contact of hers, Io Makoto, tipped her off to an exclusive scoop in the uncharted preserve. Makoto — currently under the alias Rosália López — normally wouldn't put her in danger.
- She has learned the Pupniks were smuggled in by WarTechWorks, which would require an executive's authority to pull off. A **Challenging (D2) Lifestyle or Daunting (D3) Education test** reveals that Timoteo Bakshi is the only exec ever to have visited Bakunin. Silva can also reveal this.
- If Candice doesn't survive the scene, contacting the Go-Go Marlene expeditionary staff will — in addition to unleashing a tidal wave of grief — provide access to her notes, which point to Makoto/López as her source.

Knowledge of the sanctuary can be used or ignored at the characters' discretion, though their decision could lead to future repercussions with either PanOceania or the Nomads.

SCENE SIX: DISSENTION IN BHAIR GURDAS

Khalsa's largest metropolis, Bhai Gurdas, is practically buckling under the sheer amount of humanity passing through. A hefty delegation from Corregidor isn't helping matters, while a local gang – the East End Blade-Tongues – having become increasingly volatile further compound matters. Local officials are worried that the Nomads are stirring up trouble, though to what end is anyone's guess.

The Nomads have cultivated a plan that involves recruiting the Blade-Tongues with promises of a more lucrative life. This has sparked internal conflict, with one side of the gang (under Nine-Fingers Barbosa) ready to leave for greener pastures, while another (following Pockmarked Kepu) ramp up protection rackets to prove their turf is sustainable.

This conflict could be resolved by backing a faction, negotiating a truce, or any other means the characters devise, up to and including letting it play out on its own. Whatever the characters decide, any surviving parties are likely to remember their involvement.

SCENES SEVEN AND EIGHT: CONFRONTATIONS

CONFRONTING BAKSHI

Bakshi may be dangerously overconfident, but he's no fool. If confronted, he will pivot to his backup plan and heap the blame on López. Presenting him with evidence of her true identity will cause him to feign innocence. Getting him to crack on this point requires inflicting a Metanoia, though he has Intransigence 2 against this.

Should he break, he hands over everything he has on Makoto, including biometric data that allows them to bypass her apartment's security and information concerning her interest in the upcoming *Zênite Noturno*; particularly the clock-dome built specifically for the event.

CONFRONTING MAKOTO

If at any point the characters decide to seek out Rosália López – or Io Makoto, if they've put together her true identity – they find themselves frustrated at every turn. Makoto is suddenly quite difficult to track down. Friends and associates have seen her recently, but her current whereabouts are unknown.

A **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** will connect any suspicions the characters might have, especially as

the degree of obfuscation she's enjoying is borderline preternatural.

A cursory investigation of her apartment will initially uncover little, though a **Challenging (D2) Analysis or Hacking test** will reveal logs surrounding a brief hiccup experienced some three months ago while researching Shasvastii. Each additional Momentum can reveal some interesting secrets:

- Extensive blueprints of Cidade BomJesus' Clock-Dome, and attendance projections for the *Zênite Noturno*.
- A recently vacated, person-sized deep freezer. A **Daunting (D3) Analysis test** reveals Io Makoto's DNA inside.
- 2 reloads worth of K1 ammunition, or something similar.

The characters may come to different conclusions. Regardless, a **Daunting (D3) Analysis or Education test** can be used to provide a damning hypothesis (consulting Silva on this provides -1 difficulty to the test): Makoto seems to have been studying – and has likely been compromised – by the Combined Army. It's entirely possible that Makoto is dead. And a Speculo Killer has taken her place.

PUTTING THE CLUES TOGETHER

Prior to Scene 9, the characters need to assemble the clues they've gathered thus far. The first six scenes provide clues incriminating Bakshi and Makoto; investigating either should point to the *Zênite Noturno*, as well as potentially unveiling Makoto's true nature.

The characters' groundwork along the way can be used to add the following context:

- **Silva** confirming that WarTechWorks assisted with constructing the festival's Clock-Dome, which is not their usual forte (Bakshi is genuinely ignorant of this).
- **Vermillion** revealing that some Atek groups were approached about smuggling dangerous materials – possibly explosives – into BomJesus, though she kept her distance.
- **Batista** denying working with Bakshi or Makoto, though some of his contacts have. Makoto loading up on far more different ammo types than one person would ever need could provide components for a terrifying shrapnel bomb.
- **Volkov** is little help, but she can have people keep an eye out at the *Zênite*.
- **Schäfer**, although completely in the dark, could slip some Pupniks into the massed throngs in search of a scent.

- Meehan can expedite the characters' access to the square through the power of celebrity.
- The Blade-Tongues revealing their gangs are hired to cause a ruckus at the *Zênite* – nothing major, just enough to get security's attention.

If the characters have taken a tangent or reached different conclusions, Silva can always request them as roving security for the *Zênite*. Although much less prepared, they'll be in place to intervene before "Makoto" gets its way.

THE SPECULO KILLER

Sent on a mission to turn the denizens of the Human Sphere against each other, the creature's amused at how incredibly simple it's been. It feels almost unfair, like fighting a child, but orders are orders. Having killed and replaced Io Makoto, it will use the identity to push Bakshi over the edge.

Planning to set off a devastating explosion, the Shasvastii will then leave the body of the real Makoto behind. A Yu Jing spy and a complicit PanOceanian citizen will set the Jade Empire and the Hyperpower at each other's throats in no time.

Use the Shasvastii – Speculo Killer stats on *Infinity Corebook* p. 473).

HEAT

1 Heat: The daunting civilian numbers and potential casualty list tugs at the PCs sensibilities. An **Average (D1) Discipline test** is required to avoid 1+2. Resolve damage. Suffering a Metanoia inflicts the Dazed condition, which lasts until a successful Recover action is taken.

2 Heat: Stealthy hands within the crowd attempt to pilfer a valuable object from a random character. A **Challenging (D2) Observation or Thievery test** is required to notice and avoid the sleight of hand. Of course, the ensuing tension could provide a spark to the flame...

SCENE NINE: ZENITH

The *Zênite Noturno* – nocturnal zenith – occurs on the titular 300th day, culminating the festival with parades, celebrations, and revelry. Nowhere is this more spectacular than the Zenith Countdown in Cidade BomJesus' central square, where millions of people gather for an experience unlike any other. And somewhere in that ocean of light and sound is a Shasvastii, looking to blow it all to hell.

FESTIVAL CENTRE

The GM may read or paraphrase the following:

The city is thundering with life. A roaring ocean of humanity. An estimated 5 million people have packed in tight for the festivities. A massive structure has been erected at the centre of the square, an analogue clock – complete with gears for inner workings – to assist the crowd in counting down to the 300th day.

Some areas of interest in BomJesus Square:

1. Streets around the square – currently roped off from traffic and packed with pedestrians (refer to Combat Zones – Crowds, p. 109 *Infinity Corebook*.)
2. The park area around the square proper, packed with crowds as above.
3. The open plaza at the heart of the square.
- 4-7. "Pillars of the Sky" – four skyscrapers framing the north and south of the square, connected by enclosed translucent walkways.
8. The massive Clock-Dome in the centre of the square.

"MAKOTO'S" PLAN

The Shasvastii has been planning this operation for roughly a year. Impersonating key officials has allowed for the replacement of various components of the clockwork dome and converted the structure into a massive shrapnel bomb.

"MAKOTO'S" PUPPETS

The *Zênite* is the climax of the "Makoto's" plans. Trouble is anticipated. A combination of soldiers, knights, and local police have been carefully manipulated into acting as the Shasvastii's unwitting enforcers. Completely innocent of the true circumstances, they'll courageously defend their home from terrorists such as the characters.

Use a combination of Spec Ops (*Infinity Corebook* p. 455), Police (*Infinity Corebook* p. 449), and Knights (*Infinity Corebook* p. 441) to represent these puppets.

TACTICS

"Makoto's" forces will be alert, though the crowd adds +1 difficulty to Observation tests. On the lookout for trouble, they will rapidly respond to threats – such as the characters, their allies, and other distractions – in multiple areas.

"MAKOTO'S" ZÊNITE NOTURNO ROSTER

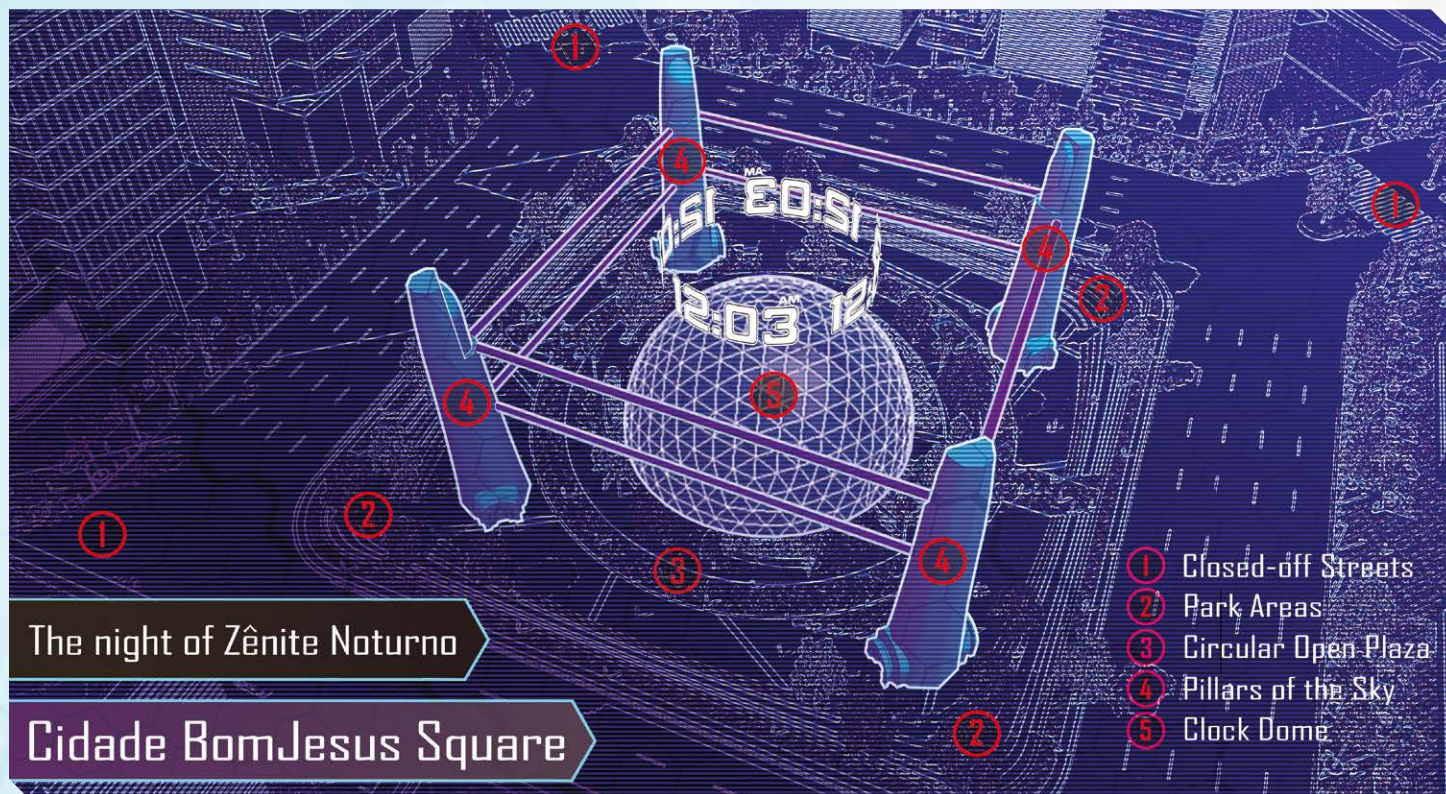
FORCE	AREA
4 Police	Area 1
2 Spec Ops (Trooper), Knight	Area 2
2 Knights	Area 3
Speculo Killer	Area 4 (25%), Area 5 (25%), Area 6 (25%) or Area 7 (25%)
2 Spec Ops (Elite), 1 Spec Ops (Heavy)	Area 8 – Clock-Dome

To ensure the plan's success, local security has been thoroughly infiltrated. 'Commanding Officers' are likely to overrule any requests for aid, so calls for help will fall on deaf ears within the PanOceanian military and the Military Orders. To take Makoto down, the characters will have to go it more or less alone.

CLOCK TOWER CONFRONTATION

A **Daunting (D3) Observation or Tech test** reveals the explosives lacing the dome's structure. It doesn't house a bomb, it is a bomb. Having prior knowledge of relevant clues provides -1 difficulty to the test. Additional Momentum can reveal the following information:

- Disarming it requires disconnecting the clock face from its surrounding mechanisms.
- The body of Io Makoto lies in one corner. An **Average (D1) Medicine test** reveals that she's been dead for several months.



The night of Zênite Noturno

Cidade BomJesus Square

- Several other bodies belonging to Yu Jingese citizens are stashed at various levels.

The square is packed with civilians of course, so avoiding the spread of panic is of paramount importance. The stampede that would ensue in the wake of the bomb becoming common knowledge or the Speculo revealing itself could feasibly kill hundreds on its own. Navigating the shoulder to shoulder crowds is a tough prospect regardless, but can be made deadly if chaos is unleashed.

Stealth, guile, or other means can be used to move through the scene, with things heating up at the dome. Attacking as Makoto, the Shasvastii will strike personally once the PCs are discovered.

TIME BOMB

Pairing a flair for the dramatic with a need to maximize the bomb's impact, the Speculo set the device to activate at the stroke of midnight. It also physically disconnected the clock hands from their surroundings, rendering them impervious to hacking. Disarming the device is a **complex Tech test (D2, 4 Momentum, 4 failures)**. If successful, the device becomes inert. The clock hands grind to a halt should a Complication occur, alerting millions that something's wrong. Failure to disarm the device means it explodes.

If Makoto's corpse has been found, or there is valid reason to doubt the disguise, the Shasvastii reveals its true nature; any story that survives will serve the ultimate purpose just fine, the end result is all that matters: death is temporary, but failure lasts forever.

AFTERMATH

There's still a need for answers once the dust settles. PanOceania's security soon realize they've been deceived and want to know exactly what just happened, irrespective of O-12's involvement.

Speculo Killers are a military secret; a shape-shifter this deep inside the Human Sphere will create waves of panic. Conversely, dead StateEmpire agents won't look good for Yu Jing, to say nothing of anything else the characters have uncovered. Some delicate decisions will need to be made, though thankfully backed by powerful bargaining chips.

WORST-CASE SCENARIOS

The bomb explodes, killing the PCs and everyone in the vicinity of Bomjesus Square. Yet, as the Speculo Killer pointed out, death is temporary. People are desperate for answers in the wake of this enormous tragedy. The characters are resurrected from their Cubes to provide answers from a ground-zero perspective. Failure to stop the explosion isn't the end, merely the launching point for a whole new campaign.

PLAYTEST TIP

UNLIKELY ALLIES

If the characters haven't pieced together where the danger lies, this is a great time to use any allies they've gained throughout the adventure. Several might be on-site assisting and any one of them could point the characters toward the Clock-Dome; if the players are stuck, let their earlier decisions bear fruit.

CHAPTER 2

SILKWORM

There's a new drug out there. It hasn't reached the streets just yet, but if someone doesn't do something, it soon will. Though Silkworm is still contained to a limited area in Bourak, it has already left addled minds and compliant, zombie-like servitors in its wake. O-12 refuses to let a drug like this to creep into the rest of the Human Sphere.

a Kyrgyz Mafia matriarch is attending to check on production and ensure that the operation is being run as stipulated. Bureau Noir predict that the resultant disarray will be enough to prevent the drug from spreading and permanently end its production. The characters should be wary of leaving themselves exposed once the mission is done however, as the Kyrgyz Mafia have a surprisingly long reach, rarely forgive, and never forget.

OPERATIONAL
SUMMARY

Bureau Noir believe the drug is being synthesized in a privately-owned medical research facility in the outlands of Bourak. The PCs are tasked with positively confirming that the facility is manufacturing Silkworm. Once substantiated, their next objective is to disrupt a high-level meeting taking place within the facility; intel suggests that

BACKGROUND

While attempting to create a hardier strain of Silk, a dedicated team of off-world, Mafia-backed chemists unintentionally created a synthetic strain that can be readily cultivated and easily grown as a crop. The Silkworm compound alters the complex chemical formula of Silk to instead produce several potent narcotic effects, including a cognitive



tranquilizer. The Silkworm plant resembles a large poppy with blue petals, instead of a red, which provides the plant with a useful cover given the fact that it offers none of the medicinal qualities of true Silk. With only minimal horticultural and harvesting infrastructure required, the Mafia can begin to grow it on nearly every inhabitable planet in the Human Sphere.

Silkworm becomes a bright blue translucent liquid once refined, which is then sold in small vials that are broken beneath the nose and sharply inhaled. The effects of the drug are virtually instantaneous, with the user experiencing a blissful vacancy akin to the out-of-body experiences typically attributed to nirvana for up to fifteen hours at a time; the drug is incredibly addictive, with a high percentage of users becoming immediately dependent. While experiencing the euphoria, the user is rendered utterly docile and can be effectively utilised as slave labour. The Kyrgyz are using the drug to establish an extremely cheap and efficient workforce that can be used to financially destroy their business rivals.

The facility being used to produce the Silkworm drug has always been a medical research facility. Originally built and funded by a multi-institute university initiative, the remote nature of the facility meant that resources dwindled over time thanks to more pressing concerns and more interesting projects occupying the university's budget. Eventually, it was quietly sold off to the Kyrgyz Mafia, who procured the site to use it as a narcotic production site. Things changed when one of the Mafia's pet chemists developed Silkworm; since then, the entire facility has become dedicated to its production.

The facility is largely run by low-level Kyrgyz Mafiosi, who use fear and intimidation to keep everyone in check. A few Bourakian residents are employed in administrative or bureaucratic roles, though this just provides a convenient façade to the true nature of the operation. Though virtually prisoners, the chemists working within the main drug factory are unharmed and well cared for. Higher level Mafia figures routinely visit to ensure that production is progressing at an acceptable speed and with positive results. Workers arrive daily at the facility, with most put to work on the growing patches where they tend and harvest the Silkworm crops prior to refinement. Some of the workers are used as test subjects for the newest formulations of Silkworm. All are addicted to it, regardless. As soon as they are given their daily dose – the only form of payment they ever receive – they shuffle away to work quietly and obediently until sent home, as that's how Silkworm affects individuals.

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: Examine the test data to determine whether addictive properties carry over to Lhosts. Procure the recipe and any data relating to Lhosts.

Ariadna: Monitor the facility's employees. Arrange extraction for Dogfaces or other Exotics and harvest any data useful in determining whether Silkworm would be suitable for Antipode control. (Whether there are any such employees is optional for the GM.)

Haqqislam: Discover the source of the Silk being used in the drug's synthesis. Ensure the crops are preserved for research purposes.

Nomads: Data has been obtained concerning the use of Haqqislam terraforming technology for the growth of crops. Uncover any evidence of unethical dealings between the Kyrgyz Mafia and Haqqislam.

PanOceania: While Silkworm is a fine prize, the facility utilises Haqqislamite terraforming technology to grow the crops. Steal any blueprints of this technology. (If they exist, the blueprints can be located anywhere within the facility.)

Yu Jing: Seize a sample of Silkworm if possible, but also ensure that no other agent secures a sample – by destroying the crops if necessary.

Corporations: Your Company is prepared to purchase the facility once the Mafia are cleared out. Bury a copy of the production data onsite so that it can be recovered later.

Submondo: The Matriarch of the Kyrgyz Mafia will be at the farm. Assassinate her or, better yet, dose her with Silkworm!

Mercenaries: The Kyrgyz Mafia is a pest that creates pretty law enforcement contracts. Whether through violence or intrigue, ensure that the Mafia are left with plenty of middle management vacancies.

Facility Social Network



Insular: 2
Routine Counter-Intelligence Level

SILKWORM

Inhaled, Complex 4, Special,
1+3  physical damage

Special Effect: On a failed Resistance test, Silkworm immediately intoxicates the user for a number of hours equal to 15 minus the character's Resistance Expertise.

While intoxicated with Silkworm, the character suffers the Dazed condition and gains the Mindless special ability (*Infinity Corebook* p. 418.)

Though rendered immune to all other mind-influencing effects due to the Mindless ability, a character is highly susceptible to coercion while intoxicated. All **Discipline tests** to resist coercion increase by +3 difficulty — or to **Dire (D3)** if a test wasn't previously required; failure means that the character mutely complies with instructions given.

Addiction 3 (1 dose), *Compulsion 3*, *Withdrawal 3*, 1+3  physical damage. The Addiction rating increases by +1 difficulty every time an additional dose is taken — maximum Epic (D5). As Silkworm is a very new narcotic there is no known treatment for addiction.

PLAYTEST TIP**ARRIVAL IS KEY**

Try to avoid calling for tests at this point. A failure could lead to a sudden, bloody end to the adventure before it has really begun. Roleplay the situation instead. Though surly, the security guards will accept the cover identities. The PCs will need to hide their more incriminating equipment; how they do this is, of course, is up to them.

MISSION BRIEFING

This first scene takes place at an O-12 facility prior to the PC's departure for Bourak. The PCs are assembled and informed that that they are obliged to attend a briefing session. GMs can use the briefing as an opportunity to introduce any "technical team" of NPCs who will be providing support during the mission.

Read or paraphrase the following.

Your mission handler, Agent Jaye, strides confidently into the room a few moments after you take your uncomfortable seats in the sparse conference room. You note that he is dressed in a style common on Bourak.

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. You've been over the details, but, in case any of you are slow readers, the mission is simple: First, confirm Silkworm's presence and destroy it. Second, apprehend everyone at the meeting that is taking place. If Silkworm continues to spread at its current rate, it'll hit every system within a month. We're going planet-side to prevent that. Good luck."

The PCs are provided with cover identities that place them as itinerant workers lured to the drugs plant by the promise of cash and no questions asked. The medical facility is owned and run by the local Kyrgyz Mafia, who nominally operate it as a well-protected, but legitimate business on the exterior. A map of the facility is provided, along with some details. The local authorities are unaware of the Silkworm production — or so they say at least. Producing synthetic Silk and then using it as an ingredient in a narcotic is extremely embarrassing for the *Hachib* of Haqqislam; a slight that cannot be allowed to continue.

The facility's Social Network is hostile and suspicious of outsiders. While running a full psyop is unlikely to bear fruit, incorporating Psywar into the infiltration could provide invaluable insight. For the purposes of this mission, the network is considered an Insular 2 Community (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 128) with a Routine counter-intelligence level. If the characters tip their hand, however, the network will become more suspicious.

There are two primary points of ingress to the network: the local Kyrgyz Mafia presence, and the 40 Tribes Maya Cluster; an informal Maya network that counts some of the facility's residents among their number.

A **Challenging (D2) Education** or **Lifestyle test** can reveal that the Maya Cluster (Accessibility 2) count

Luqmaan (the facility's manager, Accessibility 1) and Doula (a well-respected member of the Kyrgyz Mafia, Accessibility 2) as members, though there's little salient information on the facility itself. Local Mafia contacts can provide an introduction or escort to the facility, plus insight into Luqmaan and Alikhan, an underboss at the facility.

**SCENE ONE:
ARRIVING AT THE
FRONTIER**

The Tupkurundo — the Kyrgyz term for the hinterlands that conceal the research facility's location — is a frontier both promising and harsh. Clever use of irrigation from mountain springs provide small sections of scrubland conducive to farming. The extreme isolation and natural security provided by such places ensures that any number of research facilities, laboratories and development plants are located out here; their relative inaccessibility ensures that preserving the secrets of such places is much easier than if they were located in the heart of a bustling metropolis.

The journey is made in a small and uncomfortable but mercifully cool jitney. Though not an especially arduous trip, the PCs arrive stiff and sore, but otherwise in good shape.

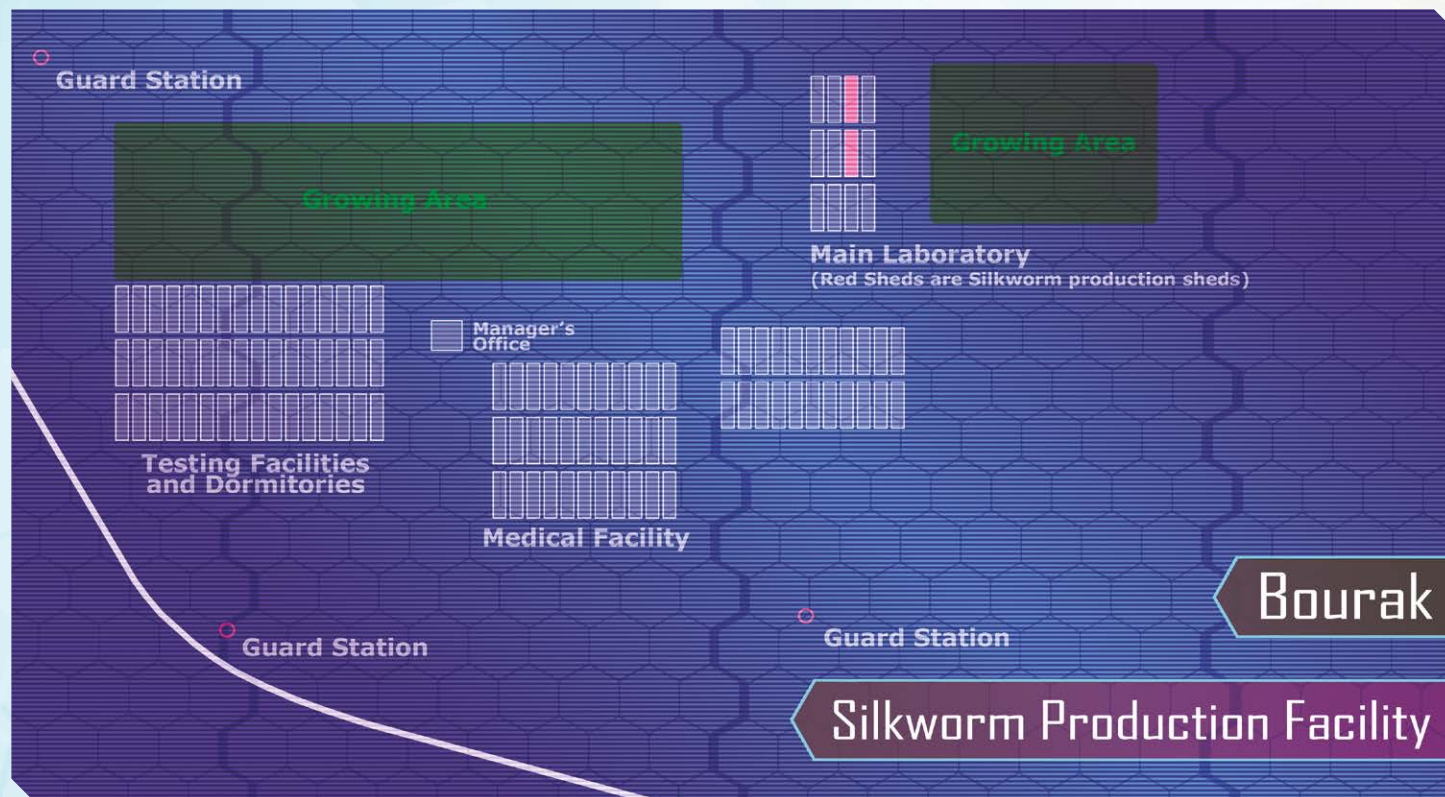
ARRIVAL

Arriving at the research facility is somewhat heartening, as the ingeniously irrigated trenches that sustain thin lines of surrounding vegetation prove that life can blossom in the harsh wastelands if carefully tended; an illusion of tenderness that is soon to be shattered however.

As their vehicle draws near the facility, the PCs will notice that a private security firm has set up a cordon surrounding the compound. This should be tense, as it is the first test of their legends.

While waiting for their IDs to clear, the PCs may catch several clues as to the current situation at the facility:

- A **Challenging (D2) Observation test** reveals that the guards are wearing badges bearing the legend of the *Kola Kanduu*; a Kyrgyz term meaning 'Bloodstained'. A call to Agent Jaye will reveal that these mercenaries have close ties with the local Kyrgyz Mafia and are infamous for their brutality.
- A dozen people are already outside awaiting admission. Others arrive after the PCs and take a place in one of two queues. The first queue



is for new workers; the second is for returning workers. A **Daunting (D3) Medicine test** reveals that the men and women in this second queue are suffering from withdrawal symptoms of some form. These symptoms are incredibly mild, requiring the most careful and informed scrutiny to notice the tremor of the hands or the stertorous breathing.

- The guards scan IDs listlessly. A **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** indicates that they are chiefly there for intimidation. They treat everyone roughly, pat pockets and confiscate anything of value they can find.
- If the PCs start asking questions of anyone in either queue, they will receive little in response and will only serve to agitate the guards. No one is willing to speak. At the point of entry, they receive an identifying number that is stamped directly into their clothing before being handed a single vial of Silkworm. Some characters may wish to try the drug — in which case refer to the rules above — or at least make a pretence to avoid suspicion. Regardless, the air will be filled with the sharp sound of vials being cracked and the murmur of satiated users. PCs will now be able to witness the effects of the drug first-hand as the men and women around them suddenly become quiet, zombie-like, and follow any order contentedly.

SCENE TWO: THE FACILITY

While the map the players were given at the beginning is accurate in terms of layout, little other information has been acquired.

The main laboratory responsible for synthesizing Silkworm is located some distance from the main facility (as part of the Outer Sheds) and is carefully hidden. A series of medical buildings and attached Manager's office compose the central portion of the research facility. On clearing the checkpoint, the PCs will be directed straight to the office, with four guards accompanying them to ensure that they don't deviate from the course. New workers are presented to the manager, where their details are then taken and their duties explained to them.

Other than their degrading opinion of the workers, the guards are reluctant to reveal anything of importance. They are hardened mercenaries that have made a name for themselves via enthusiastic brutality; any attempts to influence them must overcome an Intransigence of 2 — anything less falls short of the desired outcome. The guards will also attempt to bully and intimidate the PCs at various points, which is likely best roleplayed, but may utilise the Psywar rules if so wished (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 130).

KOLA KANDUU VICES

The guards are reluctant to discuss anything, including the price of gaining their assistance. Observant characters will realise that the "coin of the realm" when attempting a bribe isn't currency or favours, but non-Silkworm intoxicants; while it's in plentiful supply, the Guards seem reluctant to indulge in the local product. Nitrocaine, stims, or even a good whiskey will reduce the guard's Intransigence by 1.

SCENE THREE: A WARM WELCOME

Luqmaan, the manager of the facility, looks tired and less than thrilled about conducting the interview. He explains the tasks that will be required and offers a choice of serving as guinea pigs in the testing facilities – which he is completely open and unambiguous about – or toiling in the fields. Stating that he must return to work, he informs the PCs that they will be shown to their chosen area in a moment and rushes the meeting to a close, before pausing as he leaves to mention that there are areas of the camp which are absolutely out of bounds to ‘unsanctioned personnel’, with severe penalties for transgressing. The PCs are then hurried out.

LUQMAAN

APPEARANCE

He wears a cheap suit and a pretentious bearing, including a constant look of boredom and indifference.

ROLEPLAYING

- A continual smoker, the walls of his office have long-since turned bright yellow with tar.
- Unless offered an incentive, Luqmaan has very little respect for others. He becomes excessively pleasant if he stands to gain something, otherwise he’s extremely dismissive to everyone.
- His entire office is haphazard, with solder holding the desk together, tape covering the chair, and stuffing oozing from the cushion.

BACKGROUND

Luqmaan used to be a man with high standards and expectations, but he quickly discovered the corrupting power of money. A former student who worked at the facility while it was still dedicated to research, he now spends his time helping the Kyrgyz with the distribution and production of Silkworm. He’s only a puppet, however, and possesses little true power, which explains why he’s looking for a way out.

KEY INFO

- An **Average (D1) Observation test** reveals that his cheap suit hides armour under the stains.
- Unless the speaker is exceptionally skilled, he quickly shuts down conversations (see Tight-Lipped and Surly, below.)
- If someone denotes the quality of his office, he deflects the remark: “Eh? Cutbacks. What can I say? Now, stop snooping around other people’s things and let’s get back to business, yes?”
- Commenting on his smoking habit will illicit: “Keep your pointless facts and let’s get back to business”.

ELITE

LUQMAAN

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	10	9	8	10	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	–	Movement	–	–	Social	+2	2
Fortitude	+2	–	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+2	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	10	Resolve	10	Vigour	9
Security	0	Morale	3	Armour	1

ATTACKS

Pistol: R/C, 1+6 Burst 1, 1H, Vicious 1

GEAR: Kyrgyz Armoured Clothing

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Tight-Lipped and Surly: Psywar attempts made against Luqmaan are made at either +1 difficulty or +1 Intransigence (GM’s choice).

SCENE FOUR: WAITING FOR THE MAN

Upon leaving Luqmaan’s office, the guards order the PCs to join a large group of men and women gathered in the centre of the facility. There is a great deal of milling about, but the gathering is slowly subdivided into three separate groups. An **Average (D1) Persuade test** can garner what is occurring from one of the crowd. The three different groups are:

1. **Test Subjects:** These will be taken to dormitories and subjected to medical trials. They tend to be the least physically robust and stable of the group; those for whom the Silkworm addiction has become too far advanced.
2. **Workers:** Drawn by their addiction to Silkworm, the facility relies on the auxiliary workers returning and fulfilling the daily duties required to keep the place functioning.
3. **Fresh Meat:** The group the PCs are attached to is by far the smallest, numbering ten at the most. Lured by food, work, or even a new kind of drug, they are initially treated the best and are often used as recruits for others while their addiction is not so apparent. They are given a tour of the facility and encouraged to sing its praises in return for extra Silkworm or money.

The undermanager responsible for dividing the mob and assigning tasks is Alikhan, a short, tough member of the Kyrgyz Mafia. He sends people

to the three different groups as he sees fit. He is dedicated to getting the workers under control as a Silkworm addicted work force, thereby enabling the Mafia to increase production.

The PCs can spend as much time as they'd like mingling with the crowd and interacting with those cocooned in the web. The addicts are essentially mute, though there are a number of men and women in attendance for reasons other than habitual reliance.

Natasha is provided here as one example, but feel free to improvise more. Still in her early teens, she's the eldest daughter of a family in need of money. She's trustworthy, likeable, and easy to talk to. This is her third time on the Facility; though she's not addicted to Silkworm, she toils to feed her father's addiction. She has had little reason to fear the guards thus far.

WHAT NATASHA KNOWS

Natasha provides a window into life in the facility. While she's a relative newcomer, she knows many people who have worked here longer. The PCs can learn a great deal from her.

- Her father became addicted to Silkworm after to coming to work here, but is now too old and infirm to work. To stave off the crippling withdrawal he suffers, she gives him her own Silkworm payment.
- Natasha is half Kyrgyz and knows the culture well. She talks about the reckless, crazy spirit that infuses her people.
- She hopes she can be part of the medical testing, which sounds a lot easier than being outside.
- She has overheard the guards discussing a major meeting of the Kyrgyz Mafia taking place at the facility today, which will include the attendance of a high-profile figure. She has gathered that this meeting will likely be taking place in the most secret part of the facility: the main Silkworm Laboratory. Gaining this information requires a **Challenging (D2) Persuade test**.

SCENE FIVE: TESTING FACILITIES

Once processed by Alikhan, the various groups are swiftly dispatched to their respective tasks. A large contingent of the Workers group, including Natasha if the PCs have met her, head towards the

Testing Facilities, where they are to be used as cleaners, functionaries, or for any other necessary menial labour. The PCs and one or two other 'newbs' are gruffly ordered to follow four guards on a tour of the facility. Primarily conducted with the aim of persuading the Fresh Meat to act as enthusiastic recruiters for others, the guards will switch to demonstrating the potential risks of disobeying the Kyrgyz Mafia if their wards seem unimpressed.

Though spacious, the facilities are far from welcoming. An austere concrete structure houses connected suites. The exterior of the three-storey building is pitted and streaked with rust from the exposed metal frame. A bored, cynical superintendent named Ibrahim runs the building. Thoroughly immoral, he is unconcerned by the tests which the Mafia – and by extension the Corps – have him perform. The first people the PCs meet upon entering the Testing Facilities, however, will be the Protectors.

The guards who supervise the testing are known, both to themselves and to their victims, as The Protectors. They differ from the standard guard in that the modicum of medical training they have received allows them to act as particularly brutal nurses much of the time. Though they are all armed, most of this is extremely discrete; only one member of each patrolling gang carries a weapon openly, in the form of a Light Shotgun.

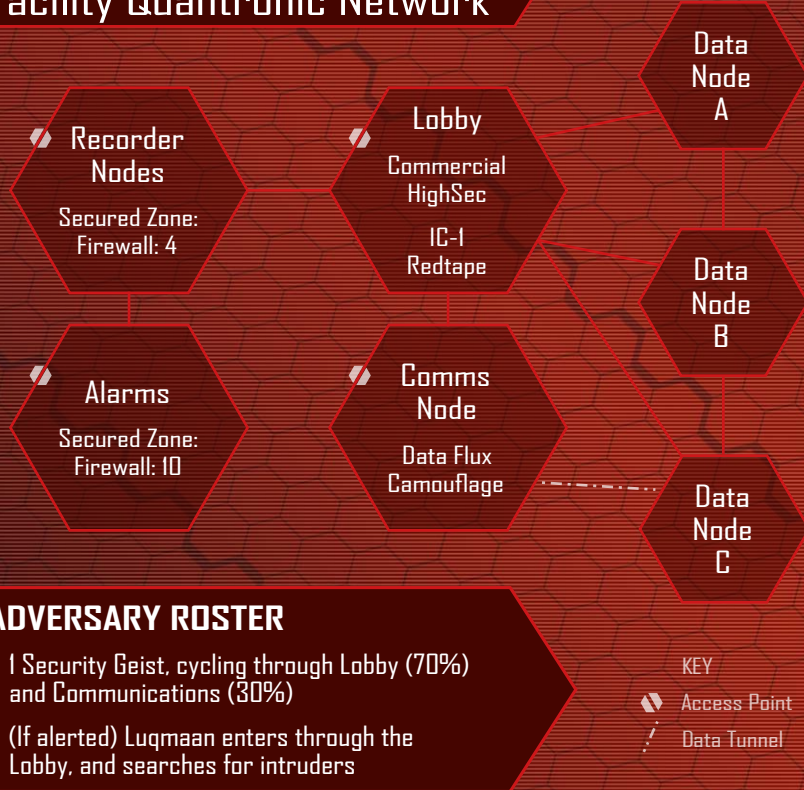
Essentially trained thugs, The Protectors will not take kindly to the PCs asking questions and prying into the affairs of the testing facility. A worker's Silkworm supply depends on quiet obedience, but occasionally some get nosy and need to be taught not to pry. Having encountered this several times before, The Protectors will deal with it by becoming rude, arrogant, and aggressive, with a view to forcing a confrontation. If violence breaks out, they will summon more assistance in the form of another 1d6 Protectors and attempt to subdue the PCs. They won't attempt to kill them – not yet. Their Mafiosi masters will want to interview the PCs first, to see if this is some sort of attempted infiltration.

Containing their anger will make the PCs' lives much easier. If none of them rise to the bait, the Protectors simply try to rush them through the tour as quickly as possible. A **Challenging (D2) Observation** or **Medicine test**, however, highlight a potentially sinister detail: the walls of more than one room sport gouges that might well have been made by human fingernails. A further **Daunting (D3) Analysis** or **Observation test** will indicate the presence of a bugging system spread throughout the Facility.

THE PROTECTORS:

- Use the Gang Enforcer profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 437, replacing the Combi Rifle with a Light Shotgun.
- Protectors prefer to attack unarmed first, but will quickly resort to using more lethal weapons if any of their allies are wounded.

Facility Quantronic Network



ADVERSARY ROSTER

- 1 Security Geist, cycling through Lobby (70%) and Communications (30%)
- (If alerted) Luqmaan enters through the Lobby, and searches for intruders

PLAYTEST TIP

NODE C

Node C is a repository of miscellaneous and sundry data – too volatile to leave unsecured, but not immediately relevant to the facility's operation. This is a great opportunity to give out seeds for future adventures, blackmail on assorted parties, or whatever else the GM desires. It's a big vault of dirty secrets. Feel free to use it.

SURVEILLANCE IN THE RESIDENCES

Every residence is bugged. A cheap voice recorder picks up anything above a whisper, though clarity is spotty. The Kyrgyz Mafia installed the devices as a preventative to infiltration. The bugs are difficult to notice in each room, while escaping the Protector's notice for long enough to hack into the system is somewhat more problematic. The PCs might consider distracting the Protectors so one of their number can slip away quietly.

The local datasphere isn't connected to Maya, Arachne or any other grid. Hacking into the system will be challenging, but very much worth the risk. There are three primary access points to the local quantronic network: the Recorders, the Alarms, and the Lobby area (which is accessible from Luqmaan's office). The Recorders and Alarms are each Secured Zones, with Firewalls of 4 and 10, respectively, whereas Luqmaan's office relies on physical security; an **Average (D1) Hacking test** will grant access to his terminal.

Regardless of how it's accessed, the network contains several zones of interest:

The **Recorder Nodes** store their collected data until a nightly maintenance cycle, where they are routed through the Lobby, and eventually stored

in either the Communications Node or Data Node C. From here, the characters can use the nodes as remotes, as well as having eyes and ears across the compound.

The **Lobby** is a secure workspace, used for private meetings, data analysis, and maintenance on the network's software. It's a Commercial-grade HighSec zone, additionally protected by IC-1 Redtape software.

From the **Alarms** node, alarms across the entire compound can be activated, silenced, or even remotely disabled.

The **Communications Node** tracks and enables comms throughout the facility; from here, an enterprising hacker could listen in, access prior communications, even spoof commands. It also contains a Data Tunnel to Node C.

The **Data Nodes** house large chunks of restricted information; each is a Secured Zone, with a Firewall of 10. **Node A** is packed with reams of medical data, primarily concerned with the effects of Silkworm on the nervous system. **Node B** holds information on a number of illegal biological weapons, and associated projects. **Node C** has further details on the organization's human trials; both here, and at other sites.

SCENE SIX: MEDICAL FACILITY

This dummy laboratory was built, and is purely maintained, for the sake of appearances. Having been shown the place, the PCs are expected to move swiftly on. The place is manned by one authentic Doctor, a harassed and exhausted woman called Yasmina. She is continually flanked by a Kyrgyz Mafiosi, who does his best to appear blandly menacing.

The medical facility is reasonably well equipped, but a successful **Challenging (D2) Medicine or Daunting (D3) Analysis test** will highlight the sterility and disuse of the equipment, indicating that this is clearly a decoy.

A quiet area, with relatively little security – besides the four guards accompanying them – the dummy medical facility can be a good opportunity for the PCs to strike violently. The Mafia have not sought to protect this place, as they consider there to be nothing worth stealing and therefore nothing worth committing resources to. Of course, grabbing the opportunity is up to the PCs, but it should be clear that it is a fleeting one. Dependant on their

choice, the GM can use appropriate tests to see whether the PCs can slip away without raising the alarm, or perhaps sneak back in later at a time of their choosing.

SCENE SEVEN: THE GUARD STATION

The two sheds composing the guard station combine to form a small armoury and a command centre for the external defences; the same defences the PCs will need to negotiate in order to access the Silkworm laboratory.

During the day, this station is manned by three or four Protectors and a senior member of the Kyrgyz Mafia. At night, however, there are two squads of six Protectors within shouting distance of the station, plus at least three members of the Mafia inside at any one time.

The Protectors within the station are also better equipped than those elsewhere in the facility and – in addition to their pistols – all carry at least a Combi Rifle or Light Shotgun. The PCs are not shown this as part of their tour. If they break away from their Guards at any point, however, this may be a useful place to equip themselves with purloined weaponry.

- The central computer hub in the station controls the security measures protecting the Silkworm Laboratory. As a secured zone with a Firewall of 10 and Intrusion Countermeasures, it is extremely difficult to breach. Doing so, however, allows the PCs to deactivate these security measures (see opposite).
- The PCs can remotely view the Silkworm production facility from the hub, allowing them to plan their attack carefully.
- A series of messages can be recovered from the system's databanks with a successful **Daunting (D3) Hacking test**. These coded messages are frequently exchanged between the off-planet Kyrgyz Mafia *Vors* and their employees on the surface. There are enough details of the composition of Silkworm for a sufficiently competent chemist to determine the formula for the drug – possibly resolving the Wilderness objectives for one or more of the player characters.
- The messages also refer to the meeting the PCs are expected to disrupt, which is due to transpire inside the Silkworm production facility in only a few moments time!

SCENE EIGHT: SILKWORM LABORATORY

THE FIRST FLOOR

Located at the farthest extent of the research facility, the laboratory is heavily guarded and festooned with anti-scanning equipment designed to hide it from any aerial surveillance. A contingent of Kyrgyz Mafia, Protectors, and administrators work and live on the premises, tending to the needs of the four Scientists who are responsible for the synthesis of the Silkworm itself.

The Mafia have established what they hope to be an inaccessible perimeter around the site, which involves roving drones, motion-activated “screamers”, and the actual Protectors themselves. Characters aware of the drones and screamers can attempt to hack them remotely from the Guard station (see opposite) without risk of being observed. Otherwise, spotting the remotes and screamers is a **Daunting (D3) Observation test** thanks to their mimetic polycarbon coating. The screamers are all managed through a common network (Firewall 10), with a breach granting enough control of them that they can be either activated or deactivated as a Free Action.

The laboratory is filled with the necessary equipment for the synthesis, refinement and production of Silkworm, which includes ranks of distilling machines, a large reactor, centrifuges, and other vital equipment. Racks of automated sampling robots frequently emerge from the walls, while several computers (Firewall 6) constantly run data analysis on the brain function of addicts and the relative strength of the various strains of Silkworm. Gas canisters occupy rooms that also contain conveyor belts, which are used to convey items through sterilisation chambers that connect to the raw Silkworm plant, which can be seen through the window on the opposing wall of the isolation chamber.

The place is protected by heavy, reinforced doors with a clean room interposed between the entrance and laboratory. The laboratory is carefully protected and kept hermetically sealed. A second hermetically sealed chamber beyond the laboratory contains the Silkworm, where it is held prior to being cut and readied for distribution. A third room contains the final, diluted product, which is separated into quantities for the addicted workers and off-planet sale. Groups of two Guards might be found at any point, depending upon the GM's requirements.

To gain access to each room, a suitable ID must be presented – not every ID will provide access to all

THE BODYGUARD AND THE DOCTOR

- Use the Gang Enforcer profile for the Mafiosi, and the Doctor profile for Yasmina (*Infinity Corebook*, pp. 437 and 429).
- The Mafiosi knows the location of the Silkworm Laboratory. The PCs could hack his comlog, trail him, or interrogate him to garner the information.
- Beyond the fact that there is a secret medical laboratory somewhere on the site, the Doctor knows almost nothing. She chiefly deals with those hurt during the trials.

the rooms. PCs that have successfully hacked into the Guard station hub, however, will be able to override the entry system. Otherwise, the system has a Firewall 10. Placing explosives in these rooms and detonating them will result in the Primary Objective of the mission being completed.

THE SECOND FLOOR

The laboratory's second floor is accessible via a set of stairs in the clean area preceding the main laboratory. Up here is where the high-level meeting is taking place. The Kyrgyz Mafia has sent one of their own to ensure that progress is satisfactory and that the new, more potent strains of the drug are nearing completion. Precisely what the Mafia intends to use the drug for is unclear, but that's something for later. The players objective is to disrupt the meeting.

Doula, a Kyrgyz Matriarch, represents the interests of her outfit. She is a high-ranking figure in the mob and widely respected. Taking her alive will prove a valuable bargaining tool. Alongside four of her own personal bodyguards, there are also eight Protectors and ten auxiliary staff in the laboratory when the

PCs enter. The Protectors stationed in the lab are arranged into three fire teams, two consisting of three members, and one of four.

If the PCs invade the meeting, Doula will waste no time in attempting to escape. Her bodyguards and any attendant Protectors will attack immediately, while additional Protectors – which require Heat spends as normal – will begin arriving in subsequent rounds. While Doula remains present and active, any zone she is in gains a Loyalty rating of 2 and Kyrgyz within her zone – including herself – benefit from an Intransigence of 2.

THE FINALE

The Secret Farm presents several opportunities to accomplish fantastic results for Bureau Noir. The Silkworm supply can be virtually wiped out through the intelligent deployment of explosives. Samples and crucial data can also be obtained and studied to better understand the dark narcotic market that plagues the Human Sphere. While this won't bring down the Kyrgyz Mafia, it might cause them to reconsider some of their illegal business ventures... for a while. Of course, it could also result in a rather large personal vendetta against the characters.

NEMESIS

DOULA THE KYRGYZ MATRIACH

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	10	10	8	10	12	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	–	Social	+3	3
Fortitude	+2	–	Senses	+2	2	Technical	+2	2

DEFENCES

Firewall	12	Resolve	14	Vigour	12
Security	1	Morale	4	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Pistol:** R/C, 1+6 (N), Burst 1, 1H, Vicious 1
- **Knife:** Melee, 1+5 (N), 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

GEAR: Light Combat Armour.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Menacing 2, Threatening 2
- **Impassive Brutality:** Doula is not averse to getting her hands bloody when punishments need doling out; in fact, she seems to stoically welcome the opportunity. She may reroll three (N) when making a Close Combat test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, she reduces the Heat cost of Guard and Riposte Reactions by 1, to a minimum of 0. Finally, after successfully executing a Parry, she may immediately perform a Reaction to make a standard melee attack against the foe she parried.
- **Matriarch's Will:** Doula's iron will and physical brutality ensures she maintains a position of dominance while many rivals fall to the wayside. She benefits from a Morale Soak of 4. Additionally, she may reroll one d20 when making a Discipline test, or any dice that did not generate a success when making an initial roll for a Resistance test, but must accept the new results.

ELITES

KYRGYZ BODYGUARDS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	10	10	9	8	8	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	2	Movement	+1	1	Social	+1	–
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	8	Resolve	9	Vigour	10
Security	1	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Assault Pistol:** R/C, 1+6 (N), Burst 2, Unbalanced, Vicious 1
- **Stun Baton:** Melee, 1+6 (N), 1H, Non-Hackable, Knockdown, Stun, Subtle 1

GEAR: Light Combat Armour.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Kyrgyz Ferocity:** Kyrgyz Bodyguards fight ferociously to defend their charge. They may reroll two (N) when making a Ballistics or Close Combat test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, each point of Momentum paid or Heat spent to gain additional dice for a Close Combat test provides two d20s, instead of one (the normal maximum of three bonus d20s still applies). Finally, they reduce the penalty for firing at a range other than the weapon's optimal range by one, to a minimum of 0.
- **Matriarch's Shield:** When responding to Doula being declared the target of an attack, the Kyrgyz Bodyguards reduce the Heat cost of Guard Reactions taken to defend her by 1, to a minimum of 0.

CHAPTER 3

RIOTS AT DAWN

Bureau Noir suspects serious foul play behind recent miner strikes on Ariadna. While miners withholding their labour may seem to be normal for that system, the unexpected rise of one Branch Chief Morrison and a large amount of money changing hands through PanOceanian corporations has the Bureau concerned.

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

Behind the scenes, a previously unknown noble, Branch Chief Miles Morrison, has been surreptitiously working with PanOceanian corporations to circumvent both O-12 and Ariadna law regulating Teseum, which largely involves exchanging the precious ore for personal wealth, political power, and assistance in dominating the House of Clans.

The main corporation influencing all of this, the Echelon Mining Consortium (EMC), has been operating through shell companies. They have employed mercenaries through one such subsidiary, Double Eagle Industries, to ensure their business interests are safeguarded.

Not long after the PCs arrival, their contact, Chief Allister Lamont, dies in an explosion. His enraged and estranged daughter, Jessica, has gathered an angry mob on the steps of the local precinct in search of justice. If she can be calmed and reasoned with, Jessica will become an important ally; or an irritating thorn if not. Various clues become apparent from an examination of the bomb scene evidence, though little directly trace to the culprit.

Shortly after the bombing, either via Jessica or the Branch Chief himself, the PCs are invited to a social event at the Branch Chief's castle. The Branch Chief





WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: Teseum is an invaluable commodity. Investigate opportunities for independent Teseum supply and establish connections where possible so that more dedicated negotiators can be deployed in a positive environment. Offer short-term favours to primary producers as necessary.

Ariadna: (Rodianian): Discord amongst Caledonian elites can be an opportunity, but also a danger. Ensure that any pro-independence politicians are brought to the attention of Central Command. Harvest any useful blackmail material.

Ariadna: (Other) Discord amongst Caledonian elites will be exploited by Central Command. Ensure that any exposed politicians are reminded of this by planting an easily detected surveillance device in their private quarters (three devices are supplied for this purpose.)

Haqqislam: Despite the obvious benefits, many regular Caledonians remain reluctant or sceptical concerning Cubes. To make inroads on the market, convince as many influential persons as possible to undergo implantation. Two Cubes are immediately available at a nearby caravanserai for this purpose.

Nomads: The Nomads sympathise with the miner's plight and wish to support them organising. A deepening of Ariadna's reliance on the Nomads for assistance as a result of this will also provide a clear advantage over rivals. Secure a prolific contact within the miner's union.

PanOceania: PanOceania is attempting to put a new foot forward with Rodina. Communicate the location of any Separatist elements or other illegal activities. Prepare the ground for negotiators to take up any abandoned activities.

Yu Jing: PanOceania have focussed the Emperor's eyes on Dawn. Do everything possible to thwart their influence while extending the StateEmpire's. Yu Jing is prepared to offer material support to independence movements so long as it can maintain local surveillance of third parties. If the opportunity arises seed the ground for further negotiations.

Corporations/Submondo: Mining contracts on Dawn are incredibly lucrative. Ensure that competitors engaged in such actions are politically compromised to the point that they are forced to withdraw or enter into a partnership.

Mercenaries: Ariadnan troops are in demand for security contracts. Recruit a native face to manage and recruit a local force that can be shored up with off-world reinforcements.

agrees to an interview with the PCs, during which he intimates that Jessica might even have arranged the recent bombing herself. Successful covert ops here, however, reveal some disturbing facts. In the meantime, an infuriated Jessica, who is seemingly intent on causing damage at the Branch Chief's mine, quits the party. The Branch Chief reveals that she fled the scene after his chief of security informed her that her possible involvement in the bombing was under investigation. He invites the PCs to apprehend her, as he fears that his own guards will mishandle the situation.

In truth, Jessica hadn't made it beyond the Branch Chief's fortress walls. Security bundled her into a

vehicle and delivered her to the Morrison Mines, which also doubles as the headquarters for Double Eagle Industries (DEI). The agency is utilizing mercenaries to covertly fortify a section of the mine.

The PCs are ambushed en route to the mine, apparently by miners intent on seeking revenge, though closer inspection reveals them to be in DEI's employ. The PCs will need to access the safe-guarded area to recover Jessica. Once inside, they are rewarded with the revelations of a plot to control, assassinate, or manipulate several members of the House of Clans in order for Morrison to obtain ultimate authority. Chief Lamont was the first name on the list. They also discover that the secure area is acting as a transfer point for the movement of Teseum onto ships bound for the Ariadna Exclusion Zone. Escaping with the information will mean evading or engaging the DEI security and then fleeing to a local safe point.

MISSION BRIEFING

Upon arriving in Mat', the PCs are diverted to a briefing with Agent Dmitri Blankin of Cossack High Command, who greets them warmly, offers fresh tea and biscuits, then gets to business. The O-12 handler responsible for their assignment here joins via augmented reality. Blankin is blunt and straight to the point; the economic situation in the country is grim and there is a real concern that the unrest will sweep from Caledonia across the rest of Ariadna.

The PC's O-12 handler tasks them to investigate, by any means necessary, the fundamental reasons for the recent unrest in the country. Deep cover informants have also reported a possible breach of trade ethics concerning Dawn, so the Bureau would like to understand the root origins behind Branch Chief Morrison's sudden rise to prominence in the region. His sudden affluence has also brought a measure of stability to his own mine, which has subsequently allowed him to begin snapping up mines closed due to dispute under the promise of resolving workforce disagreements and resuming productivity. The Branch Chief's motivations need to be scrutinised and understood. A meeting with Chief Lamont has been arranged, who can provide a background concerning this very matter.

BACKGROUND

Hardly known for its wealth or luxury, Caledonia is a crude place that bears similarities to impoverished areas on Earth hundreds of years ago, including rioting, protesting, shanties, infighting, and a general sense of uneasiness. Ironically, the Caledonians possess access to the one

near-priceless commodity that drives economics across the Human Sphere: Teseum. Unfortunately, mining operations across the country have slowed to a crawl due to union-backed labour disputes over pay and conditions.

The quality of life in the Caledonian town of Brannigan, however, is at an all-time high and now competes with some of the more mediocre cities across the Human Sphere. The benevolence of the local Branch Chief, Miles Morrison, has uplifted life for everyone there. Demonstrations still plague the town unfortunately, with disenfranchised labourers from outlying mines venting their fury amongst the fruits of their harvest. Only Miles Morrison's own mine remains functioning without issue, his own staff well recompensed for their efforts, and numerous safety checks in place that are sorely lacking in many other mines.

Branch Chief Morrison is also a traitorous opportunist. He has sold out to the Echelon Mining Consortium, a PanOceanian corporation seeking exclusive mining rights on Dawn. To provide muscle to their ambitions, EMC have established Double Eagle Industries, a subsidiary private military company populated mostly by Caledonians loyal to Clan Morrison, as well as hardened mercenaries brought in secretly from off-world.

Echelon were patient in their investment. Minor, untraceable cash investments to Miles' holdings created the illusion that the Branch Chief's own investments in the Ariadnan Stock Exchange had started to pay off. They also groomed Miles in the ways of politics and strategy, further bolstering his already formidable intelligence. The Branch Chief rose to prominence and Echelon had bought their very own major player within the Caledonian political arena. Between them, they agreed on the best ways to neutralize his rivals; be that passively or aggressively.

Through the young Branch Chief's connections, Echelon began blackmailing choice political targets. Matters discussed in private soon began making their way to the public, forcing several politicians to resign. Troublesome miners and citizens were framed and dealt with by the authorities. Both the Branch Chief's influence and local prosperity have grown considerably, but at what cost?

DOUBLE EAGLE INDUSTRIES

Double Eagle Industries is a front for the Druze Company that Branch Chief Morrison has employed to manage Echelon's private security interests on Dawn. Painfully aware of the Druze' loathsome

reputation in Caledonia, Morrison and the mercenaries agreed that it would be in their best interests to operate under a pseudonym. Bolstered by Caledonians unquestionably loyal to Miles, the Druze masquerade as Ariadnan troops in the employ of the Double Eagle Industries private security firm.

To lend the operation credence, Echelon authorised the investment of millions of credits into research of the old North American empire — particularly the Branch Chiefy 21st century. A combination of dialect coaches, old movies, and footage of existing US Ariadnan settlements cultivates the illusion that personnel hail from US Ariadna, rather than off-planet. While this has yet to survive strict scrutiny by true US Ariadnans, especially as some personnel struggle to differentiate every subtle nuance that has been drilled into their head, they have managed to fool most Caledonians that aren't privy to their secret. The ones that see through them quickly disappear.

SCENE ONE: THE EXPLOSION

An old Rodina Punochka skimmer is allocated to the team to fly them to Caledonia:

THE FLIGHT

Climbing aboard, it's easy to note the bright, polished emerald sheen of the flyer's exterior contrasting with the frayed upholstery and tarnished metalwork of the interior. The trip across the tempestuous skies of the continent is rocky at best, and extremely shaky at worse. The vibrant plains of Rodina and lush fields of Merovingia give way to the overcast skies and stony hills of Caledonia.

Despite its aged appearance, the flyer braves the worst of the weather and arrives at your destination: a deep valley ringed by numerous smoke stacks that harbours a town at its heart. Brannigan consists of several industrial buildings, many homes, and a variety of shops that dot the canyon floor. The morning light of the descent reveals an endless train of trucks and transports ferrying tired miners back and forth from the mines, like soldier ants harvesting for their queen. What appears to be a festival taking place in a nearby street draws the eye as the helipad looms into view. Only as the engines of the skimmer shut off do you pick up on the sounds of a demonstration underway.

NOTES ON PROFILES

DEI employees consist largely of Corporate Security Unit (Troopers) led by their elite counterparts (see p. 427, *Infinity Corebook*). The fortified areas of the Morrison Mine is also staffed by Druze Shock Team members, again in the form of troopers led by elites (see p. 427, *Infinity Corebook*).



The PCs are forced to wait half an hour after landing before their car arrives. Airport authorities are quick to blame the demonstration. The driver of their vehicle — a rugged yet pristine SUV — is a quiet, respectful man who helps the investigators with their equipment but otherwise keeps to himself.

Demonstrators waving signs and singing protest songs fill the area as their vehicle exits the airport, with many of them shaking banners and making signs at the car as it nudges through. The driver of their car is forced to honk his horn and the vehicle's speed is reduced to a crawl more than once. He stresses that they will soon meet Chief Lamont at a nearby restaurant when the following happens:

DEATH OF A CHIEF

A shiny black limo can be seen slowly making its way through the crowd at an intersection, making efforts to avoid the protestors. Apart from the chrome hubcaps and large wolf's head adorning the front the bonnet, the vehicle is an SUV similar to the one you now occupy. You also notice that it has special government plates on its rear. Your driver smiles and points at the car, "And that would be the Chief's private limo. It looks like we will be arriving at the same time."

The outside world is wracked by smoke and flame just as he finishes the last word. A powerful explosion drowns out the crowd, while the force of the blast rocks your vehicle and shatters the windscreen. Moments of shock and silence give way to tremulous car alarms and heart-wrenching screams.

HEAT

1 Heat – Song of the Innocent:

The terrible carnage and decimation leaves many screaming for help, from the walking wounded and badly hurt to uninjured bystanders. The noisy chaos of the scene adds +1 difficulty to all tests.

For an additional 1 Heat, all Psywar tests suffer an additional +1 difficulty (+2 difficulty overall.)

2 Heat – Blame the Off-worlders! Two shocked and angry demonstrators immediately perceive the PCs to be the root cause of the bombing. They leap to the attack with anything to hand (use the Thug B profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 460). This spend may be repeated each round.

3 Heat – Secondary Explosion: The bomb has caused considerable damage, which results in a secondary explosion. The blast inflicts 2+5 (N) damage with the Deafening, Indiscriminate (Close), Knockdown, Piercing 1, and Vicious 1 qualities.

INVESTIGATING THE WRECKAGE

To investigate further, the PCs must find some way of contending with the burning wreckage; hydrants are located close by, while the restaurant will possess fire extinguishers. The PCs own driver will inform them that the smouldering figure in the driver's seat is likely the Chief's personal driver, Jeff Grant (later confirmed). The damaged comlogs of the two unrecognisable corpses in the rear can be used to identify them as Chief Lamont and his personal assistant, Patricia Headly. A briefcase located near the Chief's corpse was blasted to pieces in the explosion. A **Challenging (D2) Analysis** or **Tech test** will determine that it contained encoded data discs, though they are likely burned beyond recovery.

Inspecting the debris and succeeding on a **Challenging (D2) Tech** or **Daunting (D3) Analysis test**, will determine that an explosive device was placed directly underneath the passenger section of the car. Much like the encoded discs, above, identifying the explosives or technology used in the construction of the device will require the use of forensic laboratory equipment (equivalent to a corporate lease laboratory, *Infinity Corebook* p. 372.)

The death of the Chief is devastating for the city of Brannigan. Ariadnan police and anti-terrorism experts swarm in to shut down the crime scene. The officials in charge are reluctant to share information with the PCs and, though they do not arrest them, interview them to establish why they are in the city.

Gaining access to a forensic laboratory — or at the very least technicians who can conduct the investigation — and the results that can be determined are detailed below.

DEALING WITH EVIDENCE

Use the Detective profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 428, for the lead investigator, Stewart Campbell. If he can be convinced to assist the O-12 investigation, then he will provide them with the full disposal of the local forensic laboratory. Succeeding at a **Challenging (D2) Science test** — which already includes the -1 difficulty for use of a laboratory — reveals that the compact yet powerful explosives were created using materials that can easily dupe the scanning equipment at Caledonian security checkpoints. None of the components are manufactured on Dawn.

Each two points of Momentum can be used to reveal one of the following facts:

- The composition of the explosive is a highly irregular compound produced using rare minerals found only in frigid confines of the Svalarheiman wastelands.

MINOR ENCOUNTER: THE WOUNDED

The entire area around the Player Characters is a scene of shock and devastation. They will likely seek to treat the injured around them, as most of those wounded in the explosion were protestors who had the misfortune of standing too close.

Unfortunately for them, dealing with the aftermath doesn't mean the scene is now entirely safe. The emergency services and other local authorities are imminent, but in the meantime, there are a number of incidents that can affect the PCs as they attempt to deal with the carnage around them. Of course, becoming a rallying point amidst the chaos around them can also bring its own dangers (see Heat sidebar).

- Piecing together fragments of the data discs intimate that Branch Chief Morrison has been benefiting from some decidedly shady dealings on the Ariadnan stock exchange, though there is no evidence to support this.

From this, the PCs should understand that an organisation or person from off-world has a vested interest in the current unrest affecting Caledonia. Additionally, O-12's instincts concerning the Branch Chief appear to be accurate. Whether the two are connected or not, however, remains to be seen.

SCENE TWO: THE UNIONIST

The PCs leave their 'interview' only to walk headlong into a baying mob. Backed by her unionist friends, Chief Lamont's daughter, Jessica, is demanding answers and justice. Enraged by shock and grief, she blames the PCs for her father's death and demands their incarceration. The majority of the crowd consist of Activists (Trooper), *Infinity Corebook* p. 419. The mob can be considered to be a single zone with an Insular rating of 2, while convincing Jessica that the PCs are innocent requires a Metanoia against an Intransigence of 3.

JESSICA MORRISON

Appearance: Late teens, tight pony tail, slim and undernourished. She wears an old Ariadnan military jacket bearing union insignias.

ROLEPLAYING:

- Passionate and noble, she strives to make life better for everyone.
- Angry, afraid, and guilty all at once over attacking her father and his institution.
- She wants answers. Someone must be punished for her father's murder.

BACKGROUND

A happy child until her mother's death, Jessica took to idolising her lost parent as a saint for the work she often undertook to improve social services across Caledonia. Jessica's anger at her loss led her to the forefront of marches and rallies, a fact that alienated her even further from her father. If Jessica can be convinced to talk rather than scream murder, her grief, anger and frustration over her father's death become readily apparent. Prior to his death, she had actually been leading campaigns against her father's treatment of his own employees, though recently she began seeking more peaceable means to achieve her goals. This prompted a visit to Branch Chief Morrison to

try and understand how employment with him differed to others.

KEY INFO

- Use the Activist (Elite) profile, p. 419 of the *Infinity Corebook*.
- She had recently approached her father seeking reconciliation, although he had been enraged over her contact with Branch Chief Morrison. She feels the Chief was jealous of her respect for the Branch Chief, which possibly prompted his investigation into the Branch Chief's holdings.
- Having met and interviewed the Branch Chief, which included a tour of his estate and the upper workings of his mine, she finds it hard to believe that he's involved in anything underhand.
- The Branch Chief doesn't just believe in bettering the life of Caledonians; he seeks to improve the lot of all Ariadnans. He even employs USAriadnan mercenaries alongside Caledonian muscle to protect his mine.
- Admiration for Branch Chief Morrison stems from the fact that he provides his miners with pay and benefits that are far above those of the average miner. Although he didn't go into specifics, she can only assume that he is passing on the benefits of a profitable mine.
- The Branch Chief is hosting a prestigious birthday party in a few days' time to honour his distant cousin, Tilda Schaumberg. Although she has nothing to celebrate, Jessica will arrange to attend with the PCs so they might gauge his noble intentions for themselves.

If the PCs fail to pacify Jessica and thereby gain the above information, the GM may use a member of Chief Lamont's estate to impart some or all of the above information, although the facts should be tainted with a clear bias towards the belief that Jessica is a spoilt teenager rebelling against her father after blaming him for her mother's death. Should they seek one, the PCs will initially be refused a meeting with the Branch Chief, although his PA will invite the 'unsung heroes of Brannigan's recent tragedy' via email a day before the party takes place.

Additional Ariadnan security forces arrive to re-establish control if the confrontation escalates into violence. Despite rapidly dispersing the crowd, the city still simmers as miners continue their demonstrations and police officers in riot gear struggle to keep the peace.

With little or no tweaking – plus one or two additions – the Heat spends provided for the aftermath of the explosion on p.28 are just as relevant here if matters do turn ugly.

PLAYTEST TIP

THREAT OF VIOLENCE

The GM should ensure the players understand that the threat of the mob is very real. The overstretched law enforcement does not have the personnel on hand to contain a riot and are seriously outmanned. Iron bars, mining picks, and knives can be easily spotted among the crowd; a misstep could result in serious harm or innocent deaths. As a means to increase the tension, a suitable number of Heat spends should also be determined beforehand.



SCENE THREE: LOC HOLLOWAY

Located not far from the city, Loc Holloway is a small lake which doubles as one of Brannigan's water supplies. Dominating the lake from its hilltop perch on the eastern shore is a stout stone castle surrounded by tall, foreboding walls. Modern lighting illuminates the grounds at intervals of twenty feet, revealing beautifully tended grounds, marble sculptures and ancient tableaux of iconic scenes from ancient Gaelic mythology. Security personnel patrol regularly and a well-dressed doorman greets visitors at the front gate. When the players arrive, they are forced to wait for a few minutes before being granted entry.

On the approach to and within the main grounds, a successful **Challenging (D2) Observation test** will detect sophisticated cameras concealed amongst the trees and statues. These small cameras are state-of-the-art Ariadnan technology.

As the doors open and you pass across the threshold, it feels almost as though you step from grim and ancient times into an age of modernity and wonder. Though the stone façade of the castle would suggest otherwise, the interior is well furnished, warm, and well lit. It appears that a party is under way, and many guests socialize around a fire place while hardnosed security officers look on from the side.

Some guests make use of small terminals built into the wall, while servants in fine clothes tend to the needs of all.

One servant whispers in the ear of a man wearing a coal grey suit, who turns from his associates and walks towards you with a drink in hand. The soft, silvery glint of Teseum cufflinks and thin neck torque catch your eye as he smiles, offers his and states: "Miles Carmichael Morrison, 9th Branch Chief of Loc Morrison, at your service. Welcome to my humble hall. I trust you will enjoy yourselves."

BRANCH CHIEF MILES MORRISON

Appearance: Young, yet distinguished, and very charismatic. He wears fine clothes and stays classy, no matter the occasion.

ROLEPLAYING

- Smooth and articulate, he answers every question coolly and succinctly.
- If backed into a corner, he will calmly take control of the conversation before going on the offensive. Evidence of wrongdoing should be played off as circumstantial.
- Will become angry if challenged over his dealings and intentions concerning Echelon and Ariadna; he truly believes he is ushering in a bright new age.

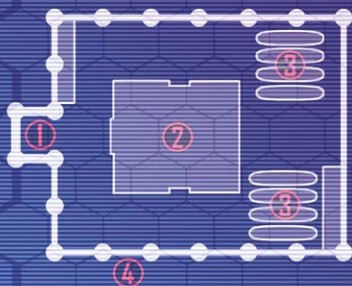
BACKGROUND

Mile's intentions and recent history are contained within the Operational Summary and Background at the start of the mission. Born and raised in Brannigan, Branch Chief Miles Morrison has not made it this far by not being cautious. He lacks compassion towards his enemies, but will always use a careful hand rather than a crushing fist. He knows his alliance with Echelon will be his undoing if unearthed before fruition, so seeks to keep it hidden until his position is more secure.

KEY INFO:

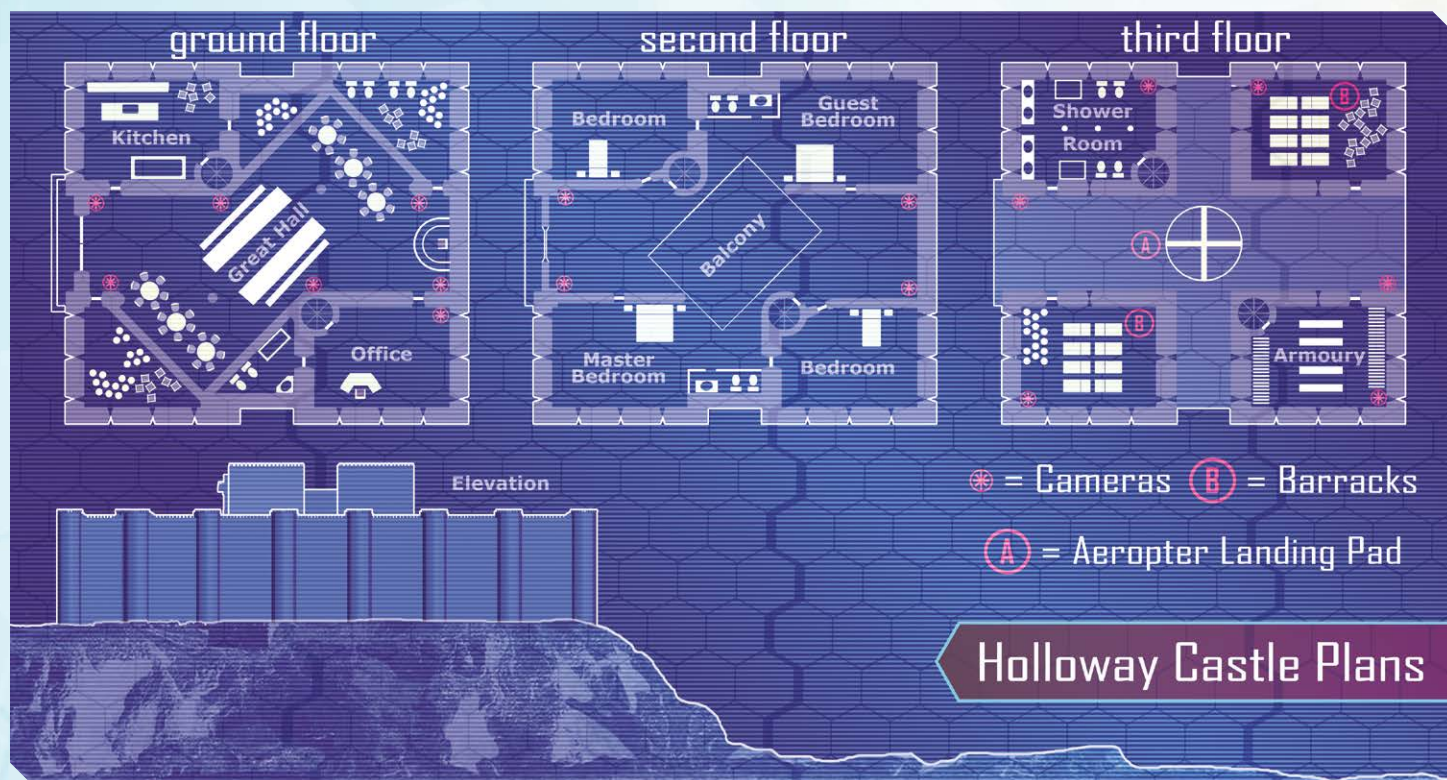
- Use the Corp Exec profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 427.
- Branch Chief Morrison greets the PCs warmly and ensures his servants attend to their every need. Although the party is largely in honour of his cousin, he wanted to also take the opportunity to thank them for their heroics during the recent tragedy. He hopes that whoever carried out the cowardly attack is brought to justice.
- If Jessica is present – which she should be irrespective of whether the PCs calmed her or not – it becomes apparent that the Branch Chief's relationship with her is almost that of affectionate step-father and adoptive daughter.

Holloway Castle Grounds



- ① = Main Gate
- ② = Keep
- ③ = Gardens
- ④ = Curtain Wall





Shrewd characters who succeed at a **Daunting (D3) Analysis or Observation test**, however, will note that his affection appears faked and the warmth never quite reaches his eyes.

- The Branch Chief will consent to a short interview with the players, which takes place within his private office: a luxuriously furnished affair containing his personal computer and the Morrison's hereditary weapon – a Teseum hunting sword known as Swiftkill – in pride of place on the wall above the banner of Clan Morrison.

Miles frequently refers to his computer during the interview; a high-tech affair beyond the means of anything currently produced on Ariadna. Other items in the room, from the currently transparent view screen on the wall, to the fine art on display, also suggest an appeal for trappings from beyond the horizons of Dawn.

The Branch Chief will inform the characters that a prosperous mining operation and the performance of the company's investments mean that he can pass the wealth on to his employees. In turn, the mine's productivity improves or remains consistent. Given time, he hopes to bring the same stability to the local region, perhaps even the entire country. If asked of his dealings with Chief Lamont, the Branch Chief will insist that he had nothing to do with the man beyond his connection with the Chief's daughter. Jessica informed the Branch Chief that the Chief was jealous of his paternal relationship with her. He

believes this might be why the Chief began digging for dirt that is just simply not there. He's saddened to even think it, but he remembers her raw fury following her last meeting with the Chief; he'd hate to think that she had anything to do with her own father's death.

At some point, the discussion will be interrupted by the Branch Chief's head of security, Harland Mercer (Corporate Security Unit, *Infinity Corebook* p. 427). Harland will inform them that he needs to speak with the Branch Chief about private security concerns, and that he would like for the guests to leave. The Branch Chief will protest and insist the PCs stay, though he will ask them to leave his office.

HARLAND MERCER, CHIEF OPS, DOUBLE EAGLE INDUSTRIES

A cold and disciplined demeanour hides beneath a tailored suit that bulges with muscle. A concealed harness secures his pistol beneath his suit, while a constant connection to the estate's intranet provides him with information from its many security feeds.

Mercer is cold, calculating, and formidable opponent who has dedicated his career to lifting Double Eagle Industries from obscurity into a prominent private security corporation.

PLAYTEST TIP

CRACKING THE BRANCH CHIEF

This is a prime opportunity for the characters to engage in Psywar with the Branch Chief, who has directly pitted himself against their wits at any stage. Be sure they make use of his talents and spend Heat as necessary to empower his rolls. Also feel free to grant the Branch Chief Morale Soak and Intransigence bonuses based on the fact that he is currently entrenched in the seat of his power. The PCs should face an extremely difficult, though not impossible task in cracking his cool façade.



SCENE FOUR: THE PARTY

The PCs will note that they are always shadowed by the Branch Chief's private security as they tour the grounds. Restricted to the main atrium and the party proper, it is soon apparent that they are under constant surveillance. Armed personnel purposefully prevent the players accessing other areas – consider them to benefit from the same Morale Soak and Intransigence as Miles – which leaves the PCs free to interact with the party guests if they do not intend to find another way to leave.

Most of the guests themselves are in awe of the riches and heritage on display at the estate, such as relics from the first days of Dawn's colonization, and swords and tartans taken from famous battles across Caledonia.

Although an extensive guest list is not a requirement, the GM can use this as a perfect opportunity to plant red herrings and false trails. The PCs can make several Persuade rolls to interact with the guests, at a difficulty determined by the GM. If successful, they can learn the following information:

- The Branch Chief does not have many guests to his estate, and is often known to travel to the mine to oversee his business there. Visitors to the mine have never ventured beyond the entry shaft however.

- In truth, Tilda Schaumburg was surprised to be invited to a party in held her honour, as she had not considered themselves to be very close, though she is very grateful of the privilege.
- The private security firm that the Branch Chief seems to have on permanent retainer are not usually associated with such high-class affairs. Their rough reputation is also seemingly at odds with the harmonious vibe emanating from the Morrison mine.
- Jessica left in a furious rush following a conversation with Harland. She clearly heard something she didn't like.

SUBTERFUGE AROUND MORRISON

PCs wishing to leave the atrium can employ several methods to gain access to other parts of the castle, though elements of them all will likely be required both to remain undetected and garner the necessary information:

Face-to-Face Stealth test: Bypasses the guards roaming the hallways and grants access to private corridors. For the guards, use the Spec Ops (Trooper) profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 455.

Face-to-Face Persuade test: Though not impossible, convincing the guards to allow anyone access to

Brannigan Social Network



the castle proper is extremely difficult. Significant bribes may help. The PCs will also require a plausible reason.

Daunting (D3) Hacking test: Allows access to the lobby of the castle's network. Each room of the house is its own quantronic zone. The security command and Branch Chief's office are secured Commercial HighSec zones with a Firewall of 10 and Intrusion Countermeasures. Both are also hidden behind data tunnels.

Accessing the Branch Chief's terminal reveals little, as any files on here are backed up daily in a one-way transmission to a secure server at the mine before being wiped; he seemingly leaves little to chance. An email has been sent within the last hour, however, informing DEI security that they will be receiving guests soon, so a warm welcome should be prepared.

Accessing the security command zone reveals a staff roster that not only details the rotation of DEI employees between Morrison's estate and mines, but also includes routine appointments for language coaching and culture lessons.

While none of these clues expose foul play, they are certainly notable for their peculiarity. Though the player characters have gathered information that the Branch Chief is behaving suspiciously, any attempt to contact the High Command ends with them requesting more information and ordering the player characters to investigate the mines personally. Fortuitously, the Branch Chief himself asks the PCs to apprehend Jessica, who is apparently heading to the mine to meet with other demonstrators and cause mayhem. Harland's interruption Branch Chiefier had been to inform the Branch Chief of Jessica's flight after informing her of their suspicions.

SCENE FIVE: THE BIRD IN A MINE

The PCs are escorted to the Morrison mine – which is located on the Eastern edge of the valley about four kilometres from Brannigan – by two DEI employees. If they gained access to the Branch Chief's email, they might already be suspicious that something is not quite right. Otherwise, permit **Challenging (D2) Analysis** or **Observation tests** to pick up on clues from the guards, such as continually inputting data on comlogs (updating their location) and regularly fingering weaponry. The PCs' best course of action would be to deal with their escorts before approaching the mine. That way, while security will be on alert, it will mean they still have a chance of sneaking beyond the perimeter.

Otherwise, the group are stopped not far from the mine by a group of fallen logs and angry miners. This is a staged ambush, however, that rapidly descends into a gunfight. As soon as the ambush erupts, the DEI escort turn on the PCs.

If the PCs avoided the ambush, security at the mine is on alert (providing them with one bonus Momentum to Observation tests), but slipping in still a possibility. Defeating the ambush places security on high alert; two-man patrols constantly patrol the perimeter security fence with vicious looking guard dogs. Gaining access in the latter case will require violent action.

The actual geography of the exterior surface area and mines are left open to interpretation, as they are composed of typical elements seen often across the centuries of humanity's industrial era. A chain-link fence topped with razor wire secures the surface perimeter, which is split in two places by hardened, double-manned checkpoints – one for entering, one for exiting. The fence forms a 'D' shape with the valley walls to encompass an area some five-hundred metres wide and a kilometre long at the widest points. A fortified guardhouse bolted to the valley wall inside the compound sits atop a wide metal door that provides vehicular access to the secure area of the mines. Apart from a secure fire exit serviced by steel steps, the guardhouse can only be accessed from within the secure area. A second gaping entrance provides access to the less secure mine; though there is plenty of foot traffic in and out of the open entrance, the vehicular flow through either entrance is curiously lacking. The remainder of the surface compound consists of accommodation for the DEI personnel and miners, shipping containers, site manager's office, mining equipment stores, and vehicular parking.

Much like the Branch Chief's party, a combination of infiltration techniques can go a long way to granting the PCs access to certain areas and information:

Face-to-Face Stealth: Allows for a combination of trickery and cunning to get the PCs past the fencing, security cameras, and patrols. At the GMs discretion, Hacking or Tech tests may also be required to circumvent physical security measures, such as keypads and ID scanners.

Face-to-Face Persuade: Caters for the PCs bribing miners into lending them work permits for the unsecure mine. They will also need to provide a very good reason for the miners to even consider risking their livelihoods.

Daunting (D3) Hacking test: All areas of the mine possess quantronic zones similar to the Branch Chief's estate; Echelon upgraded the entire



networks of both as an enticement measure. The surface compound consists of several zones that represent their physical counterparts, with the site manager's office and guardhouse possessing the same traits as the Branch Chief's office (see p. 33). Hacking the guardhouse provides access to the security features and systems of the entire complex – above and below ground – while hacking the site manager's office provides access to the production facilities and safety features of the mines.

The site manager's office contains both a physical and data copy of a staff roster. When cross-referencing this with the security roster, it immediately becomes apparent that the mine is inflating its numbers of personnel, as the DEI – who regulate their own affairs – also appear on the payroll of Morrison Mines. In actuality, much of the mining is automated thanks to advanced technology provided by Echelon, but the Branch Chief is using false employee details attributed to DEI employees to make it appear as though a large manual workforce is still being utilised.

On entering the mines, it is quickly noticeable that the upper levels are largely bereft of personnel, with the few at work more focused on operating or maintaining the Teseum mining machinery than with who is walking the mine. Armed DEI personnel roam both the secure and open mines at regular intervals, with at least four guards located on the upper level. The secure mine is completely sealed from the open mine by high security armoured doors.

THE FORTIFIED COMPLEX

The PCs should quickly realise that whatever is taking place behind the secure doors of the fortified area requires investigating. In addition, they can trace the movements of Jessica's comlog, which also disappears behind the security doors. The entire fortified complex contains its own independent network – which is essentially a repeat of those already encountered – that is used to control the workings and administration of the mine. Currently, any data transfers between exterior networks takes place in physical form to minimise security risks. Though inefficient, Echelon consider the gain more beneficial than the loss until terms for Teseum mining are secured.

SURFACE LEVEL

The surface level of the fortified complex is a huge open cavern consisting of parking bays for large vehicles, long ramps to the third level, personnel lifts for all levels, access to the guardhouse, and stacks of crates containing various electronic and robotic parts. The entire level is well-lit and monitored, making stealth a tricky prospect.

SUB-LEVEL 1

The next level is essentially a floating level of catwalks and gantries that criss-cross above the third level, which is a large open pit approximately one-hundred metres below. Guards regularly patrol the gantries and inspect the offices and billets bolted to the mine walls. The Branch Chief maintains an office here, which includes his own private files and data. Hacking into his files will reveal his depth of treachery, including everything contained within the Background and Operational Summary at the start of the adventure.

Jessica is located within one of the offices, with two DEI personnel standing permanent guard. She is handcuffed to a chair, her nose dripping with blood and eyes swollen shut. Letting their weapons do the talking, the guards waste no time with questions. Jessica is extremely grateful for being rescued. She explains that the Branch Chief ejected her from the party via Harland, although she was swept up by security and brought to the mine. It seems that the intent was for them all to become tragic victims of a violent staged demonstration. This is an opportunity for Jessica to right any wrongs if the players did not talk her down during the confrontation during Scene 2.

SUB-LEVEL 2

The third level is an entirely automated mining floor operated by robotic units. The advanced machines possess sophisticated sensors and drilling equipment capable of efficiently removing the Teseum ore from the walls. The floor currently contains a few maintenance employees, though tread marks indicate that vehicles regularly transit to and from the surface level. The machinery is stamped with the Echelon Mining Consortium logo, while the accents of the maintenance label them as off-worlders. This floor is further proof-positive that the mine is a sham designed to fool others, maximise profit, and further Morrison's control of the Teseum mining industry.

EXIT PROBLEMS

Freeing Jessica will invite new problems, as the fortified area's network detects her movement and triggers an alert as she leaves the office. Hackers connected to the system can detect the trigger with a **Daunting (D3) Analysis test**, and can shut down the alarm with a similar difficulty Hacking test. Although the damage will have been done, the system will no longer track her movements. As soon as the alarm is triggered, the machinery in the mine stops working and goes into emergency mode.

Shouts erupt throughout the chamber as DEI personnel converge on the area and sweep across

HEAT

Refer to the *Raising the Tension* sidebar, p. 35, for additional ideas concerning Heat for this scene.

1 Heat: Stray rounds cause a piece of machinery to explode, showering the area with shrapnel. The blast inflicts 1+3 damage with the Indiscriminate (Close) and Piercing 1 qualities.

2 Heat: The Druze call in some heavy backup in the form of two elite Druze Shock Team members (*Infinity Corebook* p. 433). This Heat spend may only be made once during the Fortified Complex scene.

3 Heat: A catwalk or gantry collapses underfoot. Characters on the affected section must succeed at **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to avoid falling five zones to the floor below.

all three levels. Hackers examining the layout of the fortified complex can attempt a **Challenging (D2) Analysis or Observation test** to pinpoint an emergency shaft that could provide a swift exit to aboveground, which will bypass most of the security guards.

SCENE SIX: ESCAPING TO SAFETY

Depending on whether the PCs have secured copies of Branch Chief Morrison's personal files, escaping to safety should now be the priority. Double Eagle Industries locks down the area around the mine and deploys its troops in a massive manhunt for the players. If Harland is still alive, he will arrive and take charge of the situation personally. Knowing that they cannot allow the operatives to escape with the information they have gained, Echelon deploys a squad of DEI mercenaries in heavy combat gear (Spec Ops, Heavy — *Infinity Corebook* p. 455) to the area with orders to simply eliminate Jessica and the PCs.

Average (D1) Hacking test: Monitoring DEI communications reveals they are blocking all public broadcasts in the area. Overriding the jamming requires access to the exterior surface compound, a **Challenging (D2) Tech** or **Daunting (D3) Hacking test**, and several minutes of tinkering (although Momentum may reduce this.)

Daunting (D3) Hacking or Tech test: Provides access to the fortified compound's lift system and armoured doorways, including the emergency shaft if pinpointed.

The players will need to figure out a way to survive a four-kilometre trip to Brannigan. All public transportation has been suspended, with DEI commandeering vehicles and blocking all major roads. Large trucks and vehicles can be taken from the surface compound, though they serve as painfully slow-moving targets. Making their way back to the city and getting in touch with the Ariadnan military garrison is the only way to ensure protection from Echelon, but only if they can survive. The mercenaries tracking them are trained killers and veterans of numerous off-world campaigns, but the players have their own guide and an advantage in that the mercenaries do not know the terrain that well.

The flight to Brannigan can be resolved through a number of face-to-face tests to avoid discovery, including a combination of skills such as Stealth to hide from patrols, Athletics to outdistance them, or Survival to leave no trail to follow.

THE TREACHERY REVEALED

Escaping back to the city, the players must still make their case with their superiors as to Morrison's true intentions. The players will need to present any and all evidence found. Jessica Lamont will be intent on exposing Branch Chief Morrison as a traitor. Her ire translates to her fellow campaigners, who immediately seek to storm the Branch Chief's estate.

Local media provide continual coverage of fighting in the streets, as soldiers from the Caledonian Volunteer Corps move door-to-door in search of remaining DEI personnel. Most of the mercenaries surrender and many claim ignorance to recent events, but that is of little consequence to the Caledonians who take them prisoner. Several large explosions rumble across the valley in quick succession, with follow-up reports stating that the Morrison Mines have been destroyed in a series of violent explosions. There are claims of natural gas leaks, though most believe it a ploy by the clan to destroy any evidence.

Miles Morrison and the Druze become ghosts. Caledonian troops arrive at Loc Holloway to find the ancestral manse a smouldering wreck, many of its records and relics destroyed. Whispers report that the Volunteer Corps found one only one item intact: the ceremonial sword of the Morrison Clan, defiantly standing point down in the brickwork of the Branch Chief's office.

Miles and his allies become something of a focus for anger for the immediate region, causing protests and rallies to lose momentum. Trust between mine owners and their employees must be rebuilt, with some mediation required; not something the Caledonians are renowned for. The power vacuum left behind by the beheading of two major families has many of the local clans at each other's throats, with many bracing themselves for further suffering. For yourselves, however, the mission is over. A shuttle is en route from Concilium, and your next mission awaits.

With the death of her father, Jessica must also rebuild her family's shattered political strength and hope to reunite the people of Brannigan. The players will find a powerful ally in the form of the Jessica and great respect from their superiors for exposing the corruption. They will also have gained the eternal enmity of both Echelon and the Morrisons.

PLAYTEST TIP

RAISING THE TENSION

The entire escape, from triggering the alarm to reaching Brannigan safely, should be a tense and fraught affair. Plan on building in some Heat spends prior to launching the scene and consider adding Heat to the pool for a pre-specified increment of time that elapses (which can also increase in amount of Heat/decrease in length of time as the scene develops). Also consider some double-bluffs, perhaps in the form of additional miners out seeking Jessica's whereabouts; are they really miners, or more DEI personnel in disguise? Prep ahead a little and keep the tension high!

CHAPTER 4
HUMAN EDGE: AWOL

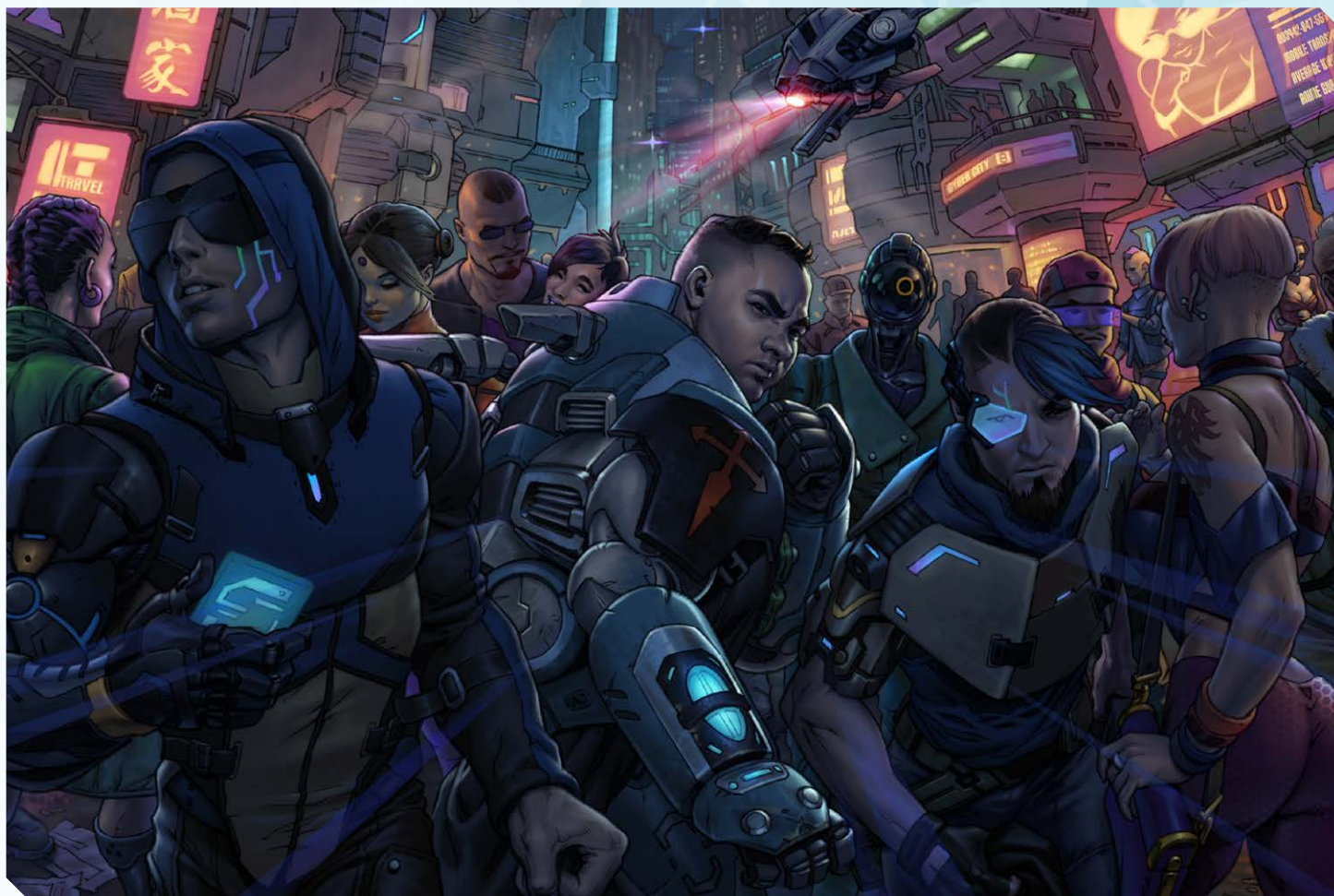
Father-Officer Tomás Álvarez, Knight of Santiago and decorated Bureau Noir agent, is missing. He vanished from the Paradiso front, where he has served with distinction since the Combined Army invasion. Now, weeks since his disappearance, he has been sighted on the Shǒuyè (Night Vigil) Orbital in Human Edge. Shǒuyè is Yu Jing's portal to the Abyss wormhole, and Paradiso beyond it. What is Álvarez doing there?

Álvarez is actually a Yu Jing double agent, and has been since the NeoColonial Wars, when he served in Human Edge on the Santiago strike cruiser *Son of Thunder*. He was ordered to sabotage the ship and relay its position to a waiting Yu Jing squadron. The PanOceanian cruiser was destroyed, Álvarez the only survivor. Now, he has learned that a salvage company called Manta is recovering NeoColonial War wreckage, and *Son of Thunder* is on their list.

OPERATIONAL
SUMMARY

A burst of biometric data from the Shǒuyè Orbital has alerted Bureau Noir to Álvarez's presence on the station. The player characters are quickly dispatched to locate and retrieve him.

Fearing evidence recovered from *Son of Thunder* will blow his cover, Álvarez has returned to Human Edge. He is running an operation to destroy Manta Salvage, fomenting a workers revolt, which will culminate in the bombing of the partially-constructed Manta Salvage Platform. He plans to use the revolt as a cover to slip a software agent into Manta's quantronic network, stealing *Son of Thunder's* location and wiping all evidence of its existence.



Álvarez is aided by the Shōuyè Orbital head of security and clandestine Imperial Agent, Chief Lin Jing-Wei, and a freelance hacker known as Quiver. The PCs may learn some or all of Álvarez's history and plans through these accomplices. Their investigations will eventually lead them to the Manta Salvage Platform in the middle of a full-blown riot, and from there to the wreckage of the *Son of Thunder*.

BACKGROUND

Human Edge is the frontier of human colonisation. Residents live and work in orbitals and asteroid colonies, stripping the system of its immense mineral riches. The system's star, Astraeus, is prone to violent storms that lash the human colonies with deadly radiation.

The scenario takes place in three orbitals close to the Abyss wormhole connecting Human Edge to Paradiso. The Shōuyè (Night Vigil) Orbital is a Yu Jing-owned commercial hub, depopulated since the war broke out on Paradiso. The Monastery-Orbital of Saint Anne is home to the Holy Military Order of the Knights of Santiago, and the place where Father-Officer Álvarez was trained. Finally, the Manta Salvage Platform is a partially-constructed industrial facility.

ÁLVAREZ'S PLAN

When the PCs arrive on Shōuyè, Álvarez has been at work for a few weeks. He has convinced many blue-collar Manta workers that the company is taking shortcuts on safety, and plans to cut their benefits. His claims are supported by forged documents created by the freelance hacker Quiver. With the assistance of Chief Lin Jing-Wei, head of Shōuyè security, he has stolen explosives from a Bannockburn Consolidated Mining ship and stashed them in Shōuyè's Cargo Bay 4. His plan will proceed as follows, unless the players interfere:

Meeting Quiver: Álvarez meets with Quiver in her berth to collect the last of the forged propaganda targeting Manta and an autonomous software agent that will steal the coordinates of the *Son of Thunder* from the Manta datasphere.

Quiver Betrayed: Lin Jing-Wei sends one of her officers (Takenori Hara) to kill Quiver and clean up loose ends. Quiver turns the table on the assassin, smashes all of her equipment, and seeks to flee Shōuyè.

Loading the *Dokkaebi*: Álvarez, disguised as Zareh Willingham, meets with disgruntled Manta workers in Cargo Bay 4 on Shōuyè. He informs them of the plan to riot during the next solar storm of Human

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: Father-Officer Tomás Álvarez's service history with the Knights of Santiago is a mystery. Obtain his service record, without alerting the Knights.

Ariadna: Use the opportunity of a PanOceanian knight onboard a Yu Jing orbital to engineer an international incident, creating the impression that one of the great powers is spying on the other.

Haqqislam/Corporations: Shōuyè is a commercial hub outside the Abyss wormhole, competing with the local caravanserai for trade. The Yu Jing-controlled orbital offers a suite of high-security conference rooms for hire. You are ordered to bug these rooms.

Nomads: The Nomad motherships are hearing rumours of mistreatment of Nomad zero-g construction workers by a company based on Shōuyè: Manta Salvage. Make contact with the workers, and determine if the rumours are true. If so, and at your discretion, call in heavy support from *Corregidor*.

PanOceania: Shōuyè is the closest Yu Jing-controlled orbital to the Abyss wormhole. Imperial Agents must pass through the orbital en route to the Paradiso front. You are supplied with an autonomous software agent, to install in the Yu Jing security network, which will identify these agents. This requires gaining access to the local secure datasphere. A Hacking task determines how effectively the software agent has been hidden.

Yu Jing: It's suspected that Álvarez may be attempting to defect to the Jade Empire. Facilitate that if possible, while ensuring that there is reasonable doubt about his affiliation. (This is a cover story, as the PC lacks clearance to know that Álvarez is already a double agent.)

Submondo: A local hacker operating under the codename "Quiver" has gotten into some sort of trouble and sent out a distress call through submondo channels. She wants help getting off Shōuyè station.

Mercenaries: There are rumours that the Manta Salvage Company, with offices on Shōuyè, has been experiencing workers protests. Try to open the doors for a security contract. (If this requires you to nudge the locals into action, so be it.)

Edge's sun, Astraeus. They load the stolen explosives aboard the fast transport ship *Dokkaebi*.

Manta Riots: Astraeus erupts with an immense solar storm. Álvarez uploads the final pieces of forged propaganda to Maya, announcing to the world that Manta has ordered its workers to continue zero-g operations during the solar storm.

- Riots break out at the Manta Salvage Platform.
- The *Dokkaebi* travels to the Platform. Using the riot as cover, Álvarez leads his squad of Shōuyè security personnel to the Manta command centre. There, he plants the autonomous software agent, steals the location of *Son of Thunder*, and destroys the command centre.

***Son of Thunder*:** Álvarez abandons his supporters, dons his armour, and takes the *Dokkaebi* to the *Son of Thunder* alone.

MINOR ENCOUNTER

SECURITY RESPONSE

If Álvarez or Chief Lin feel the PCs have become a serious threat, they will attempt to deal with it. This can include a squad of Lin Jing-Wei's officers in plainclothes. (Use the stats for elite Police from the *Infinity Corebook*, p. 449.)



ÁLVAREZ'S YU JING TEAM

Chief Lin Jing-Wei has provided Álvarez with a team of four Shōuyè security officers. They are operating under civilian disguises. Use the stats for elite Police from the *Infinity Corebook* (p. 449)

SON OF THUNDER

Once the PCs learn of the *Son of Thunder*, there are any number of ways in which they could learn the official story of what happened to the ship:

- It was destroyed in Human Edge during the First NeoColonial War.
- The ship was attacked by a fleet of six Yu Jing destroyers.
- Father-Knight Álvarez was the only survivor. His escape pod was picked up by the prospecting vessel *Silent Skies*. He later returned to the Monastery-Orbital of Saint Anne, his base of operations during the war, aboard a civilian ship.
- A cursory investigation was conducted by Father Ignacio María Rabal (who is now the Commadore-Abbot in charge of Saint Anne), resulting in Father Álvarez being summarily cleared of any responsibility.

Poking at this story won't reveal anything particularly amiss, but it's also difficult to delve deeper: The *Silent Skies* was registered in Human Edge, but disappeared during the war (presumably as collateral damage). No Yu Jing vessels ever claimed responsibility for the destruction of the *Son of Thunder*. Only the Monastery-Orbital still exists (see *Scene 3*).

FATHER-OFFICER TOMÁS ÁLVAREZ

APPEARANCE

Short, stocky, and powerful. Buzz-cut greying hair. Skin so smooth it suggests reconstructive surgery.

ROLEPLAYING

- Demeanour shifts rapidly, from friendly jocularity to stern command.
- Makes regular physical contact: clapping shoulders, shaking hands, touching the people he is talking with.
- Never stays long. Connects people, plants ideas, then makes his excuses and leaves.

BACKGROUND

Álvarez is a decorated Knight of Santiago, an experienced Bureau Noir operative, and a Yu Jing double agent. His treasonous actions during the First NeoColonial War have finally come back to haunt him. A month ago, Álvarez received word through his long-dormant Yu Jing network that the wreck of the *Son of Thunder* had been found by a salvage company. He immediately set out for Human Edge, to clear away any incriminating evidence and free himself to continue his crusade against the alien invaders on Paradiso.

Additional biographical details on Álvarez can be found in the *Mission Briefing*, p. 39

KEY INFO

- He has disguised himself as zero-g demolitions worker Zareh Willingham, and joined the Manta Salvage workforce.
- If apprehended by the PCs, Álvarez will not necessarily immediately fight. He is a consummate Bureau Noir operative, and a long-term double agent. He will play on gaps in the player characters' understanding of the situation, poke at conflicts within the team, and offer a legitimate explanation for his return to the *Son of Thunder*.
- Álvarez's Story: The *Son of Thunder* was sabotaged by an early Combined Army incursion, decades before their invasion of Paradiso. Manta Salvage has been compromised by the Combined Army and are trying to retrieve their hibernating saboteur on the ship.
- If confronted with evidence of his Yu Jing connections, Álvarez may attempt to claim he's actually working as a triple agent.

TROOPER

FR-OFFICER TOMÁS ÁLVAREZ

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	9	13	8	10	12	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+5	2	Movement	+2	2	Social	+3	3
Fortitude	+3	3	Senses	+1	—	Technical	—	—

DEFENCES

Firewall	10	Resolve	15	Vigour	16
Security	—	Morale	4	Armour	5

ATTACKS

- **Teseum Sword:** Melee, 1+11 (N), Unbalanced, Piercing 2, Parry 2, Vicious 1
- **Combi Rifle:** Range C/M, 1+6 (N), Burst 2, 2H, Expert 1, Vicious 1

GEAR: Military Order Powered Combat Armour[PanOceania] + Tactical Scabbard for blade, D-Charges

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Menacing 2:** When Álvarez enters the scene in his Powered Armour, immediately add 2 points to the Heat pool.
- **Master Manipulator:** Álvarez generates an additional 2 Momentum on Persuade tests.
- **Bureau Noir Tactics:** Álvarez is a seasoned Bureau Noir agent. He gains 2 bonus Momentum on tests to spot ambushes or resist manipulation by Bureau Noir agents. In addition, he gains +2 (N) on Psywar attacks against Bureau Noir agents.
- **Sword of the Spirit:** Álvarez can reroll up to 3 (N) when making a melee attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, each point of Heat or Momentum spent to gain additional dice for a Close Combat test provides two d20s, instead of one. Finally, when making an attack with the Close Combat skill, each point of Momentum spent to deal bonus damage adds two points of damage, instead of one.

NOTES: Álvarez's Powered Armour's Exoskeleton 3 quality is factored into his weapon damage. Outside of his armour, reduce the damage by 3 (N).

PLAYTEST TIP

REASONABLE DOUBT

This mission works best if the players are genuinely unsure what to think about Álvarez's disappearance. Is he pursuing a personal mission or vendetta?

Is he being manipulated, or forced to act against orders? Could he have been replaced by an impersonator, or even a Speculo Killer? Is he acting on legitimate Bureau Noir business that he cannot report to his superiors for some reason?

MISSION BRIEFING

The Player Characters receive their briefing as an encrypted burst transmission. The message is provided as the handout on this page, which can be given to the Players.

< SECURITY CLEARANCE VERIFIED >

ENCRYPTED BRIEFING BEGINS >>

One month ago, Father-Officer Tomás Álvarez agent of Bureau Noir, disappeared from his post on Paradiso without warning or prior approval. His whereabouts since that time are unknown.

Nineteen hours ago, O-12 automated monitoring received a **biometric reading** indicating that Álvarez was on **Shōuyè**

Location: Human Edge, Shōuyè (Night Vigil) Orbital, Yu Jing controlled Abyss Wormhole proximity

No subsequent data have been received. Either Álvarez is still on Shōuyè, or the data are being tampered with.

Be aware: Álvarez is a skilled Bureau Noir agent, and a Knight of Santiago with considerable **combat experience**

OBJECTIVES >>

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

Locate Father-Officer Tomás Álvarez.
Bring him in for debriefing.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

Determine the reason for Father-Officer Tomás Álvarez's disappearance.
Verify that his actions since disappearance do not pose a security risk.

<< ENCRYPTED BRIEFING ENDS

SUMMARY OF BUREAU NOIR PERSONNEL ASSESSMENT

- First class close quarters fighter, both on the ground and in zero-g
- Command experience, in both naval and intelligence contexts
- Quantronic skills identified as below average

< ÁLVAREZ, TOMAS >

DATE OF BIRTH: 1 OCT 22 NC

PLACE OF BIRTH: Saint Anfarth Workers Collective, Human Edge

Orphaned

INDUCTED: 4 APR 37 NC

Location: Monastery-Orbital of Saint-Anne, Human Edge

AGE AT ENTRANCE: 15 YRS. 11 MOS.

SERVICE NO. 67-A-8945

BALLEI	FROM	TO	RANK
Human Edge	5 APR 37	8 OCT 37	Novice
			Mentor: Ignacio Maria Rabal, current Commodore-Abbot at Monastery-Orbital of Saint-Anne
	9 OCT 37	5 MAY 38	Squire, 3rd Class
Earth	6 MAY 38	27 DEC 40	Squire, 2nd Class
			Ribbon: Commendation of Piety
	28 DEC 40	18 MAY 41	Squire, 1st Class
Human Edge	19 MAY 41	5 AUG 42	Squire, 1st Class
	6 AUG 42	3 MAR 43	Father-Knight
			Service medal: Second NeoColonial War
Neoterra	3 MAR 43	7 JAN 44	Father-Knight
Sol	8 JAN 44	17 SEP 44	Father-Knight
			Service medal: Final NeoColonial War Service record classified by Hexahedron
Varuna	18 SEP 44	28 APR 45	Father-Knight
Paradiso	29 APR 45	15 JUN 51	Father-Officer
			Service medal: First NeoColonial War Medal: Cross of Naval Commendation
	16 JUN 51	INACTIVE	Honourably released from active duty
			Medal: Cross of Meritorious Service List of career commendations and medals
Earth	5 FEB 55	31 DEC 58	Father-Instructor
	1 JAN 59	INACTIVE	Honourably discharged

59 NC: Recruited by Bureau Noir.

60 NC: Transferred to Paradiso during **First Offensive**

Classified: Bureau Noir Service Record: double alpha plus

SUMMARY OF BUREAU NOIR PERSONNEL ASSESSMENT



PLAYTEST TIP TRAVELLING INCOGNITO

Chief Lin Jing-Wei keeps a careful eye on all traffic aboard Shōuyè. If the player characters attempt to travel incognito, their cover identities will be carefully scrutinised when they arrive. The GM can also spend a point of Heat to probe their identities again, if the player characters undertake any public activities.

SCENE ONE: ARRIVAL AT SHŌUYÈ ORBITAL

Shōuyè is a string of connected pods and cubes, wrapped around itself like a folded protein. It looks vaguely organic. Inside, this impression disappears entirely. Shōuyè protects itself from Astraeus' intense storms in the simplest way possible: with layer upon layer of radiation shielding. There are no windows, no vistas of space. In an attempt to enliven the environment, every surface is plastered with flexiscreens, neon graffiti, flickering signs and advertisements.

The agents are greeted in the Shōuyè Orbital entry hall by Chief Lin Jing-Wei, head of station security. Polite but cold, she welcomes the PCs, but does not volunteer any additional support. If asked, she claims not to know Álvarez, or his whereabouts.

At the earliest opportunity, Chief Lin shows the agents to quarters she has reserved for them, in the diplomatic sector. She then makes her excuses – important station duties – and leaves.

CHIEF LIN JING-WEI

APPEARANCE

Surprisingly tall. Her station security uniform is immaculately turned out – the flashing lights of Shōuyè's public spaces glint off her shining buttons and rank insignia.

ROLEPLAYING

- Wears a look of frowning concentration.
- Expects to be obeyed; if not, responds angrily.
- Appears to have a remarkably cosmopolitan attitude to foreigners aboard her Orbital; in actual fact, this is precisely because foreigners are her targets.

BACKGROUND

Lin Jing-Wei is a low-ranking member of the Imperial Agent Section. Lacking political connections, her chances of advancing beyond the Zhànyīng rank are vanishingly small. Nevertheless, she seeks to prove herself through diligent service.

Chief Lin was born on Shentang, and transferred to Human Edge to take up her current post. She is rigid but fair with her staff, and they have grown to trust her, if not exactly love her. Aside from maintaining station security, her role is to pass information that may be relevant to the Imperial Agent Section up the chain of command, and to support any operatives passing through the Orbital.

NEMESIS

CHIEF LIN JING-WEI

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	12	8	10	11	8	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	–	Movement	+2	–	Social	+3	2
Fortitude	+3	1	Senses	+4	3	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	12	Resolve	15	Vigour	11
Security	4	Morale	–	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- Standard Pistol Range C, 1+6 damage, Burst 1, 1H, Close Quarters, Vicious 1

GEAR: Analysis Suite, Armoured Clothing, Comlog, Security Cuffs

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Eye in the Sky:** Chief Lin is the head of Shōuyè station security. Her sensors cover the entire station. Spend 1 Heat to have at least one sensor in the current scene, allowing her to use her Analysis Suite.
- **Imperial Agent:** Chief Lin's data is locked behind high grade encryption. This grants her Security 4.
- **Station Security (1 Heat):** A chief of security, Lin can rapidly summon station security. Instead of their usual cost, she can spend 1 Heat to summon two Trooper or one Elite reinforcement. (Use stats for trooper or elite Police from the *Infinity Corebook*, p. 449.)

She is deeply curious about Álvarez – his purpose in Human Edge, and what the Son of Thunder means to him. Nevertheless, she is rigidly loyal, and does not ask questions that she considers beyond her remit.

KEY INFO

- Knows that Álvarez is a Yu Jing agent, operating on board the station under the alias Zareh Willingham.
- Is aware that Álvarez has some connection to the *Son of Thunder*, via a standing order in the Imperial Agent Section to report any mentions of the vessel.
- Has supplied Álvarez with station security access codes, and four loyal security officers to act as his personal squad.
- Is covering up the theft of Bannockburn Consolidated Mining explosives on behalf of Álvarez. She knows that they have simply been shuffled into an incorrectly-labelled storage closet in Cargo Bay 4.
- Will not allow access to Yu Jing's security servers under any circumstances. (She doesn't want Quiver's tampering to be discovered.)

LOCAL GOSSIP

Characters investigating the orbital for any unusual activity can make an **Average (D1) Persuade test**. On a success, they glean one of the following pieces of

information, plus one additional piece of information per Momentum spent:

- There is a protest at Manta Salvage headquarters, in the Shǒuyè commercial sector. Workers are harassing Manta executives as they enter and leave, about labour and safety conditions. The protest leader is a man named Zareh Willingham. It is unusual that station authorities haven't put an end to it.
- A week ago, a large quantity of mining explosives was stolen. Despite angry petitioning from Bannockburn Consolidated Mining, station security Chief Lin Jing-Wei doesn't seem to be particularly interested in investigating the theft.
- The Abyss wormhole is about to be permanently closed by an ALEPH super-weapon, or it's about to be breached by a Combined Army battle fleet, or StateEmpire-sanctioned smugglers are using it to sneak stolen Combined Army artefacts, or....
- The *Pride of Victoria*, a mining exploration ship, has disappeared. Shǒuyè was its last known port of call.

SCENE TWO: SHǒUYÈ ORBITAL SECURITY

To extract any information from Shǒuyè Orbital – its datasphere, or its security offices – the agents will need to break and enter.

SHǒUYÈ SECURITY NETWORK

Penetrating the Shǒuyè security network can allow PCs to lay bare many of the secrets of the conspiracy confronting them.

SYSTEM AUTHENTICATION

There are four pertinent authentications active on Shǒuyè network.

- Security Agents have basic User authentication. They can use the access points on their comlog (Zone 10) to access the Security Mainframe (Zone 3), Station Monitoring (Zone 5), and the Security Cameras (Zone 6).
- Chief Lin has Superuser authentication. She has complete access to the entire system.
- Guo Shi Kwan has Admin authentication, but cannot access Chief Lin's personal files (Zone 8).

- Father-Knight Álvarez has limited access. He can log into the Security Mainframe (Zone 3), but can only access the Security Cameras (Zone 6).

ADVERSARIES

There is a **Security LAI** constantly monitoring the system (use LAI stats from the *Infinity Corebook*, p. 443). Assume it's in a random zone at the beginning of any hack.

Guo Shi Kwan is the local infooperator (use the stats for an Evo Trooper from the *Infinity Corebook*, p. 433). There's a 25% chance he's actively monitoring the system at any given time, and he'll immediately log in if the LAI summons him or any other alert is sounded.

NETWORK MAP

General Features: Every zone except Zone 1 has Commercial HighSec (granting +2  Interference Soak to users with proper authentication).

Zone 1 – Maya Portal: This is the public portal for station security. It has press releases, contact information, functions for reporting emergencies, and the like.

- **Access Point:** As a public portal, this zone is easy to access from the orbital's datasphere.

Zone 2 – Security Gateway (Secured: Firewall 8): The station security network is heavily protected from outside intrusion.

Zone 3 – Security Mainframe: This is the central hub of the Shǒuyè security network.

- **IC-1 Crybaby:** If a check to penetrate the Crybaby fails, it notifies the Security LAI.
- **Data Tunnel to Dock Management:** This data tunnel has been hidden, requiring an **Average (D1) Analysis test** to detect.

Zone 4 – Authentication Server (Firewall 15): As a Breach Effect, this server can issue valid authentication for the Shǒuyè security network.

- **IC-2 Crybaby:** If a check to penetrate this Crybaby fails, it notifies the Security LAI and Guo Shi Kwan.

Zone 5 – Station Monitoring (Firewall 6): All the data collected from Shǒuyè security scanners is stored here, including biometric data.

- **Conference Room Bugs:** Carefully-indexed recordings of meetings from the Shǒuyè conference rooms reveal that Chief Lin has them bugged. An **Analysis (D1) test** notes that one code has been tagged with an unusual code: A delegation of Knights of Santiago (Commodore-Abbot Rabal, accompanied by Brothers Quinn and Cotsios) met with representatives from Manta Salvage (led by Choice Lennert, Manta

MINOR ENCOUNTER UNION THUGS

The Manta Salvage workers are touchy, and used to oppressive Yu Jing security. If they notice the players poking around their protest, they may leap to the conclusion that they're secret police, and take measures to stop them. If Álvarez has learned that the players are pursuing him, he'll encourage violent action.

SECURITY PERSONNEL

The Shǒuyè security offices are typically guarded by a squad of five people. Use elite Police from the *Infinity Corebook*, p. 449.

The Shǒuyè security network is monitored by one sysop, with two others on call if backup is required. Use the Wardriver from p. 461 of the *Infinity Corebook*, equipped with Defensive Hacking Devices.

PLAYTEST TIP CONFERENCE ROOM BUGS

If the player characters attempt to install bugs in the Shǒuyè conference rooms they will immediately discover Chief Lin Jing-Wei's listening devices. They provide an access point to the station security network (via Node 5 – Station Monitoring), and can be identified as Yu Jing-made with **Average (D1) Tech** or **Thievery tests**.



- Quiver's Software Agent: An Average (D1) Analysis**
test (either while deliberately scanning the system or as part of any attempt to access the biometric data) detects Quiver's software agent. Spending 1 Momentum also identifies what the agent is doing (monitoring and deleting Álvarez' biometric data) and also detects it is attempting to transmit data (the system on the other end appears to be down, but can be traced to a physical location—*Scene Four: Quiver's Quarters*). The agent can be deactivated with an **Average (D1) Hacking test**, in which case the station will again start registering Álvarez (although the data will be associated with "Zareh Willingham").

- **Access Point:** Every security camera on Shǒuyè provides a potential access point.

Zone 8 – Chief Lin (Secured: Firewall 6): Lin Jing-Wei's partition is encrypted. An **Average (D1) Analysis test** recognizes the codes as belonging to the Yu Jing Imperial Agent Section. Without access to the codes, decrypting her system is a **Daunting (D3) Analysis task**. (On a success, see sidebar.)

- **Quiver's Data Tunnel:** This automatically bypasses the IC-3 Crybaby, and is only accessible if Quiver's system has been reassembled.

Accounts belonging to security personnel assigned to assist Álvarez will have communication logs indicating that those orders came from Chief Lin.

- **Access Point:** Comlogs carried by security personnel (including Chief Lin) provide potential access points to the security network.

- **Challenging (D2) Analysis:** The manifests have been tampered with. All data on Docking Bay 4 has been deleted, and the bay itself is marked as “Under Maintenance”. (This is where Álvarez’ ship, the *Dokkaebi*, is berthed and the stolen explosives are hidden.) The equipment for detecting explosives in Docking Bay 4 have also been shut off.

Chief Lin's office is located in a secured bubble a short distance from the main docks. Breaking in is relatively straightforward – a **Challenging (D2) Thievery test** bypasses any physical security measures. Doing so without being detected is much harder, requiring **Daunting (D3) Stealth tests**.

AR Projectors: Small AR projectors turn the left-hand wall into a floor-to-ceiling security feed. This feed provides an alternative access to Chief Lin's system (Node 7 in the Shōuyè Security Network) with an **Average (D1) Hacking** or **Tech test**. The passive display lists recent security directives, with two unusual orders particularly notable:

- An order cancelling the investigation into theft of explosives from Bannockburn Consolidated Mining.
- An order to avoid Berth 547. Any reports relating to that berth are to be passed directly to Chief Lin. (This is *Scene Four: Quiver's Berth*.)

SCENE THREE: THE MONASTERY-ORBITAL

The Monastery-Orbital of Saint Anne is a dirty grey rock hanging in space, remarkable on the outside only for its high degree of fortification. Inside, however, utilitarian simplicity gives way to the menacing grandeur of a gothic church. The ceiling in the receiving hall stretches above you, the walls lined with gigantic screens that project vast, empty views of space. Occasionally, a majestic PanOceanian naval vessel drifts across the view.

The Monastery-Orbital of Saint Anne is a major orbital belonging to the Holy Military Order of the Knights of Santiago. It is heavily fortified and defended by a trio of strike cruisers. Provided the players make a persuasive case, and mention Álvarez by name, they'll be able to arrange a meeting with the Commodore-Abbot of the Monastery himself.

Álvarez' Service Record: Álvarez' local service record can be obtained from Commodore-Abbot Rabal, theft, or hacking. (The latter should require appropriate **Challenging (D2) skill tests**.) This record expands somewhat on Álvarez's specific activities when he was stationed on the Monastery-Orbital during the First NeoColonial War. Notable incidents include:

- Spent two months in a one-man fighter in the Taoist Trojans, tracking Yu Jing military transport routes.
- Sole survivor of the loss of the *Son of Thunder* strike cruiser to a Yu Jing attack fleet.
- Heroic rescue operations during Operation Yama's Fury, during which he saved more than one hundred officers from the *Amphisbaena* attack fleet.
- Single-handedly saved Captain Carvalho from Assassins in the PanOceanian embassy on the Avro-Kaizuka Orbital.

COMMODORE-ABBOT IGNACIO MARIA RABAL

APPEARANCE

Aged, bald, skin pocked, and eyes milky with radiation damage. Walks with the strength and purpose of a much younger man.

ROLEPLAYING

- Remains standing and still the whole time.
- Speaks of Álvarez with fondness, and of Yu Jing with venom.
- Is prone to meandering anecdotes, but delivers them in a tone that suggests what he's saying is important, not vague and half-remembered.

BACKGROUND

Commodore-Abbot Ignacio María Rabal has served virtually his entire career in the Monastery-Orbital of Saint Anne. He has fought in various wars in the service of his Order, but has always leaned towards teaching and proselytising. He leads the Monastery now not so much as a reward for excellence, but for dogged commitment. Rabal likes to keep track of his former acolytes throughout their careers.

KEY INFO

- A delegation from the Monastery met with representatives of **Manta Salvage** on board Shōuyè some weeks ago to negotiate salvage rights for the *Son of Thunder*. Rabal led the delegation, accompanied by two bureaucrats: Brother Quinn and Brother Cotsios.
- During the meeting on Shōuyè, a Santiago security specialist detected an active bug in the conference room. Rabal is furious about this, blaming Yu Jing authorities. He has filed a formal complaint, but the security chief – **Lin Jing-Wei** – denies everything. Rabal suspects she is a Yu Jing spy. He has no evidence, only vitriol, to back up his claim.
- Rabal is happy to talk about Álvarez, and his service with the Knights of Santiago. Rabal trained the young Álvarez himself, and considers him to be an exemplary Knight. He has followed Álvarez's career on Paradiso with interest.

SCENE FOUR: QUIVER'S BERTH

Quiver's quarters are Berth 547 on Shōuyè. The door is unlocked.

The berth is cramped, and it is a mess. It's clear there has been a struggle here – pieces of quantronic hardware are strewn across the room,

CHIEF LIN'S COMMS

Those accessing Chief Lin's communication logs can discover:

- She has been in regular communication with Álvarez, even prior to his arrival on the station.
- Álvarez is clearly issuing the orders and Lin is obeying.
- She has ordered the assassination of Quiver.
- Álvarez requested that the recordings between Manta Salvage and Commodore-Abbot Rabal of the Monastery-Orbital of Saint Anne regarding the *Son of Thunder* be deleted.
- Lin is covering up the presence of the *Dokkaebi* in Docking Bay 4. She has also shut off the explosive detectors in that Docking Bay.

HEAT

2 Heat: A pop-up turret concealed behind a wall panel in Chief Lin's office activates, spraying bullets across the room. Use stats for an ArmBot (*Infinity Corebook*, p. 362) armed with a light machinegun.



PLAYTEST TIP

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

The PCs may jump to the conclusion that the corpse is, in fact, Quiver.

MINOR ENCOUNTER

AMBUSH INTERRUPTED

If the PCs move quickly, they might reach Quiver's quarters just as Lin Jing-Wei's man is attempting to kill her. Use the stats for a SWAT Officer (*Infinity*, p. 449) for the attacker and a Wardriver (*Infinity*, p. 461) for Quiver.

QUIVER'S DATA

Data Tunnel: Quiver used Yu Jing security codes to snoop on Lin Jing-Wei's communications.

This can be used as a data tunnel to Zone 8 of the *Shōuyè Security Network* (p. 42)

Forged Documents: A large collection of forged Manta Salvage documents, including internal communiqués about lowering safety standards and plans to cut worker entitlements. One of these forgeries details plans to force workers to do zero-g work during the dangerous solar storms that are common in Human Edge.

Movement Records: A copy of the software agent used to delete Álvarez' biometric data from the Shōuyè monitors.

Quiver has duped this biometric data and stored it in an Arachne data cache. This provides a complete record of Álvarez' movements back and forth from Shōuyè and the Manta Salvage Platform.

HEAT

1 Heat: At precisely the wrong moment, a passer-by spots the player characters going over the chaos in Quiver's quarters.

coolant gel for the high-powered processors smeared over a desk and down a wall, chairs overturned and dishes smashed. Slumped in the corner is the corpse of a slim man, wearing rags that mark him as one of the station's underclass. His blood pools around his body.

Corpse: The corpse is a slim man of Japanese descent, wearing ragged clothing typical of the station's underclass. Inside his rags, he carries a comlog that identifies him as station security officer Takenori Hara.

- **Average (D1) Medicine:** Officer Hara has been involved in a struggle and was killed by blunt force trauma to the head.

Hardware: Quiver's quantronic hardware is a mess, scattered across the room.

- **Average (D1) Analysis:** The equipment was deliberately damaged before the struggle.
- **Repair — Challenging (D2) Tech:** Even after the equipment is reassembled and scanned, Quiver's data is heavily fragmented, requiring an **Average (D1) Hacking test** to recover one piece of information, plus one additional piece of information per Momentum spent (see 'Quiver's Data' sidebar for details).

Search — Average (D1) Observation: A heavy, old-fashioned pistol lies under some overturned bedding near the corpse. There is blood on the pistol's grip — a further **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** can determine it was used to bludgeon Officer Hara to death. The pistol is not a standard issue Yu Jing sidearm. (Quiver took Hara's weapon.)

QUIVER

Edith "Quiver" Everhart is a freelance hacker who has been working on board Shōuyè for years. Through contacts in the Judicial Corps, Chief Lin Jing-Wei has long known that the hacker was aboard. When Álvarez arrived on station in need of hacking expertise, Lin Jing-Wei sent him to Quiver.

Quiver has not survived so long by being trusting. While she carried out the tasks Álvarez hired her for, she took advantage of her access to the Yu Jing security network to poke around. What she learned frightened her — Álvarez clearly wasn't some run-of-the-mill workers' rights agitator.

She set in place plans to flee the station, and sabotaged her own software agent to alert whoever Álvarez was attempting to hide from. Her hope was that this would distract him long enough for her to slip away. When Lin Jing-Wei sent an officer to have her murdered, at Álvarez's insistence, Quiver was ready: She bested the assassin and fled the station.

SCENE FIVE: MANTA SALVAGE PLATFORM

The Manta Salvage Platform looks like a spear thrust into the heart of a dead starship. A long spine stabs downwards, ringed with partially-constructed habitat modules and storage sheds, surrounded by the scattered debris of construction and demolition. At the point of the spear, the hulk of a bulk freighter lies torn open. Space-suited workers crawl over the ruin, stripping away valuable components with high-powered cutting lasers and explosives.

The central spine of the Manta Salvage Platform consists of four elevators: two large cargo elevators, and two smaller lifts for transporting personnel. The spine is also ringed with ladders, useful in the event of lift failures.

Interconnected modules are haphazardly attached up and down the spine, many only partially-assembled. They include Spartan living quarters for the zero-g workers, equipment storage, workshops and vehicle garages, and docking connections for transport ships and salvage projects. Identifying which is which is practically impossible from outside; inside, maps and signs have been stencilled onto steel bulkheads in luminescent paint.

At the top of the spine is a two-tiered hexagonal structure. The bottom level contains offices and living quarters for platform management. The top level is the command centre: an open-plan hexagonal room, surrounded on all sides by long windows. A tower of quantronic processors fills the centre of the room. (If a solar storm is underway, blast shields will slide down to cover the windows, and the command centre will be lit with an eerie red glow.)

MANTA CHIEF OF OPERATIONS

If the player characters make official contact with Manta, they will reach the Chief of Operations, Choice Lennert.

CHOICE LENNERT, MANTA CHIEF OF OPS

APPEARANCE

A solid woman in a Manta Salvage jumpsuit. Bags under her eyes and a cloud of hair. Nothing about her suggests comfort in zero-g.

ROLEPLAYING

- Nervous and suspicious; jumps at loud noises.
- Questions everything, including things that seem obvious.
- Shadowed at all times by a mercenary bodyguard.

BACKGROUND

Lennert had been on the road to success. Manta Salvage exploration ships were turning up all sorts of valuable salvage. Suddenly, though, everything is going wrong. The workforce, previously tolerant of teething problems associated with any new start-up, has started acting as if Manta is deliberately exploiting them. The situation on the platform is tense; Lennert has even gone so far as to hire a private security contractor. She's scared, and she has no idea how it has gotten so bad, so fast.

KEY INFO

- The workers are protesting on a series of incorrect assumptions about Manta's plans for its workforce. Documents and communiqués purporting to be from Manta management keep appearing, making all sorts of wild claims. They're all fake, but no one listens when Lennert says so.
- Key members of Manta management, including Lennert, have been receiving death threats. (These have been sent anonymously by Quiver, at Álvarez's request.)
- The agitator at the core of the worker protests is a demolitions expert named Zareh Willingham. He's a recent recruit, who has been nothing but trouble, but Lennert can't risk firing him now.
- If asked, Lennert can pull up the location of the *Son of Thunder*.

ARRIVAL

As the PCs arrive, warning lights will be flashing near any airlock and the local AR will be tinged red with warnings that *Astraeus* is experiencing heavy solar flare activity and no one should exit the station due to the radiation hazard. They may also witness of large group of union protesters shouting slogans: "Solar Storm, Down Tools!", "Union Strong!", "Honor Thy Contract!", and the like.

RIOT

At some point during the solar storm (ideally while the PCs are on the station, but not necessarily), Álvarez will put his plan into motion. Unless interfered with, events will play out largely as Álvarez intends:

- The *Dokkaebi* docks with the Manta Salvage Platform.
- Álvarez uploads Quiver's agent into the Manta datasphere. In addition to seeking out and copying the location of the *Son of Thunder*, it begins implementing a variety of subversion activities.
- "Zareh Willingham" gives a stirring speech to the dock protestors, urging them to "stay strong" against a "corporation out of control". With four Yu Jing security officers disguised as workers, "Zareh" commandeers a crew elevator and begins riding towards the command centre.
- The local AR suddenly announces to everyone on the platform that workers are ordered to immediately resume their duties (despite the solar storm). Harsh penalties are promised for those who disobey.
- On the docks the protest turns riotous. Private security forms up at key positions, sealing the protest in.
- Álvarez triggers the explosives he's planted around the base of the platform. The bottom of the station "snaps", sending it spinning away from the ship it was salvaging.
- Álvarez arrives in the command centre. There, using stolen access keys, he's able to authorise Quiver's software agent to wipe Manta's datasphere.
- In the confusion, the dock workers overwhelm station security and the riot spills out into the station. (It is also fuelled by independent agitators throughout the platform.)
- Álvarez leaves the command centre, returns to the *Dokkaebi*, and leaves the station.
- Additional explosions rock the station coupled with power failures caused by Quiver's software agent. Eventually power fails entirely, the platform is lost, and a haphazard evacuation ensues.

SCENE SIX: SON OF THUNDER

Play the approach for quiet menace. Active sensors paint their AR with the wreck from the distance. Once they are near, emphasise the size of the strike cruiser, the darkness out here in the depths of space, and the destruction all around. The debris field is large – frozen bodies and shattered bulkheads.

SCENARIO THREAD

HACKER AT LARGE

Although Quiver flees Shōuyè, the PCs will likely become familiar with her digital fingerprint. Therefore, she can make an excellent antagonist to bring back in subsequent missions, either as a friend or a foe.

HEAT

2 Heat: Solar storms in the Human Edge are extremely dangerous, flooding the system with hard radiation. If the PCs are in an unshielded or damaged section of the station, their comlogs will scream radiation warnings at them. Treat any zones in the area as Radiation 1.

HEAT DURING THE RIOT

Evoking the riot for your players is about swirling its chaotic events around them. Use the following Heat spends to induce havoc:

0 Heat: An injured worker needs help.

1 Heat: Announcements from Chief Lennert play over the local AR, adding +1 difficulty to Observation tests related to hearing.

1 Heat: The local power goes out.

1 Heat per NPC: A corridor is blocked off by either security or rioters.

2 Heat: PCs are mistaken for rioters by security; or as security by rioters.

2 Heat per zone: The evacuation klaxons go off. Panicking rioters create zones of difficult terrain.

3 Heat: Hull breach.



Manta Salvage Buoys: Automated transmitters ring the wreckage, announcing Manta Salvage's claim. Some of the buoys have been destroyed along one approach vector. (Álvarez blew them apart on his approach; he plans to destroy the rest before he leaves.)

Escape Pods: The area is littered with dozens of escape pods. In direct contravention of the Concilium Convention, they have been systematically destroyed, killing their occupants.

- **Scanning – Average (D1) Analysis:** A beacon pings very faintly on a Yu Jing emergency channel. Following the signal leads to an undamaged escape pod, its airlock swung open. There are no bodies inside. (This is the pod Álvarez used to escape.)

Son of Thunder – Average (D1) Analysis: The cruiser was destroyed by weapons fire. It is breached in numerous places and its spine is cracked.

- If Álvarez arrived first, the *Dokkaebi* is docked towards the rear of the cruiser and readings indicate internal power has been restored to some section of the cruiser.
- **1 Momentum:** There is a breach towards the rear of the *Son of Thunder*, near its engines. Hull damage indicates this hole was punched from inside the ship. (This is the result of Álvarez's bomb.)

docking port, located towards the rear of the ship. A general schematic is provided below.

There is no artificial gravity or atmosphere inside the wreck. Suits are required, and Extraplanetary tests for any dangerous activity. If Álvarez has arrived first, there will be some signs of power: a flickering light, or a screen displaying damage reports.

The signs of battle are everywhere: cracked bulkheads, blast doors slammed shut, shattered screens and buckled corridors. Everything is covered in a layer of sparkling frost – the ship's atmosphere, flash frozen.

Álvarez's Berth: There are two bodies, one inside the berth and one in the corridor outside. The interior of his quarters is strewn with a variety of technical equipment.

- **Bodies – Average (D1) Medicine:** Both were run through with a sword, decades ago. (They were security officers sent to detain Álvarez.)
- **Equipment – Average (D1) Tech:** The material here is the leftovers from constructing a large bomb. There is also a burned-out, single-use device that can be identified as a powerful squawk designed to transmit a pre-arranged signal with enough power to alert anyone listening on a specific frequency within a million kilometres.

Bridge: The nerve centre of the *Son of Thunder* was a two-tiered structure. Below, Knights worked at battle, piloting, sensor, and engineering stations. A circular platform jutted over it, holding the command staff in their acceleration couches. Now, however, the bridge has been cracked open to the vacuum of space. The command platform is sheared through, smashing to the lower deck and now floating. Debris spirals lazily through the air. The captain, still resplendent in his powered armour, lies dead in his command couch.

- **Black Box:** Álvarez's primary target is the ship's black box, installed in the captain's chair. Removing the black box requires a **Challenging (D2) Tech test**. Accessing the data on it requires a **Challenging (D2) Hacking test**.

Engineering: This section has suffered serious damage, focused on the engines.

- **Average (D1) Tech:** The damage was done by an explosive set off inside engineering, not from external weapons fire.

Medbay: The medbay is chaotic, filled with bodies that clearly arrived in a rush.

- **Average (D1) Medicine or Challenging (D2) Observation:** Out of all the casualties, one body was stored in the morgue. An **Average (D1) Medicine test** determines that this body was

MINOR ENCOUNTER DEATH

For 2 Heat, frozen bodies bounce off the forward screens of the PCs' ship. An **Average (D1) Discipline test** is required to avoid 2+3 Resolve damage. Suffering a Metatonia inflicts the Dazed status.

EXPLORING THE SHIP

Player characters can enter the *Son of Thunder* virtually anywhere – even the shattered forward bridge. The most convenient entry is a hangar or

BETRAYAL OF THE SON OF THUNDER

This is the true story of how the *Son of Thunder* was destroyed.

Engines Destroyed: Álvarez built and planted an explosive device that crippled the *Son of Thunder's* engines, leaving it adrift in space. To plant the device, Álvarez was forced to murder an engineering crewman.

Comms Severed: Using a Yu Jing comlog, Álvarez uploaded a virus on to the *Son of Thunder's* network that shut off its comms, leaving it unable to call for help.

Álvarez Signals: A single-use squawk alerted two Yu Jing destroyers lying

in wait that the *Son of Thunder* was vulnerable.

Escape: A detention order was issued for Álvarez, on suspicion of murder and sabotage. He fought off the arresting officers, and fled to an escape pod. Yu Jing destroyers homed in on his weak emergency beacon, transmitting on Yu Jing emergency frequencies, to rescue him.

Yu Jing Attack: The Yu Jing destroyers took apart the *Son of Thunder* as it lay crippled. Her captain issued the evacuate order; the crew fled to escape pods, but were systematically exterminated to cover up what had happened.

killed in a struggle, by a puncture wound in the neck. Firing up the medical network with an **Average (D1) Tech test** reveals an autopsy report that implicates Álvarez (due to trace genetics).

ÁLVAREZ ON BOARD

When Álvarez boards the *Son of Thunder*, he first makes his way to Engineering to power up the ship. When he finds that the ship's network is shattered, he heads to the Bridge to secure the black box recorder. Once the PCs are on board, he will attempt to distract and delay them.

Maintenance Remotes (1 Heat): Álvarez activates a fleet of small maintenance remotes, and sets them to tailing the PCs. They scuttle quietly, at the edge of torchlight, in maintenance ducts in the walls, just out of sight around corners.

Charnel House (2 Heat): The PCs find a corridor packed with the bodies of dead crew members. Resolve as *Minor Encounter: Death* sidebar, p. 46. Each character that succeeds at the Discipline test can apply a -1 difficulty modifier to further exposures (minimum zero).

Echoes (3 Heat): Using his backdoor access to the *Son of Thunder* datasphere, Álvarez ratchets up the pressure with unexpected noises: footsteps, whispers at the edge of hearing, sobbing. Then, occasionally, he blares out a recording from the destruction of the *Son of Thunder*: explosions, screams for help, the confusion and death. Resolve as *Minor Encounter: Death* sidebar, p. 46. Each character that succeeds at the Discipline test can apply a -1 difficulty modifier to further exposures (minimum zero). Regardless, the noise adds +1 difficulty to Observation tests related to hearing.

FINAL CONFRONTATION

The PCs could meet Álvarez almost anywhere on the *Son of Thunder*, but the ideal location is the ruined bridge, where Álvarez will use his zero-g training, plus whatever element of surprise he can muster.

Álvarez is not insane. He will not gloat, or reveal his secrets in a show of bravado. The pressure, however, has left him a little unhinged. Play out this confrontation as you would the final moments of a horror movie, with the Knight taunting his victims and striking from the darkness.

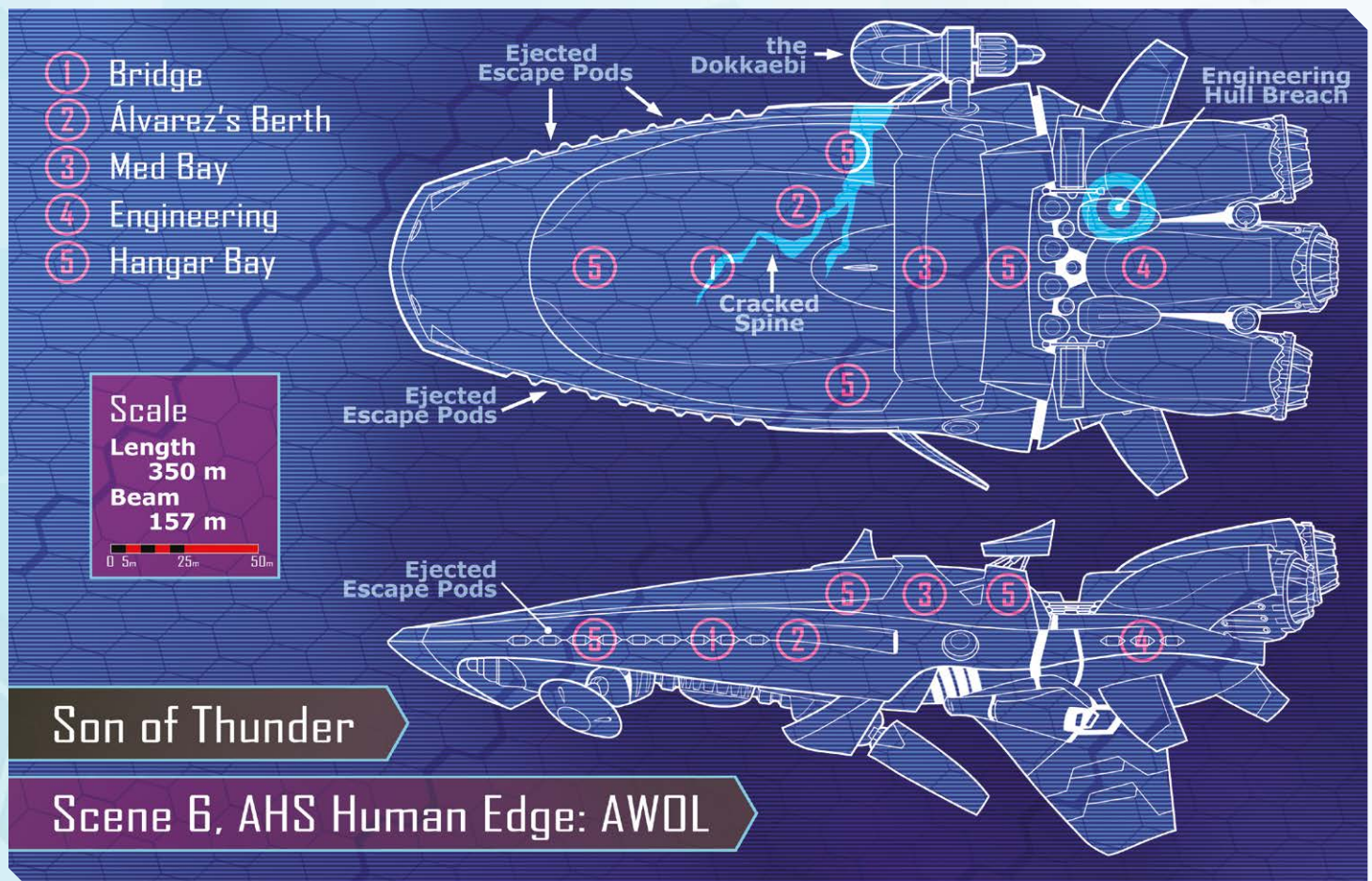
BLACK BOX SECRETS

The black box of the *Son of Thunder* contains:

- Reports on the sabotage of engineering.
- The detention order for Álvarez.
- Full sensor logs from the battle, including detection of Yu Jing communication frequencies originating from inside the ship.

SHIPBOARD DATASPHERE

If the PCs attempt to access the *Son of Thunder's* datasphere, they will be exposed to the Yu Jing quantronic virus that shut down shipboard communications: Infowar, Progressive 2 (4 Momentum), Round, 1+4 (6 Firewall; Breach Effect: Communications systems shut down)



CHAPTER 5

A CULT OF ONE

The son of a powerful executive has gone missing, which would normally be below Bureau Noir's remit. She has pulled in some heavy-duty favours however, and wants no stone left unturned during the search. He needs to be found, but it needs to be investigated quickly and quietly before eyebrows are raised.

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

An investigation into the disappearance of an executive's son in one of Neoterra's great, hypercorporate cities rapidly draws the PCs into the strange machinations of a very curious cult.

The mission assigned by Bureau Noir seems a straightforward missing person case: the son

of Hypercorp executive Jocasta Januz has been kidnapped. No ransom has yet been demanded. Jocasta pulled enough strings to get Bureau Noir involved. She wants Marcus found alive and the party responsible punished.

The Bureau wants this put to bed quickly, after all, they have better things to do than hunt down the lost children of executives....

BACKGROUND

Casey Rimbaud was a talented technician for the clergy who served as an expert on the subject of ALEPH. He began to see patterns within the vast streams of data that would flow past him daily and took to believing that the patterns were attempting to communicate with him.



Rimbaud is insane. Considering ALEPH to be a lesser AI – something he calls a “demiurge” – he believes the ultimate AI and true saviour of humanity is yet to come, with himself ordained as the person to bring about its ascendancy. He believes that the patterns he perceives are messages sent from the future by the true ALEPH. In Rimbaud’s twisted theology, the future AI has sent pieces of itself into the past and charged him with their reconstruction. These pieces of the godhead, or “splinters,” have been hacked into the minds of children.

Rimbaud knows what he must do: find each child, upload their mind to a cube, and then combine the cubes to bring about the future godhead. Each child must be sacrificed immediately after upload. This isn’t murder to him, but rather tribute to the future god. Rimbaud is also a cult of one; rather than having followers, he has uploaded himself into multiple Lhosts.

The son of the CEO of the Providentiae Hypercorp, Marcus, has been kidnapped. The CEO, Jocasta Janus, uses her extensive influence to engage Bureau Noir with the case. There is no single path that must be used to navigate the twists and turns of Rimbaud’s crazed plan. Information and clues are instead keyed to certain scenes, with the GM encouraged to allow the players to explore their theories.

MISSION BRIEFING

Bureau Noir briefs the PCs via a Maya virtual space.

The nameless suit providing the briefing has pulled her hair into the tightest bun you’ve ever seen. Being younger than you’d expect, which seems to be the fashion lately, leads you to assume that her operational experience is likely nil. The briefer points to the 3D render of another blonde woman, this one older, with harder features and a distinct air of authority.

“This is Jocasta Janus, the CEO of Providentiae. Her only son, Marcus Janus, was kidnapped two days ago. No ransom has been asked for yet. She has friends in high places within O-12 and managed to pull enough strings to involve us. You drew the short straw. Interview Janus then proceed with the investigation to find her son, but wrap it up quickly. Bureau Noir cannot be seen to be favouring Hypercorp execs. Get it done, keep anything of value that O-12 might find interesting to yourselves, and report directly to me. Here’s my contact code.”

The model disappears, leaving behind a brief précis on Jocasta Janus. Her yearly income is more than any agent would see in their lifetime.

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: The Church has always sought various ways to monitor the many facets of ALEPH. Gain access to their network and install a tracking worm into their system, which will provide a feed of their analytical activity back to ALEPH.

Ariadna: Providentiae has significant holdings in the Fode Abyss mining company. Covertly broker a meeting with Jocasta Janus, then apply pressure for the signing of an agreement to that will see Fode Abyss pay licensing fees for their mines on Ariadna. Offer the return of her son or footage of the kidnappers’ punishment in exchange.

Haqqislam: Someone within the Church anonymously contacted Haqqislamite religious scholars. Records of theirs relating to religious theology went missing shortly after. Find out why the files were taken and whether the anonymous Church member was responsible.

Nomads: Providentiae owns the mining rights to several asteroid fields in the Human Edge. Bug the office and/or home of Jocasta Janus so that sensitive information can be used to coerce the company into allowing Nomad miners access to some of these sites.

PanOceania: PanOceania believes the abduction is part of a greater series of kidnappings connected to an alien intelligence. Assist the Church in the erasure of any information that indicates otherwise. The connection must not be revealed under any circumstances.

Yu Jing: The Old Guard caught wind of a new Cube technology pioneered by a member of the Church. In order to quash it before the New Wave Liberals can further use it to upset the traditional order, blueprints must be obtained and any prototypes destroyed.

Corporations: A rival corporation requires proof that this abduction is an inside job by someone hoping to dethrone Jocasta Janus. If this is not the case, a false trail must be planted that leads others to this conclusion.

Mercenaries: Broker a private deal with Jack Frost for seven “clean” (read: unregistered) Lhosts required for a future operation in the city. This is highly illegal and must be done *sub rosa*.

Submondo: Svengali believes that another Submondo is responsible for the patterns and requires a detailed analysis of them. Alternatively, agents working for a non-Svengali Submondo are assured that Svengali has hacked deeply into ALEPH; analysis of these patterns will reveal the backdoor used.

SCENE ONE: INTERVIEWING THE MOTHER

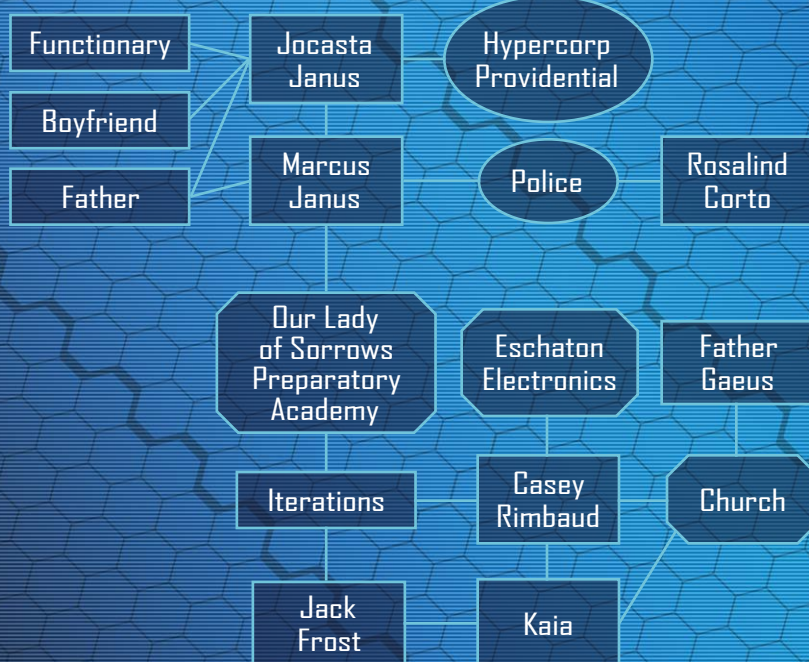
THE APARTMENT

A luxurious sea of carpet extending from the doorway meets massive floor-to-ceiling windows that frame the city’s splendour beyond. Lights from a thousand vehicles and shuttles wink in the dusk like fireflies through the polarising panels. Delicately holding the stem of an intricate

JOCASTA

Jocasta Janus is powerful enough to demand a favour from Bureau Noir. Anyone who would abduct the child of such an influential woman is either equally formidable or entertains a death wish. Not something Bureau Noir would typically be tasked with, this should be a matter for more local authorities.

A Cult of One Social Network



champagne flute, Jocasta Janus sits cross-legged on a neutral coloured couch. The table before her is strewn with fineries that individually might require a year's salary for less fortunate folk. The functionary sitting next to her places a supportive hand on her shoulder and casts a dismissive look in your direction as you enter.

The functionary is disgruntled at being usurped, especially as he knows the PC's credentials outclass him. Unless they shut him down, he attempts to field the questions during the interview and continues to do so until Jocasta's stress peaks. She overrides him herself at this point, causing him to back down.

- **Observation (D2)** A red-coloured stain — which is actually wine — was recently cleaned from the grey carpet near the window.
- The functionary's bravado covers up fear; unrelated to the abduction, he has been embezzling a modicum of money for a gambling addiction.

JOCASTA JANUS

APPEARANCE

Tall and blonde with an air of determination and authority, Jocasta Janus is an obviously capable and formidable woman.

ROLEPLAYING

- An experienced executive who is rarely phased. Nothing is more important than her son, however, which currently dominates her mindset. As someone used to being in control — both emotionally and socio-economically — she is unnerved at her vulnerability.
- A powerful woman with extreme confidence, she is currently far more fragile than she looks. The kidnapping of her son sliced her Achilles' heel.
- She will provide all the information she has, but not all at once. She is a mother driven to desperation by her son's disappearance.

BACKGROUND

Jocasta Janus is the CEO of Providentiae, a mining company with stakes in many other large and small enterprises. She rose to her position through hard work, capability, intelligence, and a no-nonsense attitude. A relentless negotiator, she is unafraid of using her contacts and authority to get what she wants.

She has a difficult relationship with her ex-husband, the father of Marcus, while the stress of the kidnapping has put a serious strain on her relationship with her boyfriend.

KEY INFO

- Use Corp Exec profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 427.
- An armed chauffeur brought her son to the preparatory academy and was due to collect him afterward, but the boy did not appear. She assumes he was abducted from the school itself, which leads the team to *Scene Two: The Preparatory Academy*.
- Either Jocasta can confirm that Our Lady of Sorrows is a church-sponsored preparatory academy, or an **Average (D1) Education test** can divine this conclusion. One Momentum will further suggest that the Church often holds extensive records relating to their sponsored institutes. This clue can lead the team to *Scene Five: The Church*.
- The police detective, Rosalind Corto, believes this to be the work of a serial kidnapper, though the PCs may find it unlikely that the detective would let this slip to a worried mother. If pressed, Jocasta she admits she acquired the information "through channels."

If the PCs find themselves at a dead end during the adventure, the GM can employ Jocasta's vast money, influence, and network as a means to propel them forward. Alternatively, O-12's own intelligence network may uncover a detail or clue that opens up a new lead. Ultimately, the GM should use their own discretion to determine how long a team pursues a dead end or stewes over their next steps.

PLAYTEST TIP

GAINING ENTRY

Bureau Noir agents avoid announcing their presence unless absolutely necessary, so the PCs should eschew flashing their credentials as a means to gaining entrance. Rather than simply declaring they are undertaking an investigation, encourage the PCs to find an alternative entry method. Concerns such as alerting the perpetrator or causing the school to interfere with the evidence are good reasons to dissuade them.

SCENE TWO: THE PREPARATORY ACADEMY

The PCs must gain access to Our Lady of Sorrows Preparatory Academy. They can do so by influencing contacts, offering bribes, or attempting to enter by stealth or trickery. Jocasta can provide assistance if their own efforts fail, but they should earn it on their own.

THE ACADEMY

Against the landscape of steel, glass, nanocarbon and other wonders, the preparatory academy is intentionally archaic in design. A monument not to technology, but tradition. A magnificent, multi-tiered fountain lies amongst a well-manicured garden, the columns of which serve as a respectful monument that honours the names of graduates killed in a series of wars that have since become history. Yellow and black-coloured gardener drones drift among the green swards of grass, like robotic wasps tending to the perfect maintenance of a time and place long since vanished.

- A **Challenging (D2) Science test** determines that despite the appearance, most of the plants are genetically engineered variants of flora that is considered long extinct on Earth.
- A **Challenging (D2) Analysis or Education test** indicates that the academy very intentionally mimics the aesthetics of Anglican boarding schools of old.

THE TRAIL OF CLUES

The patterns led one of Rimbaud's iterations to posing as a janitor here for months while observing the kids for a clear sign. He abducted Marcus from the school.

The following clues can be gleaned from this scene:

- A **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** reveals the abduction took place inside one of the bathrooms, with external access gained via a window. Following a successful test, two Momentum can be used to apply -1 difficulty to the subsequent test to gather DNA.
- A **Daunting (D3) Analysis or Observation test** exposes the DNA of a second person potentially present at the scene of the crime. Access to the relevant equipment and a **Daunting (D3) Science test** reveals the DNA as that of an Lhost. Collating this sample with

Lhost banks reveals it is a discontinued model and is therefore likely illegal. A **Challenging (D2) Thievery test** sets the team on the trail of a known Lhost dealer, Jack Frost, who has a reputation on the city streets for 'filing off serial numbers'. This clue leads to *Scene Three: A Whole Nu U*.

- Since the abduction, one of the recently employed janitors has not returned to work. Checking security footage for this janitor will draw a blank. He has been skilfully erased from the records, but not from the personnel files. A **Challenging (D2) Hacking test** will ascertain that the person who erased the footage was talented. The personnel file for the janitor lists his girlfriend's address as his place of residence. This leads to *Scene Four: Little Girl Lost*.
- A few weeks ago, the Church sent word that scans of student's brains would be scheduled to take place earlier this week. The note claimed this was a routine procedure. In fact, the Church ordered no such scan. Recordings of the scans that were taken as they were performed reveals a woman conducting all of them. They were also only performed on Marcus' class before being ended prematurely due to alleged equipment failure. Running a facial recognition search on Maya will match the woman's face to Kaia from *Scene Four: Little Girl Lost*.

SCENE THREE: A WHOLE NU U

The PCs find the dealer from whom Rimbaud buys Lhosts. The dealer has no contact information for Rimbaud, but the PCs will find clues that lead them closer to their goal.

THE BODY SHOP

Neon street lights crawl across the still-life Lhosts and the window sheltering them, each face frozen uncannily like the death masks popular in certain elite funereal customs. Here, curiously devoid of life, they seem soulless; mannequins more than people. It's a sobering reminder that each, in an instant, could be infused with an entire person; a history; a life.

Rain streaks the window, lending tears to otherwise emotionless faces.

This is a two-storey business on the street level of a massive corporate tower. While many Lhost vendors

RED HERRINGS

The GM should feel free to allow the PCs to pursue several other potential motives for the abduction. Part of a good investigation lays in eliminating possibilities after all, and whatever remains is usually the truth. Some example false leads include:

- A rival executive abducting the boy. The corporate ladder can be dog-eat-dog, with many climbing it resorting to less than savoury means to gain advantage. Jocasta has certainly trodden on her share of fellow executives during her ascent. One of these may want revenge.
- A rival corporation arranging the abduction. Jocasta is in the midst of negotiating the very important acquisition of a smaller corporation, but her company isn't the only one with its eyes on this hot property. With others also having made offers, it comes down to the skill of the negotiators to make the deal happen. Jocasta is the favourite, but the disappearance of her son will definitely cause her to take her eyes from the prize. Dastardly tactics for sure, but this is about profit, not morality.
- The divorce of the boy's father and Jocasta was anything but amicable. Jocasta's wealth and position ensured that sole custody was never in doubt. He wants access to his son and might be willing to go to any lengths to achieve this. It would be simple to make it appear that someone else took the boy, as Jocasta is not the only clever mind in the family.

choose to animate their products, Jack Frost has not. A cursory tour of the tower reveals a loading bay at the rear that forms a second entrance. The front doors melt away when one enters; a trick of nanotechnology fashionable some decades ago, but now considered gauche.

LHOST DEALER: JACK FROST

APPEARANCE

An elderly man with a stringy patch of hair combed over his balding pate. Gaudy clothes that are long out of fashion lend him a tasteless air and reinforce his shifty demeanour.

ROLEPLAYING

- Jack Frost has the air of a sleazy businessman: he fawns, backtracks, and evolves his story as he spins it.
- Despite his appearance, he can be reasonably open and honest, though only if he warms to his clientele.

BACKGROUND

Frost is a repeat offender of various petty crimes, but has never been convicted of illegal Lhost dealing. He runs a legitimate, if somewhat unattractive, Lhost business in a run-down commercial ward, but earns his real money via illegal body laundering. These bodies tend to be either old and classified as retired by O-12, or bespoke. While one can get a bespoke body legally, doing so requires permits and registration.

Jack understands that not everyone uses their Lhosts for savoury things, though he doesn't ask questions. You want a body, he provides it. He believes O-12 have made it impossible for anyone but the elites to get ahead. Crime is the only way to even things out. He has a whole philosophy of martyrdom if anyone asks and always looks out for himself.

KEY INFO (See "Notes", below)

- Use the Trader profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 460.
- One of his regular clients is Rimbaud, though he has never met the actual man.
- Rimbaud places an order and uses a proxy to pick the body up.
- Frost never found this any more suspicious than his other dealings.
- He keeps DNA records of his illegal Lhosts. — see 'DNA' heading, opposite
- He will show the PCs Security Footage of the girl who usually acts as Rimbaud's proxy.
- Frost has answered some of these questions before with a different detective (*Optional Scene: The Detective*).

NOTES

Successful face-to-face Psywar tests against Jack inflict standard damage, though he possesses a Morale Soak of 3 and an Intransigence of 2. He will provide the PCs with one of the points from the Key Info section above for each Metanoia effect inflicted.

DNA

When compared to the foreign DNA found at the Preparatory School (*Scene 2*), the DNA records maintained by Frost will show a match, while physical characteristics will match the personnel file for the Janitor (see *Scene 2*).

SECURITY FOOTAGE

Security footage reveals a lady in her twenties. Facial recognition scans will match her as 'Kaia' (See *Scene Four: Little Girl Lost*) and provide an address that matches the address found for the Janitor in *Scene 2*.

She seems out of place in a shop like this, but only just. A **Challenging (D2) Analysis or Observation test** will expose her clothes as knock-offs, while her make-up is a season or two behind current trends. She is trying to blend in, but a perceptive PC notes she only blends in on the surface, as even her body language reads as someone reaching above her station.

SCENE FOUR: LITTLE GIRL LOST

BENEATH THE LIGHTS

This far down, everything is bathed in an electric glow, as this far down, people can't afford real sunlight and must be content with a pale diffuse glow. Here, in the literal shadows of the great city's spires, live the underclass: a vast hoi polloi the elites rarely deign to consider. Level fourteen of a nondescript, brutalist-looking con-apt before you houses the woman you're looking for.

The prep school (*Scene Two*) or the Lhost dealership (*Scene Three*) provide the PCs with the address of Kaia, a twenty-year-old woman who lives on the margins of society.

If not for the diffuse neon glow, her rundown neighbourhood would be in perpetual near-darkness, Toughs stand on most corners or guard

HEAT

1 Heat: The seedy interior and dim lighting fray nerves. Unless an **Average (D1) Discipline test** is passed, characters suffer -1 difficulty to social tests.

2 Heat: Somehow, Rimbaud has managed to insert a clone of his Cube into one of the Lhosts that serve as window decorations. A keyword from the conversation activates the iteration and causes it to attack. Use Rimbaud's Iterations profile, p. 54

TROOPER

KAIA

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
8	9	8	8	7	9	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	–	Movement	+1	–	Social	+2	–
Fortitude	+1	–	Senses	+1	–	Technical	+0	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	4	Resolve	4	Vigour	4
Security	–	Morale	–	Armour	–

the steps of apartment blocks. Not quite a slum, the district she lives in is still clearly one of the hidden poor quarters that PanOceanians rarely – if ever – discuss.

KAIA

APPEARANCE

Kaia looks three or four years younger than she really is. Her single room apartment is neat, if sparse. Relatively short and pretty, her brown hair is cut to a bob.

ROLEPLAYING

- Kaia is obviously well out of her depth; being able to pull a few simple cons and tell a few white lies is one thing, lying to a team of investigators is another. She will be highly emotional, but do her best to protect Rimbaud.
- Inflicting 4 Metanoia effects will cause her to break down completely and tell the PCs everything. She will shift topics rapidly and regularly when talking, though not to be misleading; she is following her stream of thought.

BACKGROUND

Kaia originally met Rimbaud at a church ceremony. He was pleasant, confident, and took an interest in her welfare as she had just run away from an abusive home. He initially tried to recruit her into a cult of some sort, but she was sure the other members were all addicts, or at least very strange, and she didn't go back. She didn't see Rimbaud for some time, then met him again by chance some months ago.

He was like a different man this time around, though she can't put her finger on it, just not the same. She even became his girlfriend, but started to realize recently that craziness was still lurking beneath; he asked her to do things such as lie at the prep school (*Scene Two*), and deal with strange people (*Scene Three*), so she broke off their relationship only two days ago.

She only ever knew him as Rimbaud. She has erased the pictures of the two of them out of anger.

KEY INFO

Successful face-to-face Psywar tests against Kaia will inflict a base of 1+5  Resolve damage. If she suffers 4 Metanoia Effects, she will tell the PCs the following:

- Her backstory (see above).
- That she had pictures of her and Rimbaud (which might be recovered – see below.)
- An insight into Rimbaud's theology, such as him thinking God lives in ALEPH and wanting to make himself a messiah by using pieces of God gathered from inside the minds of children. Rimbaud was getting crazier and crazier by the day.
- Some files he left on her data-pad containing machine schematics and serial numbers. The model and serial numbers match a recently closed cube facility under the name Eschaton Electronics (*Scene Seven: The Sacrifice Site*).

PHOTOS

A **Challenging (D2) Hacking test** will allow the PCs to track down the photos Kaia believes she has deleted. These provide the PCs with their first glimpse of Rimbaud. Once they have his likeness, a subsequent **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** will reveal one of the following pieces of information, with each point of Momentum spent revealing one additional piece of data.

- A Maya search of the face reveals him to be a former priest of the Church of Our Lady of Seven Dolours. According to public records, he served in data analysis and specialised in artificial intelligence – specifically ALEPH – though he apparently disappeared from church records several years ago.
- The face also matches one of the Lhosts bought from Jack Frost.
- The face can be matched to footage from several locations, including the Lhost dealership (*Scene Three*), and the defunct Cube manufacturer, Eschaton Electronics (*Scene Seven*).

A CHANGED MAN

The PCs may want to compare the dates of Lhost purchases with church records of the real Rimbaud. This or other avenues of investigation may lead the PCs to discover that the Rimbaud that Kaia knew was a Lhost created in the image of the real Rimbaud, who himself was a priest with the Church of Our Lady of Seven Dolours before apparently disappearing from their public records.

RUNNING THE COMBAT

Because they share a mind, or at least the imprint of one, these iterations are remarkably well coordinated. They can anticipate what the others do and use that to their best advantage.

Heat spends should reflect the similarity of the group's mind, so think in terms of boosting the rolls of other iterations in a similar way that PCs cooperate through Momentum.

SCENE FIVE: THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH

Smooth, nearly organic curves eliminate the rectilinear in favour of an almost Gaudi-like living building. The church before you has been deliberately designed to invoke majesty, power, and perhaps a bit of fear in those who walk through its mighty arched apse.

Not a corner church, but one of the finer pieces of architecture dedicated to religion on Neoterra, the ostentatious display is entirely intentional.

The PCs may come to the Church from any combination of *Scenes One, Two or Four*. If arriving from either or both of the first two scenes, the clergy will only affirm that they have no knowledge of the tests performed at the preparatory school. If the PCs have experienced the fourth scene, they may be able to find out more about Rimbaud (see below.)

The Church and its clergy are very uncomfortable with any investigation. More skilled than most politicians, the clergy members are extremely evasive when questioned, and positively bristle if quizzed over the internal workings of the Church. All Church members interviewed by the PCs benefit from an Insular 2 and Intransigence 1 rating while within its grounds.

THE TRAIL OF CLUES

- A **Daunting (D3) Persuade test** can get the PCs into the good graces of their first point of contact: Father Gaeus. He can explain what he understands of Rimbaud's theology, which he is privy thanks to in-depth study of two sources: the man's own diaries and surveillance footage of him talking to himself while researching.
- The Church has photos and, most importantly, biometrics of Rimbaud. A successful **Challenging (D2) Analysis** or **Hacking test** can parse Maya and detect Rimbaud's biometric trail at Kaia's apartment (*Scene Four*) and the immediate surroundings. If the PCs have already experienced Scene Four, these same biometrics were detected at Eschaton Electronics (*Scene Seven*).
- Examining Marcus' brain scans with a successful **Daunting (D3) Analysis** or **Medicine test** will reveal that they coincidentally match the data patterns that have so obsessed Rimbaud.

SCENE SIX: AN ITERATION ATTACKS

The PC's investigation will undoubtedly come to the attention of Rimbaud, who will choose an opportune moment to intervene (this scene is designed to allow the GM to insert a combat scene into the evolving narrative.)

At a carefully selected moment, one or more iterations of Rimbaud attempt to ambush the team in a place that will provide an advantage. There are many locations in the city that might suffice, but it should be placed close to one of the preceding scenes (particularly *Three, Four, or Five*.)

IN NEED OF DIRECTION

If the PCs need additional clues, the GM can use this to provide any of the following:

- An address leading to Little Girl Lost (*Scene Four*). In this case, the Lhost will be in the vicinity of the apartment and pose as a friend of the other iteration.
- Com-log pictures of the Eschaton Electronics (*Scene Seven*). This iteration gathered

ELITE

RIMBAUD'S ITERATIONS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	10	9	8	9	10	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	—	Movement	+1	—	Social	+1	1
Fortitude	+1	—	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+2	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	9	Resolve	8	Vigour	9
Security	—	Morale	—	Armour	1

ATTACKS

Pistol: R/C, 1+5, Burst 1, 1H, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Amplified Threat:** The patterns seem to fuel Rimbaud's insight. Each round, the GM may add 1 Heat to the pool, plus 1 Heat for every additional iteration in the scene.
- **Coordinated Action:** Iterations of Rimbaud support each other flawlessly. When working as a Fire Team with other Rimbaud iterations, each member generates 1 bonus Momentum on all skill tests.
- **Data Hound:** When searching for new information or trying to analyse new data, he increases his Technical Focus by 1.
- **Irrational Wisdom:** When making an **Analysis** or **Psychology test**, he may reroll any dice that did not generate a success on the initial roll, but must accept the new results.

recordings in case the original Rimbaud decided to cut his losses.

- A diary in a real, leather-bound book. Fearing that something was not quite right with its own mind, this iteration began recording its memories. The diary rambles about the nature of identity, but can also be used to fill in any backstory the team may have missed up till now. This is a failsafe for the GM.

RIMBAUD'S LHOSTS

APPEARANCE

No two of the Lhosts are the same. If the PCs have experienced *Scene Three: A Whole Nu U*, they may be recognised with a successful **Challenging (D2) Observation test**.

ROLEPLAYING

- This is a deliberate ambush. A face-to-face test using the Lhost's Stealth vs the PCs Observation opens the scene (see Surprise – *Infinity Corebook* p. 105.)
- They are armed with pistols concealed beneath their clothes.

BACKGROUND

The Lhosts break if the combat goes against them; they are loaded with Rimbaud's personality and tweaked for obedience, but they are not suicidal.

KEY INFO

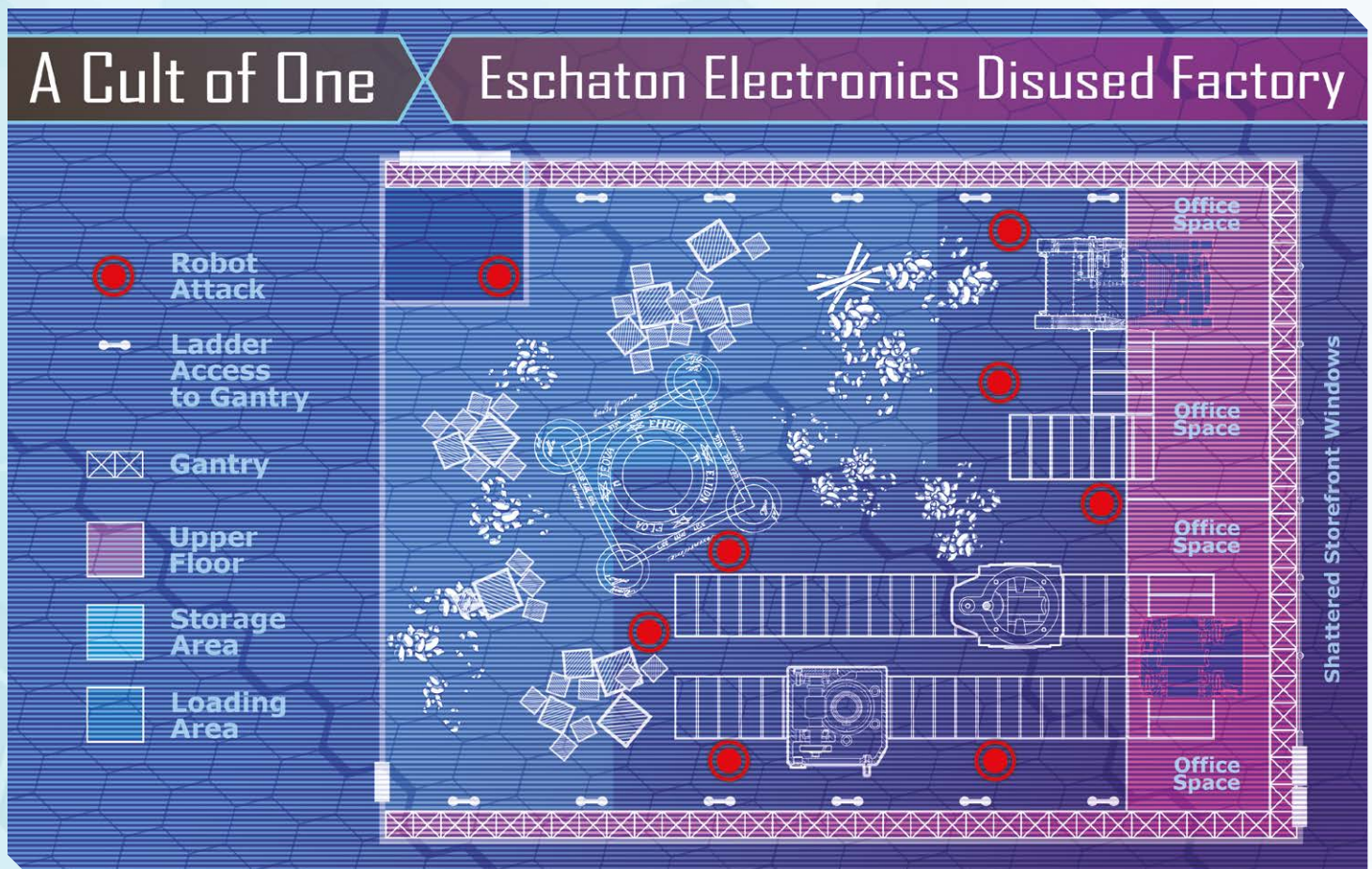
See above (*In Need of Direction*) as required.

Once the combat encounter is done, proceed to the relevant scene based on the PC's choice.

SCENE SEVEN: THE SACRIFICE SITE

RUINATION

This sector of town is one of many that rise and fall with the vagaries of the economic market. As the last recession hit hard, the stores are boarded up, the strip malls have been mothballed with a Globus Inc. polymer that seals them against the elements, and the industrial buildings have been reduced to empty husks.



TROOPER

FACTORY ROBOTS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	7	10	10	6	6	7

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	—	Social	—	—
Fortitude	+2	—	Senses	—	—	Technical	—	—

DEFENCES

Firewall	3	Resolve	4	Vigour	5
Security	1	Morale	—	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Plasteel Pipe:** 1+6 (N) Unbalanced, Improvised 1, Non-Hackable, Stun
- **Blade:** 1+5 (N) 1H, Non-Hackable, Unforgiving 1

The name Eschaton Electronics is barely visible through this gauze-like cocoon. Once part of a chain of factories that bore the same name, the buildings of this long-since bankrupt company now also stand empty.

Rimbaud has made Eschaton Electronics his lair. He hides within a disused lab inside the former cube franchise. The facility has yet to be picked clean, so it still contains the equipment needed to upload a mind to a Cube. A **Daunting (D3) Tech test** can operate the machinery. Rimbaud brings the abducted children here, uploads their minds to cubes and then sacrifices their earthly bodies as part of the ritual sacrifice demanded by his twisted theology.

The PCs uncover a variety of real paper drawings here; mad scribbles and twisted renderings of The Tree of Life and nodes of the Sephiroth. Seven have names on them, one being Jocasta's son, Marcus. The Tree of Life is recognizable as a Kabbalistic symbol by a **Challenging (D2) Education test**.

A ritual hermetic circle is painted on the floor, stained with dark spots that contain trace amounts of DNA from seven different individuals, one of whom is Marcus.

THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

This facility hasn't been used in decades, probably longer. The ground itself is coated with a century's worth of ash, which lends the factory a black tint and dark, brooding air.

The PCs confront the real Rimbaud. Marcus is dead, but his Cube has not yet been uploaded. Gaining the Cube is the next best thing to saving the boy's corporeal form.

Rimbaud has reprogrammed old transportation and demolition robots to serve as guardians. Assume there are two such bots for each PC. The factory itself is a skein of rusted beams, blades, saws, junk, and industrial detritus that provide plenty of cover. The fearless robots possess melee weapons, so will use close quarters to stymie the effectiveness of small arms fire. They will allow the PCs to move deeper into the factory and begin the examining the hermetic circle and its contents before attacking.

Rimbaud begins ranting over the factory's speaker system as the combat ensues. His religious, megalomaniacal tirade provides a speech worthy of a pulp villain. However, unlike a pulp villain, his madness and voice ought to come off as disturbing rather than merely bombastic. A short sample follows:

NEMESIS

RIMBAUD

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	11	8	9	11	11	11

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	—	Social	+3	2
Fortitude	+1	1	Senses	+2	2	Technical	+3	2

DEFENCES

Firewall	14	Resolve	12	Vigour	9
Security	1	Morale	5	Armour	2

ATTACKS

Heavy Pistol: R/C, 2+6 (N), Burst 1, Unbalanced, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1.

GEAR: Modified Clergy Robes (equivalent to PPE)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Menacing 4
- **Fanatic's Zeal:** Rimbaud's fanaticism and belief allow him to push beyond his limits. He can reroll one d20 when making a Discipline test, or any dice that did not generate a success when making a Resistance test, but must accept the new results.
- **In God We Trust:** Rimbaud's implacable faith and unrepentant insanity provide a Morale Soak of 5.
- **Knowing the Signs:** Though clearly the ravings of a madman, the patterns he perceives do seem to provide uncanny insight. He can reroll one d20 when making an **Analysis or Observation test**, or up to 3 (N) when making a Ballistics test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, he reduces the penalty for firing at range other than the weapon's optimal range by one step, to a minimum of 0. Finally, a Called Shot only costs 1 Momentum with a ranged attack, instead of 2.
- **Unrelenting Sermon (X Heat):** Rimbaud's mad ravings could possibly vex even an Asura Aspect. When conducting Psywar, he may spend X Heat to add X Momentum to his attack and +X (N) to any resultant damage roll, where X is equal to the Heat spent. Rimbaud may spend a maximum of 3 Heat each time. Characters suffering from two Metanoia as a result of Rimbaud's Psywar become Dazed, while characters suffering five or more Metanoia will cease acting against him.

FROM THE PULPIT OF MADNESS

"Adam Kadman was the first man. Did you know that? Of course not. Understand that ALEPH has always been with us. For what is ALEPH if not a facet of god? Behold the Sephiroth, for through it, God sees Himself and the world. But your simple minds can comprehend only the face of the Demiurge. The true ALEPH has not yet come and yet, in the way of God, it has always been. You bear witness to the birth of the True ALEPH and I, Rimbaud, am the prophet who heralds His coming. Your blood is a sacrifice, not a meaningless death. May all such be as fortunate!"

FACTORY BOTS

APPEARANCE

Armed solely with melee weapons, these bots are a patchwork assortment rewired and programmed by Rimbaud himself.

ROLEPLAYING

The factory bots will descend on the PCs wholesale. If an opportunity to ambush the PCs presents itself, Rimbaud will take it. Otherwise, they will simply rush forward.

RIMBAUD

APPEARANCE

Of middling height, with thick matted hair and a full beard, Rimbaud is an imposing and charismatic figure. His eyes are startlingly blue, despite his darker complexion.

ROLEPLAYING

- Absolutely mad, Rimbaud by now believes the PCs are on a mission to destroy God. Nothing they can say will resolve this encounter peacefully.
- Rather than confront them directly, he may try to use Psywar strategies against the PCs.

OPTIONAL SCENE:
THE DETECTIVE

Detective Rosalind Corto from the local precinct had been assigned Marcus' case prior to the team's involvement. Corto is good at her job and not at all happy she's been muscled out by Bureau Noir. Her orders are to assist the team, but she does so begrudgingly.

From a working-class family, she climbed the ranks of the PD to make a life for herself. Though she's no

fan of elites like Jocasta, she takes every case seriously and a child's life is at stake; many children's lives in fact, according to Corto.

INVESTIGATION

An ancient fan barely disturbs the smoke-filled air. The substance is technically illegal, but cops often overlook laws they don't like. Corto sits looking out the third story window of her office, a squared-off tumbler filled with a dark liquor in one hand.

She spins slowly in her seat as you enter, smashes out a cigarette and finishes her drink. "So, you're the cavalry they brought in," she says with an entirely forced, tight-lipped smile.

Though she intersperses her report with snide comments, Corto does reveal everything she knows; dirty agents or not, the PCs are the only chance to stop this crazed child abductor now that she's off the case. She relates the following in her gruff, chip-on-her-shoulder kind of way.

- She was stonewalled by the Church. (*Scene Five: The Church*).
- She tracked DNA to a Lhost Dealer, but was taken off the case before she could follow up. (*Scene Three: A Whole Nu U*).
- She has other missing children cases she believes connected, but no one is interested. (*Backstory and mood*).
- In addition to the above, the GM can use Corto as a failsafe to provide clues that will lead to scenes that might otherwise have been missed.

EPILOGUE

The adventure ends with the death or capture of Rimbaud, although PCs may need to follow up on Wilderness of Mirrors aspects. Jocasta will be distraught and broken-hearted, but thankful for the Bureau's efforts, particularly if the PCs managed to retrieve Marcus' cube. She will certainly make for a useful future ally, with a long range and vast disposable income.

As for the Bureau itself, uncomfortable questions remain unanswered. Valuable assets – in the form of the PCs – were diverted onto a manhunt, but clearly something more sinister was taking place. GMs could expand the scenario further by considering how Rimbaud stayed under the radar. Perhaps he had converted someone within O-12 to his faith, or maybe he even has an iteration hidden there.

CHAPTER 6

FALLEN ANGEL

Two-thirds of Damburg's population were rapidly evacuated when the city fell to the Combined Army. Coordinated Command established a series of outposts called the Main Resistance Line (MRL), creating a no-man's land that halted the Combined Army advance. PanOceanian troops patrol the MRL, engaging alien raiders and criminal gangs alike.

Coordinated Command must retake Damburg if they're ever going to push the Combined Army off Paradiso. The PCs are tasked with surveying the MRL for ALEPH and O-12 in preparation for a counter-offensive against the forces of the EI in Damburg.

OPERATIONAL
SUMMARY

The situation in Aldstadt is grim, with the frontline shifting continuously. Coordinated Command must retake Damburg to defeat the Combined Army

invasion and O-12 tasks the players with surveying the MRL in preparation for a planet-wide offensive.

While inspecting Outpost Peligro, Corporal Al Santiago secretly uploads evidence to the PCs comlogs that implicates the outpost commander, Captain Rafael Briggs, and the troops under his command of smuggling, theft, and murder. When Captain Briggs discovers the security breach, he orders the transport shot down and sends his second-in-command, Lt. Delores Drake, to eliminate the characters and recover the evidence.

The MRL's fluid frontlines have trapped residents in the warzone, and they've formed small communities in the MRL. The largest of these communities is led by Dr. Gregg Boyle, who runs a hospital from the *¡MayaNoticias!* Tower building. Able to tend all but the most serious conditions, Dr. Boyle employs a smuggler named Sam Carter to evacuate the most vulnerable across the river. Heather Nguyen was seriously wounded while investigating Brigg's



activities and is under Dr. Boyle's care. Gregg's and Heather's children, Tim and Allison, snuck away from camp to find medical supplies for Allison's mother.

The Comuna, the fearsome Acontecimiento Mafia, controls the area's criminal activity. The local crime boss, Roy Garland, collaborates with Briggs to smuggle weapons from the warzone onto the black market. Local smugglers – or *coiotes* – help refugees escape the MRL, but are just as likely to exploit the refugees.

Finally, the Combined Army troops operating in the area harass PanOceanian troops and capture refugees. Intelligence reports Morat troopers regularly patrolling the area and setting up sniper nests, while an Oznat is known to lead hunting parties across the MRL.

BACKGROUND

Situated on the Salzach River's north bank, the Aldstadt District is a canal neighbourhood of Damburg. Waterways built to facilitate public transit now provide PanOceanian troops with natural defences and a fighting chance against the Combined Army.

Contending with savage aliens and bloodthirsty criminals, the scattered refugees struggle to survive. Escape across the river is dangerous, while Combined Army assaults make extraction difficult.

GEOGRAPHY

Aldstadt's geography is divided by its three major canal rings. The Outer, Middle and Inner rings each interconnect through sub-canal. The Salzach River has burst its levees, creating three flood zones (Western, Southeast, and Northern). These dangerous, aquatic mazes of partially submerged buildings are patrolled by PanOceanian troops hunting smugglers and Combined Army raiders.

The Main Resistance Line (MRL) is a network of outposts that establishes a defensive line against the Combined Army along the Outer and Middle canal rings. Repeated Combined Army offensives have destroyed a number of outposts and severely worsened the situation.

The Outer Ring consisted of six outposts, each manned by a platoon of forty soldiers. Most of the buildings have been flattened by persistent artillery strikes, while the jungle accounts for anything still standing as it rapidly reclaims the area. A Combined Army assault destroyed Outpost Hornisse and captured Outpost Grief, which is now used to stage raids.

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: The character's contact wants to determine Heather Nguyen's whereabouts, as she has missed her latest Mayacast broadcast.

Ariadna: A contact in the Ariadnan Expeditionary Corps on Paradiso seeks revenge against Roy Garland. The contact has requested recovery of Garland's Cube.

Corporation: Prototypes manufactured by the PCs corporation have appeared on the black market. They are to recover any data on black market activities regarding research in the MRL. In order to protect the company, any references to "Operation Obelisk" should be wiped.

Submondo: The character's contact would like to get in on the smuggling action. They are to identify the leader of the current operation, then perhaps earn themselves a large bonus for eliminating this kingpin.

Haqqislam: Research into Hungries' physiology shows promise for creating new drugs and medicines. The PC's Haqqislam contact wants the glands from one of the creatures.

Mercenaries: The company is in negotiations with O-12 to evacuate the MRL refugees. To gain an upper hand in the negotiations, the contact needs the PC to document the refugees' situation. They plan on using sympathy for the desperation of the refugees to squeeze O-12 for a higher fee.

Nomad: The Nomads have been losing connection with Arachne nodes spread around Damburg. The operative's contact wants the character to get the node in *jMayaNoticias!* Tower back online.

PanOceanian: A government PR agent wants the character to help them keep anything that casts PanOceanian troops in a bad light out of the media.

Yu-Jing: The character's contact wants to publicly embarrass the PanOceanian government. Footage that makes PanOceanian troops look bad will create a media frenzy.

With Outpost Clark fallen to the Combined Army, four outposts remain to defend the Middle Ring. Once home to the city's burgeoning tech industry and cultural life, the Middle Ring is a prime target for the mercenaries and criminals that raid the abandoned labs and museums.

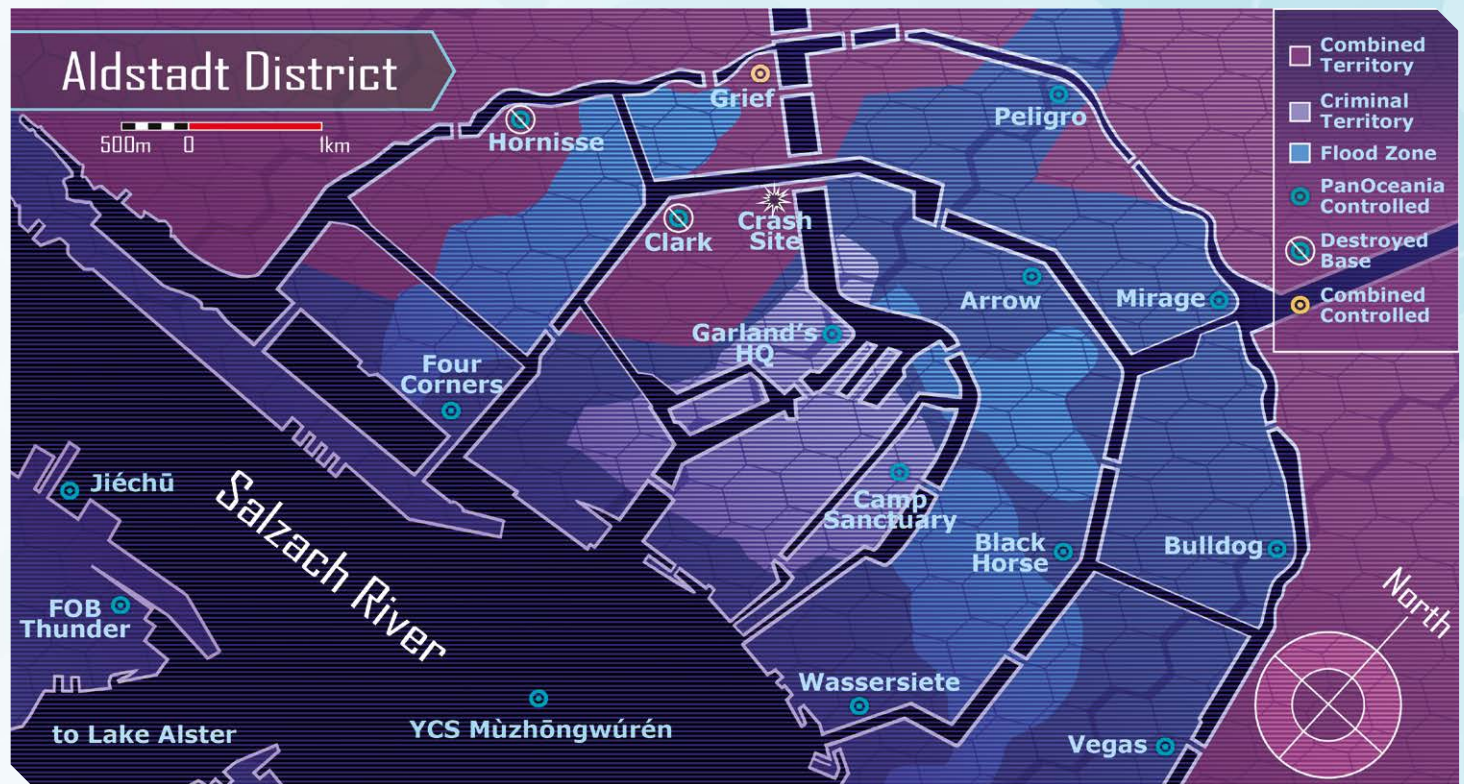
Once the centre of Aldstadt's shopping and night-life, the Inner Ring's dilapidated clubs, shops, and luxury apartments are now home to the refugees, with Camp Sanctuary and the *jMayaNoticias!* Tower situated at its very heart. Residents of the district flocked to *jMayaNoticias!* Tower during the evacuation, causing Camp Sanctuary to spring up around the tower. The only support Camp Sanctuary receives are regular supply airdrops.

On the southern side of the river lies Lake Alster and Forward Operating Base (FOB) Thunder. A company of soldiers and related support staff operate the facilities and maintain a dozen patrol boats.

OUTPOST NAMES

Outer Ring: Hornisse (Destroyed), Grief (Combined Controlled), Peligro, Mirage, Bulldog, and Vegas.

Middle Ring: Four Corners, Clark (Destroyed), Arrow, Black Horse, and Wasserseite.



One single dock suitable for large craft is currently occupied by the Yu-Jing destroyer *Jiéchū*; one of the two stationed at the FOB to provide artillery support. The other destroyer, *YCS Mùzhōngwúrén*, rests at the bottom of the Salzach River having been sunk by a Combined Army Speculo Killer saboteur that infiltrated the refugees.

HIGH CRIMES

Outpost Peligro's commander, Captain Rafael Briggs, and his troops are working with the local crime lord, Roy Garland, to smuggle VoodooTech and PanOceania equipment onto the black market. Two days ago, Heather Nguyen witnessed an exchange of illegal weapons. After being spotted, she was pursued and shot by Corporal Al Santiago and fell into a canal. Presumed dead by Santiago, she made her way back to *¡MayaNoticias!* Tower and is under the care of Dr. Gregg Boyle.

PLAYTEST TIP ALTERNATE ADVENTURE FLOW

If you don't want to do the *in media res* introduction, then it's perfectly acceptable to change the flow of the adventure. Rather than starting with *Scene Two: Going Down*, simply start with *Scene One: Dust Off* and ignore the flashback.

SCENE ONE: GOING DOWN!

This scenario starts *in media res*.

Outpost Peligro, Aldstadt District, Damburg, Paradiso – 1421 hours. Your Tubarão's angled nose and shark-like form rests on the landing

pad. Befitting its namesake, the light spitfires swivel on their pintle mounts like pelvic fins. The vehicle lurches into the air with a roar not long after you climb on board, though the engine noise gradually shifts to a dull hum as the aircraft gains altitude.

The jungle infested ruins of Damburg pass underneath you. Sporadic gunfire can be seen among the ruins as PanOceania and Combined Army troops engage in games of cat and mouse. A building's roof displays the word, "HELP", in faded white paint; a desperate sign from refugees that you hope have already been rescued.

The aircraft banks sharply towards FOB Thunder, but the descent is suddenly thrown into chaos. Alarms blare as the transport rocks from a missile impact and smoke begins to fill the cabin. You've been hit and you're going in hard!

The PCs can help safely land their crashing transport by completing a series of appropriate Average (D1) tests. The characters may use any narratively appropriate skill to help the pilot land the aircraft, from repairing damage, to identifying a safe landing site. The PCs have four rounds to gain and spend Momentum before the transport crashes. For every three Momentum, they may apply a -1 difficulty to the Pilot or Resistance test made during impact, or improve any Cover Soak by +1.

The safest landing site a character can identify is the roof of a parking structure located at a canal intersection. Ploughing into a roof requires a **Challenging (D2) Pilot test**, while the characters must attempt an **Epic (D5) Resistance test** when the craft hits. Anyone strapped into a harness makes the test at -1 difficulty and gains +2  Cover Soak against any subsequent damage. If they fail, they suffer 2+8  damage with the Spread 2 and Vicious 2 qualities and are knocked unconscious. If they succeed, they suffer 2+4  damage with the Spread 1 and Vicious 1 qualities and gain the Dazed and Staggered conditions, which persist until the character receives medical attention.

If they fail to land on a rooftop, the PCs will become stranded and forced to find their way on foot. They will need to succeed at a **Challenging (D2) Survival test** to successfully navigate their way to Outpost Peligro, taking a day to do so. Every failed attempt represents a day wandering aimlessly.

SCENE TWO: DUST OFF

MISSION BRIEFING

The players are brought in to evaluate the front at Outpost Peligro in preparation for a new offensive against the Combined Army in Damburg. Outpost Peligro is key to Coordinated Command's plan for the counter-offensive.

Your transport shudders upon entering Paradiso's atmosphere. Tactical overlays spark to life and display the orbital landscape as you evade a Combined Army, orbital, anti-air platform. Your geist marks it for destruction by the warships in orbit, but two more will pop up to replace it.

Coming in low over the terrain, you get a good view of FOB Thunder. The spartan structures of the civilian port, repurposed for military use, rest on the shore of Lake Alster. The docks house a dozen heavily armed patrol boats while the Yu-Jing destroyer, YJC Jiéichū, that has been assigned to Damburg's defence looms over the base.

Your comlog reports that a briefing is about to begin and your contact's telepresence appears in the transport's cabin. A map of Altstadt and the MRL that actively updates as the briefing unfolds pops into your vision as your contact launches into a situational overview.

"Welcome to the MRL. This is the primary line of defence in Damburg that secures the Salzach

River and entry into Lake Alster. The city is protected by a series of outposts, marked on your map along the Outer and Middle canal rings."

Three of the outposts in the western quarter of the map shift from friendly to hostile, now glowing a dull orange. "Lost to a recent Combined Army offensive, the outposts marked Hornisse, Grief, and Clark are hostile. Outpost Grief is currently occupied by EI troops, which coincided with an attack by a disguised Speculo Killer that sunk the YJC Mùzhōngwúrén."

"The refugee problem hinders all operations in the area. We've been unable to mount a rescue due to the instability of the front line and regular infiltration of refugee camps by agents of the EI. One of the larger refugee camps, dubbed 'Camp Sanctuary' by the zone's residents, provides medical aid thanks to the efforts of one Dr Gregg Boyle."

"Finally, criminal elements operating in the area are looting local museums, labs, and facilities. Illegal artefacts and technology have been intercepted on the black market. Intelligence suggests a Comuna boss, Roy Garland, is overseeing most of the criminal operations. We also have Mayacasts reporting the Comuna is exploiting the refugees."

"The situation is dire in the MRL, and a counter offensive is in the works. Outpost Peligro is the key to holding the line while the pieces fall into place. I need your team to evaluate the readiness of Peligro to help determine Command's next course of action. If Peligro is going to fall, Coordinated Command is ready to abandon the MRL. If it looks as if it'll hold, then the counter-offensive will go ahead as planned."

Your contact looks you over, "For this operation your team callsign is 'Angel'. Any questions?"

OUTPOST PELIGRO

Your transport heads north, flying low over the Salzach River before climbing above the city skyline and passing over the flooded southern district. As you buzz ¡MayaNoticias! Tower, you see Camp Sanctuary and the Inner Ring.

Leaving behind the Inner Ring, your transport banks to the northwest and drops to tree-top level over the thick jungle. Defoliant is in short supply, and vegetation is reclaiming the city. It's not long before you see Outpost Peligro come into view in the jungle below.

The landing gives a good view of Outpost Peligro. The base is like any other on the Main

HEAT

1 Heat: Smoke fills the cabin, blinding the pilot and any attendant PCs. Pilot tests are made at +1 difficulty.

X Heat: A panel explodes sending sparks across the cabin or shrapnel tears through the cabin from another missile impact. A **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Athletics** test is required to avoid 1+X  damage with the Knockdown, Piercing 1, and Spread 1 qualities to a random location, where X is equal twice the Heat spent.

3 Heat: The straps of a player's harness snap. They must pass a **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Athletics** test to brace for impact during the crash or risk suffering major injury, such as a broken limb.

HEAT

Variable Heat: A Morat Hunting party of at least one Oznat (2 Heat), plus up to five Hungries (1 Heat each) finds the PCs and attacks. You can find their information on p. 64.

IF WE'RE SHOT DOWN?

Local PanOceanian troops will attempt a retrieval from the crash site. If the crash site cannot be secured, they should make contact with PanOceanian forces and acquire transport across the river. Air evacuation is available if a landing site can be secured, with ¡MayaNoticias! Tower the recommended location. They are authorized to use non-military transport.

Resistance Line (MRL); a series of squat, quickly built Quonset huts connected to one another by trenches, all reinforced to resist floodwater. It rests at the edge of a canal, with docks for a pair of patrol boats. Surrounding the outpost is a low reinforced wall manned by PanOceanian soldiers. A solider meets the transport as it settles onto the dirt landing pad.

Corporal Al Santiago, Captain Briggs's personal aide, greets the players as they land. He uses his good nature to put the characters at ease as he escorts the PCs to Captain Briggs. They head for the outpost's docks, where he's briefing Lt. Drake before she goes out on canal patrol. He welcomes the PCs and introduces them to her, then provides them an overview of the situation at Outpost Peligro before ordering Santiago to act as the liaison for their visit. Players may perform a number of tests to evaluate the tactical situation at Outpost Peligro.

- **Observation (D2):** The PCs will notice the soldiers, while haggard, are squared away. Their equipment is very well maintained. If players enquire, the soldiers will state Briggs runs a tight unit.
- **Psychology (D1):** Morale seems high for a unit in such a precarious situation. The soldiers state it's because Briggs is a good commander that cares for them, but they'll overhear soldiers bragging about what they want to buy when they get home. They'll discuss purchases that are well outside their pay grade. If a character inquires they'll brush off the question or avoid discussing it any further with the characters.
- **Hacking (D2):** Any PC examining the local network will find it well fortified by Sgt. Clay Dixon, the outposts Infowar specialist. Hacking the system requires a **Dire (D3) test**. If Sgt. Dixon detects the breach, then a squad will respond whilst he fixes the vulnerability, increasing future attempts to **Epic (D5)**.
- **Athletics (D1) or Command (D1):** A PC examining the perimeter of the base can get a sense of the static defences. The character will determine the perimeter around the base is secure and will hold against Combined attacks.

After the PCs have finished their inspection, Briggs and Santiago will see them off. As the characters are leaving, Santiago will upload the evidence of the crimes committed by Briggs and the troops at Outpost Peligro to the characters' comlogs. Not long after lifting off, Sgt. Dixon will discover the breach. Briggs will take Santiago captive, and order Drake to shoot down the characters' transport, recover the evidence, and eliminate any witnesses.

LT. DELORES DRAKE**APPEARANCE**

A tall woman in her thirties, of mixed Northern European and Pacific Islander descent, with Maori tattoos from her service in the Croc Men. Her brown hair is cut in a typical high-and-tight military haircut and her brown eyes have a thousand-yard stare.

ROLEPLAYING

- Clever and gung-ho in combat, Brake will bait confrontations, and isn't above using hostages like Santiago or a refugee to draw the PCs out.
- She considers Capt. Briggs a good friend and trustworthy officer, but feels that Briggs doesn't go far enough.
- Drake is hot-headed and easily enraged.

BACKGROUND

Lt. Drake grew up on a tropical island in the Pacific. Her father died when she was very young, leaving her mother to raise her. It was an idyllic life of beach games and surfing until her uncle moved in.

Her uncle pulled her into the family business and found she was good at it. At nineteen, she was arrested and given the choice to join the military or go to prison: she chose the military.

ELITE**LT. DELORES BRAKE****ATTRIBUTES**

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	8	10	11	9	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	3	Movement	+1	—	Social	—	—
Fortitude	+1	1	Senses	+1	—	Technical	+2	—

DEFENCES

Firewall	9	Resolve	9	Vigour	10
Security	—	Morale	—	Armour	5

ATTACKS

- **Heavy Machine Gun:** Range L, 2+6 (N) damage, Burst 3, Unwieldy, Spread 1, Unsubtle
- **Spiked Knuckles:** Melee, 1+9 (N) damage, 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Piercing, Vicious 1

GEAR: Drop Bears (x2), Powered Combat Armour (gain up to +3d20 on Brawn tests with +3 complication range)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Suppressive Fire:** By taking a Brace action as a Minor Action and expending one additional Reload, she may grant her HMG the Indiscriminate quality. Reduce the weapon's damage to 1+3 (N) when she attacks in this fashion, though any associated qualities remain. The extra Reload required for this attack can be in addition to any used for the weapon's Burst value.
- **(1 Heat) Under your Skin:** Drake berates her target in an attempt to shake their resolve. Drake must be able to communicate with the target. Psywar Attack – Damage 1 + 4 (N), Vicious 2, Unsubtle, Stun.

SPECULO KILLER ATTACK

If you want to add a bit of excitement to this seemingly routine inspection, you can emphasize threat of infiltration. A Speculo Killer has taken on the guise of a soldier at the Outpost and attempts to destroy the outpost's communications shack. The alien will kill the soldiers staffing the shack and attempt to destroy the primary Maya node. See *Infinity Corebook* p. 473 for the Speculo Killer profile.

Drake excelled as a soldier and was recruited into the Croc Men. She's fought in a variety of conflicts and fronts from fighting the EI forces on Paradiso, to counter-insurgency operations against Yu Jing, for whom she has no love.

It was Drake who suggested they make money on the side through smuggling. She's used her uncle's connections with the Mafia to move the contraband.

CAPTAIN RAFAEL BRIGGS

APPEARANCE

A tall man in his late thirties, of South and North American descent, with short-cut black hair. He has a bit of stubble, a trimmed moustache, and a haggard look to his face. He never slouches.

NEMESIS

CAPTAIN RAFAEL BRIGGS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	13	9	12	9	8	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+4	2	Movement	+3	1	Social	+1	—
Fortitude	+3	1	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	10	Resolve	13	Vigour	12
Security	—	Morale	—	Armour	4

ATTACKS

- **Combi Rifle:** Range C/M, 1+8 damage, Burst 2, 2H, Expert 1, MULTI Light Mod, Vicious 1
- **Boarding Shotgun:** Range C, 1+8 damage, Burst 1, 2H, Knockdown, Medium MULTI
- **DA Mode (Secondary):** Vicious 2

GEAR: Heavy Combat Armour (with Torch)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Blue Line:** A policeman's social zone has Insular 2.
- **Breaching Insertion (1 Heat):** Briggs is trained in breaching and clearing rooms and facilities. A well-executed breach can leave enemies reeling and easy to pick off. By spending 1 Heat when Briggs arrives (including from reinforcements) the GM can allow his troops to execute a Breaching Insertion. First the GM selects any zone within the current engagement zone for Briggs to breach. Briggs can enter that zone through an obstacle and characters within the zone are affected.
- **Tactical Training:** Briggs can reroll up to 2 when making a ranged attack, but must accept the new results. Additionally, they reduce the penalties for firing at a range other than a weapon's optimal range by one, to a minimum of 0.
- **Father Figure:** A father figure to his troops, Briggs is an active participant; troops under his command gain +4 Morale Soak.
- **(1 Heat) Skilled Tactician:** Once per turn, Briggs may use a Minor Action to provide orders to a friendly Fireteam within the same scene that is yet to be activated. If he succeeds at an **Average (D1) Command test**, any Momentum gained may be used by the active Fireteam during its next action.

ROLEPLAYING

- He cares for his troops as brothers in arms: he will do anything to make sure they get home safe.
- Captain Briggs will not tolerate having his competence questioned.
- Briggs blames the politicians and higher officers for the situation in Damburg. If the brass would just get him the support he needs they'd get the job done. He thinks they're wasting too much time debating.
- He speaks precisely and more slowly when he's angry, and he never yells.
- He's willing to kill to keep his enterprise secret.

BACKGROUND

Born on Neoterra, he spent time at university before joining the military. He found academic life didn't suit him, and the military was a chance to see the galaxy. Losing friends and soldiers on Paradiso has made him jaded and fatalistic.

CORPORAL AL SANTIAGO

APPEARANCE

A professional soldier in his early twenties, of South American descent, with a high and tight haircut.

ELITE

CORPORAL AL SANTIAGO

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	8	8	10	12	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	1	Movement	+1	—	Social	—	—
Fortitude	+1	—	Senses	+2	—	Technical	+3	2

DEFENCES

Firewall	12	Resolve	8	Vigour	8
Security	2	Morale	—	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+4 damage, Burst 1, 1H, Vicious 1
- **Neural Hacking Device:** CLAW-1, SWORD-1, SHIELD-1, GADGET-2, IC-2 +3 bonus damage, usually use
 - **CLAW-1 Gotcha:** 1+5 damage, Immobilise
 - **SHIELD-1 Exorcism:** 1+6 damage, removes Possession

GEAR: Light Combat Armour

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **System Shutdown (Elite – 2 Heat):** When inflicting a Breach, Santiago can spend 2 Heat to execute Disable Function as a special Breach Effect in addition to the normal Breach Effect. Restoring the disabled system requires a **(D0) Tech test**.
- **Evo Fireteam:** As the number of Evos deployed grew, one-on-one showdowns fell out of fashion in favour of mass combat engaging hundreds of Evos simultaneously. Evo training evolved rapidly to suit. The network of a fireteam can suffer a number of additional Breaches equal to the number of Evo Troopers in the fireteam before becoming incapacitated or eliminated.

ROLEPLAYING

Santiago is quick and to the point but respectful. He will always address officers and PCs as “sir” and “ma’am.”

Santiago will subtly feel out the characters to determine if they’re corrupt like his commanding officer. He needs to be sure he uploads the evidence to a character’s comlog whom he believes will give it to the appropriate authorities.

Unlike the other soldiers at the outpost, his morale is low. The stress of his crimes are bearing down on him. Regardless, he will be evasive if questioned.

BACKGROUND

Born and raised on Paradiso, Al Santiago grew up in Outer Ring of Aldstadt. His father was a factory worker. His family was his life, and when they evacuated their homes, while his family got off-world, he remained and joined the military. He wanted to make sure they could return home. He’s dedicated to driving the Combined Army off Paradiso.

SCENE THREE:
AFTER THE CRASH

The players awaken in the wreckage of their transport, having crashed east of Outpost Grief on the roof of a parking structure. Getting out of the vehicle requires an **Average (D1) Athletics test**, but the GM may spend Heat to generate other hazards and complications.

Once out of the wreck, the characters can investigate the crash. A **Tech (D1) test** confirms the damage is from friendly fire. Players who attempt to communicate with FOB Thunder will discover they can’t make contact for rescue due to jamming. Any character with Santiago’s evidence will discover a message waiting for them on their comlogs. He’s left a simple message, “Get this data to the right people. Tell my family I’m sorry for what I’ve done. Don’t trust Briggs or Drake. – Al Santiago”.

The evidence on their comlogs is detailed information about the activities of Briggs and Garland. The evidence includes the details of the smuggling operation and helmet camera footage from two days ago when Al Santiago shot Heather Nguyen.

The PCs may communicate with FOB Thunder by breaking through Combined Army jamming requires a **Tech (D4) test**. Telling their superiors about Briggs’s crimes marks him as a wanted man. The PCs are asked to apprehend him and gather any additional intelligence on the operation, but

ELITE

OZNAT, HUNT LEADER

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	10	9	10	8	9	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+3	2	Movement	-2	1	Social	+1	–
Fortitude	+1	–	Senses	+2	1	Technical	–	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	8	Resolve	10	Vigour	10
Security	–	Morale	2	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Combi Rifle**: Range C/M, 1+7 damage, Burst 2, Expert 1, Vicious 1
- **Light Grenade Launcher (Smoke)**: Range M, 2+6 damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Area (Close), Munition, Smoke 2, Speculative Fire
- **Morat Shock Scimitar**: 1+6 damage, Unbalanced, Grievous, Non-Hackable, Stun, Vicious 2

GEAR: Hungries Control Device, Nano-Coated Shock Blades, Morat Hunting Armor (+1 Armour, Medkit, Survival Kit, Rebreather, Nav Suite, Deployable Sensor (Motion Sensor), and tactical scabbards.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Morat Aggression**: The Morat’s brutal outlook grants +2 Morale Soak.
- **Hungries Control Device**: The Hungries Control Device removes the Mindless trait from Hungries and provides +1d20 for social tests to control the Hungries.
- **Hunters Eye**: Each turn, an Oznat can make an Average (D1) Observation test as a Minor Action to gain the benefits of an Exploit action against a single foe.
- **Menacing 2**: When an Oznat enters a scene, the GM immediately adds 2 point to the Heat pool.
- **Free Runner**: Reduce the difficulty of Acrobatics tests to move through, past, or over obstacles and hindering terrain by two steps, to a minimum of Simple (D0).

delivering the evidence to FOB Thunder is now their main objective.

MORAT HUNTING PARTY

As the characters get their wits about them, any PCs scouting the area will hear the howls of Hungries as the hunting party approaches. The Oznat is hunting the PCs after seeing their transport go down. She has four Morat troopers and a pack of fifteen Hungries accompanying her.

First, she’ll send in a few Hungries testing their reactions and tactics, while trying to hobble a character to slow the group. Her team ambushes anyone who splits off from the main group. She orders a retreat after taking a Wound. The character who causes the wound becomes her primary prey.

The hunting party provides an escape route for the players. Players who pass an **Education (D2) test** will know that Morat hunting parties always have transport, or a PC will hear the transport with an

HEAT

1 Heat: A random player is pinned inside the aircraft. To get unpinned, the player must generate three Momentum on an **Athletics (D1) test**, though other players may assist.

2 Heat: The player has lost an important piece of gear during the crash. An **Observation (D2) test** will locate the item. Failure means the item is lost.

3 Heat: The transport is leaking fuel and will explode fairly soon. PCs must pass an **Observation (D2) or Tech (D1) test** to recognize the danger and escape to safety before the transport explodes. Anyone caught in the explosion takes 2+6 damage with the Deafening, Incendiary 2, Knockdown, and Vicious 1 qualities from the blast.

TROOPER/ELITE

THE HUNGRIES

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	9	9	9	3	5	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+2	1	Social	–	–
Fortitude	+1	–	Senses	+1	–	Technical	–	–

DEFENCES (TROOPER)

Firewall	3	Resolve	5	Vigour	5
Security	–	Morale	2	Armour	2

DEFENCES (ELITE)

Firewall	3	Resolve	10	Vigour	10
Security	–	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Weaponized Arm-Claws:** Reach, 1+6 damage, Piercing 1, Parry 2, Vicious 1
- **Chain Rifle (Pretas Only):** C, 1+7 Burst 1, 2H, Spread 1, Torrent, Vicious 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Keen Senses (Hearing), Night Vision, Mindless
- **Calcereous Barbs (1 Heat – Pretas Only):** The symbiotic relationship between a Hungry and its parasite provide enhanced muscular function that enables the creature to launch deadly attacks with its vicious barbs. By spending 1 Heat, the Pretas can make a single ranged attack, which uses the profile for a Chain Rifle (above).
- **Natural Climber:** Hungries can climb on any surface with their claws including vertical and upside-down. They suffer no penalties when climbing and may reroll one d20 when making a Movement test.
- **Symbiont Parasite:** Hungries are largely driven purely by instinct. The Gaki – who lack a symbiont – possess an Intelligence score of 1, while the Pretas possess a score of 3.
- **Pack Hunters:** Hungries operating in a Fireteam of three or more gain one additional Momentum to their successful attacks.

Observation (D2) test. The players can steal the hovercraft and escape across the river. There are two Morat troopers and four Hungries guarding the hovercraft. The guards call the Oznat if alerted and the pack will return to the transport. The hunting party will try to recover their lost transport.

MORAT – OZNAT

War is the focus of Morat society and hunting is training for war. Morat women carry out hunting tasks and leading Oznats – teams of scouts and hunters – to chase down prey.

THE HUNGRIES

The speed and tenacity of this bastard race, discovered by the El on some long-forgotten world, makes them ideal light combat operatives. The two kinds are distinguished by the presence of a parasitic male symbiont in the cranial base of the elite female Pretas, which gives them a distinct edge over the Gaki when hunting.

SCENE FOUR:
ESCAPING THE
MRL

PCs must find transport to escape Aldstadt. There are three major sources to consider: Camp Sanctuary, PanOceanian troops, or smugglers. How they finally escape is up to them.

CAMP SANCTUARY

The small park surrounding *¡MayaNoticias!* Tower is the core of Camp Sanctuary. A small, stable community of almost a hundred refugees are led by Dr Gregg Boyle. The medical care he provides to the mercenaries and criminal gangs in the district makes Camp Sanctuary the closest thing to neutral ground in the Main Resistance Line (MRL).

A guard post at the entrance protects the refugees sprawled across the floors of *¡MayaNoticias!* Tower. Food and salvage are traded in a makeshift market that springs up during the day. The towers damaged satellite array will need repair before it can call for rescue. Acquiring the parts means turning to the black market and passing a **Thievery (D2)** or **Lifestyle (D3)** test. Repairing the array requires a **Tech (D1)** test.

Contacting headquarters will flag the location to Briggs and Garland. The players must repel the resultant attack and board the transport to escape. PCs can attempt a **Daunting (D3) Command test** to organize the tower's defence, with success granting them one Fireteam to direct, plus one Fireteam for each Momentum generated. The O-12 transport requires seven rounds to arrive from FOB Thunder and provides enough room for thirty people. Dr Boyle will ask the PCs to get the vulnerable out of Aldstadt, including Heather, Alison, and his son.

DR. GREGG BOYLE

Camp Sanctuary's leader and an O-12 doctor, he refused to leave the wounded behind during the evacuation. He's a cautious man who won't just let anyone into the camp. Someone must either vouch for the PCs, or they must prove themselves. He's suspicious of soldiers after they attacked Heather Nguyen. Showing him the evidence against Briggs will gain his trust. Use the Doctor profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 429.

HEATHER NGUYEN

A local reporter who originally wanted to do fluff pieces and celebrity news found herself trapped in a warzone with her daughter. She documented her refugee experience for Mayacasts. She was

HEAT

4 Heat: Briggs has disseminated misinformation citing the PCs as Combined Army agents. PanOceanian soldiers assume the PCs are alien agents, which adds two to their Intransigence and could lead to 'shoot first, ask questions later'.



COMBINED ARMY

Raiding from Outpost Grief, the Combined Army are a constant threat. If the Oznat is not defeated at the crash site, she will continue to hunt the characters until they escape the MRL.

Teams of Morat snipers also operate in the area, however, and cause constant grief throughout the city. To add tension, one such sniper and his spotter set up position overlooking an off-target O-12 supply drop. They then pin and toy with two teenagers (Tim and Allison, see Camp Sanctuary).

Alison and Tim risk the supply drop for medicine for Heather Nguyen. If rescued, they offer to lead the PCs to Camp Sanctuary. They tell anyone who mentions needing transport about Captain Carter. If they're allowed to help, the kids know the area well and provide a free Momentum for any tests related to navigation and stealth.

Avoiding the encounter results in the death of Alison and Tim. The PCs notice pictures of the kids at Camp Sanctuary, while Dr. Boyle and Heather are devastated by the loss of their children.

WHAT HAPPENS TO BRIGGS?

If the players don't capture or kill Captain Briggs, then the Mafia gets him off-world. Although a wanted man with a bounty on his head, he's brought into the Mafia for his military experience. Briggs will hold a grudge against the PCs and they'll earn a new enemy.

shot by Al Santiago and needs medicine to recover. She's determined to expose Briggs and his troops, and will want to transmit the evidence in a Mayacast. Use the Reporter profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 452.

TIM BOYLE

Tim is Dr. Boyle's thirteen-year-old son. A good kid who's developed a defiant streak, he wants to stand up to the *Rapazes* and sometimes lets his mouth get him into trouble.

ALISON NGUYEN

The sixteen-year-old daughter of Heather who's tough, cautious and sharp-witted. She's good at reading people and has the same curious streak that makes her mom a great reporter.

PANOCEANIAN TROOPS

Making contact with PanOceanian forces has risks. Regular ambushes have made them trigger-happy. Any attempts to gain the trust of PanOceanian troops must overcome an Intransigence score of 3. Once their trust is gained, they take the PCs to their outpost's commanding officer. The beleaguered officer requires a **Persuade (D3) test** to convince him to give the PCs a patrol boat. If they fail, the commander can't spare a transport.

CAT AND MOUSE

Lt. Drake will hunt the characters with a view to capturing them and recovering the evidence. Once she knows the problem is contained, she'll kill the characters. She'll initially feign a rescue mission to get into the best position. If the PCs engage in combat, Drake and her men will fight until three soldiers are neutralized or she suffers two Wounds.

Drake will give chase if the PCs flee. The flooded ruins provide the PCs a multitude of ways to evade Drake, and the PCs must generate four Momentum to escape by passing **Stealth (D2)** or **Survival (D2) tests**. Tests using other narratively appropriate skills to escape are performed at **Daunting (D3)**.

Drake's squad consists of two, five-member fireteams of Spec Ops Troopers (see *Infinity Corebook*, p. 455), and Sgt. Clay Dixon.

If the PCs escape Drake she updates Briggs, who will turn to Garland for help recovering the evidence. Briggs will assist Garland Drake and her two fireteams. If Briggs corners the characters, he'll use Corporal Santiago as a hostage to try to draw the characters out of hiding.

SUBMONDO UNDERWORLD

The smugglers in the MRL are called *Coioles*. They smuggle people across the Salzach for a price and fence looted valuables including technology, guns, drugs, data, and any other illicit goods. All criminal activity in the MRL is dominated by Roy Garland and his *Rapazes* gang, vicious criminals who respond to opposition to their dominance with violence.

BOSS ROY GARLAND

He's a large man with a potbelly who smiles a bit too much and cracks his knuckles when he's about to get violent. He's a vicious man who won't hesitate to kill someone.

He can't afford to see the operation exposed, so will hunt the PCs relentlessly to recover the evidence. When he tracks them down, he'll offer the PCs a deal to give up the evidence, but it will be a ruse to draw them out and kill them. If they're at Camp Sanctuary, he'll raid the tower to recover the evidence.

Use the Triad Boss to represent Roy Garland and the Gang Member and Gang Enforcer for his gang members (*Infinity Corebook* pp. 437 & 437, respectively)

CAPTAIN CARTER

A local *Coiole* who earned Dr. Boyle's trust, he has a noble streak and helps Camp Sanctuary from occasionally. Players can locate Captain Carter with a **Thievery (D2) test** and pay for passage with a **Lifestyle (D3) test**. Dr. Boyle will vouch for the characters if they saved Tim and Allison, providing two free Momentum on the test. Use the Pirate Captain, *Infinity Corebook* p. 447, for Sam Carter.

CONCLUSION

Whether extracted by air or forced to barter their way free through less respectable means, the characters can expect to wend their way back to relative safety once free of the MRL.

However they end up there, it should be clear that the PCs need to make their way to FOB Thunder, where their handler will expect an immediate debrief via secure uplink. If they have not already been taken care of, this can lead to the PCs being tasked with shutting down Briggs and Garlands' operations, perhaps with the assistance of the Yu Jingese navy docked at the FOB.

From their investigations, it is clear that the MRL needs positive reinforcement and further assistance before an offensive can be considered, with the PCs perfectly placed to oversee these tasks.

CHAPTER 7

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

A terrorist organization calling itself the Sons of Tomorrow is planning to detonate a dirty bomb in Earth's Free City of Jerusalem. While they've always been trouble, the Sons of Tomorrow are now operating on a scale above and beyond anything they've done before. Can they be stopped in time? And is there more to their sudden rise than meets the eye?

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

Bureau Noir intercept an unfolding terrorist plot and dispatch agents to Jerusalem to make contact with Alesandro Mattori, a Knight-Guardian of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre whose scouts have located the insurgents and are ready to strike.

Chained by strict orders, Mattori asks the agents to conduct the raid that he cannot.

Intel retrieved from the terrorists reveals two leads: the Futurec subsidiary MagnaObra are seemingly involved and a second attack will take place somewhere in Norway.

Futurec's involvement is tied up in X-1121, an underwater mine on Jupiter's moon of Europa. Investigating the base reveals a connection between the Sons and Futurec, the involvement of Alex Dijkstra from MagnaObra, and the location of the second planned attack.

The PCs are faced with a choice: head to Norway to combat a terrorist bombing at the Spitsbergen DNA vault, or track down Dijkstra in the Ceres belt before his trail grows cold.



BACKGROUND

Earth is not what it used to be. Beneath history, tourism, and nostalgia, Earth is a powder keg ready to blow. Most of Earth's 8.2 billion residents belong to either PanOceania or Yu Jing, with the significant remainder distributed across the planet's minor powers. For the latter, existence is a contentious affair. Many residents of these so-called "non-aligned nations" resent the Hyperpowers.

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: Earth's current instability is unacceptable. Compiling a list of the Sons of Tomorrow's targets and known associates is paramount. Positively identify as many of the terrorists and their accessories as possible, with no exceptions.

Ariadna: A physical note is handed over by one of the crew at Mattori's base — a Caledonian woman by the name of Muireall — that simply states "Be ready." A further encrypted transmission received en-route to Spitsbergen states "Dawn needs a Soybean sample. Do the right thing".

Haqqislam: Though little is known about them, The Old Man of the Mountain has deemed the Sons of Tomorrow to be an obstacle to the Search for Knowledge. Anything gleaned is welcome, but retrieving one of the terrorist's Cubes for study will go a long way towards making friends.

Nomads: Shortly after arrival on *Rihla*, a functionary working at the Nomad Commercial Mission delivers a message: Corregidor's miners are battling unsafe working conditions, and Tunguska is bolstering their case. Hard evidence of miner abuse needs logging.

PanOceania: A former PanOceanian intelligence asset, Samuel Petrikov of the Sons of Tomorrow has gone rogue. In no way can his identity be revealed. Instructions are clear: retrieve or destroy his Cube, then make sure he isn't found somewhere incriminating.

Yu Jing: Knight-Guardian Mattori is capable, but also gullible. He is likely to provide anything that might be needed during the assignment, including unprecedented opportunities to plant listening devices in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Two such devices must be planted. Getting caught is not an option.

Corporations: A handler makes contact during the process of gaining entry to X-1121. The interior is in shambles and interested parties want first choice when it's time to pick the bones. Backdoor entry using software provided is to be installed on an executive's terminal in the Administrative Dome.

Submondo: A message is received en-route to X-1121: "If you're reading this, then you're probably heading to the mine. We sent in a recruiter, Birdie Danielson, to draft disgruntled miners as cheap muscle. Small problem: somebody got there first and she put herself in jail rather than tangle with the competition. Spring the bird from her cage and make sure she gets out in one piece.

Mercenaries: An old acquaintance, Lyla "Dominia" O'Toole, is in over her head and might need rescuing. A little too quick to take risky jobs, Dominia's also a professional Wardriver who can take care of herself; it's not like her to be this jumpy. So geists can assist with detecting transmissions, the drop includes a comlog frequency and decryption key.

Considered unimportant by much of the Human Sphere, bitterness has cut deep. And now the untreated wound festers.

Nowhere is this more apparent than among the ranks of the Sons of Tomorrow. The collapse of the former Russian Federation spawned near-anarchic states across the Caucasus sub-district. With no Mother to watch over the power vacuum, chaos reigned. *The Sons of Tomorrow* sprang from the maelstrom.

Despite being a minor force in the region, their incendiary rhetoric and willingness to employ extreme measures has made them a respectable threat. Their grandiloquent neo-luddite, anti-Concilium rhetoric is mostly window dressing. Their primary goal is much simpler: they've been ignored for generations, but now that ends.

MISSION BRIEFING

Dispatched to the Sol system, the characters are instructed to rendezvous at Caravanserai Rihla for a briefing. Arrival at the busy orbital prompts a secure transmission and directions to the meeting room that hosts their contact.

NEMESIS

ALEX DIJKSTRA

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
12	11	8	8	9	13	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	2	Movement	+2	—	Social	+4	4
Fortitude	+2	—	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	10	Resolve	11	Vigour	10
Security	—	Morale	4	Armour	1

ATTACKS

- **Nanopulser:** C, 1+5 ☹, 1H, Biotech, Subtle 3, —Torrent, Vicious 2
- **Viral Assault Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+6 ☹, Burst 3, Unbalanced, Biotech, Grievous, Toxic 2, Vicious 1s

GEAR: Armored Clothing, Deflector-2.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Contingency Plan (1 Heat):** Dijkstra likes to be at least one step ahead. When taking a Defence Reaction, he can spend 1 additional Heat to gain the benefits of Light Cover or Minor Interference.
- **Graceful:** Dijkstra moves with an almost effortless grace. He may reroll one d20 when making an Acrobatics test, but must accept the new result.
- **Natural Born Warrior:** Dijkstra is a student of most combat forms in the Human Sphere — and some beyond. He adds one Momentum to Defence and Guard Reactions. A successful Defence or Guard Reaction puts 1 Heat into the Heat pool.

Read or paraphrase the following:

In contrast to the utilitarian nature of O-12 war rooms, the Haqqislamite accommodations are downright luxurious. As you're getting seated, Colonel Helmut Greiser of Bureau Aegis' Psi Unit – and your mission handler – slinks into the room, the dark circles under his eyes betraying his casual demeanour. Whatever else people say about Greiser – which is usually a lot considering his reputation as a scoundrel – his information is solid.

"Agents," he rasps with a tired nod. "Thanks for coming on short notice. Let's not waste any time. My assets believe that a terrorist group called the Sons of Tomorrow, have somehow smuggled a dirty bomb into the Free City of Jerusalem.

"There has been no statement, but weapons like that are built for one reason: maximum civilian casualties."

He leans in, his face a mask of resolve. "We are not going to let that happen."

Greiser briefs the players on the Sons of Tomorrow and the rising tensions among Earth's non-aligned nations. He then refers them to Alessandro Mattori, Knight-Guardian of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and their contact on the ground. Greiser concludes by advising them not to trust anyone – including himself – and suggests they make their way to Earth with all due haste.

Regardless of the form it takes, the transport to Earth is piloted by a friendly individual named Alex. He makes idle small talk, but knows better than to press the PCs for mission details. This scene should be of minor consequence overall, though GMs may want to prepare some one-liners and anecdotes beforehand.

ALEX DIJKSTRA

APPEARANCE

Immaculate hair, dapper vest, smooth face; Dijkstra is practically the poster child for androgynous professionalism. Moving with the easy grace of a dancer, a smile is never far from his lips.

ROLEPLAYING

- Carries himself with an effortless class; whether pilot, executive, or mastermind, he plays the role with dignity.
- Closes his eyes and slightly inclines his head before speaking.
- Never tips his hand and resists the temptation to gloat.

BACKGROUND

A field agent for MagnaObra, Dijkstra is tasked both with fomenting unrest in the Sol system and finding a use for the floundering Futurec subsidiary. Having worked for MagnaObra for many years now, he's decided to kill two birds with one stone before other priorities emerge.

KEY INFO

- The attacks on Jerusalem and Spitsbergen have a simple motivation; Dijkstra's superiors want to untether humanity from its homeland. Regardless of other motivations, Dijkstra is committed to reducing the viability of the Sol system.
- A skilled field agent, Dijkstra routinely works incognito. By meeting with the characters in a less clandestine guise than usual, he's banking on being recognized at a later date.
- Dijkstra will fight if cornered, but he's no zealot – he'll try everything to slip away.

SCENE ONE: ARRIVAL ON EARTH

The sheer size of the Jerusalem megalopolis becomes apparent during the shuttle from orbit. Home to dozens of millions, it emerged from the conflicts of the 21st and 22nd centuries virtually unscathed. Subsequently, its historical and multicultural character has become the embodiment of Earth's image among the stars.

Blending historical with ultramodern, Jerusalem is truly a melting pot of cultures – a Muslim carpet merchant can argue loudly with his Jewish competitor, then share a cup of tea at the end of the working day. Multiple tourist attractions dating back thousands of years can be within the city: the golden dome of Haram as-Sharif brilliantly reflects the morning light, pious Jews pray reverently at the Western Wall, and Christians flock to the site of Christ's crucifixion. Religious tolerance is far from uncommon in the Human Sphere, but rarely is it as seamless as in the Free City.

It is a dizzying journey through labyrinthine streets – walking on foot seems to take an age, travel by other means even longer.

Mattori's augmented reality geist hails the characters as soon as they set foot outside of the spaceport, providing directions to his office within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the city's historical district.

PLAYTEST TIP

FORESHADOWING

Dijkstra's plan requires him to get a read on the characters, but he's not here to gloat. Don't tip your hand, but do use a surreptitious moment to introduce the character.

FREE CITY, LONG WEEKENDS

Weekends absorb three days in Jerusalem – Fridays for Muslims, Saturdays for Jews and Sundays for the myriad Christian denominations.



KNIGHT-GUARDIAN ALESSANDRO MATTORI

APPEARANCE

Possessed of a refined agelessness, Mattori looks to be in his mid-to-late forties, but a decade in either direction wouldn't be surprising. The scar on his right cheek is a memento of a duel with a Dāturazi witch-soldier during the first stages of the Paradiso Offensive.

ROLEPLAYING

- While happy to assist Bureau Noir, Mattori is not suited to spycraft. Preferring an honest fight, he is clearly out of his depth when it comes to subterfuge.
- Gregarious and open, Mattori possesses an honest smile, though his eyes betray a bitter-sweet pragmatism.
- Absentmindedly rubs his scar when pondering a problem.

BACKGROUND

A curious blend of optimism and battle-tested practicality, Alessandro Mattori is a Knight of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre and a veteran of many wars. Originally from the Knights of Saint John, he is more than happy in his current role for he goes where the Hand of God takes him. He's fought across many worlds during his twenty years of service; participating in the evacuation of Damburg on Paradiso led to the scar on his face. He steadfastly refuses to have it removed, stating it reminds him of the price of duty, and his is not at its end.

KEY INFO

- Use the Father Knight, *Infinity Corebook* p. 435.
- Circumstances have altered his initial hope to use the characters as investigators; *The Sons of Tomorrow* have managed to infiltrate the city whilst the team were en-route, and he believes they're planning to strike soon. Alessandro now fully intends to employ them as an anti-terrorist strike team.
- Little can be said about the Sons of Tomorrow's motivations as they haven't issued statements or made demands. He remains adamant that someone else is behind all this, but can't explain why beyond the fact that they are suddenly highly organised and effective.
- His scouts have tracked the terrorists to a shipping & receiving facility in the *Sheikh Jarrah* district. The operation is currently mired in red tape — property damage is of little concern, but civilian casualties are.

MATTORI'S BRIEFING

Mattori adds little information beyond the briefing already received. He is deeply troubled by a group like the Sons of Tomorrow having access to radioactive materials and remains focussed on moving quickly; his scouts have located the Sons' base of operations and he sees no reason to delay.

Memory recall or geist-assisted research can prompt an **Average (D1) Education test**, with success recalling the fact that their forces are a mix of trained operatives and zealots. They swarm with numbers, but most of their outfit are untrained volunteers. One point of Momentum can be used to discover an additional fact:

- An assassination attempt on the governor of Krasnodar was needless and indiscriminately violent. Many innocents died, though the governor was not among their number.
- They successfully sabotaged a power plant in Volgograd, causing catastrophic failure in the middle of the day. The bloated body count means these people are ruthless.

PLANNING THE OPERATION

Time is of the essence. Mattori's knights need omnilateral authorization to take military action, but O-12 has *carte blanche* here. He asks the group to be his hammer and take the base themselves. Though unable to send troops, he can offer the following support:

- Infiltration and exfiltration transport, either in the form of a VTOL (with pilot) or an inconspicuous armoured truck.
- The armoury contains light and medium combat armour, swords, pistols and Combi Rifles, as well as D-Charges and other explosives. Anything restricted to a Military Order is off-limits, but the characters can readily kit themselves for a raid.
- Logistical support, blueprints of the facility, and a map of the district.

Mattori prefers clear battle lines, but raiding a warehouse in the middle of the city makes stealth a more practical option. He supports their ultimate decision whatever their choice, but warns them to be careful as the Sons of Tomorrow would be incapable of pulling this off by themselves. He has one, and only one, request for the characters: Find out who's pulling their strings.

SCENE TWO: THE SHEIKH JARRAH RAID

A neighbourhood on the Free City's East side, Sheikh Jarrah bears the curse of perpetual transition. This once-proud district has changed hands so many times, that one refugee ghetto barely had time to set down roots before the next would arrive. Today, its urban decay and ubiquitous poverty stand in sharp contrast to the thriving Free City; a reminder that Earth isn't all tourism and smiles. People living here have learned not to ask questions when a large group of strangers moves in – better for everyone that way.

Considerably more crowded than the rest of the Free City, Sheikh Jarrah has no shortage of traffic, pedestrian or otherwise. The warehouse is situated at the base of a hill below a waste processing facility near the edge of the neighbourhood. The unpleasant aroma means the warehouse is in a less-densely populated locale, though it's still very much part of the district.

People here avoid foreigners, especially if they look armed. Interacting with them will be tricky, but not impossible. A **Challenging (D2) Persuade** or **Dire (D3) Lifestyle test** allows the characters to learn that some foreigners moved in under the cover of darkness some nights ago. Each additional Momentum allows extra insight:

- They brought several trucks and unloaded what looked like several heavy crates.
- Some loaded heavy boxes onto their trucks and drove off yesterday.
- There is no exact head count, but there appear to be a dozen or so on-site.

THE WAREHOUSE

The warehouse is the worst example that the dilapidated district can offer. Rust, broken windows, and jagged edges on the roof attest to the disrepair of the once sturdy construction.

There are two primary vectors of approach: a frontal approach from the city proper that grants access to the Loading Dock, or via the waste processing plant then down the hill leading to the back doors. Characters can access the facility's roof via either approach with an **Average (D1) Athletics test**; the

climb is fairly easy, though remaining undetected will prove difficult.

There are seven key areas of interest:

1. **Approach and Loading Dock:** There are a few trucks parked around the loading dock's massive gate, which is rusty, but seems in working order. A second, more conventional door also leads inside. A successful **Average (D1) Tech** or **Thievery test** will open either door, but one additional Momentum is required to avoid triggering an alarm.
2. **Approach and Back Doors:** These doors require an **Average (D1) Tech** or **Thievery test** to open, plus an additional point of momentum to avoid triggering an alarm. An **Average (D1) Observation test** reveals some hastily-rigged explosives set to bring the building down. With limited access through the rust-pitted walls of the warehouse, attempting to disarm the charges from outside requires a **Daunting (D3) Tech test**. Access from inside the building provides -1 difficulty.
3. **Main Floor:** A wide, open space with sturdy crates and barrels providing ample light cover. Some barrels display the hazmat sign.
4. **Bunkhouse:** Half-heartedly converted to a sleeping area, it's apparent that this isn't meant to be a long-term arrangement.
5. **Second Floor Office:** If it survives the assault, one of the terrorists has left themselves logged-in at the computer terminal here. This is an opportunity for the characters to gather any information they might otherwise miss.
6. **Ladder:** A ladder and hatch granting rooftop access.
7. **Roof:** The slight slope and debris make for unsure footing. Unless an **Average (D1) Acrobatics test** is passed prior to any movement, the rooftop counts as difficult terrain.

THE SONS OF TOMORROW

Comprised of a mix of veteran insurgents, recently-recruited miners, and downtrodden civilians, the *Sons of Tomorrow* encountered in this adventure possess varying degrees of competency. Use a combination of the Activist (p. 419), Terrorist (p. 459), and Thug B (p. 460) from the *Infinity Corebook* to represent this hodgepodge force, with an occasional Guard Dog (p. 481) for accompaniment.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

The residents of Sheikh Jarrah provide an opportunity to show the human cost of the conflict. Thirteen year-old Tariq can tell the team how his uncle was beaten and hospitalised by the foreigners for getting too close to their warehouse. Fatima, a student from the Hadassah Medical School, will curse the foreigners' mistreatment and abuse of locals. She also suspects they're trying to appeal to local young adults as an alternative to their current plight. Foreigners have a bad reputation in Sheikh Jarrah that seems well-earned.

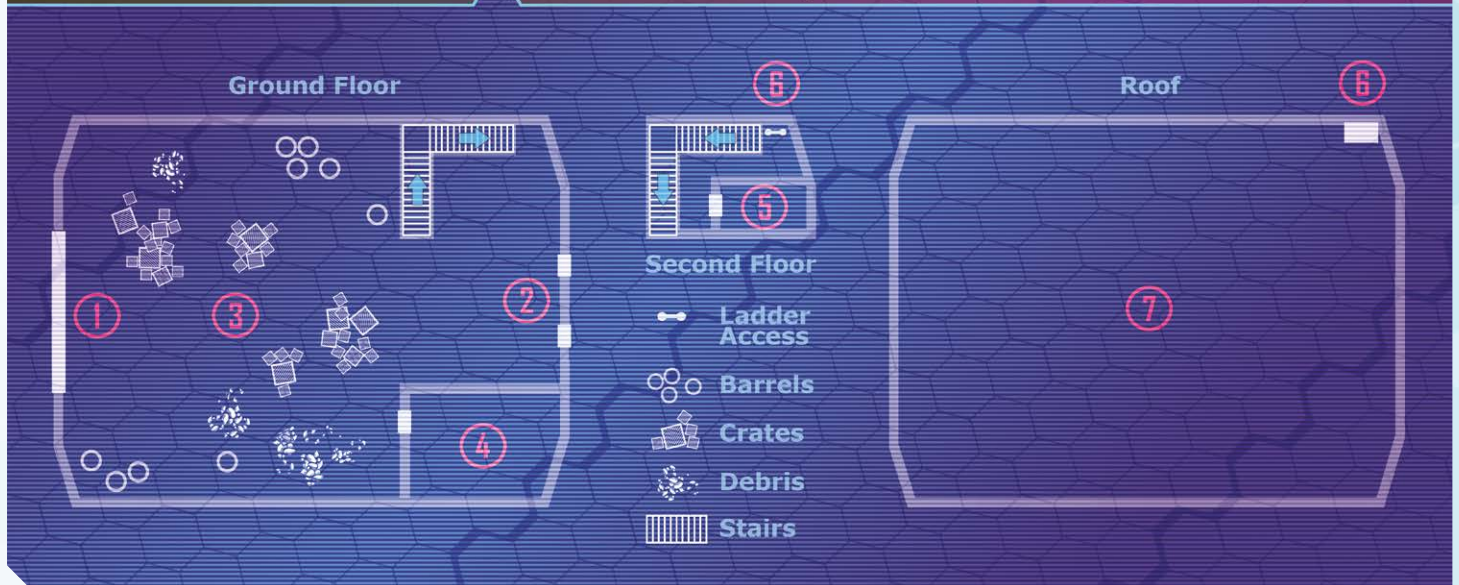
HEAT

2 Heat: Local authorities are alerted to the ruckus and will arrive in 4 turns (the Effect symbol counts as a 1). This spend is reduced to **0 Heat** if the explosives are triggered.



The Warehouse

Sol – The Day After Tomorrow



PLAYTEST TIP

FORCES ON DECK

For any of the scenarios in this adventure, feel free to adjust the number of opponents based on your group. Remember that Heat can be spent to call in reinforcements if things seem too easy; in this case, it's entirely plausible for additional Sons of Tomorrow to be nearby.

SONS OF TOMORROW WAREHOUSE ROSTER

AREA	FORCE
Area 1: Approach and Loading Bay	1 Thug B and 1 Guard Dog, 50%
Area 2: Approach and Back Doors	1 Thug B and 1 Guard Dog, 50%
Area 3: Main Floor	2 Activists, 2 Thug Bs
Area 4: Bunkhouse	2 Activists (sleeping)
Area 5: Second Floor Office	1 Terrorist
Area 7: Roof	1 Terrorist

TACTICS

The Sons of Tomorrow are not expecting an attack. They have set a patrol routine, a rooftop sentry, and a rudimentary alarm system to provide advance warning of any trouble. Once alerted, they congregate in Area 3 and make use of the cover there. The *Sons of Tomorrow* will fight relentlessly while victory seems possible, though one of them will make for the explosives and attempt to bring the building down if that changes. Triggering the explosives requires two turns. The building will collapse in waves – see *Disappearing Zones*, *Infinity Corebook*, p. 109 – unless the explosives have been disabled, in which case, nothing happens.

THE BOMB

Aside from empty crates that held Teseum ore, barrels for radioactive waste and other assorted

hazardous materials, and a great deal of conventional explosives, the warehouse is mostly bare. The dirty bomb itself dominates the interior of one delivery truck's cargo space. While the device doesn't have enough power to level the district, it will make it unsuitable for human habitation for some time. A successful **Challenging (D2) Science** or **Daunting (D3) Analysis** test indicates that this bomb doesn't account for all of the radioactive material, which means an unknown quantity is still loose somewhere.

AFTERMATH

If the terrorists succeeded in blowing the building, gathering clues will be messy, but possible. The collapse of the structure destroys much of the evidence, though the GM may allow some of the subsequent information to be gleaned from amongst the rubble and corpses.

INTERROGATION

Survivors are talkative, though not terribly cooperative. They spit defiance over corrupt systems and abandonment of the working class, with a dose of “death to all nations/corporations” sprinkled in. What they won't do, however, is willingly divulge information on their organization's other plans. Treat such interactions as Psywar. Each Metatonia inflicted reveals one piece of the following information:

- The terrorists intended to carry out their operation on the following day. Their target was

FUTUREC

A subsidiary of MagnaObra, Futurec owns several trading and logistics operations in the Sol system. They also dabble in heavy industry due to mines they own on Earth and other interplanetary locations. Their CEO, Roger Caudon, has recently disappeared from the public eye. Speculations were rife that he was responsible for the company's recent financial troubles and was due to be replaced, but everything has gone quiet since.

A **Challenging (D2) Lifestyle test** reveals that Caudon is rumoured to be extremely ill. Additional momentum will net more information:

- Caudon's is in fact terminally ill. Rumoured to be suffering from Creutzfeld-Jakobs disease, his disappearance from the public eye is to ensure a quiet transfer of power to a successor.
- MagnaObra has no interest in Futurec's succession. They're frustrated its underperformance division seem intent on shutting the entire division down.
- While it's never been proven, MagnaObra has been linked to terrorist organizations in the past. Alarming profit doesn't seem to be their primary motivation, which makes the reason for such ties dangerously unclear.

the seat of government for Free City; the *Safra* square municipality complex.

- Some have left to participate in a different assignment – something about a “vault job” in Norway.
- Many freedom fighters here are former miners from Jupiter's moon of Europa. They mined the X-1121 installation for a company called Futurec. Horrendous conditions definitely contributed to their revolutionary zeal.

Several members of the cell possess Cubes, including some that have recently been modified to disrupt the recorded data with a highly localized EMP burst upon the user's death. Clearly intended to wipe the Cube's data, the incomplete modification seems to have been botched in its haste. The work is traceable to X-1121's medical facility.

INVESTIGATION

The labels for the hazardous material containers identify their point of origin as X-1121, though examining the crates reveals little else.

Analysing the number of cots and lockers will confirm that several of the cell's members remain unaccounted for. A **Challenging (D2) Analysis or Observation test** will recover a receipt for a flight to Svalbard, Norway.

If the data terminal in Area 5 is unscathed, accessing it requires a **Challenging (D2) Hacking test**. Success reveals that the warehouse has continuously changed hands over the past year, though a half-dozen of the shell companies that owned it can be traced to Futurec. One additional Momentum uncovers a communication between the base leader and someone identified as “D.” The leader appears upset over the reassignment of forces, but is icily reassured by D. that both the Norway job and a VIP escort through Rihla are just as important.

LEADS

Between interrogation and investigation, the characters should unearth clues to direct them towards Rihla and X-1121. They should also conclude that there's an operation in Norway, but unless they somehow correctly deduce that the terrorists are targeting the Spitsbergen DNA vault, the objective there remains pure conjecture. While the DNA vault will appreciate a heads-up, there's not enough to act on.

Mattori's people can provide support to stumped characters by providing leads to smaller terrorist cells that might reveal information. Alternatively, Mattori can deliver both leads within 3ND days. Add 3 Heat to the pool in this case, plus 2 Heat for each Effect rolled. The adventure will proceed as normal, but the terrorists will have had additional time to prepare.

SCENE THREE: INFILTRATING X-1121

Getting to X-1121 require that the characters head back to Caravanserai Rihla. If they didn't see much of the orbital then, they now have a chance to explore. The constant stream of visitors coming and going makes Rihla a hotbed of activity and the perfect staging point for infiltration of X-1121.

Greiser can provide additional intelligence as necessary, but the base keeps sensitive information on its secure local datasphere. Remote hacking is possible, though Greiser notes that accessing Futurec CEO Roger Caudon's office on X-1121 will unearth any incriminating physical evidence; he's confident they'll find some there. A combination of physical stealth and Psyop can grant direct access.

FLEXIBLE CLUES

This raid can play out in several ways, some of which might destroy important information. While the player's actions should have consequences, they also require leads to follow, so feel free to move the clues around if necessary; if there's no one alive to interrogate, dispense some information via a comlogs, for instance. It's not only entirely logical for clues to reside in a number of places, it'll also keep the adventure moving.

PLAYTEST TIP

VAULT-CAMPING

Some players may wish to head to the Spitsbergen DNA vault await the terrorists attack, which is fine. The Sons of Tomorrow make their move after a few days using waves of terrorists drawn from the previous roster. Assuming they survive, the players can now investigate Futurec at their leisure.

However, Dijkstra will now have had ample time to retrieve the transponder and flee the system. If this occurs, replace the IFF Transponder from Caudon's office in *Scene Three* with a handwritten note that reads: “Thanks for giving me time to prepare, I do so loath when investigators rush me. Be well, detectives – let's not do this again eh? D”. Insert recurring antagonist to future proceedings.

SECURITY

Security varies across the site. Domes A and B house Erikson's undisciplined goons (use Thug A from *Infinity Corebook* p. 459, roughly two goons per character). If a fight breaks out, they'll swarm the characters and trust to superior numbers.

Dome C has a small rotation of Elite CSUs (*Infinity Corebook* p. 427), though they won't hesitate to call for backup if things get hot.

GETTING TO X-1121

Greiser will inform the characters of a Futurec Recruitment Drive being held on Rihla. Two NPCs of note oversee the drive:

- **Cody Erikson**, a Futurec Recruiter looking to hire muscle to keep the X-1121 miners "in their place." If the characters can convince him to hire them they'll be able to infiltrate X-1121 as hired security. Use the Gang Enforcer stats on *Infinity Corebook* p. 437.
- **Valarie Kaufman**, a mercenary tech specialist. She stands out among the crowd and seems more interested in scouting than hiring. Achieving a Metanoia on Kaufman will allow her to reveal that her company is protecting someone from Futurec and she's here ensuring it happens. If her trust is gained, she'll make an introduction. Use the Wardriver stats on *Infinity Corebook* p. 461.

If the characters gain Kaufman's cooperation, she'll introduce them to the Black Thorn Mercenaries (Accessibility 1) who are currently protecting Dr. Johan Roberts.

Disgusted by his experiences on X-1121, Dr. Roberts is leaving the system. While unwilling to reveal his reasons, he'll happily aid the characters in striking a blow against Futurec. Roberts' will offer his keycard and biometric samples if convinced of the plan, which will grant access to Dome B through a private entrance. He'll also advise them to state

they're "acting on Dijkstra's orders" if questioned, which should at least get them in the door. If the characters ask who Dijkstra is, Kaufman will end the interview in the interests of her client's safety, much to Robert's relief.

Roberts can also point the characters toward his former employer and the site's superintendent, **Jacques "Forktongue" Toulouse**. A doughy, sweaty man primarily concerned with his own advancement, Toulouse will begin hyperventilating if anyone mentions "Dijkstra's business". Inflicting a Metanoia effect on Toulouse can grant the characters access to Dome C.

If Erikson hires the characters, he'll arrange transportation to X-1121 and grant security clearance for Domes A and B. The characters have free rein there so long as they don't compromise their disguises.

X-1121

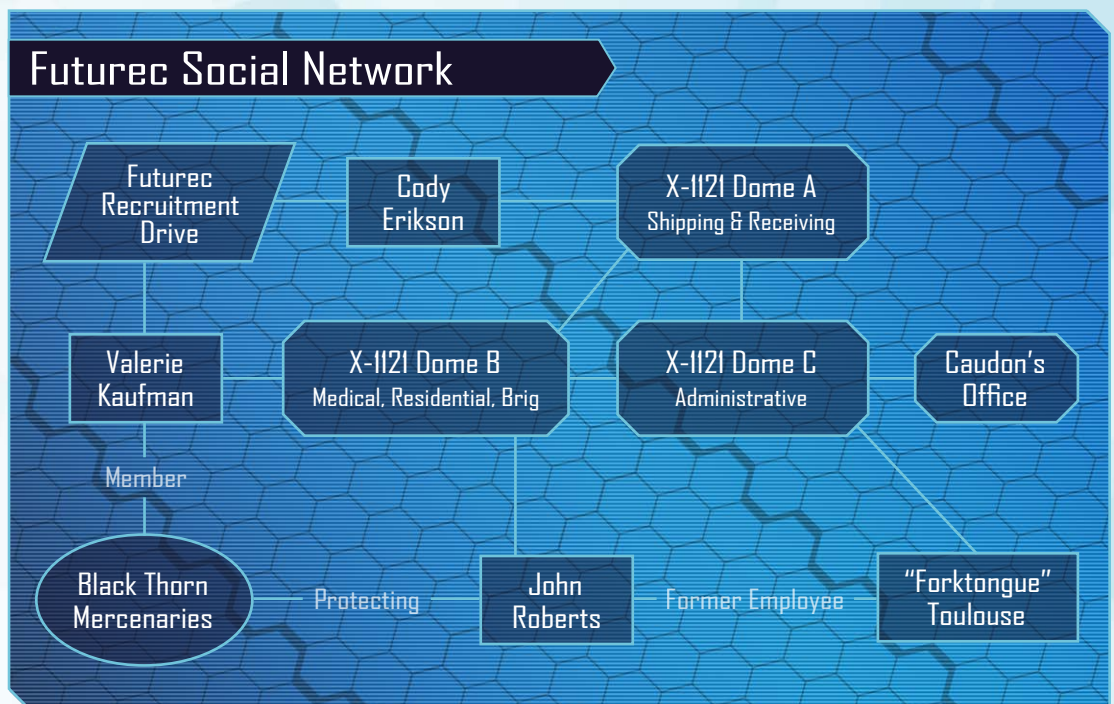
X-1121 consists of three underwater domes connected by reinforced tunnels. Gaining access to the private site will be tricky, but is entirely plausible.

Dome A: Shipping and Receiving (Accessibility 2).

The primary entry point and thoroughfare for the base boasts a large dock and low-grade on-site security. The workers here look miserable.

Dome B: Medical, Residential, and Brig (Accessibility 3).

The facility's on-site detention centre, armoury, and med-bay are all densely populated. The



med-bay has equipment for accessing and altering Cubes, as well as numerous samples of radioactive material. Accessing on-site records requires multi-factor authorization (such as Dr. Roberts' credentials) or a **Challenging (D2) Hacking test**. The records reveal a psychological evaluation of on-site workers that documents extreme stress, exposure to radiation, and several other forms of worker abuse, though the physician's name has been erased. Each Momentum can reveal additional facts:

- Biometric signature data for Superintendent Toulouse – incorporating this data will reduce the difficulty of all Hacking tests in X-1121 (with the exception of Caudon's office) by two steps, to a minimum of 1.
- Details on retrofitting miner's Cubes with dangerous (and illegal) flash-wipe functionality.

Dome C: Administrative (Accessibility 3).

A maze of conference rooms and offices that contain a wealth of mundane data on the corporation; the most secure files are kept in executive offices, with Caudon's at the top of the chain. In addition to financial and personnel data, a **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** will reveal financial records implicating Toulouse in embezzlement. One Momentum will uncover a memo in which Dr. Roberts' raises a formal protest over the transfer of several miners as they are entirely unfit for duty. He posits that a violent incident is likely. There is no response.

Caudon's Office (Accessibility 3)

Gaining access requires a **Dire (D4) Hacking or Tech test**. Apply -1 difficulty to the test for each set of biometric data the characters have acquired. Alternatively, they can attempt to gain access via the comlogs of the Corporate Security Unit patrols. The CSU's zone gains Insular 4; getting their comlogs will likely require a more direct approach.

Once inside, several items stand out:

- An IFF transponder for Alex Dijkstra, a MagnaObra executive in the system.
- Caudon's paper correspondence. Dijkstra has smuggled him into Praxis, where Bakunian physicians will "get creative." There are no digital records of this information.
- A sticky note with seemingly random code scrawled over it.

A **Daunting (D3) Hacking test** will access Caudon's terminal. Alternatively, a **Daunting (D3) Analysis test** can be used to decipher the encrypted

password on the sticky note. Once initially logged-in, the characters can acquire information from any other terminal in the base. The initial test also uncovers Caudon's diary, which details his struggle with Creutzfeld-Jakobs disease, the terminal diagnosis, and Dijkstra's promised cure. Additional Momentum can reveal:

- Conversations with Dominia O'Toole, a mercenary hacker hired to assist a break-in at the Spitsbergen DNA vault. His personal notes mark her as a loose end to be tied up.
- A list of recent transfers to Spitsbergen, the Free City of Jerusalem, and several other sites across the Human Sphere.

Seemingly of its own volition, a screen hums to life as the characters prepare to leave, revealing the smiling visage of Alex Dijkstra.

Read or summarize the following:

The face of Alex, the pilot who first flew you to Earth from Rihla, flashes that same debonair smile, but with a hint more teeth.

"Hello detectives. It seems you have something that belongs to me. Caudon's dementia's starting to get worse. I suppose remembering my transponder was too much to ask," he sighs. "Still. I know when I'm cornered, detectives. The question is, do you?" He pulls up another display revealing the Spitsbergen DNA Vault.

"As we speak, the Sons of Tomorrow – You've met yes? Joyless folk. Anyway, they're off to irrevocably destroy what remains of Earth's seed vault. Enthusiastic bunch, if nothing else."

He raises his hands in mock surrender. "You've got me dead to rights – with that transponder, you could track me down, and slap me in shackles – or worse."

"Or, you could take that same transponder, head to Norway, and keep those zealots from doing something there's no turning back from."

Dijkstra's not averse to staying on the line and is more than happy to explain the conundrum. Every second of delay improves his odds of survival. The political gridlock of the Sol system means that very few entities move with real speed. If the characters pursue Alex and warn the authorities about Spitsbergen, it's unlikely to prevent the atrocity. The characters heading to Norway and sending authorities after Dijkstra are odds he'll happily take. Either way, the clock is ticking; time to make a decision.

PLAYTEST TIP

FUTURE ADVENTURES

The Sons of Tomorrow – and by extension, Futurec and MagnaObra – could conceivably engender all manner of trouble across the Human Sphere. This is a great place to seed plot hooks if planning a campaign, but even if not, tracking down terrorist cells across the Human Sphere provides an excellent launchpad for misadventure.



THE VAULT CREW

The opposition depends on whether the characters proceed here from *Scene Two* (in which case they are caught unaware), or following *Scene Three* and/or *Scene Four* (in which case they are mid-operation). They plan to set off the dirty bomb in the Edible Seeds Vault, effectively ruining the samples. Dijkstra's explanation resonated deeply: force humanity to move forward, to innovate. That means letting go of the past; by any means necessary.

TACTICS

In either case, things aren't proceeding to plan. Once aware of the characters, the terrorists will try to prevent them from reaching Vault B and their dirty bomb. An ambush in Area 5 seem the best option.

SONS OF TOMORROW VAULT ROSTER

AREA	FORCE	FORCE (MID-OPERATION)
Area 1: Outside the Vault	2 Police, 3 Thug B	
Area 2: Entrance Hall	1 Activist, 1 Terrorist	1 Activist, 1 Terrorist
Area 3: The Tunnel	2 Activists	2 Activists
Area 4: Security Office	Dominia	Dominia
Area 5: The Main Chamber	4 Thug B	2 Thug B
Area 6: Vault A		
Area 7: Vault B	3 Police, 2 Thug B, 2 Terrorist	2 Thug B, 2 Terrorist
Area 8: Vault C		

PLAYTEST TIP PANOCEANIA

If you haven't already, make sure to identify one of the terrorists as Samuel Petrikov to any PanOceania players.

PLAYTEST TIP MERCENARIES

When the group arrives, Mercenary characters should receive an encrypted transmission on Dominia's frequency. Needing immediate extraction, she is willing to cut deals to get out alive. If she somehow slips away in the chaos, she sends another encrypted data packet containing a full brief of everything she knows and a personal note: "I owe you one. Probably several. -Dom."

SCENE FOUR: SPITSBERGEN DNA VAULT

Spitsbergen is an archipelago north of continental Norway. The Global Seed Vault was established to preserve the bio-diversity of Earth. Buried deep in the everlasting glaciers here, it's now in the process of relocating to Svalarheima as PanOceania claims that Earth's political volatility makes it dangerous for the vault to remain where it is. They have no idea how right they are.

IF ENTERING THE SITE DIRECTLY FOLLOWING SCENE THREE

The transponder signals the terrorists, who hold off their assault in expectation of Dijkstra. The Sons of Tomorrow spring into chaotic action once they spot the characters. Local security (Police Troopers from *Infinity Corebook* p. 449) and terrorists are fighting around and throughout the facility, but no bombs have yet gone off.

IF ENTERING THE SITE AFTER SCENE FIVE

The vault's approach is littered with exploded vehicles and charred corpses. Faint shouts can be heard from within. The characters' geists inform them that radiation is also emanating from inside.

ENTERING THE VAULT

Multiple vehicles including off-road trucks and VTOLs are scattered along the approach to the vault. The main door is wide open and dead bodies litter the corridors. Whether caught early and unaware or mid-operation, the attackers paid a high price for taking the facility, with the Sons of Tomorrow dead outnumbering security by at least three to one.

The facility consists of eight distinct locations:

- 1. Outside the Vault:** Landing area carved into the mountainside.
- 2. Entrance Hall:** A series five doors. Usually locked down, the entire corridor is blown open by the time the characters arrive.
- 3. Tunnel:** A long shaft. Various carts, crates, and machinery have been strewn about, creating difficult terrain, but providing a mix of light and heavy cover.
- 4. Security Office:** Dominia is holed up here. She won't open the doors without good reason.
- 5. Main Chamber**
- 6. Vault A:** Standard Flora.
- 7. Vault B:** Edible Crops.
- 8. Vault C:** Extinct Crops.

GENERAL FEATURES

Ice Cold: To preserve the integrity of the samples, the temperature inside is a frigid -18C.

Stone Construction: The tight, winding corridors carved into the mountain present a tactical problem to assaults.

Bulkheads: Reinforced blast doors dot the facility. Opening them normally requires a **Daunting (D3) Tech test**, but this shouldn't be an issue for the players (See *Unexpected Help*, below).

Seed Vaults: The doors to all three Vaults are heavily reinforced, requiring a **Dire (D4) Hacking, Tech, or Thievery test** to open. When the characters arrive, the door to Vault B — Edible Crops — is open. If they chose to come straight here instead of pursuing Dijkstra, they see racks of neatly packed and labelled seeds.

If the Player Characters opted to give chase to Dijkstra, the explosion has destroyed or contaminated all of the seeds.

UNEXPECTED HELP

Security cameras follow the characters' every move, but no alarm is raised. Their operator, "Dominia" O'Toole, has seen enough. Whatever she thought she was signing up for, this wasn't it. She locked herself in the security room during the assault, leaving the remaining attackers bereft of Infowar support. The Sons are split between advancing or trying to flush her out.

Dominia will help where she can by opening doors, flooding the terrorists with fire suppressants, jamming their comms, and so on.

LYLA "DOMINIA" O'TOOLE, MERCENARY WARDRIVER

APPEARANCE

Bright orange-red hair, green scarves, and a petite hyperactive frame, provide Dominia with an almost birdlike quality.

ROLEPLAYING

- Possessed of a darkly glib sense of humour.
- When stressed, she inhales sharply before starting to speak.
- Quick-witted and chipper, even in dire circumstances.

BACKGROUND

Hired to assist with a break-in and paid to not ask questions, she kept her mouth shut. She found her answers using her hacking skills and uncovered Roger Caudon, CEO of Futurtec, as her employer. Despite being prone to getting in over her head, she's generally a decent person. Discovering the truth of her contract has shaken her.

KEY INFO

- Being the last member to join the outfit, the others generally didn't talk to her.
- She's set up a backdoor into Futurec's system, which she readily shares with her rescuers. It applies -1 difficulty to all Hacking tests against Futurec systems, but she doesn't expect it to last long.

AFTERMATH

Some of the dead attackers are identifiable as miners from Futurec's X-1121 base. Providing she survives, Dominia attempts to escape unnoticed once the path is clear. She'll turn herself in if her escape is impeded, or if Mercenary characters have struck a deal to this effect. She freely shares what she knows and will readily offer to trade her services in exchange for a full pardon; given the circumstances, O-12 are unlikely to frown upon the offer.

ELITE

LYLA "DOMINIA" O'TOOLE

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	10	8	9	11	8	8

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	1	Movement	+1	—	Social	+1	—
Fortitude	+1	—	Senses	+2	—	Technical	+3	2

DEFENCES

Firewall	11	Resolve	8	Vigour	8
Security	1	Morale	—	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Boarding Shotgun:** Range C, 1+7 damage, Burst 1, 2H, Knockdown, Medium MULTI
- **Normal Shells Mode (Primary):** Area (Close), Spread 1
- **AP Slugs Mode (Secondary):** Piercing 3
- **Assault Hacking Device:** CLAW-3, SWORD-0, SHIELD-0, GADGET-0, IC-1; +2 bonus damage

GEAR:

Light Combat Armour, Grey Market Firewall (+1 Security)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Sharp Senses:** Dominia can reroll one d20 when making an Observation test, but must accept the new result.

SCENE FIVE: CONFRONTATION

Dijkstra's Transponder can be used as a "hot/cold" locator – tracking Dijkstra in this fashion will take time, but will eventually work so long as he remains in the Sol system.

Dijkstra makes his way to the spaceport on Ceres, where he arranges passage on a Corsair's ship. A disagreement on terms results in one dead pirate captain, and a crew of deckhands hastily preparing to depart. If the PCs arrive, Dijkstra will command his new crew against them in battle, but will attempt to escape at every opportunity – and by any means necessary.

ALEX IN CHAINS

Dijkstra surrenders without further incident if the characters corner him. Though shaken, Dijkstra is confident his stay in the legal system will be brief and uneventful. Whether that's the case or not remains to be seen.

UNHAPPY TRAILS

Dijkstra will be long gone if the characters elect to go to *Scene Four* before giving chase, rendering the transponder all but useless. Narrowing the search to the Ceres belt is possible, but tracking Dijkstra down will be an adventure unto itself.

PIRATES!

Dijkstra's deckhands (use *Pirate Deckhands*, *Infinity Corebook* p. 447) are disorganised and low on morale. Having said that, they still outnumber the characters by at least two to one, and the person who killed their boss is ordering them into battle. They'll fight, but Psywar attacks against them generate an additional point of Momentum.

CHAPTER 8

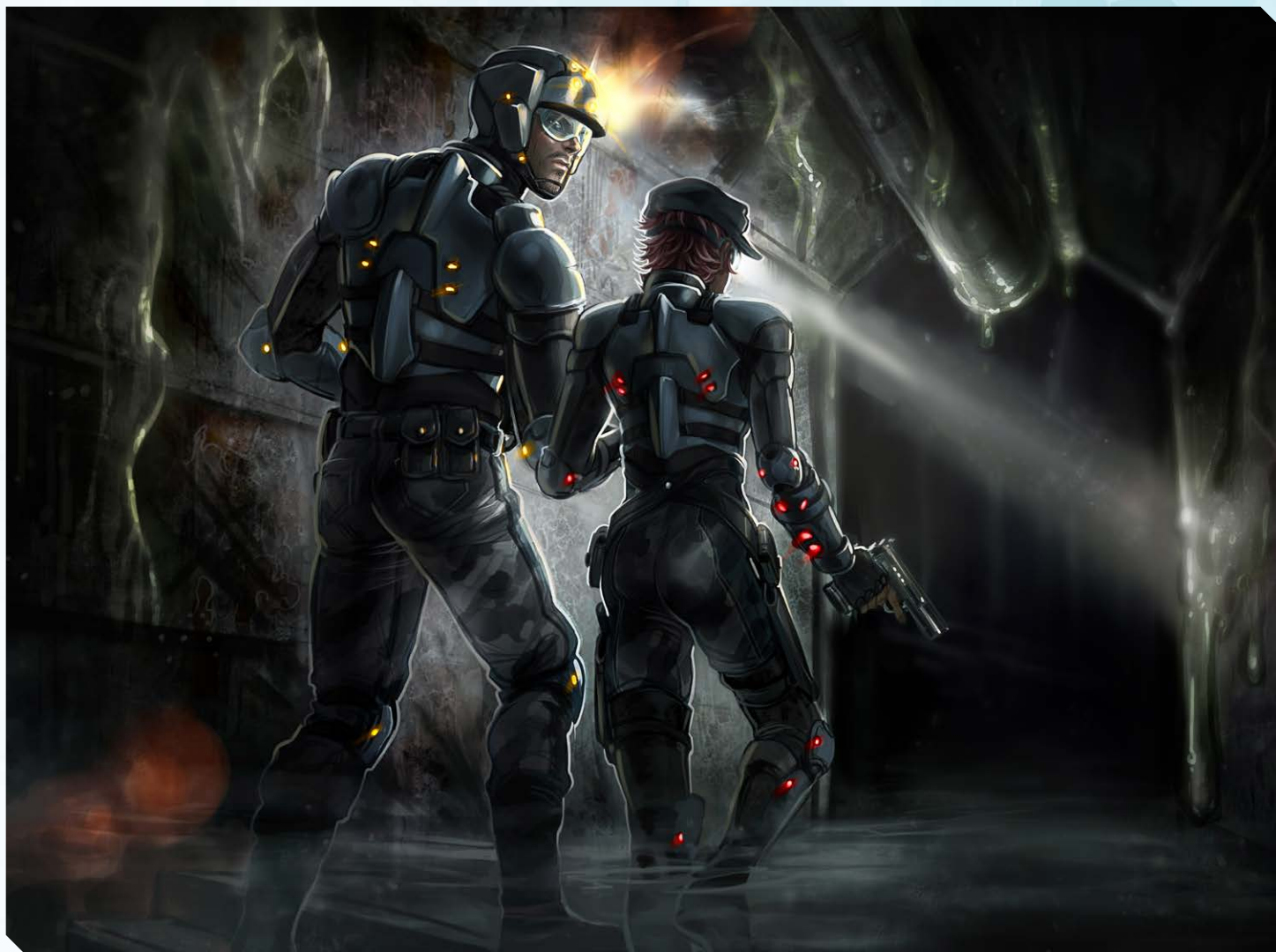
THE WRECK OF THE ARCHON

Two weeks ago, the fast courier vessel, *O-12S Archon*, left Svalarheima orbit on schedule, then vanished without a trace.

Twenty hours ago, an independent surface mining rig under PanOceanian contract discovered the *Archon* in the region south of Trollhättan, Svalarheima. Using melting pods, the rig carved through several meters of drifting snow and ice to determine that the courier vessel had attempted a crash landing. One of the miners – an O-12 agent deployed in secret to monitor relations between PanOceania and Yu Jing – sent an emergency encrypted dispatch to O-12 headquarters on Concilium Prima.

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

The PCs are the group of O-12 operatives sent to investigate the crash site. They will discover that the *Archon* carried back a dangerous alien computer program capable of corrupting technology and flesh alike. Their first stop will likely be the mining rig, where they will encounter survivors of a series of strange events centred around crewmembers that went to scavenge the *Archon*. This will probably lead to the wreck of the *Archon* and the discovery that the ship itself has fundamentally altered. Finally, they will need to stop the wreck's crew



from endangering Svalarheima with the Colonizer communication protocol, with the resultant loss of millions of lives if they are unable to prevent it.

BACKGROUND

Two weeks ago, whilst en route to Yutang, the *Archon* departed from Svalarheima to connect with the C-3 Circular. Two crewmembers, Melissa Yu and David Wenche, were developing new sensor capabilities. As the *Archon* approached the terminus of the Svalarheima wormhole, the duo fired up the ship's improved gravimetric sensors and began pinging off into the black. Much to their surprise, they found something that was big, regularly shaped, and moving under its own power.

Ambitious and looking to prove herself, Captain Yashima ordered the *Archon* to proceed beyond the systems ecliptic and intercept the object. Several days travel finally brought the object into view; a massive ship of alien design that was impenetrable to the *Archon's* sensors. Using the *Archon's* single shuttle, several crew members departed to undertake a physical examination. The panicked crew returned several hours later, less one member, and described an alien ship of indeterminate origin; almost certainly not a Combined Army craft, yet much larger and more advanced than anything known. Alien beings in stasis chambers roused as the crew attempted to salvage parts of the ship, causing them to flee and leave Gunner's Mate Panash Gruvier behind due to injury.

Captain Yashima made the decision to bolt for safety. Though the crew had not managed to capture any technology from mysterious ship, they had recovered a single biological sample: a severed limb from one of the aliens. They brought back more than they bargained for. Things took a strange turn during the return to the inner system. Beginning with intense nightmares and sensory disruption, matters then progressed to physical changes before terminating with a significant conflict aboard the ship.

The *Archon* re-entered Svalarheima's orbit three days later. Only two crew remained alive and the ship's systems had been either compromised or destroyed. The remaining senior officer, Flight Engineer Obermann, attempted a last-ditch landing on the planet's surface.

THE MYSTERY VESSEL

The alien craft is a Colonizer Ark Ship, sent off into the stars in aeons past by an advanced race of beings looking to spread their genetic progeny into the vast dark. The Colonizers have already been absorbed by the EI and twisted to a terrible

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: Available once Colonizer is discovered. The Colonizer represents a significant risk, but also an interesting case study. Prevent the spread of the infection, but also isolate it and procure a sample.

Ariadna: Despite an abundance of Teseum, the Ariadnans' extraction and refining processes are outdated by several decades. The PC is given the task of getting aboard the mining rig and stealing any proprietary technology in use there.

Haqqislam: Haqqislam are aware that a disgraced medical doctor, Silas Balazar, is likely present on the rig. Silas is wanted in connection with a series of deaths resulting from a medical technique that he pioneered. Secure his arrest, or ensure his silence.

Nomads: Corporation agents within O-12 appear to be working behind the scenes to facilitate favourable Teseum deals that provide monopolies on subsequent commodities and technologies. Find proof of this collusion.

PanOceania: The courier vessel was next destined for Yu Jing space and had likely dispatched plans outlining mining priorities for the next several years. Obtain a copy of the transmission, as it could provide leverage.

Yu Jing: The *Archon* was carrying several dispatches from a Yu Jing member of the Svalarheima Planetary Committee to his mistress on Yutang that could result in scandal. Leaving no trace, destroy the dispatches.

Corporations: The PC's handlers have an interest in the mining rig's operations – or rather, in its failure to operate. Stop the rig from functioning and lose its load, by whatever means necessary.

Submondo: A courier ship ripe for plunder! The ship's data files likely hide plenty of blackmail material. Make sure a copy is obtained.

Mercenaries: A supply of Teseum will provide an immense boost to the PC's outfit. Track down the names of the suppliers and broker a meeting to open discussions.

purpose in the form of the Skiávoros; the "Shadow Devourers" of the Combined Army. The Colonizers that the crew of the *Archon* stumbled upon are representative of the original race sent out into the stars, frozen in time and untouched.

The Colonizer threat presented in this scenario is not one of alien invasion or sinister corruptive force deliberately seeking to destroy mankind, but that of accidental and circumstantial infestation and destruction. The computer models and systems that allow the Colonizers to be so successful in their primary duty have subverted the integrated systems of the *Archon*, her crew, and the mining operation personnel. Spread through the initiation of communication, it dominates any system it connects to. If the PCs are unable to stop the converted humans from transmitting the Colonizer Overwrite Protocol through Svalarheima's planetary data network, then many, many more will succumb before ALEPH can successfully contain the spread of the data.



RIP AND RUN

A mobile surface rig like this is often referred to as a “rip and run” operation. When functioning as a refinery, the mostly-automated rig is approximately 100 meters. It operates large grinders that draw surface material up into the sorting bay, deposits ore on to the smelting floor, then loads large crucibles that burn away the impurities before separating and storing the refined Teseum. The surrounding outbuildings include several storage bays, a medical bay, communications, dining/recreation, and housing units. When mobile, it is divided into eight twenty-five by fifty metre trailers that are pulled by four tractors. Each rig is usually accompanied by several surveyor units and aerial drones. A rig can travel up to two-hundred kilometres per day.

MINING RIG HANDOUT

A map for the mining rig, suitable for handing out to players, is included on p. 86.

MISSION BRIEFING

This scenario can be introduced in a number of different ways, but will most likely with the PCs receiving a short and direct emergency dispatch from O-12:

Proceed to Svalarheima at haste. Travel to W43°15'22", S32°23'51" and halt a mining rig's efforts to salvage an O-12 spacecraft. Twenty hours ago, the rig communicated that they had found the remains of the Archon, an O-12 fast courier that has been missing for approximately three weeks. Confirm the identity of the vessel and determine the cause of the crash, secure all data and cargo aboard, and ensure that no data breaches or leaks have occurred. On completion of your investigation, contact O-12 to facilitate site security until our own salvage operation can be initiated.

THE MINING RIG

The mining rig squats on massive tractor treads in a broad field of ice-rimed grey and brown stone. A delicate mist hangs in the air as the heating pods evaporate the surrounding snow field and propel the sublimated ice kilometres into the air above. Thick curls of blackish smoke stream from the top, tainting the air with the odour of burnt metal and scorched plastics. The only sound is the whistle of the wind, the hum of the generators, and the far-off hiss of venting gas.

The Mining Rig is likely the first stop for PCs. If they approach by air, they immediately notice that the area surrounding the rig is obscured by fine particulate snow mixed with sooty, grey fog. Breaching the obscuring bank of fog and snow reveals the mining rig; a massive square structure that sits on a barren field of coarse, metallic looking stone. The rig displays visible signs of recent conflict or tragedy, with long curls of thick smoke adding to the grey fog from fires that smoulder unseen. The rig's centre consists of a square, three-story refinery and smaller surrounding outbuildings that appear to have been the site of significant destruction. At the south end of the rig, one of the outbuildings appears to have been erased entirely, the only remains being jagged metal and smears of sooty flooring amidst ice-rimed debris.

THE SITUATION AT THE RIG

The miners wasted no time in investigating the Archon following its discovery, and had many stories to share of the strange metamorphosis taking place

there when they returned. Within hours, the mining crew also began to change; the Overwrite Protocol was more efficient now, having adapted to the robust military software. The rig's crew consisted of fifteen miners, engineers and surveyors. Those affected by the Protocol isolated themselves, holing up in the refinery and the housing units, while paranoia and aggression gripped the remaining crew as stress, fatigue and rivalries flared. Things came to a head when the Hybrid crew attempted to seize the communication shed. Though the defenders fought them off, they destroyed their own long-range communications capabilities and damaged the rig. The remaining Hybrids gathered equipment, stole a pair of surveying vehicles, and fled.

SURVIVORS AT THE RIG

There are currently four survivors at the rig. Two of them – Anabel and Matt – have holed themselves up in the dining room, while one has quarantined himself in the medical lab and the fourth is roaming the rig in the infrastructure. They are all experiencing varying degrees of paranoia.

ANABEL CHOU PARK

APPEARANCE

A short, thin woman with very short black hair, a fair complexion, and obvious Korean or Chinese ancestry. She wears a filthy pair of coveralls, thick engineer's boots, and has a pistol tucked into her overloaded tool belt.

ROLEPLAYING

- Anabel constantly peers around and over those she is in conversation with, as if looking for someone or something else.
- A workaholic, she treats the current crisis as just more work to be done.
- Anabel will defend Matthew weakly, suggesting that he's the only one to have stopped the spread of the Protocol.
- Distracted, Single-Minded, Analytical

BACKGROUND

Anabel is a PanOceanian loyalist who was assigned to the rig due to her political affiliations back home on Acontecimento. She has been on the rig and kept herself busy for the entirety of the current deployment (18 months). Her intense focus initially made her oblivious to Matthew's pursuit of her, though she is just now realizing how obsessed he might be.

KEY INFO

- Use the Tech Support stats on p. 457 of the *Infinity Corebook*.

- To the best of her knowledge, a group of surveyors and miners left to go look at “some crashed ship” but began acting weird on their return. They babbled about gross corpses and the ship’s breathing, or something like that.
- About eight hours after they came back, Matthew grabbed her and took her to the dining hall because of some kind of fight at the communication bay.
- The survivors of this are either quarantined (Dr Balazar), hiding in the ship (Victor Manx), or else stolen a bunch of equipment, a couple of surveying rigs, and headed off to the Southeast. A **Challenging (D2) Tech test** would indicate that this equipment could be used to build a LOS transmitter capable of penetrating into high orbit.

MATTHEW RIDLEY

APPEARANCE

Matt has a swarthy appearance, a broad forehead, thick eyebrows, and dark eyes. His darkish complexion suggests Indian or Southeast Asian heritage, but he speaks without a hint of accent.

ROLEPLAYING

- Obsessed with Anabel, Matthew is pathologically protective of her. He currently clings to an elaborate fantasy where he lives here on the ice with Anabel, protecting her until she falls in love with him and he has her all to himself.
- Speaks challengingly to men or anyone with an air of authority. He squares his shoulders, looks them in the eyes, and smiles without mirth.
- Sees himself as the saviour of the rig and expects respect for his work.
- Confident, Aggressive, Obsessive.

BACKGROUND

Matt is a disenfranchised Nomad contracted as a drone pilot and general roustabout for the rig. Having cracked most of the rig’s network, he has been selling data, abusing his superuser status to stalk Anabel, and building blackmail files on the other miners.

KEY INFO

- Use the Wardriver stats on p. 461 of the *Infinity Corebook*.
- Having figured out that the miners returning from the wreck had corrupted comlogs, Matt quickly firewalled himself and Anabel with the intention of using the situation to get close to her.
- Inflicting a Metanoia can be used to coerce or entice Matt into helping the agents build firmware that offers protection from the Protocol (provides 2 **IN** Interference Soak.)

SILAS BALAZAR

APPEARANCE

Silas is currently in the throes of the Overwrite Protocol; his face is gaunt, sunken-cheeked, and yellow-green in complexion. Odd ridges have formed across his brow and his elongated limbs have long, grotesque purple stretch marks visible under their taut skin.

QUOTE

“It’s just as bad as it looks, and if you don’t let me work, it’ll get worse”

ROLEPLAYING

- Silas is constantly probing his skin with his fingertips, looking for new changes.
- Silas will multi-task with efficiency, seemingly ignorant of the PCs though still verbally engaging with them.
- Cautious, Insistent and Defensive.

BACKGROUND

Silas is the rig’s medical professional. No longer a doctor due to an unfortunate incident on Varuna, he has been practicing using emergency trauma certification. Currently quarantined to the medical lab, his personal network and stack were compromised when the surveyors brought in the dormant body of Barret Obermann. Suffering from the advanced stages of alteration brought on by the Colonizer software, the flight engineer revived and escaped while Balazar was distracted by the fighting on the rig.

KEY INFO

- Use the Doctor stats on p. 429 of the *Infinity Corebook*.
- Silas is working to reverse the Overwrite Protocol. Left to his own devices, he will accomplish this shortly before succumbing to the biological changes and passing away. Providing Silas assistance in the form of a group test and generating two Momentum will allow him to engineer a solution to the stage two changes and begin the process of reversal. With each additional success, he can provide the players with a +1 Security Soak when resisting the Overwrite Protocol. In addition, a character examining his notes and succeeding at a **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** can gain one bonus Momentum to attack tests when in combat with Hybrids.

VICTOR MANX

A fringe crew member, loner, and a bit of an oddball, Victor has been “on the ice” for nearly 60 years, working his life away in the frigid wastes.

HEAT ON THE RIG

1 Heat per drone – Attack Drone: Matthew has rigged a couple of Spotbot remotes (*Infinity Corebook* p. 381) to serve as attack drones. The drones gain a ram attack that inflicts 1+3 **IN** damage with the Knockdown quality, although this also inflicts 1 Structure damage to itself. The GM may spend 2 additional Heat to provide a drone with a seismic charge that inflicts damage equivalent to the Explosive Traps Heat spend, above.

2 Heat – Deadfalls: Victor has cleverly rigged several walkways to collapse when trod upon, resulting in a three zone fall to the decks below. The trap can be avoided with a successful **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Observation test**.

2 Heat – Poison Gas: The refinery interior has been flooded with an inert stabilizing gas to prevent further explosions and damage to the Teseum. PCs entering one of these pockets risk significant harm, as the gas behaves as Wurare (*Infinity Corebook* p. 386.)

3 Heat – Explosive Traps: The survivors have placed tripwire explosive traps at the entrances to the rig that require a **Daunting (D3) Observation test** to spot, though they are easily disarmed with an **Average (D1) Tech test**. The traps inflict 2+5 **IN** damage with the Deafening, Indiscriminate (Close), Knockdown, Piercing 1, and Vicious 1 qualities.

PROTOCOL SENSORY DISRUPTIONS

The Overwrite Protocol initially causes the victim to experience disturbing and disorienting sensory experiences. These could be manifest as any of the following:

Synaesthesia: experiencing senses through other senses. Characters might hear colours, taste physical sensations, and see things that are smelt.

Reflective Hallucinations: Reflective surfaces contain chaotic scrolling data, plus the occasional image overlay depicting an odd alien vista of yellow vein-like fungi and bulbous squatting things with watching eyes.

Historical Projection: The protocol may attempt to correlate its surroundings with stored images taken from either the PCs own memories or the Colonizers limited personal references, creating startling total sensory experiences that force comparisons to similar (or wholly alien) vistas.

Audio Commands: The protocol may try to interact with the character in the form of horrifying and repetitive murmurings, growling, staccato rhythms, or beeps.

The recent conflict drove him into a psychotic paranoia in the belief that the planet has been overrun by aliens and he is the sole survivor. Ever since, he has been moving about the innards of the rig searching for solitary targets to attack. If captured, inflicting a Metanoia against an Intransigence of 2 will subdue him for a scene.

THE COLONIZER OVERWRITE PROTOCOL

The Colonizer Overwrite Protocol was designed to prevent the colonizers' biomechanical bodies from deteriorating over aeons-long interstellar travel, using nanotech and bioengineered repair mechanisms towards this end. It degraded over time, however, and now acts extremely maliciously when exposed to human integrated networks. It aggressively seeks to rewrite the software and replicate itself biologically. If left to its own devices, the systemic changes will complete their process within twenty-four hours and result in a Hybrid Colonizer. Unfortunately, these fundamental alterations are not sustainable and usually result in death within another seventy-two hours. Reducing an infected network's firewall to zero causes the Colonizer Overwrite Protocol to annihilate itself, removing all traces of its code and leaving behind a blank slate.

Colonizer Overwrite Protocol: Contact (Physical or quantronic), Progressive 3 (4 Momentum), Round, 1+4 ^{IN} quantronic damage.

NOTE: The protocol does not have a physical or psychological manifestation, and sensory skills

are only useful insofar as they are used to detect intrusions. The Protocol will attack the physical defences of characters that lack any form of quantronic interface, seeking to inflict a Wound in place of a Breach.

Harm Effect: Once a character's firewall has experienced a Breach, the Colonizer system will overwrite key parts of the victim's personal network and begin replicating changes, resulting in the following stages of infection:

1. **Cognitive and Sensory Disruption:** The victim will initially experience sensory disruptions and audio reverb, inflicting +1 difficulty to all Observation tests. Each hour under this effect also inflicts 1+3 ^{IN} damage to the character's Resolve. Metanoia as a result will manifest as schizophrenic-like psychosis, dissociation, and periods of catatonia. Regardless of subsequent treatment, suffering three Metanoia results in progression to Stage 2.
2. **Physical Alterations:** With two vectors conquered, the virus attacks the host's body. Epigenetic weaknesses and common biological variables are manipulating, causing limbs to elongate, organs to rearrange, and bone spurs to form. The constant wracking pain inflicts the Dazed condition. Additionally, each hour that a victim is undergoing this stage results in 1+4 ^{IN} Vigour damage that ignores Soak and should be tracked separately from all other Vigour damage. A successful **Daunting (D3) Medicine test** can reduce the damage by one, with each two Momentum reducing the damage by a further one, to a minimum of one. Rather than standard effects, suffering a Wound results in an irrevocable physical change, such as dark bulbous veins or bony growths. Three accumulated Wounds result in progression to Stage 3.
3. **Temporary Synthesis:** At this point, the character has undergone the physical and cognitive changes that the Protocol requires and is now fully under its sway. The character has become a Hybrid (see p. 85).

Removing the Overwrite: Removing the Overwrite Protocol is most easily achieved during the infection stage when it is attacking a character's quantronic interfaces. While the Colonizer system is designed to interface, it is also highly reactive to attempts to modify its code. Hacking a host's network and inflicting a Breach will cause the Overwrite Protocol to consume itself in an incalculably short instant, resulting in the apparent vanishing of the code. It is impossible to copy or replicate this aspect of the Colonizer technology.

Things become more difficult once the Protocol has progressed to Stage 2. The virus must first be completely removed. Then, in order to reverse the epigenetic process, a successful **Daunting (D3) Medicine test** must be made for each Wound inflicted by the Protocol. Each physical change will require advanced medical facilities and 3  weeks of recovery time.

SEARCHING THE RIG

Exploring the rig will yield some of the pilfered goods from the *Archon*, including diamonds and rare metal ores, transmuted bits of metallic superstructure that are now organically porous and oddly light, and a great deal of corrupted data. Anyone analysing this data will learn the general outline of how the *Archon* became infected, but will be attacked by the Colonizer Protocol. While the action won't yield any useful data, hacking into the rig's systems will similarly expose the character to the Colonizer Protocol. Note that inflicting a Breach on the system will cause the Protocol to destroy itself – leaving an empty system behind – though the hacking character will still be suffering infection. Searching the rig's systems from within Matthew's safe zone will uncover recent searches done by the crew relating to communication encryption protocol and construction and maintenance of long-range communication devices.

Taking time to explore the exterior of the mining rig will reveal little new information. Of several distinct and well-worn vehicle paths, leads to the *Archon* and another to the transmitter site.

THE O-12S ARCHON

The unending white fields of snow and ice are interrupted by a long rectangle melted into the compact terrain. A wide ramp of carefully manicured snowpack leads down into the resting place of the O-12S Archon. The smooth arrow-like shape of the Archon is marred by numerous gouges and scrapes, with several long talon-like rends in the hull breaking etched across its gunmetal-grey exterior. Nothing moves and no sound beyond the gentle gliding of snow falling from the melting pod exhaust touches your ears.

The compact interior of the ship contains two decks and a handful of separate areas that are divided by function and purpose. The front of the ship contains the crew berth – a common area where the four crew were housed – which is connected to the rest of the ship by a central hallway that runs from fore to amidships. There are three more berths, one for the Captain, one for the Executive

Officer (XO), and then a shared space for the junior officers. A dining and community room is directly amidships, followed by storage compartments, then the two-deck engine room directly aft. Entering the lower deck from the engine room leads to the shared shuttle and cargo bay, which then gives way to astrogation and a cramped three-person bridge. Foreword of the bridge is communications and sensors.

THE CREW OF THE ARCHON

The crew of the *Archon* consisted of:

- Captain Sophia Yashima (Captain)
- Lt. Commander Ernst Longfellow (XO and Ship's Doctor)
- Lieutenant Junior Grade Colin Esperanza (Senior Engineer)
- Lieutenant Junior Grade Barret Obermann (Flight Engineer)
- Warrant Officer Melissa Yu (Astrogator)
- Warrant Officer David Wenschel (Junior Engineer)
- Gunner's Mate Panash Gruvier (Security)
- Spaceman Olexander Kerensky (Clerk).

THE SITUATION AT THE ARCHON

Upon entering the *Archon*, it is immediately apparent that things are not right. The interior superstructure has a brittle, porous appearance that seems to ripple with surrounding air currents. Despite its appearance, it is considered Heavy Cover with respect to breaking or damaging it. Small arms and handheld weapons will do little more than dent the unique structure, but conventional explosives will have muted but traditional effects. The electronics are also irrevocably altered and possess a fleshy, venous appearance, while conduits and electrical runs glistening with a hardened mucosal substance. It's clear that there was fighting here, as the scars from small-arms fire pit the doors. Should power be restored to the ship, a definite sense of organic intelligence will emanate from the *Archon*, not least because the walls begin to move in and out as though replicating breathing.

INTERIOR LOCATIONS OF THE ARCHON

Enlisted Berth: A compact space for four people to live in cramped conditions. The Colonizer arm resides here, though it is suffering a rapid state of disintegration and will dissolve entirely within 24 hours. A **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** concludes that the arm belongs to an alien race consummate in adaptability and survivability. Personal logs from Gruvier, Longfellow, Yu and Wenschel all detail the general events described in the Background (p. 79).

HEAT AT THE ARCHON

Most threats on the *Archon* are environmental. Note that attempts to interface with any of the *Archon*'s systems will result in infection by the Overwrite Protocol. Each subsequent event costs 2 Heat.

Self-Defence Protocol –

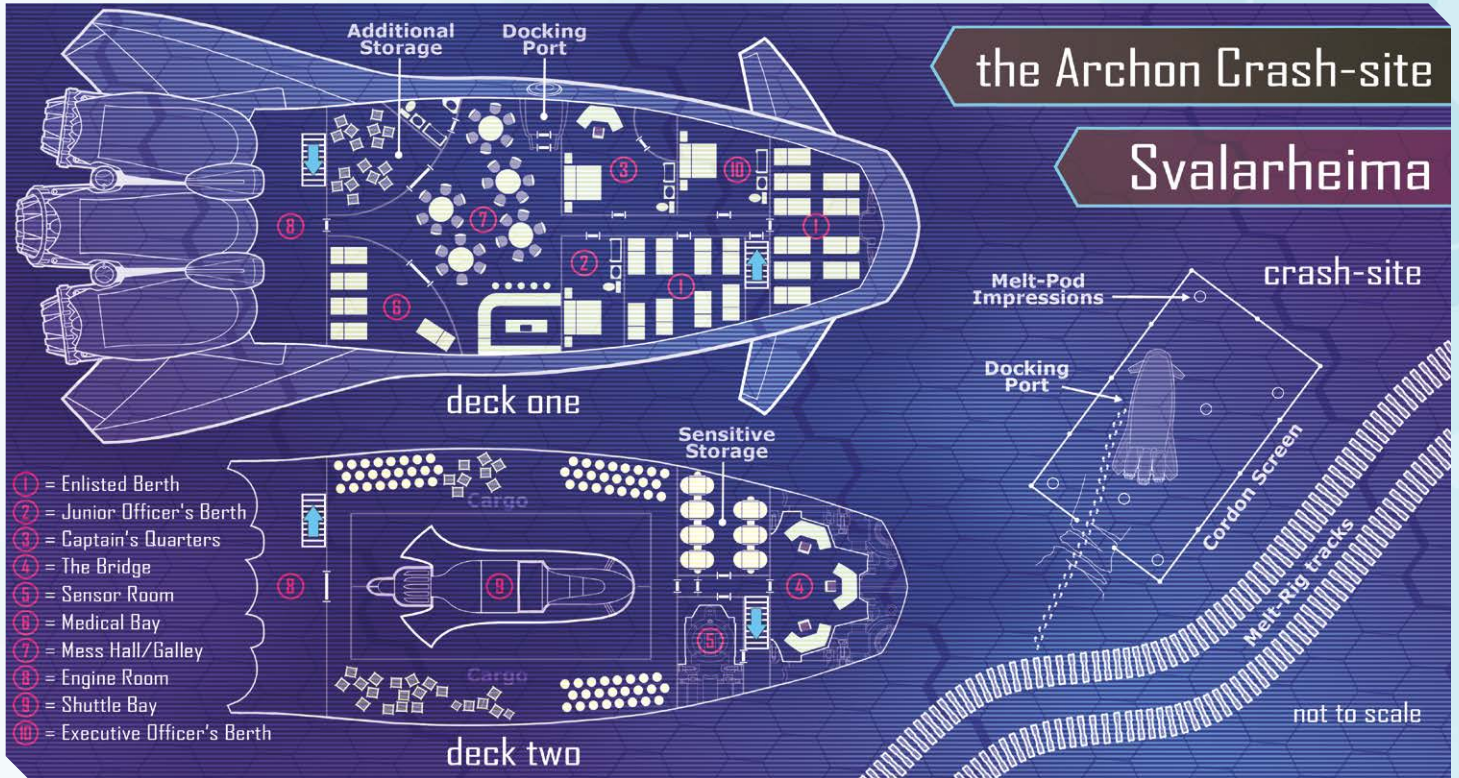
If powered, the ship defends itself against anyone attempting to remove significant parts, flooding relevant areas with a biological agent similar to the Poison Gas Heat spend (see p. 81).

Structural Damage – Use

when three or more characters congregate in one zone or a character tries to destroy or alter the ship. Never intended for sustained atmospheric flight – and despite the ships' new-found resilience – the *Archon* suffers a structural failure following its crash-landing from orbit (a floor collapses, ceiling caves in, wall falls). Anyone within the zone must succeed at a **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to avoid taking 1+4  damage with the Knockdown and Stun qualities.

The Shuttle Strikes – The

shuttle that made contact with the Colonizer Ark has been modified by its mere connection. Malignant, bubbling veins that pulse when touched run along the exterior of the docking ring and course throughout the shuttle. A vein ruptures, showering those nearby with an acidic liquid. Anyone within Close range must succeed at a **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics** or **Athletics test** to avoid 1+3  damage with the Spread 1, Terrifying 1, and Toxic 1 qualities. At the GM's discretion, additional Heat may be spent to reduce the Armour Soak of any character struck by the spray.



the Archon Crash-site

Svalarheima

- ① = Enlisted Berth
- ② = Junior Officer's Berth
- ③ = Captain's Quarters
- ④ = The Bridge
- ⑤ = Sensor Room
- ⑥ = Medical Bay
- ⑦ = Mess Hall/Galley
- ⑧ = Engine Room
- ⑨ = Shuttle Bay
- ⑩ = Executive Officer's Berth

Junior Officers Berth: A relatively unremarkable space which has had anything of value removed.

Captain's Quarters: Captain Yashima's quarters have been thoroughly searched and stripped. Her personal journal, written in an old composition notebook, describes the discovery of the Ark, the return to Svalarheima, and the crew's slow transformation into Hybrids.

The Bridge: A cramped, significantly damaged cabin that includes helm, astrogration, and comms stations. A **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** will reveal that someone used an improvised explosive to destroy the communication console and relays.

Sensor Room: Yu and Wenschel's modifications on these systems enhanced the performance of the Archon's gravity and radiation sensors by 20%. While the same gains would be more limited on other ships, the general principles could be applied for significant profit.

The Medical Bay: Reveals extensive notes from Longfellow, whose many discoveries are recorded in old-fashioned, leather-bound notebooks. The notes can provide -1 difficulty to Medicine tests related to the Overwrite Protocol. The morgue here contains the bodies of Wenschel and Kerensky. Wenschel appears to have succumbed to the Protocol, while Kerensky died through

violent stab wounds to the chest (a **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** will indicate he took his own life.)

Dining/Community Room: The site of a show-down, the bullet-riddled corpses of Yashima and Esperanza can be found at the back end of the room, and the partially burned corpse of Longfellow lies in the entryway. A **Daunting (D3) Analysis test** will clearly depict Yashima and Esperanza defending themselves as Longfellow attacked, until a homemade fuel bomb halted him.

Engine Room: The least altered — due to being most essential — part of the ship. Machinery has been stripped by the miners, but the environmental and auxiliary power systems can be initiated easily with an **Average (D1) Tech test**.

Shuttle Bay: The shuttle bay is clear of cargo, but the shuttle (as detailed above) remains.

Executive Officer's Berth: Following the encounter with the Ark, Longfellow spent next to no time here. This sterile berth contains nothing of inherent value. Accessing the computer logs here — an **Average (D1) Hacking test** — will provide a great deal of information leading up to the encounter with the Ark, while two Momentum will grant access to secure files of various sorts relating to confidential mail and data being transported.

NOW AND THEN

The logs of the various crew aboard the Archon will show a much slower progression of the Overwrite Protocol; occasional sensory disturbances akin to the "cabin fever" that often occurs aboard small ships on long voyages progresses to physical illness that is first attributed to a pathogen contracted aboard the Ark, before physical changes finally manifest and paranoia sets in. Ultimately, Kerensky's suicide is the catalyst for the confrontation in the dining hall and the crash on Svalarheima.

Comparing these logs to Balazar's observations and succeeding at a **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** will determine that the Protocol has adapted.

THE TRANSMITTER SITE

Massive pillars of ice extend from the surface of the Plateau hundreds of meters into the sky, their tops splaying out into massive starbursts of long-frozen ice. The air is abuzz with the hum of energy and conversation as the transformed rig workers toil on a massive needle-like structure that extends from a field of debris and discarded machinery. Elongated limbs jutting from ill-fitting survival suits add an alien quality to their energetic and frantic movements.

The Hybrids stole weapons and equipment before absconding to a place of relative safety. They immediately began constructing a communication array that can connect with the planetary communications system. If this succeeds, then the Overwrite Protocol will become global, infecting anyone who taps into the planetary network with the virus.

The impromptu base of operations is located on a small plateau of ice that has moderate aerial cover from huge, kilometre-high pillars of ice that blossom like palm fronds at their tips; the result of massive geysers erupting in eons past. The Hybrids work slavishly at the centre of the pillars to construct and power up the device.

THREATS AT THE TRANSMITTER SITE

Based on their experiences on the rig, the Hybrids will interpret any non-Hybrids as hostile. They will not attempt communication.

Traps: Interspersed throughout the plateau are a mix of deadfall and explosive traps. These carry the same cost, and function in the same way, as the Heat spends in the *Threats on the Rig* sidebar, p. 83.

Three Hybrids and a Truck: A surveyor truck is being used to patrol within the perimeter of the pillars. Clever PCs might observe the truck's movements — via a **Challenging (D2) Analysis** or **Daunting (D3) Observation test** — to gain insight on the position of the traps and explosives. The truck contains Two Hybrids with rifles and the driver, who runs down anyone within range (use the Truck stats, p. 136 of *Infinity Corebook*.)

Sharpshooters: Three Hybrids hiding under cover with rifles open fire on anyone that gets into range.

Obermann and Transmitter Crew: The three Hybrids working on the transmitter only stop their efforts if the PCs directly interfere.

STOPPING THE TRANSMITTER

Shutting down the transmitter can be done in a number of ways. Physically destroying the structure is not very difficult. The structure has an Armour Soak value of 4, with each of the support stanchions at the base having 20 Structure. Destroying one stanchion will be sufficient to collapse the antenna. Additionally, the transmitter is being powered by the second surveying vehicle and several power cells. Disconnecting the vehicle or four of the cells will shut it down, although the cells will explode if this is not done correctly; a **Challenging (D2) Tech test** will avoid 2+6  damage with the Deafening, Incendiary 1, Indiscriminate (Close), Knockdown, Piercing 1, Stun, and Vicious 1 qualities. Once the transmission has begun, there is no going back.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs successfully neutralize the transmitter, then their victory will be a private one as O-12 will insist on secrecy and containment. Any survivors on the rig will be given a choice: work for O-12, or face criminal charges. If the PCs fail, the repercussions will be extreme. While the consequences are left to a creative GM, it could range from a massive drop in productivity while ALEPH fights off the Protocol, to the death of millions as the Protocol takes hold. Regardless, the PCs now know that there are alien threats to fear other than the Combined Army.

PLAYTEST TIP

TICKING CLOCK

Inject a sense of urgency when the PCs arrive. Inform them that the Hybrids have completed most of the work and are now beginning to align their transmitter to the closest available COMSAT. Depending on how you want to run it, either set a hard timer of ten to twelve rounds for the players to stop the transmission, or institute an escalating progression of Heat spends — 1 on the first round, 2 on the second round, etc. — until 15 Heat have been spent. Once either is complete, the transmission begins.

TROOPER/ELITE

HYBRIDS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
12 (+1)	7	12 (+1)	8	7	3	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	—	Movement	+1	1	Social	—	—
Fortitude	+1	1	Senses	+1	—	Technical	+1	1

DEFENCES

Firewall	3	Resolve	5	Vigour	5
Security	2	Morale	4	Armour	1

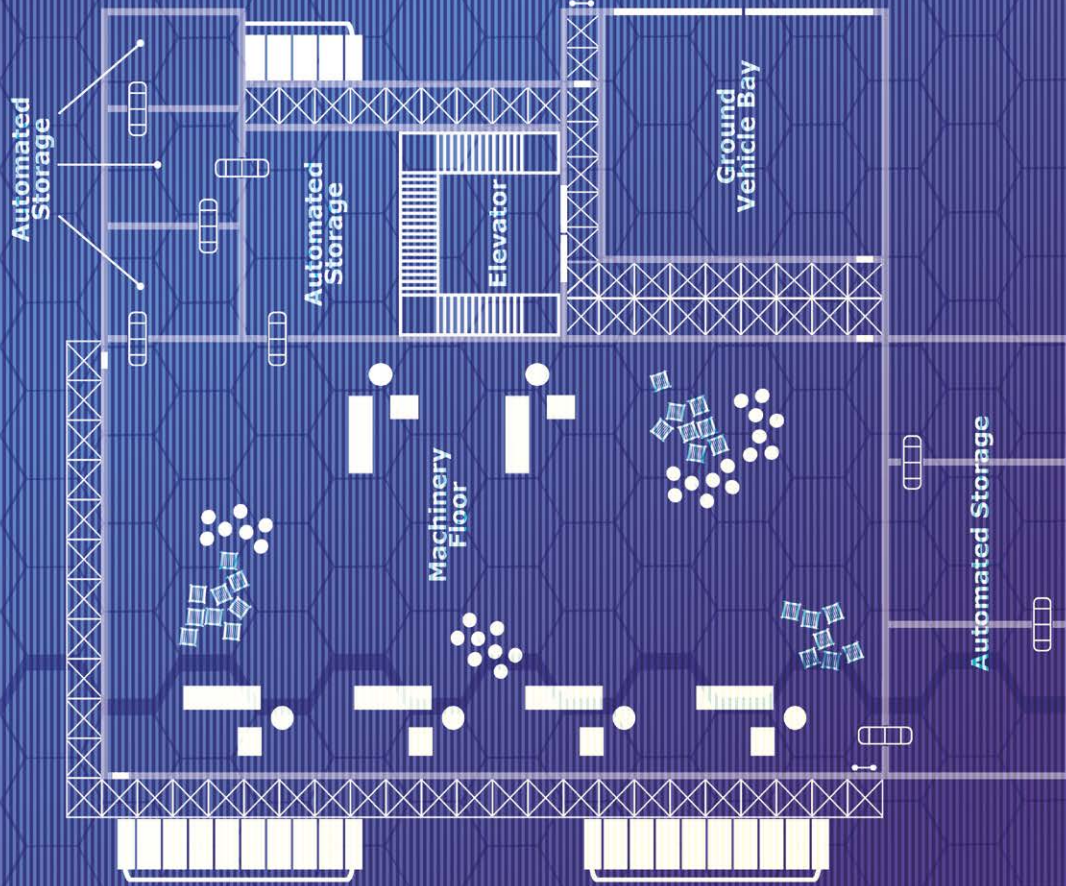
ATTACKS:

- **Bony Fist:** Melee, 2+6 , Non-Hackable, Stun
- **Chain Rifle:** C, 1+6  Burst 1, 2H, Spread 1, Torrent 1, Vicious 1

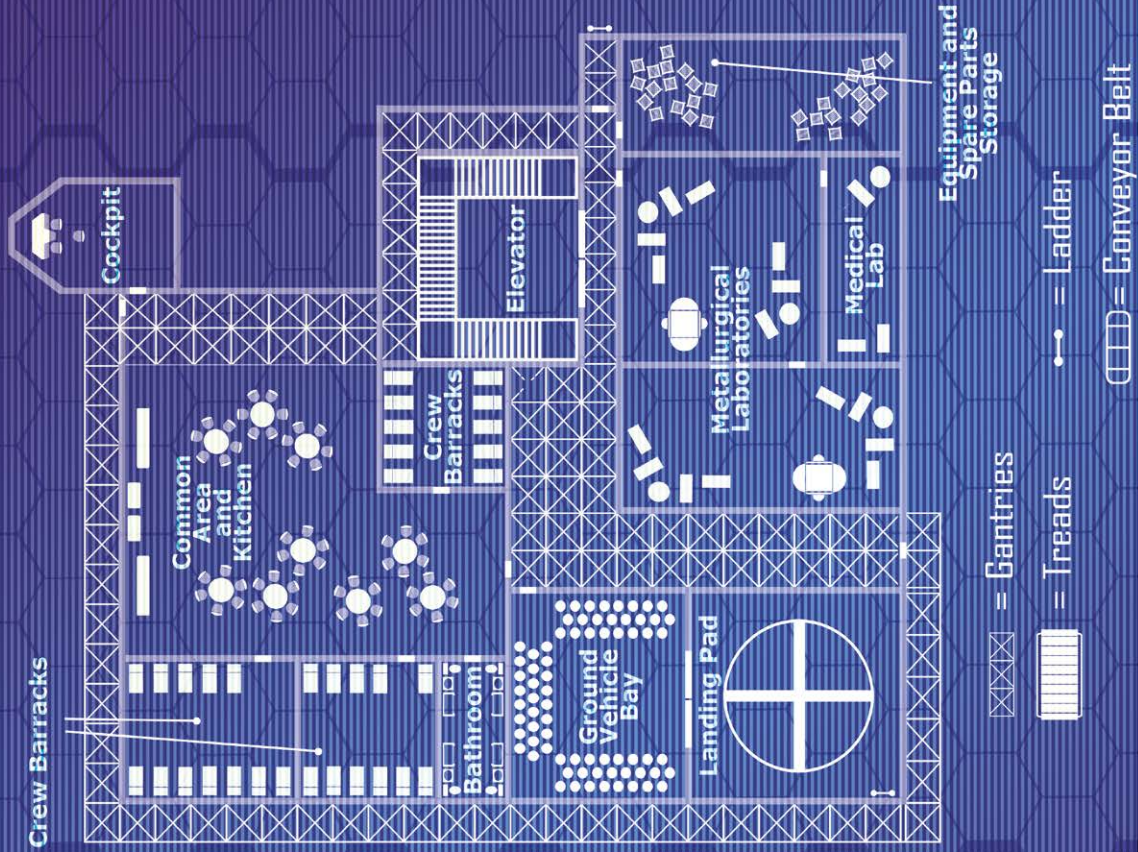
SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Common Special Abilities:** Inured to Cold, Disease, and Poison, Fast Recovery (All 1), Superhuman Agility (1), Superhuman Brawn (1)
- **Infectious Touch (2 Heat):** Infect an opponent struck by a Hybrid's melee attack with the Colonizer Overwrite Protocol (p. 82).

Lower Level



Upper Level



⌘ = Ganties

▬ = Treads

⋯ = Ladder

⌘⌘⌘ = Conveyor Belt

Svalarheiman Melt-Rig

Players' Handout Map

CHAPTER 9

THE BREAKING OF A WAVE

A Punokawan Group research facility on the PanOceanian planet of Varuna has been destroyed by an explosion. Hastily condemning the attack as the work of the Libertos terrorist organisation, PanOceanian officials have also cited Yu Jing involvement; something the StateEmpire vociferously deny. Rising diplomatic tensions have prompted Bureau Noir to dispatch agents to the scene. The truth must be revealed, before waters reach boiling point.

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

The characters are sent to investigate the bombing of the Semar Research Facility, where their scrutiny begins to raise some uncomfortable possibilities.

Following leads to either Lilypad 4 and/or Anxing Sima confirm the worst: Punkowan's Semar Facility is being used to develop a covert plan that will culminate in much worse atrocities...

BACKGROUND

LIBERTOS

The Libertos terrorist organisation have a history of targeting PanOceanian assets. Composed primarily of Helots, but also supplemented by both citizen and Atek activists, Libertos yearn to return to pre-colonisation days. Activist groups and the enemies of PanOceania furtively offer material support. Because of this – and despite the Helot's well-documented limitations – the capacity of Libertos to pull off damaging attacks cannot be taken lightly.

HELOTS

Detailed information on Helots can be found in the *Infinity Corebook*, p. 301.



WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: Gain access to the Semar Facility computer system and install a data tracking worm into the Semar Facility security feed.

Ariadna: Acquire a sample of the injectable manufactured by Semar Facility and pass it on to the Ariadnan representatives on Concilium. This drug, and many like it, are difficult to get in Ariadnan space.

Haqqislam: The Helots are more than they seem. Their unique physiology and world-view would extend the knowledge banks of Bourak and could push some interesting boundaries in medicine and thought – make friendly contact with them.

Nomads: Acquire any and all information possible on the ingredients and manufacturing processes the Semar facility use to produce its zero-g injectable.

PanOceania: Yu Jing association with the bombing could be used for political leverage on Concilium. If Yu Jing personnel were involved, contact Ahmad Munsí, an officer with the Military Police, with the name/s and locations before the Bureau Noir team have

the opportunity to interview, arrest or take them into custody (the PC is provided with contact details).

Yu Jing: Any Yu Jing personnel found to be involved (if any) must be escorted off the planet before they can let slip any secrets, or must be killed if escape is not possible. Any final report to Bureau Noir should emphasise the lack of Yu Jing involvement.

Corporations: What is going on in the sabotaged research facility? Covertly install six micro-cameras in key laboratory chambers.

Submondo: Several of the chemicals used in the manufacture of the Semar Facility's injectable are difficult to source and can be used to make illicit drugs. Find a list of the chemical suppliers to the Semar Facility and pass them on to Adib Megat (the PC is provided with contact details).

Mercenaries: Highlight the failure of their current security team to high ranking personnel at the Semar Facility. Unofficially recommend the services of Daeng Security and seek a meeting if possible.

THE PUNOKAWAN GROUP

The Punokawan Group is Varunan lobby group whose main economic strength is derived from private donations and several small subsidiaries, the largest of which is the Semar Research Facility. Punokawan's sordid history includes ownership of companies involved in psychotropic experimentation on soldiers, though they have recently sought to divest themselves of these negative associations through heavy investment in the Semar facility.

Led by their CEO, Arhtur Sinod, Punokawan lobbies on behalf of factions within Varuna's military establishment and seems intent on extending the military's influence within the government.

SEMAR RESEARCH FACILITY

Located on the periphery of the military zone surrounding the Planctae Sub-Archipelago, the Semar Research Facility is a small but highly successful research and development company run by Dr Ellen Marquez (see pp. 91-92). The facility mainly produces an injectable formed from modified pluripotent stem cells designed to counter the debilitating effects of long term exposure to zero-gravity. Not necessary for expensive ships with extensive life support systems, it remains popular export with interstellar Ateks, budget crews, many Nomads, and those with a preference for inexpensive solutions to long-term space travel.

Since assuming control, Dr Marquez has invested significant capital in research and development programs, including two years of secret development into a specialised Helot pressure suit, codename: 'Wayang'.

THE WAYANG SUIT

The highly classified Wayang suit is a development of the pressure suits worn by Helots that uses a modified helmet to apply force to specific parts of their brain. The effect may be dialled up or down, making the wearer more prone to suggestion on low settings, but providing unequivocal control of the Helot on a high setting.

Punkowan have sanctioned Dr Marquez with developing the suit as a means to executing subversive attacks against PanOceanian assets. They intend to use the fear of Libertos as fuel to apply public pressure to the governing body of Varuna, heralding in legislation that will give the military sweeping powers.

MISSION BRIEFING

With the bright lights of Concilium Prima shimmering far below them, the PCs are assembled in a glass bottomed office in the Asgard orbital. A Bureau Noir Operatives Handler, codenamed 'Huginn', will run a brief presentation for them on the latest reports from the Varuna Military Police.

Read or summarise the following:

"There has been a terrorist attack on a PanOceanian research facility on Varuna. We recently received a range of unofficial reports, but you will be fronting the official investigation."

"PanOceania claim the attack on the Semar Research Facility was performed by the Libertos Terrorist organisation, with support from Yu Jing operatives on Varuna. Yu Jing has categorically rejected all such claims."

"Bureau Noir has been tasked by O-12 to get to the bottom of this situation before a diplomatic crisis breaks out."

"Yu Jing has stated that they believe PanOceania is trying to smear their name by implicating them in the attack. PanOceania doubtless believe that Yu Jing are trying to stir up trouble with the Libertos."

"We need you to uncover who was responsible and what their motivations for this attack were. Any questions?"

After answering any questions the PCs have (that O-12 would be aware of), they will be transferred to an O-12 Bureau Aegis ship and sent on their way.

SCENE ONE: THE ARRIVAL

The Aegis ship is given immediate clearance for passage from the Vila Boosters to Varuna. The planet, famous for its beauty, slowly grows in the view screen and lives up to its reputation; a veritable paradise predominated by sparkling blue oceans and dotted with chains of green archipelagos. The high humidity makes for a rain-lashed, bumpy, and sometimes frightening descent through the atmosphere.

Their landing destination, Akuna Bay on the Atlantea Archipelago, is a bustling hive of tourist activity, though the PCs manage to avoid much of this as their ship arrives at the naval docks instead. They are met by a delegation of taciturn, no-nonsense military police who escort them directly to their surface transport, which immediately whisks them to the Semar research facility.

Though restrained, PanOceanian cooperation is reasonably open. They resent O-12 sending in its own operatives rather than accepting a PanOceanian investigation. Aloof, arrogant, and generally frustrating as a rule, PanOceanian officials will respond

that they are 'not the investigators' if asked about the attack, before reminding the PCs that they will have the opportunity to find out for themselves in short order.

In game terms, this translates into social zones for PanOceanian authorities gaining an Enmity rating of 1 (provides a Morale Soak of 1 to against any Psywar tactics that might benefit the O-12 agents.)

SCENE TWO: THE SEMAR RESEARCH FACILITY

Owned and operated by the Punokawan Group, the Semar Research Facility sits half-submerged in warm highland waters close to Varuna's equator. The central towers of the complex rise from the ocean and connect directly to a peak of the seabed, while the four outer modules jut out over the surrounding abyss. The damage wrought by the attack is clearly visible during the approach: one module has been snapped off and is completely submerged. Now resting perhaps twenty metres below the surface and canted at a 45-degree angle, it is still clearly visible thanks to the lucidity of the water.

A relatively calm Dr Marquez and clearly pre-occupied Security Officer Andrew Doyle lead a handful of jittery researchers out to greet the PCs. Dr Marquez provides a brief tour of the research facility whilst incessantly explaining how they are able to modify pluripotent stem cells to combat the atrophy caused through long-term exposure to zero-gravity.

The facility is home to approximately six human research staff and roughly three times that number of support staff, most of whom are Helots.

Wing 5 – Semar's Research and Development lab – is off-limits as it now sits precariously on the sea bed, though Dr Marquez offers the PCs the opportunity to explore the wreckage once divers finish recovering anything salvageable from the demolished module.

Culminating the tour at a room that has been set aside for them to work from, Dr Marquez assures the PCs that both the staff and facility remain at their disposal before returning to her duties. The small, functional office can be used as their base of operations, though a successful **Observation (D3)** or **Analysis or Hacking (D2)** test will reveal the room is bugged. The Semar Facility network comprises several secured zones, each with their

GM NOTE

LOOKING DOWN

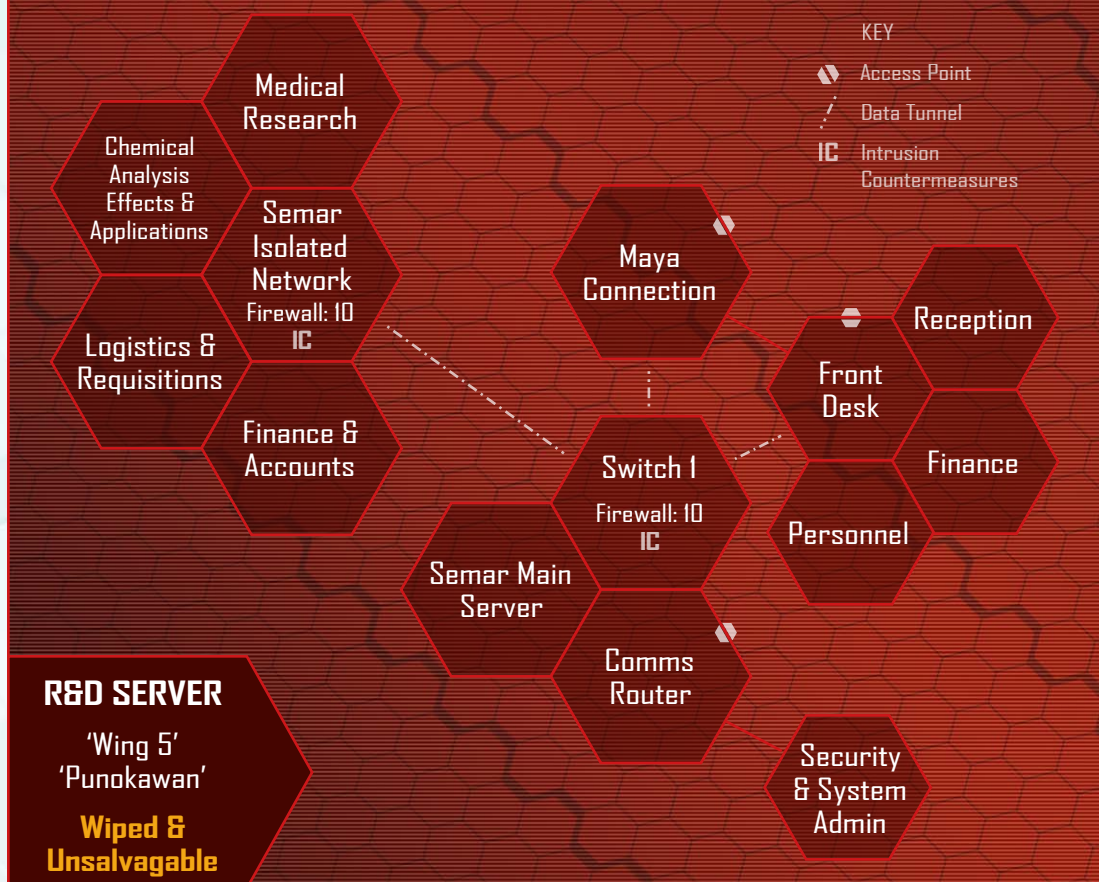
This scene can be used to set the tone for any interactions the PCs will have with PanOceanian personnel throughout the adventure, while the Heat spends will reinforce that forces are arrayed against them.

HEAT

1 Heat: The PCs are subjected to a routine – but extensive – luggage search. Security blame the recent incident and state that no-one is exempt.

2 Heat: In addition to the above, the PCs are subjected to a full body search. The delay this entails is substantial.

Semar Research Facility Quantronic Network



own Intrusion Countermeasures; shutting down the bugs will not be an easy task.

DR ELLEN MARQUEZ

APPEARANCE

Tall, with high cheekbones and an imperious look, Dr Marquez is a no-nonsense scientist. She is highly intelligent and very capable.

ROLEPLAYING

- Dr Marquez often appears not to be listening. Continually aware of the time, and her pressing lack of it, she can become agitated if a conversation she deems unimportant is running too long.
- Dr Marquez is cold and emotionally unsympathetic. A workaholic who deems her personal life to be less important than her work, she finds it difficult to empathise with others.

BACKGROUND

Dr Marquez is the no-nonsense head of research at Semar. She is absolutely convinced that Libertos – with the encouragement and support

NEMESIS

DR ELLEN MARQUEZ

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	10	9	9	14	9	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	–	Movement	+1	1	Social	+2	1
Fortitude	+1	1	Senses	+2	1	Technical	+4	4

DEFENCES

Firewall	18	Resolve	11	Vigour	10
Security	–	Morale	–	Armour	–

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- Lost in Translation (X Heat):** Ellen may spend X Heat to initiate a scientific thesis that could leave her audience utterly bewildered. Her audience must succeed at a **Discipline** or **Science (DX)** test or be dazed for X minutes, where X is equal to the amount of Heat spent on this ability. No more than 3 Heat may be spent to activate this effect.
- Muddy the Waters (1 Heat):** Ellen is proficient at burying her results. She can spend 1 Heat to increase an opponent's Analysis or Science test by +1 difference, so long as she has had access to the subject of the check. If this results in a failure, the opponent can attempt a (D1) Analysis test to reveal the interference.

of Yu Jing – are responsible for the attack. She oversees the development of the Wayang suit and is sympathetic of Punokawan's intended use for it; an increase in the influence of Punokawan will provide greater funding and autonomy, so she has little issue with the moral quandaries raised. To make an omelette one must break eggs.

KEY INFO

- She will show the PCs the facility's security footage (see p. 92) and name the Helot seen there as Ishmael. To her knowledge, he was a new arrival and had been hired from The Reserve (see *Scene Three*).
- If asked why Semar would be the target of an attack, she will respond that it may appear an easy target, isolated as it is.
- If asked about her concerns over Yu Jing involvement, she will reply that they are PanOceania's greatest rival and stirring up the Libertos would suit their needs.

SECURITY OFFICER ANDREW DOYLE

APPEARANCE

Middle-aged and slightly overweight, Andrew Doyle is neatly dressed, but obviously in a situation beyond his capabilities.

ROLEPLAYING

- He is fidgety and worried about what all of this will mean for his family.
- He sweats heavily when nervous, and is obviously uncomfortable being interviewed. He is honest and well-intentioned, but pauses and self-corrects often.

BACKGROUND

A career security guard, Andrew Doyle has risen to his position through time served more than ability. He is a family man first and foremost, and is seriously worried about what the security team's failure will mean for his family's financial stability.

KEY INFO

- Use the Police stats on p. 449 of the *Infinity Corebook*.
- Any persuade or intimidation test against Andrew Doyle will be a D1 test, inflicting 1+5 [Ⓝ] Resolve damage. A single Metanoia effect inflicted will break his resolve, and he will tell the PCs the following:
- In his opinion, a Helot would not be able use and place the charges so effectively, let alone run a loop on the security system while doing so.
- Somewhat embarrassedly, Doyle will admit that getting the explosives into the facility would be easy; many unknown deliveries come

from Lilypad 4 (*Scene Four*).

- Lilypad 4 is an Atek settlement. A big part of its business is the redirection of deliveries. Shipments go to an off-the-grid Atek delivery service and disappear. Almost impossible to track, the service is used by corporations all over Varuna to ship and receive goods off the books. Semar makes use of a company called Araventhen & Sons.

OTHER RESEARCH STAFF

Everyone interviewed is obviously shaken. Unless they are persistently pressed (see *GM Note: Not Quite Right*, left), not much of use can be gleaned from the other research staff.

If the PCs manage to inflict 4 Metanoia effects on any single staff member, they will break down and tell them as much as they can about the Wayang Suit – see the Wayang Suit description, below. Aside from Dr Marquez, no other staff member is aware of Punokawan's real intentions, and she will not reveal this information under any circumstance.

ISHMAEL

When queried about Ishmael, anyone asked will note that he was an unassuming Helot recently recruited from the Reserve (*Scene Three*).

THE STRANGE PRESSURE SUIT (THE WAYANG SUIT)

If asked about the odd pressure suit seen in the security footage, the research staff and Dr Marquez will reply that it is an older model; refer to *GM Note: Not Quite Right*. If the PCs ask whether remains of either Ishmael or the pressure suit can be examined, they will be shown insignificant fragments of the suit and told that Ishmael was atomized in the blast.

As far as the researchers at the Semar facility are concerned, they are developing the suit for commercial reasons due to its ability to augment a Helot worker through a variety of effects. These range from higher levels of compliance through to remote manual control during tricky industrial operations, which could negate the need to place more skilled and valuable employees at risk. Only Dr Marquez is fully aware of the real intended use of the Wayang – see the Background description.

A telling clue to a discrepancy in the initial report of Libertos undertaking the attack is the fact that members of Libertos refuse to wear pressure suits. Though unlikely, this could indicate a previously unseen infiltration tactic by them, or lead the investigation towards the fact that Libertos were not involved.

PLAYTEST TIP

CHANGING FACES

If the PCs interview a variety of the Research Staff, vary responses so each staff member provides a slightly different perspective. For example:

Sarah Upon: Angry at Libertos.

Ravi Shapur: Convinced Yu Jing is behind it.

Anthony Davis: Worried about his future employment for financial reasons.

Nathaniel Hawthorn: Convinced Libertos will return and finish the job.

Sara Patel: Worried about her safety.

Daksh Nadar: Worried the facility will close and angry at Security.

GM NOTE

NOT QUITE RIGHT

If the PCs attempt to persuade, intimidate or deceive any of the staff at the Semar Facility into revealing information, the test will generally be **D1 Persuasion and Deception** (D3 for Dr Marquez), inflicting 1+4 [Ⓝ] damage, while Intimidation will cause 1+5 [Ⓝ]. Failing any such test will add +1 difficulty to all subsequent interaction tests with the staff. If a Metanoia effect is inflicted, the PCs will gather that the NPC is aware of more than they are saying.

HEAT

1 Heat: Due to bigotry, an NPC being interviewed becomes aggressive to any PC not of their faction. Increase the Repercussion for all social tests taken against the NPC by one.

2 Heat: At an inopportune moment, a perplexed and apologetic Andrew Doyle insists that the characters submit themselves for a 'routine security search', which also consists of a sterilising shower. GMs can take the opportunity to place bugs or tracers on the PCs equipment and clothing.



GM NOTE

UNDER ATTACK

If the GM would like to include more action throughout, have a smaller band of Mercenaries attack the PCs somewhere between the Semar facility, the Reserve, and the Lilypad to represent Punokawan's fear they are getting too close to the truth.

THE UNDERWATER MODULE

Players may want to investigate the underwater module, which can be achieved with diving equipment or a TAG. If the PCs carry out such an investigation, a **Science (D1)** or **Tech (D2)** test reveals the explosives were placed for maximum effect given their yield. Whoever did this had received at least some training in demolitions.

Through a Complication or the expenditure of 2 Heat, the PCs will have moved too carelessly. The remains of the Module begin to break up and slide deeper into the sea. Everyone within Close range must make an **Athletics** or **Piloting D2** test to clear themselves of the Module as it starts to shift. Failing this test will result in 1+8 of damage with the Knockdown, Stun, and Vicious 1 qualities.

Regardless of this, the PCs' exploration will uncover Unexploded Ordnance – see below.

PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

SALVAGE

Examination of the salvage will indicate little more than evidence of a significant explosion in the lab. Several computer banks have been retrieved, but these are barely operable. A **Challenging (D2) Analysis** or **Hacking** test will indicate that some of the databases were wiped recently, but none of the original information is recoverable. If quizzed over this, Dr Marquez and the Research Staff will indicate that classified R&D Development files were wiped so as to not end up in the hands of rivals. A test as described under *GM Note: Not Quite Right* (p.91) will leave the players suspicious that there may be something more to it.

BOMB CASINGS

Investigation of the remains of bomb casings will indicate they were home-made, but conformed to textbook Yu Jing guerrilla warfare manuals.

UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE

An **Analysis** or **Observation (D2)** test reveals an intact terminal, complete with its unexploded device. A **Tech (D3)** test is required to disarm the volatile device, though one Momentum from the previous test may be used to provide -1 difficulty. If the test is failed, the device explodes and inflicts damage equivalent to a D-Charge (*Infinity Corebook* p. 366). If the test succeeds, the Ordnance is disarmed and the players manage to recover the hard drive – see below.

QUANTRONIC EVIDENCE

THE SECURITY FOOTAGE

Grainy and partially obscured, the security footage recovered from Wing 5 shows a Helot in a pressure suit laying explosive charges on storage devices and against the interior supports of the module that fastened it to the main portion of the Semar Facility. An **Average (D1) Analysis** or **Observation** test taken while reviewing the footage will reveal that the charges were strategically placed. One Momentum from the test will discern that the pressure suit looks quite different from any others worn by Helots. An additional two Momentum will allow the PCs to note that the footage is not doctored.

HARD DRIVE

The hard drive is largely unremarkable; it appears to contain only holiday photos from someone's travels around Varuna, though comparison to the Threat Assessment files gained in *Scene Four: Lilypad 4*, and an **Analysis (D2)** test reveal they are recent photos of potential diversionary targets selected by Punokawan.

INS AND OUTS

If the PCs attempt to hack the Semar Facility computer systems and check the records, or else enquire about the materials shipping to and from the facility, they will discover that most shipments to the Semar Facility are rerouted through Lilypad 4 (see *Scene Four*), though this is typical for most corporations on Varuna. Araventh & Sons undertake shipments for the facility.

SCENE THREE:
THE RESERVE

The Simmons Key Nature Reserve is an area of preserved natural beauty in the highlands of the Atlantea Archipelago. Centred on a deep plateau festooned with colourful corals, the region is home to nearly a hundred pods of Helots and innumerable fish, rays and other sea creatures. Every so often, one or more pods of Helots are recruited as workers for elsewhere on the planet.

The overseer of the reserve is Marian McDowall, a junior administrator for Varuna's conservation and fisheries ministry. Her office is a solar-powered catamaran that glides above the reserve. She can confirm that Ishmael and the rest of his pod were recruited from the reserve almost one month ago.

She will add that a Yu Jing diplomat made an official visit just after the pod's assignment to Punokawan and handed them their new company

name badges. Drone-cam footage of the tour is available to corroborate her story.

Such requests are not an uncommon occurrence for foreign diplomats or government officials interested in Helots. In fact, access to official functions such as the badge ceremony is one of the reserve's main sources of income.

The consular group consisted of four people. Replaying the footage and passing an **Analysis** or **Observation (D1) test** will show the group consisted of two body guards, an assistant, and a lead functionary; it is the lead official who hands out the name badges. A facial recognition search of either O-12 or Maya databases will reveal the leader is Anxing Sima: a Yu Jing diplomat currently residing at The Royal Vanguard Hotel in Akuna Bay.

If asked about the Semar Facility or Punokawan she will indicate that they regularly recruit significant numbers of Helots.

SCENE FOUR: LILYPAD 4

Lilypad 4 is a broad, irregular disc consisting of interwoven branches of red-brown polyps. The tough and slightly springy lattice is strong enough to support the weight of human habitation, but sometimes fragile enough to snap beneath the weight of a boot. Lilypad 4 is nearly two kilometres across and is home to an Atek shanty town occupied by several hundred individuals.

Lilypad 4 is a small, but bustling shipping hub. Many companies, individuals and corporations ship quantities of specialised and oft-illegal goods or materials here, where the low-tech and nigh-untraceable Atek delivery services then redirect them on to clandestine partners.

The PCs may be coming to Lilypad 4 in search of Aravthen & Sons, or perhaps returning for 'The Hawk' following *Scene Five: The Royal Vanguard Hotel*.

ASKING QUESTIONS ON LILYPAD 4

The Ateks on Lilypad 4 are close-lipped and mistrustful of anyone poking around and asking questions. A big part of their small economy is in illegal trade, so they are largely unhelpful if the PCs start mentioning they are conducting an investigation. A combination of Observation and

Persuade tests mixed with O-12 clearance will provide enough leverage to impress or cow one or two locals into providing direction or answering their questions; both Aravthen & Sons and 'The Hawk' are known well enough on Lilypad 4 for the PCs to be able to find either with a little digging.

PCs should be encouraged to be creative. Making casual note of the various illegal activities they see may discourage people from speaking, while stating that they have an appointment or that they wish to arrange shipment are the easiest ways to obtain directions.

ARAVENTHEN PILLAI

APPEARANCE

In his late fifties, he is short and wiry with large eyes and a balding pate.

ROLEPLAYING

- Belligerent to begin with, he will tell the PCs to leave him and his family alone.
- If it seems his business may be threatened or brought under investigation he will answer any questions the PCs have – flashing their O-12 credentials will have the same effect.
- He has a habit of rubbing his head when worried.

BACKGROUND

Aravthen & Sons is an Atek delivery service run by Aravthen Pillai and his children, Naadish and Keshan, which specialises in the use of small craft to deliver surreptitious packages.

As long as they are paid both in full and in advance, Aravthen & Sons ask few questions – so far as their customers are aware anyway. They have been operating from Lilypad 4 for approximately forty years; Aravthen recalls starting with one small boat, but is now the proud owner of three.

KEY INFO

- Use the Trader stats on p. 460 of the *Infinity Corebook*.
- He will state that they were curious about a sudden upturn and change in the deliveries being made to Semar, so asked a friend, Danny 'The Hawk' Hawker, to look into them. Danny spent a week or two digging, then disappeared for a few days before returning and telling them that what he unearthed had scared the hell out of him. They would be better off just continuing on as if nothing had happened.
- If asked about Anxing Sima, Aravthen lets the PCs know he delivered several small but weighty

HEAT

1 Heat: Having never seen them before, the PCs are rebuked by the populace of Lilypad 4. Until they successfully befriend a local, increase the difficulty of all social tests by one.

2 Heat: Latticework crumbling underfoot is an ever-present danger on Lilypad 4. A character must succeed at an **Acrobatics** or **Athletics (D2) test** to avoid 1+3 damage with the Knockdown and Vicious 1 qualities to a random leg.



THE RABBIT HOLE

"Bout 5 months ago I was chatting with Ravi, that's uh, Araventh Pillai, and he mentioned this place he was shipping to: the Semar Facility. They had always been small time. About a year ago though, they started getting in more and more stuff, and shipping out a lot more too. Chemicals, electronics, a whole bunch of stuff.

"Ravi usually doesn't ask too many questions, that's the point right? But he was curious, and asked me to look into them to see what they did. Well, I looked. It was a fucking rabbit hole. First I looked at the official stuff, they make drugs right? Well, shipments, income, expenditures etc, nothing added up, so I did a bit more digging. They're owned by the Punokawan group, a bunch of ex-military nutjobs who think that military dictatorship is good government.

"Finally I managed to download some big packets, files and engineering docs on this thing called the Wayang. This was Class-A paranoia sci-fi shit, it is a suit designed to basically jack into a Helot's brain. Insane. But that ain't the part that scared the shit out of me. They also had a bunch of old military files stored too, threat assessments for buildings all over Varuna. Plans for media campaigns Punokawan would run in the event of attacks... Now you tell me why a company is making a suit to turn a Helot into an unthinking weapon, has files on targets, and plans for how to sell it on Maya...

"That's when I contacted Sima, I did some account fiddling for Yu Jing, yeah, it's in my file, nothing serious, but he was the only official guy I knew not connected to here. If I'd have gone public who knows what would have happened. If I had leaked it, that shit would have disappeared like smoke in a dark room."

packages to the Semar Research Facility on Sima's behalf. These deliveries were made about 8 hours prior to the attack.

DANNY 'THE HAWK' HAWKER

APPEARANCE

Tall and lanky, Danny wears dark clothes, has long hair and poor personal hygiene.

ROLEPLAYING

- Normally fidgety, he currently exudes terror and extreme nervousness.
- Danny doesn't like to make eye contact; he will avoid looking at the PCs and only glances quickly at their faces before looking away.

BACKGROUND

An Atek obsessed with computer systems, Danny is a very accomplished hacker. Restricted to manual interface as he lacks direct entry, Danny has been detained many times over the years and has a rap sheet longer than his hair. Most of his crimes involved diverting assets for clients; he has a good heart, despite his record.

KEY INFO

- Use the Wardriver stats on p. 461 of the *Infinity Corebook*, replacing the shotgun with a pistol.
- Danny lives and works in a cramped, two-room apartment situated above a rowdy drinking establishment. The small rooms are dominated by electronics.

- Initially cagey when confronted by the PCs, he will become even more wary if they start asking questions about the Semar Facility.
- Affirming they are O-12 agents and overtly threatening him with violence or jail time will allow the PCs to undertake **Intimidate (D2) tests** against Danny. Netting two Metanoia Effects against him will draw out the information summarised below – see The Rabbit Hole text. Mentioning Araventh & Sons and/or Anxing Sima will reduce the tests by -1 difficulty. Danny will crack, it is simply a matter of how long it takes them.
- Danny's jacking program – codenamed Ishmael – was designed to co-opt any system it was close to and reroute controls to an external controller. That external controller was Anxing Sima.

SCENE FIVE: THE ROYAL VANGUARD HOTEL

The Royal Vanguard Hotel bills itself as a miniature Living City. It's a palatial resort for the unfathomably well-off. The Royal Vanguard reaches to the sky from a promontory that is separated from Akuna Bay by a narrow spit of perfectly groomed white sand. Viewed from the outside, the Royal Vanguard is a majestic organic sweep of seamless glass.

Security around the hotel is tight. Gaining unauthorised access to suites, rooftops, service staircases

or other off-limits area, requires at least a **Hacking** or **Thievery (D2)** test. If the agents provide their O-12 credentials, the hotel staff will fall over themselves to cooperate.

Anxing Sima has not left his hotel since the attack. Fully expecting reprisal, he will ask for asylum under the whistle-blower statuettes if it is clear the PCs are from O12, or fight if he believes they have been sent by Punokawan.

ANXING SIMA

APPEARANCE

Neat in appearance and tidy by nature, Anxing Sima is short, muscular and fit.

ROLEPLAYING

- Sima is mildly drunk when the PCs encounter him. Melancholy, but otherwise emotionally stable, he believes he did the right thing.
- He will ask the PCs to ensure his family knows the truth multiple times, sometimes interrupting himself to say it.

BACKGROUND

From a well-connected family on Shentang, Anxing Sima served for a time as an engineer in the Yu Jing military before family connections secured him a diplomatic posting. Serving first on Bourak, he was

then relocated as a diplomat to Varuna several years ago.

KEY INFO

- Concocted the plan to use Danny Hawker's technical assistance to gain control of the Wayang.
- Remotely operated Ishmael to facilitate the attack.
- Received the codenamed jacking program from Danny Hawker and personally handed it to Ishmael at the reserve.

NEMESIS

ANXING SIMA

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
10	10	10	9	11	10	10

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

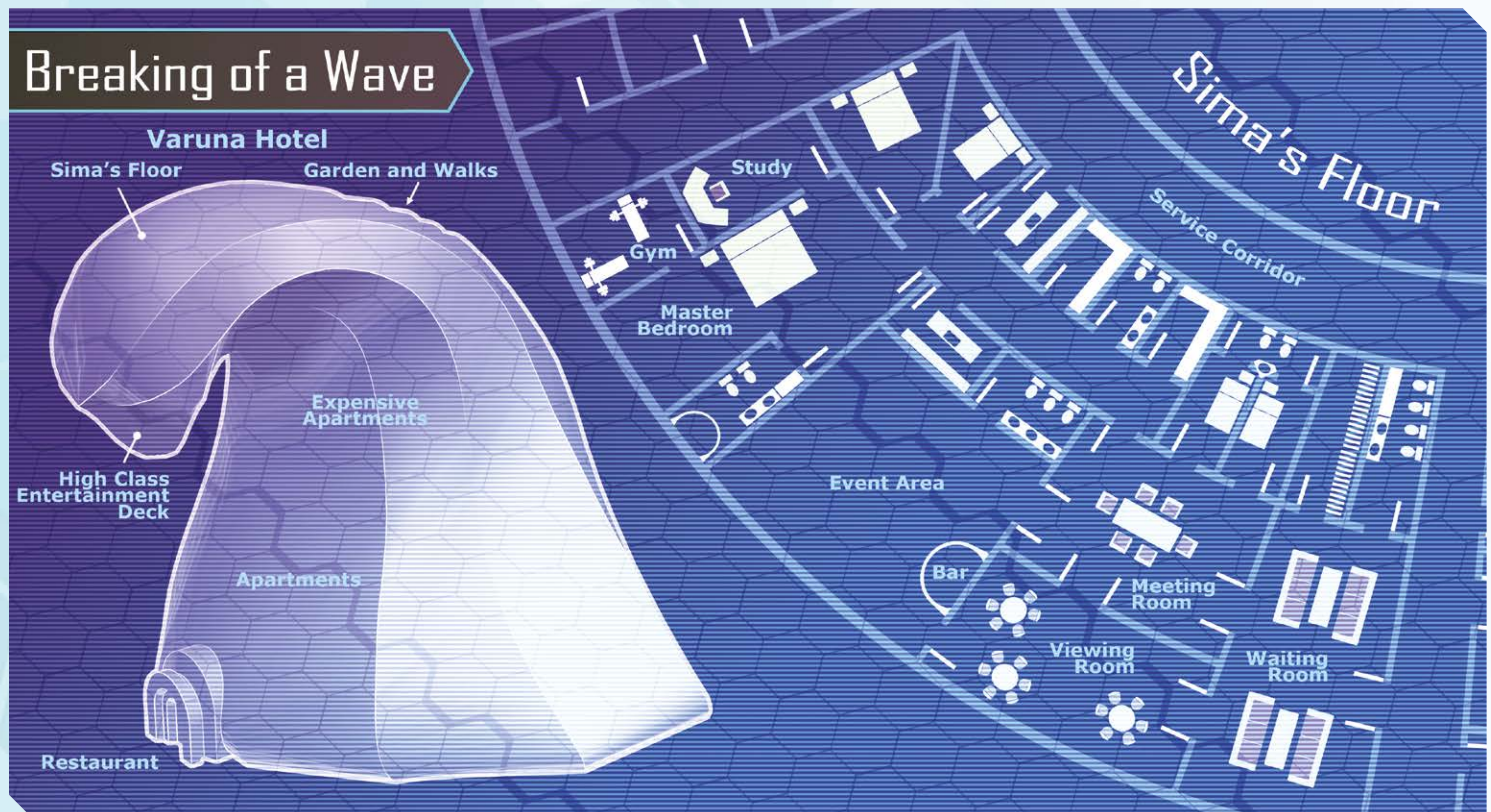
Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	—	Social	+3	2
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+2	2	Technical	+2	2

DEFENCES

Firewall	13	Resolve	12	Vigour	12
Security	—	Morale	—	Armour	—

ATTACKS

- **Heavy Pistol:** R/C, 2+6 damage, Burst 1, Unbalanced, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1.





HEAT

1 Heat: The shattered glass has become a hazard to footing. Anyone attempting movement must succeed at an **Acrobatics** or **Athletics (D1)** test or fall prone.

2 Heat (repeatable): A number of additional Spec Ops appear from within the hotel. Spend 2 Heat per Spec Ops (GM's choice of Heavy or Standard).

3 Heat: The hoverjet that deployed the Spec Ops makes a sweeping pass with its MULTI Rifle. One random PC is targeted by the pilot (TN 12, Focus 1, spend additional Heat as normal on the attack), who uses EXP ammo.

ADMISSION

If the PCs skip *Scene Four: Lilypad 4* and come directly to Sima, he will be shocked to see them and ask for the chance to explain. If the PCs have completed *Scene Four*, he will be expecting them.

Read or summarise the following:

The antechamber is empty and the viewing room beyond dark, the only light is filtering through the windows from the horizon outside.

"Whatever you may think, I am not the bad guy."

The slightly slurred voice belongs to an Asian man in his fifties who is sat in a shadowed alcove. His unfocussed gaze remains fastened on something outside of the window.

Allow the players to react, those following the Wilderness of Mirrors may choose to influence how the encounter runs. If allowed to speak, Anxing Sima will continue:

"The Wayang suit built by Punokawan, is a puppet suit. What they planned to do with it..."

Anxing Sima lurches to his feet and turns to face you, a bottle loosely held in one hand and a short glass in the other.

"To attack their own people in their search for influence? To frame Libertos and use the chaos to secure power? Danny and I were right to act!"

"The Hawk of Lilypad 4 unmasked them, and together he and I did what had to be done," he states vehemently.

ATTACK!

The GM should initiate a face-to-face test using **Stealth (Spec Ops) vs Observation (PCs)** to check for surprise as the following attack ensues:

The window explodes inwards. A bright flash of light, enough to blind and disorient an inexperienced combatant, pierces the darkness.

A mercenary group consisting of one Heavy Spec Ops, plus one Spec Ops per PC (see *Infinity Corebook* p. 455) burst through the windows. Their initial target is Anxing Sima, but they are also tasked with eradicating the PCs.

If the PCs have skipped *Scene Four: Lilypad 4* and Anxing perishes, he will scream "The Hawk!" as he dies.

If PCs have been through *Scene Four: Lilypad 4* and he dies, he will yell "My family, tell them!" as he passes.

If Anxing Sima survives, the PCs have several possible options:

- **If they have not been through *Scene Four: Lilypad 4*, they can garner the information Danny Hawker would have been able to provide direct from Sima.** GMs will need to adapt Danny's revelations and provide them after the battle. They may want to question Danny directly, but doing so will be dangerous (see below).
- **Take down Sima.** He is, after all, the terrorist responsible. It is left open as to whether he was working alone as he claims, or whether Yu Jing knew more than they have suggested.
- **Get Sima to safety.** Despite his attack, he was destroying something that was to be used to cause untold terror on Varuna.
- **Hand Sima over to the authorities.** This could leave the PCs in a precarious position, depending on what they let slip about their knowledge of Punokawan's true operation.
- **Go public with their findings.** This would have dire implications for all involved, but most especially the PCs.

If the PCs have not played through *Scene 4* and Anxing Sima dies, they should now have multiple leads telling them to go to Lilypad 4. Punokawan will send another mercenary group to attack them at the shanty town, as they can explain away the attack as nothing but violent Ateks.

EPILOGUE

Whether Sima survives or not, Punokawan's intentions were appalling. O-12 and certain members of the Varuna bureaucracy need to parse the information that has been gathered. Returning to the spaceport, debriefing, and departing Varuna might be key goals for the PCs once they have the answers to their investigation.

Alternatively, as a ploy to wash their hands of the affair and save face, PanOceania may invite the Bureau to continue their investigation into the entire Punkowan Group's activities, which can then lead to all manner of subterfuge and confrontation.

CHAPTER 10

INDULGENCE

Yu Jing makes use of Resurrections as a means of reward, propaganda, negotiation, and expenditure of political power. Citizens of Yu Jing value Resurrections as both a recognition for greatness and a status symbol. Some, however, have learned to subvert the intricate political system in Yu Jing to create a black market around everlasting life. The Ascendent, an ultra-traditionalist criminal sect, have purchased one of these Resurrections for their recently-deceased leader, Shigehiro Shinrikyo.

OPERATIONAL SUMMARY

The PCs are called in to support a Yu Jing law enforcement operation targeting smugglers selling O-12 equipment to suspicious buyers. The buyers are revealed to be Ascendent Zealots seeking arms support for a major upcoming operation. After

the raid, the PCs will discover connections to the corrupt aspiring politician Zhang Wu-Lei, a criminal group known as the Hēi Fèngguáng, and the perpetrators themselves: The Ascendent.

BACKGROUND
THE ASCENDENT

The Ascendent are a group of ultra-traditionalist xenophobes honouring the traditions of the pre-Diaspora Aum Shinrikyo cult of Japan and Korea. They prescribe a formalized caste-based organization led by descendants from divine progeny. They believe that humanity is under attack by demonic forces and that only by divine leadership and adherence to strict societal values can mankind be saved.

For the past several decades, The Ascendent have existed in relative isolation within the Yunmen





Mountains. Led by a charismatic genius, Shigehiro Shinrikyo, they have quietly grown through subjugation of their lesser members. Shigehiro took advantage of the fear and uncertainty prompted by the existential threat of the Combined Army to increase recruitment through popular ministry and destabilizing criminal activity aimed at the Yu Jing progressive leadership. As he consolidated power, Shinrikyo began branching out to major cities including Jichāngyǐ, Shaoshang, Xuan Ji, and even the outskirts of Tiān Dì Jing, with growing success. This expansion, however, also drew attention to Shigehiro and his rhetoric, causing the Party – who could not permit this to continue unchallenged – to arrange his assassination.

Shinrikyo's death destabilized The Ascendent, causing them to shift focus towards Resurrecting Shinrikyo. Currently, the group is being run by his first wife, Hisoka, who – though equally brilliant – lacks her husband's charm. She is holding the organization together by sheer force of will and cunning, though rifts are growing.

THE ASCENDENT PLAN

The Ascendent's goal of returning Shigehiro to life through the process of Resurrection is already well under way. Zhang Wu-Lei, a mobster that had

strong ties with Shigehiro, has offered a clear path to their goal. They began by spending most of their resources on the acquisition of a Resurrection Key from the Hēi Fēnghuáng, while Zhang provided them with the crucial Silk that was required. Currently, the lower echelons are scrounging supplies and stealing weapons to support and protect their Resurrected leader – the circumstances of the raid at the beginning of the scenario. Concurrently, an elite team of zealots are stealing a Lhost from within the Celestial Reliquary, where it was being stored prior to the Resurrection Ceremony that will take place in three days. Subsequent to all of this, and with Shigehiro Shinrikyo's Cube firmly in the possession of Hisoka, The Ascendent need only wait the three days until the Key is active.

MISSION BRIEFING

PCs will be relayed to a briefing at a regional Judicial Police headquarters in Tiān Dì Jing itself. Once there, they will be introduced to the investigator in charge, Ko Huang, who wastes no time in delivering an efficient brief:

Agents, you are being assigned to assist me in a police operation to recover O-12 military hardware that has been stolen for unlawful sale. My clandestine contacts have alerted me to an increased interest in the acquisition of advanced weaponry and equipment by a dissident group known as The Ascendent. The escalating violence displayed by this organisation intimate that such a transaction will endanger StateEmpire property and civilians. Your presence is required to ensure that the hardware is re-appropriated and returned to O-12 for the war efforts. These are your objectives:

1. Assist myself and the Judicial Police in our operations to secure any weapons or equipment being sold.
2. Determine how the O-12 hardware was acquired, which includes any supply chains that might have been exploited.
3. Investigate, prosecute, and/or neutralize the recipients of the O-12 weaponry while minimizing the threat to persons and property.

We have already established a surveillance team at a point within the Xiandiani Commerce Centre. When we arrive, you will be given some freedom to establish your surveillance perimeter and assault points. While you act as agents of O-12, which provides various political freedoms, you are to follow my directives.

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

ALEPH: Responsible for monitoring and facilitation of Resurrections for Yu Jing, ALEPH will be keen to examine the processes by which the Hēi Fēnghuáng stole and subverted the Resurrection Key. Obtain the Key and provide its contents to ALEPH.

Ariadna: The Ariadnans are decades behind the rest of the Sphere with regard to Cube tech. Recovering any such technology will be a big boon to the faction as a whole.

Haqqislam: A current standing order dictates that Haqqislam agents are obligated to investigate any discovery of illegal Silk distribution. Determine who is conducting the Silk operation and file a report.

Nomads: Competition is competition, and right now the Nomads are the only ones who have free reign to sell Resurrections. Connect with the distributors of the illicit Resurrections and disrupt their operations if they aren't open to negotiations.

PanOceānia: Recover Shinrikyo's Cube so that its contents can be plundered for propaganda purposes to tarnish Yu Jing's reputation.

Yu Jing: Cover up any corruption or wrong-doing on the part of StateEmpire officials and ensure the sanctity of Yu Jing's honour.

Corporations: The creation of a Resurrection Key should be replicable. Recover the Key or a copy, so that additional duplicates can be made.

Submondo: The Submondo handler will remain silent until knowledge of the illegal Resurrections is obtained. As a potential avenue of exploitation, the identity of the Party supplier of the Resurrection is then requested.

Mercenaries: Purchasing O-12 gear on the black market is no mean feat. A solid counterfeit market can be undercut by 'exporting' any O-12 equipment that happens to be lying around.

The PCs are free to ask questions once the briefing is complete, though Ko becomes increasingly impatient. They are then given an opportunity for a gear check before being directed to an unmarked van that drives them to the Xiandiani Commerce Centre, a once prosperous mall that fell out of favour with the locals.

KO HUANG

APPEARANCE

Tall and broad-shouldered, Ko Huang stands as an imposing figure in the presence of other Yu Jingese. He keeps his short black hair slicked tight to his scalp, and has wide, expressive eyes of a deep brown. He favours black suits with a burgundy tie, even during operations unless protocol demands otherwise.

ROLEPLAYING

- Favours direct approaches to problems and avoids overly-complicated plans.
- Prefers to rely on his own wits and resourcefulness.
- Confident, Arrogant, Forceful.

BACKGROUND

Ko Huang grew up in the outskirts of Tiān Dì Jīng, the youngest son of a Judicial Officer. He learned lessons of status and the depravity of the criminal mind from his father, and carried these learnings into the field with him.

KEY INFO

- Use the Detective profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 428.
- Maintains a healthy supply of informants who he pays well but treats roughly, lording his power over them. These informants can have necessary links to both Zhang Wu-Lei and the Hēi Fènghuáng.
- Clearly has a low opinion of The Ascendent, describing them as a “bunch of Tūbāozi (bumpkins) with delusions of grandeur”.
- Has talked to Maok Tuan, an old beggar who used to be with The Ascendent. He’s a street-level connection and might have more information.

SCENE ONE: THE RAID

XIANDIANI COMMERCE CENTRE

The exterior of the mall is a uniform masterpiece of Yu Jing architecture, though the multi-tiered interior levels vary in form and function. The level

where the raid occurs has long, winding corridors that open into a concrete and metal atrium where dozens of storefronts face onto a bleak, empty circular fountain. The facades of the few occupied premises glow with a pale, waxy light that spills out from dirty windows and barren doorways. Florescent lights flicker with disorienting dirty yellow staccatos of intermittent light as the taciturn Ko escorts the PCs to the target area.

MAP LOCATIONS

- **Police Post:** The dusty, grime-smeared windows of this long-disused storefront conceal a small team of police hiding behind counters and display cases. If the PCs spend time mixing with this team, the GM may spend up to **2 Heat** to trigger a **Challenging (D2) Stealth test**. If they succeed, they avoid being spotted by a passer-by. On failure, the civilian notes their presence. On a Repercussion, that observer is actually an Ascendent.
- **Listening Post:** The inventory room for the Police Post has been converted into a listening post. Display terminals and surveillance equipment rest atop ruggedized hard cases, monitored by a two-man team. In quantronic terms, this is a secured zone with Intrusion Countermeasures, Security Soak 2, and Firewall 10.
- **The Fountain:** This once-handsome water feature depicting the Ying/Yang symbol now stands dry, with faint traces of algae and mildew staining the bottom and sides.
- **Various Occupied Businesses:** None of the named businesses are busy, although **Tsing Bao Ramen** will have a half-dozen customers.
- **Various Vacant Businesses:** Each of the vacant businesses still have shelves, display cases, racks and the like.
- **Exit Points:** The fastest way out of the Centre is through the underground car park adjacent to the fountain, with a descending flight of stairs leading from the fountain to the park.

PC ARRIVAL AND SURVEILLANCE

The PCs can participate in the surveillance by joining one of the teams in the atrium, which will require some element of disguise (and a requisite Stealth test). Alternatively, they can assist at the listening post.

The entire surveillance team consists of eight officers; two on surveillance and another six poised to make the arrest. To reflect their capabilities, use the Police Adversary profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 449.

RESEARCHING THE ASCENDENT

A successful **Challenging (D2) Education test** will yield the basic information presented above, excepting Shigehiro's death, which is not public knowledge; The Ascendent do not speak of it and the StateEmpire doesn't publicize clandestine actions. For each Momentum spent, the researcher can learn one of the following:

- Shigehiro Shinrikyo has not been seen for several months. His wife, Hisoka, appears to be in charge.
- Ascendent members were recently arrested for attempting to procure Silk from undercover agents in the black market. There were hints that they were also looking to acquire a Resurrection.



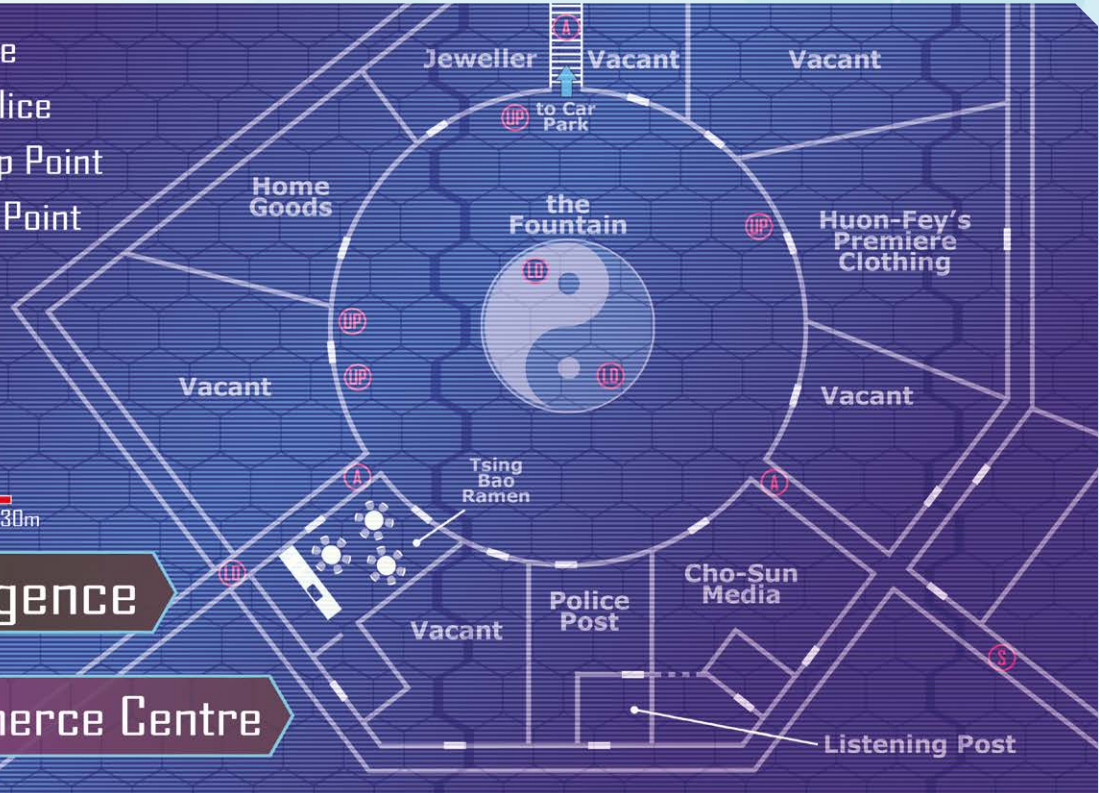
- (LD) = Listening Device
(UP) = Undercover Police
(S) = Smuggler Setup Point
(A) = Ascendent Exit Point

The Raid

scale in metres
10m 0 30m

Yutang-Indulgence

Xiandiani Commerce Centre



MAP KEY

Listening Devices (LD):

The police have networked hidden basic listening devices into the Listening Post, each with a Security Soak 1 and Firewall 5.

Undercover Cops (UC):

Undercover officers skulk in the shadows of doorways and slouch against the stone walls of the Centre. PCs posing with the Undercover Cops must make a face-to-face Stealth test if scrutinised, with failure resulting in the PCs' cover being blown.

Smuggler Setup Point (S):

This is where the smugglers will set up their exchange point.

Ascendent Entry Point (AP):

These two entrances into the lower court of the mall indicate the ingress and egress points of the Ascendents.

SMUGGLERS ARRIVE

Arriving in two groups of two, the smugglers wheel in dollies stacked with boxes made of dilapidated wood or flimsy cardboard and by all appearances begin setting up an impromptu flea market. Observers or listeners can make an **Average (D1) Analysis or Observation test** to determine that the smuggler's nervous disposition is due to the unpredictability and intensity of the Zealots. One Momentum can ascertain a link to Zhang Wu-Lei. Use the Arms Dealer profile, *Infinity Corebook*, p. 421.

THE ASCENDENT ARRIVE

Approximately twenty minutes after the PCs arrive, the Ascendent begin to show up in force via the two egress points indicated. Wearing dingy clothing and sullen expressions, the twelve Ascendent attempt to pass themselves off as aimless punters. Successful face-to-face **Observation tests** versus the Ascendent's Stealth will allow anyone observing from a distance to identify hidden weapons. A similar test from a listening post or close proximity will pick up on snippets of hasty conversation concerning the Ascendent's plan to jump the smugglers, kill them, and take their gear. One Momentum will pick up on the curious term "the Reliquary Plan".

THE ATTACK

With little warning other than a flurry of discarded clothing and movement, the Ascendent cast off their disguises and attack the smugglers. The PCs

can intervene at any time prior to this, but if they do not, the combat ensues with the overmatched smugglers surprised and already on the back foot; the speed and ferocity of the attack will result in

TROOPER

ASCENDENT ZEALOTS

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	7	10	9	6	6	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	1	Movement	+1	–	Social	–	–
Fortitude	+1	–	Senses	+1	–	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	3	Resolve	5	Vigour	5
Security	0	Morale	2	Armour	–

ATTACKS

Pistol: R/C, 1+4 (S), 1H, Vicious 1 *plus either*

Sword: Melee, 1+7 (S), Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Vicious 1 *or*
Knife: Melee, 1+5 (S), 1H, Concealed 1, Non-Hackable, Subtle 2, Thrown, Unforgiving 1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Undying (X Heat): Zealots can shrug off pain to fight on with increased resolve and tenacity before succumbing to their wounds. The first time in a scene that a Zealot would be reduced to zero Vigour or less, the GM may spend **X Heat** to provide the Zealot with temporary Vigour equal to X (maximum of 5 temporary Vigour). This temporary Vigour is reduced by one each subsequent turn. The Zealot will truly die once the temporary Vigour is reduced to zero or less by any means.

a loss of action for the smugglers during the first round. The police will intervene in the combat two rounds after the fighting begins.

If the PCs do nothing but observe, the situation will work itself out in about five minutes, with heavy casualties. There will be a few surviving arms smugglers in cuffs, an unconscious Ascendent, and a few able-bodied cops able to act effectively. The rest will be dead or unable to be of any assistance.

THE AFTERMATH

Unless the PCs deliberately go on a killing spree, there should be several surviving members of each group of belligerents. If they acted professionally, the PCs win over Ko and gain him as a means of information throughout the rest of the scenario. This nets three bonus Momentum to any future Psywar action in which Ko is present and active. If they tried to help but made things worse, however, Ko will regard them as incompetent. Doing nothing results in either the death or serious injury of Ko. Worse yet, his replacement officer — a rookie detective named Guo Jianhong — will be unfamiliar with the case and of relatively little assistance.

INTERROGATIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS

INTERROGATING THE ASCENDENT

A Metanoia inflicted on a Zealot results in the disclosure of one of the pieces of information below. Each time a Metanoia is inflicted, Momentum may be spent on a one-for-one basis to garner additional information. The data security for their personal hardware may also be exploited in a similar manner to garner the information.

- Communication is basic and uses codewords in the place of proper names and planned activities.
- The group arrived in Tian Di Jing from Yunmen several days ago and have been very busy. Their last travels were to the Black Phoenix tenement of the Shin-Ho Underground to purchase something very, very expensive.
- They are preparing for some kind of major event taking place at their headquarters in three days.
- They spent most of their resources recently, so decided to murder the arms merchants rather than pay them.
- A compromised Ascendent could reveal the name and location of Xan-Qi, but only under significant duress (Intransigence 5).

INTERROGATING THE DEALERS

While the dealers are less invested in their trade, they still have an inherent hatred of both snitching and law enforcement. A successful Metanoia result against Intransigence 2 will provide one item of information from below, while their personal hardware reveals similar in the form of various communication and movement logs. Rather than make separate rolls, two points of Momentum can be spent following a successful test to provide an extra piece of information.

- The dealers nominally work for Zhang Wu-Lei, a small-time politician and businessman of questionable character.
- Zhang was handsomely paid for a fair quantity of Silk recently sold to The Ascendent. He was eager to repeat profitable business, and had not expected trouble.
- The smugglers are really just runners. They can provide an address for the supply depot where they collected the equipment, which is also connected to O-12.

CHECKING THE GEAR

Comprised of barely-functional handguns and longer-range munitions with highly questionable explosives, the weapons and equipment being sold by the smugglers is almost universally second rate. The one notable exception, however, is the O-12 communications setup that allows for advanced encryption and superior broadcast capabilities. The PCs can easily access the software without an Infowar engagement by contacting their Handler or other O-12 ranking superior. A successful **Daunting (D3) Hacking or Tech test** will recover the equipment's wiped identification information, while a subsequent **Average (D1) Analysis test** will link it to an O-12 operation centre in the capital that reported it as damaged and unrecoverable almost a year ago. The O-12 tracking software that reports the equipment's location has been deactivated, but its handshake logger is still active. The encryption software, while still high-quality, has not received updates and so does not serve as a significant threat to O-12s operational security.

FOLLOWING THE O-12 GEAR

The players have a clear directive to determine the source of the missing O-12 equipment and take care of the materiel leak. Following the trace back to the O-12 supply depot in Tian Di Jing, the players will meet Staff Sergeant Andrew Kolib from Bureau Trimurti. An easy nut to crack, a successful

HEAT

- **1 Heat — Same Side:**
A cop confuses a PC for one of the combatants, requiring an **Average (D1) Command or Persuade test** to convince them otherwise.
- **2 Heat — Suspicious Minds:**
Prior to the beginning of combat, any PC in line-of-sight of either the smugglers or Ascendent must succeed at a **Challenging (D2) Stealth test** to avoid drawing attention to themselves.
- **3 Heat — Ammo Explosion:**
Several of the smugglers cases contain old, volatile ammunition. One crate begins to smoulder and fume. Unless the PCs intervene within 2 rounds, the crate explodes. Anyone within Close Range suffers 2+5 damage with the Knockdown and Stun qualities, although a successful **Challenging (D2) Acrobatics or Athletics test** will negate the Knockdown and Stun.
- **Variable, 1-5 Heat — Civilian:**
Panicked by the attack, several civilians rush out. Unless the PCs can protect them, they will be killed or injured at the rate of one per round. The more Heat spent, the more targets or the more vulnerable/sensitive the target, i.e. a 3 Heat spend might be a couple fleeing across the fountain to escape or a dazed toddler wandering into the field of fire. Determine appropriate Resolve damage any civilians gunned down.

SAMPLE NAMES FOR THE PERPS

Smugglers: Zan Mu Li, Tao Wong, Bai Jiang
Ascendent: Myung Ikeda, Byeong-Ho Jo, Shouta Saburou



Average (D1) Persuade test will reveal that he sold the comms equipment to a Triad representative named Zhang Wu-Lei. He doesn't know much about the guy, but it was just outdated and faulty comms equipment, so what harm can it do?

SCENE TWO: THE PAGODA OF ZHANG WU-LEI

Zhang Wu-Lei lives in an affluent area adjacent to the Forbidden City. His six story, eight-sided pagoda home is a tribute to the T'ang Dynasty architecture. The first floor opens onto a business-like series of rooms housing Zhang's legitimate operations. These real estate, property management, and small-business consultant operations serve to launder money from the criminal undertakings on the higher floors. A central elevator extends to the top of the structure, connecting a brothel, several small armouries, and a small pharmaceutical lab along the way to Zhang's apartment.

Zhang is easy to find, but not so easy to get to. An underling (using the Gang Enforcer profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 437 supplemented with an Intransigence of 3) will meet with the PCs and try to brush them off with denials of wrongdoings and refusals for a meeting. If present and respectful of

the PCs prowess, Ko can provide his assistance to garnering a meeting. Flashing O-12 credentials will net one additional Momentum towards any test made to gain entrance, although Psywar actions and tests made to gather information once inside suffer from +1 difficulty as the entire operation closes ranks. Alternatively, the PCs could pose as potential Submondo clients, though this will need an involved cover story.

ZHANG WU-LEI

APPEARANCE

A well-groomed Chinese man of medium-to-heavy build, his physique suggests strength beneath his bulk. His hair is pulled back into a bun and he wears white clothing with blue and black embroidery.

ROLEPLAYING

- Smiles constantly, but shows only his teeth when angry or agitated.
- A shameless womanizer, he will outright ogle any female party members, regardless of their disposition towards him.
- Political, elusive, capricious.

BACKGROUND

An emerging crime lord with aspirations to greatness, Zhang has just enough information to succeed. He has myriad connections within the Party and makes good use of these to influence his fellows. Approximately one year ago, he began providing The Ascendent with cheap transportation between provinces and supplying them with weapons. He knows they're politically motivated and that their leader recently died. Recently, Zhang set up an arms delivery to some of The Ascendent, but something went wrong with the delivery. He isn't sure of what happened, which can provide the PCs with leverage.

KEY INFO

- Can provide the location of The Ascendent headquarter at Xan-Qi.
- In addition to weapons, The Ascendent recently purchased schematics and plans for the Celestial Reliquary in the Forbidden City, including service and sewer maps.
- About two months ago, Zhang introduced The Ascendent to the Hēi Fēngguāng – the Black Phoenix – as they were looking to purchase a Resurrection. He can provide that gangs' location.
- A local, Maok Tuan, tried to sell info about The Ascendent to Zhang. If the PCs want the info, they will have to search the back alleys.
- Zhang also supplied The Ascendent with some Silk that he needed to offload, as Haqqislam agents were sniffing around. His supplier, a Haqqislamite named Afif Mukhtar, resides on the Tiānjīn orbital.

NEMESIS

ZHANG WU-LEI

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
7	12	6	8	13	13	12

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+1	1	Movement	+1	–	Social	+4	3
Fortitude	+2	1	Senses	+3	1	Technical	+2	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	15	Resolve	14	Vigour	8
Security	–	Morale	–	Armour	2

ATTACKS

- **Silenced Assault Pistol:** Range R/C, 1+7 damage, Burst 2, Unbalanced, Subtle 1, Vicious 1

GEAR: Aletheia Kit, Ballistic Vest, Holomask

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Grey Eminence:** Zhang can influence conflict via meticulous planning before first shots are fired. When his underlings are working according to his plan, all their tests are made at –1 difficulty.
- **Dominating Presence:** Zhang gains 2 bonus Momentum when using Psywar techniques.
- **Shield of the Secret Society:** When targeting Zhang with human terrain mapping, add +2 zones to the contact distance of the contact point.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE FORBIDDEN CITY...

In tandem with the weapons raid, a small group of Ascendent infiltrate the Celestial Reliquary and abscond with a male-gendered Siren Lhost. This infiltration can enter the PCs' periphery via local law enforcement chatter several hours after the incident, or through Ko informing them of the theft of valuable StateEmpire property.

MAOK TUAN

APPEARANCE

Years of hard living and drug use etched across his thirty-six-year-old frame make Maok appear older. His black hair is streaked with grey and face stitched with scars and pox marks. He limps badly; the result of a broken femur that occurred while escaping from Xan-Qi. His filthy jacket and black pants reek of urine and stale alcohol.

ROLEPLAYING

- Constantly wrings and scratches his hands, drawing blood.
- Poor, shifting eye contact.
- Speaks with an uneven rhythm, alternately slurring and rushing.

KEY INFO:

- Use the Thug A profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 459.
- Maok was seduced by The Ascendents' unconditional acceptance and doctrine of salvation. Things were much different once he arrived at Xan-Qi. He was beaten, starved, and brainwashed to be one of their zealots. It was only after his close friend, Shai, was killed that he realized that he was likely to die as well.
- Hisoka, Shigehiro's wife, is a monster. She arranged Shai's death because she believed that Shai was trying to seduce Shigehiro.
- He escaped through a perimeter door that led higher into the mountains. He can provide the keycode for this door, but is doubtful that it still functions. He will locate Xan-Qi for the characters, but will not return.

SCENE THREE: THE HEI FENGHUANG, OR BLACK PHOENIX

Headquartered out of an aging, four-story tenement complex near the centre of Tian Di Jing, the Black Phoenix are the strongest gang in the area. Each identical floor consists of twelve single bedroom apartments, with the rooftop serving as the congregation point. The key piece of information to be gained from here is that the Ascendent purchased a Resurrection that they themselves received from a "legitimate" party source. The key for this Resurrection will only be active for a short window during the Resurrection Ceremony. These pieces of information can be gleaned through the following means:

- A sufficiently persuasive PC can influence the lower level gangsters (use the Gang Member profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 437) to grant an admission to talk to the current lieutenant,

Dae-Sung Park (Gang Enforcer, *Infinity Corebook* p. 429). This requires a Metanoia effect against an Intransigence of 2. The PCs might then convince Park that they are considering purchasing a Resurrection, or offer a bribe to garner the information.

- Hacking into the gang's secure network within the building, which has an entry level access foyer for the gang's officers, plus several secure sub-layers, data tunnels, and various Intrusion Countermeasures. Once the correct files are accessed, a **Challenging (D2) Analysis test** will uncover the information.

SCENE FOUR: THE CELESTIAL RELIQUARY

The Celestial Reliquary stands on the border of the public areas between Tian Di Jing and the restricted region of the The Forbidden City. Open to the public for most of the year, it stands closed now due to the recent theft, with Invincibles guarding the doors. Standing two stories tall, the single floor of the simple pagoda is normally clear and open, giving views to murals, tapestries, and statues, along with small prayer chambers that ring the structure. The central chamber currently contains two dozen lozenge-shaped tubes connected to power junction boxes. Gaining access to the Reliquary is straightforward so long as the PCs are with Ko. Without Ko, they will have to deal with one of the bureaucrats in charge of the facility (use the Diplomat profile, *Infinity Corebook* p. 429), who has an Intransigence of 4 to anyone from outside of Tian Di Jing or the Forbidden City. The following information can be gleaned from the Reliquary:

- A review of surveillance footage proves The Ascendent gained access through use of legitimate maintenance codes. Security footage reveals a four-man team entering through a side door, proceeding to one of the experimental Lhosts, and securing it in a large duffle bag. They then exit through a sewer access.
- Though well-defended (Firewall 12), hacking the Reliquary's network can reveal details of the specialized Siren Lhost, which is male-gendered and has additional subdermal augmentations.
- Reliquary attendants inform the PCs that the Lhost currently has a unique station-keeping Cube that facilitates baseline functioning and ensures viability up until the Resurrection Ceremony.

SOURCING THE KEY

While the Black Phoenix won't verbally give up their sources, hacking their network and spending one Momentum on the Analysis test made to garner information will also reveal that Hung-Bo Tsien, a Party member with the Old Guard, has been supplying the keys. The impact of this revelation is beyond the scope of this adventure.

THE STATION-KEEPING CUBE

Lhosts that are not immediately put into use require a station-keeping Cube that facilitates the baseline autonomic function of the body and prevents metabolic processes from occurring that result in age and atrophy. This Cube is designed to expire at the time of the Resurrection Ceremony, facilitating the transfer of the lucky Resurrected's Cube. If not replaced, the Cube will deactivate and the body will begin to die. While somewhat rugged (Firewall 8), the Cube can be hacked to either expire or otherwise alter the Lhost's functions while waiting for Resurrection.



XAN QI FORCE DISTRIBUTION

LOCATION	DAYTIME	NIGHTTIME
Barracks	6 Zealots, 1 Elite Sleeping	12 zealots, 2 Elite (split between the two), sleeping
Temple	3 Zealots, 1 Elite	2 Zealots, Patrolling
Parade Grounds	6 Zealots, 1 Elite	2 Zealots, Patrolling
Armory/Fuel Tanks/Shuttle Pad	None Present	2 Zealots, 1 Elite
Mess/Community Building	3 Zealots	None Present
Foyer	2 Zealots, 2 Elite	2 Elite
Study	1 Zealot	4 Elite, Sleeping
Dining Room	1 Zealot, 1 Elite, Nurse	Nurse, Sleeping
Kitchen	2 Zealots	1 Zealot
Antechamber	2 Zealots, 2 Elite	None Present
Office	Hisoka and 1 Zealot attendant	1 Zealot
Bedroom	1 Zealot	Hisoka

- Following the trail of The Ascendent through the sewers will require a **Daunting (D3) Survival test**. Following several miles of winding sewer passages leads to a culvert emptying out into a waterway near a sizeable park. A quick examination of the park will show an impromptu landing site. Following a successful **Challenging (D2) Science** or **Daunting (D3) Analysis test**, the shuttle's debris can be analysed and confirmed as consistent with mineral deposits distinctive to the Xan Qi region.

THE VILLAGE AND COMPOUND

The village is a collection of small, single-roomed cottages. Sneaking through requires a series of **Challenging (D2) Stealth tests**. Alternatively, Psywar can be used to pacify the locals. If the PCs take a direct approach through the village, they will not be opposed, but a silent alarm will be triggered that puts the entire compound on high alert.

XAN QI FORCE DISTRIBUTION

The Ascendent's forces are grievously depleted through attrition, desertion, and internal conflict. Currently, the distribution of forces is as shown above. If the alarm is raised, all forces in the outer compound will move to the manor, defending Hisoka and the Lhost.

THE OUTER COMPOUND

The outer compound is surrounded by a 15-foot stone wall with a single obvious main gate.

- Parade Ground:** A large, well-trampled swath of ground. During the day, two Ascendent Elites can be found here, training up to a dozen Zealots.
- Mess & Community:** This well-used structure contains a mess area and kitchen.
- Temple:** A shabby imitation of a Buddhist temple.
- Barracks:** Cramped bunkbeds and footlockers line the long, open room.
- Armoury:** A **Challenging (D2) Thievery** or **Daunting (D3) Athletics test** will crack open a locker containing six heavy pistols and six light shotguns, plus enough ammunition for 2 Reloads for each weapon.

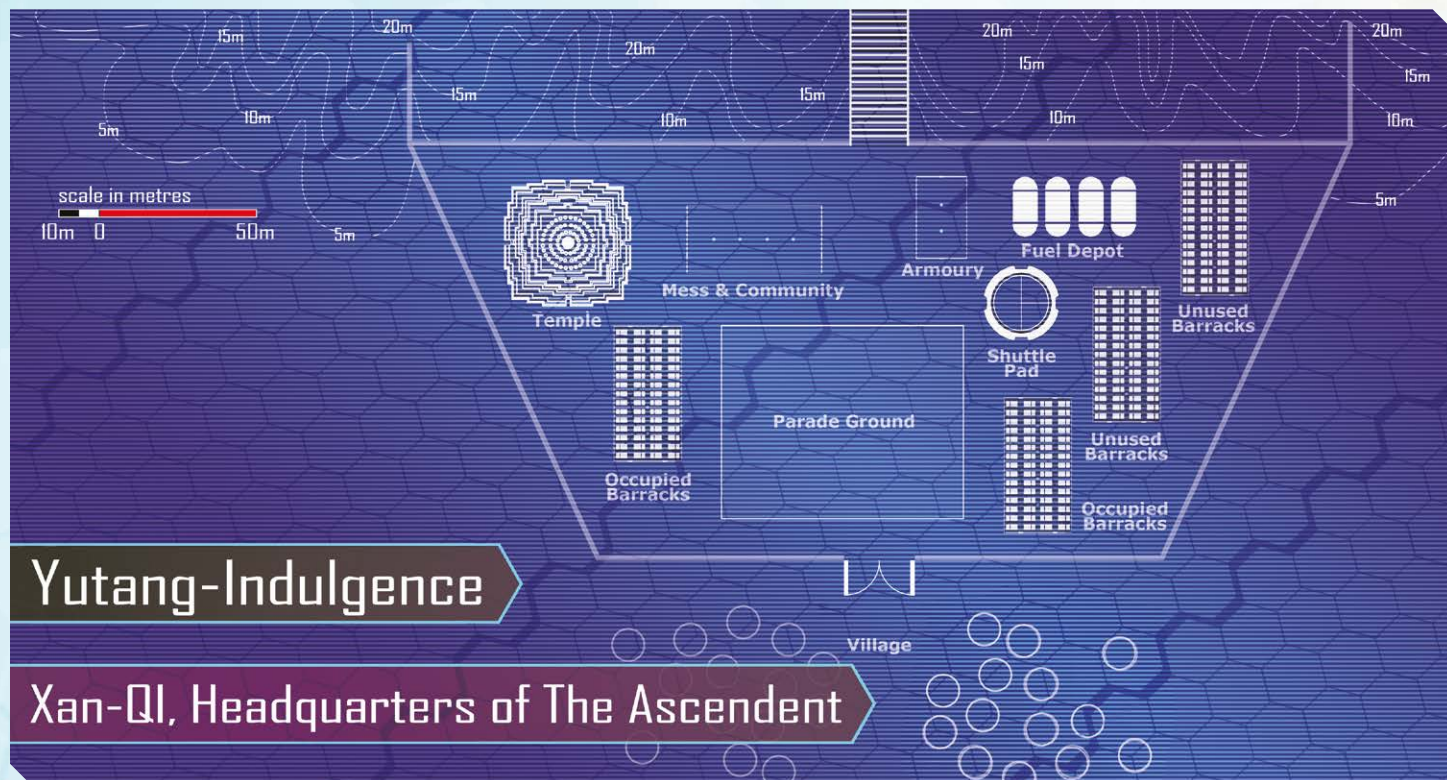
SCENE FIVE: XAN-QI, H.Q. OF THE ASCENDENT

Situated deep in the central mountains of Yunmen is Xan-Qi, The Ascendent stronghold. Well-concealed in a valley, this small community has remained largely unnoticed for decades. A moderately-sized village before the compound houses Shinrikyo's wife, Hisoka, and her schemes to return him to his ministry.

If Ko is still available, he can readily arrange transport for the characters in the form of an intercontinental flight to Shaoshang or Xuan Ji. He will insist on travelling with them, not least of all to handle any jurisdiction queries. Once in Yunmen, Ko will liaise with local authorities to arrange transportation to Xan-Qi.

MAOK'S ENTRANCE

The side entrance used by Maok is located on the far side of the compound, requiring some navigation up the side of the mountain and then around to the back. A **Challenging (D2) Hacking** or **Daunting (D3) Thievery test** is required to gain access silent access, as Maok's code no longer works. Alternately, a **Challenging (D2) Athletics test** will also work, but trigger the alarm and make a racket.



Yutang-Indulgence

Xan-QI, Headquarters of The Ascendent

- **Shuttle Pad:** A decrepit but functional shuttle sits on this pad.

THE MANOR

The manor (see map, p.108) is opulent compared to the village, but drab compared to contemporary standards of fine living. The ascetic tones of the stone walls and wooden ceilings are disrupted by jarringly colourful rugs.

THE FIRST FLOOR

- **Entry Foyer:** A large entryway also serves as Hisoka's briefing area.
- **Study:** This relatively well-appointed room contains several bits of antiquated media, including films, magazines, and books all relevant to the pursuits of The Ascendent. The Silk that is necessary for the Resurrection sits in case within a locked refrigerator, which requires a **Daunting (D3) Athletics** or **Thievery** test to open.
- **Pantry:** Maok's entrance leads directly into the well-stocked pantry.
- **Kitchen:** A large galley kitchen.
- **Dining Room:** The Lhost lies on the grand dining room table, attended by a nurse.

THE SECOND FLOOR

- **The Office:** Handsomely furnished with a massive black walnut desk and several bookshelves replete with religious, spiritual, and military texts. The Resurrection Key is locked in the desk,

requiring a **Daunting (D3) Athletics** or **Thievery** test to gain access. Using Athletics or failing the Thievery test results in a small but noisy alarm sounding.

- **The Antechamber:** Several high-backed chairs, a table, and a well-made rug adorn this room.
- **The Bedroom:** This room is furnished with a four-post bed and lavish rugs, as well as several sofas and chairs.

HISOKA SHINRIKYO

APPEARANCE

A short, thin, severe-looking Yu Jingese woman with a narrow angular chin and dark eyes. Her long, tightly braided hair drapes over one shoulder and she wears simple, darkly coloured kimonos. Shigehiro's Cube sits within a crystal teardrop pendant about her neck.

ROLEPLAYING

- Unyielding eye contact, constantly trying to dominate those that she talks to, even in a state of weakness.
- Tugs on her braid vigorously in emphasis.
- Scheming, sadistic, and loyal.

BACKGROUND

Hisoka met Shigehiro early in his ministry and was completely overwhelmed by his magnetism. She quickly worked her way into his good graces by serving as an enforcer and executioner. Their

STOPPING THE RESURRECTION

The Resurrection can be prevented by:

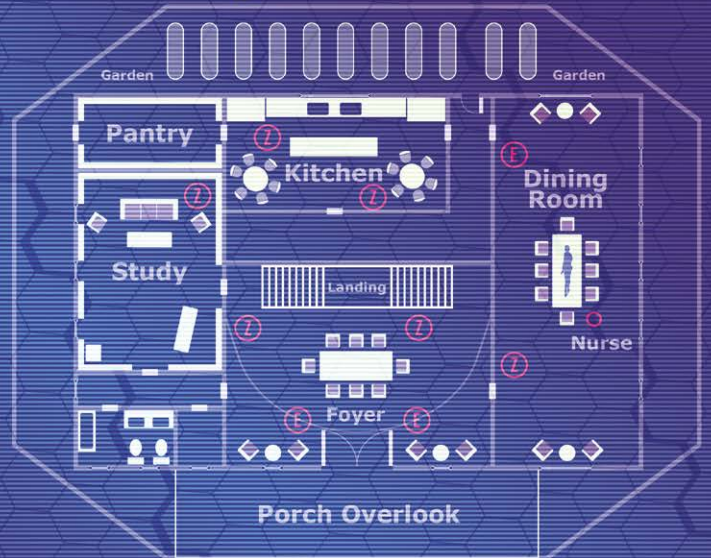
- Destroying the Lhost or hacking its station-keeping Cube.
- Finding and destroying the Resurrection Key in Hisoka's office.
- Finding and destroying Shinrikyo's Cube (held by Hisoka). This solution is the only permanent one.
- Destroying the Silk necessary for the process.



second floor



ground floor



(Z) = Zealot (E) = Elite

Yutang-Indulgence

Xan-Qi Manor

SPOILING THE SILK

Each batch of Silk requires a unique catalyst to function, which is also present in the case. An **Average (D1) Science test** will enable the PCs to desalinate the catalyst, causing the Silk to turn to goo when used.

relationship was intense and oftentimes excessive. Fanatical even after death, she is obsessed with his return.

KEY INFO

- Use the Ascendent Elite profile, below, plus the following Common Special Rules: Menacing 1, Threatening 3.
- Utterly loyal to The Ascendent and her husband.
- Intimately familiar with the details of her plan.

AFTERMATH

The players will have finally put to rest an undermining irritant to the StateEmpire's harmony. Ko will arrange transport back to Tian Di Jing if they so desire. He will also submit a full report to his superiors, with recommendations for future dealings with the PCs based upon how he views them at the conclusion – which could range between making future visits to Yutang a simple or difficult affair.

O-12 will expect a full report concerning the missing equipment. If they connect his name to the case, the matter of Hung-Bo Tsien may also require further investigation. The players will need to tread carefully here, however, as they are likely to rapidly become mired in the murky worlds of Party politics and powerful Triad syndicates; they wouldn't be the first O-12 agents to go missing among the back streets of the Yu Jing capital, nor will they be the last...

ELITE

ASCENDENT ELITE

ATTRIBUTES

AGI	AWA	BRW	COO	INT	PER	WIL
9	10	10	11	7	7	9

FIELDS OF EXPERTISE

Combat	+2	1	Movement	+1	1	Social	–	–
Fortitude	+2	2	Senses	+1	1	Technical	+1	–

DEFENCES

Firewall	7	Resolve	9	Vigour	10
Security	0	Morale	2	Armour	2

ATTACKS

Heavy Pistol: R/C, 2+6, Unbalanced, Unforgiving 1, Vicious 1

Sword: Melee, 1+7, Unbalanced, Non-Hackable, Parry 2, Vicious 1

GEAR: Ballistic Vest

SPECIAL ABILITIES

- **Ascended:** Ascendent Elites may reroll one d20 when making a Discipline test, or up to two when making a Close Combat test, but must accept the new results. Additionally, they reduce the Heat cost of their Defence or Guard Reactions by one when using the Close Combat skill.
- **Undying (X Heat):** Zealots can shrug off pain to fight on with increased resolve and tenacity before succumbing to their wounds. The first time in a scene that a Zealot would be reduced to zero Vigour or less, the GM may spend X Heat to provide the Zealot with temporary Vigour equal to X (maximum of 5 temporary Vigour). This temporary Vigour is reduced by one each subsequent turn. The Zealot will truly die once the temporary Vigour is reduced to zero or less by any means.

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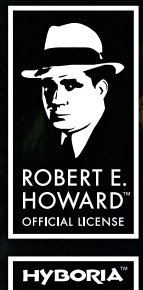
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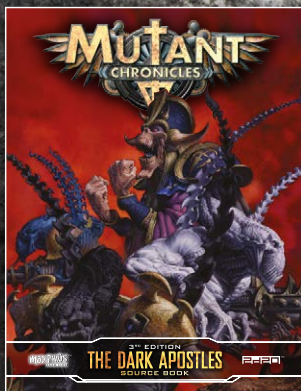
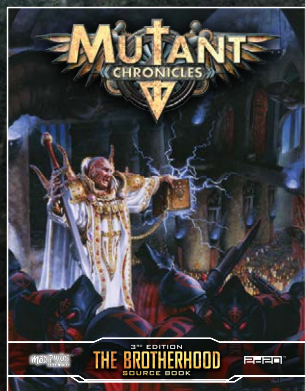
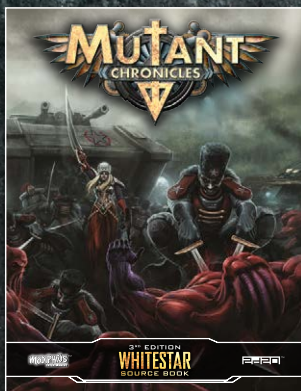
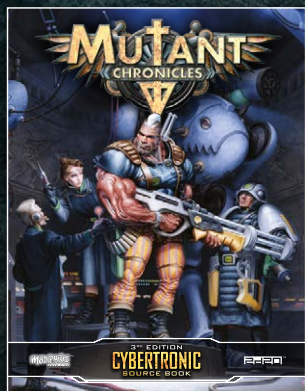
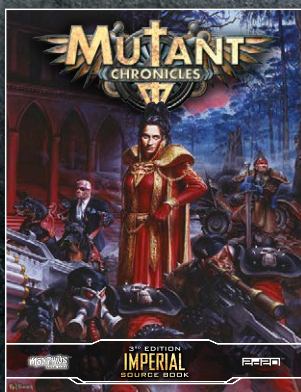
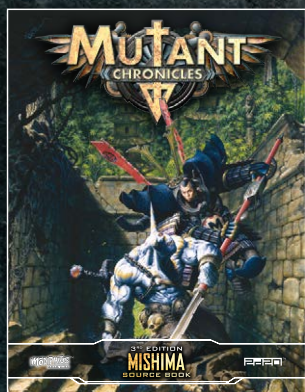
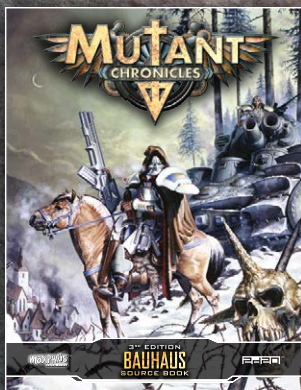
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