



# SHADOWRUN®

## RULING THE QUEEN CITY





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# HUNTING THE LITTLE MAN

Harper sneered at the punk of a bouncer that had just thrown him out of Matchsticks, the Dirty '30s style jazz joint, for having the audacity of smoking in the private club. Apparently only the torch singer was allowed to be authentic in the place, he thought to himself as he lipped out a Red Dragon cigarette from his pack, placing it between his lip and left tusk with practiced ease. He flipped out the Zippo from its holster on his belt and lit it with a single fluid stroke, bringing the smoke to life as the rain that got past his fedora threatened to dampen it before he could take a single puff. He had gotten a lifetime membership to the club years ago, after his first desperate grasp for body armor on his very first shadowrun had netted him a battered trench coat with some minor ballistic reinforcement that had been cast off by some suit when the thug style had fallen out of fashion, again. Fashion cycled back and forth in Seattle, which meant that Harper kept it up all the time, angling to aim for the old pulp novel style of private investigator, at least in looks. He did a pretty good job of it at that, despite looking more like Neil the Ork Barbarian than he did Bogey. Typically, he put it down to the tusks, which a change of clothes couldn't help. It meant he was always in style at the club, sometimes in style on the streets, and hooked into the Seattle shadows enough to be moderately successful.

He moved his hand up to feel the new cut under his eye, courtesy of the bouncer who had just thrown him and

his temporary business associate out. The guy would be nursing a hurt hand for a week after what Harper's face had done to it. You don't hit an ork or a PI in the head then expect anything important to be hurt. He gave the punk another sneer. Teach him right for trying to sucker-punch Harper to the ground.

The Belgian pulled a tiny cigar (a Mehari Java, the European human hitman had called it in the bar) out of a nice little leather two-piece case. Real leather holding real tobacco. Harper offered his flame to the European, who just waved it off, pulling his wristwatch up to the stogie's end. A butane flame came forth from it, bringing the cigar to life without the ostentatious preparation that most cigar smokers seemed to love. "Let us get to business," The Belgian declared. The sounds from the street and rain lessened around them after he pressed lightly on a different part of the watch. "Please, tell me of Seattle and its areas, as our employer has informed us that The Little Man cannot leave town as of yet, with some physical item he needs to retrieve when the heat dies down. Planning, we can do out here in the cold rain before we have to focus on sadder things." He spoke with barely an accent, which made his speech styled like the rest of him. Conservative dark suit, but not black like too many in the biz, expensive shoes, brown hair and eyes, plain features. A Mister Nobody nearly anywhere in Europe and a large number of





BY RAYMOND CROTEAU

places in North America outside of the Native American Nations. And even there he might find some places where he could hide in plain sight.

Harper cracked his neck with a twist of his head as he gathered his thoughts. The Mute had gotten him this job, repaying a debt with a job right up his alley. Finding people that didn't want to be found was his bread and butter. Typically, he was just finding them to get them to pay back a debt or make an honest woman of someone who accidentally got pregnant. Outright killing a person had been done before, but he didn't typically like those kinds of jobs. The target this time, The Little Man, was some higher-up city worker who had broken the eleventh commandment: Thou shalt not get caught. The place he was filching funds from made Harper happy he was going to help put the fellow into a bunch of other people's bodies. "Yeah, all right. Well, let's start with where we are. Downtown! The pretty lights, the office buildings and skyrakers, the arcologies, the fragging bars that don't let you smoke in them!"

"Focus."

"Right, sorry. I swear, I lit up here last month, and they didn't give a damn as long as I bought my smokes here, which I did tonight as well out of that damned sticky vending machine. Anyhow, yeah. Corporate and government offices abound here, along with some street crime

and weird traffic laws. And apartments galore, too. But all those suits living and working here would be the same type of folks who would know him, recognize him, and probably snitch him out. Friends here, yeah, but too many enemies and indifferents as well, willing to give him up in a heartbeat for some quick cash. A half-cocked story about him going under the tables and scraping all the cash from some city charity or similar thing could easily be believed from the damned dwarf. This is more a place he'd go to ground with some friends, allies, or fellow conspirators when he had no other options."

"Understandable. Home can be too close when on the run. Please, continue." The Belgian spoke while moving his hand, the glow of the cigar ember working against the spilling neon lights on the front of the club, a touch from the old days the establishment emulated, as well as a remnant of the neon revival of the 2050s. All of the neon lights around town were starting to break down from neglect and the constant rain, buzzing lightly and flickering every now and then at random times, costing too much to remove and even more to repair or replace.

"Council Island would have been a suggested place to look next until a few months ago—he certainly has enough contacts and money to provide a visa to visit the place, or hell, set up a fake NAN SIN and just live there. The island is a tiny spit of the Salish-Shidhe Council lands in the pimple



of the UCAS that is Seattle inside even more Salish-Shidhe lands. The Salish forked in a dozen companies of troops or something like that onto the island for some major saber rattling. More than the typical border bulldrek, arguments about either side letting smugglers do their thing, and so on. It could be bad this time, even if it makes things worse for everyone. No, even if he had arranged things earlier, trying to hide in what is likely ground zero for a warzone isn't that bright an idea."

"Agreed. Please continue."

"Tacoma would be next. That's where The Little Man hung his hat during the rare times he went home. Thanks to that damned sleep regulator that Mr. Johnson warned us he has, he doesn't fragging properly bed down. Tacoma is not a place you can miss, either; you'll know it when you smell it." Harper frowned as a huge raindrop slammed down on his lit cigarette, putting it out. Snarling, he packed the wet tobacco back into the pack and lipped out a fresh coffin nail. "Industry, offices, some apartments and such. It has a few places to hide out, but it also has lots of his neighbors and family." Harper raised his hand to stave off any comment. "Yeah, I know, this guy apparently don't give two dreks about his kin, so we can't go that route, but that also is a reason he won't likely hide there. He hates his family, and it's mutual. He wouldn't want to risk running into one who would recognize him and be willing to throw him to the hellhounds like us. And his family certainly has investments and jobs all over the place, so that chance is pretty high. So, put that down as second-last."

"Fair enough. Continue."

"Fort Lewis, the military part of town." Harper saw the rising eyebrow just as something triggered his instincts, and saw The Belgian feeling the same. They shifted—nothing really describable, just a setting of the shoulders as jackets opened just slightly to give access to firearms as some Halloweeners walked by. One pointed and laughed at the hurt face of Harper, but they didn't do anything further, just moved along trying to find easier prey. "Anyhow, where was I?" the ork asked, then shook himself. "Right. Fort Lewis. The military control it, almost all of it. Army, Marines, and Air Force, the UCAS's wagging dick on the West Coast, flailing it around at the Pacific Ocean like they were still the superpower-era United States. That's how a chummer of mine put it once, after he got out of the Marines and into the shadows. Apparently it's a nice place, but it's more of a location that you drive around, not through. The military got it tied up, and ain't nobody who doesn't belong going there. If it ain't big, green, legally heavily armed like citizens never could be, and able to march in lockstep, it don't belong there and it'll be noted right fragging quick. Yeah, there is some traffic through there, but not enough to hide inside of."

"Pass. The Little Man is known to be vocal against the military, so they would not assist him if they could help it."

"Right. Puyallup Barrens, ash covered, magma going through parts of it, and hell all over. You got Barrens in Europe?" Harper asked. The Belgian only nodded. "Yeah, everyone has these around, huh? Anyhow, some parts can be nice, like the Elven District, Terry-Star or something like that. Some kind of word you need to not have tisks to say right, but a lot of folks in this area are quite cliquish or clannish or some other word like that. They see an outsider and mark them as an outsider. Lots of gangs, lots of hate, lots of pain to share."

"A land of monsters that he would consider potentially worse than us." A flick of ash dropped into the alleyway, washed away quickly by the rain sluicing down into the gutter.

"Exactly. He might go there anyway. I'll get some feelers out. It covers a lot of area and has a lot of places to hide. Professional places as well, safehouses. If he did his research before running, this might be a place he'd run. Our forward should cover some easy bribes and subcontracting."

The Belgian said nothing to the last statement, only raising a solitary eyebrow.

"Yeah, I know them fancy things like that. More like sharing around money when I got it, in the hopes the same thing will come around when I don't. Anyhow, we are going into Auburn now, nice place if you're blue collar, like sports bars and brawling while drunk, and working long-ass hours for too damned little pay. Industry galore, and a mass of people who you can hide among by ditching the suit for some coveralls. Not quite so many places to properly live, but a lot of holes to sneak into."

"A good possibility. Get some more people on that one. I will provide portions of my fronted capital to facilitate this."

"Appreciate it. So that brings us to Renton, yeah. This is where he probably went. Apartments galore, nice stores and shopping with masses of people to mingle with, all walks of life provided for save the very, very rich. This part, we'd have to hit the bricks on our own. He could hide here in comfort, even in the way he typically lives. The number of people I've hunted up in this part of the 'plex defies imagination. The Little Man also has no overt contacts in that part, which can be an advantage as folks won't mistake his real name for the one he is probably giving out right now." Harper pulled the last bit of his cigarette into his lungs, taking out the tiny ashtray container to hold the butt, rather than risk it being potentially used as ritual material against him (exceedingly rare chance that might be). He fired up a fresh smoke.

Harper continued without being prompted by The Belgian. "Bellevue. Considering how much he has stolen, he



could set himself up here if he's laundered it well enough and has an exceptionally bulletproof fake SIN. Rich houses, mansions, gated communities, fucking domes to filter out pollution and damned *golf courses*, of all things! You know how many folks you could house on that much terrain? He could be there, but ferreting him out isn't going to be easy. Or cheap. Security in those places typically don't like folks like us asking questions about their residents, and all of them seem to have a PANICBUTTON just crying out to be slammed down on. We could start our search there, if you want."

The Belgian thought for a moment, blowing out a smoke ring, "No, the person contracting us believes that he did not have time to properly clean up after himself. It was for this reason he was caught. Unless he has someone willing to hide him there, the cost would be too high compared to the chance of him actually being there. Please, continue on, this is all very much-needed intelligence."

"Yeah, the Redmond Barrens, home for me. More densely populated than Puyallup, with all the other issues in that place cranked up to eleven as well. Not any pretty lava flows, but the nuke zones glow green well enough at night, and the only place a person could walk with a wallet in their pants would be Touristville, as the muggers there *might* only stab you, instead of *certainly* doing so. Add to that the fact that Humanis is doing a lot of human pride parades right now, and the crosses they're burning might have a metahuman or two on them before the match is struck, well, a dwarf like The Little Man might think twice, neh?"

"And yet you live there." The Belgian stashed the final little butt of his own cigar into an ashtray holder of his own, rolling his shoulders against the cold and oily rain.

"Yeah, well, I figure they don't bother me because I'm so handsome. I can get some folks to check out the usual places that he might think is safe while we focus on better areas. We're on the home stretch now with Snohomish, the breadbasket of Seattle. And about as full of hicks as you'd expect of any farming community, even one taken over so badly by agricorps. It's got some nice touristy places, but the ways to hide there in a living manner—yeah, our boy'd stand out something fierce." Harper sighed as another raindrop slammed nearly hard enough to pull the half-smoked cigarette out of his mouth. He shifted over the corner of the building and scratched the dented and half-smoked cancer stick out against the fake brick façade of Matchsticks, jammed it into the pack next to the other from earlier, giving up trying to smoke for the time being.

Harper took in a big breath and continued. "So, um, Everett can best be summed up as 'ships, planes, and stormy weather,' being home to the UCAS Navy and Fed-Boeing, more of that dick-waving into the Pacific. A few other

corps is in there as well, and it doesn't seem to avail itself so well to living in large amounts. The big thing is, this was where The Little Man ended up doing most of his shtick, where he stole the money, and where they'll hate him ten ways from Sunday and three times on holidays. The neighborhoods here would do us the favor of, um, providing him for us."

"From the maps I've seen, is that it?"

"Nah, still got Outremer and the Ork Underground. Outremer is the islands in the Sound, but only Anderson Island is an option, being mostly an old-age home. Some grey hair dye and our guy might be able to blend in with his wrinkly dwarfy face. Fox Island might be a place too, but everything we got says this guy don't like non-city, and that place is pretty close to being reclaimed by nature with some smuggling going on. The rest of the islands are corporate owned or a fraggling penitentiary. So, they're not likely. Finally, we got the Underground, which is in such flux that I can't comment on it in a nutshell, but a lot of dwarves are coming in with documents proving they own parts of it, either to squat on and wait for property prices to improve, or sell quickly to Renraku. Hell, some of them might even be legitimate. But all the light being shined into that place makes it quite hard for us types, especially me with my handsome tusks. But I still have a few folks down there who haven't lost my number and are plugged into those claims. In case The Little Man is trying to pull that scam, hiding out there and making some more money at the same time. But they are quite over-worked now, so, again, won't be quite as cheap as you might think."

"A good amount of intelligence. Thank you, Mr. Harper. Now, let us find a café with some proper shelter from the rain so we can smoke and start working on logistics of this job while enjoying some of Seattle's infamous coffee. My treat." The Belgian motioned Harper to move down the street, smiling at the ork.

"Damn, realkaf? I'm in." Harper said, flipping the bird at the flickering neon and garish AR face of Matchsticks, and trundled off into the sickly green Emerald City, somewhat secure in the knowledge that this might be the start of some beautiful profit.



# WHAT NOW

## POSTED BY: BULL

It's fitting that Seattle calls itself the Emerald City. Like its namesake, Seattle is a fantastic metropolis built on illusion and consensual lies. Before its current incarnation, Seattle was the Queen City of the Pacific Northwest. Now, it's the Queen City of the UCAS, the largest and most ideologically "American" of UCASian sprawls. New York, Chicago, and Boston are gone—to the MDC, Bugs, and CFD, respectively. Toronto isn't "American" to those living below the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel. DeeCee just sucks. Additionally, Seattle never surrendered to the sour malaise, resentment, and spite that persist through the rest of the UCAS down to its Constitution. Seattle never looks back. It has welcomed diaspora from every major upheaval of the Sixth World and made them its own. It couldn't even displace those when others tried to kill or evict them; it just created a new community. This sprawl welcomes the most domestic and international immigration, and those immigrants create the most diverse immigrant population in North America.

Most UCASians would take offense at that, but *The New Economist*'s annual survey identifies Seattle as the most entrepreneurial city in the western hemisphere because the relatively transparent, open, and business-friendly government makes it easy to start a business. Only Hong Kong is more business friendly among Pacific Rim cities. It's the only Pacific port in North America that recognizes and can adjudicate disputes arising from the Business Recognition Accords, which has drawn every megacorporation in the hemisphere to our fair city. This results in everything imaginable on, above, or below the Earth passing through Seattle. Altogether, this makes Seattle the last city dreaming the American Dream. It clings to the shred of a belief that anyone can come to this sprawl and make something of themselves if they work hard and smart enough.

- The good and fun part of this is that people can start up pop-up shops and food carts like *Blue Streak Express* (which is also a sweet source for gossip before it hits ShadowSea). Sometimes it's just a way to give people business opportunities. On occasion it allows innovation. Sometimes it just makes you realize how fraggling mediocre everything is.
- Butch

Seattle is also the most quintessentially American city because it is the most ruthlessly capitalist. Labor supply is high and wages remain stagnant because the immigrants and SINners coming from out of the shadows (and the Underground) get exploited by capitalists and megacorps (including those seemingly lacking in capital) and trapping them in wage slav-

ery; this is on perfect display as Renraku and the rest see the Ork Underground district as fodder for the machine to turn into perfect consumer-slaves. The government is business-friendly because it doesn't enforce or doesn't have health, safety, welfare, consumer-protection, or renter-protection laws. Its courts are the model of efficiency and a draw for corporations, but access to courts among the populace is at an all-time low, and access to justice is a cruel joke. The national welfare state the UCAS adopted over the objection of the confederate states, and resulting in secession, is gone. Seattle sold it off and turned CHGM into a horror show of bureaucracy and incompetence for those who can't afford anything better. The most insane part is that corporate citizens actually have it *worse* than your average Upright, Uptight Citizen. The UCAS's slavish devotion to megacorporations and their accords has resulted in zealous enforcement of repatriation of runaway wageslaves. Seattle was and remains a haven for the SINless and SINners escaping for something better, but more than ever before the marshals and bounty hunters are snatching up those wet-behind-the-ear corpers before they can even find their way out of Union Station.

Simply put, Seattle has become what it once was and always wishes to remain: The molten core of the Sixth World. It's the central focus of the planet's drama, and that drama will vaporize you without a nanosecond's hesitation. If you want it, you can get it. We have political drama, popular media and journalism being made and broken daily, corporate intrigue and backstabbing, smugglers and pirates, gangsters, ghosts, ghouls, magic, mystery, Monads, dragons, wackos, crackpots, and stone-cold killers. There are policlubber and cultists in Ballard, bugs and worse in the ACHE, killer execs carving their way through Bellevue, technomancers looking for lost tribes, SINners and SINless trying to eke out livings shoulder to shoulder, and last but not least, something almost tangible in the air: hope.

We are the Emerald City. We are Peerless. We are Home.

## THE SPRAWL OF TOMORROW

Seattle is a corporate city. Corporate affiliation is at an all-time high, and yet the wageslaves are constantly torn. While the sprawl is home to massive arcologies, skyrakers, complexes, and compounds, the city isn't an enclave. It's an open city, and it's a place where corpers can rub shoulders with each other, go shopping outside of company stores, and worst of all, encounter non-corpers. The money flows in and out, the products flow in and out, and that makes the boardrooms,





break rooms, and bedrooms more cutthroat and aggressive than most other sprawls. With the Megacorporate Audit and increasing competition between the mid-level corps and the smaller corps trying to feed on the scraps or even take a shot at getting bigger, business is booming. Regional megacorporations like Gaeatronics and Telestrian are facing crippling downgrades, and foreign megas are trying to kill them and consume the corpses.

While this is all occurring behind the scenes, the United Corporation Council is desperate to convince the that it remains firmly in charge. The UCC makes economic policy and drives significant government and social policies. With the recent breakup and ouster of AAA subsidiaries for smaller but more aggressive corporations, the business community has signaled that it will do anything to make money, and that size and established wealth aren't necessarily enough to decide how that's done. It's a challenge to the neo-feudal corporate fiefdoms that the audit is supposed to protect, putting the UCC and Corporate Court at odds with neither side able to blink.

The global importance of the sprawl also means that what happens here, even when it's just UCC action, reverberates regionally and globally. Seattle's *laissez-faire* policies tend to produce significant amounts of pollution and waste and the Salish get mad as drek about it. It's not just the pollution, though. Now that Wuxing is pushing Vancouver as an alternative to Seattle, the Salish-Shidhe Council finally has a real stick to smack us around with.

- I hate to admit it, but the only thing that will ever change the minds of the corps in Seattle is actually losing business, and dammit, this is a good step. Even when you have corps like Horizon and Microdeck taking up offers from Gaeatronics to go entirely renewable, your biggest players and industries are oil and mineral diggers and heavy manufacturers. The world doesn't change unless you force it to.
- Ecotope
- Bull's observation is prescient. As sudden as it was, and while it may seem important only to Seattleites, the breakup of the CPC is agitating the multinationals and embattled AA megacorps that have traditionally submitted in bodies like the Sydney Metropolitan Council and the London Business Club, which have recently had their own uprisings over what corps the business communities let decide their fate.
- Mr. Bonds

Meanwhile, this year's election is slated to be even more contentious than the 2070 race. Brackhaven is simply trying to hold on to office until the election happens, and plenty of challengers smell blood in the water. The UCC is divided. The CPC wants to stay neutral on the election, but there is an insurgency that sees Brackhaven as impeding further progress. Seattle is a city that has for better or worse tended to be at the front of everything, but the last decade or two has made it more aware of its failing. And it's not a city prone to taking irrelevance lightly. Sure, we pioneered the "street merc"/wannabe shadowrunner look and Kaf Kulture, but that's window dressing. The Ork Underground is a symbol of that real struggle: Is the incorporation of the district going to be another corporate nation-building project to create new consumerist wageslaves and subject the community that endured so much to reality of that corporatist nightmare masquerading as the American dream, or will the people grab onto the opportunity and carve for themselves a piece of the real dream—the kernel of truth in our consensual lie?

All right, maybe I'm laying it on a little thick. Let's get back to business.

## AZTECS IN CRISIS

Aztlan walked out of the Azt-Am War victorious beyond measure. The public loves them. They smote their enemies, and those enemies left are now *metahumanity*'s enemies. The Azzies are still run by a cruel and corrupt machine that feeds on evil and breeds misery, so it's only just that Aztechnology and the government of Aztlan are now burdened by the one thing that they fear: financial ruin. Waging war costs a fortune. Cleaning up the mess costs another fortune. On top of those things, they are dealing with blows to the nation's food supply, and the recovery has been difficult and has affected plenty of nations besides Aztlan. Plenty of food is produced in Seattle's borders, but not enough for everyone in the sprawl, so the city depends on imports; less food available on the international level means less food for Seattle. The surrounding Salish-Shidhe Council, by contrast, is a net food exporter and should be reaping the benefits of so much global need, but there is a downside—the growing demand for food means that food exporters become targets for those wishing to do the Azzies harm; not just by destroying or sabotaging their efforts, but by poisoning the publicity well, diverting the public and secret investments and payoffs this entails, and even supporting wet-work against people critical to shipping networks.



## SEATTLE POLITICAL PARTIES

- Archconservative\*
- Awakened Workers
- Democratic\*
- Green
- International Workers World
- Libertarian\*
- New Century\*
- Republican\*
- Salish Unionists
- Seattle Freedom and Justice
- Technocratic\*

*\*Contested gubernatorial primaries*

## SECURITY PROVIDERS

### UNLIMITED JURISDICTION

These corporations have carte blanche to patrol and operate throughout the sprawl, patrolling and arresting or more frequently just killing criminal suspects. They have full lethal force licenses and can chase you beyond any private property they protect onto and through any non-extraterritorial property.

**Corps:** Centurion SSG, Desert Storm Security, Hard Corps, Lone Star, Knight Errant, Wolverine Security.

### LIMITED JURISDICTION

These providers' jurisdiction is limited to their clients' private property, specifically contracted public areas (e.g., F-B, Emerald City, and Petrovski are part of the joint security force at Sea-Tac), or instance of "hot pursuit." These providers have lethal force licenses, but cannot exercise that ability off-site absent loosely defined "emergency" circumstances.

**Corps:** Eagle Security, Emerald City Security, Executive Protection Specialists, Federated-Boeing Security, Neo-PD, Pueblo Security Enterprises, Petrovski Security, Revlup Security.

## MARKET PANIC

In ancient Greek mythology, the primal forces created the titans, who then usurped them and took over the world to rule with force and inhuman cruelty. In time, the titans' own progeny, the gods, rebelled and destroyed the titans to become the new rulers. In the Sixth World, sovereign states created the corporations and were in turn destroyed and subjugated by their creations. The most powerful corporations forced the world to recognize those it deemed worthy as its minions—the AA megacorps. After several decades, the titans are attempt-

ing to quash or kill their children, and while the Big Ten seem to be succeeding, some of the children are rebelling.

Locally, this has significant implications because Seattle is home to many of those rebels. Seattle's own Federated-Boeing is one of the last gods standing in its own markets, and Regency MegaMedia has merged into Spinrad Industries to protect itself from being consumed by Horizon or MCT or some other media titan. The Big Ten want to rein in the megacorps based in countries that don't prostrate before them, and that has put Gaeatronics, Universal Omnitech, Telestrian, and Phoenix Biotechnologies, among others, in the crosshairs. Some analysts say they could even drop the hammer on Horizon the next time its seat comes up for election. But the gods of the Pacific Northwest won't go down fighting, not when Gaeatronics is the most indispensable and important corporation in Seattle and a number of other places where it can literally turn off the lights, even on the Big Ten's property. The big question is what of UniOmni, which now owns the Pacific Rim Bank. Gaeatronics can turn off their lights, but UniOmni can cripple the flow of nuyen to every Japanacorp and a number of regional megacorps. To make it worse, a psychopathic blob of organs runs UniOmni and would shut it all down just for kicks.

These are just the biggest bullies on a very crowded playground where everything is connected and everyone is looking for an edge. All of that Aztechnology business overlaps here. Local national and multinationals are also trying to get into the game or find an escape hatch to cash out and let the UCC burn itself to the ground. As it happens, our very own embattled governor also runs one of those multinational banks doing business with many of these corporations.

## MONEY, GUNS, AND LAWYERS

The governor is under scrutiny, and his opponents want him out of office and preferably behind bars (or two meters under). Seattle elections are crazy enough, but with thirty-four Metroplex Congress seats, a handful of district mayors, dozens of district council seats, UCAS congressional seats, and the Big Chair itself up for grabs, every politician, bagman, media maven, blogger, polyclubber, terrorist, union member, and half the college students in Seattle are losing their fragging minds. There are primary fights in eight major parties just over their gubernatorial nominees, with the Republican Party's being especially vicious: Business Secretary Ellen Danquist (and by extension President Colloton) vs. Kenny Brackhaven himself.

Meanwhile, the corps are getting into the action themselves. They've endorsed constitutional amendments to divide the executive between four elected officials instead of the one it has now. UOL and Microdeck are going to the people to put the issue of NeoNET's commission to run Seattle's grid and Sea-Source up for a vote or at least to pressure the government while it's being knocked around from every side, including from within. The smaller security corporations want the same power to chase and geek you that the big providers already have in many parts of the sprawl. Renraku, meanwhile, wants the power to control everything in the Ork Underground, exploiting the leadership vacuum to buy what they can and to gentrify what they can't, with others assisting. This means that conditions in





the OU and the racial divides in Seattle have managed to become even more dangerous.

## PRIME TIME, CRIME TIME

Last, but certainly not least, Seattle's open city status means that the organized crime syndicates and numerous and diverse gangs are in a very hot version of a cold war. The tempo crisis of '72 didn't result in outright warfare, and some say that we're overdue after the last one in 2058. It did result in the First Nations and Kumon'Go carving themselves pieces of the pie charts the syndicate execs use to determine their relative market strengths like the wannabe corpors the bosses like Shotozumi and O'Malley are. Since the syndicates and bigger gangs like the Ancients won't directly go to war, when the drek hits the fan, we tend to be the ones throwing it at the blades. The Ancients, Koshari, Cascade Orks and others want to control land smuggling. The Triads are moving in from Vancouver behind Wuxing. Control of Seattle's and Tacoma's lucrative docks are in flux because even marginal gains and losses are worth millions of nuyen. Counterfeiting, money laundering, and trafficking are all big business, especially when there are

billions to skim as money passes through the sprawl. But don't forget that some of this "chattel" is people: wageslaves, sex workers, laborers, organlegger chattel—and it's all the same to the syndicates.

I would be remiss if that doesn't lead me to this last reminder: Seattle is a vibrant city and a hopeful city. For all of the violence, evil, and mercenary tendencies that consume much of the shadows, some of those corpors, activists, even gangsters do good sometimes, and then there's us. We can use our skills to murder, rape, and pillage the sprawl until the skeleton is picked clean. That sort of work has made those who were good enough to survive very wealthy. We can also raid offices, data-stores, banks, and ships to assist muckrakers exposing public officials' worst practices, shape policy to keep from killing the world too quickly, or maybe just not abet slavery. Seattle's shadows have more hooders per capita than any other sprawl. It also has one of the highest mortality rates.

What's the bottom line? Shoot straight, conserve ammo, and never ever deal with a dragon. The wind was sown, the whirlwind is being reaped, and people in all parts of the sprawl are going to ride it or be run over.



# HOW WE GOT HERE

- There is something to be said for remembering where you come from, or more importantly, where the people you're doing business with come from. Too many runners—including newbies who just don't know better or weren't taught drek and old pros with bulldrek attitudes that they're too jaded to worry about—get geeked over it. It's especially important here in Seattle, because there are so many major events that left repercussions we continue feeling today, through the conflicts we play our part in and the people who shape our fights.

As I began compiling this, FastJack dropped a gold nugget off the late Samantha Villiers' commlink (yes, I'm in touch with him, and no, I'm not answering your questions about him). Whatever you thought you knew of her and Seattle, you didn't. It's also rather inflammatory, and so this will be read-only.

- Bull

## THE SHADOWS FALL

The Shadowland BBS was formed in 1992. As one of the many Shadowland nodes connected to the Egg in Denver, it quickly became one of the most active of the shadownets within the United States for many of the same reasons it continues to command the traffic and interest it does today. There was an anarcho-libertarian spirit within the hacking community that reflected the larger Seattle community's leanings, and each time the government would press its boot heel further onto the neck of the Internet and the community, that spirit grew. The public disregarded warnings of impending doom, corporations strangled innovation, and the hacks that gave us personal computing two decades earlier became more alienated from anything that wasn't them. After wringing the life out of university Internet resources and the nascent World Wide Web through spending cuts and prosecuting students, the Shadowland darknet emerged as the last promise of a free and open Internet, a refuge for anonymity and sharing even the most innocent data.

Never forget your roots. I keep an eye on the shadows because that's where I lived before Damien Knight recruited me for Echo Mirage. Not long afterwards, I met Richard, who always had his own uses for the streets—and for me. Principle is valuable, but sometimes you have to say, "Fuck principle."

## RESOURCE RUSH

While Shadowland and company grew, the rest of the sprawl was booming, increasing production of consumable content.

Seattle was one of the central foci of the technology industry and development of content for the Internet. It was rather clear then and remains mostly true today that the world that most people see is limited to what those of us with power and influence allow to be distributed to them. The shadownets still remain. However, it must be acknowledged that the shadownets and VPNs like JackPoint exist because they're necessary and useful in the same way that totalitarian regimes condone and in many instances sustain black markets. It's important to keep this in mind, especially as a means of controlling and shaping the public and private support for business in the future.

The Pacific Northwest was one of the first regions to seriously benefit from the waves of privatization and deregulation that began in the 1980s and accelerated in the 1990s, especially once deregulation subjected large amounts of government and Indian lands to corporate control, both directly and indirectly. In many cases, the government simply transferred control of land and resources to states or regions that were politically or financially incapable of managing them, so they eventually became managed and owned by increasingly uncontrollable corporations. As an important reminder, the media was demonizing every opponent of the Resource Rush, and by extension, a lot of political enemies of the U.S. and Canadian governments. This is in addition to the point above that the amount of media and accompanying distraction was expanding while the control of information and news was diminishing through consolidation and budget cuts. Access to government information was restricted under the 1996 Anti-Terrorism Act, and courts in both countries were allowing private entities that took over formerly government services to escape oversight and inspection of their activities. Opposition movements remained but would matter less and less.

Militarized police and corporate paramilitary forces alone began suppressing dissent quickly and brutally, and the public loved them for it. The Resource Rush gave people jobs, a lot of them in areas that had been economically depressed for various reasons—though the corps and the free-marketers blamed the losses on regulations and pointed to the subsequent resurgence as proof that the laws were strangling the economy. People protesting incursions into lands across the northwest, and especially in Alaska (protesting the Rush in Alaska was suicidal), were just as likely to be attacked by other civilians as by the riot police. Seattle had been a net producer of food and suffered the opposite problem as those New Yorkers attacking that Seretech truck—too much food and not enough of anything else. The Teamsters strike caused food riots across the United States and poisoned goodwill toward all labor unions; meanwhile, the





Asian refugee scabs and their protectors became heroes, and their presence enabled the Yakuza to work with the government in crippling the Mafia.

## THE GHOST DANCE WARS

Given the size and influence of Native Americans in the region, one might assume that the fallout from the Lone Eagle Incident and the internment of Native Americans/First Nations people would have been met with resistance. The opposite occurred, as familiarity (and a healthy dose of corporate propaganda) bred contempt and eventually hatred as television emphasized how Bangor's presence would've assured Seattle's end if the Lone Eagle had detonated. Nothing scares people into obedience like fear of imminent death and utter helplessness.

The fact that VITAS I/II devastated the Seattle area but spared those in the internment camps is fitting. Their neighbors betrayed the incarcerated people, and karma, if one believes in it, took its toll in return. This and the later violence makes it surprising at times that Seattle remains. The two diseases had a combined fatality rate of one in three people in North America, and the rate was slightly higher in the Seattle area. That number doesn't even account for the non-fatal injuries to victims as well as the interruption of services that led to starvation, violence, and more illness. However, the resources developed to keep the city intact during this crisis would sustain Seattle following the Crash of '29.

Seattle didn't suffer nearly as much as Denver, which was effectively under siege for a year and a half, but the war was felt in the streets. Fort Lewis and McChord AFB were besieged, but survived. In the process, though, everything south of Tacoma and parts of Puyallup became more isolated from the rest of the area, which helped form the beginnings of the Puyallup Barrens that would eventually become a permanent fixture once the ash from Mt. Ranier and Mt. St. Helens began raining down on the city, seemingly without end, as part of the Ghost Dance War.

In that war, Thunder Tyee's most renowned success remains the capture of the *Ohio*-class missile submarines at the Bangor submarine base. What is most important to note is, first, that when the *USS Alabama* was sunk trying to escape, the boat's remains were left behind even after hostilities ceased for fear of disturbing the integrity as it lay at the bottom of the strait. More importantly, however, is what happened onboard the *USS Michigan* and the *USS Louisiana*. The captains of those boats ordered detonation of their nuclear payloads rather than to allow the Pacific boomer fleet to fall into enemy hands. The missiles

detonated, but the warheads didn't. No one knows why, and the warheads were never accounted for until one of the Winternight bombs was found to contain a core signature identical to one of those warheads. Find the rest. No one else will even acknowledge that they remain missing, and might be poised to go off somewhere.

## THE BIRTH OF THE METROPLEX

The birth of the Seattle Metroplex is due to a loophole in what one would think would be an ironclad definition of "the city of Seattle" given the volume of other terms defined in the Treaty of Denver. Fortune favored the Emerald City, for once, and the metroplex was born from consolidation and integration of county and municipal areas into the "city" of Seattle that evolved into the Seattle Metroplex. These changes led to emergency actions to consolidate government functions and form a government that could at least maintain the illusion that the growing sprawl fell within the entity known as Seattle as described in the Treaty of Denver. The chimera created ended up giving the governor almost unlimited power over the sprawl, which has resulted in various booms and busts as some governors have been more capricious than others in how they wielded their power for the relative benefit of the metroplex.

It has also created resentment between Seattle and the Salish, especially as the latter moves further from its back-to-nature, pre-Columbian ideals and toward a vision where it leads through corporations like Gaeatronics and UniOmni (until Roxborough took control, anyway), but that resentment is tempered here by the Anglo refugees and their children who know that their old homes are just across the border. Diplomacy, conciliation, even repatriation could be beneficial to business. However, politics and resentments about the events leading to the NAN's formation won't allow that to happen. As Vancouver opens, however, there may be room to exploit rifts between tribes and communities benefiting from that move and those who are losing out.

## THE CRASH OF '29

With the benefit of hindsight, the Crash wasn't quite as catastrophic as it could have been. It was the end of the world as we knew it, but at least it wasn't the end of everything. To make a facile comparison, Crash 2.0 resulted in the destruction of networking systems that were either obsolete or about to be replaced anyway thanks to the Wireless Matrix Initiative and



UMS2. The Crash of 2029 destroyed *everything*—most importantly being the social contract. The only thing that saved Seattle from anarchy is that those with the genius and will forced control on the world by convincing the people with guns and analog production methods that they were indispensable to this city having any future. The corporations maintained and controlled means of production, logistic, infrastructure, and those with personal knowledge of how they functioned and could be maintained were either promoted or promoted themselves, often by regressing to pre-war systems and practices. It was nearly meritocratic save for the opportunists, but all in all feeding and controlling the mobs became ruling the world as feudal lords. No evidence is clearer of this than how Thomas Roxborough is the man most responsible for the Crash and yet remains one of the most powerful people “alive.” I’ve left the details with the colonel, as it’s too sensitive even for this document, but rest assured that I speak the truth. That man is dangerous and evil beyond comprehension, and I don’t make that statement lightly.

The breakup of the local economy reverberates to this day. Redmond emptied out. No one had any use for software programmers and video games when the lights were out. The Crash Virus was beyond the scope of anything the entire IT field had ever confronted, and fear and paranoia did the rest. This could have revolutionized society, and it did—though sadly, not for the better. Some older neo-anarchists still look at that time as being the last, best hope of keeping the world from becoming the neo-feudal dystopia that it became (in their words). The successors to those people and their political opposition in the streets are soft and lazy, as always happens, and that’s a weakness that you’ll always be able to exploit.

## THE LAND OF PROMISE

Portland and Seattle have held a long rivalry that has deserved to exist at some times more than others. However, any assumption that the rivalry was innocent was destroyed the day Lugh Surehand announced the formation of the nation of Tír Tairngire. No one in Seattle knew if the Tír would ever attack Seattle, yet now it’s as if that fear never existed. Instead, the Council of Princes closed the Port of Portland and forced a symbiosis on the city that ended with Seattle hurting more than ever. It came to depend on business from the city to the south, and the ports are only now recovering to the levels of business from so many years ago. This would be something they could deal with in isolation, but as history has shown, nothing happens in a vacuum. Vancouver presents and Portland remains the same threat and opportunity to business locally and globally. Never take the big picture for granted, or believe magnanimity to be that.

The original Council of Princes used the Ancients as a means of controlling their friends and killing their enemies as well as pacifying the populace (see above re: black markets) and expats, and that hasn’t changed even as they now face increased competition from Laësa and former Rinelle ke’Tesrae elements. Their business is Seattle business, and with elves, that means anticipating and manipulating their growing belief in their own near-immortality combined with the hubris and foolishness of their base humanity.

## RISE OF THE UCC

The United Corporation Council was officially formed in 2030 in the wake of the Crash of ’29. However, it was inspired in part by the increase in litigation and shadow activity between corporations since the formation of the ICC and the megacorporations’ attempts to carve their own strategic footholds in this newly legalized form of corporate warfare. The conflicts escalated by magnitudes after the Crash, especially given the personalities who rose to power in that time. Conflicts arose as upstarts challenged the status quo and the control of markets and industries shifted, but let it never be forgotten that for everyone who succeeded, many others failed.

The **Night of Rage** changed the UCC’s role in the Metropole, shifting the council from adjudication and facilitation to executive policymaking and government intervention. For twenty years, Lone Star had been policing Seattle after the SPD went on strike. Lone Star’s promise was to brutalize both sides of the race riots, and for half a century the public loved them. Its abdication of that promise nearly cost it the Seattle contract.

***The Metropole Guard rounded up every metahuman in the Seattle Metropole on February 7, 2039.***

Lone Star washed its hands of the governor’s and Guard’s actions, and the UCC remained silent until the media began showing the world the bodies of our citizens, who we failed to protect. But I can’t deny that the UCC’s mandate and de facto takeover of the governor’s office was a business decision first and foremost. The violence of the preceding sixteen months was hurting business and the social order the corporations created. The UCC had to act, and Lone Star became the sword and shield. This is why the UCC would later sacrifice Lone Star during the tempo crisis for far less. Remember, politics and business are often capricious, and even the biggest members of the council are expendable and exploitable if the rest of the members muster the will or desire to act.

It’s embarrassing how it took the UCC nearly forty years and entirely new generations of citizens in the Ork Underground to earn that populace’s respect, although it’s not entirely unsurprising given what it took to act in 2039. Never forget that the survivors of that night aren’t all orks, aren’t all dead or dying because of their accelerated aging, and aren’t all living in the Ork Underground. The corporate officers at MCT and Renaku were most vocal then about wiping out the Underground, but now that most are gone, their sons and successors are at the forefront of exploiting the district. Maybe it’s business, and maybe it’s malice. View that all without the bias that I can never rid myself of.

The UCC continues to shape policy regardless of who occupies Metropole Hall, but the members are still stifled by old resentments and staid thinking. The members and the central committee have driven Seattle through the technomancer and AI emergency, the tempo crisis, the recent Olympics, and on. However, this is not leading. The old guard was willing to fight and strive. After the corp war and the SCIRE shutdown, it’s been in perpetual damage-control mode, shutting down more business than it creates. This will be its eventual undoing.



# GETTING AROUND

## OVERVIEW

### POSTED BY: TRAVELER JONES

It's been said before, but one of the things that makes Seattle such a prime shadowrunning sprawl is it hits the sweet spot on so many spectrums of qualities. It's got the right balance between chaos and law and order, wealth and poverty, and other factors to make shadowrunning not only possible but profitable and regular.

The borders of Seattle are another way that balance is struck. If borders of a place are too loose, you don't need shadowrunners, because anyone capable of forward locomotion can get across. People don't pay you to do what they can easily do themselves. Make the border too tight, though, and only suicidal or inexperienced runners will dare try to cross it, and rather than keep trying and keep losing money and resources, people will take their business and their lives elsewhere.

If you're doing illicit business in Seattle, you're not just going to waltz across the sprawl without scrutiny, but if you're careful and skilled, you can find the right spots to get in and get business done. Be fast, be subtle, and pay attention to what I have to say, and you'll do fine. Usually.

- Double emphasis on being subtle. You can flip the bird to Knight Errant wankers on the street to show how tough you are, and they'll shrug and move on. In the airports, something as simple as that will get you selected out for long and arduous questioning. You'll have plenty of chances to act the maggot out in public; in the airport, maybe be a normal person for a bit until you're clear.
- Thorn

## GETTING IN

One of the treats of Seattle is that it has viable approaches by land, sea, or air. You've got a full bevy of options to use, so here are some things to consider when you choose how you want to get to the city.

### AIR

If you're unlucky enough to not have your own aircraft or know someone who does, then your most likely air approach to Seattle will bring you Seattle-Tacoma International Airport (called Sea-Tac by everyone). They're not kidding around at that place—armed security is plentiful and well trained, your SIN is queried every three minutes or so while you're on the premises, and a full array of sensors is waiting to get a good look at all the stuff

you have on your person. This is the sort of place where even a casual mention of the word "bomb" will immediately make half a dozen security guards point weapons at your head, so no screwing around. Get your papers in order and hide your illicit items extremely well—or better yet, just leave them behind.

If you have military connections, you might find yourself landing at the military base at Fort Lewis. The guards at this place make the Sea-Tac security personnel look relaxed and friendly. You better be fully legit if you want to pass through here, but if you can make it through the clearances you can rest assured that very few of your fellow criminals will be anywhere near you.

To be honest with you, though, I have not used either facility in years. There are plenty of smaller airstrips around town that are perfect for those of us who don't need a long strip to land and are happy to work with people who are willing to look the other way with the right offering. A word of warning, though: When flying in, avoid the airspace near Sea-Tac, Fort Lewis, and Downtown. The Metroplex Air Traffic Control is very skittish about unauthorized aircraft anywhere near these areas. Hell, they're skittish about unidentified aircraft in general, but if you go near the airports or Downtown, they're liable to send out air spirits to rapidly dismantle your craft and guide you and your flight chair to the ground, then ask questions about who you are and what you were doing. Unless you can appear legitimate, steer clear.

Snohomish is a great spot to find small landing strips, with all of its open land, and some of these are tucked nicely behind farmhouses and barns so as not to be visible unless you're pretty close to them. Izzy Heidelberg, near the northern end of the district, has one of my favorite such strips. Air-traffic control around there is pretty much negligible, so you need to be comfortable landing without much help from the ground, but there are no landing fees, and no hangar fees for the first six hours if you buy fuel. Sure, the fuel is marked up one hundred and fifty percent, but that's still less of a markup than Sea-Tac charges, and the big airport puts a landing fee on top of it. Better yet, you don't have to worry about Heidelberg giving you away—not because she's overly loyal or anything, but because her short-term memory is pretty well shot. The cops used to question her about landings at her airport, but the information she gave was so inconsistent and occasionally off-the-rails insane that they seldom bother anymore. It makes her the perfect witness.

- Be careful. The authorities know that Izzy's awareness of what's happening around her is not great, so they've taken to monitoring the airport from a nearby road if they think something worthy of their attention is going down there. They don't do this too often—who wants to go on a stakeout way out in a field in Snohomish?—but it happens often enough that you should be on your guard.
- Rigger X



There are occasionally fly-by-night airstrips that pop up in Redmond, but I don't like using them. Yeah, they're cheap as all get-out, but there's zero security and plenty of criminals hover nearby to strip down your craft the minute you step away from it. If you really feel the need to be cheap, try the Ancients' airstrip in Puyallup. Yes, the Ancients have an airstrip. It's short, not well maintained, and terribly lit, but it's close to their center of operations in Tarislar, which means there are always plenty of Ancients keeping an eye on things. Which is good, assuming you can trust them.

- Yeah, if you're an ork, don't land here.
- Butch

## LAND

If you're coming in by land and are playing legit, you can drive in through the North, South, or East roads. Remember that the sprawl is surrounded by the Salsih-Shidhe Council on all sides, so no matter what direction you choose, you're going to be crossing an international border, so expect the type of security international crossings bring. The North and South roads both follow what used to be I-5; that means the North road deposits you in Everett and its navy shipyards, while the South road brings you into Fort Lewis, with its army and navy operations. So yeah, unfortunate activities at either place stand the risk of bringing military attention to the checkpoint, so be really cautious about going in loud or with guns blazing. The good news is that there is a fair amount of traffic at the North and South checkpoints, so the personnel there sometimes get the lowered sensitivity that comes with the routine of watching cars stream by. Don't get too complacent, though, because there are plenty of automated scanners, and those things never get bored or distracted, no matter how many vehicles pass by them.

The East road is a little bit of a different story. It follows the path of the former I-90, which means you officially enter Seattle at the northeast tip of Renton, then skirt along the border of Seattle and Salish territory for a few kilometers. After that, you're driving on the border of Renton and Redmond, which means the road is something of a demilitarized zone, though plenty of Redmond-based gangs ignore its quasi-neutral status when the mood strikes them. What all this means is that this road is emptier than the North and South routes, and security is a bit more lax. That doesn't mean SINless people can just stroll through without notice, but when I want to illicitly cross an official Seattle guardpost, the East route is what I use when possible. It can be a bit of a pain, but the out-of-the-way nature of it is one of the good reasons to use it.

If you don't want to drive, you can also take a maglev train in from San Francisco, passing through Tír Tairngire. Security on that train is intense, and boarding it while it's in motion is terribly difficult. Stowing away might seem like an appealing, Old West-type move, but the high speeds of the train quickly kill the romance. And possibly you.

- The guards at the East road tend to be less aware and less experienced, but in my experience that makes them less bribable. They're new enough to worry about their integrity and not know how to manipulate the system to their advantage, so efforts to

slip them some nuyen often go nowhere. The more experienced a guard is, the more they learn, and one of the things they learn is how to smoothly give someone a pass if they are offering enough money. I find that the North gate guards are especially bribable.

- Stone

Of course, in most circumstances I don't bother with official checkpoints at all. The Seattle sprawl is, all told, more than one hundred twenty kilometers wide and more than eighty-five kilometers wide. That's an awful lot of border to cover, and the Seattle authorities simply cannot watch it all. If you have a reason to sneak across the border, find some of the dirt roads or secret byways into the sprawl. Don't bother with any well-maintained or -traveled road. Those will either be watched or barricaded—the authorities are not dumb enough to give you a smoothly paved smuggling route into the city. What you want to do is find a forgotten rural route, or a packed trail that locals drive ATVs or other such things over without a clear idea of where the Salish border is. Northeastern Snohomish is one of my favorite spots for this. The land is pretty flat, which is both a blessing and a curse—it's pretty easy to go off road if you want to, but you also have the feeling that when you make your crossing, you're visible for kilometers in each direction. The border here is a simple two-lane road, with walls on the Salish side, and enough border patrols skip up and down it to keep you on your toes. Still, at night there are not a lot of lights around, few cars, and plenty of chances to slip out of a copse of trees and make your way into the most rural part of the sprawl.

Redmond is also good for a sneaky border crossing, with the caveat that while the authorities may leave you alone as you make your way into the Barrens, the natives may be on the alert and looking for anyone foolish enough to bring something worth a decent amount of nuyen into their area. The nightmarish roads and predatory locals are generally enough to dissuade me from making Redmond one of my favorite entry points.

If I'm going to slip across the border into barrens-like conditions, I'm going to do it in Puyallup. Going over Mt. Rainier is, of course, no picnic, but just to the west of it you have Alder Lake, and north of that the Nisqually River. The river is dammed a few kilometers south of the Seattle border, so watercraft are not advisable, but following the lake and river can help get you close to the border and poised to make a run across. There are a few roads down there that help make the southern border; move to the west of the Nisqually, then head north across the relatively flat land.

- Be careful over there. Plenty of thunderbirds fly around Rainier, and you don't want to look appetizing to them. One reason border security is not great down there is both Seattle and Salish authorities figure few interlopers are going to make it through this territory unscathed.
- Mika

## WATER

You'll of course have noticed that there is no West road into the sprawl, due to that large body of water on the western edge of town. The Puget Sound is a great way to get into Seattle. You can always do this the conventional way—taking your watercraft into the Port of Entry Complex, filing the appropriate paperwork, and





hoping your fake SINs or bribes hold up properly. The Port of Entry Complex generally will deposit you right Downtown, with all the pluses and minuses that come with being in the middle of everything. As with land or air travel, if your cover is good enough, feel free to use it, but I prefer to use other, less supervised ports.

If you're in good with the Salish-Shidhe, you can jump in some of the waterways just west of the city and try to slip your way in. Jumping in at Case Inlet and moving down to Tacoma, a little north of Fort Lewis, can work well.

- Beware of water spirits summoned by the military when you come near Fort Lewis. One hit me when I was coming in using a submersible, and while I'm as comfortable in the water as a fish, I still have nightmares about it battering me around while leaks sprung up everywhere.
- Sounder

Coming in the Strait of San Juan de Fuca and disembarking at Everett is a good bet, but be aware you will be traveling between pieces of land just over five kilometers apart, so using the wide swath of the ocean to hide you is not going to happen. The Coast Guard—both from the Salish-Shidhe and Seattle—patrol actively, but there are a lot of small coves, inlets, and other features that you can use to get you in if you know the area and are patient. Just don't plan on leaving whatever watercraft you brought in tied up somewhere—if you're lucky enough to go in unspotted, you won't be lucky enough to have your boat just sit there, safe and sound, while you do your business. Amphibious watercraft that can go on land and be hidden somewhere is much more likely to stay in place. Assuming you hide them well.

- Get low in the water and travel slow enough to not leave a wake. There are lots of boats built to deflect radar—get one. And don't get too close to other traffic, but remember you can use the long wake of a large boat to cover your movement.
- Sounder

## CROSSING TOWN

Once you're in the sprawl, you're going to have to get from place to place. There are more than 4,000 square kilometers in the city and lots of ground to cover. Here are some ways to get from point A to point B.

### WALKING

The sprawl is quite large, and there is no walking around some places such as Outremer, but some areas, like Downtown and central Bellevue, are quite walkable. Vehicles can be more noticeable (and traceable) than individuals, and also subject to the whims of traffic. So don't always feel the need to jump behind an engine when your legs can do the job.

### TRANSIT

Downtown, you can't go more than a few blocks without hitting a bus route, and there are spots of Bellevue, Renton, and Tacoma with similar coverage. The buses are automated, with no driver and no cash, and most mechanical systems are protected so that anyone attempting to interfere with them re-



ceives a nice shock. This means the buses can operate some in places like Redmond and Puyallup, though in the former they don't go much beyond Touristville, as GridGuide and road quality is too unreliable beyond that point. If you're moving around Downtown by bus, you won't have to pay a thing; go beyond that central free zone, and it's two nuyen a ride.

For a faster Downtown ride, try the monorail, with stops at all notable Downtown locations. At only one nuyen a ride, you get a fast and smooth impression of what people of the past thought the future would be like.

## DRIVING

GridGuide rules Downtown. In some areas, like Tacoma, if you don't want to use GridGuide, you can maybe come up with an excuse that someone might listen to about why you're not on the system, but Downtown, there are no excuses. If you're not using GridGuide, you're not driving Downtown. In Redmond, by contrast, if you attempt to use GridGuide, you're not going anywhere, as it tends not to work through most of the district. It works better in Everett and Snohomish—those spots may be far out, geographically speaking, but they perform services more necessary to the lifeblood of the city, in the eyes of the government, than Redmond.

If you want to move on the road but don't want the hazards of registering with GridGuide, there are plenty of taxi services to take you from place to place. Emerald City Cabs, Yellow Cabs, and GridCab all offer somewhat safe rides for overly high prices, but if you're lucky, you can pass the charge along to Mr. Johnson as an expense.

- GridCab recruited a number of drivers from the Ork Underground, and many of them were active in the campaigning to make their home an official district of Seattle. They're still a decent source of intel about what's happening beneath the surface. Be sure to tip them nicely for whatever they tell you.
- Butch

If you've got some extra scratch and want to be shuttled around in style, limo services cover frequently used corporate paths. WP Express has routes that include A2D (airport to downtown) and A2B (airport to Bellevue). The cars are nice, the drivers are capable and not simply software code, and the cost is enough to pay for all that. That means rates start at seventy nuyen to get you Downtown, and taking you to Bellevue will cost at least one hundred.

There are other options for those who do not want to own a vehicle or depend on cabs. KeyCar has several vehicles at multiple locations across the sprawl, and for a relatively low monthly payment of around fifteen nuyen, you have a chance to schedule time in one. It's cheaper than buying a whole vehicle, but you might regret it when you find yourself needing to get out of town, fast, and it turns out to be a weekend and all the vehicles near you are booked solid.

Possibly more intriguing is the service that a number of riggers around town have started up with their vehicles when they aren't using them. They send them out, either piloted remotely by the rigger or by an autosoft, and people use a piece of software to hitch a ride in those vehicles—a lot like a cab service,

really, but without the official licenses and stuff. The service is called GhostRide, and the ability to create an account with nothing more than a burner link commcode as well as the low prices when compared to taxis have made it popular among runners.

- Among incautious runners, maybe. Trusting any part of your fortune to a rigger you have not fully vetted does not strike me as a wise idea.
- Cayman

## AIR

I mentioned before that the Downtown airspace is watched closely by security. One of the prime reasons for this is the amount of short-hop air traffic involving important people in the area. There are small copters and other VSTOL craft in the area waiting to shuttle people across the sprawl and save them the indignity of having to touch the soiled ground. Emerald City Air, Renraku Air, Sea-Tac Express, Quetzal Shuttle Services, and Federated-Boeing Air Carriers are the major lines, and using them will cost you. They start at one hundred nuyen for a short hop, one fifty to go across town, and that's without the charge for extra passengers. The speed cannot be beat, and the hours of operation are surprisingly long—though if you're looking for an air taxi at 4 a.m., pickings will be a little slim.

- Word to the wise: The Halloweeners have taken to interfering with arms shipments coming into town, and they seem to have a particular fondness for surface-to-air missiles. I don't know how many functional pieces they have managed to obtain, but even one is too many.
- Sunshine

## WATER

Many people spend their whole lives happily on land in the sprawl, but sometimes you find yourself needing to go to Outremer, or lucky enough to make it to the San Juan Islands. A whole network of ferries is available for you during the hours that normal people are out and about, meaning between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. Options are plentiful—there are larger boats that are five nuyen per person, twelve with a vehicle, and smaller ones that don't take vehicles and only cost two nuyen. When you're going to the most populated spots in Outremer (a relative term, I know) you can catch an express hydrofoil. Normal trips to Outremer locales take about forty minutes, but the express can get you from port to port in fifteen.

- These are great for smuggling, as onboard security is not great and there are few scans of debarking passengers. Use a submersible, a lone diver, or whatever to get stuff onto a moving boat, and it won't have a terribly tough time getting into the city proper.
- DangerSensei
- Abuse this route too much and the authorities will catch on, and you'll see water spirits patrolling all over. Let's not get to that point.
- Sounder



DANTE'S  
INFERNO  
9 HOT CIRCLE!



# THE WOULD-BE LEADERS

POSTED BY: HIZZONER

## EQUAL JUSTICE UNDER NUYEN

Why does it matter what the government is doing? The government, even if it is in the pocket of the corps, is still thoroughly enmeshed into the daily lives of everyone in the sprawl. They are the cops, the emergency responders, the garbage men (literally and figuratively), and they regulate life day in and day out. It's important because the corporations think it's important. See, they don't replace the state because they need and want the state. The state gives them legitimacy. It gives them a neutral player to control each other and through regulatory capture, keeps competitors in check or outside of the market altogether. This is especially true with Seattle. Seattle's legal system is the most established and reliable and relatively neutral of all of the cities along the Pacific Rim. Period. It's easier to start a business, end a business, and generally get shit done be-

cause here's the secret—day to day, extraterritoriality doesn't mean anything. The little guys and the megacorps are, legally, on equal footing. The nearest sprawl that even comes close to being this open is St. Louis. I'm not going to pretend it's nice, but it's fair. It's fairer for them to operate here than damn near any other city in the world. Corporations that don't even operate on this continent line up to file in the UCAS Contract Court for the District of Seattle—the most amazingly beautiful court of chancery system erected in centuries. The rest of the federal and state courts are equally popular places to do business, and that's why it's important you know who and what is important here: The business of Seattle government is the business of the world, and that means the shadows of Seattle form the mirror image of that façade of equity and fair play.

Most people don't think too much about the judiciary and legal system unless you're on the wrong side of it in a criminal prosecution. However, it touches and concerns everyone in the sprawl daily, and more importantly, provides a lot of low-level work for shadowrunners, with the occasional jobs at the higher end when it involves major deals or wetwork. As a

## CABINET DEPARTMENTS

<b>Administration</b>	General services, maintaining metroplex property, supervising operations rendered, dispute resolution, personnel management
<b>Business</b>	Promotion and regulation of business and labor activities in the metroplex alongside the Secretary of State's office.
<b>Information</b>	Seattle Grid, SeaSource, GridGuide, public education and libraries, publication of government materials.
<b>Health &amp; Metahuman Services</b>	Public health, safety, welfare programs.
<b>Justice</b>	Attorney General's office (criminal and civil litigation), supervision of law enforcement and corrections contractors.
<b>Military</b>	Metroplex Guard, urban militias, Seattle Metroplex Defense Force, liaison to UCAS and Salish militaries.
<b>Public Works</b>	Infrastructure and logistics—roadways, airports, ports, utilities, etc.
<b>Race Relations</b>	Improving relations between metahumans and with sapient non-metahumans.
<b>Resources</b>	Metroplex land and water, leases of and other uses of metroplex land and water.
<b>State</b>	Foreign relations, elections, business formation, other licensing and regulations
<b>Treasury</b>	Metroplex and district budgets, auditor, risk management, investment advisory council



general matter, the UCC, the syndicates, and basically everyone with real power has a gentleman's agreement that no one is allowed to threaten the fundamental nature of the legal system (i.e., no assassinations) unless there's an agreement, or at least an understanding, between a lot of people above us. The system already functions on a thin veneer of order, and the line protecting certain politicians and executives also applies here. That doesn't mean you can lean on an official until he's about to break, but only so long as they don't break. If you break a politician, a judge, or even a DA, you forfeit all hope of goodwill within the community. Indeed, runners are more likely to take protection jobs that Lone Star doesn't have the manpower to handle, and because they don't want or need the hassle that goes with pushing a button on some disgruntled civilian before they can even move on their threat.

Otherwise, there's a lot of work to be had for those working the lighter shades of gray. Judges in Seattle are elected at every level, and so every political dirty trick of governors, mayors, and Congress applies here as well. Muckrakers, bagmen, low-grade saboteurs, and thieves can carve out comfortable niches working political angles here just as with jobs originating in Metroplex Hall. Muscle is useful, too. The legal process is a façade, but it's a façade everyone has agreed to maintain. Lone Star can be hired to serve papers, enforce judgments, and the corp is also responsible for controlling and selling seized property. That said, no Lone Star officer in their right mind would volunteer to do this work in the Barrens or even more reputable areas, and so guess who does the work while Judicial Services officers check the box to make it "legal."

Finally, there are plenty of resources available for those who know not to overlook an underserved market. Getting in here can connect you with independent shadow bankers, fences, info brokers, and even clients and assets in virtually every other market because the law touches *everything*. And that's the other thing I emphasize in putting this first: The law touches everything, and it colors almost all of the work that touches on the government and political areas, especially because what's legal isn't always ethical, and what's ethical isn't always legal. This community can be rather insular, even given the size and diversity of the players involved. Anyone on the institutional side has ties to each other: Dean Skourtes controls the Seattle Democrats but has extensive personal and business ties to his counterparts in the Republican, New Century, and Archconservative parties. These people have the same professional trajectories, go to the same political academies, do the same post-collegiate work, canvas the same neighborhoods, wheel and deal with the same media and political operatives, and tend to invest in the same businesses—each other's. Skourtes didn't need to buy in because his family's wealth has been cemented in the northwest for a century, but whose business do you think Emile Corrigan has invested into heavily (through Brackhaven Investments, of course)? Skourtes Medical. This is public information, but no one wants to report it, just as no one wants to report on or acknowledge the strong-arm and coercion that Skourtes used against certain politicians and party activists in 2076 when he deemed Nikola Taul to be the choice of the powers that be, not all of whom were Democrats, as the party's gubernatorial nominee.

- Ex-Representative Clowes knew better than to get the bill to reopen the ACHE aquaculture farms killed at the last second. You don't take 100 million nuyen out of the mouths of those people and survive politically. Had Seattle not just seen the 2074 assassination spree, he'd certainly be dead. Pushing Taul to be the nominee by having party operatives sink Clowes' legacy during his campaign was just a collateral benefit.
- SEATAC Sweetie
- I guess this is as good a place as any to explain how I got from this same place to the shadows. I'm not from Seattle, but I had a similar experience. Study politics, intern with some elected office, get into law school (mostly for access), work in that profession as a day job while volunteering with the right party people and causes, and eventually get some job as an assistant with a governor or federal official until you can run for yourself. But the day job and causes overlap because, naturally, the firm is politically active and aligned with your politics. Then you do your first job as a bagman—literally holding a bag full of untraceable certified credsticks, "donations" made while a politician is supposedly just doing a meet & greet at a house of worship—and move up to working as a face and even doing low-level sneak and peeks. Eventually, you're a runner, billing code 000 ("Services Rendered"), pretending to be a lawyer. From there it's an easy hop to company man for a megacorp. Adventure? Excitement? Oh yes, I cared to have those things. I'd have gone into the shadows sooner if I knew then that I'd make more of an impact on politics and policy as a shadowrunner than I ever could have if I stayed legit.
- DangerSensei

## METROPLEX GOVERNMENT

Seattle has a straightforward but highly unusual system relative to its fellow states. The incorporation of entire counties into the city of Seattle as a means to avoid becoming part of the Salish-Shidhe Council resulted in a metroplex government that contains many trappings of a city government. In effect, it functions similarly to the New York City government before the 2005 quake, but it also has all of the powers and representation of a sovereign state. The governor alone has all of the executive power and appoints various officials, and it has no formal process for succession in spite of multiple governors leaving office early. This is what makes Governor Brackhaven's enemies so insane with fear and anger. There aren't any checks on his policies by other officials, making the only means of ensuring that he acts legally is a corrupt and mostly subservient Metroplex Congress. However, that may change come November. There are constitutional amendments on the ballot to create independent offices for Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer, and Lieutenant Governor (which would also clarify the line of succession). The UCC is supporting them this time around, which suggests that they have had enough of Brackhaven.



- I can easily see Lone Star permanently solidifying its influence by controlling any and all future Secretaries of State. For them, it isn't who they can help benefit, but who they can put over a barrel.
- Kay St. Irregular
- Brackhaven personally stands to lose the most if Seattle has a truly independent Treasurer. His firm currently handles all of the Metroplex's securities and investment business, including government employees' pensions.
- Mr. Bonds

## GOVERNOR BRACKHAVEN

Controversy follows Governor Brackhaven like a shadow, but at the same time he's been politically deft at handling his critics and opponents by being smarter than them and by employing a tight crew of advisers and operatives that could easily become VPs at any megacorp if they're so inclined. He's linked inexorably to Humanis. He opposed Proposition 23 and admitting the Ork Underground as a district. His niece is dating an ork media mogul tied to organized crime. He's not even the real Kenneth Brackhaven. The real one was an ork Karl Brackhaven had killed and replaced with a street kid who turned out to be an investment genius and two-term governor. These are all public facts, and most people don't care.

He's made his political leanings very clear, but he's also gone out of his way to promote certain racial programs and appointed a bulldog of a Commissioner for Race Relations. He's worked very hard to make Seattle the globally strategic business center it has remained, both by reducing tariffs and taxes (except to certain countries like Tír Tairngire) and by undermining competitor cities using his foreign policy powers. He's a businessman running the metroplex like a machine and with a self-financed campaign and he's beholden to no one. He didn't agree with Proposition 23, but he's content to let the dwarves and transition politics hang the orks and trolls he couldn't destroy even if he sent the entire Guard into the tunnels. The wife of an ork, with his own role in the firm, runs the firm that made Brackhaven a household name. My goodness, how does he do it?

- The biggest firms representing these dwarves support Brackhaven and do business with the government. Between that and funding to the Stonecutters' Guild to finance their representation, many of them aren't paying a single nuyen to claim title to the Underground.
- DangerSensei

He manipulates people because they are stupid and short-sighted. He's also, frankly, smarter and craftier than his opposition. Self-financing his campaign didn't keep him from being coerced, because his future success as a politician and investment banker hinge on not angering the bigger kids. Even when Lone Star lost the policing contract, it still held onto the more lucrative corrections contract. Seattle still contracts out most routine licensing and regulations functions to Lone Star, and Lone Star sheriffs still perform civil law enforcement (seizing, holding, selling property; serving writs and process, etc.). They also protect more courthouses than Knight Errant. That's the skill of a man like Brackhaven: he hedges his actions so that even if he's wrong, he still wins.

- Even here he's hedged. The most reliable groups of voters in Seattle are government employees and contractors. He's dangled the carrot of bringing some services back in-house and not threatened hellfire and layoffs to hold onto the people who work in government, and he's used that as a stick against contractors. And vice versa. Keeping them in equilibrium ensures stability, and stability gets you re-elected.

Take the fire service, for example. Firefighters are reliable political activists. Seattle's fire protection service just happens to be contracted to an insurance and protection company owned by the Mafia. Those people also have a long and distinguished history of political activism. Keeping Franklin Associates execs and employees happy is a no-brainer. No one goes after firefighters politically, and those who do are quickly convinced not to continue. Franklin's connections (like MCT's to the Yakuza) also ensure turnout on Election Day in precincts that are controlled by organized crime. If you ever wondered why census takers can enter virtually any neighborhood and leave alive, it's because that's how this arrangement works. People get counted and SINers vote because it's encouraged, and in return, organized crime gets to run their businesses with relative impunity.

If Franklin ever gets out of line, there's an army of firefighters from Emeral Crisis Management (Yokogawa) and Phoenix Fire Management (PCC), both affiliated with Mafia competitors, ready to take over the contract, and there's a for-cause termination letter on file in the governor's office. Brackhaven always hedges.

- Black Knight
- Those Lone Star officers have a big hard-on for playing sheriff and serving process. Their reputation precedes them, which I guess is for the best if it means fewer people getting shot over tax liens.
- Sticks
- That's little comfort for those killed and displaced whenever Lone Star does its semi-monthly condemnation or warrant sweeps to remind residents of the Barrens that the powers that be can and will fuck with them whenever and however they desire. KE acts above it, but they would grab the civil contract in a nanosecond if possible.
- Hard Exit

As an aside about Brackhaven, I should mention the Seattle Metroplex Defense Force. It's a means for him and his Humanis buddies to circumvent President Colloton's ability to federalize the Metroplex Guard and allow SEACOM to control and purge the Guard's officer corps, which it has been doing since JTF-Seattle arrived in 2059. The SMDF's absolute independence from the DOD will give him an army that the feds can't control (even the district urban militias are subject to some federal control). He's personally financing the SMDF and using "former" Lone Star Military Liaison and DED troops to train this human army of skullcrushers to keep the Metroplex Congress from interfering. No one knows why he's taken such a keen interest in this so suddenly, but one can imagine it involves the Ork Underground.

- This will turn out well. Meanwhile, the Ork Underground militia just received a part of the DOD grant made to bolster Seattle's



## GOVERNMENT SERVICE CONTRACTORS

<b>Knight Errant</b>	Criminal Law Enforcement
<b>Lone Star</b>	Corrections, Licensing & Regulations, Civil Enforcement
<b>City Health and Group Medical</b>	Public Health
<b>Eta Engineering</b>	Sanitation
<b>NeoNET</b>	Public Grid and Database
<b>Franklin Associates</b>	Fire Protection
<b>DocWagon</b>	Emergency Medical Response
<b>Gaeatronics</b>	Energy
<b>Mitsuhama</b>	Transportation & GridGuide™
<b>Shiawase Envirotech</b>	Public Works

urban militias. If I didn't know any better, someone might think that they want us to kill each other.

- Khan-A-Saur
- It must be said, Bull, that sometimes greatness is thrust upon those who least desire it.
- Butch
- That happened to Julius Caesar, and it didn't end well for him or anyone else.
- Bull

## CABINET

The Cabinet and the rest of the executive (minor agencies, offices, commissions, most of which fall under these same rules) function as arms of the governor, both directly and indirectly when dealing with the public and with the districts. The Metroplex government doesn't have veto power over district ordinances, but it can exert significant amounts of pressure. This puts some districts in difficult positions because Bellevue, for example, is constantly under scrutiny by Metroplex Hall to shape policy that keeps the district grounded. However, the UCC has a direct line into the mayor's office, and the residents of Bellevue are wealthy and active enough to want more for their district. Fewer regulations, lower taxes, special dispensations for their "charities," and so forth. Meanwhile, the government can generally run over any novel policies promoted by Redmond's or Puyallup's government. That pressure and influence works the other way, as mentioned with Bellevue. MCs (members of the Metroplex Congress) constantly pressure individuals within the executive branch. Depending on which MC it is, they can be known to push them into doing illegal but ethical or legal and unethical things on a regular basis. Additionally, these offices are accessible to lobbyists and pressure groups "within reason" (defined as whether or not it riles up the AG) both as public in-

stitutions and whenever members of the public are invited to be involved in rule-making or similar matters. One example of how these agencies control and influence policy comes from looking at how the Justice Department changed the rules during the tempo crisis using emergency powers to pull Lone Star's contract and ensure that it went to Knight Errant. The AG and SecState oversee the assessment and hiring of public safety candidates, namely police. The test every candidate must pass encompasses the entirety of Seattle and UCAS criminal law and procedure. For KE to be up and running, the personnel it sent to Seattle had to pass this test. The Office of Contractor Assessment offers learning materials exclusively to service providers that can meet certain financial and insurance thresholds—thresholds that before 2072 were written to exclude every corporation except for Lone Star. The rules were changed without notice and comment to allow KE to apply, and lo and behold the new KE Seattle administrators and officers all aced the examination. On a less earth-shattering scale, the only way to become a bonded contractor in Seattle is to have a policy with Franklin Associates.

- I love it. Even the construction guys the other syndicates own are beholden to the Mafia.
- Slamm-0!
- It works the other way with the Yaks controlling access to the banking and gaming industries. They may kill each other over minor slights, but institutionally, money rules everything. The only thing preventing full-scale wars tends to be these forced marriages.
- Mihoshi Oni
- Gaming the rulemaking process is how the security industry was consolidated after Crash 2.0. The smaller shops got run over, pushed out, or bought up. There used to be more than a dozen private security companies that handled active and passive





security, patrols, and so forth for private residences and business locations. Now that number is six. Ares owns three (Knight Errant, Hard Corps, Wolverine), Shiawase owns one (Desert Storm), and the remaining two are Lone Star and Jonathan Blake's Centurion SSG. They've kept the rest of us too small to worry about. However, I've been hearing rumors that another AAA wants in, and there's also whatever game Neo-PD is playing with the Underground. It's a growth industry if more wealth keeps coming in (or back) to Seattle, and I'd be happy to watch the giants fight if it means getting a shot to expand my own business.

- OrkCEO

Perhaps the government's most important power lies with the Secretary of State. Every corporation and many other forms of business organizations are either incorporated or registered with her office in order to do business in Seattle. Even accounting for federal preemption under the Business Recognition Accords and Contract Court Amendment, UCAS states and metroplexes still have fundamental powers that the UCAS Supreme Court refuses to disturb, chief among them being that, absent some other protection, any business organization can be stripped of its

power to do business in the Metroplex. Additionally, registering subjects them to the limited or general jurisdiction of Seattle's courts, depending on circumstances. As mentioned above, UCC members and even non-Seattle corporations love to litigate in Seattle because it's the most "fair." Unlike its neighbors, Seattle doesn't bar any corporation or megacorp of the right to operate or unfairly penalize them, usually as reprisal to penalties they impose on non-BRA signatory states. Likewise, Seattle's importance makes it more likely that judgments have some teeth to them because there are assets or accounts that can be targeted in Seattle itself or in the UCAS.

## CONGRESS

The Metroplex Congress was originally an expansion of the Seattle city council, and since then it has remained a unicameral chamber even while growing in size. The people don't want to see a whole new class of permanently ensconced politicos fill a new chamber. Beyond that, the legislators' business is rather insignificant given the sheer amount of power the governor wields. How do they keep their seats? Bribes. The money cycles back around, creating an efficient setup for those juiced



in. The governor wields most of the power, but the Congress officially controls the budget and can pass legislation that shapes or nullifies executive action. That only happens, however, when you get a majority of the hundred MCs to agree on anything. The MCs are lucky, however, to have a lot of time to wrangle. MCs can have an unlimited number of six-year terms, which makes it easy to collect and disregard controversies. The elections are staggered so that a third of the seats are up for election every other year. The long terms make it easier for incumbents to build up their influence and war chests, but unlike in the UCAS and CAS, they also result in virtually every seat being contested every election cycle.

- Back in the forties and fifties, the number of parties in Seattle's Congress and district councils exploded from three or four to nearly a dozen. Back then it was often described as being even more boisterous than Chicago or New York politics. Publicly, they'd talk of consensus and cooperation and then engage in wheel-and-dealing, bickering, table pounding, and plenty of shouting. And that was just on the floor. Since then, you get a lot more shouting and at least a couple of times a year, there's physical violence. It's a hoot.
- 2XL
- That's a great relief to the people who are getting fraged over, as it does nothing about helping the Ork Underground integrate with the rest of the sprawl.
- Khan-A-Saur
- You may as well put your faith in the Universal Brotherhood.
- OrkCEO
- I have hope. That doesn't make me naïve. It just means I'm not a selfish fragger.
- Khan-A-Saur
- Hope. Funny you mention that.
- Puck

The Congress works on the seniority and majority system, which makes wheeling and dealing interesting with around ten parties usually represented at any given time in the chamber when the leadership must determine committee assignments. Usually, multiple parties caucusing together tempers the chaos, but when Tommy Danvers is the only Awakened Workers Party member and has been an MC for twenty-four years, he doesn't have to caucus with anyone to demand a senior position on a number of committees. This also doesn't account for the occasional schisms, such as between the Libertarian, Archconservative, and Republican parties during the last election. Seattle's demographics would polarize the electorate if not for all of the parties, but suffice to say that the sprawl is far more centrist than it was before the Treaty of Denver and the arrival of displaced people from more conservative areas like Idaho and western Washington.

- The Metropolex Congress is already panicking about the eventual redistricting that will come with the 2080 census and the 2082 election. The Ork Underground will have to get at least a few seats.

Either the Congress will expand beyond one hundred members, diluting the MCs' power, or those seats will come at the expense of the consolidation of current MCs' districts. In public, that's a noble sacrifice they will accept. In private, this is already creating opportunities for runners to undermine politics across the sprawl as the rats scurry.

- Bull

## FOREIGN RELATIONS

Since 2042, Seattle has had the power to appoint and receive ambassadors and to engage in foreign relations independently of the UCAS government. It was intended as panacea to secession threats, but it also makes a great amount of sense since Seattle has interests that the rest of UCAS doesn't share, and those interests move at light speed. Over fifty countries exchange diplomatic envoys with Seattle, with some of the city's ambassadors also serving as observers to multinational organizations like the NEEC, UN, and PPG. Additionally, the Corporate Court maintains an embassy in the city, and Robert Johanssen, its envoy, is recognized as an ambassador. While most of these countries are in the Pacific Rim, Seattle maintains a global reach. Basically, if a country has any corporate value, Seattle exchanges envoys. The metroplex government and UCC jointly fund Seattle's diplomatic corps in yet another step to exert its influence over the sprawl government under the auspices of the foreign relations power being commercial in nature.

Daily relations between nations focus nearly entirely on trade agreements, tariffs, and compliance issues with existing treaties and partnerships to which Seattle is a member. The 2042 law and the Seattle constitution grant the governor exclusive foreign policy powers like the UCAS president, and that allows him to disregard the whims of the Metropolex Congress most of the time. However, the governor can't ignore the whims of the President and the UCAS Congress, which leads to plenty of opportunity for conflicts. This also means that the UCAS ends up spying on Seattle and its citizens here and overseas all of the time because of their constant contact with foreign powers and players.

- Seattle spies right back on them. Knight Errant's contract includes them protecting access to foreign embassies and consulates and gathers foreign intelligence for the governor. In fact, Seattle is so important that Brigadier Lloyd Ritter commands all Ares intelligence operations affecting the Pacific Northwest from his fusion center in Everett for the UCC, which *might* share information with the governor. Ritter commanded Knight Errant intelligence and special operations in Silicon Valley and oversaw the Firewatch mission to extract Saito and decapitate protectorate leadership. He also spent time as a Seattle shadowrunner and uses runners for his missions.
- Fianchetto
- Ritter is an elf and tends to use Tír proxies, usually Telestrian (his personal favorite), Eibisu Biomechanics, and KMC, a Portland robotics firm. Other times, Colonel Smith, one of the most dangerous elves alive, acts as Mr. Johnson under the handle World War Terminus.
- Thorn



## CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

- Senator Charles Seaver (Republican)
- Senator Helen Royer (Democrat)
- Representative Erik Shira (Republican)
- Representative Katy Rozman (Technocrat)
- Representative Benita Saver (Democrat)
- Representative Sharron Lu (New Century)
- Representative Robert Wheeler (Technocrat)
- Representative Samuel Lamptey, Jr. (Republican)

## DISTRICT GOVERNMENT

The district governments are as diverse as the sprawl itself. With the frequent demographic changes that come from regular immigration into and across the sprawl, the districts have slowly morphed in political power and leanings. Downtown is no longer the liberal epicenter it used to be as more conservative citizens move into the sprawl from corporate enclaves into the open city or from the contiguous UCAS to Seattle, which has a better economy and (seemingly) less propensity of being wiped out or walled up. Meanwhile, inexpensive housing has pushed changeling and Underground refugees into formerly human-only strongholds in Renton and Auburn. However, there's a reason why Downtown hasn't shipped masses of homeless or underprivileged SINners and SINless into the suburbs since it packed the ACHE to the gills with human chattel. Bellevue has always been relatively moneyed, but it still has its problems with inequality. Downtown has had it worse because of sheer population size and density, and there are vocal minorities who'd elect a tyrant if it meant not seeing poor (metahuman) people. The outer districts are also seeing increases, with even Fort Lewis seeing "campers" in the forest. The reason is simple: No one will take them, no one wants to spend money on them, and the corporations love to remind wageslaves that one wrong step can put them right alongside these people.

- I'm going to go out on a limb and say it: I wish I could care. I really do. But I can't and won't. I hate the poor, and my fake SINs voted for Brackhaven on the expectation that he would run them out of the city center like a tyrant. I may be a criminal, but I'm not a sap.
- Sticks
- That's the thing about getting older. You want a world where your enemies are crushed and your whims are automatically sated. Eventually that age begets wisdom that everyone is a dictator but with differing ends, and that you can only control as much as you're willing to negotiate.
- Kane

**Auburn:** The district is up and coming while still remaining home to a lot of people who can't or won't go anywhere else. They don't want to be pushed out, but they can't move up or out to bigger districts. Mayor Tyrone Monzo is still running the

show in Auburn, but he's no longer beholden to Mitch Stuck. Stuck has grander ambitions, and Monzo just wants his people to get along or get out. Gentrification is making them more difficult, and as a former street cop Hizzoner sometimes resents the monied over the old-timers who sustain Auburn's sense of community. Councilor Henry Bortle is his biggest opponent, representing growth over sustaining the existing community, and both are looking for every edge they can find.

**Bellevue:** Jonathan Blake may be the perfect mayor for Bellevue, and he still maintains his sights on a run for governor with that going for it. A lifelong corporate executive and manipulator, he was able to run Saeder-Krupp's shadow operations in secret for decades before jumping ship, aligning with and then divesting himself of ties to the Draco Foundation, and becoming a shining star of the political world. He's acted deftly and professional, made himself popular with the public through his gang crackdowns and is conversant and liked by the corps who live and work in the district. Councilmembers are falling all over itself to align themselves with him, especially Councilor Cantalicio, whose Lake Vasa district had been home to the Lake Acids before Centurion all but wiped them out.

- There's a gadfly named Alonso Solis to watch out for. He's a Microdeck executive who's been appointed to various political commissions and initiative for the last few years. He's a very charismatic individual just looking for the right opportunity to jump the line and seize power. One day he's going to suddenly become the chair of the Seattle New Century Party or a cabinet secretary and people will say "Oh, of course." I can't stand guys like that.
- Snopes

**Downtown:** Downtown is politically active and progressive, benefiting in large part from having the largest and most diverse population of the districts with such bohemian and progressive enclaves as the U District, Elven District, Ballard, and the magicians of the Elven District. Mayor Taul is focused entirely on her gubernatorial campaign, which has left a vacuum where the council fights over the fate of the ACHE (and whether it deserves political representation) and the gentrification of the Ork Underground by dwarves from the Elven District, which has resulted in a counter-movement by orks and trolls into the neighborhood.

- Aztechnology and Shiawase both want to reactivate and expand the food production and processing facilities in the ACHE for about the same reasons (especially as global drought and famine seems to be inevitable), but that means taking in the residents and sharing ownership with the UCAS government, which won't relinquish control of the top and bottom most floors and basements, especially the fusion reactors. Shiawase has the inside track since it controls Kansai Village and the reactors a stone's throw from Capitol Hill in DeeCee without incident, so they can surely be trusted.
- Kay St. Irregular

**Everett:** Everett's a Navy town, and the city's residents either sustain the naval yard or eke out lower-class lives in the border town. It's poor and sometimes feels like the Wild West,



and it has the politicians to prove it. Mayor Matthew Hilcox keeps fighting the Navy, and he keeps losing, but he sees it as a roadblock to Everett's future. The majority of the council, however, loves the government's encouragement and money from the sharks and syndicates who exploit the sailors and contractors when not trying to push through sales of swamp land and blight for their own gain.

**Fort Lewis:** Fort Lewis remains mostly apolitical, but does have its own government and council that serves the growing civilian population in the district around Ft. Lewis proper and McChord AFB. The dual control by the UCAS military and a civilian government is generally amicable, but there is discord about the growing "camper" problem in the district forests, and politics aren't entirely prohibited. Given the historical leanings and President Colloton's own popularity, it's no surprise that the government is solidly Republican. However, Councilor Jimmy Skeleton is a member of the New Century Party and a magician, and he enjoys throwing the occasional monkey wrench into council debates as he vigorously represents his constituency.

**Outremer:** Outremer's politics are as friendly as its islands, which is to say ice-cold. The "get off my island" sentiment runs strong, and the Libertarian Party is second only to Independent/Non-Aligned, with Archconservatives bringing up the rear. The locals don't want or expect much from their government, which means that conflicts tend to be small in scale but highly personal and energetically fought.

**Puyallup:** Puyallup is the hard-luck district, where everything that can go wrong seemingly does. Mayor Lon Campa has remained in power in spite of constant threats to his life in no small part thanks to his ability to keep the Mafia, Yakuza, and Ancients equally angry at him. The councilors look at the job as an entrepreneurial activity and are in the pocket of whichever syndicate controls their district, which in turn allows those syndicates to skim money from the district and the metroplex government. There are people trying to do good in the district, but even the angels have dirt on their wings. It's the only way to get things done.

- If you want to help anyone out, start with Mayor Campa and Councilor Debbie Trembath. The rest can go to Hell.
- Jimmy Kincaid

**Redmond:** Mayor Sonya Scholl has managed to remain in office because no one wants to spend the nuyen on the bullet to take her out. It helps that she's been tenacious and dedicated enough that she's finally gotten the attention of her fellow Wobblies and the neo-a collective of Redmond to cooperate with her efforts. The problem is that it's Redmond, and every step forward means getting pushed backwards two steps by outsiders. Knight Errant's, Lone Star's and everyone else's forays into the Barrens just makes things worse, and even the councilors who are supposed to represent them are on the take from those corps. That said, Danny Williams and Rebecca Lewis are the shadows' favorite challengers if you want to take a stand.

**Renton:** Renton is seeing a number of conflicts as the demographics change. Transplants from the east and south, many of whom are changelings, magicians, and metahumans, mean that the racism remains but is becoming more subtle. With an ork and dwarf now on the council, Knight Errant can expect to

see its procedures challenged more often. Many of the sprawl's magicians are being solicited to come to the district, and the Apep Consortium library was recently completed near Cougar Mountain. Newly elected Mayor Jeremy Lucas seems intent on challenging the bunker mentality of the locals, but only if Fed-Boeing doesn't undermine him and move its Renton facility to the Olympic Peninsula.

**Snohomish:** Jassila Feddersen replaced her husband as mayor of Snohomish in 2076 after he suddenly announced his retirement. She is overseeing an economic boom in the district thanks to its agriculture industry. Indeed, the money has resulted in a number of transplants from other districts to do work on the farms that robots can't, which is leading to some friction given the racial makeup of these transplants (a combination of dwarves, trolls, and orks). Additionally, the increased tax revenue and attention is making the council a hotbed of scheming and dealmaking. The more traditional councilors like Doug Jensen and Carmel Tunison want to bank the revenue for lean times like smart farmers, while Technocrat "Lucky" Duck Phillips want to spend on capital projects now and diversify the economy. It's interesting time in the Seattle breadbasket.

**Tacoma:** Tacoma politics are street fights, especially since the syndicates make their involvement and preferences well known. Francesca Sipple chose a side and it cost her everything. The Yaks saw to that. Mayor William Duffy learned from that and chose the biggest bully he could find to serve: Federated-Boeing. He's content to let the syndicates kill each other so long as the port's business remains unaffected. The Gianelli Family still has three councilors and half the judges and DAs in its pocket, with the Yakuza keeping two councilors and the Vory with two of its own. This results in nonstop fighting within the district council, but when the UCC visits, they know to jump and roll over like the dogs they are.

**Ork Underground:** The problem with describing the underground's political leadership is that, frankly, there is none. Kathleen Shaard is the presumptive frontrunner to become the district mayor, but there's always the possibility that she will forego the opportunity or maybe people will decide she's not ready. Gimli Harris is one of two dwarves in contention, but the "reclaimants" prefer Georgia Fitpatrick. There are also a couple of power brokers who want to run Mongo as a write-in candidate. Senators and mayors have won as write-ins under similar circumstances, and right now, anything is possible in the Underground. Renraku is pushing Anton Burov as their candidate, but he's a carpetbagger who got himself transferred to Seattle after failing to get elected there twice in Manhattan.

- I'm a conservative, almost archconservative. I know exactly what it's like to come from nothing, to have been in those warehouses and running for my life in the tunnels on the Night of Rage. But being angry and resentful isn't going to change anything. I don't want anything from anyone except acknowledgement that I exist. I can do the rest. It sucks to be a minority in a world full of humans. I don't want human allies helping me out. I want to take over. Until then, we've taught our kids at an accelerated rate because *everything* grows faster with orks and trolls when you stop treating them according to human standards. It's hard, but life is supposed to be hard, and wishing it wasn't doesn't change anything.
- OrkCEO



## UCAS GOVERNMENT

Seattle politics extends to its congressional delegation, which means that they're just as aggressive as their local counterparts. It makes the senior among them excellent party whips, but it also means they make plenty of enemies in DeeCee. It helps that the Republicans still control the Senate, which has earned him a chair on the Megacorporate Affairs Committee and a vice chair of the Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Royer is former Senator Charles Royer's daughter, and like him is Seattle's most vigorous proponent in DeeCee. The representatives don't have nearly as much experience or political capital, again, Seattle politics is brutal and capricious, and between that and the constant reassessments based on which parties caucus together in the divided House, it's difficult to pin them down.

Business Secretary Ellen Danquist began her political career on the streets of Auburn, and it was inevitable that she would return. Since her primary defeat by Kenneth Brackhaven in 2070, she has built up quite a career in DeeCee. It is clear, however, that she still wants his job. She's been campaigning hard against him within the Republican primary, which doesn't take place until the end of summer, but that has also meant that the Business Department is being run from Seattle now (She doesn't have to resign unless she wins the primary). The Business Department and the UCC have long been deeply entwined, and that definitely gives her an edge politically, but it also gives them an edge with the Contract Court. The Business Department represents the UCAS in disputes with megacorporations and manages federal corporate policy and law, and it can stand before metroplex courts if a dispute involves a megacorp, even under metroplex law. The Contract Court was recently elevated out of the DOJ and into the judiciary, and the Office of Contract Counsel moved from DOJ to Business. There are still countless relationships policies at play, and Danquist is at the heart of it all, especially since she appointed most of those judges who now have life tenure.

On a related note, the UCAS has eight federal law enforcement agencies that all operate within the Seattle Metroplex. The FBI is the big one covered elsewhere and Homeland Enforcement (HEAD) is generally the agency smugglers encounter, the Coast Guard if you're in the Sound. The Marshals enforce the law on behalf of the Business Department and its Matrix Marshals are the law on UCAS grids. Some work together with

GOD, sometimes they butt heads. Jack in and take your chances. The Defense Security Agency is generally limited to policing the military, defense contractors, and counterintelligence. Finally, there's the IRS. They're maniacs. They break into megacorp headquarters, hack their banks, and basically take pains to go after the biggest and most dangerous targets. Given the amount of legal and illegal nuyen flowing through Seattle, they're definitely around. IRS Enforcement is both a law enforcement and intelligence agency, and they have a couple of floors in the federal building and are represented in the SIC, but their best agents are covert and hiding among the shadows with us.

## SEATTLE COMMAND

The pretense of Joint Task Force-Seattle had worn thin long ago, given that its mandate to take and secure the Renraku Ariology was officially completed in 2064 when it handed control of most of that building to the Metroplex Guard. Reforms under the Colloton Administration have created a unique beast. Worst of all is that it's an aggressive one. It's no secret that Colloton is trying to get the UN, the megacorporations, and the local governments to support active military operations and presences in Tsimshian, California, and otherwise use Seattle as a staging area for a new *Pax Americanus*.

In a combination of fortunate timing and practical necessity, the **Confederation of American States** has taken a special interest in the region and has special access to SEACOM. Given Aztechnology's increased activities in the Metroplex, Seattle has become a strategic target of theirs, and the CSS *Kitty Hawk* and two escort cruisers are now docked at Naval Station Everett as a reminder. Since Everett remains off-limits to corporate warships, **Aztechnology Armada** and the **Makah Tribe**, which controls all former and existing military properties on the Olympic Peninsula, are refurbishing Bangor and Kitsap; now the five-ship *BAA Tezcaltlipoca* carrier battle group calls Kitsap home while a squadron of Azzie submarines berth in Bremerton. Indeed, these expansions are even being used to entice **Federated-Boeing** to move some facilities out of Seattle just for good measure.

## BEYOND SEATTLE

**Salish-Shidhe Council** surrounds the sprawl, and their politicians love and hate Seattle. They love the money that trade with Seattle brings, but they resent the effect it has in emitting pollution across council lands. The Salish, both directly and through corps like Gaeatronics and Inkan Energy, are throwing carrots and sticks at Seattle to clean up its practices. They are adamant that the sprawl can rely entirely on renewable energy and non-toxic production methods by the end of the century. However, there are too many players that stand to lose if it gives up fossil fuels and current chemical production and uses. Appropriately enough, one of those corps is in the Athabaskan Council.

There is no shortage of NAN activity that somehow always finds its way to Seattle, but the most intriguing activity at present comes out of the **Athabaskan Council**, where the Delacroix "mafia" runs **Athabaskan Oil** both legally and covertly to maintain its interests and the interests of its main allies. It's been stirring up trouble in the **Trans-Polar Aleut** nation to force TPA to

### NATIONAL SPY AGENCIES

- **Amazonian Intelligence & Security Department** (Amazonia)
- **Australian Intelligence & Security Enforcement** (Australia)
- **Department of External Affairs** (PCC)
- **Department of Strategic Intelligence** (CAS)
- **Information Secretariat** (Tir Tairngire)
- **Japanese Intelligence Agency** (Japan)
- **Korean Intelligence Agency** (Korea)
- **Office of Military Intelligence** (Sioux)
- **Truth Dancers** (STC)
- **UGB/GRU** (Russia)



give up control of Prudhoe Bay and all of its other rights to the oil and minerals buried beneath the Arctic Circle, and possibly acquiring all of TPA. It's even helping finance the political **Thule** insurgency, both political and military, and rumors are circling of Delacroix schemes with both Russian and Yakut players over the fate of **Yupiq** (that part of northern Siberia that is legally owned by TPA). The Russians resent this exclusion from what they see as their right to mine and drill the fuck out of the Arctic (though given Saeder-Krupp's influence in TPA and Russia, that resentment isn't too loud).

- That would explain why I smuggled the biggest fucking trolls I've ever seen in my life into Seattle and back out. Funny. I just assumed that our middleman called them Thor's Twins because they were as large as the mountains.
- Sounder

Beyond the intrigues of energy and clannish politics, the Salish's biggest stick is its investment in **Vancouver** as an alternative to Seattle. Wuxing's western hemisphere headquarters is now located there, and the Salish and many of the Native American Nations are investing in the city to attract trade and foster growth, especially since the NAN and Salish are still burdened by rebuilding **Tsimshian**. The Tsimshian issue means that Mitsu-hama isn't welcome, but it'll survive. That's the drawback it has in competing with Seattle: it lacks the legal environment Seattle has as a city open to all megacorps. At the same time, the Corporate Court is already targeting NAN megas under the audit, so they're at an impasse. Both have plenty to lose, but they don't see the gains in negotiating. While that continues, other business involves building a maglev railroad from Vancouver to **Boise** and extending the **San Francisco-Seattle** line to Vancouver.

At the same time, the UCAS, and possibly the CAS if it keeps cooperating, wants to commit military forces to Tsimshian under the auspices of a United Nations nation-building program. It's also moving to put forces in California, putting the **Pueblo Corporate Council** and **Tír Tairngire** on edge. The Tír relies heavily on trade with Seattle, but the NAN would never aid the country that violently seceded from Salish. A number of these conflicts hinge on the countries' relations with Aztechnology, which puts the megacorporation in the enviable position of being a kingmaker in the Pacific Northwest.

- Isn't Aztechnology supposed to be the desperate party here? WTF?
- Slamm-0!

## ESPIONAGE IN THE SHADOWS

Given its remote and non-contiguous location from the rest of the UCAS and its strategic political and economic value, it is no surprise that Seattle is a major espionage outpost for the UCAS. The **Office of UCAS Intelligence** recently opened the **Seattle Intelligence Center** on the top floors of the ACHE to coordinate all official intelligence-gathering operations. Additionally, the SIC is supposed to coordinate with national law enforcement and military operations and liaison with corporate and non-UCAS entities. This makes it a nest of vipers because everyone has an agenda, even those professing to be on the same side. The Salish have representatives for interdiction efforts, but that means Cascade Orks have people in the room tipping off some of those same smugglers. On the flipside, the CIA has its own interests in exploiting that intelligence to infiltrate the NAN or Tir. The Seattle Run/Vladivostok Route has produced a bartering economy among the spooks and squids from over two dozen corps and countries over which smugglers get a pass and which get sent to the bottom of the Pacific at any given moment. There's also the matter of how international smugglers operate independently and with official entities to keep their markets open by informing on terrorists and other "serious threats" to the region. Sure, the black market exists even in a nuclear-blasted hellhole, but there's more money to be had if Seattle stays mostly intact.

With the official presence of all of these spooks making things dangerous enough, the shadowy side is even worse. Between diplomatic covers, front companies, corporate spies working for clients even the ground troops couldn't identify, and plenty of business unique to Seattle, everyone is looking over everyone else's shoulder in the sprawl. The following are the biggest players in the covert operations game, but they are by no means alone in this field. Additionally, the for-hire spy corps (**Aegis**, **Argus**, **Infocore**, **Infolio**, **Millennium**, **SIS**) work for numerous national or other political clients (e.g., the UN is an Argus client), and government agencies constantly cooperate with local corporations. Finally, a handful of shadowrunner teams are company men for one or more agencies. I'm not going to rat them out, but it's worth knowing in case they subcontract out for support or distraction jobs.



# THE REAL LEADERS

Seattle is the only global city on North America's West Coast where the Business Recognition Accords are actually law. This shapes business and government in the sprawl and competition with protectionist ports like Vancouver, Portland, and even San Francisco. Since Seattle is the friendliest legal jurisdiction in a strategically located commercial hub, conflicts from elsewhere find their way here, and the corporations have more say in daily life than even seems apparent. However, just because corporations run the sprawl doesn't make it the megacorporations' company town like Neo-Tokyo and Manhattan are. It's subtle with flashes of brilliance, a Seattle longing for the highs and lows of the Good Old Fifties while also moving forward into the next century.

## A SOLID FRONT

### THE UNITED CORPORATION COUNCIL

In case it wasn't clear from the list, things have changed radically on the CPC in the last few years. The ranks of the UCC are diverse and extensive, but the one thing it is not filled with is compassion. With Samantha Villiers gone and NeoNET already taking its share of hits on the East Coast, the local insurgency took her vacancy not as a moment to pass the torch, but instead to burn away the dead wood. And burn it did, kicking **NeoNET** out of the CPC for the first time since it was founded. The newly permanent **Saeder-Krupp** presence has turned out to include, free of charge, all of the mega's internal frustrations and chaos within, especially inside **S-K Prime**; all of which means that a scary bag of wyrms has been dumped right into the heart of Seattle's corporate environment where it's not welcome.

The general membership also took that moment to make it clear that they don't care how big the Big Ten are; Seattle was theirs before most of them existed, and will be theirs long after the next court shakeup or corporate war—the kinds of "juvenile" nonsense that gets in the way of the single overriding goal of the UCC of ever-expanding profit. Indeed, there is suspicion that this small-scale revolt was organized by **Zeta-Imp-Chem** through **Bicson Biomedical**, a Seattle-based subsidiary, and other members of Syndexioi. Regardless of who is manipulating whom, in public the UCC still serves as the face of the status quo. That's giving them too much credit for something more likely to be organic. While the corporations rule, they do so while facing actual competition, and that makes them scared. Fear, in turn, makes them dangerous.

- I should note that this includes the shutdown debacle. Renaku's competitors relished the lack of competition that came with the arcology's closure, and likewise the reduction in people who didn't contribute much to the outside economy. At least ACHE residents come out once in a while.
- Facet
- That's cold-blooded, even for corpors.
- /dev/grrl
- Remind me, again? Where are your parents?
- Facet
- Ladies, please. Let's focus on pressing concerns, such as: What the fuck is Tiffany Brackhaven doing on the CPC?
- Haze
- Ever since Uncle Kenny sent her to rehab after the tempo pipeline ran dry five years ago, she's been a whole new woman. It's been remarkable, especially since Brackhaven Investments acquired Dassurn Securities & Investments.
- SEATAC Sweetie
- Literally, I'm sure.
- Bull
- Hardly. It's a matter of pragmatism as cold as the Siberian winter. Tiffany and CrimeTime aren't stupid, and they aren't isolated from the world. CrimeTime is in deep with the Vory and has extensive ties back home in Mother Russia. Now, there are two things Russia has a lot of: vast expanses of nothingness, and people who spent centuries getting by using complicated schemes that even the most devious financiers couldn't begin to wrap their heads around. So between them and Uncle Kenny, it's simply a matter of economics: They could make each other even wealthier and pursue their mutual or contradictory personal goals at the same time.

There are two other things I should mention. First, it's important to remember that while the Vory are one of the most powerful factions in Russia, especially now that they and other corps are exploiting Saeder-Krupp's weaknesses to grab more power, one of the other major factions is the Human Nation. Second, CrimeTime actually has very little to do with the ork community day-to-day. He's a figurehead, a de facto leader in a community without any major voices, but for all intents and purposes he may as well be



## UCC PLANNING COMMITTEE (2078)

CORPORATE MEMBER	RATING	REPRESENTATIVE
Ares Macrotechnology	AAA	Karen King
Athabaskan Oil	A	Francis Murkowski-Delacroix
Aztechnology	AAA	Xochitl Madalena
Brackhaven Investments	A	Tiffany Brackhaven
Eastern Tiger Corporation	AA	Janet Choi
Eta Engineering	A	Laurent Bonta
Federated-Boeing	AA	Jessica Sirianni
Gaeatronics	AA	Leandro Ironwind
Microdeck	A	Manuel Amano
Mitsuhama Computer Technologies	AAA	Eito Jensen
Regency MegaMedia	AA	Vikram Vadsaria
Renraku	AAA	Željko Mesi
Shiawase	AAA	Matsudaira Tadaaki
Telestrian Industries Corporation	AA	Moire Ferguson
Universal Omnitech	AA	Schuylor Aubrey Betchley IV
Wuxing	AAA	Hilary Pei
Corporate Court (Ex Oficio)	—	Robert Johansson

as human as the vast majority of people he actually sees and does deals with and whom he employs to run his own little media empire.

Besides all that, however, is this. The wheels are already in motion. Brokerage X couldn't devise more elaborate ways to deceptively exploit insider or outright false information the way Brackhaven Investments has been doing under everyone else's noses. And believe me, they've tried. The firm's existing clientele is deep and extensive, and this collaboration has allowed them to target international whales and cook up deals that could in time rival Dunkelzahn's, and now Daviar's, financial hoards in size and opacity. At the same time, some of the schemes are so risky and untested that if it gets big enough and something goes awry, which has happened when banks tied themselves up in knots on deals they shouldn't have made (e.g., White Monday), it could bring down the whole damn system.

- Dr. Spin
- ...
- Chainmaker
- I thought that might pique *your* curiosity.
- Dr. Spin
- This would also certainly draw the attention of other less scrupulous financial players, and given their need for possible exit strategies at NeoNET, I can see Trans-Latvia Enterprises deciding to invest in the action. With their Mafia ties, it could be used to broker peace between the Russians and Commissione in Eurasia. Unless someone even bigger stands to gain from the distraction in Russia an ongoing conflict would maintain.
- Icarus

Membership of the UCC is theoretically open to every business, not just corporation, operating within the Seattle Metrop-lex. Practically, there's an unspoken agreement that those with revenues below a certain threshold (in millions of nuyen) aren't welcome to join. Furthermore, subsidiaries of members aren't

permitted to become members, and there is an arms-length rule to dissuade shell and holding companies from joining, thereby rigging the general membership votes by excluding members from being the largest shareholder/member/partner of another member. As a result, the UCC general membership is considerably more capitalistic and free market-oriented compared to those bodies dominated by staid and indifferent megacorporations. As a lobbying body, it has helped make Seattle one of the largest and most open ports and commercial centers on the planet. Needless to say, the Big Ten representatives hated this arrangement even before three of them were kicked off the CPC.

## CENTRAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

The CPC wasn't intended to be an executive, policymaking body; rather it was an adjudicatory body used when corporate relations in the general body fail. That purpose hasn't changed, but the emergency session convened to respond to the Renraku arcology shutdown was the first step toward it becoming a supragovernmental policymaking body of the Big Ten. The general membership was up in arms, but they were strong-armed by fear and manipulation by the megacorps and UCAS government, and they also had to deal with Tir Tairngire's re-opening the Port of Portland (withdrawing its exclusive use of the Port of Seattle), the mob war following James O'Malley's



assassination, and the incipient corp war that reshaped the face of the Corporate Court.

During this time, the CPC claimed non-bias, but *somewhat* in that time the Big Ten got bigger and Seattle's economy became stagnant. Make no mistake, the CPC and the Big Ten have no actual interest in market capitalism. However, the local business community and smaller national and A-rated corporations still have some faith in that concept. It's understood that this clandestine consensus is what allowed them to stage their revolt.

The CPC continues to serve as a secondary cabinet to the governor, but also liaises with the Corporate Court embassy and UCAS offices. As the executive board, it assigns membership to the government and community relations committee, policy committees (Metroplex Security, Infrastructure, Youth & Education, Port of Seattle, Seattle-NAN Cooperation, etc.), councils, and task forces (Ork Underground District Development is the hot one). The lobbying committee has a considerable amount of power and a direct line to the governor's office, but the shakeup has made the membership committee especially active and important as factions attempt to stack the UCC with their favorites while excising their enemies.

- How was the revolt staged without being undermined by the megas? It seems like the locals were rather quick to act following Villiers' death. Yet there are intelligence corporations operating in this sprawl that were caught surprised by this move.
- Cosmo
- The timing would suggest that there's a very clear prime suspect.
- Kay St. Irregular
- I know you hate Roth, but is it that hard to believe that this could have just happened organically?
- Thorn

## KEEPING THE SPRAWL RUNNING

Many of the Central Planning Committee's members are also contracted to provide utilities and other basic services throughout the sprawl, and it would be unwise to ignore those necessary and indispensable parties to Seattle's continued existence. The most obvious of these is **Gaeatronics**. Without the power it provides, this sprawl ceases to function. Shiawase's reactors and the fusion reactors beneath the ACHE are effectively off the grid, which makes Seattle reliant upon the renewable energy provided by the SSC-based megacorporation. While Leandro Ironwind runs Seattle operations overall, Sunborn Rey was recently brought in from the Sioux to manage power generation and distribution within the sprawl in co-ordination with **Inkan Power** personnel bringing in their energy storage and distribution expertise to upgrade and support the sprawl's power grid.

- There's a tremendous amount of resentment in the corporation and across the Salish that the Corporate Court is likely to downgrade Gaeatronics even though it's the second-largest energy corporation in the world. The corp has met with a number of firms looking to merge or consolidate to help it diversify, but

the sentiment now is that it's all for show. The Court has it in for megacorps based in non-BRA countries like Gaeatronics and Telestrian in the Tír, and what I've heard is that it's not going to bow down to anyone. They can literally turn off the lights for tens or hundreds of millions of people. If the Court wants to fight them, they'll fight back.

- OrkCEO
- That sounds like a losing strategy.
- Sticks
- Not when one of its allies can now bankrupt a couple of AAAs. One White Monday was enough. A second in twenty years will cripple Japan for a century.
- Mr. Bonds

## CRACKS IN THE ARMOR

### LESS MEGA, MORE PROBLEMS

Here's the current rundown of the various Ares subsidiaries operating within Seattle:

**Ares Consumer Products:** The branch is sitting pretty after its acquisition of **Starkaf**. The A-rated soykaf corp and marquee of the Kaf Culture is now solely within the hand of Ares. Things haven't changed much yet, but it's a sure bet that this won't last. Ares wants Starkaf to exhibit the same characteristics it always has in terms of quality and service, but that will only last a year or two before quality sinks. Ares hasn't dominated North American consumer sales (outside of Aztlan) because of brand diversity and its unique and distinctive products; like its *Buzz!* and *FantaZack* lines, it's familiarity all the way down, from the boardrooms of the less-important subsidiaries and across the world from Seattle to Mumbai to Cape Town. Starkaf is going to be global, but it's already lagging behind **Quaf** (Aztechnology) and Kong Wal-Mart's distribution of **Soybucks** products.

**Ares Arms:** Ares Arms has a number of factories in and around the sprawl, and the Seattle office is often more successful in making deals in Asia than the Asian offices. Credit tends to go to Karen King, as usual for anything in Seattle, but also to Javince Goorin and Blayden Dezi, who are the best Ares has when it comes to Asia. That said, Ares Arms Seattle has been in crisis mode following yet another instance of Ares, and Ares Arms specifically, snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. Not only was Ares immediately ready to capitalize on **Baihu Corporation's** demise, but they also had forewarning and may have even been integral to its ultimate end according to Brokerage X sources. Ares was finally going to get the Asian jewel in its crown, right until that didn't happen. Instead, **Terracotta Arms** walked away with virtually all of Baihu, and Ares was left to suffer a massive loss of face and nuyen in China. Even more embarrassing, **Renraku** is using what it acquired from the Chinese to expand into the Philippines and Southeast Asia, where Japanacorps typically aren't welcome and where Ares is virtually absent.



- What's with the intel? Was BX wrong, or is there something else afoot?
- Cosmo
- The intel was solid. Everything fell into place regarding the corp's collapse, but at the end of the day Renraku's Terracotta subsidiary carried the remains while Ares Arms' delegation was left wondering what had happened. It's rather frustrating because a lot of people took a bath on that one. The ones who didn't ... disappeared.
- Mr. Bonds
- This settled a very old debt.
- Orange Queen

Since then, blame and suspicion have been considerable, and there are plenty of people within Ares Arms who want to go to war. It's mostly this, but it's a lot of things that have been brewing since Excalibur, the TRO project, and other frustrations within the office. Time used to be that you never saw a non-Ares weapon in Seattle.

**AresSpace:** Coordinating with Ares Services, AresSpace's operations and subsidiaries bring a great deal of airfreight into and out of Sea-Tac. Ares' many subsidiaries own the logistics and transportation market in and around Seattle. The AresSpace execs are happy, but they're never *that* happy. **American Airlines** and **Qantas Airlines** are big players in Seattle airfreight, but the looming specter of Vancouver and the massive **Wuxing Worldwide Services** port under construction isn't far from their minds.

**Ares Services: Ares Global Entertainment** dominates this subsidiary, but **Mercury Express** is close behind after cementing its expansion throughout the region. **NBS** has been promoting **Knight Errant** and its transition in Seattle, but that's an exception in its faceless but familiar media when contrasted with competition from so many other operations in the sprawl and Vancouver and Cara'Sir/Portland breathing down Seattle's neck with their own attempts to draw media investments. The deal between **Amalgamated Studios** discussed earlier with **Gaeatronics** is on hold, with the latter mounting a heavy campaign fighting the Court's leanings to downgrade it to A-rating. AS is looking for suitors and partners, making the media industry even hotter. **VisionQuest**, **Brilliant Genesis**, **EarthWurm Media**, the **Atlantean Foundation** (the world's largest book publisher), **Wind Speaker**, and other shops are all seeing their value rise just on principle.

## CROSS PURPOSES

There's also the matter of some old business rearing its head once more. Representing Gavilan Ventures on the Ares board allowed Nicholas Aurelius to remain in Seattle to oversee his troops and the conquered territories of **Cross Applied Electronics** ("CAE") and the rest of **CATCo**'s holdings in the Northwest—on both sides of the Pacific. CATCo had made inroads into areas that Ares has never had success, especially Russia and Asia. What it seems now is that while playing Damien Knight and the rest of the board as **Gavilan Ventures**' proxy, and while increasing his ownership stake, Young Nick was facilitating Ares' demise.

It should be noted that Ares' conquest of Cross was brutal, and it destroyed more than it took. What Ares did take was more for vanity than for utility, as can be observed with the fact that **CAE** and **Cross Matrix Technologies** (CMT) have spent over a decade languishing. While CMT's problems rest in large part on the seemingly endless litigation (fueled, ironically, with Ares' cash from its purchases of other Cross assets), CAE just fell under the radar. No one from Cross was even at the Everett headquarters opening. However, it has been busy right under Karen King's nose. It seems that Nicholas, rest his soul, took his lessons on subterfuge from someone even more devious than the Seraphim and Knight's Unseen.

The stories about Ares' war with **Proteus AG** in 2063 have taken on mythological status, but there is one thing that is certain: Proteus was operating within **CATCo** without the Seraphim's knowledge, and since Ares took over Cross' northern Pacific assets, those people found a patron in Nicholas to continue exploiting a megacorporation's size against it. It turns out to be enemy action and not incompetence that Ares completely missed the boat in developing a name brand line of commlink in spite of controlling **CMT**, **CAE**, **Apple Personal Products** (APP), and its entire Silicon Valley portfolio—all corporations that have for decades manufactured personal and consumer-oriented computing devices.

## JAPAN AGAINST THE WORLD

The decision by the big three Japanacorps (MCT, Renraku, and Shiawase) to declare a sort of détente beyond Imperial Japan's borders in order to resurrect their dominance over the global economy has resulted in great success, especially for MCT. However, that doesn't mean that everything is wine and roses. One of the conflicts that is still vibrating in Seattle is Renraku's takeover of the **Confederate Broadcasting Company** during MCT's global expansion and jump to the number one spot among the Big Ten. Even as late as our recent compilation of corporate briefings (see *Market Panic*), control of CBC was in flux. It matters in Seattle because Seattle is the second-largest media market in North America after Los Angeles when aggregating entertainment, news, information, and media technologies. **CBC** also happens to be investing in **QuickSense**, the social media app created by a team of **Microdeck** programmers that allows users to broadcast live simsense feeds instead of chatting over AR or communicating over VR. The *QuickSense* beta has recently rolled out in Seattle and will probably be available in major sprawls by year's end if they can surmount or bypass certain legal challenges.

The other reason that Seattle matters to CBC is that Renraku's takeover is linked to political meddling by UCAS officials. Given President Colloton's favoring Renraku in the past, MCT suspects that it exploited political relations in the Atlanta headquarters and the spies in **SIS**, the intelligence corporation that had CBC as its largest client. The spy shop is also joining Renraku, but it has a large office in Seattle (mainly due to its media market). While MCT isn't likely to go after Renraku directly, Seattle is the best market to attack SIS and Colloton in retaliation.

The Japanacorps are also about to make things interesting in Seattle with the local offices of the four Korean corporations that were recently upgraded to AA status by the Corporate Court: **Hyundai**, **Samyung**, **Kwonsham**, and **Yang Su**. Seattle



has a long history as a focal point for Japanese-Korean conflicts, but with **Yakashima's** acquisition of **Daiatsu**, the pool of Japanacorps is diminishing. This is a severe blow to their honor and reputation that comes alongside **UA**'s takeover of the **PacRim Bank**, and the smaller megacorps—namely **Monobe** and **Yakashima**—want blood. Literally.

It's also worth noting that MCT's purchase of the **Apep Consortium** has made it perhaps the biggest player in Seattle's magic scene. Few people think about it, but Seattle has become a major thaumaturgical research destination thanks to the many publicly accessible research libraries, including those of the **University of Washington**, **Seattle University**, **Apep Consortium**, **Atlantean Foundation**, **Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research**, **Astral Space Preservation Society**, **Illuminates of the New Dawn**, and the **Sovereign Tribal Council**. As cold-blooded as Apep is, it's also benefiting from this opportunity and is leading the construction of a single library for MCT's entire magical division somewhere in Kirkland.

The Apep sale provided a massive influx of nuyen to its owners, most of which still have minority interests in the corp, with the Swiss-based law firm of **Stark, Theissen, and Van der Mer** already spending that money like drunken sailors. They recently purchased Seattle largest law firm of Roth Coie, and two of Vancouver's largest firms. They're more active in the shadows, sending runners all over the region, as well as to Denver, New Orleans, Chicago, Hong Kong, and Constantinople.

Speaking of MCT and weird law firms, the French firm of **Schmidt, Iakob and Ley** recently bought into Seattle. Schmidt practices actual simony (spiritual contracts) and "techno-simony" (contracting with AI and other Matrix beings). It's already taken Microdeck as a client, and it has represented technomancers and spirits in legal (and extralegal) challenges to MCT's and NeoNET's practices.

## AZTECHNOLOGY'S LOCUS

- Interesting choice of terms.
- Frosty

The Azzies have a pronounced interest in Seattle as a processing hub for consumer products and foodstuffs bound for Aztlan and beyond, as so much of the food it gets from Horizon and the NAN comes from the Pacific Northwest (especially, and especially disconcertingly for the Azzies, Tír Tairngire). The reality is that the drought and Atlacoya Blight that struck Aztlan have left them, once net exporters of consumer goods, especially foodstuffs, neck-deep and upside-down in drek. They need to provide adequate resources to satisfy local populations within the country as well as satisfy the markets that have become accustomed to cheap, premade Azzie shit—er, food—from Athabaska to Zambia. While the corporation knows this, it is becoming a secret it is trying desperately to keep from even itself. Goodwill is an insufficient substitute to debts and reality. MCT is already ahead in magical services and products, and their cooperation with other Japanacorps has put a significant dent into the Big A's heavy industries and chemical markets.

So what we have here is an enormous consumer that happens to be Seattle's best friend. All of those raw products, especially foodstuffs, need to be processed. Given its strategic importance

both as a central location and as an open market, Seattle has become indispensable to Aztechnology. That has also made Seattle number one hotspot with a bullet for any and every person who wants to take the Big A down. Fortunately for Aztechnology, this financial machinery is under the aegis of **Bancomex**, for there is no bank on Earth that is more skilled at laundering mega-nuyen than the bank used by cartels for over a century.

Aztechnology has always shown a unique interest in Seattle. It used Sea-Tac as the base of operations to rescue personnel stranded on The Spindle over twenty-five years ago, it was one of the first sprawls to acquire a major teocalli/pyramid complex, and as orbital scuttlebutt continues to insist, it has constantly remained within the footprint of at least three spysats. Now shit has gotten real because all of the Azzies' schemes and deals have made Seattle literally invaluable to the country. It's secretly acquiring as much foodstuffs as possible from nearby sources in the NAN, Tír Tairngire, and Seattle itself to hide the ugly truth that Aztlan cannot feed itself, let alone the rest of the world, with cheap and disposable foodstuffs made primarily of soy and krill and other manufactured goods.

See, they're also hiding an uncomfortable truth: *The world never needed soystuffs*. Tír Tairngire's own Willamette Valley could itself produce enough foods to feed North America west of the Mississippi. The Azzies are perhaps the leading manufacturer of the bullshit story that the world couldn't feed itself without soy-stuffs. Right now, it produces quite a bit of overpriced, boutique "real" food for the upper classes. Booze, too, through its wineries. The only thing keeping the world from enjoying real pistachios or berries isn't demand, it's *perception* of demand. But that was before. Now the drought and blights hitting the continent have made the truth a lie, and so now we live that lie because the western world *is* starving.

The Azzies don't give Fuck One about that, though. They just need to provide foodstuffs to their people and the consumers who visit **Stuffer Shacks** and **Carrefour** stores across the world and consume **Quetzal-Cola** and other **Deliciosa**-owned foodstuffs and drinks at their restaurants and retail sites. They can't increase prices. Not now. They won a war and have basked in the glory and increased consumption that comes from being on the winning side. To increase prices would be to admit that they've over-leveraged their debts and that the war cost them their ability to feed themselves and the world. So they'll spend themselves into debt and import as much foodstuffs as is physically possible into Seattle for processing and redistribution—anything to hide reality.

- Q-Cola is firmly entrenched in Seattle thanks to Deliciosa's ownership of so many restaurant chains and cross-promotions with its popular foodstuffs, with Ares' own Buzz Cola and related brands close behind. That doesn't keep Coca-Cola and a few other drinkstuffs corps from trying like mad to penetrate.
- 2XL

Given the importance of Seattle to Aztechnology, it's worth noting what **Horizon** and **Saeder-Krupp** are doing, given their frequent and fractious relationships with the Azzies. And the thing they are doing is submitting. Horizon is acting invisibly behind the scenes, in part because it's trying to minimize its relationship with **Aztechnology** via **Wind River Corporation** and



other agricultural concerns. However, it's also because Horizon's largest subsidiaries have significant local competition ranging from **Federated-Boeing** to **Regency MegaMedia** and **Microdeck**.

## ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE

NeoNET Northwest is bleeding out, a dead corporation no one has put down yet. Samantha Villiers' body wasn't cold before the entire Northwest Division began unraveling as its competitors began trying to poach everything and everyone they could. Unsurprisingly, Shiawase and Renraku have been the most aggressive raiders, but here's where things get good.

The most ruthless and unexpected heel turn came from within as Samantha Roth, one of Ms. Villiers' fixers, abandoned ship and made haste for **Spinrad Industries**. With Spin's moves to consolidate and acquire several corporations moving along, and given her own background, first impressions were that she was headed for **Regency MegaMedia** or **Sol Media**, which Spin has effectively acquired after a long struggle by Johnny. Instead, she reports directly to Johnny Spinrad while overseeing Spin's operations in the Pacific Rim. In return she handed Spinrad a treasure trove of information that was apparently sufficient to help him close the deal to take control of **Aegis Cognito**.

- That information included, but was not limited to, Samantha Villiers' vouchsafe with Trans-Latvia Enterprises' owners. Not to mention that Roth has an eidetic memory and is able to provide Johnny with every secret she has ever had access to.
- Miles Lanier
- Including yours.
- Puck
- Especially mine.
- Miles Lanier

Obviously, you say, Cara Villiers responded immediately to such treachery. You would be wrong. She already has one foot out the door, and the other is on a banana peel named Project Vulcan. NeoNET is bleeding, it has since lost **Manadyne** almost as quickly as it acquired the Boston-based magecorp (although not before it spun off **Mangadyne** as a separate Seattle-based Matrix subsidiary in line with its original functions), and it's really more a question of when and not if she decides to sell her shares and bail for whatever in the world a middle-aged billionaire/former runner does. Taking all of that into account, she has shown no interest or even time for vendettas. That isn't stopping the other zombies at NeoNET who are doing their jobs while waiting for the inevitable axe to fall on them.

- I'd buy the Caribbean islands.
  - Kane
  - I'll bite. Which ones, Kane?
  - Pistons
  - All of them.
  - Kane
- :: Pistons rolls her eyes ::**

Realistically, though, we've seen this game play out before with her father jumping ship and moving on to another independent venture. The question is whether Cara Villiers follows her father or decides to venture out on her own. Meanwhile, business suffers. Local and regional cybertech and Matrix firms are biting at NeoNET's heels. **Nightengale**'s clinics are losing traction to **Spin Shops**, **Body+Tech**, **Emerald Biotech**, and others. **Microdeck** and the locally belligerent **Ares Matrix Services** have been taking chunks out of its Matrix operations, and **UOL** is on the verge of snatching the Seattle grid from NeoNET and connecting it with consumers in Asia, Africa, and the Americas. NeoNET is being further undermined due to Cale Winters losing his own company (**Mangadyne**) while keeping his sister's (**Manadyne**) when it escaped (or was pushed out of) NeoNET. Steve Ridgemont at **Warpdrive Systems** has approached Cale, since both are deckers with axes to grind against NeoNET and have money to burn.

- James Booth's old firm, Benton & Glakowitz, is the firm representing CATCo against Ares in the consolidated Charlotte litigation. Booth is the CEO and majority owner of UOL and has personally met with Jean-Marie Cross repeatedly in the last few months. He has a sense for when something big is happening, and it seems like he's picked a side as well.
- Mr. Bonds
- Charlotte litigation?
- Ma'Fan
- Nothing much. Just a trial over hundreds of billions of nuyen between Ares and what's left of CATCo that could end one or both for good.
- Mr. Bonds

## VANCOUVER RISING

Compared to its competition, **Wuxing** is sitting pretty just north of Seattle, which continues being necessary and indispensable for the Hong Kong-based megacorp's financial, shipping, and consumer goods industries. However, Wuxing isn't the only big-name player operating in Seattle out of Vancouver or with a stake in building "friendly" competition between the two sprawls. Naturally, Wuxing didn't make friends with the local politicos when it opted for Vancouver to host the Skytower West and by extension its headquarters for western hemisphere operations. It doubly impacted Wuxing that the governor owns **Brackhaven Investments**, one of **Fidelity Mutual**'s largest regional competitors. Wuxing firmly believes in competition as a means of growth for both cities, and so that has resulted in **Kong-Wal-Marts** sprouting up or taking the place of stores acquired through its takeover of **Kroger**, **Safeway**, and the local **G. Meyers** supermarket and distribution chain.

The second-biggest Vancouver kid is **Universal Omnitech**, which is a familiar face among Seattleites and Seattle runners. There are numerous changes occurring at UA, not least of which is the shock felt across the Pacific Rim upon its successful acquisition of the **Pacific Rim Bank** in Japan. PacRim Bank is the home bank for every AAA and AA Japanacorp, surety for their own financial assets and the combined tool used for Japan Inc.'s attempted return to greatness. Now it's in the hands of *gaijin*,



and the worst of all of them as a further insult. The benefit to UA and Thomas Roxborough is clear—he has the Japanacorps by the balls and knows exactly how and when to twist to cause maximum harm. However, this wasn't enough for him.

**Universal Omnitech** is currently a painful thorn in the Azzies' side. The Azzies have every intention of burying UA and its majority shareholder, Roxborough. This is in spite of UA making itself indispensable to them through **Ingersoll & Berkeley**, the foodstuff producer and processor best situated to exploit its recent troubles. Appealing to fellow PPG members Wuxing, Evo, and Horizon (all of which would like to get a finger in alongside Roxy's clenched-fist control of the PacRim Bank) all but ensures UA will keep its AA status through a combination of extortion and spite. It also paints a giant target on the corporation, especially on its Seattle operations.

Finally, it should be noted that Aztechnology is also a member of the PPG, and Wuxing doesn't take sides in disputes unless it can specifically gain from the fight. Sharon Chiang-Wu has shown no love for Roxy or UA, but that has changed following the collapse of the **TIUOPRBPRCUKO** deal and UA's acquisition of Pacific Rim Bank.

- Samantha Villiers' claims about his role in the Crash could further make Roxy's life extremely unpleasant as his competitors and the Japanacorps scramble to destroy him before he can do the same to them. Because make no mistake, his recent successes in business and corporeality aside, he's a walking dead man who would absolutely scorch the earth upon his death just to prove he could.
- The Smiling Bandit

## FAMILY BUSINESS

**Athabaskan Oil** (AthOil) is one of those major Seattle corporations no one thinks to give a second look. It's not because AthOil has extensive operations in the sprawl (its only major asset is the Tacoma refinery it received in the **Chevron** acquisition), but because Seattle is where it does so much of its business and, more importantly, holds all of its money. Given the difficulty of reaching even the populated parts of Athabaska much of the year, many of the deals are conducted in Seattle. Above all, however, is that AthOil's true owners are in Seattle. To summarize, the Athabaskan Council nationalized ownership and control of all of the oil and mineral rights within its borders and extending as far as legally allowed into oceanic and sub-oceanic shelves. It then privatized the whole enterprise as Athabaskan Oil and now distributes dividends and shares similarly to PCC residential shares. Officially, the Delacroix Family controls the corporation, but it's suspected that non-Athabaskans actually own the majority of AthOil, hence its form of incorporation.

- I'm proud of the changes that I forced Chevron to make, and I hope that AthOil continues evolving its mining operations and expanding into other energy fields.
- Orange Queen
- I'd worry more about her access here if she didn't keep giving us interesting info.
- Glitch

The Delacroix Family is basically a large gang of political cronies, schemers, and outright crooks. It has, through marriage and other arrangements, weaseled into every major Anglo and Native commercial and political family while also taking a piece of the black market and shadows of Athabaska. But as I said, they are not the owners of AthOil. Nor is the Athabaskan Council the *majority* owner of its biggest source of revenue. That honor goes to a group of Native American corporations and individuals, with **Gaeatronics** commanding the largest percentage and carrying the most influence.

Outside of illicit substances/sims, arms and energy stand out as the most ruthless global industries. The Delacroix have gotten where they are by being extremely ruthless in dealing with other apex predators, but they and the Athabaskans needed financing to form AthOil because its formation and early years were fraught with threats. The last men and corps standing among those investors are a who's who of NAN business leaders. Gaeatronics loves AthOil. In public it's a punching bag to demonize. In private, those oil and mineral sales built all of those zero-emission power plants along the Pacific coast. AthOil is also the premiere source of kickbacks and bribery among NAN officials.

With money and power comes more money and more power, and AthOil has expanded into the rest of the NAN, especially Trans-Polar Aleut and Tsimshian, and further into the oceans. As mentioned elsewhere, they're involved in a bit of a proxy fight with various Russians over operations beneath the Arctic Circle. They are propping up the Tsimshian government on graft and a prayer because they won't let it collapse, but they are also undermining the Polar Council and arming Thule terrorists. As I said, energy is a ruthless business. All of that money flows into and out of Seattle. AthOil and its competitors hire runners for everything from datasteals and wetwork to bodyguarding some of the richest people you'll ever meet on their biannual shopping trips to the big city. Now that the secret is open to JackPoint about the owners, business is only going to increase.

- I've never encountered such bumpkins in all of my life. However, they pay extremely well, especially for novelty.
- Mihoshi Oni
- Aztlan was originally a NAN state, controlled by a corporation founded for money laundering purposes. Pemex is also the largest corporate operation in Athabaska.  
Oh. Oh my.
- Mr. Bonds
- Francis Murkowski-Delacroix, a fixer who happens to occupy the corner office at AthOil Seattle, is a peculiar fellow. He's part of the more political arm of the Family that negotiated with the Athabaskans to keep a lot of the Anglos from being kicked out, and both names carry a lot of weight throughout the Pacific Northwest. He was educated in Kyoto and DeeCee and earned a law degree from Willamette in Tír Tairngire, so he's not just some empty suit legacy hire. He's managed to weave some ridiculously complicated deals in part from having been trained under the Tír's old and ludicrously complicated legal system.
- Thorn



## HOMETOWN HEROES

It's impossible to discuss corporate intrigue in Seattle without touching on **Federated-Boeing** and **Microdeck**, the most important corporations in the sprawl. The former is an AA-rated megacorporation and the latter is an A-rated corporation that would love to break into the ranks of the AAs without sacrificing its identity and, more importantly, the Gates family's control. Federated-Boeing has a significant amount of the Pacific market, and while Renraku reaped the lion's share of Baihu's corpse, it seems they left some choice bits for Federated-Boeing in the form of exclusive access to raw materials and ownership of heavy construction facilities in China and Southeast Asia. It is suspected that this is due to F-B's intelligence and shadow network being responsible for undermining Ares Arms' takeover and Renraku's acquisition of a corporation that F-B itself couldn't buy but that it still wanted to deny to one of its largest competitors. Beyond that, Federated-Boeing Marine has exploited its membership in the Pacific Prosperity Group and long relationship with the Salish-Shidhe Council to weasel its way into construction and operation of the joint Makah-Az-technology overhaul of the old U.S. Navy bases across Puget Sound from Seattle proper.

- Once is a mistake. Twice is a coincidence. Three times is enemy action.
- Balladeer
- The evidence is certainly mounting, and it seems to be pointed directly at DeeCee.
- Sticks
- No one seems to mention how Wuxing was so blasé about Baihu's destruction and takeover.
- Stone
- Not directly, but that deal cited in *Market Panic* that led to Sharon Chiang-Wu's usurping control almost certainly involved Baihu.
- Lei Kung

It's also not likely a coincidence that F-B's newfound support of Renraku comes after MCT acquired **Sikorsky-Bell**, which was F-B's AA-rated competitor longer than any other in the aerospace industry. With the other longtime West Coast aerospace corp, **Lockheed**, firmly in bed with Horizon and the NAN via PCC subsidiaries, F-B and its second-oldest competitor, **Aerospatiale**, are the last free aerospace megacorporations standing. Market analysts already expect Aerospatiale to build deals with other NEEC members Maersk or Regulus to protect itself from the Megacorp Audit and encroach into F-B's stronghold in the Pacific Rim, especially Northern Pacific and Arctic activities. Naturally, this aggression will not stand. As a member of the PPG, F-B has a number of firms it can collaborate or consolidate with if competition comes to that. The most obvious member is actually **Trans-Orbital**, which has no chance of keeping its AA status even in light of being on the Manhattan Development Council. Merging with F-B could at least allow its executives to maintain some dignity rather than being consumed by Horizon Transglobal, which is already pushing hard for the sale, and it

would give F-B a serious presence in space. F-B has also been reaching out to **KondOrchid**, which would give F-B great shipping and logistics resources beyond its reliance on Wuxing as well as expanding into the South American defense market, where F-B has never been able to get a foothold thanks to Ares Arm's iron grip. KO was granted a reprieve from being destroyed during the tempo crisis, but it still has a target on its back. F-B could help fend off the Azies politically, and to be honest, few industries synergize like drugs and arms. Given its behavior and allies across Asia, F-B hardly has clean hands. Another major ally could end up being **Tanamyre Resources**, which is among the many megacorps that serve as de facto nationalization platforms and arguably lack the transnational presence necessary for megacorp status. F-B could help Tanamyre compete in Asia and creates markets in the Americas. Meanwhile, its engineers at **Commonwealth Aerospace Systems** and **Commonwealth Armaments Solutions** would drool at the opportunities to collaborate with **Loral-Vought** and other F-B subsidiaries.

- If they team up, they could very likely take control of Ares Australia and possibly more.
- Baka Dabora

**Microdeck**, on the other hand, has quietly but effectively rolled through all of the challenges and changes it's faced as the Matrix was born and has evolved. It hasn't gotten into flashy markets or made serious enemies, but that has also kept it in the shadow of its pre-Crash greatness, both in size and market domination. The current generation of the Gates family hasn't appeared to care about the past, however, and is content to produce Matrixware that just works. This isn't entirely true, however, although it's unclear if the public stance was a ruse or there has actually been a shift in mindset. The corporation has benefited from its ultra-secretive support of the technomancer community from the beginning, collaborating with the **Undernet Alliance** and **KivaNet**, and severing its business with Horizon's **Singularity** immediately upon learning of its treatment of technomancers. While unable to grant SINs itself, Microdeck has vouched for a number of runaway technomancers, AIs, and even a few metasapient in order for them to acquire UCAS SINs under the Dunkelzahn Amendment. The intent has been to develop software and hardware with a more holistic and integrated approach to functioning in the Matrix, to flow with the data (and arguably, the Deep Resonance) rather than against it.

It's this mentality that led to the development of *QuickSense*, which is a way for people to communicate via simsense clips. It exploits many of the developments of the technology, which has arguably stagnated since the mid-'50s and the unfulfilled promises of PolyPOV, and the advances in real-time editing to let people communicate more fully than the archaic use of icons and text that has existed for millennia.

- Finally, real-time simsense. Wasn't Mangadyne working on this years ago?
- Slamm-0!
- Yeah, well ... so were a lot of other people.
- Mika



Beyond *QuickSense*, however, Microdeck has been busy making deals and collaborating on secret projects, mostly with corporations that tend to fall under the radar of the megacorps—even where the megacorps own those corporations. DeeCee-based Matrix services provider **UOL** has financed a considerable amount of research into constructing robust and bulletproof hosts and architecture systems, especially for its operations in Africa and other regions where the systems can't be quickly repaired or replaced without highly technical personnel. In many ways, this follows the thinking that **Erika** was well-known for before it went all-in with **Transys** and **Novatech** to make NeoNET systems that dominate the market through the corporation's sheer size (Microdeck execs know this game better than most).

Microdeck has also provided contract programming and systems design for **Ares Matrix Service** subsidiaries like **APP**, **Cross Matrix Technologies**, and **Cross Advanced Electronics**, among others. Something interesting to note is that the people in those corporations tend to be former CATCo employees, who have as a group seemed to suddenly perk up after more than a decade as zombies. The crown jewel of these projects is a joint APP/Microdeck commlink and OS based on the *QuickSense* model. It's intriguing, not least of all because before Crash 2.0 and the acquisition of CAE and CMT, Ares' Apple subsidiary was a reliable cash cow producing popular portable and wearable tech—commlinks, pocket secretaries, HUDs, and portable sim-decks—that would become integral components of the UMS 2.0-enabled commlinks we use today. One look at the market, however, shows that Ares is barely considered a player in the Matrix field. Something has changed, and Sharon Aurelius (Nick's sister, who remained at Ares Matrix Services when the rest of her family joined CATCo) now oversees AMS from Seattle and is focused on these recent changes and activities, especially following her brother's recent death. This could lead to a more permanent arrangement if Aurelius and Karen King can help it, but they are also wary that it may backfire like the CATCo takeovers. At the same time, Sharon undoubtedly has her eyes on Nick's old office, now occupied by Karen King.

- King has been an effective general for a long time, but generals are still replaceable.
- Kane

The Megacorporate Audit is having a significant effect on Seattle-area business. The smaller businesses are also becoming more agitated and active, either wanting to get out from under the thumb of a megacorp or finding a savior (and maybe a quick fortune) by selling out. Down south, **Telestrian Industries Corporation** has already made a deal with the devil, as it sees Aztechnology, to stay alive in return for delivering as much export product as possible to Aztechnology Northwest for processing in Seattle. It's also looking at regional corporations to acquire in order to preserve its own threatened AA rating. Strangely, it's almost purposely avoided talks with Gaeatronics, but has communicated with the **Emerald City Group** (a local powerhouse combining an airline, security, sales & distribution, design & architecture, biotech, and the **Bank of Seattle**), **Zor Entertainment**, **Eibus Biomechanics** (Boise), **Kyusei Medical** (Spokane), **Pacific Cybernetics** (Vancouver), and **High Plains Coding** (Sioux).

## THE NEW GODS

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Because of its strategic importance, especially in light of it being the only port where the Business Recognition Accords are given their full weight on this side of the Pacific Rim (at least, north of the Equator), the Corporate Court maintains an embassy in downtown to ensure that none of the extraterritorial cockfights escalate in light of the fragile equilibrium that keeps the sprawl, and northern Pacific Rim, humming. While the UCC serves as a type of model UN, the Court On High uses this office to remind the peons who their masters really are.

Additionally, the expanding bureaucracy of the Corporate Court and the Z-OG Bank needed space for themselves, and now everyone is here: GOD deckers, bank examiners, Interpol agents, C5 analysts, and lawyers. So many lawyers. At the top of the pile is Ambassador Robert Johansson. After retiring from the FBI, Johansson settled in Seattle and kept himself busy for ten years as a liaison between the feds and every kind of spy, runner, and scumbag around the Pacific Northwest. Now that he's sworn fealty to the Court, naturally he feels right at home among the politicians and executives.





# THE CLUMSY ARM OF THE LAW

## POSTED BY: BLACK KNIGHT

The law in Seattle comes in three flavors for shadowrunners to worry about: city, federal, and correctional. At the city level it's Knight Errant and they've settled in nicely, though Brackhaven's recent issues have shaken things up a bit. The federal law consists of UCAS federal authorities, the various alphabet agencies, and the Metroplex Guard, who all make life in the shadows more interesting in their own unique ways. Correctional services is still the realm of our old friends at Lone Star, though it's their Correctional Services department, rather than Security Services, but that isn't stopping them from creating interesting situations for the shadows.

## THE ERRANT KNIGHTS

The pawns have settled into their new city over the past half-decade. Early reprisals and operations by their opposition were plentiful but failed to create the schism they desired. It pushed millions in cash into the shadows, but failed to put a dent into the deal between Damien Knight and Kenneth Brackhaven. Since then, Knight Errant has settled into a state of business as usual, developing a standard operating procedure for Seattle, that while similar to other cities in some ways, as a whole is unique to the Emerald City.

While I could bore everyone to death with a manual-like treatise on this, I will instead break it down in a far more user-friendly format for the intended audience.

- Did he just insult us?
- Slamm-O!
- There's still a lot of cop in him. But he's firmly on our side of the law.
- Stone

## BASIC TRAINING

First, let's take a look at who Knight Errant is. They're a security corporation with city contracts and private contracts all over the world. They're a subsidiary of the top arms megacorp. They provide the longest basic training course of any private security firm and they require it of *all* officers, even those that come from former military or security backgrounds. They have absolutely no concern for anything but the bottom line.

In order to protect assets that are undercover, Knight Errant doesn't release exact census details, but their world population is in the millions. That's not all boots on the streets, but they are the

majority. Being worldwide provides the Seattle offices with connections and assets to track, surveil, and capture shadowrunners across the globe.

Having Ares backing Knight Errant is like having a five-thousand-kilo gorilla backing up a five-hundred-kilo gorilla. KE doesn't just get equipment at discount rates; they have access to large chunks of Ares' global network of resources. Ares doesn't give them free rein, they're still a highly compartmentalized megacorporation, but they open up access to their resources quite easily. Members of Ares' GOD squad working out of KE precincts is so commonplace even shiny-badged rookies don't gape for long.

Their high expectations during training make the officers they put on the street the best in the business. The indoctrination they go through during that training makes them the most loyal. When they hit the street, it's all about making the badge, and therefore the company, look good. This style was perfect when they came to town and needed to show everyone how they were going to be different than the Star.

But eventually it's all about the contract. The money the Metroplex government pays to KE to act as their police force. Money they need to use to pay officers, maintain equipment, cover corporate expenses, and still make a profit. KE needs to show concern for the laws they enforce, but in the end if a law costs them too much, you can trust that the boys in black are going to turn a blind eye to benefit the bottom line, or cut a few corners to trim the expenses.

Next, let's look at who they are definitely not. They are not traditional police. They are not on the side of the law. They are not beholden to the government that pays them. They are not the good guys.

KE enforces laws that the corporation is paid to enforce and officers have that idea drilled into them over and over during their training. They aren't there to protect and serve, they are there to enforce and control. Unlike traditional police who focus as much effort on prevention as they do on policing, KE doesn't create programs to educate the youth, doesn't create registries for sex offenders, and doesn't care much for preventing crimes. Do they prevent thousands of them every day? Hell, yes, but that's out of fear, not out of special effort.

- We see this a lot when they catch runners and then use them. The runners didn't exist in the first place and Knight Errant gets some quick deniable assets. It's actually better to burn your fake SIN and go in SINless than to get tagged with the fake, because that ties you to the system, and KE has to do more work to cover up turning you to the dim side.
- Stone





Thus, they are not on the side of the law; they *are* the law. They don't particularly want to stop crime in Seattle, they want to stop criminals from committing more crimes. A law must be broken for it to truly be enforced.

When it comes to the enforcement of those laws, they are somewhat beholden to the government for creating these laws in the first place, but in the end, Knight Errant is primarily beholden to Ares. Seattle may refuse to renew a contract and not let KE be their cops anymore, but they're still going to pay what's owed to KE, else they answer to that five-thousand-kilo gorilla. Knight Errant just needs to keep turning a profit. If they start losing money because they are too focused on catching criminals and not paying enough attention to how much each capture costs and whether that money is in the budget, they're in trouble.

That's why they're not the good guys. They aren't there for the little old lady who had her purse stolen. They're there to catch or kill the criminal behind the crime while staying within budget.

This doesn't mean every pawn on the streets of Seattle is running after criminals with a little nuyen tally running in their HUD or that case files have an ARO with a current cost ticker. The black coat on the street is truly just a pawn. They're the foot soldiers out chasing down criminals and looking into crimes. You don't start counting beans until you get promoted, and only those with the right mentality will move up in the ranks. Years and collars don't get you promotions; they may get you pay bumps and bragging rights, but knowing the true purpose of a corporation is what earns you rank.

That leads me to the basic rundown on the structure of Seattle operations. Most everyday runners are going to come across two types of officers: beat cops and detectives. I bet everyone out there thought I would say HTR or SWAT, but you don't run into those guys—they run into you. Runners need to know what it's going to take to work with or around the normal cops, because there are only two options when dealing with the other guys: run or gun.

The everyday Seattle beat Knight Errant officer isn't some donut-eating sloth. Underneath those long black-and-red coats and the visored helmets are keen-eyed wolves out looking for their next meal. Criminals are their prey, and they don't care about the crime. They aren't the brightest, but they're tough, trained, and have limited ego when push comes to shove, so backup is most definitely on the way. Though they sound terrifying, they are still human. Once that changes we're all screwed, but for now they still fill that body armor with more meat than metal. If you stay under the radar or can talk a good game,

they'll let you slide. They aren't as bribable as the Star was, but paying them off isn't impossible. It just usually takes a little more research on the individual officer to know what they really want—nuyen isn't always king with a pawn.

Beat cops always come in pairs. If there isn't a pair in front of you, you just don't see the other officer. Patrols in Redmond and Puyallup, as rare as they are, run in quads. It's one of the reasons there are fewer patrols in those spots. In places like Bellevue and Downtown, where the powerful like their services hidden, Knight Errant doesn't care. They don't change the officers into some fancy uniform. It's still intimidation black and can't-see-the-perps-blood red.

The detectives have earned a chance to actually dig into crimes rather than just respond and react. They'll usually come to your door asking questions that you don't necessarily want to answer. Too many runners I've known react with the shoot-first mentality. While KE isn't the cops, they still act like it when it comes to killing, or even just shooting, one of their own. The key to working with detectives is evasion. First and best option: Don't give them a reason to come to your door. If they end up outside your door, run out the back. If you have to talk, chat nicely and get them to go away. The detectives in Seattle have so many cases, and they knock on so many doors, it's easy to skate under their radar. Fire a shot and you can guarantee you've just given them the best lead they've had all day.

The best thing about being a detective is getting out of the long black coat. The worst thing about being a detective is getting out of the long black coat. The KE coat is some primo armor. Detectives wear whatever they need to based on their current case, but that rarely provides the same level of protection as what they wore on the beat.

Being a detective in Seattle is when you get the first taste of maintaining the bottom line. The cases you get assigned are often ranked by how important the company thinks they are. It's not up to you to decide which to investigate first; it's up to you to follow the cases at the top of your list. For the detectives who don't like this, their journey up the ranks is done.

- This is a great time to point out the value of a contact in KE's IA office or higher in their ranks. With a few swipes they can move your case way down the list and keep the heat off you.
- Stone

Once you move above detective, you truly see that crime in Seattle is a numbers game. Enforce the law but avoid excessive expenses. Internal Affairs within KE precincts does a lot of number-crunching. If you're a company rigger and you keep los-



ing drones, you're going to find IA breathing down your neck. If you're a company mage and you keep blowing drams and drams of reagents on your craft, you'll get IA visitors. The same goes for HTR and SWAT team members who cause too much collateral damage—or don't get proper records of who really caused the damage.

As for the more specialized officers, you won't find those at every precinct. Knight Errant has hundreds of precincts in Seattle. Specialized units are assigned to specific precincts for a variety of reasons, though centralization for minimum response time is the most likely. This includes, though isn't limited to (because Seattle has dozens of extremely specialized units), SWAT, HTR, CSI, AI, MO, K-9, and RK-9.

SWAT stands for Special Weapons and Tactics, and they're the ones who are going to show up to kick in a door or subdue a hostage situation. They don't negotiate, they initiate.

HTR is the High-Threat Response team, and they come a-calling whenever someone is causing a bit too much havoc. They act a lot like SWAT but with a more mobile style. Most runners end their careers with a run-in with an HTR team.

CSI teams are Crime Scene Investigators. They come in after the fact, gather up all the evidence, and help point others in the right direction. They also have a lot of access to evidence in cases. Evidence that sometimes needs to disappear or have a contaminating spill fall on it in a lab.

AI stands for Arcane Investigations. These units, often just a handful of officers, handle all things magic in nature. They read auras, scan crime scenes, and regularly root around in people's heads without permission. These aren't front-line spellcasters—the SWAT and HTR teams have members who handle that. These are the arcane detectives.

MO is Matrix Operations. They operate from specific precincts and always pair up an MSS with a VOS—that's Matrix Security Specialist and Vehicular Operations Specialist. This way the MSS (their hacker) can be driven around by the VOS (their rigger) and get close enough to eliminate issues from signal degradation.

K-9 and RK-9 are closely related, and both are terrible puns that won't go away. K-9, or canine, units consist of specially trained mundane animals and their handlers. Not always dogs (hence the K-9, rather than canine), these units are the second rarest in the metroplex. Tech handles most of the duties these units traditionally cover, but traditions die hard. RK-9 are the Awakened version of K-9. (Get it? Arcane nine?) The numbers of these units are quickly growing. As fast as they can train critters and cops, they are getting them out in the field. They offer a blend of magic and muscle that can be bred and trained to detect threats that their mundane counterparts cannot.

In Seattle, you've got a great opportunity to meet, interact with, and hopefully outsmart all sorts of interesting Knight Errant employees. The corporate police force of this city does one thing very well for the shadowrunners in Seattle, and that's make sure Darwinian evolution is firmly in play.

## AOO: AREA OF OPERATIONS

I mentioned briefly above that Knight Errant has hundreds of precincts, but that doesn't really communicate the full picture of where they operate in the city. Easiest way to track active Knight Errant precincts is to check out the values of the local proper-

ty. Hiring a corporate police force is supposed to make everything equal when it comes to policing, but we all know that's not the case here in Seattle. Things are at least different than they were in the Lone Star days, but that's not to say they are better. Property value, usually tied to commercial viability or localized income bracket, relates directly to the number of Knight Errant precincts in a given vicinity. Note I said number of *precincts*.

The number of *officers* at said precincts tends to be low because most of those high-value properties have private contracts of their own, some even with Knight Errant, so there's no sense in placing extra bodies where they aren't needed. This is where Knight Errant made an improvement, in terms of fighting crime, on how LS did things. KE increased the number of officers in precincts where there is a greater likelihood of altercations and along the edges of the more valuable regions. These numbers also change frequently as officers are moved around to best allocate resources against current threats. This method has been touted to the public as the reason for such a peaceful Olympic season, but we all know the pile of drek that is.

This change from how Lone Star did things also allowed Knight Errant to shake things up in terms of security ratings for specific areas. They don't use the alphabet system that Lone Star does. Instead they rank using their own system of codes, but the system is easily comparable. The best security is Triple Diamond, then Double Diamond, and just Diamond; below that are Gold, Silver, Copper, and Lead. Seriously, Lead. I'm sure the joke was fully intended. Most of the Districts are given a rank from Gold to Lead, with Diamonds being limited to specific locations, though Downtown is usually given a Diamond ranking.

Last ranking had Downtown as the lone Diamond; Everett, Bellevue, and Outremer as Gold; Snohomish, Renton, Auburn, and Tacoma ranked Silver; Ft. Lewis and the Underground were Copper, the former due to the high incident counts near Puyallup; and Redmond and Puyallup got the uncoveted Lead ranking. Because Knight Errant uses an averaging scale, most of the Districts that touch a Lead area are going to get dragged down. Bellevue actually has more Triple Diamond properties than any other District, but the spots where they touch Redmond rarely rank over Copper.

Now take those rankings and apply what I said earlier. You'll find more precincts and fewer officers per precinct in Triple Diamond zones and the reverse in the Lead areas. Gold is where the balance is at. In Seattle, and for runners, this means Lead zones, especially the Barrens, have officers to throw your way. Quite different than the Star.

Now this might make people think they're kicking in doors all over the Barrens, but we all know that isn't happening. What is happening is a lot of VTOL traffic carrying officers to various locales to quell local issues, mostly gang related, or hauling them over to other precincts to help handle issues there.

A final important point to get out here is that Knight Errant officers never stay at any precinct for more than a year, most cycling through several during that span. KE delivers the line that this keeps their officers always learning new places and never getting complacent. Those of us who jumped around saw that the movement tossed us into hell often enough to keep our skills sharp and kept officers from getting too connected to people in an area.

The line, "They're clients, not people," still haunts my dreams.



## OP: OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE

I intentionally left out the word, “standard,” so that I could talk about both the usual and the not-so-usual. I already pointed out the training and indoctrination that they reach the street with, but after that it’s a seriously steep real-life learning curve full of things they can’t put in handbooks.

Officers work in pairs, assigned to best complement each other physically, mentally, and emotionally. At the detective level it stays the same, but the pairings are tougher because those who get this far tend to be more complex in the latter two categories. Beat cops are given a particular range of the Metroplex to patrol. The size of the area is determined by the area’s rankings and how much extraterritorial property falls within their range. Detectives work out of a precinct and get favored cases based on their proximity to crime scenes, but in the highly mobile world we live in, they often visit areas far afield from their home precinct.

Specialized units each get their own SOP, but I can easily generalize all of them: Contain and eliminate the threat with minimal collateral damage. Whether it’s the Matrix, astral space, or a bank on the corner, the goal is to stop the criminals while causing as little collateral damage as possible. This keeps the costs down on repairs that KE has to pay for if they were caused by their officers. There is always insurance, but best to keep premiums down by minimizing incidents.

The unusual comes with how they manage things like that. The first part comes in their relationship with other private security companies and the locations they are responsible for securing. While Knight Errant will always be responsible for investigating a crime, stopping the crime in progress in a place with private security can be tricky. Officially, officers are to assist private security on site and contain the situation. Off the books, every officer knows to just stay outside and let the trouble come to you. Going in just risks getting shot by a runner with a uniform or an illusion spell, or an overzealous guard that thinks you are a runner with a uniform or an illusion spell. This also means that any damage inside the building is on them.

The next decision that has to be made when it comes to private security is whether or not they’re competition. Knight Errant lends a hand to Hard Corps and Wolverine, much faster than Eagle and Petrovski. One important note, DocWagon always gets help, even when they’re coming to pick up a perp. That way the relationship stays tight for when an officer needs help and when a perp needs to be handed over.

On the books, officers are allowed to use whatever force is deemed necessary to stop a crime in progress; whatever force is necessary to ensure the safety of persons and property of value; and whatever force is necessary to apprehend a known criminal within the Mission Parameters provided by their superior. You notice there’s a lot of discretion given to officers to discern whatever force is necessary, but that doesn’t mean they can act with impunity. The kid gloves can get slapped on if there is a lot of collateral damage risk on an apprehension. Life clue here: If you want KE to come in soft on you, live somewhere nice.

Off the books, KE hates gunfights and car chases. Too much collateral damage risk. They prefer precision strikes and tactical assaults. KE officers like to corral and herd criminals toward spots with less valuable property or directly onto extraterritorial property where they are no longer KE’s problem. It’s a dirty trick,

but it works. Mitsuhamu is a favorite target for this tactic, and we all know why.

Fights that break out on extraterritorial property are another story. A story of containment. Knight Errant loves to prevent criminals from coming back out onto Metroplex property after they’ve broken the law on megacorp turf. Officers carry several clips of light-fire ammo to lay suppressive fire into megacorp property. The ammo minimizes damages and therefore contains costs. If it looks like the runners are going to make a break for it, and the megacorp’s security is on their tail, KE officers know to hold back, record the action, and let the corp goons rack up the collateral bill, then swoop in at the end to grab the perps. Dirty, but cost-effective.

If they need to get into a fight, they tend to avoid the spray and pray, along with the duck and chuck. They prefer the radio and retreat. This way backup is on the way, officers stay alive, and criminals stop shooting the drek out of valuable stuff. The move would normally make KE look weak—a reputation they haven’t been given—but there are reasons for this. First off, the criminals rarely stay free for more than twenty-four hours after their run-in. A drone tags and follows them on getaway, and then SWAT or HTR pays them a visit. Secondly, the public never catches wind because MSS officers are constantly deleting gigapulses of data from personal comms, removing information considered “dangerous to the general public.”

Last point I want to make here: Knight Errant works for the city and the citizens of that city. Corporate citizens get a little more scrutiny and lot more hassling. With the exception of Ares, of course. SINless get zero rights. In the eyes of Knight Errant, the use of a fake SIN makes you SINless. This doesn’t mean every SINless runner out there is going to get targeted by KE, but it does mean that if you can’t show them some kind of value in you ... well, a bullet costs 2 nuyen, even less if you work for Ares; food, a cell, and the time it takes to slap a criminal SIN on you is a lot more.

Moral of the story: Make yourself useful, don’t get on their bad side, and don’t let them perform a cost-benefit analysis about your continued life.

## FEDERAL PROTECTION

The feds don’t have the same level of resources (monetary or manpower) as KE, but they also don’t have the masses of officers to expend them on. The various federal agencies of the UCAS have jurisdiction in Seattle, and a long list of crimes that shadowrunners commit fall into their book of bad deeds. In a world long past, local cops and feds would have argued about jurisdiction, but if the feds want to investigate certain criminal activities, that’s less for KE and better for their bottom line. High-profile cases occasionally cause problems, but hopefully no one reading this is stupid enough to become a high-profile case. If you are, my suggestion would be to play these two off each other and move to Atlanta.

In Seattle you have the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) looking into federal-level criminal activity. Dead politicians, counterfeiting the UCAS dollar, flight of criminals across state lines, corrupt politicians, and domestic terrorism all catch their eye. There’s more, but this is about the people, not laws. The FBI tends to spend a lot of time on surveillance and getting to know targets before



they send in the brute squad. They need to build a case for conviction, and taxpaying citizens tend to scrutinize their failures. They aren't huge fans of using shadowrunners, but they also aren't huge fans of letting criminals get away. Because they have a limited budget, they tend to trade in favors as often as nuyen, and while most runners don't care about what they can't spend, the smart ones know how valuable a favor from a fed can be.

While Seattle is still considered UCAS soil, so much of it is extraterritorial, and therefore foreign, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) actually operates here. That's important to shadowrunners, because we get dragged into their spy games far more often than we'd like and often without knowing until it's too late. Getting yourself associated with a spook is dangerous, because when people want leverage or info, they are coming after you, not the spook, because no matter how good we runners might think we are, these guys are the real deal.

- Speak for yourself.
- Thorn
  
- You don't count. You're a spook!
- Slamm-o!

Next up is the National Security Agency (NSA), which handles remote monitoring for the UCAS government. They aren't as scary as GOD, but they use that to their advantage. While every hacker is worried about keeping an eye out for the G-Men, they aren't looking around for these guys. NSA hackers specialize in being unseen, stealing every bit of data they can, and recording everything they come across. They use runners more often than any of the other alphabet organizations. Since they aren't built with a force of thugs at their disposal like the FBI, they often hire runners, usually gunbunny types, to keep them secure when they need to actually go out in the field.

Last up in the feds category is the Metroplex Guard. Not usually the law, per se, but Brackhaven had them doing constant cross-training with Knight Errant to be used as a backup police force in the event of something big. Usually the Guard would simply act as boots on the ground, emergency personnel, or crowd control in the event of an emergency, but Kenny wanted more assurances of order among any potential chaos.

Or so the headlines read.

The cross-training happened, but only for Anglo humans. Brackhaven also increased the numbers for the Guard and undermined any kind of affirmative action for metahumans that might have been in place to push the Guard's human tally over ninety percent.

Being the right fit for Brackhaven's new goon squad earned me an inside look for a few weeks. I didn't get much past that when they found out I'd dated several elves and a few dwarfs growing up, and they didn't break my heart and make me a metahater. I got pushed from cross-training, and they kept me away from any of the Metroplex guys who cycled through our precincts in Redmond.

- Kenny's legacy may live on for a while inside the Guard. It's not completely overt, but there's plenty of tension just below the surface. At some point it's going to burst.
- Stone

## TIN STARS AND PRISON BARS

Lone Star didn't get the complete boot from Seattle back when Knight Errant moved in, because KE's correctional services were too underdeveloped to handle a sprawl the size of Seattle. There were early rumblings that they would grow them to scale and take the contract over completely, but since the takeover KE has been too busy being cops to take over that other part.

- That and Lone Star has sabotaged every attempt KE has made of getting something going.
- Fianchetto

Lone Star Correctional Services, as they are officially known, runs the entire prison system for the Seattle Metroplex. This means getting arrested and convicted is quite the lesson in governmental and corporate cooperation. Knight Errant arrests you and holds you in a temporary facility. Once bail has been set, you are either free on bail if you can afford it, or you're remanded into the custody of LSCS to await your trial in the UCAS courts. While you are in Lone Star custody, KE investigates the crime and reports to the UCAS judiciary. When trial time comes, you are brought back by Lone Star.

If you're released, you can start the process of finding any property you had on you, or you can just write off the loss because it has been traded back and forth between this pair of bickering schoolchildren, who will always blame the other, even if they are caught red-handed while stealing your goods.

I'm not a huge fan of either organization, as I've said, but once I crossed over to the shadows, I've been looking to LSCS for work because their operational preferences tend to match my own moral compass. What I've discovered is that Lone Star has been digging at dirt on Brackhaven and KE since the pair joined forces and removed them from their comfortable perch overseeing the Emerald City. They don't just hire runners, either. They use the resources at their disposal, handed to them by Knight Errant. Namely, shadowrunners who got pinched.

Any decent runner that KE bags gets sent over to LS. Once there, LS has a meet and greet, offers freedom for favors, and then kills the runner. Or so the e-trail shows. The runner's criminal SIN bites it in the joint—it's a violent place—and the runner goes right back out into the world, SINless and in debt to Lone Star. If they get snagged again, Lone Star makes sure they don't actually survive all the way to the pen and cleans up any identifying evidence that might reveal what the security corp is up to. This costs them several of their favors as they use runners to clean up the messes in dangerous places. Like KE precincts.

Inside the prisons, Lone Star runs it fast and loose. The actual prison grounds are considered UCAS property, but Lone Star always makes sure the back-of-house areas and surrounding property are theirs, and thus, extraterritorial. That way, if a prisoner escapes or gets out of line during transport, there's some wiggle room while they're on megacorporate property.



# HUFFING THE GLUE OF SOCIETY

POSTED BY: SEATAC SWEETIE

The thing that makes us the most different from other animals is our constant need to assert how different we are from other animals.

When chickens are young, they push and peck and bully each other, the stronger birds asserting themselves, taking more of the resources that are available to them while weaker birds are pushed to the margins of the flock. This pecking order carries over to adulthood, but that doesn't mean it's permanent. Members of the flock are always looking for a chance to prove dominance over another member. Maybe age or disease will weaken a chicken, making it vulnerable in a fight. Or maybe a bird will be able to generate such an ostentatious display that actual force will not be necessary—through their strutting and preening, they may convince other birds to not tangle with them, thereby moving up the social order (and gaining the extra food and mating privileges that come with such a move) by looking the part, moving right, and sounding tough.

Seattle is full of humans working in their own pecking orders, countless flocks of chickens scrambling to see who can make it another step up the ladder. I'll give humans and metahumans this: the chickens tend to stay contained in their own flocks. They usually only see what is in front of their face—if there is another flock ensconced in another coop just out of view, they don't care. Because they don't know enough to care. They can't understand the world beyond their sight, so they stay contained. Humans and metahumans, on the other hand, can't stop thinking about the possible windfall around the corner, the chance to strike out to parts unknown (even if they're only unknown to you while being perfectly known by the people already there) and stumble onto enough wealth to shoot you straight to the top of any pecking order you care about. And this isn't just about exploring the unknown—sometimes you know perfectly well where another flock is, how many chickens are in it, and just what they have in their coop, and you go in to take it, because you can.

What all this means is that if you want to better understand the different strata, sub-groups, and other organizations that are a part of Seattle society, you have to approach it the same way a naturalist looks at linear dominance in a flock or herd or clutch or whatever. You have to see what particular currency that group values, and how to look like you either have that currency or are on the verge of getting it. So let's examine a few groups and what they're trying to get by banding together.

## POLITICS

The major political parties have already been discussed elsewhere, so let's take a glimpse of some of the smaller groups who still have a significant influence in the political body of the sprawl.

## THE EMPOWERMENT COALITION

You have to love starry-eyed idealists who, despite all that is going on in the world around them, continue to believe that power can be made to devolve to the masses, and a sustainable system supporting equity for all can be put in place and made to function well for years on end. They sometimes, against all odds, succeed in making a small piece of the world a little nicer, and they're often pleasant clients in my line of work, because a lot of times the primary form of release they're looking for is having someone listen to their grand ideas, nod sympathetically, and tell them to keep up the good fight.

Started as a feminist organization, the Empowerment Coalition gathers together a whole panoply of organizations dedicated to lifting up marginalized or oppressed groups. They connect them to each other, give them some administrative support, help them figure out how to grow, and look at how they can stay innocuous enough to get some of the funding corp's give to community groups to make themselves feel good. While also, of course, trying to make a difference.

The Ork Rights Committee has been supported by the Empowerment Coalition throughout its existence and has been one of their true success stories. Mothers of the Metahumans and National Association for the Advancement of the Awakened are two prominent organizations with strong ties to the coalition. There are members of the coalition who would dearly love to start a campaign around AI rights, but that effort has been slow to get off the ground. While the general public remains unclear on the cause of the Renraku arcology disaster, muted whispers about that incident combined with the role of artificial intelligence in Crash 2.0 made acceptance of AI rights a tough row to hoe. Cognitive fragmentation disorder has, of course, only set back the possible movement more.

Executive Director Juliana Corma, a civil-rights attorney by trade, is very skilled at fighting the kinds of battles the Empowerment Coalition wages. She understands the importance of leverage, and in the Sixth World, that often means information (especially if you are not gifted with large sums of money). Have



information on dirt about some mover and shaker in Seattle? Corma might be a willing buyer. Even if her cash offers aren't as high as some of the competition, the favors she can arrange through some of her contacts can be considerable.

- Just don't go in thinking she's some kind of starry-eyed naïf that you can take advantage of. She knows how to play hardball politics, and she absolutely refuses to be taken advantage of.
- Sunshine

## HUMANIS

For better and for worse (a whole lot of the latter), we have been the city of Kenneth Brackhaven for a good long while now, and you don't get to have someone like him in office for a sustained period of time without a core constituent of racists. The Seattle chapter of the Humanis Policlub is large, old, and deeply interwoven into the fabric of the city. How deeply? It was, for a long time, headed by Karl Brackhaven, the uncle of our beloved governor. The Brackhaven family homestead in Snohomish, along with several other wealthy estates in the area, are prime territory for Humanis fundraising. More militant and violent groups like Alamos 20,000 and the Human Nation benefit from money that originated in the accounts of these Snohomish residents.

Humanis has followed in the footsteps of many past groups of people in power who feel their grip is threatened. When pro-metahuman groups develop language or concepts that bring success, Humanis quickly mimics it, distorting the concepts through a funhouse mirror of their version of reality. The acceptance of the Ork Underground (or Seattle Underground, which is the nomenclature Humanis prefers) as an official district of the city was based in ideas like providing orks a part of their city where they could truly feel like they belonged, a staging ground where they could make their best selves and then bring those selves to contribute to the rest of the city. Humanis has backed organizations in most of the rest of the city (besides Redmond and Puyallup) pushing arguments like "Renton for Rentonites" and "Let Snohomish Be Snohomish!" They echo the arguments of a "safe haven," and they have a treasure trove of data of ork-on-human or troll-on-human violence to indicate why they think such safe havens are motivated. They are not, they insist, "anti-meta"—they are simply "pro-human." Of course, their agenda is indistinguishable from people who are openly anti-meta, so their change in verbiage is not all that meaningful.

- Philosophically, maybe not, but from a recruiting standpoint? Absolutely. Human history has long showed the power of giving disaffected populations someone to be a scapegoat for their problems, and when the suffering wageslaves of the city are told the malaise they have can be pinned on someone, anyone, besides themselves, that's an awfully appealing message.
- Fianchetto

Executive Director Dennis Osterling is congenial and eloquent, almost inhuman in his ability to stay calm and not be baited into an argument he doesn't want to have. While he doesn't let any perspiration show in public, behind the

scenes he is busily preparing for what might be a future without Brackhaven in the top spot in the sprawl. He knows better than to work directly with the voters—most of his efforts are spent dealing with corporate powers (he spends a lot of time in Renraku offices) and convincing them that any radical departure from Brackhaven's policies, in any respect, would badly destabilize the city. Some executives think they hear a veiled threat of racial violence in those words, but Osterling naturally denies he or his people would instigate any such activities.

- There's an old saying that a conservative is a liberal who has been mugged, and Osterling is not above arranging strategic muggings and other related crimes to shift people in the direction he wants.
- Kay St. Irregular

## ORK RIGHTS COMMITTEE

On the other side of the political spectrum from Humanis is the Ork Rights Committee, which has traveled through the refiner's fire and come out strong. The battle over Proposition 23 (the vote to make the Ork Underground an official district) was bruising, the kind of fight that can make even the victor crumble in the exhausted aftermath. Instead, the ORC established themselves as a voice that even the corps must listen to, an astonishing feat for a grassroots organization.

The corps and the government, however, have seen situations like this before, and they know how to respond. When your initial attempts to subdue don't work, you co-opt. With the Ork Underground becoming a district, a number of new governmental positions, including mayor, will become available, and you can bet your life that someone from the ORC will get an important position in the government. There will be a lot of initial excitement and enthusiasm, and then in a few years the person from the ORC will notice that any proposal they introduce gets tabled for a seemingly infinite period of time, and when they introduce an initiative they can never find adequate funding to make it work initially. They received some of the trappings of power, without any of the, you know, actual power. They start agitating, working on campaigns against the government, before remembering that they are now part of the government, and their efforts to condemn the government will make them seem either hypocritical or ineffectual. They will feel stymied and confused, not knowing quite how to proceed, which is exactly the intended result.

But that's down the road. For now, the ORC has a full agenda of how to more deeply entrench the Underground in the affairs of the city, and Executive Director Janus Kraal, now an ork in his early thirties so not a spring chicken by any means, does not intend to slow down in his work to advance the affairs of orks, trolls, and even dwarfs if he is feeling expansive.

- There are other ways of co-opting people besides government posts. Rumors say Brackhaven's people are working behind the scenes to get Kraal a prestigious chair at the University of Washington, hoping the lure of an academic life and the chance to shape the lives of young people will pull him off the streets and into the ivory tower.
- Kay St. Irregular



- They might be disappointed in that hope. Kraal might be able to organize people quite well from within the university, especially with an official title to lend his efforts prestige.
- Winterhawk

## SONS OF SAURON

Humanis has the Human Nation and Alamos 20,000; ORC and the Empowerment Coalition have the Sons of Sauron. Any cause contains a number of proponents firm in the belief that slow change is the work of timid appeasers, and rapid change must come explosively. They don't always have to be the ones to cause the violence, but they avow that the violence must happen in order for change to follow. They are revolutionary, using rhetoric that they might dismiss as terrorism if it were applied to a cause they did not agree with.

While the Sons of Sauron do not believe they *have* to be the cause of violence, that does not mean they are *opposed* to being the cause. Bombings, assassinations, and kidnappings are all part of their playbook. When Operation Daybreak struck leaders of Project Freedom and instigated riots at pro-Ork Underground rallies, some people darkly muttered that Brackhaven must have gotten his hands on a Sons of Sauron playbook.

The forward movement of the Ork Underground has done little to pacify the Sons of Sauron, as finding examples of continuing racism in the sprawl is not exactly a challenge. Brackhaven is still in the governor's office, Renraku still has a solid presence in the city, and Snohomish continues to exist. The Sons have especially focused on rumors of untoward medical practices and experimentation on metahumans, thanks to some stories out of Denver about longstanding practices such as forced sterilization and negligent care. They want evidence (and their standards are not terribly high) of clinics engaging in anti-metahuman practices, and once they have that evidence they make their displeasure known, generally with Molotov cocktails.

- Need a distraction for a run? Find a medical clinic near where you'll be working and feed info to the Sons that they're sterilizing orks. Good times.
- Haze
- Haze does not have any shame, so pointing out the innocent patients who will inevitably become collateral damage in such a move will not affect him. But I have hopes for the rest of you.
- Aufheben

## PACIFIC INDEPENDENCE LEAGUE

This is a new one, and somewhat curious. I first started hearing about them from some connections near Tarislar, who heard some members of the Ancients complaining about how this League was interfering with their business. It turns out the League has been watching the gang carefully, interrupting some of their human- and drug-trafficking activities, which peeves them to no end. I mentally wrote them off as minor (if curiously named) do-gooders, until I was with another client, a rather highly placed individual in Telestrian, who was complaining that League-affiliated congressional leaders were

suddenly eager to impose all manner of tariffs on Tír Tairngire. Since keeping up on such organizations is a hobby of mine (and often good for business), I did some digging around and found a Matrix site for the Pacific Independence League. Their rhetoric is reminiscent of many isolationists throughout time, with the focus on keeping the Seattle sprawl free and clear of foreign influences and entanglements. Oddly enough, Tír Tairngire has received much more focus from this group than has the closer Salish-Shidhe Council. The Matrix site lists a staff and board of directors, all of whom are nondescript and undistinguished (the executive director, Percha Stern, spent twenty-five years as an accountant at Microdeck, doing little to indicate why someone would give her leadership of a poli-club). Despite this, several members of the Metroplex Congress seem to be paying heed to whatever this organization is pushing, which could make for worsening relations between the city and the Tír.

- They've got money—name a five-thousand-nuyen-a-plate political event, and you'll find someone from PIL there—but no one knows where it came from. Their main source of money appears to be a continuing grant from something known as the Mitty Foundation, but information on that organization and where its money originated is hard to come by, even for me.
- Sunshine

## MAGICAL

With a grand collection of magical shops, many talented practitioners, and plenty of nearby reagent hunting possibilities, Seattle has many organizations for you spellslinging types where you can swap stories and formulae and figure out how to better make the world dance to your tune.

Council Island is full of magical activity, and the **Bear Doctor Society** is the leading group on that spot. Composed mainly of Bear shamans (surprise!), the society is full of skilled healers, and they operate a free clinic on the island. Rumors say that they were very active in keeping the damage unleashed by Project Daybreak in the Prop 23 conflict from being worse than it might have been, which might point to a heretofore unidentified political leaning in the group.

Taking a more academic, less service-oriented tack are the **Hermetic Order of the Auric Aurora** and the **Illuminates of the New Dawn**. Both are large, well established, and possess a tremendous wealth of magical knowledge. The HOAA is more academic in nature (their magical studies began, believe it or not, before the Awakening), and they have tremendous facilities in the home of their leader, Dylan Pike, who resides Downtown near Pacific University. With ritual space, a lore store called the Blue Moon, and quarters for visiting mages, the mansion is a one-stop shop for everything magical. The IOND, by contrast, is more practice-focused, with magic professionals from all walks of life (including shadow-running) getting together to share experiences and ideas. Their approach to magic is very hermetic—shamans are not banned from the organization, but nothing that happens in it tends to interest shamans much. Their activist mentality and broad cross-section of membership means they are the go-to organization when it comes to lobbying around Awakened causes.





- If you go to an HOAA meeting and an IOND meeting in consecutive nights, you'll find the philosophies and approaches to magic pretty similar, but that doesn't mean the groups are all that fond of each other. The HOAA tends to view the IOND as sloppy, while the IOND views the HOAA as impractical and stuck in the clouds. They're not about to start street fights with each other, but they prefer to act as if the other organization does not exist.
- Winterhawk

If your brand of magic practice is more about doing and less about studying, some other magical societies may be more up your alley. The name of the **Mystic Crusaders** alone inspires visions of sweeping quests. If you want to join the type of group who might get swept up in a quest for the Holy Grail, see if you can connect to them, though they are not easily accessible to outsiders. Artifact and reagent hunting are major parts of their activities, and they are also excellent sources of knowledge on magical threats, including critters of the Pacific Northwest and beyond.

- Some members I know have recently made trips to the Sioux Nation, and they're even more close-mouthed than usual about what they were doing there. I haven't had much of a chance to investigate what's going on beyond doing a flyover, and while I did not find anything definitive, something about the manosphere around Yellowstone seems off. It's always a little different there, but lately it seems ... *more* different.
- Frosty

The **United Talismongers Association** has a mutually beneficial relationship with the Mystic Crusaders, as they are quite skilled in identifying the strengths of any artifacts the Crusaders find and processing the reagents they bring in. The UTA very much wants to be prime, if not the only, source of telesma and enchanting in the city, so if you start engaging in any such activities in a serious way, expect a visit from members inquiring about your interest in joining. They won't get heavy handed with their pitch, but they are incredibly persistent, and more and more shops and fences will not do business in magic gear with anyone who is not a member.

- It's really weird to try to sell ground-up Hellhound testicles in a dark alley to a guy who wants to see your union card.
- Haze

## OTHER

Yes, this is a catch-all header for this section, but as you will see, sometimes common bonds are difficult to find.

What can one say about the **Children of the Dragon** other than, hey, they still exist? At times there has seemed to be little reason for the group to carry on other than founder David Dragonus's persistence and formidable bank account, but he gained enough followers and publicity that, much though Nadja Daviar and the Draco Foundation would have liked, they could not ignore him anymore. Alexis Glimmerscale sits on the boards of both organizations, which is both as a concession to the Children and a message that they should respond to her as if she speaks with Dunkelzahn's voice.



I can't say as I blame her, as I have had various long conversations with members of this group from time to time, and heard detailed elucidations of their philosophies and concepts for the future, and while I consider myself a patient and attentive listener, my eyes always glaze over within thirty seconds. Don't get me wrong, I know the organization does a variety of fine things, from distributing food and clothing to the needy to training newly Awakened individuals, but the theology of it all leaves me cold. The divinity of Dunkelzahn is not as evident to me as it is to them, and I have never been able to sort out their beliefs on the kinship of humans and dragons. I will give them this, though—of the many religions regularly preached in Seattle, the Children of the Dragon seem to spend the least amount of effort trying to catch up to the Sixth World. They were born from it and move through it naturally. They do not have to adapt their doctrines and understandings of the universe to account for magic; magic is integral to their thought process and worldview. This compatibility with the world around them gives them an edge in seeking converts.

Amanda Goldenwing (yes, all the leaders have names like that; they choose them for themselves) leads the Seattle crèche (temple congregation) of the Children with the same solemn charisma that Dragonson possesses, and she is a frequent guest on newsnet interview programs, helping raise her visibility and that of the Children.

- Dragonson does not seem to be anywhere near retirement, but his replacement already seems to be lined up. Michael Redclaw has risen to second in command in the organization, and he has a fire to him that both Dragonson and Goldenwing lack. There have been whispers that he might move to Seattle and take over some of Goldenwing's higher-profile duties, if only to keep himself in the spotlight while reducing the power of a potential rival.
- Goat Foot

If you want to see the struggle of older religions to adapt to the modern world, look no further than the **People of the Book**. This organization sprang from the united efforts of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim leaders to promote more tolerance and understanding and a gentler response to the massive changes of the Sixth World. A laudable effort, to be sure, and one that has brought many benefits to the people of Seattle. But these three religions have been separate for millennia for a reason, and a strong message of tolerance and understanding is not enough to bridge those gaps. Cracks have begun to show in the organization, as people complain that it is tolerating too much or too little, worry that their beliefs on the proper uses of magic are too narrow or too broad, and so forth. They have accumulated many members in their time and engaged in many actions, but they seem to be at a turning point of figuring out what their next step may be.

- That tends to be the stage where a charismatic leader can take the helm and do a lot of good—or harm. Watch carefully to see who might make a power play with this membership base.
- Goat Foot

At the dawn of the network of computers that paved the way for the Matrix, people gave in to unbound and unwarranted

optimism about this new collection of knowledge and people, saying that errors and misperceptions would fade, because the truth would be available and easy to find, and would inevitably conquer falsehood. Of course, such beliefs came about with an extraordinarily limited understanding of human nature, cognitive bias, and other matters of how opinions are formed and hardened. Can you find the truth (whatever that may be) in the Matrix? Yes, but you can also find a group of people who, no matter what you believe, will tell you that you are right and the rest of the world is wrong, and give you support in your quest to never have to entertain a new idea. Despite this failure of the Matrix to stamp our erroneous thought once and for all, the belief persists that if people can just be connected properly, a better, more equitable, more *right* way of being will emerge. And so we have the **Gestalt Consciousness Network**. Started as a social experiment at the University of Washington, the Network brings people from all districts of the city together addressing issues such as racial violence, police brutality, and most quixotically of all, megacorporate power and the resulting inequities. I will certainly grant that the members of the Network are passionate about their work—messages about a range of topics regularly spin across the Network, and they are more than just text screeds (though there are plenty of those). Works of fiction, plays, paintings, photo collages, and more fill the Network, as the members try to put their individual stamp on an issue, build understanding, and move to a consensus.

Though I must add that the members of the Network have been wary about that last word ever since the technomancer massacre in Las Vegas. Achieving consensus is, of course, crucial to moving forward in any endeavor, but since the Network believes one of the critical lessons of Las Vegas is to look very carefully at how consensus is achieved. They have shied away from algorithms or other tools that help measure consensus or agreement, and instead decided to rely on the old-fashioned way of getting agreement—people agree when they say they agree. That's made coming to any conclusions slower, but the Network remains one of the great idea-generators of the city—and I say this with my cynicism about the potential for networks to eliminate error fully intact.

- The Network doesn't have an official leader, because of course they don't, but they have a spokesperson named Naomi who is seen online more than off, and offline sightings of her are contradictory. Inevitably, that's the sort of thing that leads to rumors of her being an AI, and with anti-AI sentiment growing in the wake of CFD, many members of the Network are urging Naomi to make more physical public appearances.
- Sunshine
- Yep, look for that to start happening as soon as her personality gets firm, unshakeable footing in the body of some head case.
- Plan 9

The whole head crash situation hasn't been great for Als, and some residents have decided that these newest forms of life need an advocate. The Empowerment Coalition has been reluctant to take on pro-AI causes, so an organization has sprung up without their support. **Friends of Galatea** formed to advocate for the intelligences that have been introduced into an un-



familiar, often hostile world. They only became active in the past two years, but they have a strong board composed of people from Seattle tech companies and an executive director who is willing to build consensus rather than make absolute demands. Mae Takawana's message is much the same as the ones used in support of the Ork Underground—the Als simply want a safe place to call their own where they can have redundancy and protection from those who would delete or corrupt them. That all sounds nice and good, except for the whole problem is that no one believes the Als have a desire to be contained, and they worry any spot in virtual reality they are given will become a staging point for the anti-flesh revolution.

- One lesson we have been slow to learn from the whole CFD affair is that Als are not uniform or in lockstep agreement on all things. For every Al who participated in making the head crash virus, there are a handful who were horrified at what some of their kind had done. If you want someone to keep an eye on Als who might get out of control, those other Als would be the perfect candidates.
- Arete
- And the fox is the perfect creature to guard the henhouse.
- Clockwork

But enough about the people who are seeking to help disadvantaged groups or advance consciousness. What, you ask, about those who want to revel in pure material decadence? For that, I present to you the **Bellevue Heritage Association**. Seattle is not a stop on the European Grand Tour and in truth is too far removed to be considered a regular destination, but the blue bloods of Seattle are determined to not be outdistanced in the effort of throwing large gobs of money at social gatherings, especially Bellevue's Snowflake Celebration. The association handles the planning of these events, which means their well-protected database has information on every ultra-posh gathering spot in town, as well as contact information for the richest, most powerful people in the sprawl and beyond. They deny more hack attempts than McHugh's serves soyburgers. The association is led by Miranda Stapledon, but if you want to get to the true power of the organization, the person you care about is Josue Alvarado, the event coordinator for the association. The association lives to plan major events, so Alvarado does the most important work.

- As you might guess, most of the events they stage are held Downtown or in Bellevue, but they've partnered with Boeing to plan some of the more posh events in Auburn for Boeing Days, and there's talk of staging an event in the wealthier estates of Snohomish. Still, they'll only do these other things as long as it does not distract them from the Snowflake Celebration.
- Frosty
- Well, look who's tapped into the networks of the rich and powerful!
- Pistons
- You can't have the family I have without being targeted by certain types of newsletters. And yeah, I open them to look to see who went where while wearing what. I'm not made of stone.
- Frosty





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