

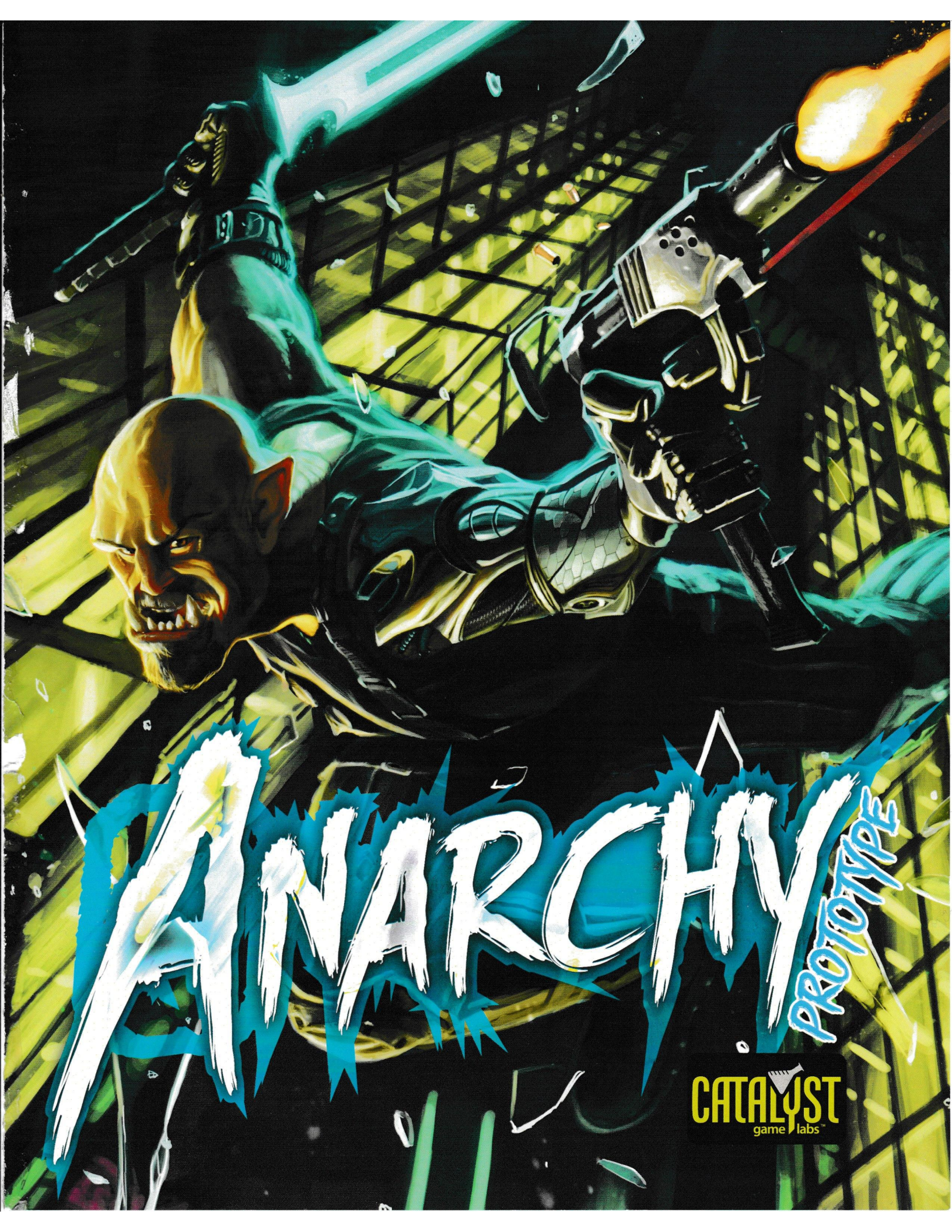
SHADOWRUN

ANARCHY



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PROTOTYPE



ANARCHY

PROTOTYPE

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PREFACE

RULES ARE MEANT TO BE BROKEN

It was the summer of 1989 when I was first exposed to *Shadowrun* via a four-page preview pamphlet at my local game store. A few weeks later and I had purchased the First-Edition rulebook and taken the first steps on the path to what would become the greatest RPG love affair of my life. Wait, elves *and* cybernetics? Megacorporations *and* dragons? You can't do that!

I spent the next nineteen years running a campaign, and for most of it we were playing weekly, every Monday night. There are living, breathing stories and characters that only exist within the minds of the few people that sat around that table, and any one of them will happily regale you with tales of the duplicitous machinations of a dwarf fixer named Redeye or the tragic end of Eddie Garrett, ex-Lone Star cop turned reluctant shadowrunner.

Shadowrun occupies a very special place in my heart. The walls and shelves of my home are covered in *Shadowrun* books and art, and indeed sometimes I have to remind myself of the countless people who have fallen in love with the *Shadowrun* world not through the classic tabletop role playing game, but instead through one of the many *Shadowrun* video games, or any of the more than fifty published novels.

But everything ends. My beloved campaign came to a satisfying conclusion in the fall of 2008, and while I have kept up with the game's new editions and releases, and flirted with some short story arcs, it hasn't returned to my table in any meaningful way for a while. I find that my tastes have changed over the years, and while I have lost no love for the *Shadowrun* world, these days I prefer RPG game systems that are lighter on the rules and more focused on story and character. There has been a massive explosion of indie-style RPG game play in the last few years, and many people are engaging with the

hobby in intriguing new ways. As a hobby-game retailer myself, I have also witnessed no shortage of gamers interested in playing tabletop *Shadowrun* but utterly intimidated by the massive rulebook. The fact of the matter is that that big black book isn't going anywhere, and there will always be players who want to joyously fiddle with every last glorious detail and chrome widget of rules found within those pages, and more power to them. I was one of them for a very long time.

Shadowrun has been part of our collective gaming consciousness for well over twenty-five years now, and it's been actively in print the whole time, something very few games can claim. It's been so long in fact, that what was a game of a speculative future has now become what is veritably an alternate *history* game! (Since magic did not, alas, return to the world in 2011. Although there's still a slim chance that my friend Warren might goblinize into an Ork in 2018, as we've all long suspected he will, but that remains to be seen.)

Some of us shadowrunners are now getting long in the tooth, lacking the time to play or facilitate a game with such a robust and exhaustive rules set. Meanwhile, more collaborative storytelling-style RPGs and even gamemaster-free RPGs are seeing some real popularity as the hobby continues to grow and evolve.

That's where *Shadowrun: Anarchy* comes in. It's flexible enough to be played as a rules-light version of a traditional roleplaying game, or as a much more freeform "open table" style storytelling experience. I am incredibly pleased with what the Catalyst team has come up with here, and I think it has the potential to inject a whole lot of new energy into the *Shadowrun* community. It's certainly going to get a new campaign to my table for the first time in years.

So if you're new to the Sixth World, welcome. Maybe you've always wanted to be an elf street ganger with an adrenal pump and a heart of gold. Or you've always entertained fantasies of summoning spirits from the back alley streets of Seattle by muttering arcane mysteries through your massive ork canine teeth. Or you're dying to see your *Shadowrun* video-game character come to life in a tabletop pencil-and-paper RPG. There's plenty of room for all of us in the shadows.

If, like myself, you're returning to Mr. Johnson's table after a few previous jobs, you'll fit right in, but you'll find that the rules have changed a bit. But rules are meant to be broken.

Paul Alexander Butler
July 2016, Baltimore

TELL US YOUR STORIES

We'd love to hear about your experiences taking this prototype out for a test drive! Come on by the forums at forums.shadowrun tabletop.com and pop into Shadowrun: Anarchy sub-forum and tell us what stories you came up with at the table and how it went!

INTRODUCTION

When dragons run globe-spanning corporations, mages call down lightning to shock uzi-wielding security guards, and hackers don't just break into restricted Matrix zones but sometimes bend the very fabric of reality, anything—anything!—can happen. *Shadowrun: Anarchy* is here to unleash those endless possibilities.

The Sixth World setting of *Shadowrun* stacks dozens, even hundreds of powerful obstacles against players and dares them to survive. Shadowrunners might have to infiltrate heavily guarded research facilities to steal secret prototypes, confront dangerously toxic environments to find hidden magical reagents, extract top corporate talent so that a rival can make use of their skills, or find long-forgotten pieces of technology buried under the destruction that so frequently hits the world. Along the way, they may run into hard-nosed police, merciless corporate security, gangs intent on causing chaos, and critters who have adapted to this brave new world by learning innovative ways to devour it. Their creativity, wits, and guts are what will carry them through, and *Shadowrun: Anarchy* gives them new ways to show what they've got.

With an emphasis on storytelling, *Anarchy* brings everyone at the gaming table into the fun of shaping the story and pushing it ahead, giving every player the chance to contribute their ideas and add surprises to the unfolding plot. The rules are built for speed, offering chances to succeed by rolling the dice (handfuls of six-sided dice, specifically—we wouldn't have it any other way), while making sure the plot moves ahead and the story carries the players along. In many ways, storytelling is the key mechanic of *Anarchy*, because the fun and creativity players contribute to a game are what will enable their characters to excel. Rewards are there for players who make the game memorable. There is chaos in *Anarchy*, but it's the kind that encourages the players to work together to overcome it in amazing ways, rather than letting it break them down.

Anarchy is fast, chaotic fun, and the book has all the tools you need to launch into a game (except for the aforementioned six-sided dice, but we have faith in your

ability to track some of those down). Here's a quick run-down of the tools you'll find in the book. First, there's *The Shadowrunning World*, which provides the basics of what a shadowrunner is, what they do, and the world in which they do it. Then there are *Anarchy Rules*, detailing the information of how to play the game, what dice to roll when, and the framework in which you and your characters will be awesome. Following that are *Characters*, both player characters and non-player characters, that are all ready to be thrown into a game. They can be used in the *Scenarios* in the final chapter, two plot lines that set up games and illustrate the easy-to-jump-into gameplay of *Shadowrun: Anarchy*. You could start your first *Anarchy* game within half an hour of first picking up the book, and subsequent games will start up even faster.

This book is a prototype, meaning the core pieces are mostly in place, barring a final tweak or two, but it's not fully outfitted with all the bells and whistles of the final product. The full version of *Anarchy* will have more characters, more scenarios, character creation and advancement rules, as well as a few extra options for hacking, vehicle combat, and a few other specialties. The core of the game, though, is here—the fast-paced, story-focused fun that will have all players finding ways to discover what kind of legend they can build.

ANARCHY AND SR5

Anarchy is an alternative to *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*, but not a replacement. *SR5* remains the fully detailed flagship of the game line. We have designed *Anarchy* to work well with the full *SR5* ruleset. While there are enough changes that *Anarchy* cannot be considered a simple distillation of *SR5* rules, moving back and forth between the two games is not overly difficult. The core of *Anarchy* is a simplified set of attributes and skills that echo attributes and skills from *SR5*, and parallel names for cyberware, weapons, spells, and other gear make it relatively easy to translate a character from one version of the rules to the other. What's more, the setting material for *SR5*, as seen in books like *Market Panic* or *Courts of Shadow*, is directly usable in *Anarchy*, providing plot hooks, characters, and story ideas that can form the basis of plenty of memorable *Anarchy* games.

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ANOTHER NIGHT, ANOTHER RUN

Smoke filled the air, cut through by the dancing, impossibly straight crimson lines of laser beams. Lights strobed all around him, showing Gentry still-frame images of bodies clashing violently, muscles heaving, chrome flashing razor-sharp contrast against scuffed black leather. Belly-deep, he felt as much as heard the staccato thrums of too-loud percussion, shaking him to his core. He ignored it all and concentrated on the AR feed piped straight to his brain by top-end hardware and his customized implants.

This was Gentry's first trip to the Skeleton, and the last thing he wanted was to get turned around in the press of thrashing bodies on the dance floor, dazzled by the lights and fog, smothered by the surrounding hordes of metahumanity. Hardpoint had sent them all directions for the half-secret—and, Gentry dearly hoped, well-soundproofed—back rooms, and ignoring reality for his AR overlay had gotten Gentry this far in life, hadn't it? Meatside light shows had never done him any favors. The Matrix was where the action was. Augmented reality or full-on virtual, whatever—that's where Gentry did his best work.

The heaving crowd jumped and roared in time to the Archfiends, an all-elf rock band with more guitars and good looks than talent. That part, at least, made Gentry feel at home. He hadn't been back to Tir Tairngire since his sentence had been commuted, but seeing a rock band of nothing but elves reminded him of home. The crowd had enough humans in it so that Gentry wasn't as self-conscious as he'd been back in the Tir, though. Here, his rounded ears didn't stick out.

He was just one of many, wedging his way through a brawling pit disguised as a dance floor, overcrowded with all metahumanity had to offer, humans included: weekend-warrior wannabes slumming it from Downtown and Renton, soaking in the dirt and danger of a trip to the edge of the Barrens. Then there was the everyday Redmond populace, as tough and stained as the denim and leather they all wore. Redmond being Redmond, gangers made up a sizable chunk of the crowd. Gentry saw a tight knot of orks from the Crimson Crush (louder and more violent than the slam-dancers near them), a lone woman in the green and black that marked her a Desolation Angel (looking for trouble and pretty enough some idiot would offer her some before the night was out), and a troll looming over everyone else (not wearing any gang's colors in particular but big enough he didn't have to). Metahumanity, sweating and panting, moving in time to the wailing strings and shouting voices from the stage, flash-lit by a retro light show and the lasers and commlinks some of them waved in white-knuckled fists.

Gentry wrestled his way clear and sucked in a deep breath. Chip-truth, he didn't really care for metahumanity enough to like it packed this tightly around him. Coydog was waiting for him just outside the press of bodies, though, elf-thin and elf-pretty, with raven-dark hair. The leather fringe of her outfit swayed just a bit as she let the Archfiends' latest guitar riff make her move, and a light sheen of sweat covered her bare arms, showing she hadn't been afraid to join in on the dance floor while the night had still been young.





BY RUSSELL ZIMMERMAN

When she noticed him, the Salish elf just laughed and shook her head, then tapped her wrist where someone else might wear a watch.

Gentry made a face and said terrible things about her mother in Sperethiel, knowing that despite her pointed ears and high cheekbones, he knew more of the elven language than she did. She got the gist of it, though, and—still laughing, teeth flashing elf-perfect and white—her little fist thumped into the armor over his shoulder.

"Let's go," Coydog hollered at him, turning to show him which hallway to take. Or, upon reflection, Gentry supposed she might have just called him an asshole. So that he'd know next time, he set his snugged-in earbud's sound filter to pick up her voice.

Coydog sauntered through the shadows of the back halls easy as you please—Gentry was used to that, with elves—but it took him a few seconds to adjust. He thumbed at the dimmer-display for his cyberdeck and sent all the secondary lighting to full power. His cobbled-together backpack was powered by several cannibalized commlinks strapped to his messenger bag strap, and when he told them to, they could give him at least a little light to see by. The last thing Gentry wanted to do was stumble into Coydog from behind. She'd never let him live it down.

Hardpoint and Sledge were waiting for them in the back room with a half-open window letting moonlight and soft traffic sounds in, and probably a couple of Hardpoint's drones out. The dwarf killed time in the middle of the room, juggling a trio of

small KnowSpheres. MCT had designed the drones about three weeks after the Horizon Flying Eye had hit the market, but if you tried to tell him Mitsuhama had copied the design, Hardpoint was liable to kick you in the shin or punch you somewhere uncomfortably higher. He'd been in the business long enough to have gray streaks through his beard, but the dwarf was stubbornly loyal despite what life had thrown at him.

Sledge, meanwhile, did what he normally did: glowered. Gentry knew the ork was vain enough, in his street-tough way, to keep a synthflesh covering over most of his cyberarms, not wanting his augmentations to ruin his tattoos and the biceps that were so central to his self-esteem. His forearms, though, were no-frill monstrosities, Evo-specced combat chrome that didn't pretend to be anything but armor plating and hidden weapons. Right this second, those arms were crossed across his broad chest, and he took turns glaring at Hardpoint for his goofing off, Coydog for the perpetually amused smirk she always wore, and Gentry for being late.

He settled on Gentry, natch. Just the decker's luck.

"You're late," the razorboy grunted, showing tusks in a snarl. "We're supposed to be professionals, breeder. Mr. Johnson'll be here any minute."

Gentry shrugged, armored jacket rustling and soft lights from his backpack sending shadows dancing.

"Nasty traffic, Sledge. Hardpoint's directions had me rolling through contested turf. Skirmish started up, an' traffic went for crap. Spikes and Ancients going at it again, you know how it is."



Hardpoint didn't seem to notice he'd been blamed. He just kept juggling his KnowSpheres. Coydog looked for something clean to sit on. Sledge didn't let it lie, though.

"So next time you geek the elves, end the firefight, an' get here on time. You ain't back in your precious Portland. You gotta earn your nuyen in Seattle, kid."

"Right." Gentry sighed and rolled his eyes, ignoring that, if anything, he was probably a year or two older than the ork. "What, you think being a human criminal in the Tír was just a walk in the park, huh?"

"You must'a treated it like it was, breeder." Sledge pushed off from the wall he'd been leaning against, arms uncrossing as he took a few steps towards the human, "Since you got your ass locked up and put to work, didn't you?"

Gentry's eyes narrowed. It wasn't about timeliness or professionalism, it was about machismo and pride. Both of them had too much of it. Sledge took a perverse pleasure in rubbing Gentry's nose in the fact he'd been arrested back in the Tír and had to work off a long sentence playing the hyperviolent sport urban brawl, while Sledge had so far avoided Knight Errant or any other law enforcement body. The violent ork also resented that he wasn't the team's leader any more, and—knowing that—Gentry had long since been ready for a confrontation. He bet Sledge wouldn't talk so tough if someone took advantage of a backdoor to his personal area network and shut those fancy arms down for diagnostics.

"Before you two cripple each other, I thought you might want to know our boss is outside."

Hardpoint's voice, all business, interrupted the brewing star-down. A fresh bevy of lights blinked on the external display panels of his MCT-issued headware, a sure sign he was actively monitoring one of his recon drones.

"Maybe we should take the job and burn off some steam, huh boys? Having both of you along for the gig helps our odds, I'm sure."

"I dunno, HP," Coydog teased and flashed a wicked grin, "If one of 'em geeks the other, it means bigger shares all around!"

Sledge kept up the glare, but Gentry lost interest and turned away.

"You guys are right. We need to focus, Sledge." The decker sent mental commands to his backpack, shoving icons around and canceling the viruses he'd been about to upload into the ork's PAN.

"Let's go meet the boss and get the details."

✱

Sledge wasn't thrilled with leaving his Harley back at the Skel-eton, but after a short conversation with the righteous tusker running the door, he was satisfied his bike would be cared for. That punk Gentry's sleek Mirage looked fast but fragile next to Sledge's chopper, but Coydog's muddy Gopher pickup dwarfed both of them. Satisfied they'd all be there when they got back, the big ork clambered into Hardpoint's big van, a GMC Bulldog.

But right away, Gentry started whining and wrecked what should've been a quiet ride.

"I'm telling you, facial recognition pegged the guy. Mr. Johnson's from Ares. You can see him in this fundraiser picture, he's part of a security detail, if you'd just take a look at—"

"Well, I ain't takin' a look at it," Sledge cut Gentry off with an angry chop at the air. His new sword was sheathed, but he

still liked waving the thing around to interrupt the wannabe daisy-eater.

"It ain't our job to care, chummer. We took the job and the up-front payment, so now we do it. Period. We go in, download the specs, record the infiltration. That's it. That's all. It's simple."

"No, it isn't. It's never that simple! This guy's hiring us to do a run against his own company, and you don't think that's a little weird?"

Sledge rolled his eyes.

"I'm saying it don't matter if it's weird. It's just another night. Just another paycheck." Sledge reached across the van and jabbed the decker in the chest with his sheathed blade again. "Maybe he's Ares internal affairs or somethin'. Maybe he's from another department. Maybe he's angling for his boss's job an' wants us to make him look bad. Lots of maybes, but none of 'em matter. It's just another run."

"Listen, if you'll give me five minutes to ..."

"No time, shadowkiddies." Hardpoint's voice cut off their argument, and the dwarf unplugged himself from the Bulldog's dash. "This is our stop. Sledge, you're on point"

Sledge hopped out of the van smoothly, leaving Gentry to fumble with this seatbelt and strap his goggles and headset on. The ork's movements came herky-jerk quick now, his enhanced reflexes turned on and running hot. He had a blocky AK-98 in his hands, an Ares handcannon holstered at his hip, and his new pig-sticker, long and thin, slung over his back. It was an official *Neil the Ork Barbarian* repro, all thin, curved, and fantasy-stylized right out of a high-budget trid flick, but it had a wicked sharp mono-edge, and that's all Sledge cared about. The team had a block and a half of broken-down Seattle to cover, and Sledge knew the streets better than the rest of them. He led the way from cover to cover, alley to alley, hurrying them through the rain-slick shadows. The Seattle shadows were his home, and urban gunfights his way of life. They knew he'd get them there.

Sledge shot a backwards glance as he waited at a corner and flashed his tusks in a smirk at Gentry, who was second. The decker had a Colt Government 2066—which wasn't the worst gun in the world, Sledge grudgingly admitted, and Gentry wasn't the worst shot—in his hand, but the real skill he brought to the team was strapped all over his body. It was some sort of drek-hot Ren-raku backpack rig that Gentry'd sometimes babble on and on about like anyone but him or maybe Hardpoint gave a damn. The human's eyes weren't chipped up like Sledge's, and the breeder had to wear those goggles of his, half shooting glasses and half supercomputers, to use a smartlink or see in the dark.

Sledge snorted.

Coydog and her cowboy boots came last. The elf was different. Salish tribal born and raised, but now marking time in Seattle's Council Island and Everett neighborhoods. She had a foot in both worlds. Native and Anglo, backwoods and city streets; Sledge liked her. Everyone liked her. She had a big Browning pistol holstered at her waist in a sleek, modern gunbelt that didn't quite fit in with the feathers in her hair, the strings of colored beads, the leather fringes on her clothes. She was an interesting gal, Coydog. Sledge saw her lips move, saw hints of color flash and ripple from her hands, and then felt a cool breeze swirl around them all. He knew what that meant, and would've smiled if smiling was his style. The shaman had gone to work and called up a friendly spirit. They'd be hidden from prying eyes, at least partially, but Sledge sure wasn't going to let that trick him into relaxing.



The ork stopped at the building's loading entrance, back to the wall, covering the team as they approached. It was time for Gentry to do his job. His smartgoggles brightened and his Colt was holstered as he began to work with his own brand of magic. No, not really magic, just skill. Soft blue lights flared and danced while the decker's fingers shifted and tapped, pecking away at an imaginary keyboard that his Renraku hardware spun into existence. Sledge covered them while the decker worked, smartlink reticule and the muzzle of his AK sweeping the streets.

The ork growled impatience low in his throat like a junkyard dog, his reflexes wired up so fast it seemed like the decker was working in slow motion. Coydog laid a gentle hand on Gentry's shoulder and whispered something encouraging to him, but Sledge didn't have a chance to say something snarky about it. Maybe a half-second later, the doors slid open. Fraggin' finally.

The ork gave Hardpoint a nod, and the rigger lifted his hand. Several drones leaped to answer his call. A sleek little glossy-black beetle drone, an MCT FlySpy, lifted off from his palm and led the way into the building, with Sledge and his AK just behind. Hardpoint rummaged in his pockets and tugged out his KnowSpheres, and soon enough the trio of little black globes were buzzing through the air circling the team, recording the job per Mr. Johnson's explicit request. The FlySpy, nimble and silent, sped down the hallway ahead of them as the team hurried inside, getting in out of the Seattle drizzle and putting walls and doors between them and the external security teams.

The FlySpy led the way. Hardpoint's tiny drone buzzed along ahead of them, making sure that security cameras were where they were supposed to be, or that a corpsec kill-team wasn't lurking around every corner. The dwarf worked his left hand to pilot the little machine, fingers splayed, twisting and planing his hand this way and that, angling his palm to orient and maneuver the spy-drone, headware and extensive control rig electronics making it unnaturally responsive to such simple commands. He had one eye looking through the drone's optical sensors and the other squinted half-shut, while Coydog led him through the halls and kept him from bumping into anything.

Gentry was the slowest of them, here; every camera the FlySpy tagged on their team's heads-up display—visible to all of them but Coydog, who said she kept losing her AR glasses though Hardpoint insisted she was breaking them on purpose—became his responsibility. Sledge gave Gentry a little nudge and a grunt each time he spotted one, just to make sure the geek was on top of things. And to hurry him up.

Gentry reached out through the Matrix, his AR-goggles bright with streaming data and security override commands, cracking into their nodes one at a time and convincing each camera to run a loop of the last minute over and over again before they stepped into the frame. Gentry's skills convinced corporate cameras to shut their eyes tight while the team snuck past. If the decker kept it up, Sledge knew their job would be a whole lot easier.

It was slow going, and tense. The FlySpy took point, Sledge cleared each hallway with the muzzle of his sturdy Kalashnikov, then came Hardpoint and Gentry, only half there, most of their attention sapped away by the electronic wonderland of the Matrix. The dwarf's three KnowSpheres swirled around the team, tiny dog-brains obediently recording. Coydog rode herd, listening for doors opening and closing behind them, the stomp of security boots, the wail of alarms. Slow and tense, and careful, too, but Sledge would get them there. They didn't see another living soul. Together they threaded a careful path through winding Ares

corporate hallways and stairwells, slicing their way deeper and deeper into the belly of the beast.

And then, suddenly, there they were: dataterminal 501. Sledge took a knee and braced his rifle against a cubicle wall, nodding for Gentry to move in. It was showtime.

Sledge watched as Gentry settled into this corporate spider's chair—he had to admit that hacking into a Matrix security agent's terminal as a way into the whole system was a decent plan, assuming he could pull it off—and adjusted a few of the sub-systems on his makeshift cyberdeck. Then Gentry pulled a long, slender cable from a spool on his right bracer, the main body of his illegal 'deck, and reached toward a port on the Ares counter-hacker's workstation.

Sledge thought about wishing the decker good luck, but decided against it.

That might have been a mistake.

✕

Hardpoint knew better than Sledge or Coydog what the decker was up to. The dwarf was no expert console cowboy like Gentry, but he had a handle on the basics of illicit Matrix interfacing. He knew how fast things happened in full virtual reality, how every nanosecond counted and how everything, from your own icon to the intrusion countermeasures that threatened it, moved at the speed of thought. Gentry flew in VR when he could, but Hardpoint preferred to keep one foot in the real world. That was the difference between them. The human liked to escape reality fully in the Matrix, where the dwarf preferred to influence the meat-world, just through drones instead of his own two hands when he could help it.

But the speeds were the same. The electronic rush. The stakes. Hardpoint knew, even if the rough-edged samurai and the city shaman didn't, how quickly things could go wrong in an electronic contest.

He heard and saw it through his own eyes and ears, as well as the audio and optical sensor suites in four different drones, when the claxons started to howl and the security lights began to flash. It hadn't taken long, but Hardpoint hadn't expected it to. Things moved fast in VR. Sometimes a little too fast.

The dwarf watched through his FlySpy's optics as Gentry rocked in the chair, lurching from side to side. He called his littlest drone back to him—no point in stealth, now—and stowed it in the armored pouch on his belt. He kept his KnowSpheres running and recording, one swooping all around the team on autopilot, the other two racing away to scout. The decker jerked again in the big chair, body going tense and rigid, somewhere between having a seizure and taking a punch. Then again. And again.

"He gonna die?" Sledge didn't look up from the sights of his AK, unperturbed by the security alert.

"Spirits, I hope not." Coydog bit her lip.

"I doubt it," Hardpoint said, half his attention elsewhere. He piped commands through his headware to the waiting Bulldog, disabling security measures, firing up the engine, and getting it rolling in their direction for a quick escape.

"No," Gentry himself said, reaching out with one hand to unplug himself. The human stood and swiped the back of his other hand under his nose to smear away some blood.

"Got the file by the tips of my ears." He shook his head, still unsteady on his feet, and Hardpoint watched through a drone as he blinked heavy eyelids that suddenly had deep bruises



beneath them. Gentry patted his primary commlink, now heavy with stolen data, a sleek Transys Avalon that rested on his hip not far from his Colt.

"I almost got iced, but me and my baby got the job done."

Intrusion countermeasures—IC—could tear a Matrix icon to shreds in nanoseconds. Some IC, the blackest of the black, could do the same to a decker's brain and body through custom-programmed biofeedback. Judging from Gentry's condition, the files had been more heavily protected than Mr. Johnson had mentioned.

Hardpoint started to get fresh information from his recon KnowSpheres, his reliable MCT headware giving him several datastream overlays at once.

"Welcome parties are coming. West side, down three stories," he said, monotone, matter-of-fact. He recorded and reported all at once, telling the others about the incoming security teams even while his headware showed him black-clad security troopers, armored head to toe, faceless beneath their glossy helmets. In their midst loomed a taller, broader, figure, a massive troll, too big to even fit in the full-body security armor the rest of them wore.

"And east, one floor down." A second group was jogging up the opposite stairwell, looking to trap them. A pale woman in a dark suit led a handful of heavily armored guards. Behind them, Hardpoint recognized combat drones; Duelists, the experimental bipedal drones Ares was manufacturing in this very facility.

Gentry and Sledge could see the problem over the team's shared cam-feed. Before that KnowSphere could get a better look, the woman raised a hand and whispered a word. A flashing bolt enveloped Hardpoint's little spy drone, and the display window turned to static.

Sledge didn't speak, just led the team down the left hallway where they'd have a better chance of making it upstairs unimpeded. He shouldered the door open and threw a pair of metallic spheres down the stairwell in one smooth motion, then took a knee. Gentry led the rest of them up the stairs hurriedly. Sledge's broad orkish frame blocked Hardpoint's curious KnowSphere from being able to track the grenades as they bounced down the stairs, but there was no denying the ensuing explosion was impressive. Hardpoint's ears rang from the twin blasts, but he was able to hear the wailing of injured guards through the audial suites in his drones. Sledge hadn't moved, just waited there with his AK shouldered.

One of Hardpoint's drones watched as Gentry kicked the roof access door open, the other floated above and behind Sledge. Hardpoint and Coydog burst onto the roof behind the decker just as Sledge's AK started to bark and fill the stairwell behind them with muzzle flashes and fast-moving bullets. The first heavily armored guard to recover from the grenades and stumble into view caught a burst for his trouble and went tumbling back down the stairs. Then came a second and third, and Sledge burnt the rest of his magazine knocking them back out of view.

Slivers of Hardpoint's attention flitted from drone to drone, watching as the Ares security troll lumbered into view. He swung up a huge gun and the dwarf's KnowSphere and Sledge both scrambled out of the way. Hardpoint felt the gun go off on the roof, even two stories away, as the Panther Assault Cannon roared like thunder and sent a round smashing a fist-sized hole through the wall where Sledge had been just a second earlier. His drone whirled loudly as it tried to keep up with the impossibly quick ork, flying up the stairs after him as he ran to catch up to the rest of the

team. Just as the security door opened up and the second Ares team burst into the stairwell near them, the drone's audio equipment picked up the sound of a pair of metallic spheres bouncing down behind the ork.

The dwarf fought a little smile as he heard the second pair of grenades go off, but the hulking troll and his assault cannon worried him. Ares was so concerned with securing the facility that they were willing to blast giant holes in it to try to stop a few shadowrunners. Security, not practicality, mattered to them here, and that made them unpredictable. Unpredictable people were dangerous to get into firefights with.

Hardpoint *tsked* under his breath and shook his head, sending out a fresh series of mental commands. The only way to fight fire ...

Coydog still wasn't exactly sure how everything had gone so wrong, so quickly. One second Gentry had been doing whatever he did in the Matrix, and the next their whole night had gone to pot. Claxons everywhere, emergency lights painting the whole building red, and Hardpoint and Sledge rushing them up stairs, a half-breath ahead of onrushing security goons.

The crew darted across the roof, heading toward the nearest building and starting to cross over. The Ares security team burst up the stairwell behind them, missing maybe half of their number, several of the survivors with armor scratched and scarred from Sledge's explosives. The troll stood head and shoulders over the rest. The slender, pale woman in her dark suit pointed, and they lifted their guns. Supplementary laser-sights flickered to life beneath their assault rifle barrels, and gunshots rang out.

Gentry leapt courier-quick across the gap between buildings, firing blind behind him with his big Colt autopistol. Sledge sprinted across a ventilation pipe, chip-quick, and spun to unload a second magazine from his AK. Coydog carefully holstered her Browning and leapt across the gap, nimble as a deer. Hardpoint stood where he was, letting his stubby little Ingram hang by his side, and just lifted his arms and grinned. His reinforcements were here.

A flurry of grenades fell onto the roof, fired one after another from a trio of miniature helicopter-like drones that swooped low overhead. Coydog recognized Hardpoint's MCT-Nissan Roto-drones a second before the team's activity was covered by thick smoke and a fresh wave of explosions that scattered the security team. The dwarf cackled as he scampered to join them on the new rooftop. Sledge's AK fired and fired, and was soon joined by the autoguns mounted in each of Hardpoint's support drones. Coydog ducked as one of the little KnowSpheres flew by, turning to record the firefight while the larger drones traded fire with the Ares security squad. Between the drifting clouds of thermal smoke and the protection of her own friendly spirit, the security forces had trouble getting clear shots at Coydog and her friends, but the drones' mobility and armor plating were their only real defenses.

She heard Sledge's AK stutter out a long burst and saw the Ares troll stagger but not fall. In the corner of her eye she saw Gentry kicking at the rooftop door that would get them clear of the fight, and everywhere else she looked she saw smoke and muzzle flashes, swooping drones and black-clad security. She reached out with a simple spell and sent an Ares goon stumbling and staggering, exhausted. But didn't quite drop him. She heard Coyote bark laughter at her failure and frowned, drawing up a



fresh wave of mana. The black-armored thug turned to fire at her, no doubt shouting into his helmet, but then he wavered and fell unceremoniously on his face.

Coydog smiled and started to say something smug to no one in particular when the security woman across the way lifted her arms. A sickly blue glow filled the rooftop as she chanted with a voice that scratched Coydog's soul. The elf switched to astral sight to get a better look at what the other magician was up to, and her blood turned cold. The spirit in mid-summoning was terrible, but just as disconcerting was the black, lifeless, no-aura mass of drones that emerged from the stairwell.

"Oh, Ghost," the elf said under her breath as the wave of Duelist anthro-drones led a fresh charge across the rooftop. Her mana spells wouldn't do any good against such soulless automatons. She blinked, dragged her vision back to the material plane, and drew her big Browning out of its holster as though it would do her any good.

Sledge appeared out of nowhere, blocky AK nowhere to be seen, with a blue-glowing sword in one hand and the bucking, death-spitting mass of a big Ares handgun in the other. He barreled into the lead drone with a simple shoulder-check, then she lost a clear view of him as he blurred into motion. A fresh wave of smoke grenades dropped onto the roof, and all she could see of him was the faintly glowing blade and the occasional muzzle flash of a point-blank shot. Coydog likely couldn't have made out his motions clearly even without the smoke, though, the big ork was moving so fast. Pieces of Duelist sec-drone started to tumble out of the smoke.

The distraction had worked, though. The drones had done their job, and the Ares security magician ducked back into cover, her work complete. There was a flash of too-bright light and a faint droning in the air. Coyote yipped and barked out anger in the back of Coydog's head, and the elf looked up at a twisted insect spirit, all mandibles and outstretched, wriggling legs. She felt bile fill her throat.

And the worst part was, thanks to a locked door and a seven-story drop, they couldn't even run away.

✖

Smoke filled the air, cut through by the dancing, impossibly straight crimson lines of laser beams. Lights strobed all around him, showing Gentry still-frame images of bodies clashing violently, muscles heaving, chrome flashing razor-sharp contrast against scuffed black leather. Belly-deep, he felt as much as heard the staccato thrums of too-loud percussion, shaking him to his core. He ignored it all and concentrated on the AR feed piped straight to his brain by top-end hardware and his customized implants.

They needed him to open the door. The team needed him to dive back into the Matrix and get just this one door open to save all their lives.

Gentry ignored the stutter-flashes of muzzles spitting out round after round, whether from Hardpoint's swooping drones or the Ares Alphas shouldered by corporate muscle. He pushed aside the curses and grunts of exertion where Sledge was, single-handedly, dismantling a half-dozen purpose-built combat drones. He didn't flinch when the Ares troll's cannon sent a round close enough to tug at the edge of his armored jacket, or turn to stare in abject horror at the clawing, chittering nightmare that loomed over Coydog.

He decked. He could more than hold his own in a fight, and he had some subtle combat augs to back it up, but more than that—more than anything—this was who he was, what he did. His mind ran through program after program, subroutine after subroutine, thought about security protocols and lockdown practices, thought about everything the computer might do so he could anticipate it, counter it. He knew electronics backwards and forwards, literally inside and out, and all he had to do, all he had to do in the world right now, was beat this maglock and the hardwired security system supporting it. His Renraku hackpack screamed wirelessly in the back of his mind and ran hot, back-up systems getting shut down and processing power shunted from secondary processors. Bullets flew by and chipped paint from the wall just near him, and Gentry just reached out, irritated, to snap a return shot without looking.

One pop-up window out of many, all juggled at once by Gentry's headware coprocessors and his top-end smart goggles, started to show him what he was missing through his gun's smartlink camera. Hardpoint alternated between twitch-quick piloting and wild cheers as his Roto-drones strafed the looming Ares troll and dodged assault cannon rounds. Sledge hacked the last drone apart and blasted the wreckage point-blank to disentangle it from his trid-flashy sword, then staggered as an enemy burst tore into his armored vest.

The terrible spirit loomed over them, ready to strike. Coydog raised her hands and chanted something in a language Gentry didn't know.

"I'm sorry," Gentry's earbud picked up the elf's voice, wedging past all the background cacophony to hear her whispered apology to empty air.

There was a thunderclap and a flash of sorcery-bright lightning. The enemy spirit, assaulted by Coydog on one plane and by her spirit on another, shrieked in pain and tumbled to pieces. There was a cyclone hanging in midair for a half-second, impaled on the ephemeral insect's claw, before it, too, vanished.

In the same instant, Gentry gave the door locks open and disengage commands thirty-seven different times and one finally got through. Coydog swayed and fell, elf-thin and elf-fragile, having given almost everything within her to blast the spirit to nothingness. Sledge, covered in equal parts blood and oil, dove to snatch her up and—kicking her dropped pistol Gentry's way—hauled her toward safety.

Hardpoint's FlySpy led the way past Gentry's just-opened door, and directions and building schematics began to scroll across the team's network. They had their exit route, finally.

"Straight down, Bulldog's out front," the dwarf whooped and flashed a thumbs up. His sole remaining KnowSphere—the other one lay ruined, the victim of a stray bullet—hovered just over his shoulder as he started down the stairs. Sledge was next, half carrying Coydog, shouldering roughly past Gentry but just for a half-second there, in the doorframe, giving him a nod.

Gentry covered their escape with his Colt in one hand and Coydog's Browning in another, while the remaining Roto-drones split up and swooped wide around the rooftop, still firing, and splitting the corpsecs' attention. A fresh wave of smoke grenades made the cross-building jump risky, and Gentry knew they'd make it clear before the Ares troops caught up to them.

He had the data. Hardpoint had the footage. None of them were dead. Johnson would profit from it all, somehow. It was just another night, just another paycheck, but considerably more than just another run. ✖



SHADOWRUNNING THE WORLD

The first thing that you need to know about the Sixth World is that what you don't know absolutely will kill you. So will what you do know. In fact, it's safe to assume that anything and anyone you see has both the potential and the desire to kill you.

That's good info to know, but not enough to keep you alive. So here's a rundown of what the Sixth World is, how it got there, and some of the power players who make sure a few people stay on top while the vast majority of the people wriggle uncomfortably under their mighty thumbs.

EVERYTHING HAS A PRICE

Read the sentence in the header there. Read it again. Got it? Good. Because if that's the only thing you take away from this, if that's the only thing you learn, then you'll still be getting something valuable about the world you live in. You walk around this world, you'll see a lot of heaps, and each one of them's got someone perched on top of it. Every megacorporation has its CEO, governments have their chief executive, gangs have their lieutenant or head man or chief head basher or whatever the hell they decide to call it. Even that one block in the barrens that has nothing more than a rusty dumpster, an abandoned car, and a shed whose roof has caved in has a scary-eyed guy named Rastool who scared off all the other scary-eyed guys so he can claim that spot as his own. Each of them figured out what they would have to pay to get to the top of that particular heap, and each one of them ponied up when the time came.

Now, if we're going to talk about payments, we need to talk about currency. What I mean is, we need to look at the things you might need to give up in order to get ahead.

MAGIC: PAYING WITH YOUR MIND

When magic came back into the world in 2011, and elves, dwarves, orks and trolls started scratching and

clawing for power alongside humans, it didn't take too long for people to start trying to get a handle on how to use all the new mana floating around for themselves. Turned out some people had a knack for it. While the rest of us were wondering what they were looking at with their glazed eyes and weird expressions, they were figuring out how to channel and shape streams of mana—a sort of magic energy that seems to be just about everywhere. Turns out, if you can suss how it's done, you can use mana to set the air on fire, make people do things they'd never do, or other truly esoteric and/or insane things. And mana wasn't just for the spells and stuff we think of as magic. It gave some people the strength to punch through walls, others can shame a cobra with their reflexes, and there are some who can outrun a cheetah; and that's just scratching the surface. And you know all those magic goodies from legends and fairytales and myths? We got 'em all: enchanted swords, magic rings, wands, amulets, mojo bags, and every potion you can think of. Not that they always work the way they did in the stories. Don't just grab the sword of a legendary warrior and expect to slice and dice like she did, for example. But magic is out there, and people are using it. It's not easy—it can be draining, physically and mentally, and some people push themselves to the point where their sanity drips out of their ears in a nice, steady trickle. That's the price, and it's often gladly paid.

CORPORATIONS: PAYING WITH YOUR SELF

The way corporations work in the Sixth World isn't really anything new. It's just the latest iteration of the might-makes-right way of doing things. There's a lot of legal history we could cover to help you see how things got to this point, but in the end it boils down to one word: **extraterritoriality**. That's what allows corporations to say that whatever happens on the buildings and lands they own is subject to their laws—and no one else's. Gaining extraterritorial status was a long-held dream of many of the world's largest corporations, and when judicial decisions in nations across the world gave it to them, they spent several years pissing on themselves





and each other in utter delirium. Then they figured out their infighting was cutting into their bottom line, so they stopped fighting each other so much and concentrated on pissing on the rest of us.

Not every corporation in the world has extraterritorial status. To understand who does, you have to know about the **Corporate Court**, the body the megacorporations created when they realized they were spending too much time solving their disputes by ravaging entire small countries. The Corporate Court is sometimes mocked as a toothless entity, a puppet of the world's largest mega-corporations, but it manages—usually—to keep open warfare between the corps from breaking out, and that's at least worth something.

As part of its duties, the Court has created a ranking system to tell you how big and powerful a particular corp is. At the top is the **Big Ten**, the most powerful megacorps in the world. The main thing you need to understand is that these guys are bigger than big. Think of the world's largest manufacturer of computer equipment. Then add in a powerful magic supplies broker. Throw in a few banks, an insurance firm, an entertainment conglomerate, and a snack-food giant, and you're still not a tenth of the way to forming one of the Big Ten. They employ millions and control trillions of nuyen. Each and every one of them owns a piece of land within one hundred kilometers of you, unless you're in the Sahara, the Amazon, or at the bottom of the ocean. And maybe even then. These are the people in the world who have the nuyen that we want, which means they determine the rules of the game. We just play it—and figure out how far we can bend those rules.

AUGMENTATIONS: PAYING WITH YOUR SOUL

Every bit of who you are can be improved with the right piece of gear. Think you've got quick reflexes? You can be quicker. An artificial neural network'll make you faster than a nervous jackrabbit. Think you're strong? Switch out the muscles you were born with for a set that's been custom grown for power and efficiency, and you'll take strong to a whole new level. Think you're charming? Implant a set of specialized pheromone dis-

persers, and people will swoon when you walk by and nod enthusiastically when you talk.

And that's just for starters. You can put actual plates of armor on your skin, or lace your bones with metal so your fists and legs deliver crushing blows. You can make your senses sharper, your brain faster, and you can implant knowledge you never learned in school. You can replace entire pieces of your body with artificial replicas full of extra strength, nimble agility, secret compartments, and hidden weapons that provide very unpleasant surprises at just the right time.

But it's not free. And we're not just talking money; there's a higher price to pay. All this stuff is useful and great, but it's artificial, and your body knows it. Each time you get one of these augmentations, you give up a piece of yourself. You lose something inside of you, the essence of metahumanity. We don't quite understand what this "it" is, but we know this much—the more artificial you make yourself, the farther you get from actual life. If you get too far, whatever animated you is going to disappear, until all the gear you bought just collapses and becomes indistinguishable from any other pile of silicon, steel, and chrome. So go ahead and get yourself augmented up, but understand that each time you do this, another piece of your metahumanity slides away.

LIFE IN THE SHADOWS: PAYING WITH YOUR BLOOD

The megacorporations of the world prefer a docile population, a world of people who do whatever work they're told, build anything, carry anything, sacrifice anything for the mega, then spend all their money in the company store and be glad they got it so good. Sheep. That's how megacorps see metahumanity: a vast herd of sheep they have to keep in line to serve their purposes.

Which means the rest of us face a stark choice: Accept their shit. Or not.

For some of us, corp life is not a life. The megacorps own enough in the world. They don't need to own us. So we drop out and find another way. We do the jobs corps don't want their regular employees to do, the things they





don't want connected back to them. Espionage missions; missions of theft, sabotage, and assault—maybe even assassination, if you swing that way That's how we survive. We still have to dance to the corporate tune to some degree, but if we live right and build up our skills, we can become the best at what we do and get paid what we deserve. Then, maybe, instead of being one of us, scrambling under the heels of the powerful, we can be one of them, and remake a small part of the world in our image.

But if we're going to survive, we have to find work. There are dozens, hundreds, thousands of jobs out there. You can make money off them, but each one will cost you something. You'll get a scar from a bullet that should have killed you. A leg that aches in the cold 'cause you broke it crashing your motorcycle on one of your less-stylish get-aways. A missing arm because you were standing just a bit too close to a bomb going off, and a working cyber model is pricy. A fried brain lobe from lingering in the Matrix a second too long with security closing in on you. And that's just what will happen to your body. You'll be double-crossed, betrayed, and abandoned. You'll see trusted friends turn on you and watch others die right in front of you. You'll have every last bit of you tested in ways you can't imagine just to see how much you can endure.

And if you succeed? If you stay alive? Money, first of all, but more. You become a legend. You join the ranks of the people we tell stories about, the shadowrunners whose names we all know. Dirk Montgomery. Fastjack. Sally Tsung. The Smiling Bandit. You'll have lived your own life, survived, and even thrived. You'll have stuck it to every man the Sixth World has to offer.

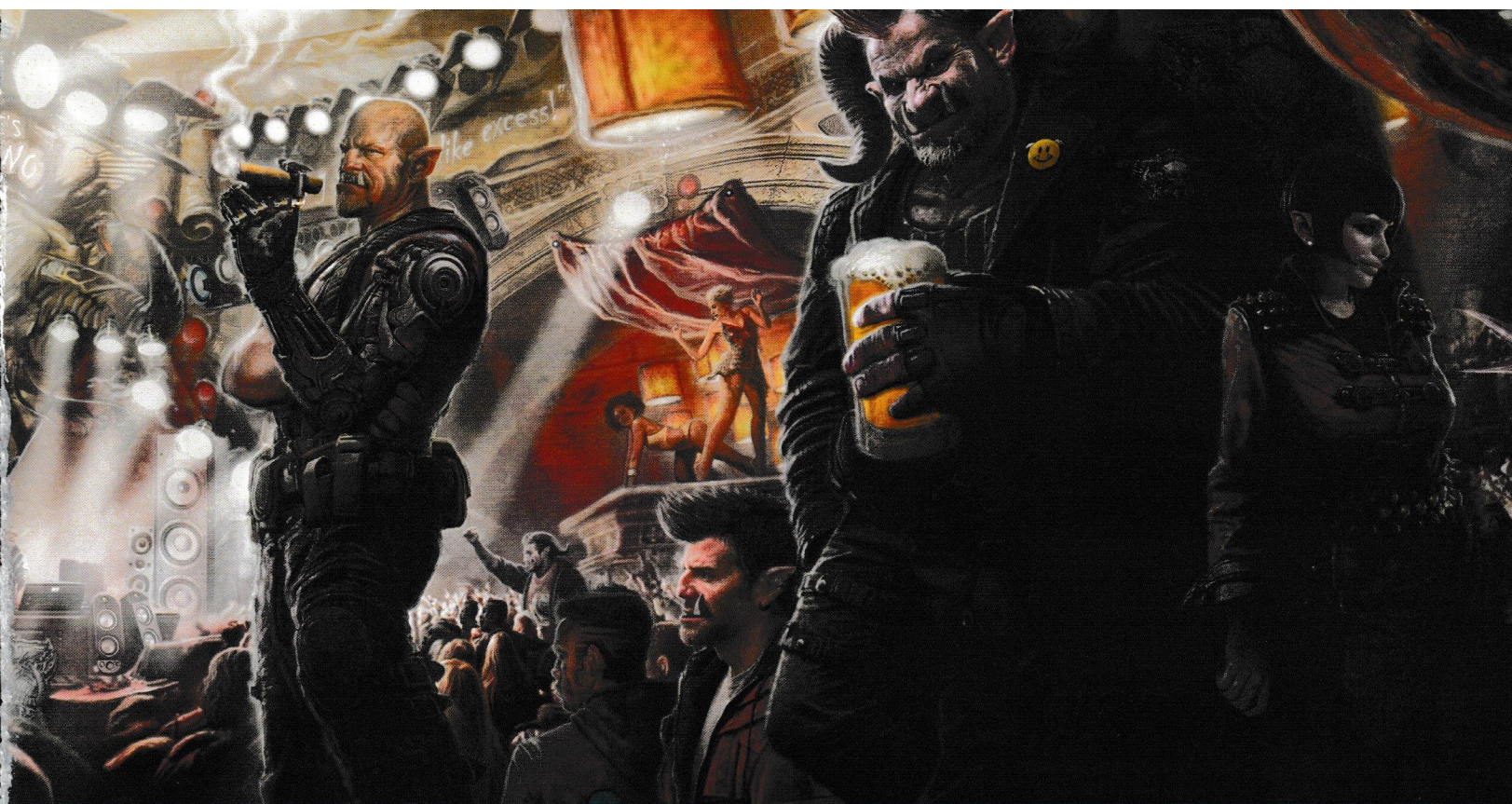
As long as you can pay the price.

DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

You know how when you meet some piece-of-drek punk ganger in an alley, and he's all full of mouthy attitudes and sucker punches, and you find yourself thinking how if you looked into that little dirtball's past and learned more about his parents and upbringing, you'd understand how he became such a bastard? Well, our world is a lot like that. I'll give you some of the highlights from the past that made the world into the snot-nosed asshole we all know.

- **2001:** The infamous Shiawase Decision in the United States Supreme Court gives multinational corporations the same rights and privileges as sovereign governments. The era of national governments as the drivers of global events comes to an end.
- **2002:** The U.S. government allows corporations to run roughshod over the resources found in Native American reservations during the so-called Resource Rush. This leads to unrest and resistance among Native populations.
- **2010:** Virally Induced Toxic Allergy Syndrome (VITAS) appears in New Delhi, India. Eventually it kills a quarter of the world's population.
- **2011:** The Awakening, or at least the beginning of it. Dragons appear, people develop talents and abilities that





can only be described as magic, babies are born in ways that exactly resemble elves and dwarfs of legend, and the world reveals itself to generally be much weirder than anyone suspected.

- **2018:** After the Great Ghost Dance of the previous year, in which Native American shamans spurred natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions across the globe, the United States and Canada agree to the Treaty of Denver, in which large portions of both nations are given to aboriginal populations to become the various states that make up the Native American Nations of the Western Hemisphere.
- **2021:** In a process known as Goblinization, some adults spontaneously mutate into creatures that become known as orks and trolls (a wider range of forms emerge as time passes). People react with fear and loathing, which, after more than half a century, has generally eased to fear and extreme distaste. Though some people prefer to stick with loathing. Dwarfs, elves, trolls, orks, and the like are collectively labeled "metahumanity."
- **2029:** The Matrix, the interconnected wonder of the computer world, crashes, and crashes hard. The virus that caused the crash takes years to eradicate, setting the stage for cyberwarfare in the years to come.
- **2030:** After losing so much territory to the Native American Nations, the remnants of the United States and Canada

merge to form the United Canadian and American States (UCAS). In subsequent years, the Free State of California, the Confederation of American States, and the Caribbean League claim parts of what used to be the United States. This mirrors political fracturing and re-alignment occurring around the world.

- **2039:** The fear and loathing against elves, dwarfs, orks, and trolls (particularly the latter two groups) comes to a head in the Night of Rage, a worldwide series of riots targeting metahumans and their families. The pain and scars inflicted that night still linger.
- **2055:** After a cult known as the Universal Brotherhood introduces the vile creepies known as bug spirits to the world, Chicago became the most infested city on the planet. When containment didn't seem to be solving the problem, the Ares Corporation set off a nuke in the city, an event known as the Cermak Blast. The combined infestation of bugs, removal of anything resembling law and order, and destruction levied by the nuke made central Chicago the blasted wonderland it is today.
- **2057:** The citizens of the UCAS collectively throw their hands in the air, say "What the hell?!", and elect a dragon named Dunkelzahn as president. Dunkelzahn serves for just under ten and a half hours before being blown to kingdom come. A huge astral rift hovers at the scene of the assassination for years.



- **2061:** Halley's comet passes by and initiates the Sudden Unexplained Recessive Genetic Expression (SURGE) event, bringing changelings to the world as some people take on animal characteristics. A new dragon named Ghostwalker emerges from the rift left by Dunkelzahn's assassination and decides to take up residence as the tyrant of Denver. For good measure, increased storms, earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions keep the entire population of the world jittery.
- **2064:** The combination of a massive corporate IPO, the machinations of a crazed artificial intelligence, and an assault by a terrorist group known as Winternight brings about the Second Matrix Crash, or Crash 2.0. A new wireless Matrix emerges in its wake, along with technomancers, who can manipulate the Matrix with nothing more than their mind.
- **2075:** After campaigning for years about the lack of security in the wireless Matrix, activist and philanthropist Danielle de la Mar convinces the corporations of the world to revamp Matrix protocols to be stricter, less open, and more subject to corporate control. They lap up her suggestions enthusiastically.
- **2076:** A new condition known as cognitive fragmentation disorder (CFD) is spotted, where people suddenly and abruptly completely change their personalities, or become a battleground for warring personalities. A hybrid technological/biological virus is suspected as the source, but questions remain about its origins and how it was created.

THE BIG TEN

Since these are going to be the guys paying you a lot of the time, you should know who they are.

ARES MACROTECHNOLOGY

Corporate Court Ranking (2078): 9
Corporate Slogan: "Making the World a Safer Place"
Corporate Status: AAA, public corporation
World Headquarters: Detroit, UCAS
President/CEO: Damien Knight
You Know Them For: Making your favorite gun, arresting you for using your favorite gun.



AZTECHNOLOGY

Corporate Court Ranking (2078): 4
Corporate Slogan: "The Way to a Better Tomorrow"
Corporate Status: AAA, private corporation
World Headquarters: Tenochtitlán, Aztlan



President/CEO: Flavia de la Rosa
You Know Them For: Great PR, selling microwave burritos at thousands of worldwide locations. Also, ruthlessness and blood magic, but they keep those under wraps.

EVO CORPORATION

Corporate Court Ranking (2078): 7
Corporate Slogan: "Evo Is Acceptance"



Corporate Status: AAA, public corporation
World Headquarters: Vladivostok, Russia
President: Yuri Shibanokuji
You Know Them For: A billion commercials pitying you for not being awesome enough to sport their entire line of enhancements and augmentations

HORIZON GROUP

Corporate Court Ranking (2078): 10
Corporate Slogan: "We Know What You Think"



Corporate Status: AAA, private corporation
World Headquarters: Los Angeles, PCC
President/CEO: Gary Cline
You Know Them For: Your favorite trid shows, your favorite music, and your favorite off-book bunraku parlors offering the services of people who look like your favorite performers.

MITSUHAMA COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES

Corporate Court Ranking (2078): 1
Corporate Slogan: "The Future Is Mitsuhamas"



Corporate Status: AAA, public corporation
World Headquarters: Kyoto, Japanese Imperial State
President/CEO: Toshiro Mitsuhamas
You Know Them For: The cold feeling of fear in your heart whenever you hear the words "Mitsuhamas Zero-Zone."



NEONET

Corporate Court Ranking
(2078): 8

Corporate Slogan: "Tomorrow
Runs on NeoNET"

Corporate Status: AAA, public
corporation

World Headquarters: Boston,
UCAS

CEO: Richard Villiers

You Know Them For: Rising and falling more times
than a phoenix.



WUXING INCORPORATED

Corporate Court Ranking
(2078): 6

Corporate Slogan: "We're Be-
hind Everything You Do"

Corporate Status: AAA, public
corporation

World Headquarters: Hong
Kong, Free Enterprise Enclave

President: Wu Lung-Wei

You Know Them For: Making you move several times
during your meetings so you don't mess up the feng
shui of that particular room.



RENRAKU COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Corporate Court Ranking (2078): 3

Corporate Slogan: "Today's Solu-
tions to Today's Problems"

Corporate Status: AAA, public cor-
poration

World Headquarters: Chiba, Japa-
nese Imperial State

CEO: Inazo Aneki (Honorary)

You Know Them For: That big, flat-topped pyramid in
Downtown Seattle that sends a chill through your heart
every time you see it. Also, computers.



SAEDER-KRUPP HEAVY INDUSTRIES

Corporate Court Ranking
(2078): 2

Corporate Slogan: "One Step
Ahead"

Corporate Status: AAA, private
corporation

World Headquarters: Essen, Al-
lied German States

President/CEO: Lofwyr

You Know Them For: Perhaps being single-handedly re-
sponsible for the adage: "Never cut a deal with a dragon."



SHIAWASE CORPORATION

Corporate Court Ranking (2078): 5
Corporate Slogan: "Advancing
Life"

Corporate Status: AAA, public
corporation

World Headquarters: Osaka, Jap-
anese Imperial State

President/CEO: Korin Yamana

You Know Them For: Their des-
perate attempt to get as cozy with the Japanese Imperial
State as Aztechnology is with Aztlan.



ANARCHY RULES

Gameplay in *Shadowrun: Anarchy* revolves around two things (besides shooting people in the face for money, which in *Shadowrun* is a given): *Building the Story* and *Rolling Dice*. But first, let's talk about some of the important things you'll need to be ready for the game.

Note: For ease of reference, important terms will be bolded when they are first detailed to make them easy to find. Additionally, the rules may reference the "Cue System." This is a general name for this unique rules system, while "*Shadowrun: Anarchy*" or "*Anarchy*" represents this entire volume, meaning the Cue System rules with the *Shadowrun: Anarchy* twist, or liquid *Shadowrun: Anarchy* poured over the rocks of the Cue System. Choose whichever drink-based analogy suits you.

DICE

As noted in the *Introduction*, *Shadowrun: Anarchy* uses six-sided dice; anytime "D" is used, as in "D6," it's shorthand for "die" or "dice," so 4D6 means four six-sided dice. Rolled dice are scored individually instead of being added together. *Shadowrun: Anarchy*, like regular *Shadowrun*, uses six-sided dice pretty much exclusively.

BEFORE THE GAME BEGINS

Here are some of the basic things, besides dice, that you will need to make a game of *Shadowrun: Anarchy* work.

CHOOSE OR CREATE A CHARACTER

Each **Character Sheet** (starting on p. 34) consists of an illustration and all the pertinent information for a *Shadowrun: Anarchy* character. To make sure you choose a character you'll like, you'll have to understand the different parts of a sheet. For an in-depth look at Character Sheets, see p. 20.

NOTE

Players can easily grab a character sheet and leap into action based on the name of a character, their Tags

and Cues, or even just the artwork. But it can help to know how the game is going to work, and what you are going to be wielding when it's time to throw down. If you want that info, check out the *Rolling Dice* portion of this section before selecting their character sheets (see p. 26).

DESIGNATE A GAMEMASTER

In most tabletop roleplaying games, there is someone in charge—in this game, it's a **gamemaster** (GM). This person acts as the mastermind behind the game, creating the plots and stories the players will interact with.

The GM is in charge of establishing the setting and running the game world the players interact with, but they do not have the sole responsibility for introducing story elements and moving them forward. In *Shadowrun: Anarchy*, storytelling is a shared experience. Players apply their creativity to a variety of story elements, not just their characters' actions. They work with the GM to build something entertaining and fun for everyone involved. This means that the GM's job is more about facilitating the story—keeping it moving and giving the players what they need to make the story fun—than it is about controlling it. See *Building the Story* on p. 24 for more information on how this works.

SELECT A CONTRACT BRIEF

On the mean streets of the Sixth World, there's no such thing as a typical shadowrun. Whether a Mr. Johnson sends you to steal a prototype, deal with freedom fighters in a bush war, guard (or geek) a VIP, or any number of other odd jobs, the possibilities of what your team will end up doing is endless. Flip through the **Contract Briefs** section (see p. 42) and you can check out a small sample of the jobs shadowrunners might encounter, some contracts that will get them started on their new career. Pick your poison, and there's a vial ready to drink down at the gaming table.

Contract Briefs supply all the information you need to start playing, quick and easy. Each Contract Brief in-





cludes many points that players can use to play the job, and multiple Contract Briefs can be connected to make a Campaign. Here are some of the sections that will generally be found in the briefs.

- **Context:** A short overview of what the Contract Brief will be about, what the goal will be, and what opposition the characters can expect to find. This often is presented as in-universe text, something a character in the game universe might come across and read. These can be military documents, historical texts, security briefs, intercepted personal communications, local newspapers, and so on. This section is intended to help the GM establish some background for the story and establish the right feel.
- **Mr. Johnson's Pitch:** This section represents the team's meet with the Mr. Johnson who is contracting the shadowrunners' services, and it is usually read aloud to the group to kick off the Contract.
- **Objectives:** The Objectives list a set of goals or accomplishments that characters are expected

to do, though they aren't mandatory—plots may twist, turn, and take runners in strange places.

- **Cues:** The Contract Brief's Cues function the same as the Cues on a character sheet. Each Cue can be the basis for a Narration as well as a description of the Contract itself.
- **Tags:** Tags give short descriptions of the Contract Brief to give players the gist of the adventure—for example, when trying to skim and find a specific flavor for a contract to run—or to aid the creation of a longer campaign.
- **The Setting:** The Setting is a description of the area where the characters find themselves at the beginning of the Contract Brief. The GM can read this aloud to players at the beginning of the job.
- **Enemies/Obstacles:** Finally, the Enemies/Obstacles section gives the opponents and obstacles that the characters may have to defeat or overcome to successfully complete the Contract, with each part considered a Scene, or section, of the overall Contract. For ease of use,



each Scene includes suggested NPCs to use from the book. However, those are just suggestions. Use whatever NPCs your group thinks will make the job rattle and hum. Scenes may also offer special-case rules or GM advice for ways the players can tackle that particular Scene.

Like pretty much every part of *Shadowrun: Anarchy*, lots of the information given in a Contract Brief is up to the discretion of the players. Want to add your own Cues? Go for it! Want to change parts of the Scene? No problem! Want to change the Objectives? No one's stopping you! Raise the fun factor high, keep the plot moving, and you're golden.

LOCK AND LOAD!

Once you've chosen characters, a GM, and Contract Brief, grab some dice and jump into the action.

CHARACTER SHEET

Your character sheet contains all of the information you'll need to tackle any problem, be it physical, magical, or virtual.

ILLUSTRATION/ PERSONAL DATA

The character sheet includes an illustration of the character, along with Personal Data—name, metatype, age, that sort of thing. This section also includes a set of one-word **Tags** that immediately provide an at-a-glance grasp of what defines this character.

This section also includes a brief character description and some **Dispositions**, which are easy-to-review sentences that make a character who and what they are. This information, along with the **Cues** and **Qualities** on the second page, provides everything the player needs to quickly get inside the head of their character and leap into the action.

ATTRIBUTES AND ATTRIBUTE DICE

Beginning at the top of the second page of the character sheet, you'll see the different **Attributes** and the number of dice that represent those stats (**Attribute Dice**).

Strength: It's how strong you are. Duh. Also represents your constitution, a measure of your physical health and resiliency. Strength determines your Physical damage track and also conveys extra damage in melee combat, so if you plan on punching a lot, this helps you punch harder.

Agility: It's not just about power—it's how you use it. Agility is a combination of hand-eye coordination, flexibility, balance, and reaction—reflexes and awareness of

situations. This Attribute covers how good a person is in combat, whether ranged, close quarters, hand-to-hand, or even vehicle-to-vehicle.

Willpower: When you're slogging through a mud-dy ruined building in the barrens while acid rain is dissolving your coat, do you plug along or go home and make some nice, hot tea? Willpower helps determine the answer. It's a combination of your character's desire to push through adversity under any condition and that gut-instinct voice that anticipates an ambush or tells you when it's time to cut and run. Willpower determines your Stun damage track.

Logic: This corresponds to the mental faculties of the character, whether street smarts, learned science, or just plain inherent brilliance. Helps you quickly come up with an answer to the ever-present question, "If you're so smart, why are you still on the streets?"

Charisma: You don't need to out-shoot someone if you can talk them out of pulling on you. Charisma is your character's ability to talk their way out of a situation—your presence as you walk into a room and take charge.

Essence: In a technological world dominated by the need to be faster and stronger to survive, many people willingly carve away pieces of their metahumanity to stay one step ahead of the bullet with their name on it. Essence is a measure of how much of a character's metahumanity remains. See *Essence Loss* on page 23 for more information.

Edge: Edge is a very special number for each character. Unlike the other Attributes, it does not correspond to a number of dice, but instead it can be spent to gain some much-needed help for a particularly difficult roll (see *The Core Mechanic*, p. 26). Edge only replenishes at the beginning of each game session, so spend it wisely.

SKILLS

Skills represent the knowledge and abilities a character has developed while running the shadows. Skills cover a wide variety of topics, from the ability to shoot a gun, hack a Matrix system, or keep a teammate from bleeding out. Skills work hand in hand with Attributes when determining how many dice to roll for a given Test.

Skills are covered in detail on page 22.

SHADOW AMPS

The *Shadowrun* universe is a dystopian future where man meets magic and machine. From casting spells to augmenting physical attributes via magic to cyberware and bioare enhancing bones, flesh, and muscle, to chips that allow for bare-brained interactions with the worldwide Matrix, a myriad of ways exist to augment flesh and blood. **Shadow Amps** (short for Shadow Amplifications, often shortened further to simply "Amps") represent those more-human-than-human improvements and advantages, and they are covered in detail on page 23.



KARMA

In the Sixth World, what goes around comes around. **Karma** is a measure of the experience and resources your character has accumulated, for good or for otherwise, and it is used for improving your character. Character Advancement rules are not provided in this prototype but will be available in the full version of *Shadowrun: Anarchy*. A space is provided on the character sheet to keep track of how much Karma your character has earned.

CUES

In the center of the sheet are the character's **Cues**. Cues are statements or quotes that help define the character, whether it's attitude, capabilities, or personality. Each Cue can help form the basis of a **Narration** (see p. 24).

QUALITIES

Below the Cues are **Qualities**, which round out your character's personality and affect certain actions. These often are built off of a character's Disposition, providing concrete rules for how a character will react in various circumstances, whereas Tags define what your character is.

Each character has three Qualities—two positive and one negative.

WEAPONS

Most shadowrunners who plan to stay alive carry at least one weapon. The **Weapons** section lists these tools of the trade, the damage they inflict on a successful hit, and their range. In many instances, additional rules are included for the effects of the weapon.

Weapons are covered in detail on p. 29.

ARMOR

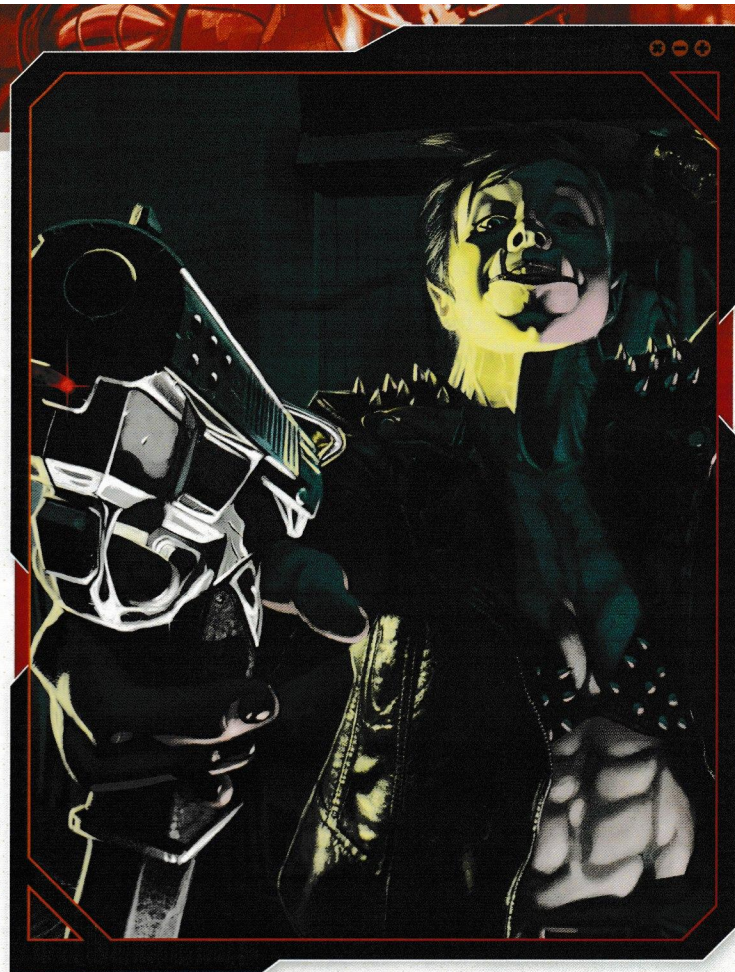
The **Armor** track gives the number of Armor dots the character has. Armor is a generic term that covers things like a Kevlar jacket, military-grade body armor, an Armor spell, and extreme agility. Anything that might keep someone from being hit by an attack is in this category.

If a Skill or Amp provides a permanent Armor boost (as opposed to, say, an Armor spell that must be cast), it will be reflected in the Skill or Amp's text.

Armor helps absorb damage during **combat** (see p. 31).

CONDITION MONITOR

The **Condition Monitor** track defines the character's health status. Once a character's Armor (or any spell or Shadow Amp that acts as Armor) has been depleted by



damage, further damage will accumulate on the appropriate part of the Condition Monitor.

There are two different types of damage, **Physical** and **Stun**, which are tracked separately. Different weapons and effects can either be Physical or Stun damage.

As injuries pile up, a character will suffer negative performance effects (see *Dice Pools*, p. 26).

GEAR

While Coydog trusts her abilities, she also carries some tools and supplies, as shown in the Gear column of her character sheet. Unlike weapons, gear in *Shadowrun: Anarchy* has no set stats. Take a stimpatch, for example. Sure, it could just be a standard painkiller. But what if right in the middle of an escape, the GM drops a Plot Point to say that the stimpatch Coydog slaps on to overcome some wounds is from a bad batch laced with a custom-tailored street drug? What might happen?

In such instances, the player may have to answer those questions during gameplay with a clever **Narration** (see p. 24).

Gear generally falls into two categories:

Noncombat Gear: This is stuff that's (generally) not for killing people. What will Coydog use her shamanic lodge materials for? Does she have anything personal on her Meta Link commlink, or is it just a cheap burner unit?

Contacts: As the saying goes, "You are who you know," and your contacts can mean the difference be-



tween life and death in the shadows. The variety of contacts can help inspire unique approaches to otherwise sticky situations. Who is Coydog's contact Four-Paws-Laughing? What's her deal? How could she help the team solve the problem at hand? Answering these sorts of questions can make for a great story.

NPC CHARACTER SHEET

Finally, there are two types of character sheets: those for fleshed-out player characters, and those for less-important individuals, like henchmen or supporting characters, or even for certain types of gear with their own damage tracks and weapons, such as vehicles and drones. These **non-player character (NPC)** sheets take up a third of a page and contain much less information than player character sheets. Gamemasters can also modify the NPCs in the *Characters* section (see p. 41) to expand the number of enemies for a given contract.

SKILLS

Each character has a unique set of **Skills** that showcase the actions that character excels in. Every Skill has two parts: a dice value and the specific Attribute the Skill is linked to. Whenever a player uses that particular Skill to accomplish an action, the value of the Skill is added to the linked Attribute to determine the base number of dice rolled. See *Rolling Dice*, p. 26, for more information on using Skills.

The name and description of each Skill provides a guideline for some ideas for what the Skill can do, but ultimately it'll be up to the player, the GM, and the role-playing group to determine the limits of what each Skill can accomplish. Most Skills are broad enough to cover several different options for an action, such as the Hacking Skill, which can be used to brute-force your way into a Matrix node, set a data bomb, engage in cybercombat with IC or spiders, and so on. If a player wants a given Skill to do something that might fall slightly outside the guidelines of that Skill and there is no other specific Skill in the Skills List that would govern the action, the GM may allow the action, generally allowing the player to simply roll the value of the Attribute normally linked to the Skill (magical skills are the exception to this rule).

SPECIALIZATIONS

Some Skills contain additional text in that Skill's box. These represent **Specializations**, meaning the character has further honed their proficiency in that Skill in a specific direction of focus, such as a particular weapon or a certain area of study. Specializations generally allow the player to gain extra dice when using that Skill in a Test. However, if the conditions of the Specialization are not met, you receive no bonus dice for the Test.

For example, on Sledge's character sheet (see p. 39), the Specialization text on the Firearms Skill is "Semi-Automatics: +2." This means that when Sledge uses his Firearms Skill to fire a semi-automatic weapon, he receives two additional dice for the Test. However, if he ever needs to fire another type of pistol, he will not roll the bonus Specialization dice.

SKILLS LIST

The following list shows which Attributes link to which Skills and provides some examples of what kinds of actions each Skill can accomplish. For quick reference, each Skill on a character sheet shows a letter denoting the linked Attribute.

STRENGTH

Though Strength is not linked to any Skills, this Attribute determines the Physical track on the Condition Monitor (see *Damage, Armor, and the Condition Monitor*, p. 31), and it increases the damage of Close Combat actions (see *Combat*, p. 28).

AGILITY

Athletics: Running, jumping, swimming, and acrobatics.

Close Combat: Armed melee combat, unarmed melee combat, and martial arts.

Projectile Weapons: Bows, crossbows, throwing weapons, and certain critter attacks.

Firearms: Pistols, shotguns, submachine guns, and rifles.

Heavy Weapons: Machine guns, assault cannons, missile launchers, and grenade launchers.

Vehicle Weapons: Vehicle-mounted weapons, drone-mounted weapons, and pintle mounts.

Stealth: Sneaking, palming, and pickpocketing.

Piloting (Civilian): Cars, trucks, bikes, civilian drones, and civilian aircraft.

Piloting (Military): Tanks, fighters, attack helicopters, and military-grade drones.

Escape Artist: Escaping bindings, contortionism, and shaking a tail.

WILLPOWER

Conjuring: Summoning and banishing spirits. Magicians only. Cannot use untrained.

Sorcery: Spellcasting, ritual spellcasting, enchanting, and counterspelling. Magicians only. Cannot use untrained.

Astral Combat: Astral/spirit combat. Astral plane only. Magicians only.

Survival: Wilderness survival, navigation, and fasting.

Close Combat: When attacking spirits only.



LOGIC

Biotech: First aid, medicine, and cybertechnology.

Hacking: Computer hacking and cybercombat.

Electronics: Computer hardware and software, cyberdeck repair.

Engineering: Auto repair, aircraft repair, and boat repair.

Tracking: Physical tracking, Matrix tracking, and shadowing.

Knowledge Skills: Languages, interests knowledge, and professional knowledge.

CHARISMA

Con: Con artistry, acting, performance, and etiquette.

Intimidation: Influence, interrogation, and torture.

Negotiation: Bargaining, contracts, and diplomacy.

Disguise: Camouflage, cosmetics, costuming, and digital alteration.

SHADOW AMPS

Shadow Amps (or just Amps) is a catchall term for certain advantages, spells, and modifications that can benefit a character. Amps is an umbrella term covering a huge swath of possibilities. From spells players can sling at opponents, to body modifications that make a character stronger or capable of sustaining damage, to implants that make a character smarter—almost anything is possible, if you're willing to pay the price.

Much like how Skills supplement Attributes, Amps also enhance related actions by granting certain effects. For example, one Shadow Amp might allow rerolls of certain dice that failed to score a hit, another might grant a bonus die in certain situations, and another might act like a Cue to a Narration instead of enhancing a die roll, and so on. Amp effects are listed on the character sheet. See *Rolling Dice* (p. 26) for more information on how Amps can factor into gameplay.

TYPES

Shadow Amps come in several different types. Here are a few examples of each type:

Spells: Magicians can manipulate mana to cast spells.

The Invisibility Spell allows the player to reroll one die that failed to score a hit on their Sorcery Test, and the Improved Invisibility Spell allows two failed dice to be rerolled.

Telesma: Enchanted magical items can impart special bonuses when bound to a magician.

A weapon focus is an imbued melee weapon that can be used in astral combat, and a low-grade spirit focus allows the reroll of one die on a failed Conjuring Test.

Adept Powers: Instead of casting spells, adepts use mana to perform physical magic.

The Killing Hands adept power allows the player to deal Physical damage instead of Stun damage when using the Unarmed weapon in a Close Combat roll, and the Missile Parry power allows the character to pluck arrows or knives out of the air by negating one hit when targeted by a Projectile Weapons attack.

Cyberware: Cyberware represents technological implants in the body.

Wired reflexes 1 gives the player 1 extra attack action per Narration (see *Attack Limits*, p. 29). Wired reflexes 2 gives 1 extra attack per Narration and 1 Plot Point (see *Plot Points*, p. 25) at the beginning of each Scene.

Bioware: Bioware represents biological implants and genetically engineered improvements on the metahuman body.

Tailored pheromones allow the character to influence others. Rating 1 allows the reroll of one failed die on any Charisma-related Test, whereas Rating 3 rerolls 3 dice.

Cyberdecks: Unless you're a technomancer, you'll need some hardware to hack into the Matrix. Cyberdecks are what you need.

A cheap cyberdeck like an Erika MCD-1 will allow the reroll of one failed die on a Hacking Test, but a high-end cyberdeck, like a Shiawase Cyber-5, will allow three failed dice to be rerolled. Cyberdecks also have a Firewall rating and a Matrix Condition Monitor, which are both used in cybercombat (see *Hacking and Cybercombat*, p. 32).

Programs: If you want to be successful in the Matrix, you'll need some (possibly illegal) programs to massage data.

An Armor program reduces the amount of damage taken in cybercombat by 1, and a Biofeedback program lets you use neural feedback to damage a hostile decker's Condition Monitor instead of the cyberdeck's. See *Hacking and Cybercombat*, p. 32.

Critter Powers: Some nonmetahuman NPCs have special abilities that can be used in Tests, combat rolls, and general Narrations.

The spirit of earth's Concealment power lets it grant a +1 modifier, while a spirit of fire's Fear power inflicts a -1 modifier to opponents.

ESSENCE LOSS

Many Shadow Amps, most notably cyberware and bioware implants, require the character to trade away part of their metahumanity, and this results in Essence loss. The more you push the boundaries of what your body can do, the more you lose your metahumanity in the process.

Not all Amps include an Essence loss, however. For example, many magical Amps do not diminish your Essence. If a Shadow Amp includes an Essence loss, it will be noted as such on that portion of the character sheet, e.g., "[Cyberarms: Essence -1]".



If a character's Essence is low enough to incur any penalties, that fact is noted on the character sheet next to the Essence value. Low Essence imposes a dice-pool penalty on hits on magic- and healing-related Tests.

PLAYING SHADOWRUN: ANARCHY

Once each player has some dice and a character sheet, a Contract Brief has been selected, and a GM chosen, your group is ready to get started.

Shadowrun: Anarchy play is divided into a series of segments that build on each other: *Turns and Narrations*, *Scenes*, *Missions*, and *Campaigns*.

URNS AND NARRATIONS

Shadowrun: Anarchy gameplay is divided into a series of turns. Each turn, every player has a chance to play out and describe their character's actions, along with other elements of the story going on around them. These descriptions are called **Narrations**, and as the game progresses these Narrations build on each other and form the story of the game.

GAMEMASTER

Each turn begins with the GM and continues with the player on the GM's left until all players have had a turn at Narration (though check the *Talk Time* sidebar and *Spending Plot Points: Gamemaster*, p. 25, for some exceptions to this).

The GM begins the turn by giving a narrative of the current situation and advancing the plot, as described under *Contract Briefs* (see p. 42). The GM also makes any actions or die rolls for enemies the characters may encounter.

TALK TIME

For most Scenes and Turns, taking turns will work best, as it will keep the story moving, give people a chance to be creative on their turn, and also provide a structure where people can use Plot Points. Sometimes, though, the turn-based structure might interfere with the flow of conversation when runners are doing something like meeting with Mr. Johnson, questioning a witness, or other activities where multiple people might want to be engaged in conversation. In these circumstances, the GM can declare—or players can request—**Talk Time**, where the turn-based structure is suspended and players can engage in free-wheeling conversation. Once the conversation gets beyond mere talk and into tests, though—like when someone starts a serious Negotiation and Intimidation—it's time to let the story proceed through turns again.

Once all players have had a chance to narrate their character's actions, the turn ends and a new turn begins.

SCENE

A Scene is defined as the start and finish of a given section of time within a Contract Brief. A Scene contains a number of turns, which vary depending upon what's occurring within a given Scene.

For example, take a look at *Be Careful What You Search For* (see p. 42). Each of the three descriptions of the Enemies/Obstacles found in that Event Brief is a Scene. There is no hard and fast rule on how many turns are in a Scene. Instead, that will be based on how many players are involved, their style of play, and their Narrations, which ultimately leads to how quickly (or slowly) they're able to accomplish the goals of a given Scene.

CONTRACT BRIEF

A Contract Brief usually constitutes a single game session, and the session ends when all of the Scenes within a Contract Brief are completed. The number of Scenes required to finish an Event Brief is detailed in each Event Brief, but this can be modified by the player group.

For example, one player group may decide after accomplishing the three Scenes laid out in *Be Careful What You Search For* that the Event Brief is done, and their time running the shadows is over for the day. However, another group playing the same Contract Brief might decide to add in a new fourth Scene that helps close up some of the plot threads that grew through players' Narrations, so they keep playing. A third group might not have as long to play as the other groups, so they actually split the Event Brief up into two different days of gaming sessions. Whatever works for each playing group is just fine.

BUILDING THE STORY: NARRATION AND FLOW

Giving a Narration is quite easy. All a player has to do is describe what his or her character is doing, such as engaging in a firefight, exploring a Matrix host, or summoning a spirit, as well as adding some descriptions about what happens around them when they do what they do.

If any action has a chance of failure, then a dice-rolling test is made to determine whether the action succeeds. See *Rolling Dice*, p. 26.

Many Narrations are based on Cues provided on character sheets or Mission Briefs.

CUES

Cues are building blocks players can use as a basis for Narrations. Cues are both suggestions and descriptions. They can be positive and negative and never have to be narrated the same way twice. If a player draws a blank

or wants to make sure he's staying on-topic, he can look at a list of Cues and choose an appropriate one to base a Narration around.

MOVING THE STORY FORWARD

Collaborative narration is about creating a story and moving it forward. *Shadowrun: Anarchy* is about making impossible choices, facing terrifying challenges, and overcoming them in fantastic and fun ways. It is all about saying "yes" to fun, not "no" to something unexpected.

So when you are faced with the impossible, you smile and say, "Yes, and ..." Then you make it up! There is no wrong way in *Shadowrun: Anarchy*. Want to have the characters swallowed by a magical alchera while running the shadows of Los Angeles? Then do it! But be ready for the GM to have a metaplanar entity show up and try to force you out. After all, the rule is "Yes, and ..." Respect other players' choices, don't use your Narrative to make an overly easy way out or an impossible challenge, and you'll be building a fun story.

PLOT POINTS

Plots create twists you never saw coming—a twisted water spirit emerging from a swamp, experimental security countermeasures appearing right in the middle of your firefight, a strange subsystem in a Matrix node that gets activated, or a vicious paracritter breaks free from its laboratory cage.

In gameplay, Plot Points may be used in many ways. They are used to interrupt or alter another player's Narration—a method of adding a twist to the game. They can also be used to change player turn order, alter a die roll, or gain back a point of Physical or Stun damage. The ways players utilize Plot Points are only limited by how creative they want to be.

Players will be earning and spending Plot Points throughout the game, and using some type of tokens (such as poker chips or pennies) is the best method to track them. However, players are free to use whatever system works best, whether it's chips, dice, noting them down on paper, tablet, or smartphone, and so on.

EARNING PLOT POINTS: PLAYERS

Players begin the game with three Plot Points each and may be awarded more points by the GM for particularly good Narrations. Players may have a maximum of five Plot Points at any time, and only one point may be awarded to a player at a time. Certain Shadow Amps give players a bonus Plot Point at the start of combat.

The GM is the only person who may award Plot Points, though some Shadow Amps tell them when this should happen.

EARNING PLOT POINTS: GAMEMASTER

The GM also receives Plot Points into a Plot Pool. The GM starts a Contract Brief with one Plot Point, and every time a player spends a Plot Point (see below), the GM receives that Plot Point.

Unlike the players, the GM's Plot Pool has no size limit.

SPENDING PLOT POINTS: PLAYERS

No matter what effect you want to cause, the cost is one Plot Point, and the change is immediately made to the game. Players may not spend more than one point at a time in an attempt to maximize the twist, though they can spend multiple Plot Points during any player's Narration (whether their own, or another player's).

Example things to do with Plot Points:

- **Live dangerously:** Add a Glitch Die to a player's roll, including your own. (see *The Glitch Die*, p. 28)
- **Shake it up:** Change turn order by making a Narration and taking actions when it isn't your normal turn.
- **Double time it:** Take two movement actions to close on—or get away from—an opponent (see *Character Movement*, p. 30).
- **Surprise threat:** Unseen corporate security guards show up!
- **First aid:** Heal a point of Physical or Stun damage.
- **Malfunction:** A character's spirits/devices/etc. suddenly stop working for a short period of time.
- **Take the hit:** If a weaker or injured character is successfully hit by a combat action—i.e., the target rolled fewer hits than the attacker—then a player can spend an Plot Point to take the hit instead. The original target's defense roll is ignored, and the interrupting player rolls their own defense dice against the attacker's hits.
- **A dish best served cold:** Immediately take one free attack action against the NPC who just attacked you. This attack does not count as a Narration.

If you come up with another creative use for Plot Points, go for it! Plot Points are meant to change the game in fun and interesting ways, so don't be afraid to use your imagination.

Just remember, Plot Point use doesn't always mean a positive change. Often plot twists are a negative event—something goes wrong that must be fixed or adapted to by the characters.

SPENDING PLOT POINTS: GAMEMASTER

Like players, the GM can spend Plot Points in any fashion they choose, with the following caveats:



- With the exception of adding a Glitch Die (see p. 28), Plot Points can only be spent to aid NPCs or create plot twists; they cannot be spent to directly aid or hinder a player.
- The GM can only spend one Plot Point per turn, unlike the players who can spend more than one per turn.
- Instead of using a Plot Point to go first, the gamemaster can spend one to change how turn order works for a round. They can select to go in reverse order (starting with the player to the GM's right), or they can roll a die to randomly determine a new starting player for that round. This can be especially useful to shake up patterns players develop in a game or keep players on their toes.

TROUBLESHOOTING

In an improv-style game such as *Shadowrun: Anarchy*, the single greatest issue that can suck the life and energy out of a gaming session is if players start spending too much time deliberating over their actions and Narrations. If you've ever watched an improv play, when a character pauses too long trying to follow up with what's just been said, you're thrown out of the action and the energy is gone.

If this starts to occur, players should work together as a group to help a player feel more at ease with this style of play. This could be practice sessions outside of a game, or something as simple as finding an enjoyable improv play to watch that can provide an example of how this style can unfold. Gamemasters can also do a lot to help by asking specific questions (e.g., "What are you going to tell that ork who's making a series of exceptionally rude gestures?" rather than a basic "What happens next?") and by making sure turns keep moving at a good clip, so that players do not struggle too much with making the story move forward. Don't force players to come up with something if they are blanking on ideas, or make them feel too much pressure. Keep it light, keep turns moving, and keep it fun!

ROLLING DICE

At some point, characters are going to attempt something difficult, awesome, or nearly impossible, because those are the sorts of things characters are supposed to do. At those points, it's time to roll the dice, so here's info on how many to roll and what kind of numbers you want to see.

HITS

The main goal when making any die roll is to score **hits**. When rolling dice, any die that comes up as a five or six are counted as hits. When you spend a point of Edge, dice that roll a four, five, or six are counted as hits.

THE CORE MECHANIC

Shadowrun: Anarchy uses a simple dice-rolling mechanic to resolve **Tests** and **Combat**.

Any time your character (or an acting NPC) wishes to perform an action where the success is in doubt, you need to make a Test to see whether the action was successful. Your main job is to figure out how many dice you are going to roll, then roll them and count up hits. The gamemaster decides on a difficulty for the roll and rolls an opposing dice pool, or rolls an opposing dice pool generated by an NPC. After making your roll, apply any Shadow Amp effects (if any), count up your final number of hits, and compare them to the number of hits rolled by the opposing dice. If your hits equal or exceed the hits scored by the opposing dice, then your action was successful. If you score zero hits, the Test automatically fails, even if the opposing dice also rolled zero hits.

This means that the mechanic for resolving all Tests looks like this:

Skill Dice + Attribute Dice + Modifiers (if any) + Shadow Amps effect (if any) vs. Opposing Dice

DICE POOLS

These are the elements that go into deciding how many dice you're going to roll:

Skill Dice: If you possess a relevant Skill for the action, then your Skill dice form the base of your dice pool. If you have a Specialization for that Skill, and the Specialization applies for the current action, then you also add the bonus dice as noted on the Skill.

Attribute Dice: The Skill used to perform an action denotes the Skill's linked Attribute with a letter. Find the appropriate Attribute and add that Attribute's dice to the dice pool. A list of Skills and their related Attributes can be found on p. 22.

Modifiers: Modifiers represent good or bad situational circumstances that take an ordinary situation and make it extraordinary. Such as: you're trying to hack into a keypad while being attacked (a negative modifier), you're wounded (a negative modifier), and you're getting additional help (this also could be a positive or negative modifier depending upon the Logic value of the player trying to help). Some negative modifiers are clearly set out by the rules, such as:

- **Injuries:** The more damage on your Condition Monitor, the higher the modifier will be. See *Damage, Armor, and the Condition Monitor*, p. 31.
- **Essence Loss:** The lower your Essence, the more negative modifiers are applied to certain Tests. See *Essence Loss*, p. 23.
- **Qualities:** Positive and negative Qualities can affect certain actions by adding or subtracting dice from a roll. Check your character sheet to see if any of these apply.



- **Assistance:** Sometimes you just can't do it alone. These modifiers represent being helped by a teammate, a spirit, a Matrix sprite, or some other form of aid. See *Teamwork Tests*, p. 28.

Beyond that, the gamemaster might impose additional modifiers based in variable conditions. These modifiers (alone, not counted with the modifiers listed above) should never go beyond +5 or -5, and that level should apply only very rarely.

- **Environment:** Light, darkness, weather. This can also include things like the ground on which people are operating, surfaces they are trying to climb, and so on.
- **Attitude:** Social situations may be affected by the attitude of the non-player character, the overall situation, and the existing relationship with player characters.
- **Distractions:** Characters may be trying to drive and shoot at the same time, or fight while sustaining a spell, and the effort of doing multiple things makes them less effective performing at least one of them, so they take a penalty due to the distraction.

Shadow Amp Effects: The text on a Shadow Amp will note whether it can affect the outcome of a Test, such as allowing the reroll of dice that failed to score a hit or reducing the number of opposing dice rolled, negating hits, adding pips to dice, and so on. Make sure to apply a relevant effect before comparing hits with the opposing dice. Only one Shadow Amp can affect a roll's outcome; if two or more could apply to the Test, you must choose one effect to apply. See *Shadow Amps*, p. 23.

Opposing Dice: In some cases, the opposing dice are determined by making dice pools of an opposing player. For example, if a non-player character is being attacked, they will roll a defensive test of Agility + Logic, just like a player character.

In other circumstances, there will not be an opposing dice pool from another person (like when a player character is trying to climb a wall). In those cases, the number of opposing dice that are rolled depends on the difficulty of the action:

- **Very Easy:** 4 dice
- **Easy:** 6 dice
- **Average:** 8 dice
- **Hard:** 10 dice
- **Very Hard:** 12 dice

Different circumstances generally dictate a certain difficulty level. For example, a maglock at a securing the back door of a mom-and-pop store would likely fall into Very Easy difficulty (rolling only 4 dice against the player's dice pool), but a maglock in an ultra-secure Mitsuha Zero Zone would certainly be Very Hard (12 dice). If the difficulty is not readily apparent or there is too much

deliberation over the difficulty, the gamemaster can never go wrong with Average difficulty.

ATTRIBUTE TESTS

There are two types of occasions when you might exclude Skill dice from a Test and only roll Attribute dice.

Untrained: If you want to try a specific action but are untrained in that action—i.e., the appropriate Skill is not on your character sheet—then determine what the linked Attribute is for the missing Skill (see *Skills List* on p. 28), and then use that Attribute's dice for the Test. In a few limited circumstances, such as Magic-based actions, Untrained actions cannot be taken. If a Skill cannot be used untrained, that is noted on the Skills list.

Attribute-Only Tests: Some Tests only apply to a specific Attribute and don't need a related Skill. In those cases, either add two Attributes together, or add one Attribute to itself. For example, lifting a heavy object would require a Strength + Strength Test; catching a thrown object would require Agility + Agility; resisting torture, Willpower + Body; remembering a specific detail, Logic + Logic; judging someone's intentions, Charisma + Charisma; and so on. One of the most common Tests of this nature is **Perception**, which is Logic + Willpower; for more information on Perception, see below. Shadow Amp effects apply to Attribute-only Tests when appropriate.

PERCEPTION

As noted above, **Perception** Tests are made with Logic + Willpower. When a character is looking at inanimate objects, the opposing roll is based on the gamemaster's idea of the difficulty of the roll, per the listing for **Opposing Dice**, at left. If the character succeeds at such a Perception Test, rather than simply tell the character what they see, give the player a chance to detail what it is they discover, as this can bring the player into the fun of shaping the story.

If a character is trying to see a sapient being that may be trying to sneak past them, the Perception Test generally would be opposed by Stealth + Agility of whatever the character is trying to see. In this case, the gamemaster should feel free to tell the character who or what they see if they are successful.

EDGE

When you need a boost on a test, you can spend Edge in one of two ways. First, you can announce you're spending Edge before you roll a test; when you roll the dice, you get to count fives, fives, and sixes as hits, instead of just fives and sixes. Second, after you roll the dice, you can spend a point of Edge to re-roll all of the dice that were not fives and sixes. When spending Edge this way, you still only count fives and sixes as hits. If you want the benefit of having fives be hits, plan ahead!



You can spend a number of Edge points in a single gaming session equal to your Edge rating. Once you've spent them all, you're done using Edge until the next session.

TEAMWORK TESTS

Good shadowrunning requires teamwork, and sometimes that means pitching in as a team to get a single task done. When appropriate and sensible, players can help each other on a Test, making a **Teamwork Test**. To assist, players choose a leader who will be doing the main work of a Test. The other players make the appropriate Skill Test. Any hits they make become additional dice for the player taking the lead on the Test, to a maximum of the leader's Skill level (or the higher of the two Attributes, if it is an Attribute-only Test).

Certain circumstances are not appropriate for assistance. Spellcasting, conjuring, and most combat tests cannot use Teamwork Tests. Gamemasters and players should use their judgment as to when other Teamwork Tests will be appropriate or not. Generally, characters need to be in the same place and able to function in a helpful way (meaning they are, you know, conscious and mobile) at a minimum.

THE GLITCH DIE: GLITCHES AND EXPLOITS

Even when a shadowrun is going right, sometimes a quirk of chaos manages to worm its way in and make things go south really, really fast—or provide just the lucky break you needed. In *Shadowrun: Anarchy*, gamemasters and players can represent this manifestation of fate, or whatever you want to call it, by introducing the Glitch Die into a roll.

To use the Glitch Die, the GM or a player must spend a Plot Point before a roll is made. The player spending the Plot Point gives the rolling player a die that is noticeably different from the other dice being rolled. This die can be a different color, style, or size—whichever the players prefer.

GLITCHES

If the Glitch Die comes up as a 1, then a Glitch has occurred, and the universe has once again attempted to screw you.

In the event of a Glitch, the player who made the roll must detail their stroke of bad luck in their Narration of the attempted action they were rolling for. For example, a player who Glitches an unarmed Close Combat roll could miss a kick and fall; a Glitched Hacking Test could accidentally delete the wrong file; a Stealth Test could draw the attention of a corporate security hellhound; a Firearms action could jam the gun; and so on.

A Glitch will still occur even if the Test itself is suc-

cessful, thanks to the other dice rolled. For example, if you are trying to make a flying dive into cover and you succeed in a Gymnastics Test but roll a 1 on the Glitch Die, then maybe you dive for cover successfully but land wrong, jam your elbow on the ground, and take 1 point of Stun damage. Or maybe you Glitch on a successful Hacking Test: perhaps you grab the file you need, but you trip security in the process and alert some intrusion countermeasures. How the Glitch manifests is completely up to the imagination.

Regardless of how the Glitch occurs, it shouldn't be life threatening unless the affected player wishes it to be, for the sake of drama. Instead, a Glitch should represent unforeseen complications that really throw a spanner into the works. The best Glitches help move the story forward in new and interesting directions, so feel free to let your creative flag fly right in the face of bad luck.

EXPLOITS

If the Glitch Die rolls a 5 or a 6, then it counts as an **Exploit**.

When an Exploit occurs, the player has made fate their plaything, and something went really right for a change. This windfall of good luck can take any form the gamemaster deems appropriate for the action taken, such as bypassing the target's armor during a combat action, stumbling on an incriminating Matrix file that you weren't looking for, an attacking spirit suddenly and mysteriously backs down, and so on.

An Exploit can also occur if the roll failed. As long as the Glitch die rolled a hit, the Exploit reveals a silver lining to your failed action. For example, a failed swerve to maneuver your Harley-Davidson Scorpion out of danger might distract one of the people you're chasing, or an accidentally tripped Matrix alarm might spontaneously reset itself due to a scheduled maintenance routine.

As with Glitches, the best Exploits are those that inject some unexpected fun into your story.

COMBAT

Combat is when the time comes to bash heads, shoot people in the face for money, or what have you. It works in similar fashion to other Tests. Regardless of whether the action is ranged, melee, magical, or otherwise, the attack is resolved the same way. The basic dice-rolling mechanic for all combat is:

Skill Dice + Attribute Dice + Modifiers (if any) + Shadow Amp/Weapon Effects (if any)
vs. **Agility Dice + Logic Dice + Modifiers + Shadow Amp Effects (if any)**

As shown, combat is a straightforward contest between the attacker's and defender's hits. If the attacker equals or exceeds the defender's hits, then the defender takes damage. The difference between the attacker's



hits and defenders hits—called **net hits**—is added to the damage of the attack. If the attacker rolls fewer hits than the target, then the attack fails and inflicts no damage. If the attacker rolls zero hits, the attack automatically fails, even if the defender also rolled zero hits.

MODIFIERS

As with Test rolls, combat rolls can have a variety of situational modifiers added, all of which are decided upon by the GM. Certain spells, range penalties, and environmental effects are common modifiers seen in combat rolls.

In addition to those listed on p. 26, here are common modifiers that apply to combat rolls:

- **Weapon Dice:** Some weapons offer bonus dice when used in combat rolls.
- **Range:** Certain ranges incur dice penalties. See *Weapons*, p. 29.

SHADOW AMP/ WEAPON EFFECTS

Some Shadow Amps can be used in combat, and some weapons have additional effects when used, such as allowing the reroll of dice that failed to score a hit or reducing the number of opposing dice rolled. Make sure to apply a relevant effect before comparing hits with the opposing dice. Only the weapon used and one Amp can affect a roll's outcome; if two or more Amps could apply to the combat roll, you must choose which effect to apply. See *Shadow Amps*, p. 23.

In combat rolls, if the defender possesses any Amps that apply to defense, such as a type of reaction enhancer or the physical adept power *Missile Parry*, then those effects get applied to the defender's roll before comparing hits.

ATTACK LIMITS

A character can only take a single attack action during their Narration. What is an Attack action? An action that intentionally and directly damages another living being (including NPCs, critters, spirits, and whatever). Want to debate the meaning of Attack action beyond that? Have fun, and we'll be here for you when you're ready to play!

Reaction Enhancers: The notable exceptions to this rule are the various types of reaction enhancers. For example, *wired reflexes* and the *Increase Reflexes* spell allow characters to take a bonus attack action. See *Seizing the Initiative*, p. 32.

WEAPONS

Weapons come in all shapes, types, and sizes. You name it, and one of the megacorps undoubtedly sells it—and in a variety of chic designer colors and styles to boot.

Most *Shadowrun: Anarchy* characters start each Mission with a default set of weapons. These are listed on the character sheet along with the amount of damage they do when used successfully against a target, their range brackets, and any special effects or bonuses their use confers.

Here's what you need to know when using weapons:

- **Ranges:** All weapons list three general range brackets:
- **Close:** Melee weapons, unarmed combat
- **Near:** Short-ranged weapons, such as pistols and shotguns
- **Far:** Long-ranged weapons, such as rifles and heavy weapons
- **Each range bracket on a weapon listing can have three possible notations:**
- **OK:** The weapon can be used at this range without penalty.
- **-X:** The weapon can be used at this range, but with a -X modifier.
- **-:** The weapon cannot be used at this range.

For example, Sledge's Ares Predator V has the following range notation: Close OK, Near -2, Far —. This means it can fire at Close range targets without penalty, suffers a -2 modifier at Near range, and cannot affect targets at Far range. Which makes him sad, but he'll just have to get another gun.

There are no precise definitions for Close, Near, and Far ranges, mainly to prevent the game from being bogged down in specific measurements. The basic definitions are that Close is within reach of a sword or similar melee weapon, either by swinging it where you are or taking a few quick steps toward a target. Near is farther than that, going far enough outward that you start reaching the limits of where pistols have a reasonable chance to hit. Being generous, that range is around 100 meters, without being precise. Far is any distance beyond that. Remember that it is rare for any weapon that's not artillery or something to fire more than half a kilometer, and going a full kilometer is rarer still.

Unarmed Combat Damage: Your Strength determines the damage you do when engaging in unarmed combat. The damage you inflict is Stun damage equal to your Strength, noted as (STR)S. Some Shadow Amps may increase this damage, or turn it into Physical damage.

Close Combat Damage Bonus: A high Strength Attribute confers bonus damage when using the Close Combat Skill with a weapon. A Strength of 5 inflicts 2 extra damage, and every two full points of Strength above 5 inflicts one extra point. For example, Sledge has a Strength of 8, so his katana (base Damage Value of 6P) will inflict 9P damage on a successful Close Combat roll. If a character has a Strength bonus to a Close Combat weapon, it will be noted in parentheses in the Damage Value: e.g., 3(5)P. To make life easy, here is a listing of damage bonuses with various levels of Strength:



CLOSE COMBAT DAMAGE BONUS

STR	BONUS
1	—
2	—
3	—
4	—
5	2
6	2
7	3
8	3
9	4
10	4

Carry Limits: A character can carry no more than six weapons at a time. If the player already has six and wants to acquire a new weapon, a current weapon must be discarded.

If a character has a Skill that requires the use of their hands, then the character can't use that Skill if they are holding a weapon (or gear) in that hand. If there is the slightest doubt about how the character uses said Skill, before gameplay begins, the players and gamemaster will need to determine for their games whether a particular Skill requires a free hand to use it.

Ammo and Reloading: *Shadowrun: Anarchy* doesn't require players to track things like ammunition, shots fired per turn, firing modes, reloading speeds, and so on. This is an action movie—all reloading is assumed to happen when the camera isn't pointed at you, if it happens at all.

Secondary Effects: Generally speaking, *Shadowrun: Anarchy* doesn't assume weapons have any other effects beyond straight-up damage as noted on the various character sheets. Those weapons with additional effects are specifically noted, of course. However, like the equipment also noted on the character sheets, players and gamemasters are free to come up with additional effects from a weapon, provided they can make a good Narration for it.

For example, Sledge has an Ares Predator V on his character sheet (see p. 39). The player choosing Sledge could pitch to the group that this is a custom mod of that pistol. The modification would allow the weapon to fire riot rounds that always knock the target down after dealing its damage. The gamemaster feels that's too powerful for a gun that small and decides that the weapon can't be used at Close range, and further, if the weapon scores a hit, the target will make a Strength Test with a modifier determined by the gamemaster. If the target

succeeds, he or she withstood the extra effects of getting hit with such a large riot round; if the target fails, he or she is immediately on their back until they can spend a Narration to stand back up.

Meanwhile, in another situation, the gamemaster may decide Coydog's survival knife is actually an enchanted weapon focus. When it hits, that weapon's mystical powers partially numb the target, so the target applies a -1 modifier to any actions for the next two turns.

And so on. As usual, unleash your imaginations at the table!

Making the Game More or Less Lethal: The weapons on the character sheets are geared toward a good mix of play speed and fun combat action that'll span multiple turns of dice rolling to resolve a given situation. However, some groups may decide they want to switch things up to suit their style of play.

- **Less Lethal:** If a player group decides they want more dice rolling and heavier combat-oriented play, simply lower all Damage Values by 1, or even cut Damage Values in half. If weapons have a D6 for their Damage Value, change that to D6 - 1 damage.
- **More Lethal:** If another group wants quicker combat and more cinematic style where the good guys can take out the bad guys in a single swipe, reduce armor by half or more. The more armor goes away, the quicker people go down.

CHARACTER MOVEMENT

In *Shadowrun: Anarchy*, there are no hard-and-fast rules for walking and running speeds, and weapon ranges are abstracted. This places the focus on story and action. In many circumstances, the ranges are just approximations, and the gamemaster can provide a ruling of the current range, and the players can move on. There are times, though, when more tactical movement may be needed, so here are some rules for closing or expanding ranges in such situations.

Movement is based on three different range brackets: Close, Near, and Far. See the *Weapons* section for more detail on how range brackets work.

Movement from Close to Near, or Near to Close, requires a single movement when on foot. Moving on foot from Near to Far, or Far to Near, requires three movements. Note that these can be divided among multiple people involved in maneuvering around each other. For example, let's say a player and an NPC are at Far range, and both of them decide they want to be Near. The player uses their movement to get closer, and the NPC does the same. That's two movements, so if on the player's turn they decide to move closer again, they'll be in Near range. Just in time for the NPC to shoot. Oops.

Note that characters can spend a Plot Point to take two movement actions to make this process go faster.

There is one exception to this rule. If you moved from



Far to Near or Near to Far, in the very next turn you can decide to move back to the range you left. If you don't make that move in the next turn, the opportunity is lost; it's assumed that others move or the universe realigns in some way that requires the three movements to get from Near to Far or vice versa.

DAMAGE, ARMOR, AND THE CONDITION MONITOR

Whenever a fight occurs or a dangerous situation is encountered, there's a chance a character could take damage on the Condition Monitor.

Damage: On every character sheet, there's a Weapons column that lists the weapons the character started the game with and its **Damage Value**. Whenever a character takes damage, the damage from the weapon is first applied to the Armor column of the character sheet. Once all Armor circles are marked off, damage then begins to apply to the Condition Monitor. If that happens, it's time for some serious heroics before true disaster strikes.

Physical Damage vs. Stun Damage: There are two types of damage on the Condition Monitor: Physical and Stun. Physical damage represents potentially lethal damage: gashes and gouges, burns and breaks, and so on. Stun represents nonlethal damage: bruises, fatigue, synaptic overload, magical drain, and so on. Weapons with a **P** notation in their Damage Value apply their damage to the Physical column on the Condition Monitor once armor has been depleted, and weapons with an **S** notation damage the Stun column.

Condition Monitor Flowchart: The Physical and Stun columns on the Condition Monitor of the character sheet take the form of flowcharts with three rows of boxes apiece. Players start at the top, left-hand box of the damage column for the damage type and move to the right until the first row is marked off, then move to the left-hand box of the second row and move to the right until the second row is marked off, and so on.

- **First Row:** When the first row of boxes is filled, the character immediately applies a -1 modifier to all future die rolls.
- **Second Row:** When the second row of boxes is filled, a -2 modifier is applied to all die rolls. This replaces the -1 modifier from the first row instead of being cumulative.
- **Third Row:** When the third row of boxes is filled, a -3 modifier is applied to all die rolls. This replaces the -2 modifier from the second row instead of being cumulative.
- **Fourth Row (if applicable):** When the fourth row of boxes (if available) is filled, a -4 modifier is applied to all die rolls. This replaces the -3 modifier from the third row instead of being cumulative.
- **Staggered:** When all of the boxes of either Condition Monitor are filled, the character simply cannot give anymore and may take no actions

(he does not give any more Narrations until he's healed; he cannot spend any Plot Points either). However, there are instances in which a spell or Skill could still be in effect even if the character is Staggered; the final call on whether an action or Skill is still active while a character is Staggered is up to the GM.

- **Knocked Out (Stun track only):** If the character is damaged again with Stun damage after being Staggered on the Stun Condition Monitor, they are Knocked Out; they are out of commission until they receive healing.
- **Killed in Action (Physical track only):** If the character receives Physical damage again after being Staggered on the Physical Condition Monitor, they are at risk of being killed. They must make an Edge + Edge Test, starting at Very Easy difficulty and increasing each time more damage hits. If they fail this test, the character is dead; for more details, see *Character Death*, p. 31.
- **Cumulative Wound Modifiers:** If a character has a wound modifier on both the Physical damage track and the Stun damage track, the highest modifiers on each track are added together for a single modifier. For example, if a character has suffered enough damage to have a -1 modifier on the Stun track and a -2 modifier on the Physical track, then the character incurs a total wound modifier of -3 for any die rolls until enough damage has been healed to reduce one or both of the modifiers.

Regaining Armor/Condition Monitor Damage: Fortunately, there are many ways to repair Armor and heal Physical and Stun damage. A player could spend a Plot Point to regain a circle of Armor or Physical/Stun damage. Some characters carry first aid kits as equipment, which can restore Physical or Stun damage. Additionally, some characters are medics or magicians and can use an appropriate Skill to fix armor or heal a teammate, with each hit on the appropriate Skill Test healing a box of damage.

CHARACTER DEATH

As noted under *Damage, Armor, and the Condition Monitor* (see p. 31), the standard rules for the game allow a character to die. *Shadowrun: Anarchy* is a roleplaying game about the mean and gritty shadows of the Sixth World, and here, when a character dies, they stay dead.

That being said, some players may agree that a Killed In Action character isn't truly dead, but there should still be some consequences for a character running roughshod over his or her whole Condition Monitor. Or maybe the player was Killed In Action far too early in an evening's gaming session due to bad luck, and they don't want to sit out for the rest of the session. For these situ-



ations, here are a few options players can use to provide more depth of play:

The players should decide as a group which of these options are allowed and which option a player will use if a character is Killed In Action during a game. For each of these options, the character heals one box on their Physical Condition Monitor and is ready to move—hopefully out of harm's way.

- **Don't count me out just yet:** The character spends all but 1 of their available Plot Points to avoid Killed In Action and suffer no further effects. If the character has only 1 available Plot Point to spend, this option cannot be chosen and another option must be chosen instead.
- **Just give me a minute:** In addition to the standard wound modifiers for damage on the Condition Monitor, the character will suffer an additional -1 modifier on all Tests and Combat rolls for his next 2 Narrations.
- **I'll never be the same:** Permanently reduce the character's total Physical and Stun Condition Monitor boxes by 1. Strength and Willpower remain unaffected.
- **I've had better days:** Permanently lower one random Attribute by 1. If Strength or Willpower is the affected Attribute, use the new value to reduce the character's total Physical or Stun Condition Monitors.

SEIZING THE INITIATIVE

When you're wired to the gills or amped up on reflex-enhancement magic, the world seems to slow down around you. You gain a fly-like perception, which often allows you to spot the perfect place to jump into the action to take the right shot or save someone's life.

To accomplish these kinds of feats, many characters who have Shadow Amps that improve their reaction are given a number of Plot Points at the beginning of each Scene. This can help them in combat, and may make these speedy characters more likely to perform actions such as **Take the hit** or **A dish best served cold** (see p. 25)

USING GEAR

Some characters carry a variety of gear that might be helpful during or after a fight. The uses of many of the different items may be obvious: a medkit would help treat a character who's been injured, or a tool kit could be used to repair armor or other devices. The intended application of other gear may be obscure or even totally unknown. In many cases, this is intentional and gives the players a chance to decide exactly what that gear does, based on the name. Gear is there to fuel Narrations and open up possibilities for storytelling, rather than carry specific mechanics.

HACKING AND CYBERCOMBAT

Since its introduction, the virtual data network of the Matrix has become a ubiquitous aspect of life for meta-humans around the world, and deckers the world over ride the electrons to keep information free. The following rules provide guidelines on how to hack into systems and engage in cybercombat within the virtual world of the Matrix.

AR vs. VR: Deckers can access the Matrix in two ways: via AR (augmented reality) or VR (virtual reality). When using AR, you interact with the Matrix via a software window, viewing your persona, files, and other Matrix objects as icons in the window. However, when you're using VR, you dive into the virtual world, putting your whole awareness into the Matrix: you *become* your persona.

Accessing the Matrix via AR does not confer any bonuses, but going full VR confers a +1 bonus to any Hacking Tests. This bonus is noted on Shadow Amps that allow VR connection, such as datajacks and trodes, and it always applies in VR, even if another Amp is used to affect a Test while in VR.

However, when in VR, you cannot take any actions or use any Skills that would require the use of your physical body (gamemaster's discretion), and cybercombat (see below) can be more lethal.

Hacking: Now that you've gotten access to the Matrix, you probably want to start doing something that the ever-vigilant Grid Overwatch Division deems illegal. To defy GOD, you'll need your trusty Hacking Skill. Anything you want to access or control—be it a security camera, an electronic keypad, a secure system, a certain file, any Matrix-connected device, and so on—will require you to hack into the virtual Matrix object that represents it.

To make a hacking attempt, roll a standard Hacking Test and apply an applicable Shadow Amp effect or a bonus conferred by a cyberdeck. Failure might not necessarily trigger an alarm, but you are certainly free to narrate one if you think it will benefit the storytelling. If the Test is successful, you have succeeded in putting a mark—your persona's digital signature—on the Matrix object and can now access it. Certain objects, such as hostile Matrix objects like IC, sprites, and other personas cannot be marked and instead must be defeated in cybercombat.

Cybercombat: When a decker accesses the Matrix either via AR or full VR, all combat that takes place there will be cybercombat between their virtual persona and various Matrix threats, such as hostile personas and sprites, intrusion countermeasures (IC), and so on. Cybercombat represents using brute force in the Matrix, by sending data spikes and malicious code intended to crash the targeted threat.

To engage in cybercombat, the attacker must spend a full attack action (see *Attack Limits*, p. 29). Use the Hacking Skill and an applicable Shadow Amp, such as a program, to aid the attack. Sprites and other Matrix constructs will



use an appropriate Skill. Defense dice roll Logic + Firewall. Thus the dice-rolling mechanic for cybercombat is:

Hacking Dice + Logic Dice + Modifiers (if any) + Shadow Amp Effect (if any) vs. Logic Dice + Firewall Dice + Modifiers (if any) + Shadow Amp Effect (if any)

Stun damage to a decker using a cyberdeck is applied to the Condition Monitor of the cyberdeck itself, regardless of whether the target is using AR or VR. Physical damage, when using VR, is applied directly to the character's Condition Monitor, bypassing any armor worn; if using AR, apply Physical damage to the cyberdeck's Condition Monitor instead. When a cyberdeck's Condition Monitor is completely filled, the user is kicked out of the Matrix, and the cyberdeck is severely damaged, requiring the expenditure of 1 Karma to repair.

The Electronics Skill can be used to repair cyberdeck damage. See *Damage, Armor, and the Condition Monitor*, p. 31.

SPELLS, SPIRITS, AND ASTRAL COMBAT

Mana is a constant, everyday reality in the Sixth World, and knowing its ins and outs is a good way to stay alive. The following rules provide guidelines on how to cast spells, conjure and command spirits, and engage in astral combat on the astral plane.

Spells: Spells in *Shadowrun: Anarchy* fall into two categories: combat spells and effect spells. Combat spells inflict damage, either Physical or Stun; effect spells accomplish some form of non-damaging effect.

Casting a spell counts as an attack action for your Narration (see *Attack Limits*, p. 29). To cast a spell, make a Sorcery Test (opposed by the target, as listed with the spell), and use the Shadow Amp effect for the chosen spell. Success means the spell was cast successfully: a noncombat spell's effect occurs, or a combat spell applies its damage.

The damage and defense dice for a combat spell is listed in its description. For example, let's take a look at Coydog's Lightning Bolt spell:

Lightning Bolt (Spell): 6P/-A
Reroll one failed die
Defense: S + W

The Shadow Amp effect lets Coydog reroll one die, and the defender will roll Strength and Willpower (S + W) against Coydog's hits. If Coydog wins the roll, then the defender will take 8P damage that bypasses Armor (8P/-A). Net hits on the spellcasting roll are added to the damage.

Combat spells are instantaneous; the spell immediately ends once its damage has been applied.

Effect spells last for as long as the spellcaster and story requires the spell to last. When the caster's next

Narration arrives, the player can simply declare they are sustaining the spell they cast last turn; no Sorcery Test is needed. A character may only sustain one spell at a time. Depending on the complexity of the spell and/or how many turns the player has sustained the spell, the gamemaster may impose a negative modifier for any rolls the player makes while sustaining a spell.

Spirits: Players and NPCs can use the Conjuring Skill to summon spirits. Success on a Conjuring Test summons one spirit of the chosen type. A successfully conjured spirit acts like an NPC and has its own NPC sheet, but unless the gamemaster says otherwise, the player who conjured a spirit narrates the spirit's actions and rolls the spirit's dice during their own Narration.

Conjuring a spirit costs an attack action. Under normal circumstances, a player may only have one conjured spirit at a time. To conjure another, the player must first either dismiss the existing spirit with a successful Conjuring Test (upon which it will vanish), let it reach Knocked Out or Killed In Action, or wait until the spirit vanishes at dawn or at dusk.

Spirits are resilient and can only be easily damaged by spells, weapon foci, the Conjuring Skill, and the Astral Combat Skill (only in astral space; see *Astral Combat* below). However, it is possible to hurt a spirit by putting the force of one's will into a physical strike. To attack a spirit in this way, use Close Combat + Willpower (instead of Agility) with a -2 modifier. If successful, apply the attacker's Unarmed damage to the spirit.

Banishing a spirit severs the mystical connection between the spirit and its summoner. Use the Conjuring Skill in a combat roll against the spirit's defense dice. If the roll succeeds, deal the spirit a number of Stun damage equal to the magician's Willpower.

Astral Projection: A magician can visit the astral plane by undergoing astral projection. This is accomplished by voluntarily detaching your essence and leaving your corporeal body behind in meat space. No Test is needed for leaving your body or for returning to it later. However, if you return to find out your body has been moved in the interim, you have a different set of challenges to face.

Astral Combat: All combat that takes place on the astral plane is astral combat. On the astral plane, characters can battle against spirits, dual-natured critters (which inhabit both the physical and astral planes simultaneously), wards and other astral phenomena, other astrally projecting magicians, and so forth.

To engage in astral combat, the attacker must spend an attack action (see *Attack Limits*, p. 29). Use the Astral Combat Skill (or just Willpower, if untrained), and you may apply an applicable Shadow Amp, such as a damaging spell or a weapon focus, to aid their attack. Spirits and other astral denizens will use an appropriate Skill to engage in astral combat.

Any damage characters and NPCs take in astral combat is applied to the Stun track of the Condition Monitor.



CHARACTERS



COYDOG

ELF STREET SHAMAN

TAGS

• Elf • Coyote • Magician • Salish-Sidhe • Prankster

DISPOSITIONS

- Cities are a natural habitat, too.
- Be flexible.
- You can handle anything with your spirit friends.
- Coyote's paths aren't always straight and narrow.

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
3	4	6	4	7	1

SKILLS

- Astral Combat 1+W
- Conjuring 3+W (Air Spirits +2)
- Stealth 1+A
- Con 1+C
- Sorcery 4+W
- Survival 1+L

SHADOW AMPS

- Essence: 6

Lightning Bolt (Spell): Combat spell. Damage of 8P/-A, may reroll one failed Sorcery die, defense S + W

Chaotic World (Spell): Mass hallucination/distractions, and targeted group must reroll one successful die per roll.

Physical Mask (Spell): Mass illusion/disguises, and targeted group may reroll two failed Disguise dice.

Improved Invisibility (Spell): Mass invisibility, and targeted group may reroll two failed Stealth dice.

Sustaining Focus (Focus): You may sustain one additional spell.

CUES

- Spirits are my friends, not my servants. But yeah, I'll ask him.
- Sorry, bro, I'm not that kind of elf.
- Ugh, not again!
- Ha! You should see your face!
- Where's the fun in the easy way?

QUALITIES

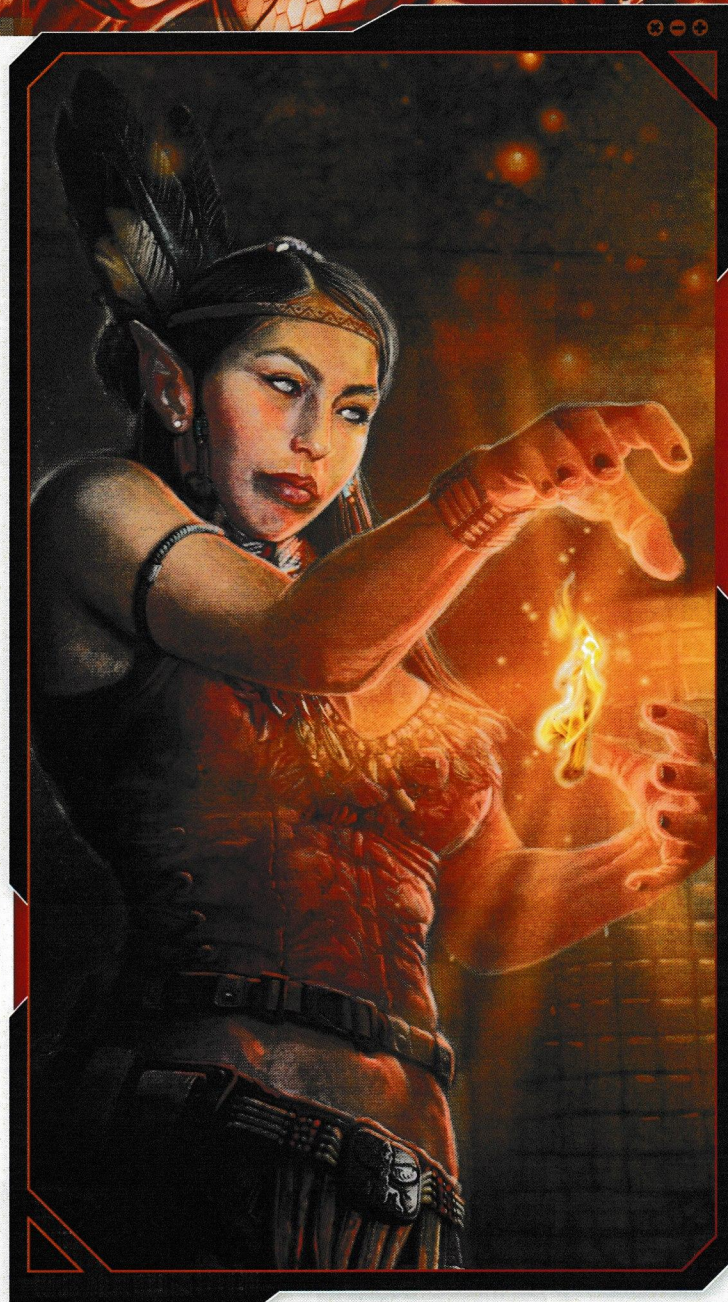
Mentor Spirit (Coyote): +1 die for Con tests, may reroll 1 die when casting effect spells.

Spirit Affinity (Air): +2 dice with Air Spirits.

Gremlins: When using high-tech items, always add a Glitch Die that cannot roll an Exploit.

WEAPONS

	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	2S	OK	—	—
Survival knife	2P	OK	-2	—
Browning Ultra-Power, pistol	5P	OK	-2	—



Armor: 6 [armor clothing]

Condition Monitors (P/S): 9/11

Gear: Fake SIN, Meta Link commlink, Toyota Gopher pickup truck, magical lodge materials, stimpatch, Survival kit

Contact: Scout-Who-Kills-Six-Times (Ganger, Big Brother)

Contact: Four-Paws-Laughing (Coyote Shaman, Pain in the Butt)



GENTRY

HUMAN COMBAT DECKER

TAGS

• Human • Hacker • Free Runner • Neo-Anarchist • Fanboy

DISPOSITIONS

- Information wants to be free.
- When in doubt, hack the world.
- Frag the system, the system fragged you.
- Suck up to elves.

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
4	6	3	6	2	3

SKILLS

- Athletics 1+A (Gymnastics +2D6) • Electronics 4+L
- Close Combat 1+A (Clubs +2D6) • Hacking 4+L
- Firearms 1+A (Semi-Automatic +2D6)

SHADOW AMPS

- Essence: 4.5 (-1 dice to magic/healing tests)

Synthacardium: Bioware. May reroll one die on Athletics rolls. -0.5 Essence

Datajack and Headware: Cyberware may access the Matrix via full VR, +1D6 to Matrix actions. -1 Essence

Shiawase Cyber-5 Cyberdeck: May reroll one die on Matrix actions, Firewall +2, Matrix Condition Monitor 8, may run one program at a time.

Biofeedback: Program. Deal Cybercombat damage to your opponent's physical or Matrix condition monitors.

Exploit: Program. May reroll two dice on non-Cybercombat hacking tests.

CUES

- Frag off, chummer.
- Woo, did you see that sick trick?!
- If I can't hack it, I can shoot it. If I can't shoot it, I run.
- Sperethiel is just a more beautiful language!
- Sledge, you put the "ork" in "dork."

QUALITIES

Natural Athlete: +2 dice for Athletics tests

Codeslinger: +2 dice when for Hacking tests.

Elf Poseur: When making social tests about/with elves, always add a Glitch Die that cannot roll an Exploit.

WEAPONS

	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	3S	OK	—	—
Stun baton	8S	OK	—	—
Colt America L36, pistol	5P	OK	-2	—



Armor: 9 [Urban Explorer jumpsuit]

Condition Monitors (P/S): 10/9

Gear: Courier bag, fake SIN, Transys Avalon commlink, 1D3 stim patches

Contact: Signal (Elven Technomancer Terrorist/Freedom Fighter)

Contact: Galadriel (Elven Madam)



HARDPOINT

DWARF SECURITY RIGGER

TAGS

• Dwarf • Corporate-Trained • Wheelman • Pilot • Veteran

DISPOSITIONS

- Mitsuhamma Computer Technologies Seattle District Jiu-Jitsu champion, unaugmented division.
- When in doubt, drones are the answer.
- Mitsuhamma puts out the best products.
- Precision is everything.

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
6	6	3	6	3	2

SKILLS

- Close Combat 2+A (Jiu-Jitsu +2D6)
- Engineering 1+L
- Piloting (Civilian) 2+A
- Piloting (Military) 3+A
- Vehicle Weapons 3+A

SHADOW AMPS

- Essence: 3 (-2 dice to healing/magic tests)

Control Rig II: Cyberware. Control vehicles by VR, +1 die to vehicle actions, may reroll two dice on vehicle actions. -2 Essence

Cybereyes: Cyberware. Ignore vision modifiers, may reroll 1 failed die with ranged attacks. -1 Essence

Custom Gun-Drones II: Gain +2 attacks/movements (only with gun drones)

CUES

- Faster!? Engines can only do so much!
- Hai, I really am that good.
- If you hurt my team, aho, the whole world's my Zero Zone.
- No prisoners, no survivors.
- We should put more guns on that!
- You've got to bring the right tool for the right job. Luckily, you've got me.

QUALITIES

Street Racer: +2 dice for Piloting (Civilian) tests.

Combat Pilot: +2 dice to Piloting (Military) tests.

Brand Loyalty: -1 die when using a drone/vehicle that isn't MCT-crafted or that Hardpoint hasn't customized.

WEAPONS

	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	6S	OK	—	—
Ingram Smartgun, SMG	7P	OK	OK	—
Gun-Drone (mounted rifle)	9P	OK	OK	-2

Armor: 10 [armored jacket]

Condition Monitors (P/S): 11/10

Gear: Fake SIN, Transys Avalon commlink, Mechanic toolkit, customized GMC Bulldog Step-Van

Contact: Black (Scrapyard Owner/Mechanic)

Contact: Quick Billy McCoy (Smuggler)



MS. MYTH

TROLL FACE

TAGS

• Troll • Shadowrunner • Professional • Negotiator • Leader

DISPOSITIONS

- You protect your team (more than they know).
- Use the right runner for the right job.
- Plan all the time, talk when you can, fight when you must.
- Improvisation is an ugly necessity in this line of work.

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
7	3	5	5	5	3

SKILLS

- Con 2+C
- Intimidation 1+C
- Stealth 1+A
- Firearms 1+A
- Negotiation 3+C

SHADOW AMPS

- Essence: 5 (-1 to magic/healing tests)

Tailored Pheromones: Bioware. Reroll one die on all in-person Charisma-related tests. -0.5 Essence

Cerebral Booster: Bioware. Reroll one die on Logic-related tests. -0.5 Essence

I Know Everybody: Gain (Charisma rating) contacts

Team Player: You may freely gift your own Plot Points or Edge to other players.

CUES

- Shake my hand, let's both leave happy.
- Trust me, just do it!
- No one's going to offer you a better deal.
- Aww, drek.
- Think this through. Let's be professionals about this.

QUALITIES

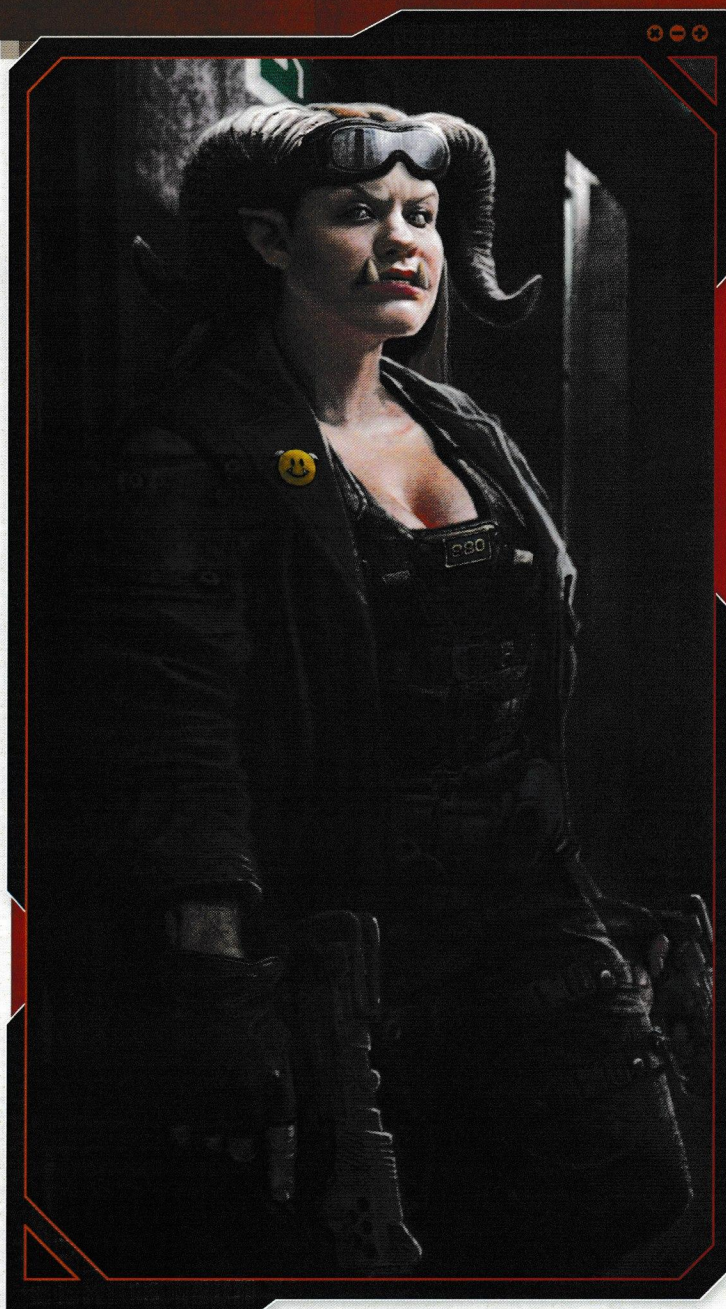
Exceptional Attribute (Charisma): Increase your Charisma cap by +1.

Silver Tongue: May reroll two dice on Charisma tests.

Combat Paralysis: Act last on the first round of any combat (that isn't you specifically initiating an ambush).

WEAPONS

	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	7S	OK	—	—
Fichetti Security 600, pistol	5P	OK	—	—
2x Ingram Smartgun, SMGs	7P	OK	OK	—



Armor: 12 [armored urban camo suit]

Condition Monitors (P/S): 12/10

Gear: Fake SIN, 3 cheap burner commlinks, Actioneer Business Suit, two smoke grenades

Contact: The Juggler (Elven Fixer)

Contact: Esmerelda Expertise (Mr. Johnson)

Contact: Khayyim (Street Doc)

Contact: Frankie (Bartender)

Contact: Kelly Quick (Cutters Gang Lieutenant)

Contact: Mr. Satou (Company Man)

Contact: Bing-Lei "Billy" Shen (Triad Lieutenant)



SLEDGE

ORK STREET SAMURAI

TAGS

• Ork • Gruff • Fighter • Underground • Brash

DISPOSITIONS

- The streets have rules.
- Your word is your bond.
- Backing down shows weakness.
- When in doubt, nail 'em.

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
8	6	4	4	2	1

SKILLS

- Athletics 1+A
- Close Combat 3+A
- Firearms 3+A (Semi-Auto +2)
- Intimidation 2+C
- Stealth 1+A

SHADOW AMPS

- Essence: 1 (-3 dice to healing/magic tests)

Wired Reflexes II: Cyberware. Gains +1 attack/movement, +1 Plot Point per Scene. -2 Essence

Custom Cyberarms: Cyberware. May reroll two dice on Agility-related rolls. -1 Essence

Cyberlimb Armor Plating: Cyberware. Reduce all damage taken by 1. -1 Essence

Cyberspur Upgrades: Cyberware. Unarmed attacks may do physical or stun damage, may reroll 1 die with Unarmed. -1 Essence

Custom Cybereyes: Cyberware. Ignore vision modifiers, may reroll 1 failed die with ranged attacks. -1 Essence

CUES

- We said we'd do the job, so we do the job.
- You look at me cross-eyed again, I'll gut you, chummer.
- It's a street fight, not a boxing match!
- I'm gonna need more ammo for this gig, brother.
- I didn't mean YOU when I said that about elves, Coydog.

QUALITIES

Biocompatibility: Ignore 1 point of Shadow Amp Essence cost.

Bruiser: +2 dice to Intimidation tests.

Distinctive Style: Constantly upgrading and tinkering with custom cyberarms creates an easy-to-remember look.

WEAPONS

	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	8S/8P	OK	—	—
Custom replica mono-katana	6(9)P	OK	—	—
Ares Predator V, pistol	5P	OK	-2	—
Ingram Smartgun, SMG	7P	OK	OK	—
Yamaha Raiden, assault rifle	9P	OK	OK	-2

Armor: 10 [tactical vest]

Condition Monitors (P/S): 12/10

Gear: Fake SIN, Renraku Sensei commlink, Trauma Patch, Medkit

Contact: "Red Dot" Dottie (Weapons Dealer)

Contact: Elkarra Johannsen (Orkish Beat Cop)



STRIDER

DWARF PARKOUR ADEPT

TAGS

• Dwarf • Adept • Runner • Thrill-seeker • Courier

DISPOSITIONS

- The package is sacred; it must arrive safely.
- Streets and sidewalks are for ordinary people.
- Always striving to beat her best time.
- The riskier the delivery, the more fun it is.

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
4	6	3	4	2	3

SKILLS

- Athletics 4+A (Running +2D6)
- Local Geography (K) 3+L
- Close Combat 3+A
- Projectile Weapons 1+A

SHADOW AMPS

- Essence: 6 (no penalties)

Improved Reflexes 2: Adept power. Gains +1 attack/movement, +1 Plot Point per Scene.

Light Body: Adept power. +2 dice for jumping tests.

Wall Running: Adept power. Run up/across vertical surfaces during a movement.

CUES

- Live to run, run to live ... it's all the same thing.
- You're about to see my short little stumpy dwarf legs up close, *omae*.
- I know a shortcut.
- Can't get there from here. From up there, however ...
- Catch me if you can!

QUALITIES

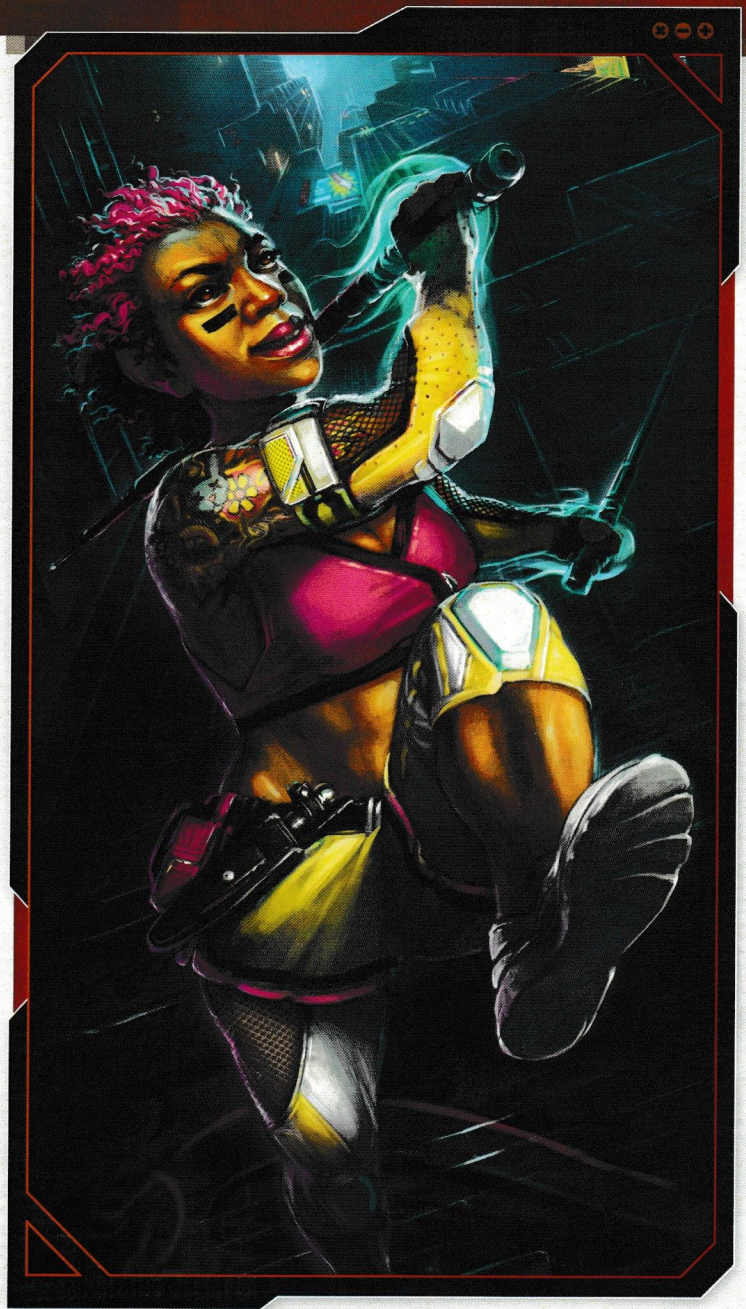
Natural Athlete: +2 dice for Athletics tests

Quick Healer: +2 dice to any test to heal this character

Thrill-Seeker: Must succeed at an Average difficulty W+L test or take the most dangerous course of action

WEAPONS

	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	4S	OK	—	—
Extendable Batons	6P	OK	—	—
Throwing Knives	5P	OK	-2	—



Armor: 6 [armored clothing]

Condition Monitors (P/S): 10/10

Gear: Courier bag, fake SIN, Renraku Sensei commlink, stim-patch

Contact: Alley Cat Express (free-runner/courier group)

Contact: Corp receptionist/secretary



NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

BUG QUEEN

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
9	5	6	4	2	4

Skills: Athletics 5+A, Close Combat 6+A, Intimidation 4+C, Sorcery 3+W, Stealth 2+A, Tracking 3+L

Shadow Amps: Essence 6 (no penalties). Acid Spit [Spell, DV 5P, +1 damage to Armor], Insect Chemicals [Enhancement, +1 Plot Point per Turn to give to insect in their swarm]

WEAPONS	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	9S	OK	—	—

Condition Monitor (P/S): 13/11
Armor: 4 [natural]

BUG SPIRIT

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
7	4	3	2	1	1

Skills: Athletics 3+A, Close Combat 4+A, Intimidation 3+C, Stealth 2+A, Tracking 2+L

Shadow Amps: Essence 6 (no penalties). No Amps

WEAPONS	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	7S	OK	—	—

Condition Monitor (P/S): 12/10
Armor: 2 [natural]

ENEMY MAGE

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
5	4	6	5	4	4

Skills: Astral Combat 4+W, Athletics 2+A, Close Combat 2+A, Conjuring 4+W, Firearms 3+A, Intimidation 4+C, Negotiation 3+C, Sorcery 5+W, Stealth 3+A

Shadow Amps: Essence 6 (no penalties). Control Thoughts [Spell, +1 dice to Intimidation and Negotiation Tests, resisted with Willpower + Charisma], Fireball [Spell, DV 6P, affects multiple targets], Invisibility [Spell, +2 dice to Stealth tests]

WEAPONS	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	8S	OK	—	—

Condition Monitor (P/S): 11/11
Armor: 6 [lined coat]

GANGERS

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
4	4	3	2	2	2

Skills: Athletics 3+A, Close Combat 3+W, Con 2+C, Firearms 3+A, Intimidation 2+C, Piloting (Civilian) 2+A

Shadow Amps: Essence 5 (-1 die to magic/healing tests). Cyberarm [Cyberware, +1 Unarmed Combat damage, -1 Essence]

WEAPONS	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	4S	OK	—	—
Rem. Roomsweeper, pistol	5P	OK	-2	—

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10
Armor: 8 [armor vest]

RENT-A-COPS

STR	AGL	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
4	4	4	3	2	2

Skills: Athletics 4+A, Close Combat 4+A, Con 1+C, Firearms 4+A, Intimidation 2+C, Piloting (Civilian) 2+A

Shadow Amps: Essence 5 (-1 die to magic healing tests). Reaction enhancers [Cyberware, +1 Plot Point at the beginning of combat, -1 Essence]

WEAPONS	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed	4S	OK	—	—
Ares Predator V, pistol	5P	OK	-2	—

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10
Armor: 10 [armor jacket]

SOLDIERS

STR	AGI	WIL	LOG	CHA	EDG
4	5	5	3	2	2

Skills: Athletics 4+A, Close Combat 4+A, Engineering 2+L, Firearms 4+A, Heavy Weapons 3+A, Intimidation 2+C, Piloting (Military) 3+A, Tracking 3+L

Shadow Amps: Essence 5 (-1 die to magic healing tests). Aluminum bone lacing [Cyberware, -1 damage from all hits, -1 Essence]

WEAPONS	Damage	Close	Near	Far
Unarmed Combat	4S	OK	—	—
Ares Predator V, pistol	5P	OK	-2	—
Ares Alpha, assault rifle	8P	OK	OK	-2

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/11
Armor: 10 [armor jacket]

Note: For Elite Soldiers, increase Strength to 5, Charisma to 4, Firearms to 5, Intimidation to 4, Heavy Weapons to 4.



CONTRACT BRIEFS

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SEARCH FOR

MR. JOHNSON'S PITCH

The runners are hired by Jody Stubblefield, a high-level data analyst at Hildebrandt-Kleinfort-Bernal, one of the largest banks in the world. He's made a discovery that has placed his life in great danger, and strange things have been happening to him lately. He says he is being followed, someone's been going through his garbage, and his family is getting strange calls. Jody needs to get to a safe location and be kept from harm until he can sell what he has.

OBJECTIVES

- Help Stubblefield retrieve data from his apartment
- Get Stubblefield to a safehouse
- Repel gang attack

CUES

- This guy's crazy.
- What's so important about that data?
- Guys, there are a bunch of dwarfs rushing the house!
- You sure this place is safe?
- Gangers are surrounding the safehouse? That ain't coincidence.
- How'd they know we were here?

TAGS

- Dwarfs
- Protection
- Gang
- Safehouse
- Conspiracy
- Data

THE SETTING

The downtown area is typical for its kind. The low-rent neighborhood all around is poor and a bit dangerous, but not controlled by the local gangs ... yet. The Stuffer Shack down the block is the only source of food for a few kilometers, but even that monument to greed-by-way-of-junk-food looks pretty worn down.

ENEMIES/ OBSTACLES

SCENE 1

Suggested NPCs: Elite soldiers

Jody tells the runners that before they head to a safehouse, he needs to grab something from his apartment. He left an offline copy of his research data there and needs to destroy it so no one else can get to it first. Jody is paranoid, but the runners see no evidence of anyone out to get him.

After looking around for a bit, Jody becomes erratic. He can't find the other copy. As Jody continues to frantically look around for the data, a strike team made up entirely of dwarfs ambushes the runners inside the house. These are not typical corporate security or even military.





The dwarfs seem to be an elite-ops group, though nothing on their equipment indicates who sent them.

SCENE 2

Suggested NPCs: None

Jody's data is found on the dwarfs. Jody begs the runners to get him to the security of the safehouse, and on the way, he begins to ramble. Jody insists that while analyzing and archiving physical bank information from before the Matrix Crash of 2029, he came across a pattern of deposits and withdrawals that seemed curious.

Stubblefield claims to have found similar bank discrepancies from all over the globe, but much of the data had been tampered with. When he analyzed the net effect these discrepancies had on the global economy, it seemed twenty billion nuyen had up and disappeared. Digging deeper, he found the companies that were responsible for the discrepancies no longer exist. Additionally, even though he has some facial scans and fingerprints of some of the dwarfs on the elite-ops team, he cannot find a trace of their identities. They do not seem to exist.

SCENE 3

Suggested NPCs: Gangers

At the safehouse, Jody's commlink rings, and he shouts that he has a buyer for his data. Outside, a local gang has descended upon the safehouse. The gangers aren't tough, but there are a lot of them. The characters should be in for a desperate fight, with reinforcements coming in waves and threatening to overwhelm them. At that moment, Jody shouts he has the money. The gangers' leader glances at a freshly received message, and he then orders retreat. The gangers disperse and run back to their hovels.

Jody pays the runners and mentions that he has more work for them if they want it.

AFTERMATH

A few weeks later, the runners hear that Stubblefield has been killed in a bizarre elevator malfunction. Could be worth investigating—or maybe they just want to stay the hell away from this growing disaster.



CONTRACT BRIEFS

DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT ARCOLOGY

MR. JOHNSON'S PITCH

My employer, Shiawase Corporation, has made a bid to purchase the ACHE. As a show of good faith, they have offered to provide a containment unit around it, to facilitate renovation without danger to the community. This dome prevents communication in or out, and has a contained EMP to shut down any cybernetic threats.

My employer wants to take inventory of the arcology and its systems before work begins. Unfortunately, the UCAS government occupies the underground levels, where the nuclear reactors are located.

You will break into the lowest levels, get past the UCAS soldiers, and install a program code onto the nuclear reactor network. The program will diagnose and record relevant information for twenty-four hours. When finished, collect the data and get out.

CONTEXT

WORD WATCH

Arcology n. (Portmanteau of "architectural ecology"). Massive building that houses a self-sustaining, densely populated habitat with no need for import or export.

A.C.H.E. n. Arcology Commercial and Housing Enclave. Ninth largest building in the world. Formerly the Renraku Arcology.

BACKGROUND

In 2059, a rogue artificial Intelligence shut down the arcology and subjected those within to nightmarish conditions. Seattle subsequently stripped the arcology from Renraku and turned the lower five floors into a shopping mall. The two hundred floors above are sealed off, though squatters often find a way into the dark, abandoned corridors. The arcology's highest floors remain a mystery.

OBJECTIVES

- Break into the ACHE. Gain access to basement.
- Install program code onto nuclear reactor network.
- Collect data and escape.

CUES

- It's too quiet.
- This place gives me the creeps.
- How do we get past the soldiers?
- They're not expecting company
- Is that an alarm?
- Do you hear that? Sounds like a stampede!

TAGS

- Seattle
- Arcology
- Shiawase
- Technology
- UCAS soldiers
- Artificial Intelligence?





THE SETTING

The mall's temporarily closed. It's eerily quiet, and the runners can't help but feel dread as they head through the giant, empty hallways. A specter of hidden threats and mechanized terror still lingers here. Although nothing accosts them, the players should feel like something will at any moment.

ENEMIES/ OBSTACLES

SCENE 1

Suggested NPCs: Rent-a-cops

Entering into the ACHE should be fairly easy. The mall area has been emptied and foundations for the dome are under construction. Getting past the construction workers and rental cops should be easy. Once in, the PCs need to find the elevators to the lower floors.

SCENE 2

Suggested NPCs: Rent-a-cops

On the lower floors, UCAS soldiers are extremely hostile to anyone who isn't expected. Runners should use stealth to avoid setting off alarms. If the runners use stealth, it should be fairly easy to slip into the control room unnoticed. Installing the program should be easy for the team's decker.

SCENE 3

Suggested NPCs: Soldiers

Once the program finishes, an arcology-wide alarm sounds. The UCAS soldiers are on high alert, and guards block the exits. To add to the confusion, a few hundred of Seattle's poorest try to escape from the housing floors when the alarm sounds.





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MORE
ANARCHY
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If this prototype whetted your appetite for Anarchy, get ready for the full version coming soon! Along with the base rules of this prototype, the full version will have:

- ❖ Character creation and advancement rules
- ❖ Seattle setting information
- ❖ More Matrix options
- ❖ More characters, NPCs, and Contract Briefs
- ❖ Extra fiction and world information to provide background for the stories you build

In short, the full version has the same easy-to-play rules with more information to help you leap into the action and make your own street legends!

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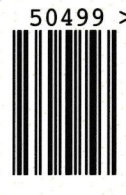
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