SHADOWRUN 7117

BUG CITY™

FASA CORPORATION

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

In The Darkness, Something Terrible Breeds...

For years, a shadow war has raged against the Universal Brotherhood and its savage masters—parasitic insect spirits that feed on human hosts. Now, Chicago has become the final battleground in the war against the bugs. Overrun by the horrible predators, the city has been quarantined by the UCAS military, leaving its inhabitants to fend for themselves while "other solutions" are considered. Hundreds of thousands remain trapped within the walled Containment Zone, at war with brutal gangs and ruthless warlords that rage unchecked—and the unnatural menace that threatens them all.

Bug City is a Shadowrun sourcebook that picks up where the novel Burning Bright left off. It provides a detailed description of life in the Containment Zone and includes game information on the changes in Chicago's physical and magical nature, profiles of the city's important residents, and expanded rules for the city's terrible ravagers—the insect spirits themselves.

SHADOWRUN
SECOND EDITION

FASA CORPORATION

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ATTENTION

By Order of the UCAS Federal Government the City of Chicago is

Until Further Notice

Please Remain In Your Homes

IF YOU MUST TRAVEL, DO SO ONLY IN GROUPS

Please Monitor Your Radios for Additional Information

Jeanette (Order #5584877)

Jason Miller (order #558487)

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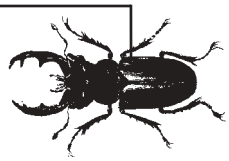
Jason Miller (order #5521877)

WELCOME TO BUG CITY



And we say that with real sincerity. The **Bug City** sourcebook for the **Shadowrun** game system describes the aftereffects of the insect-spirit infestation of the City of Chicago that occurred in late summer 2055. The **Shadowrun** novel **Burning Bright,** by Tom Dowd, offers an account of the bug explosion that includes the lurid details most readers want to know. Gamemasters will find the information contained in **Burning Bright** useful but not necessary to use **Bug City.**

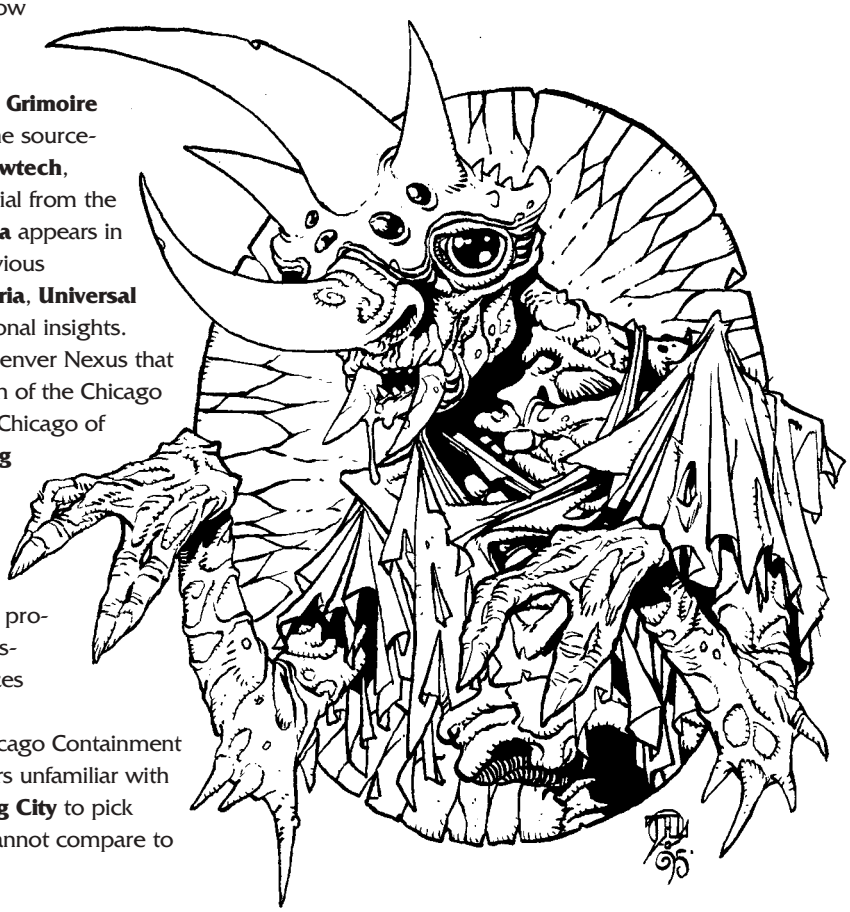
As a result of the bug infestation, the UCAS military quarantined the City of Chicago and sealed it off from the rest of the country. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions of people remain in this city under siege, caught within the walls of the Containment Zone and forced to deal with (not necessarily in order of difficulty) a shattered economy, nonexistent law enforcement, food and supply shortages, each other, the effects of the subtactical nuclear weapon detonated to destroy the primary hive, and the remaining bugs.

Shadowrunners may find themselves caught inside this terrible, lost place, desperately trying to get out. They may be hired by those lucky enough to be on the outside but who lost or left inside someone or something valuable enough to retrieve. Even more so than in the other dangerous cities of the **Shadowrun** world, Bug City offers tremendous opportunities for profit and death.

This sourcebook is presented as a compilation of online files from the city's broken Matrix that someone somehow acquired from the sealed city. Posted by a variety of people still stuck inside the Containment Zone, the files reflect their lives within and their views of and hopes for the city. Gamemasters and players will find nuggets of information, truth, and fear contained within those messages and files, but little concrete information exists. The truth is, only those inside know what's going on, and ya just gotta be there to understand. The **Bug City** sourcebook offers a framework on which the gamemaster can build his vision of what's left of Chicago. This means that no two **Bug City** campaigns or adventures will be the same, but how many nightmares *are* exactly alike?

Gamemasters must be thoroughly familiar with the **Shadowrun, Second Edition,** rules and the second-edition **Grimoire** rules to use **Bug City.** Gamemasters may also find useful the sourcebooks **Street Samurai Catalog**, **Rigger Black Book**, **Shadowtech**, **Fields of Fire,** and **Corporate Shadowfiles.** Chicago material from the now out-of-print **Neo-Anarchist's Guide to North America** appears in this book, updated to reflect the current situation. The previous **Shadowrun** insect-spirit adventures such as **Queen Euphoria**, **Universal Brotherhood**, and **Double Exposure** might provide additional insights.

Bug City opens with a message from a sysop at the Denver Nexus that sets the tone for the frightening documentation of the crash of the Chicago Matrix that follows. The **Windy City** section compares the Chicago of 2052 to what it has become in the wake of the bugs. **Living in Oblivion** offers advice for how to survive in Bug City, **Insects among Us** provides an everyman's guide to the insect spirits, and **Bug City** suggests where to go, what to do, and who to avoid. The final section in this book is for the gamemaster's eyes only. **Gamemaster Information** provides hints for running adventures and campaigns in a transformed Chicago and rules and stats for the beings and places player characters may encounter.



Though we have attempted to create maps of the Chicago Containment Zone that offer enough details to be useful for gamemasters unfamiliar with Chicago, we encourage gamemasters who want to use **Bug City** to pick up a really detailed Chicago street map. Our best efforts cannot compare to what mapmaking professionals can accomplish.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

"I have taken all knowledge to be my province."
— Francis Bacon, 1592

CATEGORY	***GO TO:***
Message Base/Mail System	OK
Special Category/Topics (SIGS)	OK
Library Archive	OK
Information Base—SPECIAL FEATURES (Limited Duration Posting)	OK
Knight-Errant Corporate Security Training Manual	EN ROUTE
Paranormal Animals of Europe (Don't say we didn't warn ya. . .)	OK
Bug City (CHICAGO UNDER SIEGE)	OK
Shadowtech Compilation (Weird Science 101)	OK
Lone Star (Cops and their Bad Habits)	OK
Cybertech (More Big Hardware Than Humans Allowed)	EN ROUTE
Denver Compilation (Treaty City Stuff)	OK
Tir Tairngire (Those Wacky Elves. . .™)	OK
Aztlan (Down and Dirty South of the Border!)	EN ROUTE

CHICAGO UNDER SIEGE

City under Siege	OK
The Windy City	OK
Living in Oblivion	OK
Insects among Us	OK
Bug City	OK
Other Information	OK

DOWNLOAD ALL? **OK**

NOTE FROM CONTROL: Anyone with information regarding tampering with this system should contact me. Censorship will not be tolerated!!

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

Jason Miller (order #5584[illegible])

CITY UNDER SIEGE

TO ALL READERS OF THIS FORUM

You must read this file.

I don't know what else I can say to reinforce that. This may be the most important file we've ever posted. Yeah, I know some of you who think you're in the know are snickering at that comment, but I'm serious.

Sure, we've posted files that were more important to you, the shadowrunning community. But this posting is important to *everyone*.

It confirms as horrifying reality something that has only been whispered of until now—Insect Totems Are Real. God help us. (And too fraggin' bad if that little plea insults some people.)

This is what we know. Around 4 P.M. on the 22nd of August somewhere west of the Shattergraves, a hive of insect spirits in the Chicago area vomited a swarm of spirits that ravaged the city and made it into a war zone.

I know that ain't what you've been told. And that's part of the problem.

Because this is all new to some of you, I'll post the information we have so that you can at least begin to comprehend what follows.

What the government says is a lie. The City of Chicago (not even the chunk they're describing) has not been infected with some wild new mutated strain of VITAS. There is no plague in Chicago—at least, none that can rightly be called a disease.

The UCAS military has used force to isolate Chicago from the rest of the country because an unknown number of insect spirits have infected the city. These are creatures from the metaplanes, quasi-real levels of existence beyond our own. They manifest in the forms of, and to some degree demonstrate the powers or abilities of, familiar, everyday insects—ants, beetles, wasps, and so on. These spirits, however, cannot appear in the physical world without acquiring a physical host. That be us, folks. They need to inhabit living human bodies in order to be here. An all-too-real *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

Hundreds of thousands, perhaps more than a million people are trapped within the military's Containment Zone. And the government refuses to let them out because the people in charge are *afraid*. They don't know what to make of the insect spirits, and they're afraid that the bugs will somehow spread beyond the Containment Zone if the people in charge let their guard down for even a moment. But they're already out here. It's too late. Check the newsvids and the fastfaxes. At the same time as the Chicago breakout, the bugs attacked almost everywhere else—Manhattan, Philly, Atlanta, Buenos Aires, Istanbul—pretty much anywhere with a population. The thing is, those places suffered a *tiny* breakout compared to what hit Chicago. And in *every fraggin' case* the initial reports of insect activity were discredited and dismissed (we'll come back to that factoid in a moment). Somewhere in this file you'll find references to the Chicago hive as being the largest known hive, certainly the biggest in North America. There's no way to create a reliable estimate of the number of bugs that might be in Chicago. I guess that's another thing scaring the government pretty good. I know it frightens the drek out of me.

Ah, sorry. I just reread the above and discovered I'm rambling. I'm composing this on the fly because I want to get the rest of the file online as soon as possible, but it really does need something to set up the situation.

Getting back to the facts as we know them, late in the afternoon of August 22nd, Eagle Security began fielding calls from panicked citizens who claimed that they were seeing giant bugs everywhere. The media picked up the story and even flash-videoed a couple of shots of giant bugs crawling around. Eagle promptly issued a statement accusing an unidentified wiz-kid gang of traveling through the streets and casting illusions intended to panic the city. That, and the fact that the media reports of giant bug sightings died down to almost nothing by midnight, calmed the city enough for people to make it through the night. The city's problems were just beginning.

Early in the morning of the 23rd of August, the city's newstrid organizations lost their ability to continue to report on the apparent "giant bug" phenomena when local antimedia terrorists blew up a major fiber-optics relay station and effectively blinded most of the city. By early morning, the government had begun to seal off the city.

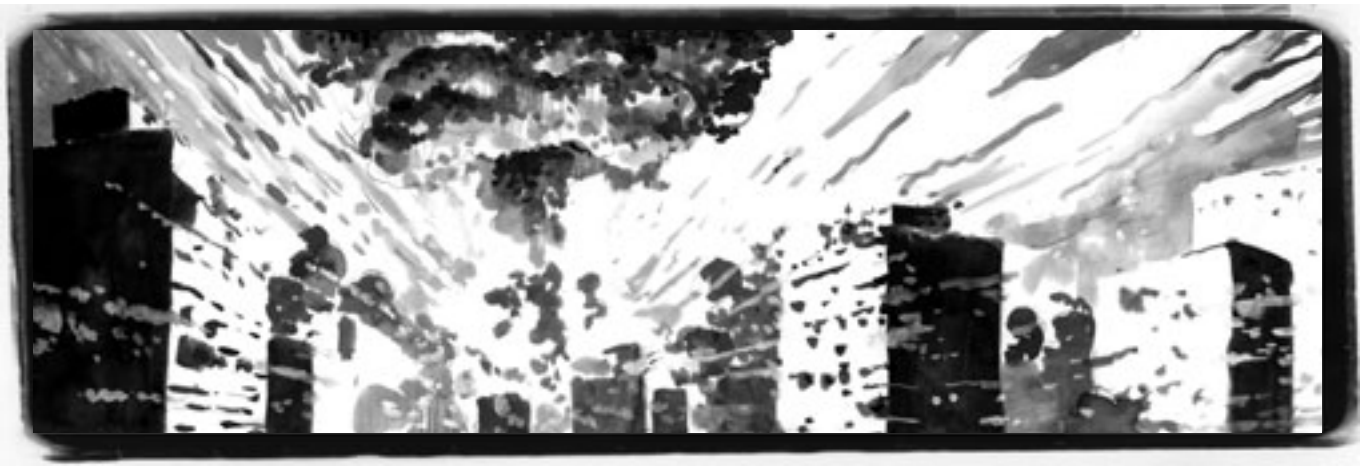
First, the city government issued a severe air-pollution warning and, in a move that seemed extraordinary for the City that Works, recommended that all citizens stay home. Those who ventured outside were flagged down by police wearing filter masks and ordered to return to their homes. A perceptive few noticed that members of the National Guard seemed to be supplementing Eagle Security. Word began to spread that O'Hare Airport was clearing military aircraft for landing, and by late lunch people had begun to flee the city.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

At approximately 6 P.M. the rest of the world heard the shocking news that a new form of VITAS had broken out in Chicago. And that was all we heard. Chicago was blacked out, isolated, all communication into the city cut or jammed. Rampant speculation described widespread rioting, panic, and mass deaths within the city. The UCAS government trotted out expert after expert who explained that this dangerous new form of VITAS spread only by physical contact. By isolating the City of Chicago, the government said, they were confident of containing the Chicago plague.

A week later, the media began to report stories of people shot while trying to escape from Chicago by climbing the barricades, swimming for safety across the lake, and even flying in privately contracted rescue aircraft. The Red Cross protested that it was being prevented from sending teams into Chicago, and the World Health Organization also cried foul, as they had been blocked from receiving samples of the new virus.

Very early in the morning of September 1st, something unexpected happened, something that the government couldn't hide and was apparently at a loss to explain. Just as the first rays of dawn brightened the eastern sky, someone detonated what all observers tentatively identified as a subtactical nuclear weapon a few kilometers north of the Chicago Core. Dozens of people witnessed the blast—there was no denying it.



Rumors spread like the alleged Chicago plague itself. The most prevalent rumor claimed that a corporate strike team detonated the weapon, but even the rumor mill offered no explanation as to why. The blast caused the government to clamp down even further. It pulled the news media out of the area and confined them to a single government-controlled media pool. The government also established martial law in the neighborhoods and refugee camps immediately surrounding the Containment Zone and asked the media to filter all reports concerning the Chicago plague through the government pool.

Amazingly, every single one of the big news agencies apparently agreed. News reports assured the rest of the world that rescue agencies had established regular supply drops into the city and that research was progressing on the nature of and possible cure for the Chicago plague. Eventually it began to seem as if the City of Chicago had moved to some other part of the world and no longer occupied land in North America. And we were told that people continued to die every day.

Pirate and indie news-trash shows persisted in reporting that the entire Chicago situation was a cover-up, that there was no plague. But no one was willing to believe them. Not me, and I should have known better. I recognized the signs. All of us on the inside had started seeing odd reports, smuggled files, and other incongruities pointing to the truth. But frag it, we just didn't want to accept that what those signposts pointed to was true.

But it is. It is.

We've been lied to, pure and simple. By the government and by the media who agreed to keep their mouths and eyes shut. Why? Fear. Everyone's afraid. Afraid it'll spread. Afraid people will panic. Afraid, afraid, afraid. Like I am.

But the fear can't hide the truth that follows, pulled from I'm not going to say where so that I don't jeopardize the source. All I'll say is that this post is a fraggin' technological miracle.

This truth represents files and captures from what exists of the Chicago net inside the Containment Zone. A small group led by someone named SYStem 05 cobbled together what remains of the Matrix within the CZ and set up a BBS that those people with still-active telecom lines can access. It's become a source of information, rumors, truth, lies, fear, and hope for the citizens of Chicago. And we've got it here for everyone to see, in the words and pictures of those trapped inside.

Spread the file wide, chummers. Make sure everyone sees. Everyone must know.

There are bugs here.

—Captain Chaos (January 21, 2056)

Jason Miller (order #5538877)

>>>>>(Not everyone was paying attention, but this is how it started.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (19:41:08/11:18:55)

>>>>>(Hey, has anyone heard about gang war breaking out?)<<<<<
—Tailor Tim (271679) (16:10:31/08-22-55)

>>>>>(Nope, can't say that I have—and in my neighborhood, I'd be catching it firsthand.)<<<<<
—Uncle Leo (102928) (16:11:00/08-22-55)

>>>>>(Is that what's going on? There seem to be a lot of security cars around.)<<<<<
—Titus Androgynous (302919) (16:12:02/08-22-55)

>>>>>(Are the dogs barking in your neighborhoods? The ones in mine are going *nuts*.)<<<<<
—V. Wilson (251810) (16:12:58/08-22-55)

>>>>>(All I hear is some sort of buzzing noise out back. Sounds like a bad transformer or something. Hang on while I check it out.)<<<<<
—D.K.Goolup (029171) (16:14:05/08-22-55)

>>>>>(DK?)<<<<<
—V. Wilson (251810) (17:22:36/08-22-55)

>>>>>(DK?)<<<<<
—V. Wilson (251810) (20:31:06/08-22-55)

>>>>>(Does anyone have any news? Can anyone tell me what's going on? All the newsvids are repeating the wiz-kid gang stories. Does anyone have any other info?)<<<<<
—Q.Davies (342415) (06:41:11/08-23-55)

>>>>>(Come on, joker, you really believe that fleece? Wiz-kid gang? Get gripped—just how big a gang would this have to be?)<<<<<
—Vince Aflash (06:55:12/08-23-55)

>>>>>(I hear Eagle's calling down a curfew for 10:00 P.M. tonight. Anyone else heard that?)<<<<<
—M.Katche (154382) (08:10:23/08-23-55)

>>>>>(Curfew? Are they mad? What the frag?!?!?!)<<<<<
—T.Levin (262651) (08:11:04/08-23-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584577)

>>>>>(I just talked to my sister who lives near Clark and Damen and she *swears* that she can see bugs, man-sized bugs, all over this building down the block from her. She said there were Eagle security cops all around the place. She sounded panicked, and I *think* I could hear gunfire in the background. Then we got cut off. Anybody hear anything about this?)<<<<<
—L.Minassian (276181) (10:21:03/08-23-55)

>>>>>(Man-sized bugs? Your sister a chiphead, LM?)<<<<<
—C.Garfield (409172) (10:33:14/08-23-55)

>>>>>(Bugs? Oh Christ. Were they bugs? Real? Or spirits? LM, did she say? THIS IS IMPORTANT!)<<<<<
—RipperJack (11:16:01/08-23-55)

>>>>>(I'VE SEEN THEM! THERE WERE WASPS IN MY BACKYARD AN HOUR AGO! THREE OF THEM—I THOUGHT I WAS GOING NUTS!)<<<<<
—Angel X. (182710) (11:34:10/08-23-55)

>>>>>(RIPPER! I confirm! I've eyeballed a swarm of *giant* flies myself. Meet me in the usual place pronto!)<<<<<
—Twigger (11:55:58/08-23-55)

>>>>>(You jokers stop playing these stupid games. It's a wiz-kid gang out there spooking the streets—nothing more. Stop yanking people around with this foolishness.)<<<<<
—O.Walsh (029171) (13:04:59/08-23-55)

>>>>>(What the hell is goi◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊>>>>(In from Houston but there is no w>> QJF GB NkiYUo hjGJku can't find any nodes outside the city.)<<<◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ >>>(Be careful, I hear the back door has a (((What the drek! Is this some kind of joke?)(ng on?)<<<<◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ GJkiU FJgh DHhjku hjGklk >>>(W◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ >>>(B>(Has anyone tried the satellites?)><>><(BLACK IC ON THE>>>>STOP.....

•SORTFAILURE V202>>BLKBK3>>EXECUTE.....

>>>>>BEGIN OPEN BROADCAST POST:::::
>>>>>(We are experiencing a localized system failure. AmeriCom™ probably wants me to extend our apologies for any inconvenience these problems may cause you, but since they haven't told me what the frag is going on I think it is safe to abandon protocol for the time being. As far as I can tell, several nodes shut down unexpectedly, leaving large sections of the local Matrix pretty badly tangled. Anyone with pertinent information should post it as clearly and succinctly as possible. We've already got sufficient traffic about the problems of the past day; if you don't have anything to add, please wait until you do—we have thousands of posts jamming the system and 87 percent of them are some variation on "what the hell is going on?" Thank you for your cooperation.)<<<<
—SYStem 05 (02:◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

>>>>>(Can someone tell me what those things are? They're all over the building down my block. I can't get through to 911 and the Matrix Emergency Line is jammed. Can someone tell me? Please?)<<<<<
—John F. (218935) (18:49:12/08-23-55)

Jason Miller (order #53877)

>>>>>(I was perusing the Sharper Image directory from a terminal in my suite. When I tried to download some product information there was a lag, half of a "we are experiencing technical difficulties" message, some garbage and I was drop◊◊◊◊ped off the system. I tried re-requesting the information, but no luck so far. Assuming the SI people crashed, I logged into a local chat room to report the incident to the sysop and I got similar stories from all over. Something is very wrong here but I am afraid to jack out.)<<<<
—Max Bias (201◊◊◊◊22) (19:06:51/08-23-55)

>>>>>(I will never understand why you people persist in treating your deck like some kind of magic box. You are only at risk while you have a physical connection with your deck. Once you jack out you are safe. If you are worried about something going on in the Matrix GET OUT!)<<<<<
—SirLee (392910) (19:11:43/08-23-55)

>>>>>(Hey! Is everybody's cable out? All I got is blue screen. What the frag use is blue screen?)<<<<<
—Terry V. (748965) (19:36:13/08-23-55)

>>>>>(MAX—Your crash could have been caused by an attempted file transfer from a remote datastore across a failed node. Does anyone know where Sharper Image is based these days?)<<<<<
—REMbrandt (5478965) (19:38:21/08-23-55)

>•DIAL {WRK} EXECUTE.....
>
>>>>NO RESPONSE {Redial Inactive}
>
>•EDIT {TB2} Max would have logged onto our retail server downtown but if he requested >comprehensive technical specifications for any of our newer cyberware it would have come >from the Customer Service Archive in Taloosa. I checked his story and the Retail >Server has indeed crashed. SEND.....

>>>>>(I have been monitoring the usage activity, and in the last four minutes 76 percent of us were dropped. Of those of us who are still on, no one is from outside the heart of Chicago. I think someone is trying to isolate the city. Thoughts?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (20:03:14/08-23-55)

>>>>>(SYS—I tried to skate to Detroit the hard way and found the usual route down or blocked. I greased a piece of IC sitting in the LTG/RTG SAN, and let me tell you, it wasn't AmeriCom™ IC. Nope—bigger, nastier, and it nearly took me with it. The tangle was tougher than it should have been, since near the fringe things were pretty static—cold lines, faux routing, bad echoes, the whole bit. When I got out into the RTG, things cleared up almost immediately. I skimmed Motor City, and then ran for home.

By the time I got back, maybe fifteen, twenty milliseconds later, HALF the remaining routes into the city were down. I had to fight my way back in, got vexed, jacked, and logged back on. I started to check out the dead routes locally and let me tell you, they are dead, zero bandwidth. What's worse, the first three I checked had no evidence of rerouting or shadowboxing. I think they were actually hard breaks. I think you are right—someone has cut off the city. They started with smoke and mirrors but they are following it up with ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊)<<<<<
—◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

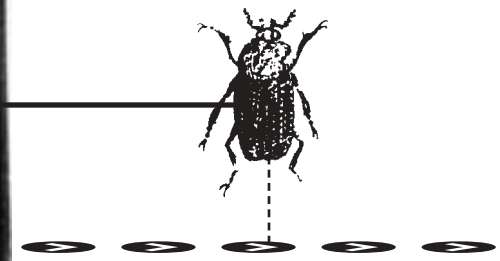
>>>>>(Who posted that? Do we have an ident bundle on that last message? Does anyone know?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (20:57:01/08◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ **>>>>>EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM ACTIVATION** 0046
>>>>>EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM ACTIVATION 0029
>>>>>EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM ACTIVATION MN201-10
>>>>>EMERGENCY BROADCAST SYSTEM ACTIVATION 0046

>>STAND BY FOR EMERGENCY TRANSMISSION

A COMPUTER VIRUS ATTACK AGAINST THE CHICAGO LTG IS IN PROGRESS.
PLEASE LOG OFF IMMEDIATELY AND PURGE ALL FILES DOWNLOADED WITHIN THE LAST 36 HOURS. THE CHICAGO LTG/MATRIX SYSTEM IS SHUTTING DOWN IN 12 SECONDS.
(12)
(11) **>>REPEAT TRANSMISSION**
(10)**A COMPUTER VIRUS ATTACK AGAINST THE CHICAGO LTG IS IN PROGRESS**.
(9) **PLEASE LOG OFF IMMEDIATELY AND PURGE ALL FILES DOWNLOADED WITHIN**

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

(8) **THE LAST 36 HOURS. THE CHICAGO LTG/MATRIX SYSTEM IS SHUTTING DOWN IN 7**
(7) **SECONDS**.
(6)
(5)>>>>>(What the frag!)<<<<<
(4)—SYStem 05 (21:01:56/08-23-55)
(3)
(2)>>>>>(THERE ARE UCAS MILITARY VTOL LANDING AT MEIGS FIELD! DOES
(1)ANYONE KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON? PLEASE DON'T SHUT THIS DOWN I NEED TO
>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::PLEASE TRY AGAIN LATER
HAVE A NICE DAY



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>>TEST

>>>>>(That's clean! That's clean! You got it! ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ Almost ...)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Confirm! I'm clean here!)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊
◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

>>>>>(Me too! But my 'ware says the network's still unterminated. It's gonna be fraggin' dirty. ...)<<<<
—Turant (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

Jason Miller (order #5538877)

>>>>>(I know, but it's the best I can get ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ right now. Keep error-checking on maximum. It'll slow us down, but drek we ain't running full-sense anyway.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Clean signal over here!)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Andy! Yes! How are you? How are you?)<<<<◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ <
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(I'd say been better, but you know that.)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Hi ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ Andy!)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>('Lo Andrew!)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(HI!'s all around. Does anybody know what the frag is going on???)<<<<<
—Mr. ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Teig? I think that's yours.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ FAILURE)

>>>>>(Are we it??? Are we all that's online??)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(At the moment. Now that the system's up (sort of) more people will begin accessing it. The lines are still hot within most of the city, but there's no data traffic going in or out. I can't even get the satt uplinks hot. But right now I've only opened it up to those of us who had the right-of-way codes anyway. Let's figure out what we're going to do here before the screaming starts.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Approved.)<<<<<
—Turant (SYSTEM TIME/DATE ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ FAILURE)
◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

>>>>>(OK, as near as I can tell here's the tale—the city's been quarantined.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(WHAT!)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(oh frag)<◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ <<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(I was in at Eagle when the word came down. It has something to do with that mess from a couple of days ago. Apparently when word got back to Washington some of the politicos into things para◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ normal freaked.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(What mess? Paranormal? Politicos?)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

Jason Miller (order #5584577)

>>>>>(The bug thing.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(No comprende hombre.)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Chummer, you been in a cave???)<<<<<
—Turant (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ KJ5u6H asdHSD8ynkjiouydf WR C@!sd#@$ s 78t y7q8wed◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

>>>>>(Kinda)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(There are giant insects all over the city. Not◊◊◊◊SDSD◊◊◊◊real bugs, spirits of some kind. Rumor is that there was some sort of a hive or something in the Shattergraves.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(WHAT! ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ I heard some people talking, but I figured it was like the trid said ...)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

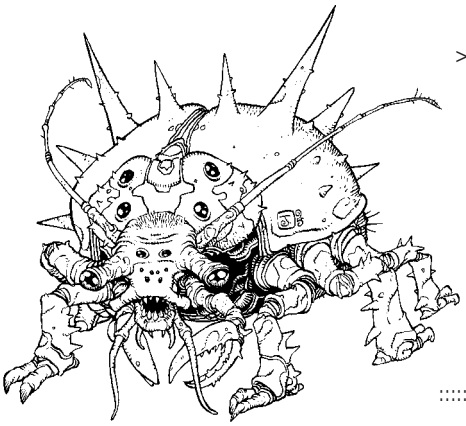
>>>>>(Wrongo, Andy. Apparently they're real. And they're killing people.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>asdq3 125???23 asd>>(There's panic, Andy. The army moved in yesterday and sealed off the city. They've been shooting people who try to get out.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(That can't be right. You guys spooking me? You're playing games, right?◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(No Andy, wish we were. I've got my windows blacked out, but if I peek I see a nest? hive? of wasps? down the block in one of the high-rises. I've seen them flying back in carrying people, Andy.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

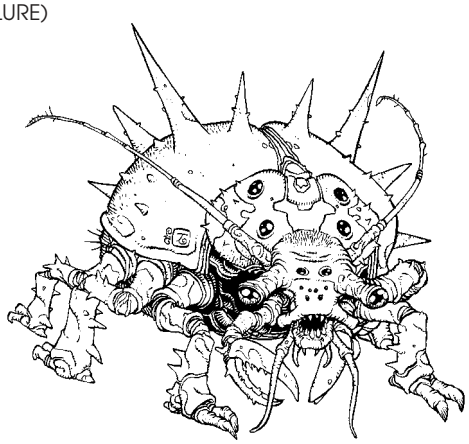
>>>>>(How big are they?)<<<<<
—Turant (SYSTE◊◊◊◊ *&56b%g◊◊◊◊ M TIME/DATE FAILURE)



>>>>>(The wasps are about man-sized?)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Yes, man-sized, more or less.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊
◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊
>>>>>(oh my god)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)



:::::QUANTUM PRINCESS has LOGGED ON ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

>>>>>(Vanny! Vanny! Vanny!)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ VANESSA!)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

Jason Miller (order #5538877)

>>>>>(Oh thank god there's still somebody out here.)<<<<<
—Quantum Princess (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(QP! Alive and Kickin'!)<<<<<
—Mr. Hyde-Park (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Howdy Princess. jhsh^nDTYJ78jhSD&ASHD)<<<<<
—Turant (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Hi All. What's going on? I hear there are ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ leaflets, but I haven't seen them.)<<<<<
—Quantum Princess (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(QP—There are; I was just bringing Mr. HP up to date. He hasn't been out of his basement.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊
◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊
>>>>>(Wise. Fraggin' wise.)<<<<<
—Quantum Princes (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Leaflets? I haven't seen them.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(There ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ are planes making fly-overs back and forth across the city dropping them even as we type. They've been pretty much south◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ of the Core, but they've been working their way north.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)
r23
◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ kljasd 89o8yfkkjJKJ*&kajaHOlsdf 3DULYDSDadf adfs FOIAquick!UYF O◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

>>>>>(What do they say?)<<<<<
—Quantum Princess (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Basically just the government◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ telling us that we've been drekked and dipped. City's been quarantined and is under ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ curfew (but no time is given, which is always a bad sign) and that we should all await further notice.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ?????

>>>>>(Great, just great. How the frag are we supposed to◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ jh8y ds y(*Y
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>>◊◊◊◊>>>(FRAG IT! Sorr◊◊lkjahsd◊◊y, the networ◊◊◊◊ k's still a mess. When ◊◊◊◊jh8y ◊ they cut the lines, they r◊◊◊◊ eally cut the lines. Blew them ◊◊SDIAS◊◊◊apart in some places, so we're bas ◊◊◊ 275484*&^)◊ ically a mess. ... I'm going to have to take it down and◊◊◊◊ see if there's anything I can do to bal◊◊◊◊ a◊◊◊◊ nce it.◊◊◊◊ Watch for me. ...)<<<<<
—SYStem ◊◊◊◊ SDJ ◊◊◊◊ 05 (SYSTEM TI◊◊◊◊ME/DATE FAILURE◊◊◊◊)◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ kjhsd*(&^% *&6KJLH◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
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>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::PLEASE TRY AGAIN LATER
HAVE A NICE DAY

Jason Miller (order #55848773)

:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::Try Again? (**Y**/N)

:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::Try Again? (**Y**/N)

:::::SYSTEM ACTIVE
:::::STAND BY FOR ACCESS

>>>>>(Hello?)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

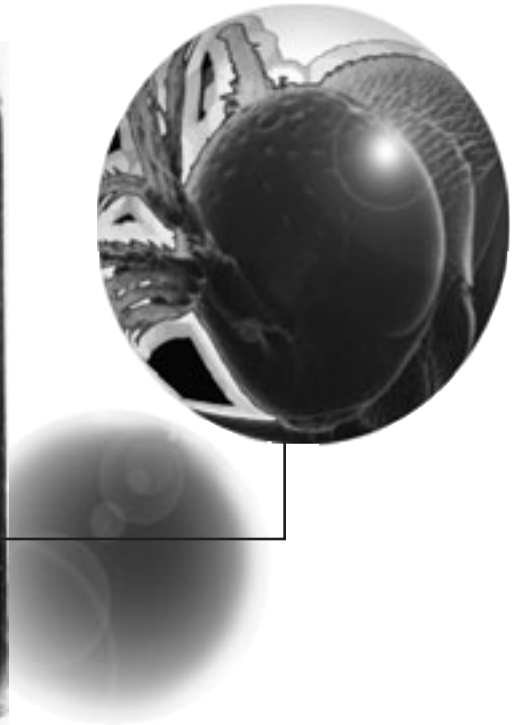
>>>>>(Welcome aboard, old man. <grin>)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(HEY! This is clean! Bravo!)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Well ... let me tell ya, I stopped trying to use Chicago Online's old nodes as the host. I finally figured out that someone (take a wild guess) introduced a viper bug into it right about the time the citynet went down. It's been like trying to tune a car with blown gaskets.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Waddya do?)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Me and Jose borrowed some hardware, Fuchi hardware to be exact. Didn't look to me like they were using it. It's pretty amazing what a trio of FTX 3000 HyperBox-Elite systems can do when you ask them. <grin again>)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)



Jason Miller (order #5538877)

>>>>>(Christ on a stick! That should do it! (Of course, if I still had an employer I'd be honor-bound to tell them ... but they seem to have been among the first to flee this mess.) You gonna be able to run partial or full sense on those?)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Maybe. Jose thinks he can partial sense (single channel feedback) in about a week or so (if nothing else goes wrong) and *maybe* full sense at half-speed if he can find somebody who really knows the HyperBox's Spatial code arrays.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Makes sense.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(So what's going on??)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Not much since I caught you on the phone yesterday. More grab-attacks up near Irving Park, but I heard at least one report that the army was starting to put a couple of mages in the towers along there to cast at the bugs when they hit the refugee camps.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(About fraggin' time they're doing something.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

:::::2SPIRITS has LOGGED ON

>>>>>(Look, I hate being here as much as you, but truthfully—I think they may have got it right for a change. What if these fraggers had gotten out?)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(They won't.)<<<<<
—2Spirits (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(What do you mean?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

Jason Miller (order #5584577

>>>>>(Won't leave? Why not? Who are you?)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(They won't leave their queens. Even the solitary hunters know the queens must survive until the next birthing.)<<<<<
—2Spirits (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Oh wait ... you're over at the Field Museum, aren't you??)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Huh?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(I have created a haven there for all who wish protection.)<<<<<
—2Spirits (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(How the frag can *you* protect them???)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(He's a shaman. ... hang on.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

:::::HAWKEYE has LOGGED ON

>>>>>(HooooRAAAAH The SYS-man strikes again!)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Teig? What's up?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(A bunch of local strong men lynched one of them man-bugs around the corner from me. They've got it up on a pole so everyone can see it. I guess they think it's going to scare off the other ones ...)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Teig?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(What's going on?)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Something is beginning and ending. ...)<<<<<
—2Spirits (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Look, none of that crap online, okay? Save if for the lodge.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(What am I missing?)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Somebody's throwing around a drek-load of firepower east of me. I can hear gunfire and catch flashes of magic (?))<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Where's that, Teig?)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

Jason Miller (order #5538877)

>>>>>(Down Cermak. I'm just northeast of Cermak and Ashland. I heard a bunch of explosions but now all I hear is gunfire and some other kind of muffled blasts. From my dining room window I can see flashes of light.)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Do you hear aircraft? Is it the military?)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Must be—)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Teig?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(IT'S GOTTEN BRIGHT OUTSIDE! BUT THE LIGHT'S ALMOST VIOLET AND THERE'S NOISE LOUD A ROAR—)<<<<<
—Teig (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

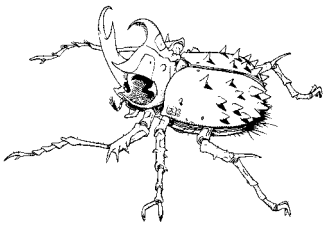
:::::DROPPED SIGNAL ERROR 303— "TEIG"

>>>>>(I CAN SEE IT!)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (SYSTEM TIME/DATE FAILURE)

>>>>>(Wha—)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (SYSTEM◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊
askjh8u j pd ;ou9087i UJ98y
lk;J ODFUs9l; ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

P(USP DP(i
;lm l_)(*l)(S_DI AS

:::::LINE OVERLOAD ERROR 23020/1
****CRASH WARNING****



>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
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>>>>>(GLOBAL SYSTEM FAILURE
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::THE SYSTEM IS NOT RESPONDING
:::::PLEASE TRY AGAIN LATER
HAVE A NICE DAY

>>>>>(That last segment was logged early in the morning of October 1, 2055. The event in question was, of course, the Cermak Blast. It has been described as possibly anything from a mega-hellfire spell to a subtactical nuclear weapon. I'm inclined to accept the latter explanation though I find use of such force somewhat unbelievable.

But then again, why not? Considering everything that's happened here in the last few months, how can I disbelieve anything? This city, our home, is infested with insect spirits. I'll leave it to others to explain what these things are, but they've virtually destroyed us. That may seem a pessimistic view, but it's true. You need only have eyes to see this.

Our government has abandoned us. We are on our own. Our city is fighting to survive.

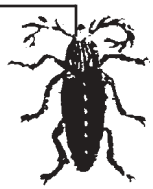
I hope this BBS will aid some of you in that fight. The city has changed too much too fast, but here we offer as much as we can to anyone who's still got a live telecom line (sorry, PIXT-mode only; we still can't get anything else to work reliably)—maybe you'll get the help and answers you need.

And please, help others as well. We all have skills and experience from which others might profit. And please, let's keep the doomsaying to the CORE/STUFF/RELIGION topics, 'kay?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (20:19:17/11:18:56

Jason Miller (order #5584577

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

WINDY CITY



>>>>>(OK, chummers, here's how things work in My Kind of Town these days. Things have gotten pretty hairy inside the Wall—excuse me, the Chicago Containment Zone—and plenty of my fellow Chicago-zens trapped in this hellhole are still wondering what the frag's going on. This file's for you—read it and weep, my friends. We all think things are really bad—but most of us still don't know how bad it is, because we don't know 'bout *nuthin'* outside of the few blocks we may call home. So here's the Big Picture on life inside the Big Box. These are just the basics, kids—especially where to stay away from and what not to do unless you *want* to get fragged. For a deeper look at the down-and-dirty, see the posting titled **Living In Oblivion.**

Just for the sake of comparison, I dug up a big chunk of an old Neo-anarchist post about our fair city; it's about five years out of date now, and it really creates quite a picture of how things used to be. Lots of the info about parts of the city outside the Zone is still chip-truth (though a fat lot of good that'll do any of us, seeings how we can't get out). Some of the stuff about areas inside the Wall is still true, too—so I decided to give you the entire original post with whatever appropriate annotations I could solicit. Public service to my fellow trapped rats, doncha know.

Oh yeah. This info originally came to us courtesy of a chummer calling himself (or herself) Defcon 1.)<<<<<

—Phranc S. (12:04:56/09-15-55)

Here's the game, brothers and sisters: I know Chicago better than the rest of the UCAS, but I don't think I'm wrong in saying this town has got to be one of the best examples of why we've got to burn the old contracts and come up with a new set of rules for running the world. This city is split between the haves and the have-nots—and the haves are winning big time. Not only do they practically starve the working class, but they've fixed it so that the poor are burning out their gray matter in straight simsense chips and BTLs coming from City Hall, the corps, and the mob. These guys sit around making fragging profits off the despair of the poor!

>>>>>(Partly true and partly not. 'Stead of being split between the haves and have-nots, the city's split between the folks inside the Big Box and the folks outside. As for the power triad of the corps, the mob, and City Hall, read on. The despair has kept its place, though—and gotten worse.)<<<<<

—CurlyMoe (827182) (08:12:53/09-18-55)

>>>>(And naturally—half out of fear and half out of ambition—there are a dozen or so so-called people trying to set themselves up as top dog now that everything has gone into the crapper. Better, I suppose, to rule in hell. ...)<<<<<

—VOX (10:06:01/09-22-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584577

Things may be starting to turn around, though. We (the Neo-anarchists of Chicago, that is) have gotten a few grassroots organizations going. We're working hard on the Northside, which has become a breeding ground for violence. We've set it up so that the workers who want to fight for change collect money to hire shadowrunners. It's true the runs don't pay great, but so many runners around here are so fed up with the situation in Wind City that they do part of the job as charity. Hooding, it's called, stealing from the rich to give to the poor. Sometimes they make these runs to dig up dirt for the aldermen who are almost on the straight and narrow to use.

>>>>>(Nobody hoods anymore. Since the Wall went up, nobody fraggin' cares about anybody else.)<<<<<
—Neo-A (11:03:57/09-17-55)

>>>>>(Not true, cobber. Plenty of folks go shady for something other than profit. Hell, what good's nuyen gonna do you in a hellhole like this? Sure, nobody steals from the rich just to stick it to them. These days we got more important stuff on our minds—like snatching dropped-in food supplies from the friendly black-market slugs who hoard it so they can keep driving prices higher. The three cans of beans you paid for last week with a couple of packs of smokes'll cost you a couple of *cartons* this week if these sewer rats have their way.)<<<<<
—Schindler (928719) (22:16:52/09-19-55)

All the stuff you don't want to hear about and can't quite believe is happening right here. For better or for worse, this city is rockin' and rollin'.

>>>>>(Well, *that's* certainly true …)<<<<<
—Master Harold (11:56:02/09-20-55)

Jason Miller (order #958877)

BASIC INFORMATION

>>>>>(What follows this offers a pretty stark contrast between what was and what is. Try not to take it too hard—there's plenty of good folks left in the Zone too.)<<<<<
—Phranc S. (12:07:41/09-15-55)

CLIMATE

Here's what they say about the weather in Chicago: "If you don't like it, just wait five minutes and it'll change." And that's no lie, chummers. Show up and take your chances. Some of the "mages" down in Little Earth say that the free air and water elementals along Lake Michigan are an especially mischievous lot who have been hassling the city for centuries. That's about as good an explanation as any for this city's crazy weather.

You do need to be prepared for the blizzards. Snow drifts can pile up to three and a half meters or more, and traffic grinds to a halt. Plan your winter runs with an eye to the sky.

>>>>>(Chicago only has one kinda weather—lousy.)<<<<<
—Micky Boy (19:07:33/09-30-55)

>>>>>(Anybody notice that we ain't seen no sunshine since the Wall went up? Cloudy every fraggin' day—and no "partly" about it, neither. Buzz I hear says the big boys runnin' the UCAS are keepin' it cloudy so's nobody can get satellite pix of the Zone.)<<<<<
—Pretty Boy Floyd (08:01:36/10-02-55)

>>>>>(Huh. I didn't know the UCAS had that kind of magic. ...)<<<<<
—VOX (15:57:01/10-02-55)

>>>>>(Fragging great. Our own personal equivalent of nuke winter. What happens when real winter hits this town?)<<<<<
—Janie B. (328191) (09:08:25/10-04-55)

>>>>>(So far we've been damned lucky it hasn't. Guess we're going thru one of those mild phases Chicago sometimes gets. Thank the spirits nothing's gone wrong with the electricity yet … if that happens, we get to start watching for iced-over corpses.)<<<<<
—Boss Daley (17:20:22/10-07-55)

>>>>>(Hey, real bugs don't like the cold—what about these? Can anyone guess what these will do when the temp drops?)<<<<<
—R.Grant (104587) (21:03:30/10-09-55)

TRAVELING TO CHICAGO

There are plenty of ways of getting to Wind City. Which one you take depends on what you're trying to hide.

Plane

O'Hare International Airport is the busiest airport in the world, handling flights from all over the globe. It also serves as the hub for people and cargo transport in North America. The place is so busy, in fact, that the O'Hare Sub-Sprawl has developed in the middle of Chicago. (The Sub-Sprawl is covered later on. For the moment, all you need to remember is that, armed with a visa and nuyen, you can travel by plane from anywhere in the world to Chicago. The reverse is just as easy.)

Domestic flights cost $100 to $500, depending on ticket class, time of year, city of origin, and time of day of travel. The price could also change if the airlines are in the mood to try a free-market economy instead of depending on fixed prices. Multiply these prices by 100 to 500 percent for international flights.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

Security used to be really tight in the O'Hare Sub-Sprawl. Since the assassination of the Chancellor of Germany last year, it's *really* tight. Security requires that all guns be checked through, but they usually discover someone trying to slip one by. The search always turns up some BTLs, too. If the old dreks up at City Hall don't want something in the city, I'd think twice about trying to smuggle it through the airport.

Midway International Airport is almost exclusively for use by the corporations in the Elevated. Security is just as tight as at O'Hare (AAA), but they're much nicer about it. I went through once, posing as a wage slave for Ares, and I couldn't believe how fraggin' polite security was. It's a different world down in the Elevated.

>>>>>(O'Hare *used* to be the busiest airport in the world. These days, seems like the only traffic at OH is military—and lots of it. Sec-wise, it's a fragging military checkpoint. Anybody heading in, don't try O'Hare. Or Midway—it's closed down, and the soldier boys cratered the runway. That means nobody can use 'em, no matter how fancy a flyer you style yourself.)<<<<<
—Wingman (18:23:34/10-05-55)

>>>>>(Ever heard of a VTOL, boxhead?)<<<<<
—Tagger (06:39:44/10-21-55)

>>>>>(Indeed, Midway's runways have elevated the classic Chicago pothole to a whole new level. Try Meigs Field instead—far'z I know, it's still open.)<<<<<
—Da Mayor (10:16:58/10-28-55)

Automobile or Bus

The roads aren't great in the Midwest, but you can get into Chicago by car and bus. This is your best bet if you need to import something illegal. Bus tickets run about $150 to $250, depending on your point of departure. For the money, you're getting a secure, reliable service.

>>>>>(Forget gettin' in by road. All roads into the CZ stop at the Wall—a huge barrier made from the rubble of collapsed buildings (blown up by the UCAS military, thank you very much). Oh, and the military left a nice wide kill zone, about ten or fifteen meters, so they can take their sweet time drawin' a bead on any slag trying to run across. And if the soldiers don't getcha, the gangers will—just take a gander at the comments in the **Bug City** part of this post.)<<<<<
—Road Kill (20:47:18/10-02-55)

Jason Miller (order #958877)

Train

Amtrak Inc. handles the passenger-train travel in and out of the city to most points in the UCAS. Amtrak's security is fairly tight for weapons (A) but lax on contraband. They only make spot checks, so you can slip almost anything small on board if you're careful. Travel in Illinois ranges from $20 to $50 within the state and runs $50 to $300 from other states. The travel schedule also changes with destination and departure points. Tickets are either first class, second class, or tourist.

>>>>>(The Amtrak trains don't run anymore—the tracks stop dead at the Wall, blocked by huge barricades. People are living in the cars inside the CZ—friend of mine fixed one up real nice.)<<<<<
—Ms. Mestopheles (16:22:33/10-01-55)

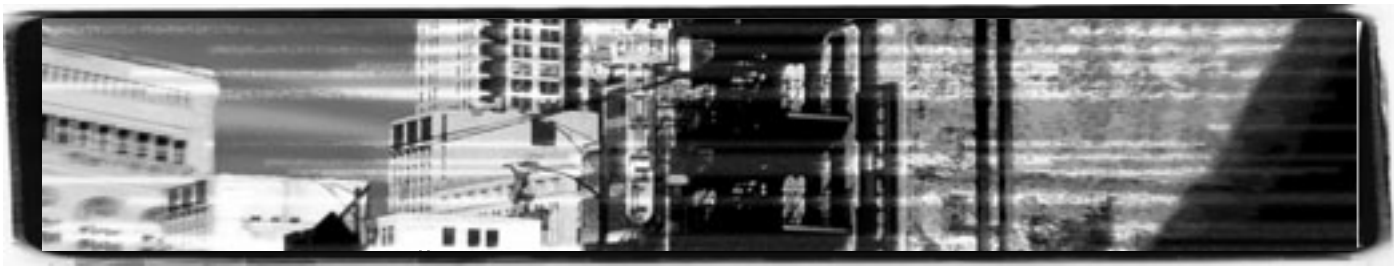
>>>>>(Hey, if the 'lectricity is still on, does that mean the tracks can be powered up again? Can the gov-boys' barricade stand up to a train engine barreling along at fifty klicks per hour? I'd bet not.)<<<<<
—T. Pass (1478963) (12:11:06/10-02-55)

>>>>>(Ever heard of an AVM, boxhead?)<<<<<
—Tagger (19:07:38/10-05-55)

LODGING

Hotels on the Northside are about $30 a night, becoming more expensive the further south you go. The YM/WCAs can put you up for $2 to $5 a night, and metahuman hostels run about the same. Lately, a lot of the hostels have been getting shot up in the middle of the night. No word on the perps yet, but we're going to nail their scalps to the wall when we catch them.

If you're looking for a place with really tight security, try a hotel in the Noose. The prices are steep for the quality ($100 a night for a mattress and a bare bulb), but the security is topnotch and the staffs never snitch.



>>>>>(Those high-priced hotels in the Noose this slag's talkin' about have turned into armed camps, full of the privileged folks who can pay for that kinda security. Of course, we're not talkin' cred—we're talkin' some kinda goods or some service that's still some fraggin' use to somebody in the CZ. If you got something to offer that they think is real useful, they'll take you in. Of course, the folks runnin' the joint are the ones who decide what's useful … Oh, and stay away from the high-rises, like the formerly ritz 'n' swanky Hyatt, the Omni, those kindsa places. Bugs just loooove tall buildings—especially wasps.)<<<<<
—Big Shoulders (05:14:31/10-07-55)

>>>>>(The best hotel these days? Somebody's house. Make them an offer—food, supplies, ammo, services, whatever—and the right-thinking may just put you up. Of course, you may have to give them *your* weapons first. Can't trust everybody, doncha know.)<<<<<
—VOX (03:18:09/10-12-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584677)

LEGAL AID

The North American Civil Liberties Union is pretty competent in Chicago and can usually put you in touch with someone who knows what's what. However, unless the charges against you are really lame, the ties between the mob, City Hall, and corps are so tight that you can count on doing time no matter who defends you. The only way to avoid all that trouble is to not get caught. This was kindly pointed out to me by a cop who busted me back when I was just a punk.

>>>>>(Legal aid? In the CZ?! LOL—ROFL …)<<<<<
—Roy Ko (13:23:57/10-15-55)

>>>>>(The only aid you're going to get around here is the kind you'll find in the CORE/CITY/SPECIAL.HELP forum.)<<<<<
—Wandering Kid (16:01:10/10-15-55)

GETTING AROUND

ZONE ISOLATED
AUGUST 24, 2055
AP>NEWSNET>TAGLI

CHICAGO - Any individual attempting to enter or exit the Containment Zone along the city's expressways, rail lines, or waterways will be stopped by any means necessary, according to a statement released Tuesday by the UCAS military commander for Chicago. "Obviously, this is a tragic situation for all involved, but in the interest of public safety no one can be allowed to enter or leave the area," said William Smiley, a UCAS army spokesman. "This order comes from the highest authorities, and anyone who chooses to ignore it does so at his own risk—and the UCAS cannot be held responsible for the consequences. ... "

ROAD TRIPPING

CHICAGO>TRANSPORTATION>MAPS>HIGHWAY SYSTEM
EXCERPT "FODORR'S '28 CHICAGO"
FODORR'S TRAVEL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2028

Six expressways link the outer reaches of the Chicago metropolis with the city's downtown business core. Eight-lane Lake Shore Drive runs along the city's lakefront. I-90 and I-94, both twelve lane expressways, traverse the city from its north and northwest corridors to its southeast portion. Twelve-lane I-290 runs across Chicago's Westside, and I-57 enters the city from the south...

Jason Miller (order #958877)

>>>>>(And thanks to the good ol' UCAS, u don't have to contend with rush-hour traffic anymore, as long as u don't leave the Containment Zone. Of course, if u wanna get out or get in, I suggest u avoid the e-ways, unless u have a death wish. The border patrol has blocked off all these roads at the Zone demarcation lines and placed extra missile batteries at these points, making these roads pretty much useless.)<<<<<

—Mario A. (16:17:29/10-08-55)

>>>>>(They may be useless for getting in and out, but if you've already got yer sorry hoop into the Zone and wanna get from one end to the other, they can't be beat. Of course, you'll wanna make sure your vehicle is well-armed and armored, cuz it's pretty fraggin' hard to slip by unnoticed when you're streaking down giant ribbons of ferrocrete. And watch out for the potholes.)<<<<<

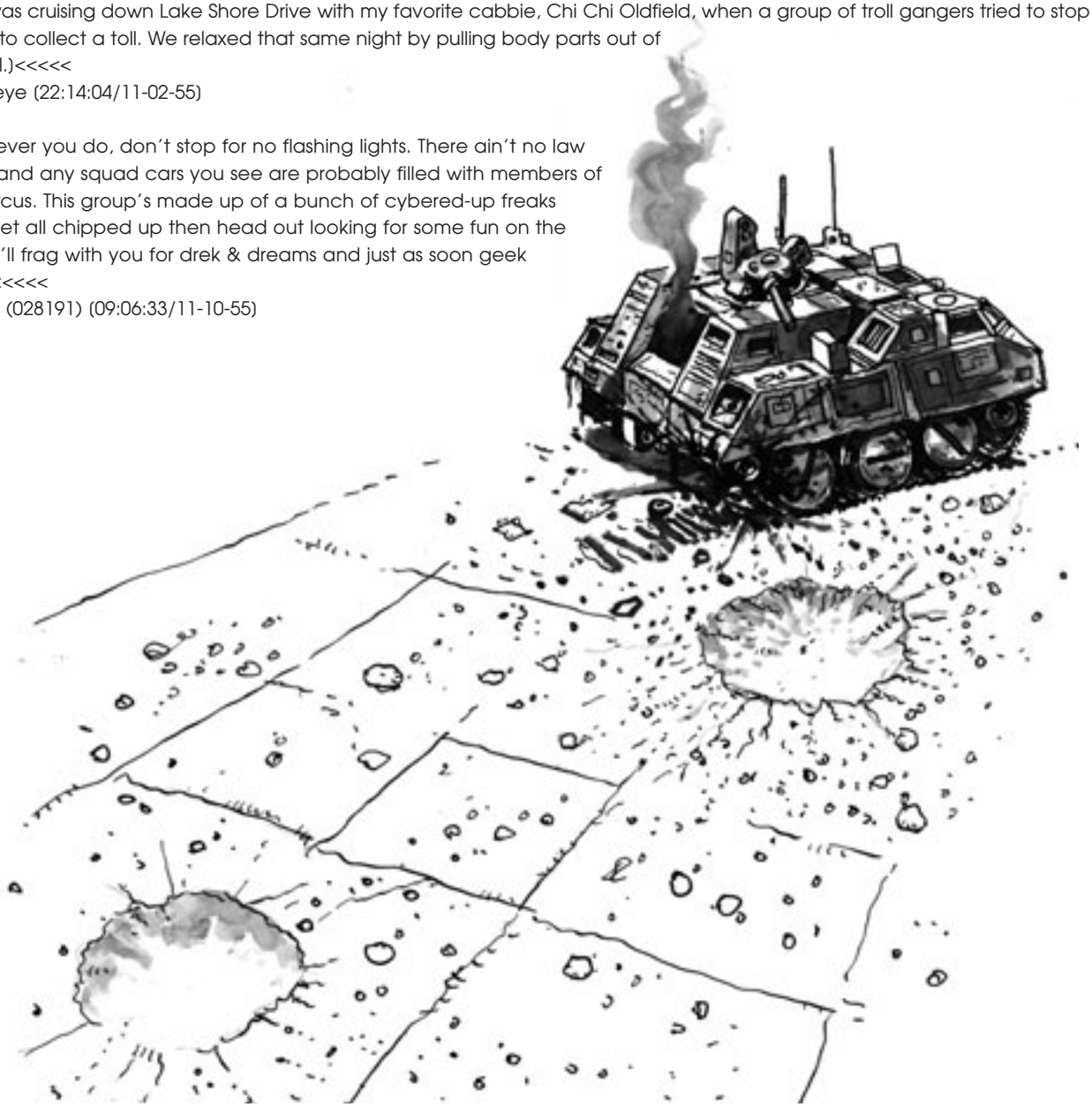
—Sunday Driver (23:31:11/10-24-55)

>>>>>(If you've got some nuyen or something else to trade, you may be able to hire an armored cab. I'd say at least fifteen enterprising souls have started offering such transportation services—you can usually find them along the old e-way entrance ramps. Generally, they'll charge extra to take you anywhere off the e-ways, but they know the roads and can save an out-of-towner valuable time. And they get you where you're going fast. I've seen armored cabs plow through roadblocks, bugs, you name it. Just the other day I was cruising down Lake Shore Drive with my favorite cabbie, Chi Chi Oldfield, when a group of troll gangers tried to stop us, probably to collect a toll. We relaxed that same night by pulling body parts out of her cab's grill.)<<<<<

—Hawkeye (22:14:04/11-02-55)

>>>>>(Whatever you do, don't stop for no flashing lights. There ain't no law in the Zone, and any squad cars you see are probably filled with members of the Flying Circus. This group's made up of a bunch of cybered-up freaks who like to get all chipped up then head out looking for some fun on the e-ways. They'll frag with you for drek & dreams and just as soon geek you as not.)<<<<<

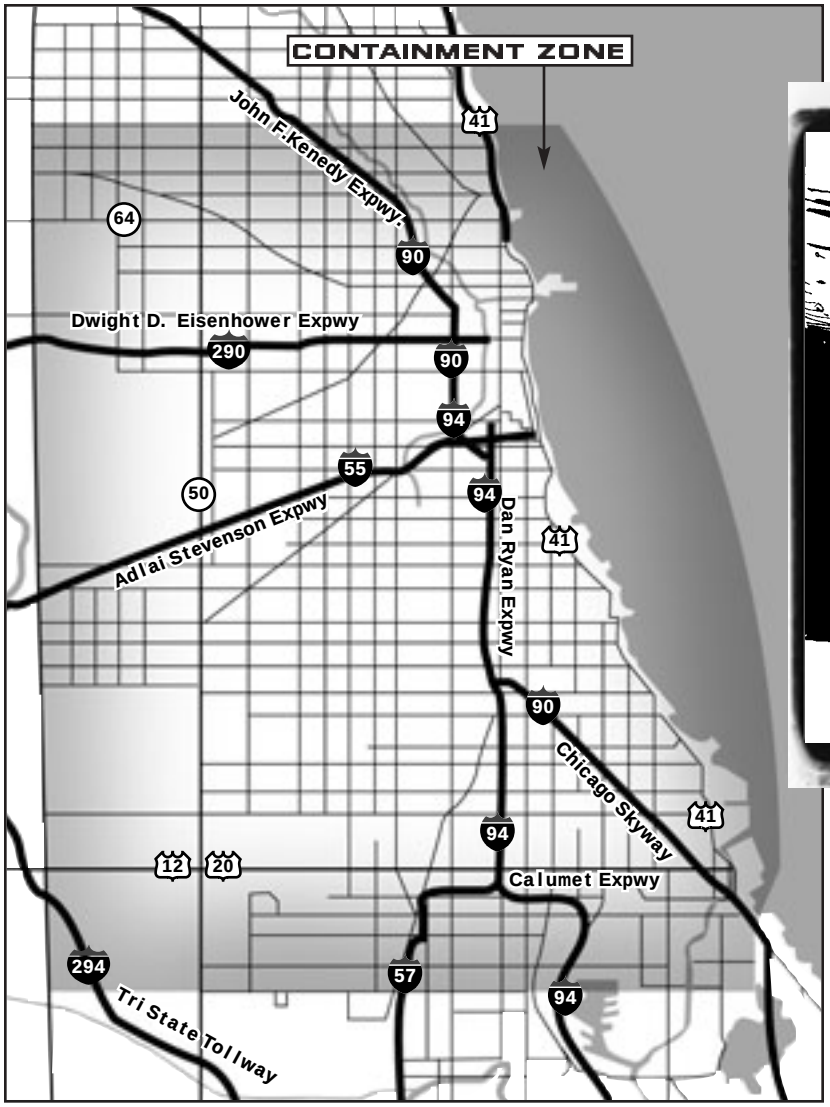
—Max.D (028191) (09:06:33/11-10-55)



Jason Miller (order #5584677)

PIXFILE

CHICAGO>TRANSPORTATION>MAPS>EXPRESSWAYS



RIDIN' THE RAILS

CHICAGO>TRANSPORTATION>TRAIN SYSTEM
EXCERPT "FODORR'S '28 CHICAGO"
FODORR'S TRAVEL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2028

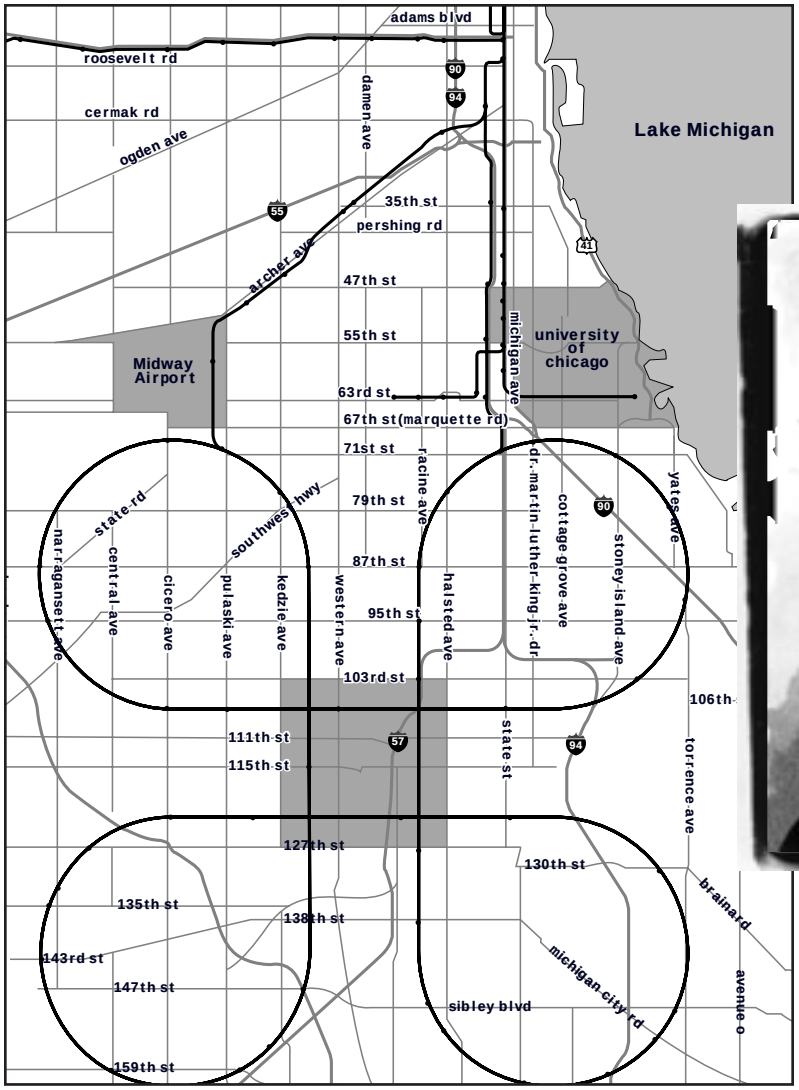
Chicago's extensive public transportation network includes buses and rapid transit trains, both subway and elevated. The city's rail-service providers, Metrorail and Skytrack, publish excellent maps of the transit system, available on request from either firm.

Most, but not all, rapid transit lines operate 24 hours; some stations ...

Jason Miller (order #958-877)

PIXFILE

CHICAGO•TRANSPORTATION•MAPS•RAPID•TRANSIT SYSTEMS



>>>>>(Good luck getting a train now, chummer.)<<<<<
—Rat Boy (22:33:44/10-12-55)

>>>>>(Actually, it's not as hard as you might think, if you have the nuyen. A group calling itself the Angels—buncha slots who like to deck themselves out in red berets and other military garb—runs an informal transportation service using the old elevated tracks. They can't take you into or out of the Zone, but once you get inside they can usually get you anywhere you need to go along the old CTA lines. They've got their own generators hooked up to the tracks and a couple of old elevated train cars all armored up nice 'n' purty. Their rates start at 1,000 nuyen and go up from there, depending on where you want to go, how many are in your party, and how restless the native gangs are at the time. The "fare" can get pretty steep, but they will take items in trade, like weapons, ammunition, or body armor. However, they can only run you along the old elevated lines—all the subways have been sealed off because the roaches and giant mutant rats have taken them over. And every now and then some slots will block the tracks and demand "toll." Usually the Angels just plow over the fraggers, but occasionally someone'll manage to get some large immovable object—like an old truck—up on the tracks.)<<<<<
—Kommuter (13:36:28/10-14-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584677)

"L" TRAINS

Two elevated lines currently run through Chicago. Metrorail serves the Northside down to the Noose, and Skytrack handles the downtown area known as the Elevated. The trains of both lines run 24 hours a day, each handling a good chunk of the rush-hour crunch.

Though each line of Metrorail passes over or under the Noose, Metrorail officials have closed and sealed all the stations there.

The security rating on Metrorail is B. Each train normally has two guards on board. Extra guards are available for each train making its round through the Noose; two additional guards board every train at the stop before the Noose and get off when the run through the Noose is completed.

Skytrack began developing a monorail system for the Southside in 2025. Using cash earned in the trideo boom of 2026, the company expanded its original design to create something more like an amusement park than a transit system. Skytrack is supported by sturdy pillars seven stories high. At night the lights of the Skytrack system make the Southside sparkle like a simsense fantasy.

Security on the trains and at the stations is A, contracted from Eagle Security.

A single trip on Metrorail or Skytrack is $2. A monthly pass is $75.

>>>>>(These days, folks walk from place to place on the old "L" tracks 'stead of on the street—cuz you can see things coming from up there. Aside from the cars the Angels run, there's hardly any trains, so walking the tracks is safer than it sounds. Don't go in the subways, tho—the roaches have taken over. You wanna tangle with them, you better have one BIG can of Raid.)<<<<<

—Lizzie (14:55:03/10-08-55)

BUS

Wind Transit won the contract for the city's ground-based mass transit a decade ago. What can I tell you? South of the Noose, the buses are clean and efficient. North of the Noose, the buses and service are dirty and undependable. Northside drivers are protected by bulletproof booths, but they won't do anything to stop a mugging in their own vehicle. They've even been known to tear through other vehicles and pedestrians when rushing through a nasty neighborhood.

Fare throughout the city is $1. The security rating depends on the neighborhood through which the bus is traveling.

>>>>>(There're a few armored buses running parts of the old routes, offering the same kinda service as the armored cabs—some of the bus drivers are crazy enough to try to keep public transportation going in Beirut-on-the-Lake. Then there's the bus drivers who are just plain crazy—they drive around looking for saps who'll board, then geek them first chance they get. I hear some of them are hosting bugs—which gives their victims an even nastier fate, so I hope to god that's a lie.)<<<<<

—Little Jake (10:16:27/10-10-55)

>>>>>(No such luck. The bug-men steal buses so they can ride around looking for fresh meat. Gangers have stolen practically a fleet's worth, and so have the warlords and everybody else who thinks they need a set of wheels. There's no bus service to speak of any more—not anywhere in the whole CZ. You need to get somewhere, take an armored cab or use your feet.)<<<<<

—Smith 'n' Jones (15:12:04/10-11-55)

Jason Miller (order #958-877)

BOATS

A ferry service runs from Business Village to the Southside, giving the business-school students a way to get downtown without having to get dirty. The ferry docks at the University of Chicago Pier, making the round trip three times a day. The provider sometimes cancels the service in inclement weather. The fare is $7.

>>>>>(The Coast Guard's intercepting all boat traffic these days. Two choices, chummer—let them capture you, or take a fast trip to the bottom of Lake Mich. You get a single warning, so make your choice quick. I've heard rumors about "stealth boats" making it to shore, but I've never seen it happen and I don't know anyone who has (at least, not anyone whose word I'd trust). I've also heard that a few indies are running boats up and down the Chicago River—and some slag told me the Wendella Boat Lines are *still* doing sightseeing cruises!)<<<<<
—Algren (12:13:55/10-09-55)

>>>>>(Tourist boats?! Yer fraggin' me …)<<<<<
—Mirth 'n' Girth (07:49:16/10-09-55)

>>>>>(Wanna hear something really funny? Ain't no scuba gear left anywheres in the Zone—every slag who could get his hands on some used it to walk outta here across the bottom of the lake. Wild, neh?)<<<<<
—Big Shoulders (15:03:21/10-11-55)

CHOPPERS

For just over $100, you can travel between any of the Southside's major buildings (governmental, offices, shopping malls) via Federated Boeing's local air service. All key buildings have heliports.

>>>>>(Airspace over the CZ is restricted. One warning, then a missile up your hoop. Better fly fast.)<<<<<
—Wingman (22:13:07/09-22-55)

>>>>>(Best way to get in by air is to sneak your bird in during a supply drop. No one'll notice you if you avoid doing anything that might attract attention.)<<<<<
—Stealth Bomber (18:21:07/09-27-55)

>>>>>(Bulldrek. A few too many folks have tried that little stunt, and the brass are well prepared for it. They know *exactly* who's dropping what where—they'll notice you, believe me. And if too many more of you sheep-brained aerojocks try to tiptoe over the Wall, the Powers That Be will stop you by using the surest way I know—they'll suspend the food drops "until further notice." Won't that be nice?)<<<<<
—Aldercritter (08:06:13/09-30-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584677)

HISTORY

The town of Chicago was incorporated in 1833 with fewer than 100 inhabitants. A portage site for fur traders, the area developed into a major crossroads for trade during the early years of stealing North America from the Indians. The city has remained a hub of commerce as well as a cauldron of racial unrest.

Two key events in this century have shaped Chicago. The first was the discovery of ASIST technology by Dr. Hosato Hikita of ESP Systems, Inc. The second was an act of terrorism unequaled by any that followed.

As soon as ESP Systems "leaked" their ASIST concept, the company was snapped up by maverick financier Dan Truman. Truman had the bucks to back the development of the ASIST technology, turning Chicago into the capital of ASIST and simsense research. According to Truman, "[Chicago is] never going to be Hollywood, but by God, those people are going to stop calling us the fly-by city!" Rumor has it that Truman got ESP only after offering its two founders a "permanent vacation."

ESP became a subsidiary of Truman Technologies, but it was absorbed into the parent company after TT lost the suit it brought against Fuchi on ESP's behalf, charging that Fuchi had stolen ESP's ASIST technology. Truman still wants revenge against Fuchi, which has set up an unhealthy competition between the two companies. They constantly try to steal top scientists away from each other.

>>>>>(There's a zillion and one would-be power players left behind the Wall, lots of 'em corp people that got caught behind the lines when the balloon went up. Two of the corps with the biggest remaining presence are Truman Technologies (natch) and its big bad rival, Fuchi. Not the bugs, not the bomb, not *nothing* has made them stop going for each other's throats—with the city dying around them, they act like there's still nothing more important than fragging each other. Both of them have an awful lot of research and product-testing facilities in the CZ, and the whole disaster went down so fast they didn't have time to close up shop. So they can frag with a whole lot of each other's projects. Must make them all feel warm and cozy inside.)<<<<<

—Sunday Driver (23:12:03/09-22-55)

>>>>>(Speaking of Truman Tech, I hear Dan Truman's put up a drekheap of cred for any slag who tracks down his missing daughter. Seems young Melissa Truman went AWOL the day her family skipped town, and poor old Danny can't get any word about her. He's hired plenty of bodies to go looking, but so far no luck I guess.)<<<<<

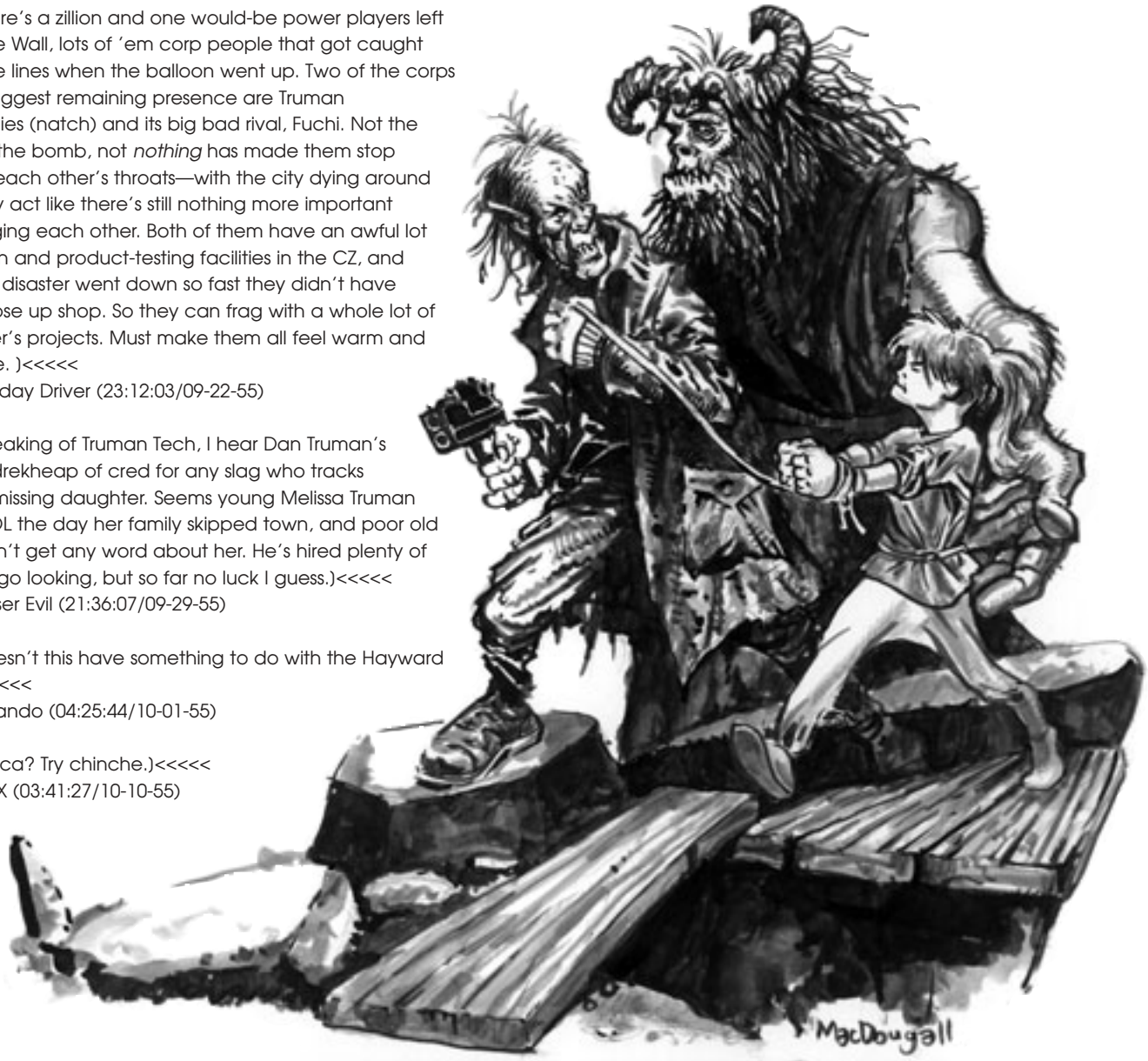
—Lesser Evil (21:36:07/09-29-55)

>>>>>(Doesn't this have something to do with the Hayward chica?)<<<<<

—Quando (04:25:44/10-01-55)

>>>>>(Chica? Try chinche.)<<<<<

—VOX (03:41:27/10-10-55)



Jason Miller (order #958-877)

Within seven years, Truman Technologies was rich enough from simsense entertainment profits to begin revitalizing Chicago's south side. Contracts were signed, cheap land bought, and neighborhood folks were tossed into the streets. The now-homeless were bought off with simsense prototypes presented as "market surveys."

Chicago, traditionally known as a city of neighborhoods, became a magnet for the Awakened. Many of the metahumans headed for Chicago's Southside, where a strong back often compensated for green skin, especially in the factories. The numerous districts of the city provided conclaves where orks, trolls, dwarfs, and elves could gather together in safety, but it reinforced the old ghetto mentality. Each racial group had a place where they could feel at home, but they were separated from the rest of the city. A corper feels like he's part of Chicago, but a ghetto-dweller identifies with the six-by-four-block area he is forced to call home. Soon even these areas no longer belonged to the metahumans.

When the Loop expanded, it headed south and west, driving up real estate prices in areas where metahumans had recently settled. Truman's land-development deals displaced much of this working class to the fringes of the city. The situation got worse when office workers from the northern suburbs moved south to avoid a three-and-a-half hour commute to the relocated business district.

When the business district moved, metahumans and other racial minorities had to find new places to live. Members of the suburban communities circling the city forced acceptance of the metahumans into their own neighborhoods for economic and other reasons, creating balanced, racially integrated areas. Unfortunately, these neighborhoods were also absorbed into the city, collapsing as the corporations moved south and southwest. Once again the metahumans and their working-class neighbors were forced to move.

In 2029, the waves of anti-metahuman violence set off by Seattle's Night of Rage swept through the country. It was widely believed that the most radical arm of Alamos 20,000, the Hand of Five, was responsible for the warehouse fires that caused the tragic deaths of hundreds of Seattle's metahumans that night. The terrorism continued all over the world in the days that followed.

Three days after the Night of Rage, members of Alamos 20,000 committed the most outrageous act of terrorism yet, the second major event that affected Chicago. IBM had acquired the Sears Tower years earlier. From the beginning of the Awakening, the computer company supported an equal-opportunity program. Just when it seemed as if people could begin to pick up their lives and go on in the wake of the Night of Rage, the terrorists of Alamos 20K, with a combination of magic and explosives, destroyed the balance of the nine units making up the Sears Tower, sending the building crashing to the street during a weekday lunch hour.

The falling debris destroyed blocks worth of buildings, streets, and sidewalks. Thousands were crushed to death, but it was still not over. When the area's gas lines ruptured from the structural damage, the whole Loop area went up in flames. A second Chicago Fire was narrowly averted by mages who managed to contain the blaze in less than an hour. This additional damage pushed the death toll to nearly 26,000.

The physical damage was not the worst part of the incident. Alamos 20K covered its tracks by arranging the destruction of the Tower to look like metahuman retaliation for the Night of Rage. The corporations responded immediately by sealing the metahuman and poor (currently lumped together as one group) out of their respective neighborhoods. City Hall and the corps built projects on the Northside to house the metahumans and keep them separated from the rest of the city. They also built factories in the same area to serve as work camps, and the official tongue-wagging says the situation is "under control."

>>>>>(The same mentality that sealed us all in the Containment Zone. Guess some things never change.)<<<<<
—Cynic (19:36:12/09-21-55)

>>>>>(Of course, now everybody's in the same jam. Humans and metas, poor and filthy-fragging-rich, everybody. Maybe this disaster'll finally teach us to pull together, at least for a little while. Ragging on the poor and the metahumans seems a little pointless when you're likely to get eaten by a bug that looks an awful lot like a rich human CEO.)<<<<<
—Poly Phonic (14:04:34/09-28-55)

>>>>>(Dream on, pretty Poly. Racial bigotry is part of the air everybody in this town grows up breathing. Always has been. If anything, it's worse now.)<<<<<
—Aldercritter (06:38:20/10-02-55)

>>>>>(NO! We can't let it be like this. We have a common enemy. We must all stand against the bugs. Skin color be fragged. I'll bet we all taste the same to the bugs.<<<<<
—Buck Shot (09:35:24/10-05-55)

>>>>>(You sure about that?)<<<<<
—Alamos Andy (23:48:16/10-10-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

The areas crushed by the Sears Tower are known as the Shattergraves. All forms of human and inhuman creatures, as well as the ghosts of those killed in the building's fall and the aftermath, are said to roam the mazes of steel and concrete. The rest of the Loop, left to rot by the corporations and government, is under the thumb of Chicago's underworld, which is why it's known as the Noose. In the eleven years since the fall of the Tower, the Noose has expanded its boundaries as far as Western Avenue.

CHICAGO DISTRICTS

Chicago is divided into six broad sections: the Elevated, the O'Hare Sub-Sprawl, the Noose, the Northside, the Westside, and the Southside. These sections have no political basis, but have developed along economic lines.

>>>>>(*Tcha.* Irrelevant. There is now only the Containment Zone. It castrates the Northside along Irving Park Road, slices the Westside down Harlem Avenue, and then divides the Core neatly down the middle along 115th Street. Most of Chicago is outside the CZ, and I only care about what's in my world now.)<<<<<
—Trial (22:15:47/10-02-55)

>>>>>(Wow, he sure got the name right.)<<<<<
—A.Vanoss (21:07:06/10-05-55)

Jason Miller (order #958877)

THE ELEVATED DOWNTOWN OR THE CORE OF THE WASTE

District Size: Approximately 676 square kilometers
Population: 610,040
Human: 77%
Elf: 14%
Dwarf: 4%
Ork: 2%
Troll: 2%
Other: 1%
Population Density: 902 per square kilometer
Per Capita Income: $500,000
Below Poverty Level: 0%
On Fortune's Active Traders List: 3%
Corporate Affiliation: 95%
Wards: 17
Education:
<12 years: 1%
High School: 5%
College Degree: 65%
Graduate Degree: 29%
Hospitals and Clinics: 14
LTG Access Numbers: 1312 and 2312

>>>>>(Not surprisingly, the above vital statistics (and the same stats for every other area now inside the Zone) are just so much drek in a can. But who's counting?)<<<<<
—Janie B. (13:26:37/09-28-55)

>>>>>(Anybody got a count of the dead? Seems like that constitutes a timelier issue!)<<<<<
—Roy Ko (10:13:34/10-01-55)

>>>>>(FYI: As a general rule, population is up, income is down, and the percentage below the poverty level is way up everywhere in the Containment Zone.)<<<<<
—Phranc S. (05:08:49/10-02-55)

>>>>>(Well, population is up for the part of Downtown *outside* the CZ, which is where I suspect a lot of refugees are still huddling. As for the part inside the CZ, well, population varies.)<<<<<
—VOX (07:56:33/10-02-55)

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Elevated includes the area of Chicago encircled by Skytrack's cloverleaf and the lands just outside the tracks. The cloverleaf stretches from 71st Street on the north down to 159th Street, and from the lake out to Route 43. The center of the cloverleaf is known as the Core—a fifteen-square-block area formed by the monorail tracks as they come in off one leaf and head out on another.

Suburban-style living dominates the Core and the land immediately surrounding it. Almost all the units are owned by corporations for use by their own employees, or they are rented out to other companies. The rest of the Elevated is made up of sleek cement-and-glass office buildings, condos, and shopping centers. The destruction of the Sears Tower did little to dissuade people from raising their own phallic symbols.

Jason Miller (order #5584677)

>>>>>(BIG grains of salt on this one, folks. Keep reading.)<<<<<
—Phranc S. (22:13:34/10-05-55)

>>>>>(Yeah. And keep in mind, of course, that when certain corps figured out or were tipped off to what was going on, you know whose people they got out first—their own.)<<<<<
—Trial (21:20:04/10-07-55)

NEIGHBORHOODS

The Core

The Core consists of the fifteen-square-block area created by the Skytrack and the ten blocks immediately outside the square. Easy access to the Skytrack makes this prime real estate. The biggest corporations and the tallest skyscrapers rise out of the heart of the cloverleaf. Key companies have buildings in the Core, including Truman Tech, the Chicago Board of Trade, Ares Macrotechnology, IBM, Federated Boeing, UCAS Steel & Manufacturing, and Fuchi-America. Truman Tower is intersected by Skytrack, with one of the stations located inside the building.

The Core is where most of the art looted by the execs from Chicago's museums is now stored. Oh, you didn't hear about that? Well, after the Sears Tower went down, insurance companies refused to cover art in the Institute and other museums. The sararimen picked up all the best and most valuable pieces, cleverly convincing the current owners that it was better to keep the art in Chicago, even if it was no longer public property, than to transfer it somewhere else. Wanna see some oil paintings? Become a wage slave. The funny thing is, some of the paintings have been stolen from the corps, and now the corps want to get them back. I guess they're not as hyped on the public good as they say. From what I hear, the paintings and statues are part of an "illegal museum" (strange words for strange times) on the Northside. The parents are trying to get their kids off on paintings rather than dreamchips. More power to 'em.

Real estate in the Elevated is expensive, but the corps like the fact that the area is rated AAA with Eagle Security.

>>>>>(The Wall cuts the Core just about in half; the safe place to be is on the southern side. Lots of corps got caught with their proverbial knickers down, so there's a fine stash of corp goodies in the northern half of the Core for any runners enterprising (or crazy) enough to go get them. Ares in particular left a lotta good stuff. See the **Bug City** section for the gory details.)<<<<<
—Council Warz (22:23:56/09-28-55)

>>>>>(Hey! I wonder if there's any of that art stuff left?)<<<<<
—Rat Boy (18:10:13/09-29-55)

Malony Government Complex

Named after the Mayor who got Chicago's political machine back in working order just in time to stop the corps from controlling the city, the Complex is located at the southern edge of Skytrack's northwest leaf. There is a central plaza surrounded by City Hall (where the mayor usually hides with his officially appointed lackeys), the Council Building (where the alderman gather to debate important issues and decide who's picking up the profits from organized crime this month) the Midwest FBI Division, the Postal Building, and the Cook County Circuit Court Building.

>>>>>(This illustrious haven for the criminally powerful don't exist no more. Bulldozed.
Army, I think—who knows, who cares?)<<<<<
—Skinny Puppy (07:08:10/10-01-55)

University of Chicago/Little Earth

The U of C's campus has grown steadily over the years. It is now located just outside Skytrack's northeast leaf.

Magical studies were incorporated into the University of Chicago's philosophy department in 2028. Less flashy than the programs at Texas A & M and MIT & T because of the lack of industrial, or "practical," application, the program is actually more important because it incorporates magic into our view of the universe.

Shortly after the CAS formed, the Atlantean Foundation donated funds to the U of C to develop a research park out on Lake Michigan. It seems the lakefront area is alive with free air and water spirits. The research park was viewed as a boon to students studying detection and illusion, concentrations of magic important to the Atlantean Foundation. Other corporations kicked in, and Elemental Hall was floating off the shore of Lake Michigan by 2034. Magician philosophers quickly assembled, giving the program a reputation for producing some of the subtlest, if laziest, magical theorists around.

Jason Miller (order #958-877)

Elemental Hall is located half a kilometer off the shore of Lake Michigan. The four-story building sits atop a concrete foundation set in the bottom of the lake. The building has a courtyard in its center, and a ten-by-ten-meter section of the courtyard has been cut out for access to the lake. The pool is heated in the winter so that the lake is always available for study. The Hall has 30 students and twelve professors as permanent residents, and other students sail out for classes and research. I don't know much about this stuff, but last I heard, the Hall's library was considered the best magical research library in the midwest.

The University has also become a mecca for the fringe elements of the magical world. Those who don't make the cut for the U, or who just want to gather with others who share their particular point of view, have taken over an area near the campus. It's called Little Earth, a term taken from the Middle Earth books by Tolkien. (I hear the U of C still gets flak about that from the local metahuman rights groups.) Any theory you've got about magic will find a sympathetic ear in this neighborhood. A fair share of artisans and antitech policlubs have also settled here.

The U of C's security rating is AA. Little Earth's is B.

>>>>>(For the latest skinny on Little Earth, see the **Bug City** post.)<<<<<
—Mage-ik Man (14:45:08/10-02-55)

Residential Areas

The Elevated combines two types of residential neighborhoods, suburban and high-rise.

The suburban style features single-story and two-story houses set along tree-lined streets. Kids can play in the streets without their parents worrying. Illegal chip use is low among the juvies, and there's little crime. Humans make up the majority here, though there is one neighborhood called Elfhome, which is simply a bunch of pointy-ears keeping up with the Joneses.

The high-rises are condo units stacked on top of one another. They're usually filled with younger wage slavers who haven't begun their own families.

>>>>>(Most of that stuff's not really true anymore. Those of us left alive in this bug-infested hell tend to cluster together wherever we find other warm, still-(meta)human bodies—and definitely in lo-rise housing, 'cause wasps have this thing for tall buildings. Nobody's kids play in the street around here since the beetle swarm grabbed the Martin twins. We never found the bodies …)<<<<<
—Lizzie V. (325849) (15:56:17/10-10-55)

The burbs and illegal chips seem to share a symbiotic relationship. Zealous execs looking to turn a profit on simsense and BTLs at every opportunity are waging a strange sort of war. Corps invest money to rout illegal chip use from their own communities, while doing their best to shove chips down the throats of their neighbors. Truman and Fuchi seem to be the leading factions in this war.

>>>>>(The chip trade is booming inside the CZ. BTL addiction's worse than it ever was, no surprise. You'd think the total collapse of business and the economy here in the Big Box would've slowed down sales some, but apparently you can still get anything you want for a variety of creative prices—smokes, food, and weapons seem to be the Big Three as far as currency goes. I'm talking canned goods and stuff like that, not fresh—even if you could get some in this heyday for soya-based fakestuffs, hardly anybody has a working refrig anymore to keep the fruits and veggies from spoiling. I hear tell that bootleg chips are actually keeping our underground economy alive—our fourth major currency, you might say.)<<<<<
—Aldercritter (03:12:27/09-27-55)

>>>>>(I'll tell you why there's so much BTL out there. The corps left warehouses full of chips when they pulled out. Not by accident, either. They made real sure to leave behind all their nastiest prototypes—the CZ's one big corp test market.)<<<<<
—Sunday Driver (24:05:56/09-29-55)

>>>>>(Oh, like they had lots of advance warning! Fragging conspiracy theorists. Nobody's ever proved that the corps produced any BTLs, let alone concocted a secret plot to test them on the public.)<<<<<
—Schooner (09:45:32/10-01-55)

>>>>>(You think Danny Boy Truman and his lab boys made their pile of cred on the up and up? What do you think they've been doing in places like the Noose and Northside? And they didn't have to see the Bug Bomb coming. They just had to take advantage of it. There's plenty of legit operators like Truman that had a nice little sideline going when this place went to hell. Why should the Bug Bomb stop biz?)<<<<<
—Pitt Bull (09:51:33/10-03-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

The tax base on land around the Elevated is higher than anywhere else, but the city also dumps most of its money for security and city services here.

The residential neighborhoods are middle- to upper-class and have a security rating of B to AA.

O'HARE SUB-SPRAWL

District Size: Approximately 169 square kilometers
Population: 172,800
Human: 60%
Elf: 12%
Dwarf: 14%
Ork: 8%
Troll: 5%
Other: 1%
Population Density: 1,022 per square kilometer*
Per Capita Income: $250,000
Below Poverty Level: 1%
On Fortune's Active Traders List: 3%
Corporate Affiliation: 98%
Wards: 5
Education: (Unconfirmed)
<12 years: 2%
High School: 8%
College Degree: 68%
Graduate Degree: 22%
Hospitals and Clinics: 3
LTG Access Number: 3312

*This high density is even higher for the working class, who are crowded into little residential space.

>>>>>(The Sub-Sprawl's out of the Zone, but it's the prime staging area for getting inside the Big Box. "Tourists" take note.)<<<<<
—Phranc S. (12:12:21/09-15-55)

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Sub-Sprawl is a vast recreational and tourist complex surrounding O'Hare International Airport. The Sub-Sprawl's permanent population works the facilities (tourist and airport) round the clock. During the day, when the crunch is on, 15,000 commuters make sure the "Hub of the UCAS" keeps the flights moving and the travelers entertained.

Most of the area immediately outside the airport is what passes for class these days—chrome and glass. There's not much greenery, but the tourists are too full of alcohol to care. Various corporations and nations supply the services, making sure their employees and citizens have the chance to give cash back to the corps when visiting. Proper ID is required to enter these areas, but you can get a visitor's day pass for $25 to $50 and a security check. The area beyond the visitors' section is middle- to lower-class residential. Most of these areas are shabbily genteel, run-down buildings that have been patched and repainted over many decades.

Jason Miller (order #958877)

The airport is the only game in this town; if you work, you work for the airport. Dwarfs repair the planes, orks and trolls take care of building maintenance and security, and the humans and elves sell tickets, serve drinks, and keep the overstimulated tourists "happy." Exploitation figures heavily in the long list of activities they supply, but where the responsibility falls is up for grabs. Much is made locally of the apparent stereotyping of jobs and workers. Pressure groups have been trying to prove that a hiring bias exists, but the corporations deny the charges, producing their personnel files as proof of their equal-opportunity policies.

The city makes money off the airport, and it's the hundreds of thousands of airport employees who ensure that profit. Do these workers see benefits from the city? Nope. The profits are dumped either into more tourist facilities or into the Elevated to court more business.

>>>>>(Some refugees from the Zone made it this far, though not too many before the Wall went up. The folks playing watchdog on the borders of the Zone have turned the O'Hare Sub–Sprawl into their new hometown.)<<<<<
—Beat Cop (08:32:01/09-29-55)

NEIGHBORHOODS

O'Hare

Though not officially a neighborhood, the airport deserves a special mention for its AAA security rating.

National and Corporate Enclaves

Aztlan, the CAS, California Free State, Aztechnology, Ares Macrotechnology, Truman Technologies, Federated Boeing, Fuchi Industrial, and England all own large sections of land around the airport which they use to entertain visitors. Some of this land, as in the case of Fuchi, amounts to little more than a hotel with several floors set aside for employees. Other enclaves cover several blocks, complete with restaurants, bars, theaters, and other amenities. By creating a mini-environment right at the airport, the enclaves serve as tourist traps for visitors on stop overs at O'Hare.

Each enclave is walled off from its neighbor. Security is provided by each nation or corporation (AAA), but per a deal with City Hall, all other jobs are filled by Chicagoans. Applicants for work at an enclave undergo a thorough screening. Because almost every service is available right at O'Hare, Chicago's embassy ghetto is at the airport.

>>>>>(I'll bet the enclaves are the perfect base of ops for most of the folks who want into—or want something gotten out of—the CZ. Runners and security slags hired by corps to go in after their top-secret stuff or to smuggle out paintings and such that the corps looted years ago from the old Art Institute, that kind of thing. The corps use the chunks of land they own and all assets on those premises to finance and equip these escapades and to house any necessary personnel.)<<<<<
—Business Major (12:46:07/10-02-55)

Labor Neighborhoods

Most of the lower-income employees of the airlines, airport, and enclave facilities live in middle- to lower-class neighborhoods, with security ratings from A to C. Overcrowding makes the labor neighborhoods the most depressing areas in Chicago. Disease is a huge problem in the area around the airport, though you'd be hard-pressed to find a published study from City Hall to that effect.

>>>>>(I hear the number of refugees swarming over these neighborhoods, plus the influx of military people and their families, have made things even worse. Not that much extra space to begin with.)<<<<<
—Beat Cop (412589) (11:09:56/09-29-55)

Luxury Neighborhoods

Elk Grove, Elm Park, and Spring Heights are the three well-to-do areas in the Sub-Sprawl. Airport and airline execs live out here, as well as some of the folks who bring sex, drugs, and illegal chips to the weary traveler. In fact, Madame Wing's in Spring Heights is reputed to be the classiest brothel in Chicago.

The security rating is AA for all three neighborhoods. Spring Heights has almost no crime because so many members of the Mafia live there.

>>>>>I also hear that a lot less changed in these ritzy streets than you might think. Some folks left when their income died along with the businesses in the Zone. A few sold their houses to military people, but most of these properties went to smugglers and black-market profiteers—the new robber barons. Security's real, real tight.)<<<<<
—Beat Cop (412589) (13:01:44/09-29-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

NOOSE

District Size: Approximately 60 square kilometers
Population: 60,000
Human: 40%
Elf: 8%
Dwarf: 12%
Ork: 19%
Troll: 20%
Other: 1%
Population Density: 1,000 per square kilometer
Per Capita Income: Who knows?
Below Poverty Level: 70%
On Fortune's Active Traders List: Not likely.
Corporate Affiliation: 0%
Wards: 0*
Education:
<12 years: 72%
High School: 5%
College Degree: 16%
Graduate Degree: 4%
Hospitals and Clinics: 1
LTG Access Number: X312**

*City Hall refuses to acknowledge the "illegal" inhabitants of the Noose.

**The LTG was rigged by hackers who wanted to work out of the Noose. It's not on the city's phone lines. Security is Orange 3.

>>>>>(The Noose LTG now represents the heart of the existing Chicago Matrix and the BBS to which you are currently posting.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (22:10:23/11-18-55)

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Noose covers Chicago's old Loop area and then some. It now stretches from the lake to Western Avenue and from North Avenue down to Cermak Road. The area emptied out after the Sears Tower went down and the corps took their business to the Southside. That left a lot of available space, and those with small "business operations" found a cheap place to set up shop. The area quickly became a red-light district, and then the squatters started moving in. Actual living quarters were scarce, so inadequate makeshift bathroom facilities were built. That's the reason the Noose stinks so bad.

>>>>>(Yeah, and it smells oh-so-much better now.)<<<<<
—VOX (09:21:16/09-30-55)

Two types of people live in the Noose: the dirt-poor who have nowhere else to go and criminals looking for a place to start a career. Both types are going to want something from you, so be careful if you go in.

And there are reasons to go to the Noose. It's the nexus of black-market weaponry in the city, a great place to fence goods, and the home base of street contacts and rumormongers. You can hire muscle, deckers, and mages, and they're all hungry. If there's a black hole in the UCAS, this is it.

Why doesn't City Hall clean it up? For three main reasons. First, it's a kind of ready-made housing project that requires nothing from the Hall. The Noose is a collection of buildings that people have taken over unofficially, a ruined area with ruptured water pipes and destroyed power lines. The city isn't responsible for doing any repairs.

This leads right into the second reason. City Hall has always taken the attitude, "Let them eat each other." If the poor have to destroy one another to stay alive, that's fine as long as it doesn't bother the folks down in the Elevated.

Jason Miller (order #958877)

Third, there's currently enough firepower in the Noose to fight a full-scale war. Eagle Security prefers to patrol the perimeter rather than actually wade into the mess. Frankly, I can't blame them.

Chaos in the streets is prevented by the strength of the Murphey's Law gang, currently ruled by "Alderman" Jack Strong. In addition to being boss of the Noose's biggest protection racket, Strong has declared himself arbiter and judge in the Noose. In the rare instance when two parties want to settle a dispute without gunning each other down, they take the case to Strong at the old Circuit Court Building. If you don't agree with his decision, you get your legs snapped by his goons.

>>>>>(Not any more. Jacko bought the farm recently—I hear tell a giant ant tore his head off.)<<<<<
—Road Kill (08:10:09/10-01-55)

>>>>>(I heard he tried to run and got cacked by the National Guard while crossing Irving Park.)<<<<<
—Janie B. (102589) (16:05:03/10-04-55)

>>>>>(My guess is he died in a street battle with a warlord hungry for a little more lebensraum. Things have gotten so bad in the Noose that the description above almost sounds like the good old days. Forget law and order—not even a whisper of it exists anymore. Instead, there's a plethora of self-styled warlords running around, all armed to the back teeth and all grabbing for their own personal chunk of the mean streets. Eagle Security doesn't keep the peace anymore—they've become just another gang trying to gouge out some territory. Every problem raised in this old file has gotten worse and then some. I don't know how much more these people can take.)<<<<<
—Algren (17:55:46/10-08-55)

>>>>>(When you think about it, the folks in the Noose are the ones most likely to survive this mess. They're tough; they're used to getting fragged over and dealing with it. If anybody can cope with "the breakdown of civilization" and not turn a hair, they can.)<<<<<
—Tillman (10:32:16/10-09-55)

>>>>>(Funny how these things happen, but I was walking through the Noose yesterday and I suddenly had this weird feeling, deja-view, or whatever they call it. Yeah, it all kinda looks like Maxwell Street used to, or parts of Halstead, but you know what it really reminds me of now? The Middle East, places like Morocco. Street vendors, kids, noise, crowds, wares on display everywhere (mostly crap, and recycled crap at that, but crap someone might be able to use), street hustlers, joykids, weirdos, the whole picture. Very odd.)<<<<<
—Jax (05:32:22/10-12-55)

>>>>>(Why so? The UCAS government quite obviously now considers Chicago the equivalent of a Third World nation. Why, they've even applied their foreign policies to the city: neutralize, contain, ignore.)<<<<<
—Hammer of Thor (07:57:12/10-13-55)

The Noose also has the Shattergraves, but it's hardly a tourist attraction.

When Alamos 20K destroyed the Sears Tower, the nine smaller towers making up the building fell away from each other, crushing four blocks of other buildings and the people inside them. The remaining piles of rubble have become known as the Shattergraves. The area is a four-block circle around the former site of the Tower. Some portions of the Shattergraves are simply rubble, huge piles of concrete and steel. In other places, large sections of office buildings still stand.

It quickly became apparent that the area was inhabited by the ghosts of those killed in the disaster (one of the reasons the area was never cleaned up), with estimates of over a thousand apparitions and specters. Though rescue crews removed as many of the bodies as possible as quickly as possible, the area became a feeding and breeding ground for Chicago's ghouls, who were drawn to the thousands of corpses left there. The ghouls stayed on long after their initial food source petered out, having worked out an unspoken deal with the living inhabitants of the Noose. The ghouls stay away from the living, and the living give the ghouls their inconvenient and troublesome dead.

Lone Star rates the Noose as Z. Except for a few really nice hideaways, the Noose qualifies as a slum.

>>>>>(OK, there's been one improvement in the Noose. The ghouls have left the Shattergraves. Of course, the ghosts are still there, but if you can stand them, it's a pretty safe place to live … physically, at least. The bugs don't like the ghosts one little bit, so they stay far away. Psychologically, though, it's scary. The ghosts tend to get to people; more than a few folks who thought they'd found a bug-free haven in the Shattergraves have gone certifiably wacko within weeks.)<<<<<
—Algren (09:37:01/10-02-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

>>>>>(If the ghouls left the Shattergraves, *where did they go?*)<<<<<
—Lizzie (04:26:33/10-07-55)

>>>>>(Geez, Lizzie, been living in a box?? See the **Bug City** section for more information.)<<<<<
—VOX (10:56:10/10-10-55)

NORTHSIDE

District Size: Approximately 1,080 square kilometers
Population: 1,274,400
- Human: 38%
- Elf: 11%
- Dwarf: 17%
- Ork: 16%
- Troll: 17%
- Other: 1%

Population Density: 1,180 per square kilometer
Per Capita Income: Low
Below Poverty Level: 15%
On Fortune's Active Traders List: 0%
Corporate Affiliation: 1%
Wards: 37
Education:
- <12 years: 12%
- High School: 44%
- College Degree: 32%
- Graduate Degree: 12%

Hospitals and Clinics: 23
LTG Access Numbers: 7312, 1708, 2708

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Northside is a vast stretch of urban blight that crawls north along the lake from the Noose up to where Route 60 crosses Interstate 94, and from the lake over to just past Interstate 290. The average worker's family is crowded into a small apartment in a towering building with broken elevators, flickering electrical systems, and faulty water delivery. Both parents have to work to feed their children. The kids are herded into schools that teach them nothing more than to sit still for 20 minutes at a time. At least 80 percent of the Northside's population, both adults and children, indulge in alcohol or dreamchips.

The plastics factories and metalwork centers belch black soot into the sky, and the snow is dirty before it hits the ground. The lake shore is littered with garbage from the factories. People visit the lake in the summer, but they do so at their own risk.

Poverty and despair have made this area the hotbed of racial unrest in the city. Though the metahuman population outnumbers the human population, the metahuman factions distrust one another as much as they distrust the humans. Each neighborhood is a ghetto for a single race.

>>>>>(In the areas near Irving Park, the Zone's northern border, the huge concentration of DPs is making things really nasty. There are a lot of frightened, angry people in the part of Northside that's in the CZ. One of these days the whole place is gonna go up like a forest catching fire. It'll make the Night of Rage look like a kid's party.)<<<<<
—Roy Ko (20:06:55/09-28-55)

>>>>>(DPs?)<<<<<
—E. Quich (22:24:13/09-29-55)

>>>>>(Displaced Persons. The Habitation-Challenged.)<<<<<
—VOX (22:26:02/09-29-55)

>>>>>(Squatters have nearly taken over the in-Zone part of Northside. People just stop anywhere they find livable space and set up house. I know one slag who lives in the little booth at the entrance to one of the old public parking lots.
It's not much, but it's home.)<<<<<
—Janie B. (07:11:54/10-09-55)

>>>>>(By the way, most of the Northside described here tends to be outside the CZ: Irving Park Road cuts the Northside off soon after it begins.)<<<<<
—VOX (09:58:05/10-10-55)

Jason Miller (order #958-877)

ECONOMY

Most of the residents of the Northside work in factories that produce synthetics and chemicals or steel. The slaughterhouses, which ship meat across the UCAS, are also located here. Unions are effectively busted. The unemployed population is mostly made up of people who went on strike to get decent wages. They remain unemployed until they're ready to take any job over fair treatment.

At least once a year a strike turns nasty. These strikes unite the races, then Eagle Security comes in, some workers are killed, and it's business as usual. A new simsense intended to placate people invariably hits the streets just after the murders.

>>>>>(The factories tend to be outside the Zone, so they're still working—but with a lot of new faces, cuz the workers who live inside the CZ can't get out to go punch the time clock. Needless to say, the in-Zone economy is shot purely to hell.)<<<<<
—Smith 'n' Jones (10:43:13/10-11-55)

NEIGHBORHOODS

Blood Town

Blood Town is representative of the neighborhoods on the Northside. It is almost completely made up of orks and trolls who work at the huge Fast-Flesh slaughterhouse just east of 94. The stock, most it from up north, is brought down the train line, unloaded, killed, packaged, and sent off to the old states.

I spent some time in Blood Town, and I've never seen such docile orks and trolls. The big guys were actually gentle with the animals. One of the foremen explained that most of the workers had been herded from one camp to another when they were children, so they shared a certain empathy with the beasts being led to slaughter. Not that they consider themselves animals, but they share the prospect of dead-end lives.

Most of the workers live with their families in housing projects built by Fast-Flesh. Doorways and furniture are scaled to fit them comfortably. I'd like to think this shows consideration on the corp's part, but that's not likely. Rather, it probably means they think this is where the metahumans belong, living in dirty apartments that will smell of blood forever.

Most of the inhabitants of Blood Town want out pretty desperately. Most are also in debt to loan sharks of the Skarz Mob, a big-time Northside underworld operation. They use the money to buy up dreamchips for resale at a profit. The problem is that the poor suckers can never catch up on their payments, and they end up further and further in debt. So where does the mob keep getting its expendable muscle? It calls on Northside workers who owe money and want to protect their families.

Blood Town is rated B. The neighborhoods of the Northside get B through Z ratings from Eagle.

>>>>>(The Skarz Mob is still going. They've just switched their profit-making medium from money to food, weapons, and (of course) chips.)<<<<<
—Aldercritter (11:22:53/09-28-55)

Business Village (Evanston)

Where do all the execs come from who run the factories on the Northside? From the area known as Business Village, locally known as the Village.

The Village is an armed camp (AAA) complete with walls and barbed wire. Once upon a time, it was the city of Evanston (LTG# 1708). When the Northside turned sour, the town of Evanston bottomed out. Northwestern University, embedded like a splinter in the city's side for years, eventually bought up the whole town, destroyed the tax base that had been so hotly contested for years, and made out like bandits.

The cash really started flowing into NU after the Kellog Business School's Dean Tarkton instituted the Terror Principle, still in use today. In case you don't know, the Terror Principle is designed to train young execs for the real world. All of the students' income, living expense funds, and gifts are kept in accounts controlled by the school. The students receive a weekly allowance based on their biweekly grade-point-average postings. The higher the rating, the larger the allowance. The fun part is that the whole system is set on a curve, so each grade is limited to a certain number. It's basically a proving ground for academic Darwinism.

Kellog, always well-respected as a business school, became a mecca for those who wanted a Master of Business Atrocities. When the corporate draft picks come up, Kellog is always first. In fact, it's not uncommon to see shadowrunners hanging out in the bleachers of graduation ceremonies to ensure that corporate investments get delivered safely to their first day of work.

A lot of the Kellog grads cut deals with the future deckers from the Tech school to get dirt on their companies in the Elevated. This way they can up their salaries even before they start pushing pencils. The situation benefits both sides. The deckers manage to pull in pretty hot stuff using clues provided by the Kellog kids. They should really inform the feds or my Neo-anarchists instead of keeping it all in the family.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

The streets of the Village are clean and safe, with plenty of nice shops and movie theaters. The only time something bad happens is when kids from the adjoining neighborhoods get wasted trying to slip over the walls to pick up some extra cash.

>>>>>(I hate these slags, sitting all comfy in their ritz houses while us in the Zone are starving and freezing and running from the drek-eating bugs. And do these people give a flying frag? Are they even trying to help out, like maybe tossing a pittance from their fat cred-sticks toward buying us a few more food drops? Not a chance. They're well-fed and snug and safe—what do they care?
I hope to god the bugs take a short hop up to Biz Village and breed in all the nice rich people's houses.
Serve 'em right, the motherfraggers.)<<<<<
—Big Shoulders (01:55:10/10-01-55)

WESTSIDE

District Size: Approximately 1,440 square kilometers
Population: 1,090,380
- Human: 43%
- Elf: 26%
- Dwarf: 16%
- Ork: 8%
- Troll: 6%
- Other: 1%

Population Density: 757 per square kilometer
Per Capita Income: Middle to High
Below Poverty Level: 14%
On Fortune's Active Traders List: 1%
Corporate Affiliation: 30%
Wards: 32
Education:
- <12 years: 3%
- High School: 12%
- College Degree: 70%
- Graduate Degree: 15%

Hospitals and Clinics: 27
LTG Access Number: 5312

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Westside is huge and varied. Most of the people living here are commuters to the Elevated or well-off employees of the Sub-Sprawl. Stretching from the Noose to Route 59 and from under O'Hare to down along 55, the Westside neighborhoods get better the further west and south you go.

ECONOMY

The residents are mostly white-collar and service industry. Ares, Truman, and Mitsuhama all have research parks out here in large, cleared areas, safe from prying eyes. Most of the employees live nearby.

>>>>>(And some of them are actually still inside the CZ. Too bad for them.)<<<<<
—Caliban (19:31:04/10-02-55)

Jason Miller (order #958877)

If the yakuza have a base in Chicago, this is HQ. They're quiet about it, hiding behind the white-bread citizens of our fair city, but this is their command center. I've no doubt that several of the warehouses at the Mitsuhama park are stuffed full of Japanese black-market goods.

>>>>>(The yakuza are still going strong—in fact they're duking it out with the Mafia for control of the food and BTL markets. Dunno who's winning.)<<<<<
—FeedtheCat (16:37:18/10-03-55)

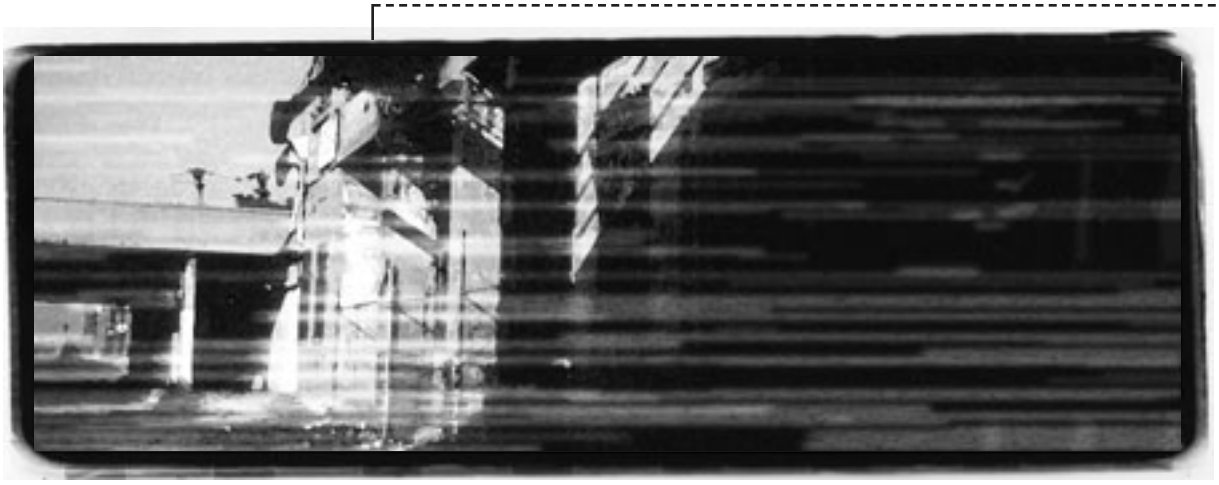
Fifteen "clean" computer factories, most of them part of the Truman Technologies simsense facility, drive a large part of the Westside economy. Many of the execs from various companies live out here, and somehow most of these factories follow federal guidelines just close enough to keep pollution to a minimum. Go figure.

Dream Town, located in the heart of the Westside, covers the largest area of any Westside business concern. Truman knew from the beginning that programmers wouldn't be the key to creating the fantasies that would sell dreamchips. Twenty years ago, he began building up a colony of writers, painters, and hallucinogenic experts to create the concepts for his chips. Unlike the other early creators of simsense chips, who thought the technology best suited for travelogues, the Chicago folks knew immediately that overstimulation was simsense's true destiny. Dream Town is like Hollywood used to be—sprawling, demanding, and filled with folks having too much fun for their own good.

The three major studios in Chicago are Fox, Brilliant Genesis, and Living Life. All three work independently of Truman but distribute their simsense through Truman Technologies. TT makes money on distribution as well as by selling the studios new developments from their research park. This leaves the studios free to work up new thrills for the masses.

The studio people are well paid, and they spend lots of money in the area, be it on research for fantasies or on expensive nights out. They are a boon to the economy, even if it's true that they ruin the minds of people who shouldn't be wasting their energy by plugging into chips. Most people don't realize just how competitive the simsense and dream-creation industry is or how fiercely companies protect their stars. The defection of Witt Lipton and Honey Brighton from MegaMedia to Brilliant Genesis proves that the stakes in the entertainment industry are now high enough to attract major attention.

>>>>>(Dream Town, the studios, and a big chunk of the TT office park is in the part of Westside that's within the Zone. Lotta research gets done in these places, folks—which means lotsa tempting targets for runners. It's a dirty job, but someone's gotta do it.)<<<<<
—Da Mayor (07:14:49/10-05-55)



NEIGHBORHOODS

Most of the Westside was incorporated into Chicago in the last 20 years and is still searching for an identity. It's a sprawling patchwork of economic levels and races lumped together only because no single area is large enough or unique enough to stand out.

The Westside will eventually subdivide (I expect to see a really souped-up computer ghetto in another five years), but until it does, it's just two million hard-working people. Tenement ghettos (slums), landscaped areas with mansions and barbed wire fences (upper-class), and every other lifestyle exist here side by side. Security ratings range from AA to D.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

SOUTHSIDE

District Size: Approximately 864 square kilometers
Population: 980,430
Human: 44%
Elf: 11%
Dwarf: 12%
Ork: 15%
Troll: 17%
Other: 1%
Population Density: 1,134 per square kilometer
Per Capita Income: Middle to Low
Below Poverty Level: 15%
On Fortune's Active Traders List: 0%
Corporate Affiliation: 1%
Wards: 28
Education:
<12 years: 6%
High School: 44%
College Degree: 20%
Graduate Degree: 30%
Hospitals and Clinics: 25
LTG Access Number: 9312

GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

The Southside of Chicago runs from Interstate 294 to the Indiana border. The Chicago sprawl actually extends into Gary, Indiana, which Chicago wants to swallow up to increase its size and to qualify for more federal aid. It's only a matter of time.

ECONOMY

The majority of jobs on the Southside are in the steelworks and factories. The city's power plants are also located down here. The neighborhoods run by UCAS Steel are the best.

NEIGHBORHOODS

The neighborhoods range from slums to middle class. Security is rated from C to A, but the A ratings are only given near the Elevated.

>>>>>(Lucky Southside ain't in the Zone at all. Course, there's refugee camps all over the fraggin' place. Plenty of 'em are full of rich slags who fled from the Elevated and the other ritz places inside the CZ. They're having a tough time getting used to the DP lifestyle, har-de-har-har.)<<<<<
—Sunday Driver (21:26:28/09-27-55)

>>>>>(My heart bleeds.)<<<<<
—Master Harold (23:41:06/09-30-55)

Jason Miller (order #9583877)

GOVERNMENT

Chicago is divided into 124 wards, each ruled by an alderman. In theory, the aldermen are responsive to the needs of their constituents. In fact, ballot-box stuffing by the corps is quite common in poor neighborhoods. If someone not on a corporate payroll accidentally ends up in the Hall, he is usually bought off or killed off. What does an alderman do? He lines his pockets and the pockets of those who keep his ward's illegal proceedings moving along smoothly.

An alderman has to listen to his constituents enough to prevent riots in his ward. Every once in a while, he's forced to use the money earmarked for repairing street lights and potholes for exactly those purposes. He doesn't really want to give up the money, however, so he often steals supplies and money from neighboring aldermen, who are in turn stealing from other aldermen, using street thugs for the dirty work. The "Aldermen Wars" are the largest-scale gang wars in the country. Anyone too closely associated with the power bloc of a hostile ward takes a big risk walking into an enemy ward.

The aldermen make up the City Council, which is presided over by the mayor. Each office is up for grabs every four years, but 72 percent of the incumbents retain their position each year. Because the aldermen are drawn from the neighborhoods, metahumans make up 12 percent of the Council. Most of the orks and trolls are on the take. The elves are doing all right for themselves and simply want to keep what they have—even if it means beating out the city's other needy groups for funds.

>>>>>(Nix all that stuff. No wards, no aldermen, no corp power, no nothing except a lot of little jumped-up dictator wannabes with a little ordnance, each trying to carve himself his very own piece of the pie. Some of these "pockets of influence" are as big as a square mile, others as small as a couple of blocks. Somebody earlier called this place Beirut on the Lake; it's worse. He who has the biggest guns gets to be Da Boss.)<<<<<
—Aldercritter (17:22:39/09-28-55)

>>>>>(Anarchy Rules!)<<<<<
—Neo Boy (24:06:17/10-01-55)

Jerome Standish is the current mayor. He's a thin, creepy guy rumored to have tapped into some weird voodoo juju while with some merc unit down in the Caribbean League. He's just finishing up his first term, and word on the streets is that the Elevated has picked him to win again. Little Earth says His Honor is jammed with some bad voodoo and is some kind of undead. No one suggests who might be pulling his strings.

>>>>>(Mister Standish lost the last election, but he hasn't outlived his usefulness. His puppeteers, whoever they may be, have turned him into a warlord and are trying to grab back the mayor's office on his behalf.)<<<<<
—CurlyMoe (23:48:01/10-07-55)

>>>>>(Standish is one of the bugs. Bet you anything. One of those that looks kinda human, but ain't.)<<<<<
—Road Kill (23:50:16/10-10-55)

Honorable aldermen include Barbara Edwards, Bruce Gorden, and Finch "Teeth" Stump. Edwards, a beautiful human from the Elevated, keeps eking what she can out of City Hall for the city's downtrodden. Gorden is from a Southside family of steelworkers, knows how corps can take advantage of the working class, and does what he can to keep the unions intact. Most of his efforts are focused on the Southside, where the unions are still respected.

Teeth, one of the more personable orks I've ever met, hails from the Northside. He tells me he's received bribe offers and threats from Truman, Ares, and Perfecto Polymers. He's willing to die for his people, both metahuman and human, despite the complaints of his ork constituents that he should only deal with ork needs. Every week he shows up at the Council meeting prepared to shove in the Council's face another obscure federal statute dealing with municipal housing requirements. He makes it impossible for the Council to ignore the housing problems in his ward.

>>>>>(Poor old Teeth got gacked recently by the Volk. Fraggin' rat bastards.)<<<<<
—Micky Boy (02:14:38/10-08-55)

>>>>>(Presumably the other two are still alive, but they're not doing much these days.)<<<<<
—Janie B. (06:54:27/10-15-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

Each of these aldermen has been on the Council for just over a decade. They started out quietly, gathering dirt on their fellow aldermen and on Chicago's corporations, then started asking for little favors. Those who didn't play the game were suddenly busted by federal investigators. The trio, independently of one another, attained folk-hero status, and they were targeted for assassination. All attempts on their lives failed. This is because Teeth has managed to get orks and trolls to donate time as bodyguards for the three aldermen, and because Edwards has secured shadowrunners known as Hooders to enter the Matrix and keep tabs on the files the corps keep on her, Gorden, and Teeth.

Anyone who wants to donate Hooding time should talk to Edwards. The pay isn't always as good as a straight run, but it'll make you feel all warm and gooey inside.

THE HALL, THE CORPS, AND THE MAFIA

Chicago is one of the few cities where the government still exerts as much authority over the populace as do the corporations. There's nothing particularly cheery about this picture, however. City Hall still has power because it uses the Mafia as a lever against the corporations. In effect, City Hall acts as the fulcrum between organized crime and criminally organized business.

The Hall's traditional alliance with the mob goes way back, but it became a permanent fixture in the city's politics during the 2030s. During the Awakening, Mayor Malony cut a secret deal with the newly installed Don, Patrick Murphey, to get black-market medical supplies and food to the city during the worst of the chaos. The mayor knew that the Mafia was personally involved in the city in a way the corps were not, so he split the effort to keep Chicago alive between the two sides.

His illegal dealings seem to have paid off. The corps and the mob have equal money and manpower. Over the years, City Hall has mediated between the two parties to help them act together for the benefit of the city.

>>>>>(Like somebody mentioned earlier, not anymore. City Hall and the corps have no power inside the Zone—only the Mafia's still going, and they're fighting a yak power grab. The line between the politicians and the crooks has gotten so thin it hardly exists—in fact, a favorite tactic of the warlords and their underworld buddies is to intercept supply drops and hold onto the stuff as a bargaining chip.)<<<<<

—Master Harold (19:33:55/10-11-55)

ECONOMY

Chicago's economy is currently expanding at an incredible rate. Here's how the rich are getting richer.

The city has always been well-placed to handle trade. Since the breakup of the United States, new nations have begun specialized production of certain goods and have increased imports and exports. This means tariffs, and O'Hare gets a piece of all the money changing hands. Chicago also serves as the hub for all the train lines in North America. Chicago's simsense hardware and software, cattle, chemical goods, and steel products are now shipped across the continent.

Speaking of simsense, no company is currently doing better than Truman in the midscale market. The products are lower quality than Fuchi's, but Truman can really market its technology. Close ties to Fox Simsense, Brilliant Genesis, and Living Life Productions give them plenty of software to support its systems.

Dream Town is making a big name for itself. The employees there are quickly getting rich off their residuals, and more and more writers, actors, directors, and engineers are flocking to the Westside to get in while the boom is on. Just as Hollywood was synonymous with movies in the past, Chicago is becoming the production town for simsense (and BTLs). Information from other parts of the world indicates that simply having the name Chicago on a simsense chip marks it as a quality product.

The meat market is thriving here, but retail prices are so high locally and throughout UCAS that most Chicagoans can't afford to put meat on their tables. The prices of other natural foods are jacked up as soon as the trains come into the city. Like other major cities, Chicago has had its share of food riots. People who can afford a good meal every night are those who have money to burn.

Cyberware is also a bit more expensive in Chicago, mostly due to a hefty city tax imposed to generate income. Most cyberware runs 5 to 10 percent higher than standard catalog prices.

>>>>>(Forget all this stuff too, at least inside the Zone. Cred's no fragging good anymore—it's a barter economy now, chummer, and the only market in town is black. For a step-by-step of how it works, check out **Living in Oblivion**.)<<<<<

—Master Harold (20:08:45/10-12-55)

Jason Miller (order #958-877)

MAJOR CORPORATIONS

BRILLIANT GENESIS STUDIOS

Home Office Location: Chicago, Illinois, UCAS
President/CEO: Victor Marquette
Chief Products/Services: Simsense scenarios
Business Profile:

Brilliant Genesis was the first studio devoted exclusively to simsense scenario production. Though they've maintained a streamlined budget in the past, they're currently pouring major money into new talent. Word is that the Mafia just bought a controlling interest in the company.

Security/Military Forces:

Brilliant Genesis has just upgraded to Knight-Errant Securities.

>>>>>(BrilGen and a bunch of other simsense corps are paying good cred to get some of their top people out of the Zone. Producers, stars, those kindsa people. Plenty of hot properties are stuck behind the Wall, and the sim corps want 'em out real bad.)<<<<<
—Wolf (21:47:02/10-09-55)

>>>>>(Some companies are using the situation as a prime opportunity to steal big talent. "Yes, Miss Brighton, we'll send a team to get you out of the Zone in one piece … simply sign this little piece of paper that says you have to come work for us." All's fair in business, I guess.)<<<<<
—Cynik (07:01:44/10-15-55)

FAST-FLESH ENTERPRISES

Home Office Location: Chicago, Illinois, UCAS
President/CEO: Virginia Kidd
Principal Divisions
Division Name: Fast-Flesh Processin
Division Head: Evan Gore
Chief Products/Services: Slaughtering and processing of cattle and livestock.
Business Profile:

Fast-Flesh made a killing on secret, patented, FDA-approved steroids and growth stimulants. Livestock is reported to reach full growth in just over a month. Rumors abound that the FDA was paid off for approval of the company's chemicals. Studies that question the safety of Johnson's Old fashioned Meats (Fast-Flesh's retail name) are quickly buried under a pile of counterstudies. I've also heard that some of these drugs might be out on the streets pumping up goons, and that the corp's R&D division might be experimenting with illegal "super-soldier" serums.

>>>>>(They don't slaughter cattle here anymore, chummer. They slaughter people. The bugs have taken it over—the whole facility's a huge bug breeding ground.)<<<<<
—Mario A. (03:10:32/10-10-55)

>>>>>(How do you know? Have you been there?)<<<<<
—Lizzie (04:16:17/10-13-55)

>>>>>(Y'know them super-soldier drugs this slag's talkin' about? I heard the bugs're using 'em when they make their flesh-forms. Anybody feel like tanglin' with a pumped-up roach?)<<<<<
—Big Shoulders (04:12:58/10-15-55)

Security/Military Forces:

Fast-Flesh maintains standard security forces.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

LIVING LIFE PRODUCTIONS

Home Office Location: Chicago, Illinois, UCAS
President/CEO: Charna Halpburn
Chief Products/Services: Simsense scenarios
Business Profile:

Living Life has made a name for itself with its action/adventure line. Rumor has it they are able to turn out their scenarios quickly by adding the hero's adrenaline in postproduction, as well as by creating the more spectacular stunt sequences with computer animation rather than putting an actor through the paces.

Security/Military Forces:

Living Life Productions has just upgraded to Knight-Errant Securities.

TRUMAN TECHNOLOGIES

Home Office Location: Chicago, Illinois, UCAS
President/CEO: Dan Truman
Principal Divisions
Division Name: Simsense Systems
Division Head: Mike Malony
Chief Products/Services: Primarily simsense hardware, with a small output of low-end cyberdeck equipment
Division Name: Truman Distribution Network
Division Head: Julie Miller
Chief Products/Services: Distribution of simsense chips
Business Profile:

Truman, now in his sixties, is just as arrogant and driven as he was when he made ESP Systems of Chicago into a multibillion-dollar business. His company manufactures its own simsense hardware and distributes software designed by several studios on the Westside. There is no doubt in my mind that there is a division of the company producing BTLs and other illegal chips.

When the independent studios make a simsense scenario, they need to get it to the people who own input jacks. Rather than investing capital to distribute the chips themselves, they sell the scenarios to TT, which prints the chips and sells them across the country. This way, both the studios and TT make a profit.

Security Profile:

Truman Technologies maintains standard security forces, though the research park on the Westside appears to be fairly paramilitary in nature.

>>>>>(Truman's had a rough time lately. His son got fragged by the bugs—they wiped his mind, or something. Then his daughter disappeared the day the family evacced out. He's trying to run his business from outside the Zone, but with Fuchi fragging him left and right he's not doing too well. Rumor has it that he's gotten involved with Ares—maybe to get some help against Fuchi, maybe to find his daughter, maybe for some other reason entirely.)<<<<<
—Algren (14:31:08/10-12-55)

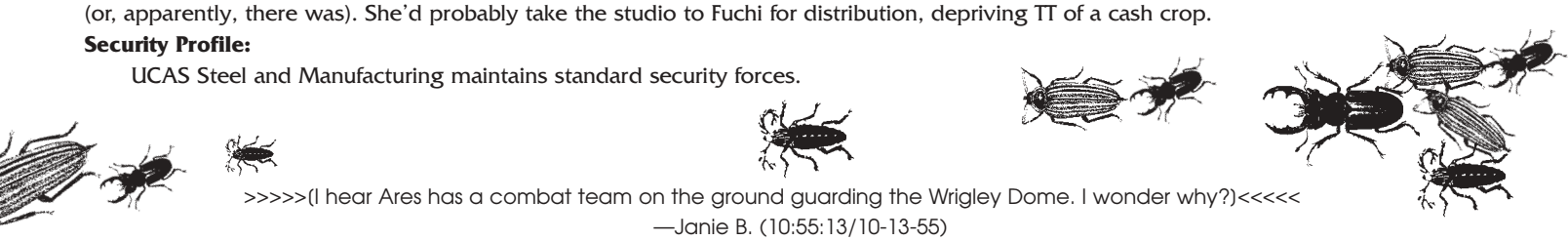
UCAS STEEL AND MANUFACTURING

Home Office Location: Chicago, Illinois, UCAS
President/CEO: Linda Jenkins
Chief Products/Services: Steel processing, manufacturing, and distribution
Business Profile:

Jenkins is a powerful, rich woman. Like many 20th-century corpers, she is intrigued by the entertainment industry. She is rumored to have her eye on one of Chicago's independent simsense studios. It's well known that there's no love lost between Truman and Jenkins (or, apparently, there was). She'd probably take the studio to Fuchi for distribution, depriving TT of a cash crop.

Security Profile:

UCAS Steel and Manufacturing maintains standard security forces.



>>>>>(I hear Ares has a combat team on the ground guarding the Wrigley Dome. I wonder why?)<<<<<
—Janie B. (10:55:13/10-13-55)

Jason Miller (order #958-877)

>>>>>(Smuggling. They're bringing in new tech and supplies on the sly. Be nice if some of their new toys'd make it to the street fast enough to do us some good.)<<<<<
—CurlyMoe (13:06:15/10-14-55)

>>>>>(Melee weapons are the best defense against the bugs. Me and some chummers are offering classes in how to use them at the Discovery Depot. Check it out!)<<<<<
—Lizzie (12:01:45/10-16-55)

CRIME

A disgruntled FBI agent on assignment in Chicago once said, "Crime? What crime? To have crime you need good guys and bad guys. Around here it's impossible to tell where City Hall ends and the Mafia begins!"

YAKUZA

The yakuza are slowly making inroads into Chicago. They've set up gambling parlors and prostitution rings near Dream Town to pick up some of the new money, but are finding it hard to get a foothold in the more established sections of town. The Mafia is backing racism against all Orientals in an attempt to prevent the yaks from becoming accepted. This effort will probably fail, since the Mitsuhama building just opened up in the Elevated last month and a lot of computer factory jobs are being created on the Westside. It's hard to maintain opposition in the face of increased employment. I'm counting on the yaks to destroy that delicate City Hall/Mafia/corporation balance in the near future.

MAFIA

Don Jim O'Toole is running the mob now, and it looks like things couldn't be better. City Hall turns a blind eye when his men run Truman's BTLs up to the Northside. In exchange for profits, aldermen leak information about upcoming FBI raids. If a sarariman tries to upset the government, O'Toole's boys ice him.

Only once did a corporation try to move against the mob. Fuchi got cocky back in '45, thinking they had enough clout to buy some land without greasing the palms of the aldermen in charge. When the aldermen refused the sale, Fuchi brought some pressure to bear. The mob immediately threw its weight behind the two aldermen, and a firefight left most of the mobsters lying on the sidewalk. The suits thought that was the end, but the next day no native Chicagoans showed up for work at Fuchi. None. They were all asked nicely or told roughly not to go to work. And they didn't. And they didn't the next day. And the next. The company threatened to pull out of Chicago. The mayor said, "Fine, boys. We're the second-largest city in the UCAS. Someone will be glad to take your place." They paid off the Hall, 120 lower-class families lost their homes, and the real estate was "developed."

And that's the way it is in the city that works.

>>>>>(The Mafia's not just fighting the yaks, like other folks have mentioned, but also each other. Internal power plays are definitely on the rise between what used to be the "corporate divisions" of the Mafia empire. And of course every underworld group plus all the wannabes are smuggling anything and everything into the Zone that might possibly help them get a foothold or turn a profit. There's no law 'n' order to stop them, but they've gotta watch out for each other. The "free market competition" can get lethal.)<<<<<
—Road Kill (22:01:49/10-15-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

Jason Miller (order #5932 5771)

LIVING IN OBLIVION

>>>>>(Despite what you might read in this and other parts of what we fondly refer to as the Bug City post, there's no way to tell how long the infestation and the quarantine are going to last. We're stuck in a state of limbo, neither fish nor fowl, and I suspect that many of you would argue we've already fallen into the abyss. After all, we no longer exist as far as the outside world is concerned. The government refuses to honor its obligation to us as citizens, and so *et voilá*—we're no longer citizens. We are nonentities. We are on our own. Our leaders and employers were the first to abandon us and so now we must fend for ourselves.

That's what this message/file base is all about—how to stay alive in this hellhole.

I've culled the best posts, files, exchanges, comments, and so on from the terapulses of data that we've accumulated over the last few months. This is the hard-core stuff you need to know if you entertain any hope of surviving in the Zone, and it pulls no punches. Read carefully, and the big picture might reveal things to you the contributors missed.)<<<<<

—SYStem 05 (07:33:24/01-10-56)

>>>>>[THE WALL

:::::prepared by R. VICTOR [VENGEANCE] (31515)

This post provides the lowdown on the CZ wall—where it is, what it is, how it is on our side. The Wall heads west from the lake shore along Irving Park Road on the north. It then follows Harlem Avenue south, marking the western boundary of the CZ. At 115th Street it heads back east and bisects the downtown Core before ending again at the lake. The lake boundary consists of a string of flotation markers and sensor buoys floating approximately one kilometer offshore.

ON THE LAND

Along Irving Park Road, Harlem Avenue, and most of 115th Street, the Wall follows a similar pattern; the government bulldozed the buildings lining both sides of the streets and compressed the debris into barricades along the north edge of Irving Park, the west edge of Harlem, and the south edge of 115th, effectively denying the entire city access to those main thoroughfares. The rubble construction makes the barrier inherently unstable and very difficult to traverse.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

At intersections, along cemeteries, and in other places that lacked buildings to commandeer, the engineers erected more traditional barricades—concrete barriers, barbed wire, and so on. This type of barricade corrals most of the Core, a practical solution accepted when the "experts" declared the buildings in the Core too tall to be safely bulldozed (or when they were owned by people with more clout than the average citizen).

The barricade varies in thickness from a half-dozen meters to ten or twenty depending on the size of the buildings used to construct it. The density of the barricade varies as well. Sometimes you'd swear you can see the soldiers on the far side sneering back at you, and other times you feel as if you're staring at a brick wall. The sections that look less solid may seem to offer tempting exit points, but you can feel confident that our efficient government has secondary concrete barriers in place to supplement the rubble barrier. According to the buzz on the street, the UCAS military recently began to hide heat and motion sensors in the debris to help foil escape attempts. Keep an especially sharp eye out for these in Wall sections near the Core and the lake (both on the north and the south).

The Towers

To further discourage escape attempts, the government also erected guard towers along the Wall. The guard towers, usually made of steel or reinforced wood, generally stand about twelve meters high and 30 to 100 meters apart. Those areas where refugees cluster (such as along Irving Park Road or along 115th Street west of the Core) show the greatest concentrations of towers, some built on existing tall structures such as power-line supports, others built from scratch.

Three main types of towers exist, with steel towers being the most common. Most of these structures feature partially enclosed guard platforms, though some steel towers, particularly those along 115th Street just to the east and west of the Core and those along Irving Park Road near the lake, feature fully enclosed guard platforms protected by armored-glass windows. The reinforced-wood towers look just like the old prison-camp towers shown in every war trid ever produced. Jerry-rigged towers, basically guard platforms erected atop existing buildings, usually consist of little more than braced wood or metal barriers designed to offer the guards some degree of protection from the citizens below.

Generally, the personnel manning each tower are equipped with one or more sets of night-vision/thermographic binoculars and one military-grade multiband telecommunications unit. (Because of the continual government-sponsored jamming of the radio waves in the Zone, I suspect these telecommunications units must be hardwired back to some central signal-distribution point). Every guard wears light body armor, roughly the equivalent of an armored jacket (though I have seen some wearing heavier,) and carries an assault rifle (probably a Colt M22A2) with an ample supply of regular ammo and concussion minigrenades. In addition, each tower is equipped with loads of flares and either a public-address system or bullhorn, so there's no chance that the citizens huddled below will miss hearing the instructions of their "protectors." I also know for a fact that the government issues LMGs (usually Ingram Valiants), neuro-stun grenades, and the occasional rocket launcher (HER or SAM loads) to certain towers at sensitive locations.

The Guards

In general, it seems that most of the guards don't relish their assignments. Well thank fraggin' god for small favors. They usually issue a lot of warnings before taking action, but they don't hesitate to take whatever action seems necessary if and when someone gets within a couple of meters of the formal barricade. They issue their first warning with a PA or bullhorn. If the subject ignores that warning, the guards then fire a warning flare, immediately followed by a concussion grenade or two. Apparently, the guards' rules of engagement instruct them to use lethal and "near-lethal" force only if fired upon or if a group of citizens attempts to storm the barricade and a "breakout situation" appears imminent. Even under these circumstances, they've been told to shoot to impede by aiming for a target's legs. Thanks, guys.

Fortunately, most of the guards seem reluctant to resort to such displays of force, and I've only seen them open fire on people when the Wall is truly in risk of being penetrated. In fact, I've seen occasional fights break out in guard towers over the appropriate action to be taken, and I've even seen guards wave instead of shoot. It seems that the ranks of the cold, unfeeling bastards who trapped us here contain some human beings after all.

That exception certainly doesn't apply to the "Counterforce Teams"—but I'll have more to say about them in a byte or two.

By the way, I've been told that most of the Wall guards belong to regular UCAS Army troops. It seems the government intends to conveniently ignore those laws that forbid the use of federal troops against the civilian population.

ON THE WATER

A combination of UCAS Coast Guard and UCAS Navy vessels police the lake boundary. In mid-December the Navy paid Chicago the high compliment of stationing the Bennet-class light aircraft carrier *Wolverine* and two Richard A. Dean-class guided-missile frigates—the *Lucan* and the *Voight*—offshore as well. A far cry from the days when the Navy refused to send anything but FFGs and the like for display at the old Navy Pier.

However, fleets of small, fast patrol boats—typified by the Bloth-Voss River Commander—represent the primary means used to control the lake border, supported by GMC-Beachcraft Patroller air-cushion vehicles (which will become the primary means of border patrol

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once the lake freezes, probably within a month). Squadrons of light and air-sea rescue helicopters, such as the Hughes WK-2 Stallion and the Coast Guard's version of the Hughes Aerospace Airstar, the 2052-A/SR, provide air support. These squadrons operate off the *Wolverine* and from ground facilities to the north and south of the CZ.

Under their present orders, the patrols first issue loudspeaker warnings to anyone trying to penetrate the lake barrier. If the subject does not desist, the patrols then physically impede the progress of the subject using the patrol boat or the helicopter rotor down-draft. If the subject still does not stop, patrols may fire on the vessel to sink it. Once the lake freezes, I imagine the lake-border policy will run along the same lines as the policy for the physical Wall.

A series of connected floats, buoys, and sensor buoys make up the actual lake boundary, all connected by carbon-steel cabling and a wire mesh. The mesh rises two meters above the surface of the water and descends nearly five fathoms.

Some sort of base exists at the old University of Chicago Elemental Hall, but it seems to have little to do with CZ security, so I'll leave it for some other slag to jabber about.

IN THE ETHER

Not my best subject, but I've been told the UCAS military quickly transferred nearly every available magician currently assigned to nonessential duties to the Chicago area. Priority one: keeping the bugs in. They seem to be succeeding at this task, according to my sources. Maintaining the border in astral space ranks as priority two—keeping folks from getting in and from getting out. My sources also report that astral space around the border teems with watchers and elementals galore, and a number of shamans contribute their skills to guard duty as well. These aren't even UCAS military shamans; they're NAN shamans sent here by the Sioux and Ute to keep things contained. Again, thanks, guys, for your concern.

I've heard tell that various military officials "have initiated a dialogue with certain individuals" in a not-to-be-mentioned formerly Irish nation about creating a mystical ward around the city. I suppose sealing us off completely makes it that much easier to forget us.

COUNTERFORCE TEAMS

I mentioned these drekheads before. They're an assortment of UCAS special forces and elite units running covert operations. They fill in the gaps. Air-mobile and armed for serious fun—combat armor, full-auto shotguns, stun batons (huh?), and the usual kit-bag of chaos—many of them are also adepts of some kind, and many teams include full-blooded magicians. Mostly they perform quick-response border support whenever breakout threats occur, but they've been known to perform missions in-city as well. Usually these consist of snatch-and-grabs, but sometimes they'll conduct seek-and-destroys targeted at various warlords or gangs dominating an area—especially if the target is grabbing and hoarding food. (Did you know that selling or bartering in any manner for "dropped food and supplies" is illegal? Get real.)

I once saw one of these teams in operation, but at the time I thought it was a group of corp soldiers. These fraggers don't think twice about laying on the firepower. Must be nice to know that a full reload's waiting for you when you get home. Anyway, these slots have dusted some pretty bad jokers, so I'm not going to spank them too much.

Jason Miller (order #5584577

OTHER ASSETS

I've been told that the government's got a lot of assets beyond the Wall that we inside can't see, gear like various models of t-birds, LAVs, combat choppers and such. I've heard of a Stonewall main battle tank out west near one of the forest preserves, but I'll bet ya cans o' soup that it was an LAV.

Then there's the *Wolverine* that sits barely two klicks offshore. What that carrier has inside her is hard to say. Typically, *Wolverine*s are armed for sea combat, local air superiority, and the occasional ground attack. However, *Wolverine*s also have been used to ferry regular army and, of course, marine troops and their transports. Perhaps the rumors of a plan for a heavy bug-clearing assault are true. I do know that the *Wolverine* is not conducting the normal number of flight operations. Sure, various air-combat patrols seem to be up most of the time, but the *Wolverine*'s deck is too quiet. Believe me, when she becomes active, the city will know it.

If you have information about the Wall, especially its weaknesses, post to: CORE/CITY/WALL.]<<<<<

◆◆◆◆◆[GETTING WHAT YOU NEED

:::::prepared by UNCLE LEECHE

No one's money is worth anything in the Windy City these days—economic transactions in the Zone are conducted by barter. I got something, you want it, we work something out. That's the way it goes. Sort of a throwback to the old days, don't ya know. Ultimately, it's a seller's market, cuz the supply of everything—save bugs—is pretty limited. If you want what I got I can pretty much set the price. And pretty much anything goes, so watch who you deal with—I've heard of people who demand some pretty outrageous prices.

But the stuff that people want has to come from somewhere, and the main somewhere is the legit "dumps," the supply drops. You'll find three or four per square kilometer—every neighborhood's got one. The drops come during the day, about once every five days per site. The gov-types stagger the specific days and never announce them, apparently in an attempt to outmaneuver the various goons and strong-armers who try to control the food and supply flow over multiple neighborhoods and areas. By making drops at seemingly random times, they force the goons to be ready and waiting at multiple sites all day. When the drops finally come, odds are the local populace can get at the stuff quicker and more efficiently if the thugs are spread thin. Does it work? Pretty much. Of course, sometimes the strong-boys decide to control just one site, and they simply camp there and wait for the next drop scheduled for that location. The government's all over that problem, though—it either changes the drop site (surprise!) or sends in its own hardmen instead of supplies (boffo surprise!).

Supply drops come down in large intersections, parking lots, or open parks—anywhere a large helicopter or VTOL can hover long enough to drop pallets. Ninety-nine percent of the time the stuff reaches the ground okay, but sometimes the pilot releases the pallets prematurely or at an angle, and the supplies really scatter when they hit. I've heard multiple reports that the government has begun sending in minichoppers and drones to police active drop areas. Start playing king of the pile and you may find your gear being divided up even before your ventilated corpse hits the grass.

All kinds of stuff gets dropped. Mostly concentrated and nonperishable food, lots of canned stuff and various kinds of processed drek. Lots of soy this and soy that. (Blecch!) Drops also include blankets, medicine (a hot black-market commodity), first-aid and hygienic supplies (like soap), and clothing. The kind of stuff you'd need to rough it in the woods for a few weeks. They've also dropped tents, electric heaters (in areas that still have power), and chemical heaters (you know, those goofy blankets and pads that heat up to nuke-meltdown when you push the weird button, but then cool down in a few hours).

They also drop a continual supply of bug foggers and bombs. You know, cans of bug spray. The bugs hate this stuff but the cans don't provide much range, so you gotta be real fast to give a bug a face-full before it snaps your head off. If you prefer more of a distance weapon, tape miniexplosives to the cans of spray. You don't need much more gunpowder than what fits in a shotgun shell. Attach a short electro-timer, and blammo—you've got yourself an anti-bug grenade. You can thank me later.

What about weapons, you ask? Well, it's true that the government occasionally brings in weapons, but usually only when the hardmen themselves drop by to clean out a drop site. When that becomes necessary, the gov-boys have been known to leave behind guns and ammo so that the locals can defend themselves from whatever force has been controlling the site. Unfortunately, the hardmen too often end up returning to the same site to deal with the jokers they left the guns with on their previous run. Ah, well.

This policy makes guns and ammo the most expensive commodity on the black market, but the prices of all goods accurately reflect the usual inflation of a black-market economy. The following list shows the costs of various items in the CZ as percentages relative to the standard street prices.

Jason Miller (order #5388877)

CONTAINMENT ZONE COSTS

ITEM	COST
Weapons	
Ammunition[1]	800%+
Explosives	1,500%
Firearm Accessories	600%
Firearms	700%
Melee Weapons[2]	100%/400%
Projectile Weapons	300%
Throwing Weapons	150%
Armor and Clothing	
Armor[3]	500%
Regular Clothing[4]	200%
Security and Surveillance[5]	
Communications	10–750%
Security Devices	10–750%
Surveillance Countermeasures	10–750%
Surveillance Measures	10–750%
Survival Gear	400–1,200%
Vision Enhancers	300–800%
Electronics[5]	
Electronics	10–750%
Cybertech[5]	
Biotech	500%
Bodyware	400%
Cyberdecks	400%
Headware	500%
Internals	400%
Programs	800%
Magical Equipment	
Hermetic Library	3,000%
Magical Supplies	2,500%
Magical Weapons	Hah!
Power Foci	Seller's market
Ritual Sorcery Material	2,500%
Spell Foci	Seller's market
Vehicles	
Aircraft	Hah!
Boats	Seller's market
Ground Vehicles	1,500%
Military Vehicles	Dream on
Appropriate Fuel	1,500%
Illegals	
BTLs	400%

[1]That's regular ammo, chummers. Figure 1,000 to 1,200 percent for explosive, flechette, and gel/stun. Figure 3,000 percent for APDS.

[2]The base 100 percent is for crude or common stuff, clubs and such. You want something fancy, say a katana, you gotta pay. Want something slick like a monoblade and the like, it's a seller's market, chummer. You pay what the seller asks.

[3]This is for soft armor up to and including armor jackets. You want any kind of full or partial security armor, triple the relative cost. You want hard military stuff? Seller's market—or you can take it from one of the Counterforce Teams yourself.

[4]How much will you pay for a warm coat for your kid? Just wondering.

[5]This is one of those tough areas to call. Some of this gear is worth your life (or someone's, anyway), other stuff ain't worth drek. Base rule—the more useful it is within the CZ, the more a seller can ask for it.

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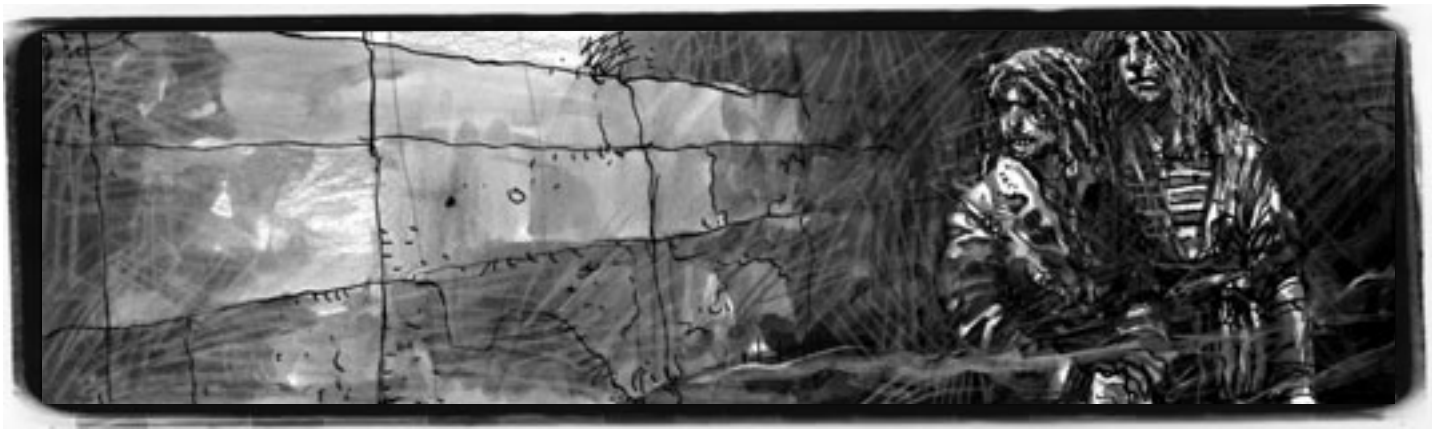
When the time comes, yer gonna hafta cut some kinda deal with whomever. That's up to you. Finding the sellers, that's the tough part. You gotta ask around for that. In many neighborhoods, we'll be pretty fraggin' obvious. Street brokers, as we like to call ourselves, have no real reason to hide their identities. Sure, there's always the chance that someone's gonna try and knock one of us over—gutter-pukes try it all the time—but you think I'm not protected? You think I can't use what I got to insure I keep it? Think twice, Mr. Happy-To-Be-Alive, and be smart so you stay that way.

And, regardless of the government's efforts, in too many places warlords control the supply of food and gear. If you ain't in tight with them, you're stuck. Luckily, most of them understand they gotta keep the basic flow going to keep their power. Too many, though, get real taken up by the idea of a personal fiefdom and go a little too far.

Of course, for you average Joes and Josies, it's best not to advertise your wares and what-nots, cuz you never know who'll try to knock over a flaunter.

If you need something, post to: CORE/STUFF/FINDER and I'll see what I can do.]<<<<<



●●●●●[DISORGANIZED CRIME

:::::prepared by SWISS KNIFE

The bugs just don't understand respect, ya know—they trapped the yaks, the Maf, and the triads the same as all the rest of us. Now all the old deals are off, and there's one massive family war taking place for control of the black market, BTL trade, prostitution, and what-have-you. The old "gentleman's agreements" regarding turf and behavior might have never existed.

The war for control of the CZ is being fought on several levels, but the small size of the playing field means that conflict boils over pretty easily. Some observers have said that the three organizations are chewing each other up faster than even the bugs can.

It all boils down to access and distribution. When the government sealed the city, that action left only a few prime routes open into and out of the Zone. The UCAS military stands ever vigilant to crack down quickly on the smuggling of commodities into or out of the CZ, but sometimes they're just not fast enough.

The most common method of illegal importation is actually the simplest: the negotiating parties pass messages over the Wall, making the necessary arrangements, then at the appointed time and place someone from the outside hurls duffel bags (or whatever) over the Wall into the waiting arms of someone on the inside. This system obviously requires careful coordination, communication, and timing. The nature of the deal often results in packages going over the Wall in the wrong places or dropping into the arms of waiting gov agents. Some Wall guards can be bribed to look the other way during such smuggling operations. Guards not on the take cheerfully open fire on embargo offenders.

Other forms of illegal importation require greater craft and more complex plans, and offer varying results. Perhaps the oldest plan, and a perennially successful one, is to bribe the officer in charge of making a supply drop or the cargo handlers who load one of the drop aircraft. Either party might be willing to add a "special delivery" to the supply pallet. A more recent smuggling style uses low-flying cargo drones to deliver contraband over the Wall. Small, fairly maneuverable, and with low signatures, the drones or RPVs fly close to the border at a few feet off the ground, using the streets and buildings to shield them from radar and IR sensors. At the last second, perhaps following a preprogrammed flight path, they pop up just high enough to slip over the barricade.

Any route into the city remains useful for only a short time before someone makes a mistake or the government spots it. This keeps the various crime orgs occupied with running continuous jazz on each other to usurp routes or spook the competition, hoping in the process to intercept shipments destined for their rivals.

Jason Miller (order #5388877)

The yakuza, Mafia, and triads each still work in their own unique way, attempting to control some part of the CZ using new methods and old. Their supplies alone keep some warlords in business, and in some cases they serve as the warlords themselves. None of them, however, take kindly to their rivals, other warlords, or "freelancers" encroaching on their territory. Consider yourself warned.

My final point—don't get involved with the crime orgs in the CZ unless you can't avoid it or you've got the wise to work it. Dangerous turf, whatever way you cut it.]<<<<<

●●●●●●[STREET TALK

:::::prepared by W. JACOBS (NEWSHOUND) (271161)

Whom do you believe? Who do you trust? These perennial questions take on vital importance in our current situation. Unfortunately, there's no easy answer. The government, in its wisdom, shut down virtually every outlet of reliable information within the Containment Zone. Ostensibly, this measure is designed to keep people on the outside from learning what's going on in here and panicking. But whoever knows the true rationale behind government action? Perhaps the government itself is responsible for the bug breakout and fears the rest of the country will find out.

There. Did you catch what happened just now? I was being an irresponsible journalist. How? I said, "Maybe they're responsible for this and are afraid the rest of the country will find out," which was pure speculation on my part. That statement has no basis in reliable fact, but if I'd let it stand, too many people would have viewed it as fact, passed it on as gospel to their families and friends, and before long that statement would come to be accepted as "fact."

This means you have to be careful what you believe these days. Under the present circumstances, it's nearly impossible to confirm anything as true through reliable sources. As a result, the content of conversations in the Zone that discuss how this started, who's responsible and how, and when it might end must be regarded as speculation and hearsay. Now, I'm not saying that you shouldn't listen to what people say; just realize that they may not know what they're talking about.

By now you're probably saying, Walter, get to the fraggin' point. Well, the point of this lengthy preamble is that here on "Chicago under Siege," you have a source you can trust. Several other journalists and I trapped here inside the CZ with you have pledged to continue to supply news and facts to this net. We're going to use all the journalistic skills and ingenuity we possess to tell you what's really going on here in the streets of the Zone.

If you slip over to that part of the BBS, you'll notice there's no direct way for you to annotate the stories we post. That's deliberate—we want to keep the original stories intact and free of bias. However, the BBS contains companion zones associated with each story—use these for your comments, corrections, annotations, and so on.

By jamming the city's communications system, the government successfully keeps the populace in the dark. If they intended to control the city through information blackout, we are at a loss to explain their apparent lack of interest in actually controlling the CZ. Though we don't pretend to understand the government's motives, we intend to keep the information flowing, regardless of whether or not our doing so disrupts the government's plans. We will keep people informed of what's happening, where it's safe, and where it's not.

And we're not going to wait for news to happen before we file our reports—we're going to head out and find it. We're going to identify situations before they become problems and let people know what's going on. And yes, if we can, we're even going to take steps to see that those problems get solved. It's what we have to do if we want to save this city and the people in it. I know that sounds like a high and mighty statement of purpose, but it's what each and every one of us must do to survive this mess and keep our humanity.

To read online news briefs type: GO CITYNEWS
To read news comments and annotation type: GO CITYNEWS/TALK
To post your own comments, post to: CITYNEWS/COMMENT.]<<<<<

●●●●●●[GETTING HELP

:::::prepared by FIRESTORM

I'll keep this brief. Simply, if you got a problem, post to the >>core/city/special.help<< datagroup. Volunteers help monitor the board almost 'round the clock, and if we think we can help we'll be in touch as soon as we can. And we can help with almost any problem—bugs, goons, and warlords—you name it, we're game for it. Oh, one catch—use us to resolve your personal problems and you'll regret it. You only get one warning, and this is it.

For Special Help, post to: CORE/CITY/SPECIAL.HELP
For Special Help specific to those fraggin BUGS, post to: CORE/INSECTS/RAID.]<<<<<

Jason Miller (order #5584577

>>>>>[THE COMMON ENEMY

:::::prepared by J. Q. PUBLIC

The CZ is a dangerous place. Everyone you meet is a potential enemy. We pass each other in the streets, suspicion in our minds and on our faces. Can I take this person at face value, or is there something horrible hidden deep inside him?

Everyone knows they can blame the bugs for the dismal state of affairs in the CZ and everyone hates them for it. This hatred is unifying—it's the only thing that can bring us together. The bugs provide a common enemy we can and must stand against. If we do not accept this basic fact of life in the CZ, we are all lost. If someone finds himself up against the bugs, we are obligated to help them in any way we can. But for the grace of the spirits, that someone could be you. Coming to the aid of anyone facing the bugs must become a law of the street.

Anyone who refuses to help a fellow citizen against the bugs or does not act against them when the opportunity presents itself, must be cast out. If others learn that you have failed in your obligation as a member of this city to fight the bugs, they in turn must obey the law of the street and refuse to grant you the rights and respect due a citizen. This threat of ostracism must be powerful enough to banish all second thoughts, all hesitation when confronted by the bugs.

A lesson from my own life: About three weeks back I was tracking some four-leggers through the alleys when I came across an elf that I knew from way back—we've gone round and round more times than I care to recount, but he's always had the upper hand. I can't tell you how many times I'd dreamed of taking him down, giving him pain. Now he was helpless, bleeding from a half-dozen rips in his flesh, hurting from a fight with a bug. Even as those thoughts flashed through my mind, I helped him. It's the Law.

Nice story? It's true, and it's a truth we must all live. It's bad to see a real bug scurrying across your kitchen floor, worse to see one climbing the side of a building. We can tolerate neither.

It's the Law.]<<<<<

>>>>>[BEWARE THE BOMB

:::::prepared by Dr.T. ALLOMAN (PROF.TED) (391010)

These are the known facts. Early on the morning of October 1, an unknown person or persons detonated a subtactical nuclear weapon at a local power facility in the vicinity of Cermak and Racine. This *peak-load* facility was designed to provide assistance to the local power grid in times of high consumer demand. It was not, as popular rumor suggests, a secret corp nuclear power plant or research facility that the bugs caused to malfunction. As best as we can determine, that site was the home of a vast multi species hive of insects on the verge of releasing a tidal wave of new insect spirits. The nuclear blast was apparently intended to destroy them before that event took place. I have been unable to determine whether or not the blast accomplished its goal, but the puzzling effects left by the detonation can be easily documented.

The detonation seemed to cause surprisingly little damage. Evidence indicates that the weapon had a small yield, perhaps less than a kiloton. Certainly portable, the weapon may have been small enough to fit inside a standard briefcase. Despite the relatively small yield of the bomb, theoretically the detonation should have destroyed the plant and most nonhardened structures within a radius of three-quarters of a kilometer. It didn't. Take a look for yourself—just don't get much closer than 500 meters. The blast effects at 200 meters resemble the expected effects at 1,000 meters. A crater marks the center of the blast, so I think we can safely assume the bomb detonated as it was designed to. Additionally, pulverized debris covers an area immediately around the center of the blast, though in most circumstances, debris would be blown outward and away from the center. The crater itself offers a puzzle; its radius is slightly less than 100 meters, but it's *deep*. No one has measured it yet, but the hole extends much farther down than it should.

The radiation effects of the blast prompt even more questions about what actually happened. Tac-nukes are designed to produce low-radiation yields so that a military force can occupy the site of a blast immediately and remain relatively safe from radiation poisoning. Even so, tac-nuke detonations always leave measurable evidence of radiation. But beyond 150 meters of this blast center, there's nothing that cannot be attributed to blown particles. Within one 100 meters, however, the radioactive-contamination levels nearly match those left by *20-kiloton* weapons.

What does it all mean? Well, were it not for the radiation, I'd say the Cermak Blast wasn't nuclear at all. In fact, some type of *magical* conflagration seems the only plausible explanation for the effects at the site. Still, reliable sources have assured me that a nuclear blast occurred at Cermak and Racine.

Go ahead and investigate for yourself—just don't get too close.

For discussion of the Cermak Blast, access CORE/CITY/BLAST.]<<<<<

Jason Miller (order #5388877)

▫▫▫▫▫▫[THE BIG BUG SLEEP

:::::prepared by NIGHT WALKER

The other night, at a place and time I've promised not to divulge (even though other postings on the net seem to have made that point moot, I'll honor the gentleman's request), I spoke with a magician who was present when the Cermak nuke detonated. He and I engaged in a much more detailed conversation on the subject, but I paraphrased our conversation in the following transcription with his approval.

ME: Can you tell me why the bomb was set off?

HIM: The site contained a nest, bigger than any other in the city, filled with what we feared were hundreds, maybe thousands of insect spirits about to be born. The hive was well defended, and we needed to use something that was small enough for us to carry inside yet powerful enough to destroy the threat.

ME: And you just happened to have a nuclear bomb handy.

HIM: <chuckle> It wasn't mine, you understand. It belonged to some other people, some friends of mine. They had it for, um, just such an emergency.

ME: That sounds like they were expecting to use it.

HIM: I wouldn't say they were *expecting* to, just *prepared* to if necessary. And I'm fragginj64 glad they did.

ME: Care to say who they were?

HIM: No.

ME: All right. Now, one magician to another, what the frag made you think that a nuclear weapon would affect a spirit? We know, and I'm talking about Douglas's Theorum here, that when spirits are at the energy state we call astral space, they lack any positive physical energy whatsoever. They are dissynchronous with terrestrial harmonics and should therefore be immune to such things as "radiation" and "shock waves."

Jason Miller (order #5584577

HIM: Well ...

ME: Wait—we also know that even if they are quasi-corporeal, in a transitional state where they can be affected by things with inherent mass, their willforce enables them to allow such things to pass through them without taking damage. It's only when a cognizant mind invests associative energy in an object it has imparted with potential energy that a true spirit gets, if you will, hammered.

HIM: Well, assuming you don't think Kerri Douglas is a four-letter fruitcake—

ME: You assume correctly.

HIM: —you've got to realize what we're talking about here. I know that a conventional explosive detonating in a room with a spirit won't harm that spirit at all, regardless if that spirit is in astral form exclusively, physically manifest, quasi-corporeal, out-of-state, or whatever. The size of the blast is also unimportant; if it levels the building the spirit is standing in, the spirit will be fine. While I'll admit that my decision might have been based on the scientific part of my brain rearing up to rebel against the mystical part that dominates it, I chose to believe that the very nature of what we were doing might affect the spirits.

ME: And that was?

HIM: Splitting the atom. Quite frankly, I've always found it hard to believe that *nothing* except magical energy could affect a spirit in astral space. I mean, just what constitutes magical energy or mana? What criteria define magical actions and reactions? You know the arguments.

ME: But you were taking a hell of a chance. You didn't know if it would affect them.

HIM: No, we didn't. But we were sure that the explosion would destroy the cocoons and the physicality of the nest, which would buy the city some time.

ME: So, did it turn out the way you wanted?

HIM: Not entirely. We destroyed the nest, the cocoons, all the flesh forms present, and any physically manifest spirits we happened to catch.

ME: But the rest?

HIM: Well, it didn't destroy all the bugs, but it did do something. As far as we can tell, all the bugs that were within astral space inside the blast radius were knocked into some form of torpor. I believe they were partially disrupted.

ME: So they weren't destroyed.

Jason Miller (order #53877)

HIM: No, they're still there. Dormant, asleep in astral space, but they're still there. And this is an effect that's not limited to just the local blast area. We've found dormant bugs everywhere all over astral space within the CZ, though the effect seems to be less widespread the farther north you go. But that only makes sense—the borders of the CZ interrupt any efforts to track the blast effect to the west, south, and east. You can only go north for any distance inside the Zone.

ME: Can you explain this torpor effect?

HIM: Not really. We were using some pretty heavy magic at the time the bomb went off and that may have contributed somehow. But I really don't know.

ME: What's the long-term effect?

HIM: Well, it's been a few months, and the bugs in torpor don't seem to be waking of their own accord.

ME: Under what circumstance can they be roused?

HIM: Magic. Use magic near a bug in torpor and it might wake up. The power of the magic and the range from the magic to the bug both seem to contribute to the likelihood of disrupting the torpor.

ME: Are we just talking about spells here?

HIM: No. I know of a few cases where just the proximity of active foci releases a bug from torpor. I know that a sustained or quickened spell will do it too, as will the presence of another spirit, especially elementals or nature spirits. Oddly, the presence of an active bug doesn't seem to affect the torpor.

ME: Nature spirits, too?

HIM: Nature spirits, too. The one time I've observed the effect, the presence of the spirit seemed to affect an area immediately around the shaman, rather than extending through the spirit's entire domain of influence, thank god.

ME: What about conjuring?

HIM: Conjuring seems to be the worst. Conjuring, and banishing, sets up shock waves through astral space that disrupts the torpor.

ME: So it could be the summoning of the nature spirit, rather than its presence, that disrupts the torpor.

HIM: Good point, I hadn't thought of that. I can only say from experience that summoning elementals can be very dangerous. I can also say that the presence of free spirits and watchers seems to disturb fewer bugs in torpor than the presence of elementals.

ME: So there are free spirits still here in Chicago?

HIM: At least one.

ME: Why? Why didn't it flee?

HIM: I really can't speak for his motivations. Maybe you can ask him yourself someday.

We magic types have set up a special forum here on the net. Access it via: CORE/CITY/MAGIC/BUGS.]<<<<<

>>>>>[MADMEN

:::::prepared by FAT MAX

Is it just me, or are the crazies the only ones left in this fraggin' city? I mean, HELLO! What's the scam here? Did somebody slip a little note to the sane people so they could get out early?

I'm serious. Walk the streets. They're full of whacked-out kooks and nutcases. People singing, crying, arguing with themselves. People doing awful things to themselves and other people. What gives?

Yeah, yeah, I know terrible times do terrible things to people's brains. And I seen the vids too. My friend Drew, who used to be a shrink, says it's all some sort of continuing trauma stress whatchamacallit? He says a lot of people can't deal with the reality of the Zone, so they simply change reality in their own heads. Life too harsh? Talk to trees! I don't know, though. None of this really seems to explain it.

I mean, I can deal with life in the Zone, but I feel the craziness happening to me anyway. Sometimes I seem to forget what's happening here. There just doesn't seem to be anything wrong. I don't hear the screams, I don't see the bodies. I don't see the kids fighting for scraps of food or, spirits help us, scavenger rights on a corpse someone found. Sometimes, everything seems all right.

Yeah, I know. I make it sound just like Drew says it should be. But see, I know something that he doesn't. Something about me. I know why I'm sane. Look, I've been a hard man for a long time. Been places and done things I wouldn't wish on an enemy. I've dealt with the blood and lives of others on my hands for most of my life. And there's only one reason I've kept my sanity—I dream. Or rather, I used to.

See, I used to have terrible dreams. Awful, nasty dreams about who I was and what I'd done. My nights were hell, but that meant I could live through the day. Each night I bought myself another day.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

I still have nightmares, but now they're different. I can barely remember them. But instead of waking up cleansed, now I wake up scared. It takes me a long time to work up the energy to get up. It's not until I can convince myself that everything's okay that I can get up. Get the picture?

I don't think I'm sleeping as well as I used to, either. At least it doesn't feel that way. Is this the way it is for everyone? I think it's getting worse. Slowly, but it's happening. What's going to happen in six months? A year? It's gotta be over by a year, right?

Right?

Right?]<<<<<

●●●●●[THE MAGICAL CITY

:::::prepared by JANE OBLIVION

My kinda town, Chicago is. I mean that, sincerely. Drek, I know I've had my head inside a plastic bag once too often, but I'm serious. This city has truly come alive since the bugs moved in. It's hoppin' now, pun intended. Things are moving, things are shaking. I feel like I'm living in a place with energy, not just in some corporate shadow. People matter now, small decisions are important. It's a different game with an all-new playing field. Deal me in, chummers.

And what a playing field it is. Chicago has always had a bit of a buzz to it (and that time I didn't mean the pun). People have always talked about elementals up and down the lake shore, good 'ole Elemental Hall itself, the wiz-kids at the University, and so on. It's always seemed a bit more alive to me than, say, Manhattan (too sterile), Denver (too weird), or Atlanta (too, well, Atlanta). That may have been what attracted the bugs here in the first place. Can't say, but I'll bet there's a reason they decided to call this town home.

Anyway, that's the way Chicago was. Nowadays it's a bit different.

BACKGROUND COUNT

The presence of the bugs, the Big Bomb, and every little kind of fallout have all shaken things up. Needless to say, all the drek flying around has sent the background count up. It's only fractional in most areas, but in a couple of places—like near the blast crater, an area near Randolph and Sangamon, parts of the U of Illinois campus, and a handful of other select locations—it's up more than a bit. It also seems to be determined by local influence. Ever been in one of the squatter camps near Irving Park Road when the bugs raid? When the bugs first broke out, no one noticed any particular patterns, but now when the uglies raid—spike! Up goes the local interference. Is it the bugs? Is it the panic? My answer is both. Take note and watch yourself.

BUG STUFF

The bugs themselves can be a pain in the butt. Seems like they're everywhere. Well, they kinda are, but now I'm just referring to the ones that are still awake. I and some others have gotten together to take a careful look at the situation and as far as we can tell, if there are any queens or nest-mothers left, they're weak. We also found no sign of any insect shamans boasting any level of power. Are they still recruiting? Bet your chromed heinie they are. But I don't think you can just walk up to a guy, ask him if he wants to be in on the deal, and Boffo!—he's a Roach shaman. At least that's not the way it works for other totems.

Anyway, a lot of bugs still show themselves, but most seem to lack direction. With no queens or nest-moms to guide them, they're into this self-preservation thing pretty good. Some of them hunt, even though as spirits they really don't need to eat. Most just hang around, waiting to be told what to do. Especially those fraggin' ants. Gaaaaaaah. ... there's a hive of them in the parking lots under Grant Park doing nothing. You can almost walk up to them, rap on their rust-colored skulls and yell HELLO?!?! (Don't though, they'll kill you.)

But infringe on their turf or get in their way when they have a goal and you'd better watch out. I actually think they're nastier without someone telling them what to do. Of course, I'm talking about the hivers, mostly. The bulk of the loners, the solitary bugs, don't care if their mom is living, disrupted, or sleeping quietly in the corner. They just go about their business. Even so, they seem particularly, um, uninspired these days. Maybe it's a partial torpor effect. No scholar mage am I. (Guessed that, eh?)

The big problem, like I mentioned above, is that these hordes of bugs are probably just waiting around for some new bug shaman with an ounce of real power or a new mega-queen to tell them what to do. And that's something else that gets me. I mean, I'd have thought that the hivers would go screaming off to the wherever when their beloved queen got crispy-fried in the Big Blast. But no, it's like she ain't dead but isn't giving orders either. Are the even bigger queens and nest-moms in torpor somewhere? Scary thought, *neh*?

Anyway, on the likelihood of a new kick-a bug shaman showing up soon, how about pretty good? You can bet your brother that any such fraggers on the outside have already been trying to get in. I'll bet that's half the point of the fraggin' Wall. They're might be an army of bugs in here waiting for a new master. More scary thoughts, *neh*?

Jason Miller (order #538877)

But what about new bug shamans appearing from inside the Zone? Well, access to the metaplanes is a lot harder within the CZ. If bug shamans are recruited from outside (as it were) then I'll bet that's slowing down the application process *a lot*. It's probably harder for the uberspirits to send their wriggly little thoughts into someone's head. We can hope so, anyway.

METAPLANE BUSY SIGNAL

Like I've said, there's some problem getting through to the metaplanes from the Zone these days. I can only assume this is some aftereffect of the Big Blast. The thought that someone might be doing this deliberately is a little too heinous for my pea brain to consider. I've thought about it, and I can't think of anyone who's powerful enough to cast this big of a whammy, nor can I think of any way to do it. Now, like I said, I ain't no scholar mage, so working theories of this very concept may be beyond me, but thoughts of someone capable of doing this still tend to make me stop and stare at nothing for a while.

I've tried astral questing a couple of times when I was bored, and drek, was it tough. It was like someone had layered cotton between this realm and the metaplanes. The simile is more than a pretty picture—I felt like I was suffocating when I tried it. I haven't gotten a clear explanation from anyone about this phenom, but most non-astrally challenged magicians have noticed the effect too.

I can't really wrap my head around what the long-term implications of the current sit might be. I know the conditions I'm describing seem pretty uniform throughout the CZ, but I can't say what it's like beyond the Wall. I do figure a couple of short-term implications of this, though not everyone agrees that the dots in my picture all connect.

Conjuring Chaos

Ja, not only does conjuring tend to wake any sleeping bugs that might be in the neighborhood, but it's fraggin' hard to do these days. I think the same problem that makes the metaplanes harder to reach is at work here. Seems logical, right?

Anyway, it takes a little more time and a lot more effort to whistle up a spirit of any kind, excepting nature spirits. I guess those guys are here aleady so they're not affected. A friend suggested it might be because they are intimately connected to a particular area, and so the connection between here and there is sturdier. Gots me, chummer. I ain't no scholar mage, remember?

Toxic Totems

I don't know if you've noticed, but we've got a lot more toxic shamans running about these days. I'm not only talking about true toxics like the losers who worship the totems of the sanitary canals and the waste dumps, but also those who follow more common totems that have gotten a little, um, twisted. Like followers of Dog, who's a little too protective, or of the cruel trickster that Coyote has become. It seems like the darker sides of the totems are showing their hands these days. Again, could be connected to the metaplane access problem. Don't know. Wonder if anyone does?]<<<<

Jason Miller (order #5584577

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

INSECTS AMONG US

>>>>**File Header Damaged**
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afraid of their shadows. What's out there? How dangerous are they? What should I do?

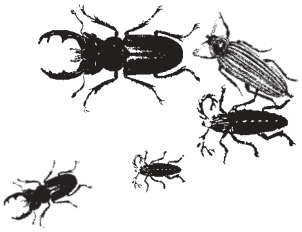
There aren't as many insect spirits as there are bugs in the world, thank fraggin' whomever, but their numbers are high enough to cause every other living being concern. Why? Because they don't care about noninsects, they're ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊

Insect spirits generally show interest in only two things: eating and breeding. That's it. And though some exceptional insect spirits pursue their own alien agendas, insect spirits are also generally stupid. Don't be fooled by the apparently sophisticated behavior ants display—it's all instinctive or ◊◊◊◊ reflexive.

And yes, insect spirits must be summoned. That means that, ultimately, a human being is responsible for all this. Sometime, somewhere, someone heard the call of one of these spirits and answered. Every insect shaman believes he can control the spirits and use them to his own ends, but every time the insect spirit proves the shaman wrong. The shaman summons queens or females in order to augment and mature his own power and quickly discovers that he cannot dominate a fully empowered spirit. The insect spirit soon decides that the shaman is only useful for summoning other spirits or more often, that he has outlived his usefulness. I do not know, nor have I heard of, any insect shaman that solely or jointly controls a hive or nest of any real size.

>>>>>(We don't know that "ultimately a human being is responsible." We face too many unknowns about the insect spirits and their shamans. It's entirely likely that somehow, somewhere they know a way into our world. Who knows if we'll ever find out the truth of their nature and how they came to our world?)<<<<<
—Jana (09:13:17/11-29-55)

I've put together the following information on the different kinds of spirits that reliable sources have reported as being within the Containment Zone. My information is as accurate as I could make it; please annotate what I've missed or misinterpreted.



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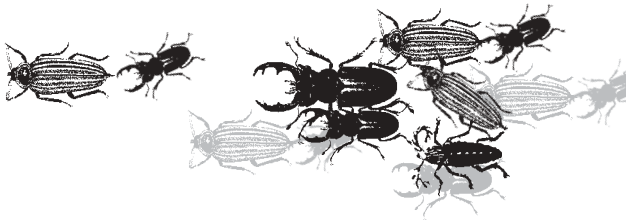


WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

I'm sure as drek no expert on magic, but I've been told that a place exists out beyond astral space where the insect spirits originate. Now, I happen to know a number of more "metaphysically aware" individuals, and while I can't follow half of their blather I do know that even they disagree on where the bugs come from. Some say this bug place is one of primal energy, one of many such places where the wills and desires of Man formed into incarnate energy. Others pooh-pooh that idea and say that a Realm of Insects exists, in the same sense that a Realm of Animals (or something) exists where the totems hold sway (though another friend says each totem belongs to a single Realm). Personally, I prefer to believe that the insects are being called from another place. The first theory presented here advocates that nothing exists until a magician forms it. A magician wants an insect spirit, and his will and the universe obliges. That theory makes us ultimately to blame for the current situation. Personally, I'm more comfortable believing that these things exist elsewhere so that mankind cannot be held responsible.

>>>>>(You foolish moron. Why can't we be responsible? What's wrong with admitting that our world includes misguided, deranged, possibly evil people? We are, and must be, responsible for our own actions. Including this one. And as the level of magic rises in the world, we fraggin' better get used to it.)<<<<<
—Warlock In Chains (22-06-55/12:01:55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

WHY ARE THEY HERE?

No one's sure why the bugs came here. One theory says they've always been here. Others say because they can be. Another theory says it's because we called them. Whatever ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ ◊◊◊◊ They're here, that's that.

>>>>>(But can we get rid of them? We can't be stuck like this forever, can we? I mean, somebody's got to be able to do something.)<<<<<
—JT Public05 (21:38:32/11-10-55)

>>>>>(Sure, something can be done. One fraggin' bug at a time ...)<<<<<
—Warlock in Chains (23:12:07/10-15-55)

Why they're here is a question that must be begged. In my experience, the insect spirits act just like ordinary bugs. The only smart ones I've seen are those horrid man-bugs that hold on to some vestige of humanity (though don't bother trying to exploit it). I'm told the queens and some of the elder females have a high level of intelligence, and that may very well be the case. The common insect spirits—the workers, soldiers, or whatever—are dumb as, well, a box of bugs. They don't understand technology or its purposes, and routinely fail to fear it until too late. They're perceptive but susceptible to many simple tricks and ruses.

>>>>>(Never Ever Forget that they don't sense things the same as us. Some rely on smell, others on tactile contact, air pressure, and so on. A plan that may seem brilliantly deceptive to you might be quite obvious to them. And vice-versa, of course.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (12:15:31/11-10-55)

Jason Miller (order #953-877)

>>>>>(Please, please, there's some in the next building. I can hear them at night. Can you help me? I'm near Argyle and Clark.)<<<<
—Mary R. (22035) (06:34:21/11-17-55)

>>>>>(Mary, post to the help forum at >>core.insects.raid<< and someone will help you.
In the meantime, STAY AWAY FROM THE BUILDING.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (06:35:48/11-17-55)

As I said before, they seem to exist for two primary purposes, breeding and eating. And eating seems solely geared to ensure breeding. Insect spirits simply want to make more insect spirits. As many as they can. That's the primary goal of the queens, the mothers, and almost all the others. It's the primary goal of the insect shamans, for them becoming an obsession. I've met two bug shamans in my life, and both jokers were completely fragged up. I'd say lets classify them as insane or deranged, put a bullet in their heads and be done with it.

>>>>>(Harsh, but perhaps the wisest course. The world of the insect shaman has little in common with the world of the more, um, "traditional" shaman. While most shamans work under the auspices of indirect signs and portents from their totem, the insect shaman deals almost exclusively with avatars of the totem, the insect spirits themselves. You'll note that their shamans never speak of Dog spirits or Bear spirits, but insect spirits exist in our world. They're different, chummers, and those who serve them are different, and the term *shaman* technically doesn't apply.)<<<<<
—Tiger Faux (21:23:36/11-22-55)

>>>>>(How can you tell an insect shaman from anyone else? Is there a way to recognize them?)<<<<<
—Marty V.W. (30281) (08:19:44/11-26-55)

>>>>>(If you're a mundane, only by their actions. You'll probably never see one, though. They tend to be cowardly bastards who hide where the queen can protect them.)<<<<<
—Devon Heart (11:09:43/12-03-55)

>>>>>(You don't know what you're talking about.)<<<<<
—Tiger Faux (22:04:05/12-07-55)

They're not like you or I, chummer. Insect shamans live in their own twisted world. As the queens or females that a shaman thinks he controls gain power, the shaman's grip on humanity slips away. Eventually, they serve no further use to anyone, especially the elder insect spirits, and the bugs do 'em in. The hive or nest doesn't need the shaman to grow or thrive by that point anyway.

>>>>>(It's the lure that gets 'em, the promise of power and secrets revealed. The end is always the same. Death.)<<<<<
—Quantum Princess (19:22:03/12-02-55)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The best piece of advice I can give, other than what's in the bit on each type of insect, is to stay away from them. It's easier than it might be because most of them are dormant now, supposedly as a result of that blast just north of the Core. I think we're safe if they stay that way, but if that mass of insect spirits ever wakes up ... well, you can imagine the destruction. The scariest thought, pointed out by my friend Fidel, is that Chicago is practically awash in dormant nests and hives. If you happen across one, please don't disturb it. *So ka*? Thanks.

HIVES

Some of the insect spirits, like ants and wasps, live in hives or colonies. The common man can safely view them both as the same fraggin' thing—one place filled with dozens, scores, perhaps even hundreds of bugs. Most insect hives support only one queen, but the type of insect spirit and the goal of the hive may require more. Sometimes different types of bugs cooperate and coexist within one hive. Rumor has it that the two super-hives destroyed here in Chicago contained multiple types of spirits. I've also heard they had something to do with the Universal Brotherhood, but I find that hard to believe.

>>>>>(Believe it.)<<<<<
—Ares 101 (03:36:41/12-10-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

>>>>>(Don't believe it. I think it's too damn convenient that people are assigning the blame for this disaster to the one organization that worked the hardest to lift those who were oppressed from the yoke of corporate bondage. Free thought is true freedom. Believe in yourself and you can fly.)<<<<<
—Ellen X. (43920) (07:22:33/12-13-55)

>>>>>(Then fly over the wall, honey. Fly and be free. See how much lead you catch.)<<<<<
—Wall Watcher (07:26:47/12-14-55)

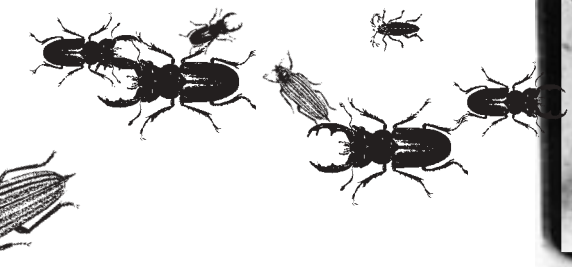
>>>>>(We won't be leaving. Too many people here need our help.)<<<<<
—Ellen X. (43920) (07:29:59/12-14-55)

>>>>(Rah-rah. Glad to hear it. That brings up a point, though. Whoever wrote this file mentioned that there were lots of bugs out there, whole nests even, lying dormant following the Cermak Blast. Well, I know for a fact that that's true. I also know for a fact that certain people have been going around deliberately waking them up. ...)<<<<<
—Great Big Bear (11:24:48/01-02-56)

Life in the hives also offers clear role distinctions. Certain types of insect spirits do certain things. Some gather food/victims, others guard the hive itself. Most hive-based insect spirits lack much advantage in the brains department—but a lack of intelligence may explain why they take direction from the queen or shaman *really* well.

NESTS

Solitary bugs—mosquitoes, roaches, and the like—form nests in order to breed. Each nest usually contains one or more females, nearly always of the same type. (In fact, I've never heard of ... actually, that's not true. I've heard of a beetle nest in an ant hive, so never mind.) The females fiercely protect the cocoons from invaders, and bugs that fulfill other roles also provide protection. These other bugs also transport food to the nest for the breeding females, which rarely leave its safety. I've never heard of a nest containing more than four females, but that doesn't mean it doesn't happen.



LONERS

What I call loners make up an additional subset of the solitary bugs. These I know the least about. Mantises, for example, apparently establish neither a nest nor hive, but instead form a little "cabal" consisting of a dominant female and her "assistants." More on them later.

COCOONS

One behavior that all known insect spirits share, regardless of the way in which their terrestrial counterparts breed, is the use of some form of "cocoon" to produce new creatures of their type. In all known cases, the spirit chooses some poor slob as a host and cocoons him or her, then summons a new spirit into the body. The time it takes to summon the spirit, and the "incubation" time to birth varies from bug to bug. The cocoons represent the insect spirits' most vulnerable stage. If you find cocoons, destroy them.

>>>>>(And strike *hard*. Accelerants like gasoline, kerosene, and alcohol work really well. Make the old standby Molotov cocktail and cook away. Burn buggies burn!)<<<<<
—McCormick's Raider (23:53:01/11-21-55)

Jason Miller (order #953-877)

>>>>>(McCormick's a fraggin' nutcase, but she's right. If you can't do it yourself, post to the CORE/INSECTS/RAID datagroup and somebody who can help just might read it.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (22:04:57/12-07-55)

The bugs join the host body and the spirit in the cocoon in a manner akin to egg laying. Usually the mother or queen "mounts" the host body and then "invests" it with the new spirit. The bugs do not need to actually physically penetrate the body (except in the case of wasps and mosquitoes), but the summoning apparently requires that position. Horrible, almost obscene if you've ever seen it happening. ...

TRUE AND FLESH FORMS

A bug spirit that's been bonded to a human host develops into one of two forms, true form or flesh form. The true form is a real spirit that resembles a roughly human-sized physical equivalent of the terrestrial insect. Bug spirits of the same type may look slightly different from each other and may possess different abilities. The important point, however, is that the true-form bug spirit is an actual spirit, able to assume a physical form and everything else that other spirits usually can do. True forms also tend to be the smarter form of the two, though no one can say why. And they're *fast*, in either spirit or physical form. They're plenty dangerous, and as spirits they're a pain in the hoop for the likes of you or me to fight.

>>>>>(Not so true. I've found most of the bug spirits to be small and weak—maybe broken by the Cermak nuke or underpowered because their masters need to churn them out quickly in order to defend themselves. They're weaker than they look.)<<<<<
—Milo (21:55:10/11-19-55)

>>>>>(Shut the frag up, Milo! Don't tell them that. STAY AWAY FROM THE BUGS. That's the only way you can be safe.The only way.)<<<<<
—Tower Terror (04:13:21/11-25-55)

>>>>>(Now who's fraggin' with whom? Yup, run and hide. Run and hide. Run and hide.
That's the only thing we can do. Hide and be afraid.
WRONG! Fight back, frag it! This is our city, our home. The government's drekked out on us, so who's left? The Ares Macrojerks down at the Dome? I think not (in fact, this may be all their fault). We gotta fight back. We gotta do it. It's our only choice.)<<<<<
—Werehouse (06:19:12/11-30-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

>>>>>(And how do you suggest we do that? Me, my brother, and a friend of ours are the only adults protecting eight kids. We gotta find food. We gotta keep them safe. We gotta keep them alive. How are we supposed to fight those *things* at the same time? I've seen them, I know they can't be fought.)<<<<<
—Adam S. (27191) (08:09:22/12-04-55)

>>>>>(You can do it, but you have to be strong and fearless. Don't bother with guns. Find hand-to-hand weapons—swords, axes, pipes, pieces of wood with nails sticking out. And gather some friends, more than three if you can. Surround the bug and be brave. But be careful, too—they're fast as lightning. Remember, it's your determination that counts, not the sharpness of your weapon.)<<<<<
—Park Police (23:39:48/12-10-55)

>>>>>(Do you have any idea how many people you just killed?)<<<<<
—Warlock in Chains (23:00:51/12-12-55)

Flesh forms look like twisted human-bug hybrids. The specific appearance of any given flesh form varies from merge to merge and from insect type to insect type, but they all remind me of some nightmare from a particularly twisted horror trid.

>>>>>(Ya know, the ones I've seen all look like those things in the simsense *Against the Hive*—the one with Euphoria—produced about four years ago. Odd coincidence? I wonder.)<<<<<
—Traveller 128 (07:37:31/12-01-55)

Flesh forms move at closer to human speed and lack the intelligence of the true forms (and in the case of some hivers, that's saying a lot). Some can pass as human by wearing heavy layers of clothing and other types of disguises. I've even heard about some bug shamans putting spells on the flesh forms to conceal their appearance.

>>>>>(Yeah, and if they're carrying a disguise spell lock, we're talking about a mass bug-fry.)<<<<<
—Cobol-san (10:12:26/11-29-55)

In all cases, the host body's mind, spirit, soul—whatever you call it—gets swallowed by the consciousness of the insect spirit. The life of the host, as we understand life, is snuffed out.

>>>>>(What, no "as I understand it" this time? Truth be told, some hosts suffer a fate worse than death. Sometimes, fortunately very rarely, the insect spirit subsumes the host's consciousness. What's left is this piece-of-drek bug-man-spirit fragger walking around with the memories of a real person. Scary thought, neh?)<<<<<
—Dweeber (08:55:01/11-27-55)

Jason Miller (order #953-877)

ANT

Like most of the insect spirits, the ant spirits look pretty much like the little bastards we crush underfoot almost by force of habit. If you're not careful, the reverse will be true with these.

Ants are hive bugs—they obey a queen, which they surround with wingless, infertile females commonly called workers and fertile males, often referred to as soldiers, some of which are winged (apparently depending on the hive). Most hives contain only one queen, but I have heard reports of more than one queen cooperating in a colony.

Ant spirits commonly hunt in force. They travel in lines of five to forty ants, depending on the task and the size of the hive. They collect food scraps, plant life, animals, humans—you name it, they bring it back to the hive.

>>>>>(Here's a hint—ant lines usually follow a leader. Cack the leader first, and you might buy yourself a second or two of confusion in the rest of the line that can give you an advantage before they realize just what the frag is going on. They don't need to re-establish a new leader in order to defend themselves or retreat, so don't expect to take it easy and cut them up at your leisure.)<<<<<
—Honor Guard (11:20:41/11-25-55)

Ant hives tend to be pretty obvious—these insect spirits dig into the ground and pile the dirt in a hill on the surface. Ants usually create multiple exits from the hill, and brave souls who tackle these spirits on their home ground must beware being surrounded by spirits emerging from more than one exit.

>>>>>(And don't bother dropping explosives down the hill thinking that will take care of the problem.
Sure, a grenade (commercial or homemade) will scred a man-bug, but it won't do anything against a spirit.
Nothing at all. They'll look at it, take a couple of steps backward when it blows and then take you apart.)<<<<<
—Black Ranger (12:31:02/12-01-55)

>>>>>(You can attract the ant spirits with food, especially sugary food. At least, I've done it.
Matter of fact, most bugs seem drawn to the stuff. ...)<<<<<
—Jack the Killer Giant
(16:04:56/12-07-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584577)

BEETLE

I think I hate these things the most. Beetles like to bury themselves in refuse, debris, or just below the surface of the ground, then when you pass by BLAM, they're all over you. And that's strange behavior, because they're fraggin' spirits. They don't need to hide physically; they can wait in astral space for you to get near, appear, and you're history. Why do they burrow? Frags me.

>>>>>(I've seen 'em do that too. It's like the beetles sometimes forget they're spirits. They spend a lot of time manifested physically, rooting about, foraging for spirits knows-what kind of food. They're also pretty fraggin' fearless. ... Ooops, typed too soon.)<<<<<
—Electric L (03:18:54/01-05-56)

Beetles don't seem very bright and what that really means is that they're too stupid to be afraid of anything. I've seen a male (a stag) take on an armored car by ramming it with its horns. The APC lost, by the way.

>>>>>(I saw that! Up at the corner of the CZ, Ashland and Irving. The fraggin' bug flipped the APC right over, but its horns were caught in the armor plating so it went right over with it. The troopers hit it with a flame thrower (I think) and then it disappeared.)<<<<<
—Betty V. (40292) (22:16:07/11-21-55)

>>>>>(Are the bugs afraid of fire? Someone told me they're afraid of fire. ...)<<<<<
—Azam HR (10239) (20:19:33/12-02-55)

>>>>>(I've seen them shy away from it, certainly. Logic holds, though—the more powerful the bug, the less it fears flames. It's not the light, by the way, it's the heat (as far as I can tell).)<<<<<
—Warlock in Chains (07:29:58/12-07-55)

Beetles fall into the loner classification of insect spirits. You'll rarely find more than one in any single location, but they usually remain close to the home nest. Only attack beetles in groups—I've heard a story of a mother beetle that started chittering when she was attacked and within a couple of seconds the nest was swarming with beetles who'd heard the call.

Beetles prefer to nest in cool, dank, dark places like basements, sewers, and the like. They also seem to be particularly fond of abandoned supermarkets.

>>>>>(I've heard that some of the beetles act like pack rats, collecting stuff for no discernible reason.)<<<<<
—Teddy W. (37615) (09:44:21/11-23-55)

>>>>>(Roaches do that too.)<<<<<
—Vern O. (16282) (10:16:37/12-07-55)

Jason Miller (order #953-877)

CICADA

I don't hate beetles as much as I hate these bastards. ALL THAT FRAGGIN' NOISE! It seems that's all they do, night and day, day and night. Except for the noise, they're pretty much like beetles, so everything I said there goes for these bugs, too.

>>>>>(They make the noise 'cause they're horny. I know the feeling.)<<<<<
—Jojn J. (22725) (01:15:06/12-15-55)

>>>>>(Shut up.)<<<<<
—Minerva V. (39182) (02:24:31/12-30-55)

I've also heard a rumor that sometimes you can find one or two cicadas guarding a hive or nest belonging to some other kind of insect spirit. I don't know why they would engage in that particular behavior, so if anyone can confirm or deny the rumor, please post here.

>>>>>(Can't answer your question, but I can say that hundreds of cicadas nest in the old zoo down in Lincoln Park. I shouldn't need to point out that this tourist attraction should not be tops on the list of places to take the family anymore.)<<<<<
—Paul L. (02716) (08:14:44/01-02-56)

Cicadas seem to prefer to nest in lightly wooded areas such as parks and forest preserves. I've also seen them clustered up in isolated big trees. They seem to be quieting down now that winter's coming.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

FIREFLY

I never thought I'd say this, but the firefly spirits are beautiful. From where I am, I can see a firefly nest, and at night they put on the most spectacular light show you'll ever see. They live in this neighborhood, but no one's ever had a problem with them. They just exist, floating through the night sky flashing to each other and sometimes together. Just stunning.

>>>>>(This guy's up near Belmont Harbor. I know what he's talking about. They've taken over the upper floors of one of the high-rises on the lake and the view sometimes reminds me of what downtown used to be like. The windows all light up, flickering quietly like they're responding to some kind of music only they can hear.)<<<<<
—Skank (20:16:43/11-29-55)

>>>>>(Thanks for the tip. I know the next target for The Bug Hunters.)<<<<<
—Duce Deluxe (19:30:11/11-30-55)

>>>>>(You slob. Doesn't this make you stop and think? All the terror and death the bugs have created, but they are also capable of this beauty. What's going on? How can this be?)<<<<<
—Claudia B. (12671) (18:29:08/12-04-55)

>>>>>(Like it or not, it's nature.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (15:03:33/12-08-55)

>>>>>(The only thing it makes me think about is whether or not I'm going to have to make me more grenades.)<<<<<
—Duce Deluxe (14:16:32/12-10-55)

Jason Miller (order #953-877)

FLY

The fly spirits are the most gross, disgusting creatures in the entire bug realm. You're bound to find flies wherever corpses are found. I hear the old Chicago city morgue hosts a major fly hive, probably because that's where they tried to store the dead bodies in the early days of the infestation, before the CZ. Flies display no intelligence to speak of, and they always move around in groups of at least six. And be extra careful dealing with these insect spirits—I know a couple of people who've gotten sick just from contact with them. Real sick. Dead sick.

>>>>>(The flies and the skeeters are keeping up their traditional role—carriers of the plague. I wonder if that's got the Rat shamans pissed off.)<<<<<
—Warlock in Chains (22:38:55/11-29-55)

>>>>>(Yeah, they are. But not, as you suggest, because another creature has usurped the Rat's chosen mission. How about because they kill people and use their bodies as hosts? Is that a good enough reason to be pissed off?)<<<<
—Candide (21:46:04/12-10-55)

You'll find flies anywhere that anything has fallen to rot or decay, and that includes buildings, especially old wooden buildings. They don't like the modern construction plastics. Go figure.

>>>>>(Dumps, too. You'll find them in dumps.)<<<<<
—Dogster 501 (24:13:35/12-07-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

MANTIS

I can't decide whether to love or hate the mantis spirits. On the one hand, they're probably the most powerful of all the insect spirits. One of these things can outfight a whole squad of street samurai. On the other hand, these solitary insects eat—you guessed it—other bugs.

>>>>>(Unfortunately, they've been known to attack humans, as well. They've got sharp spines on their front legs, and once they grab hold there's no gettin' loose.)<<<<<
—Slayer (24:06:31/12-01-55)

>>>>>(Ya got that right. Once I seen one attack a troll. There were eight of us pulling at those legs, and they didn't budge an inch.
The thing acted like we weren't even there, just went about cracking through this poor slot's skull with its mandibles and chompin' on his brain.
Finally, we couldn't stand his screams anymore and we flamed the fraggin' thing. Even as it burned, its grip never loosened.)<<<<<
—Rat Boy (12:09:33/12-11-55)

>>>>>(The mantis spirits lie beyond the usual run of bugs. They function as intelligent beings. They don't attack humans for food—they feed on bugs. In my experience, they'll only go after you if you're interfering in their plans somehow. Of course, they don't usually take the time to explain how you're interfering or to tell you to stop.)<<<<<
—Mr. George (18:56:23/12-19-55)

I classify mantids as loners. Unlike other solitary bugs, mantids don't group around a nest. Instead, they form little "cabals" consisting of a dominant female and her assistant spirits. This unique social arrangement probably stems from the mantids' method of reproduction. All female mantids can reproduce, but they must consume male mantis spirits to do so.

>>>>>(The things bugs will do for love.)<<<<<
—Juliet (21:10:11/12-20-55)

>>>>>(At least one group of mantids operates within the CZ—I've dealt with one who calls herself Vixen (go figure). She's average height with just-longer-than-shoulder-length strawberry-blond hair and blazing green eyes. She always wears some combination of green and black leather clothes, sometimes with a stylized winged angel painted on the back of her jacket or vest. I have to admit that I have never been more physically attracted to a woman than I have been to her. She knew it too, and I think she deliberately kept me dangling at the edge of control. She was smart, cold, violent, and had a harsh, viperlike sense of humor. I'm afraid that someday I'm going to run into her again. ...)<<<<<
—Tiger Faux (02:15:57/12-30-55)

Jason Miller (order #958-877)

MOSQUITO

Mosquitoes, at least the females, serve as the vampires of the insect world. They've got long, sharp mouth parts that look uncannily like overgrown hypodermic needles—perfectly designed for piercing skin and drawing blood. These insect spirits can drain all the blood from a full-grown troll in about 20 minutes. Of course, you gotta hold still. They prey on any warm-blooded creature they find sleeping or otherwise subdued. And they'll keep on sucking until their prey is dry.

>>>>>(It gets worse. Not only does the female mosquito remove blood from her prey, she may also infect the victim. When the insect "bites," it injects salivary fluid into its victim. This fluid prevents the victim's blood from clotting, and it often contains any number of infectious microorganisms that can produce malaria, yellow fever, dengue, and filariasis.)<<<<<
—Dr. Fisher (09:43:12/11-19-55)

>>>>>(*Filariasis*? Speak English.)<<<<<
—Tyro (10:12:33/11-28-55)

>>>>>(That's "worms" for the linguistically impaired. It means that your blood and body tissues become infested with filariae—parasitic, threadlike worms. You may not even notice a problem for the first few weeks or months, depending on the severity of the infestation. Then you suddenly start losing your appetite, eyesight, mental faculties, and so on.)<<<<<
—Dr. Fisher (09:44:11/11-30-55)

>>>>>(I had to ask.)<<<<<
—Tyro (09:16:55/12-10-55)

Mosquitoes are solitary insects that often group themselves around a nest. They deposit their cocoons in stagnant or still water such as the stuff common to lakes and large pools. They usually move in swarms of three to eight (sometimes more) and often gang up on a single poor slob. They seem to find animal blood just as satisfying as that of humans, and choose dogs more often than not.

The summoning of the insect spirit into the host involves the penetration of the female's stinger into the host body. It seems to be a symbolic act, but one guaranteed to horrify a (meta)human witness.

Perhaps the most frightening aspect of the mosquito spirit is that it weaves only a light cocoon over the unfortunate host. This minimal covering allows the other mosquitoes to occasionally draw some blood or fluid from the body. They also exchange some kind of fluid as they do this, but I'm not sure what purpose these actions serve.

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

ROACH

Like their mundane cousins, roach spirits like to make their hives near people. And they'll live just about anywhere. They seem to prefer cool, damp places, but they can turn up in garbage dumps, sewers, underground garages and subway tunnels, to name a few known haunts.

>>>>>(And they usually turn up where you least expect them. ALWAYS check the basement whenever you move to a new building or before you crash for the night. Roaches are nocturnal insects and shy away from light, so that wiz new three-flat you've just found may contain a nest or two hiding down in the cellar—and trust me, it's much better to discover such things in the light of day, rather than having your sleep interrupted by some large, foul-smelling brown thing feeling you up with its antennae.)<<<<<
—Geena D. (3214587) (08:32:12/11-30-55)

>>>>>(Geena's right. And you can usually tell as soon as you enter a room if any roach nests are nearby—the smell's usually overpowering.)<<<<<
—Vermann (05:56:13/12-01-55)

These fraggers seem almost preternaturally fast in close combat. They possess sensory structures—called cerci—that extend back from their abdomens and sense minute air movements. These cerci enable them to *feel* you sneaking up behind them and allow them to respond almost instantaneously to avoid any blow directed at them from behind.

Roaches feed on just about anything—garbage, drek, rotting corpses, other cockroaches—and because roaches are such versatile little eaters, roach nests can be found throughout the Zone, from Irving Park Road all the way down to the Core. Beware of them around dumps and piles of garbage, in particular.

>>>>>(Roaches seem to engage in a rather bizarre behavior—they'll stare at you when you find them. Yup, just turn toward you like they're daring you to do something. I've seen the tiny (real) ones do this too. You know they're there, they know you know they're there, but it's like they're daring you to do something. And I don't think they're afraid of light as much as they are sudden movement. Sometimes they run from light, but sometimes they don't.
I think (for the tiny (real) ones anyway) what's r
eally happening is that when you enter a room and flick on the light, what they're running from is the changing air pressure of you moving into the area. That's what I think anyway.)<<<<<
—Josea O. (625171) (22:35:06/12-05-55)

>>>>>(I think yer dreamin about them starin at ya. I think they're just stupid and think that by standin' still ya won't see them. Think about it. The guy said they "see" by motion, so why wouldn't they assume everything else "sees" the same way?)<<<<<
—Georgie (22:10:04/12-06-55)

Jason Miller (order #3534877)

WASP

Wasps like to establish their hives in high places, and so you'll find wasp nests in most skyscrapers of the Zone—from the multistory tenements of Daley Gardens in the northeast corner of the CZ to the abandoned corporate towers of the Core. Fortunately, these bugs don't move around much after dark, but they're so fast when they do move that their victims rarely see them coming until it's too late.

>>>>>(Be particularly wary of egg-bearing wasp queens. They seem to exhibit some semblance of true intelligence, which often surprises their victims. Once I saw a queen direct her hive subjects to set a building afire and capture its inhabitants as they fled for their lives.)<<<<<
—Marlon P. (06:32:55/12-19-55)

A wasp queen produces new insect spirits by mimicking the way certain kinds of real wasps lay eggs in a host. First, the queen must find a host creature, which she paralyzes with a toxin she secretes in her abdomen. Then she pierces the host's body and "invests" the new spirit in the host. Incubating wasp hosts are not always cocooned in the traditional manner. Some simply lie comatose near the queen, fed by workers. A few stories I've heard claim the wasps sometimes let the host body wander away to resume its normal life until the incubation time ends. Then ... well, you can probably guess what happens.

>>>>>(I've found wasps to be the nastiest of all insect spirits. They're fearless and terribly aggressive, especially if they believe you might attack or stray too close to their hive. Then they come out in force. Defending the hive is an instinctive imperative. I wish a quick death to anyone who stands in the wasp spirits' way.)<<<<<
—Trevor Corn (21:16:02/01-01-56)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

BUG CITY

>>>>>(The big bug breakout and the erection of the Containment Wall drastically changed life in Chicago. No one is keeping order, no one is providing city services. The most basic necessities of life, such as food and ammunition, are in short supply, and competition for them has become deadly. (Well, maybe life in the city hasn't changed so much after all.) You can't just go to your local fixer when you need some new gear, and you can't just walk down to the local Nuke-It Burger when you need some food. The bugs have spread throughout the Containment Zone, and the places they don't control, other vermin—petty warlords and gangs—exert their rule.

This section describes the most important sites in the Containment Zone. Anyone planning a little excursion into the City of Big Mandibles should pay particular attention to the entries on Ghoultown, the Wrigley Dome, and the Sanctum. These describe the three largest and most important havens in the Zone where runners may be able to find shelter from the bugs. And anyone looking to score some nuyen or beef up their share of the barter system may want to look at the entries on corporate sites in the Core. Some heavy-hitting corps called that area home before the Wall went up, and many of them left valuable goodies behind in their rush to get out. Naturally, you'll run into some like-minded company around these parts.

Oh, and one more thing—beware your fellow man, cuz life in the Zone can turn even the most peace-lovin' fragger into one bad mofo. Think about it—his government and/or his corp abandoned him, he's scavenging for food and ammo, and he's gotta worry constantly about becoming lunch for some overgrown Jiminy Cricket. You can't blame him for being a little suspicious and trigger-happy.)<<<<<

—Chicago Seven (21:05:32/11-20-55)

>>>>>(Safe haven from the bugs? Who are they kidding? Nowhere is safe—I mean *nowhere*.)<<<<<

—Endochrine (21:07:18/11-20-55)

>>>>>(If nowhere is safe from the bugs, how come they haven't spread to the rest of the world?)<<<<<

—NeverReady (21:07:53/11-20-55)

>>>>>(How do you know we are the only containment area? Have you logged onto Newsnet lately? God knows I haven't. For all we know the flesh forms have taken over UCAS and the Containment Zone is just one big holding pen, designed to keep us in one place until they get hungry.)<<<<<

—Endochrine (08:21:39/11-21-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

>>>>>(Thanks for the nightmares.)<<<<<
—Beards (15:32:09/11-21-55)

>>>>>(Has anyone been to Volksville? I hear they have a good deal there if you have the barter to get in.)<<<<<
—NeverReady (11:01:34/12-01-55)

>>>>>(No, but I have been up to Ghoultown, and that is one nasty place. I guess it's better than ending up as dinner for some overgrown cucaracha.)<<<<<
—Bolo Boy (11:02:09/12-01-55)

>>>>>(Do you really think so?)<<<<<
—Sleeps With Lights On (13:26:14/12-02-55)

>>>>>(I'm sure you all have noticed these posts already, but watch out for a number of media excerpts in this section that I would call dubious, to say the least. In all cases, they're media transcripts, memos, and similar bytes that apparently originated *outside* the Containment Zone *after* the CZ was put in place. How did they get in here? Does someone have a conduit to information outside the city that we don't know about? Maybe, but these might also be clever lures designed to attract people to a specific place. Who would do that? Bugs, maybe. Maybe a few of the warlords. I can't say—but be careful.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (23:28:47/12-06-55)

THE CORE

CHICAGO>SITES>THE CORE
EXCERPT "FODORR'S '28 CHICAGO"
FODORR'S TRAVEL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2028

Chicago's business and financial center, known as the Core, includes the fifteen-square-block area created by the Skytrack and the ten blocks immediately outside the square. The area's glass and steel skyscrapers, designed by some of the world's most respected architectural firms, serve as headquarters for such corporate powerhouses as Truman Technologies, Ares Macrotechnology, IBM, Federated Boeing, UCAS Steel & Manufacturing, and Fuchi America. The Chicago Board of Trade is also located in the Core, and more than ...

CORPS PROTEST QUARANTINE
AUGUST 23, 2055
AP>NEWSNET>PYLE

CHICAGO — Spokesmen for Ares Macrotechnology, Federated Boeing, Fuchi America, and Truman Technologies criticized the UCAS government's quarantine of the Chicago area during a joint news conference Friday.

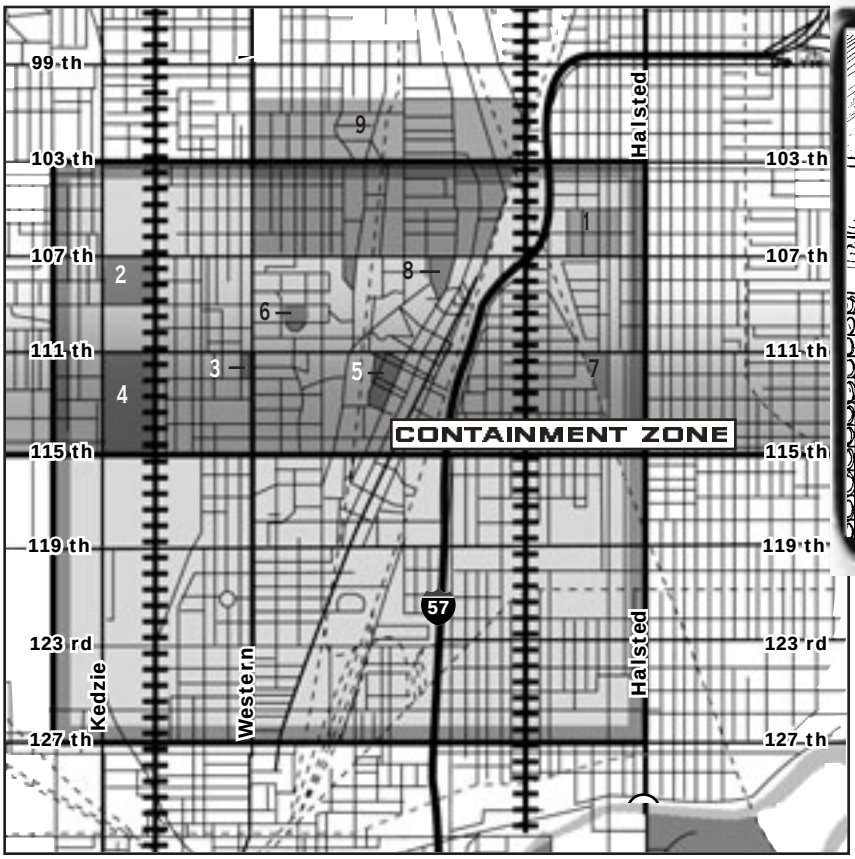
All of the firms represented at the conference maintained headquarters in the section of the Core now inside the quarantine zone.

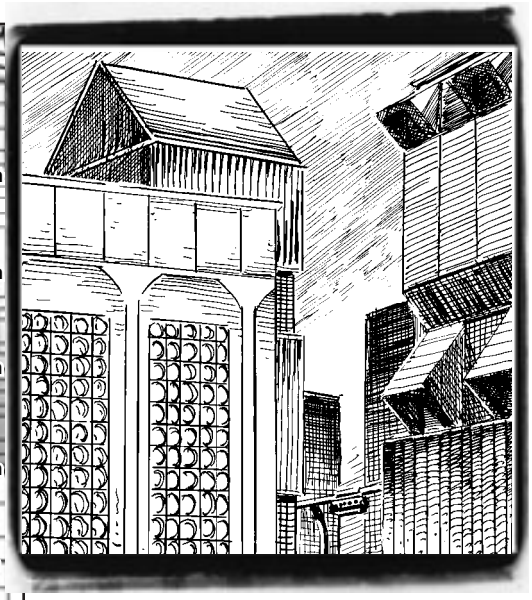
"As a result of the government's overreaction to this tragic situation, my firm—Truman Technologies—and those of my colleagues have been unfairly penalized," said Elaine Taylor, a spokeswoman for Truman Technologies. "The government's action has prohibited Truman executives from accessing corporate properties and so has penalized both Truman Technologies as well as the public at large ... "

Jason Miller (order #9788877)

PIXFILE

CHICAGO•MAPS•THE CORE





1- TRUMAN TOWER
2- ARES
3- AZTECHNOLOGY
4- FED-BOEING
5- FUCHI
6- MITSU
7- YAMATETSU
8- NOT INDICATED
9- WIND TRANSIT TERMINAL

>>>>>(Ms. Taylor's concern for the public is so touching it just makes me wanna drek. The truth is these suits are up in arms because they're afraid some enterprising young runners will snatch up all those goodies they've tucked away.
Undoubtedly, Ares left prototypes of its latest weapons designs lying around its corporate headquarters, not to mention its latest military and security offerings and biotech products ...)<<<<<
—Dumpster Diver (20:31:57/11-28-55)

>>>>>(And good ol' Fuchi probably left some wiz new cyberdeck prototypes, novahot hardware, and experimental IC programs.)<<<<<
—Skavenger (20:33:34/11-28-55)

>>>>>(U got it, Skav.)<<<<<
—Dumpster Diver (20:34:17/11-28-55)

>>>>>(You drekbrains—you really think the corp boys would leave their little toys lying around to be picked up by just anyone who happened by?)<<<<<
—Miss Turee (03:21:39/12-01-55)

>>>>>(Not under normal circumstances, Miss T. But remember, no one outside of the highest government circles saw this thing coming. And I'd wager that even most of them were out of the loop on this one. Hell, most of the fraggin' field commanders had no idea what was coming down. The corps were caught with their pants down like everyone else.)<<<<<
—Dumpster Diver (03:25:45/12-01-55)

>>>>>(Okay, I'll grant you that. But what about all the corporate muscle hired to protect all those goodies?)<<<<<
—Miss Turee (03:32:12/12-01-55)

Jason Miller (order #55848

>>>>>(How long do you think those slots are gonna stay loyal to their masters now that they've stopped getting their paychecks? Frag, I wouldn't be surprised if some of them have started lootin' goodies already.)<<<<<
—Dumpster Diver (18:41:32/12-08-55)

>>>>>(Okay, I'm sold. But you haven't mentioned that jewel of the Core, the Truman Tower.)<<<<<
—Miss Turee (22:13:07/12-15-55)

>>>>>(Ahhh, I'm so glad you asked ...)<<<<<
—Dumpster Diver (22:18:52/12-15-55)

TRUMAN TOWER

CHICAGO>SITES>THE CORE
EXCERPT "FODORR'S '28 CHICAGO"
FODORR'S TRAVEL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2028

31Head east along 107th Street to Aberdeen and you'll find the opulent Truman Tower (1000 W. 107th St.). A Tinker, Evans, & Chance design of 2052, the Truman Tower reaches up 352 stories and nearly 4,700 feet.

Walk through the elegant three-story glass entrance and you'll discover an eleven-story atrium that contains a fountain and spacious reflecting pool. Watch the pool's schools of carp for a moment and you'll see them change colors! The fish were custom designed by the Roche-Baxter gentech division and each cost several thousand nuyen ...

FROM: John Running Bull
TO: Daniel Truman
RE: Recovery of Truman Technologies assets located in the Truman Tower

The UCAS isolation of Chicago prohibits us from immediately recovering Truman assets in the Tower, but I have recently made contact with Truman personnel who were trapped inside when the quarantine went into effect. I have authorized these personnel to make every attempt to protect and recover Truman property whenever possible and contract outside help if necessary. I recognize the overriding need to protect Truman proprietary technology and would normally direct that only Truman personnel be involved in such duties; however, circumstances within the quarantine may necessitate the use of outside personnel.

CHICAGO>TRUMAN>BIOGRAPHY
EXCERPT "A HISTORY OF CHICAGO"
BOOKWORKS PRESS, 2051

The discovery of ASIST technology by Dr. Hosato Hikita of ESP Systems, Inc., remains a milestone in the formation of modern-day Chicago. Shortly after news of Hosato's discovery spread, Truman Technologies, under the direction of noted Chicago financier Daniel Truman, acquired ESP. Bolstered by the resources of Truman Technologies, ESP researchers began rigorous development of the new technology, and soon Chicago became the undisputed capital of ASIST and simsense research.

Within seven years, Truman Technologies had realized substantial profits from the exciting new technology, and Daniel Truman almost single-handedly revitalized the city's South side by his generous investment in the area ...

Jason Miller (order #9388877)

CHICAGO>TRUMAN>ESP/ASIST
EXCERPT "TRUMAN AND CHICAGO: THE INSIDE STORY"
NEW WORLD BOOKS, 2054

The details of Truman's acquisition of ESP remain quite murky to this day. ESP's owners were definitely resistant to Truman's overtures, and they reportedly only agreed to sell to Truman after both received threats to their lives. Neither would agree to an interview for this book.

The official accounts of Truman's rise also tend to gloss over his failed attempt to sue Fuchi Technologies for allegedly stealing ESP's ASIST technology. The suit created bad blood between TT and Fuchi that continues today. They continually try to lure researchers away from each other's employ and undoubtedly engage in clandestine operations against one another ...

>>>>>(As soon as the big Bug Bomb went off and the Containment Zone was set up, Fuchi agents were drawing up plans to loot Truman facilities in the city. And you can bet that Danny Boy Truman knew what they were up to. Agents for both corps were chompin' at the proverbial bit to do each other drek, and they took the creation of the Zone as a signal to take off the gloves and really go at it.)<<<<<
—Bystander (21:17:42/12-05-55)

>>>>>(No drek. Lots of Fuchi and Truman muscle got caught behind the lines, and it's really whacked some of their little minds. Even without the intercorporate bad blood, these slots would probably still be going at it. It's become something of a blood feud now, a nasty little war of attrition. The streets are still buzzin' about a little incident that occurred about three weeks after the Wall went up. Seems a group of Truman hitters learned that some gangers in the employ of Fuchi were meeting in an abandoned underground garage on Clark Street. The Truman hitters dressed themselves up as Eagle Security officers and proceeded to line the gangers up against a wall. Then they opened up with their automatic weapons and just mowed 'em down. The lucky ones got geeked right there. The Truman slots didn't even have the humanity to finish off the wounded—they just left 'em for the fraggin' ants.)<<<<<
—Gusenberg (04:37:21/12-19-55)

VIOLENCE CONTINUES IN ZONE
SEPT. 3, 2055
AP>NEWSNET>ROBBINS

CHICAGO — Random violence continued to plague the Chicago Containment Zone nearly a week after government officials cordoned off the area.

In one reported incident, a total of 34 reputed gang members were slain inside an abandoned parking garage in the Northside portion of the zone, according to sources inside the zone. UCAS sources have declined to comment on the report ...

>>>>>(Frag me runnin', even the Volk don't kill like that. If you value your butt at all, you'll pass on any employment opportunities offered up by Truman or Fuchi in this city and you won't go snooping around the old Truman Tower unannounced. The nuyen may be tempting, but the costs are just too fraggin' high.)<<<<<
—Not-Saying-I-Was-There (23:08:47/11-29-55)

>>>>>(Where's your sense of adventure? Seems to me all you have to do is get yourself hired by Fuchi or Truman to wreak some havoc on the other. Then once you're inside, you just help yourself to some extra perks.)<<<<<
—Buzz Grrrl (23:14:30/11-29-55)

Jason Miller (order #55848777)

MORE FROM THE CORE

>>>>>(Soundz alright to me. What else is out there?)<<<<<
—Anything Once (14:29:56/12-01-55)

>>>>>(That's the spirit. Besides, the wasps usually keep the corps' muscle occupied anyway. Just about all the skyscrapers in the Zone-side Core have wasp nests in their upper stories. And when those little baby wasps get hungry. ... Anyway, to answer your question, Ares Macrotechnologies, Aztechnology, Fuchi America, Mitsuhama Computer Technologies, Saeder-Krupp, and Yamatetsu all maintained offices in the Core—and don't forget the old Federated-Boeing air service base.)<<<<<
—Dumpster Diver (07:16:43/12-02-55)

Ares Macrotechnology
LOCATION: 107th Street and California Avenue

UCAS>CHICAGO>SECTION 5
ATTN: Commander Romero
SUBJECT: Corporate assets in the Core
Agent Nadalya Smith

Intelligence provided by informants indicates that sensitive corporate properties may have been abandoned in the portion of the Core now contained in the quarantine area.

Based on interviews with various individuals who either worked for Ares or entered the corporate facilities as the quarantine was established, I believe the Ares Macrotechnology center may still contain several advanced prototypes and design chips for the second-generation Alpha Combatgun high-velocity assault rifle and Firelance vehicle-laser systems. I trust you already realize the inestimable value of these items to the UCAS.

Undoubtedly, Ares—as well as others—is making plans to recover these assets. In the interest of national security, I advise that tac squads be sent in to recover these items if possible. Failing that, I recommend the items be destroyed to prevent their recovery by hostile forces.

>>>>>(I guess the secret's out now—the old Ares Arms building is your place for one-stop arms shopping! Experimental armor-piercing munitions, weapons prototypes, state-of-the-art surveillance gear—this place has got it all.)<<<<<
—Smart Shopper (19:23:51/12-02-55)

>>>>>(Yeah, right. And what do you think the Ares boys are using to defend the place??)<<<<<
—Signal King (09:09:10/12-04-55)

>>>>>(Come on you slags, use the brain. Ares combat people are running the Wrigley Dome Haven. Ask yourself again where you think those weapons are ...)<<<<<
—Tiger Faux (02:22:38/12-07-55)

Aztechnology
LOCATION: 111th Street and Western Avenue

>>>>>(The good ol' Aztechies left behind all kindsa wizzer sim gear when they hightailed it outta the Containment Zone. Chips, rigs, all kindsa drek.)<<<<<
—Dumpster Diver (21:30:45/11-29-55)

>>>>>(Allllll right. Let's have a party.)<<<<<
—Dr. Leary (04:12:54/11-30-55)

>>>>>(Huh? I didn't know the Azzies were into that kinda stuff ...)<<<<<
—Dr. Hill (24:03:44/12-02-55)

Jason Miller (order #938877)

>>>>>(Any of you would-be party goers had better watch your step. The Chicago branch of Aztechnology was in bed with the local yaks and Mafia, both of which are very determined that no one else is going to get the sim rigs they see as rightfully theirs.)<<<<<
—Zeeblik (13:35:29/12-03-55)

>>>>>(I've heard that the Azzies also had a big warehouse of illegal simchips in the city ...)<<<<<
—Corleone (11:56:02/12-05-55)

>>>>>(The Azzies and everyone. Chicago was (and still is) a center of legal simsense production, and so it's logical people would produce the illegal stuff here, too. Of course, I doubt the Azzies'd keep of cache of illegal chips in their corp offices. Buzz on the street says at least three major BTL warehouses are in the CZ. Nobody's found 'em yet, but it's not the kind of discovery you'd announce.)<<<<<
—The Untouchable (05:32:32/12-06-55)

>>>>>(Geeez, the way you boys talk you'd think that every fraggin warehouse in the CZ was full of simchips. Let's get real, shall we?)<<<<<
—Koola (21:44:08/12-07-55)

>>>>>(What I'd be more worried about is what magic stuff, now unmonitored, the Azzies may have left behind.)<<<<<
—FireNet (11:52:49/12-09-55)

>>>>>(There's definitely crap going on at the Azzie building—one astral look and its obvious. The building is warded, pretty powerfully, which means someone or something is probably still inside keeping the place safe.)<<<<<
—Tubor Joy (23:09:38/12-13-55)

>>>>>(Blood spirit?)<<<<<
—Twilight Torn (17:27:51/12-15-55)

Federated Boeing Air Service Headquarters
LOCATION: 111th Street and California Avenue

>>>>>(If u wanna get yourself some wings I'd suggest you hurry. Everyone thought FB just kept its lame commuter vehicles in its facility, but the street's still buzzing about that slot who found an experimental Eagle military VTOL last week. Anyway, this fragger—went by the name Papillon—strapped himself in, jump-started the thing, and headed for the wild blue yonder. Thanks to the firepower in that Eagle, he had no problem with the Wasps and the UCAS choppers that swarmed after him. Rumor has it that a couple more Eagles and a few Commander military rotorcraft are still lying around the air-service base, but no one's got away with any yet.)<<<<<
—Jaeger (29:43:17/12-01-55)

>>>>>(I'd take this one with a grain of salt. You'll notice that the FB facility abuts the Wall along 115th Street. I don't think anything is going into or coming out of that place without eating a bunch of SAMs or AVMs.)<<<<<
—Lord Donut (07:23:58/12-06-55)

>>>>>(Can anyone confirm or deny rumors I've heard about the FB building being haunted?? It's built on the old Mount Olivet Cemetery, and I heard they didn't exhume the bodies before they built ...)<<<<<
—Viscount Horseman (21:46:55/12-11-55

>>>>>(Get a clue, Horsey. Of course they exhumed the bodies—how else could they put in the multiple-level subbasement?? Same for the Ares building and whatever lies between the two; both stand on the Mount Greenwood Cemetery.)<<<<<
—Surveyor (12:03:39/12-16-55)

>>>>>(Restless spirits are restless spirits, *mon ami*. They could be trapped there, unable to find their bodies ...)<<<<<
—Lacombe (00:34:16/12-29-55)

Fuchi Americas
LOCATION: Homewood and Monteray (just south of 111th Street)

>>>>>(All you deckers out there will be interested in this place. Fuchi left behind some prototype decks that make the Fairlights look like fraggin' toys. The big bad beetles nesting in the basement of the Fuchi building are the only reason any of those decks are still in the place.)<<<<<
—Lou C. (458795) (08:40:21/11-20-55)

Jason Miller (order #5584877

>>>>>(And don't forget that renowned Fuchi IC. Get your hands on some of that and you'll never have to worry about anyone ever messing with your files again.)<<<<<
—Geekster (21:46:19/11-22-55)

>>>>>(You slots are forgetting the best loot of all—the simsense technology.)<<<<<
—Dr. Leary (23:09:48/11-26-55)

>>>>>(You jokers are all fraggin' nuts. You really think there's anything left, especially in light of what's been said about Truman and its feud? If the scavengers haven't stripped the place bare, the TT boys have.)<<<<<
—Twisted Fiddle (20:41:25/11-27-55)

>>>>>(I tend to agree with Fiddle about the hardware, but I wonder just how much software was also left behind—simsense compression algorithms and the like. In the right hands, a single chip-load could be worth hundreds of thousands of UCAS $$. Of course, once you get it you gotta hang on to it long enough to get it out ...)<<<<<
—Pumpkin Head (16:43:22/11-29-55)

Mitsuhama Computer Technologies
LOCATION: 109th Street between Oakley and Bell

>>>>>(This place is like a toy store for big kids. I know people who've picked up autonomously guided vehicles, computer-controlled weapons, and remote drones.)<<<<<
—Oro Uro (12:34:46/12-07-55)

>>>>>(And I know people who tried to get in there and got themselves geeked by some of the very same machines.)<<<<<
—Suzette (12:42:16/12-07-55)

>>>>>(Here's a savvy picture for all you Great Train Robber wannabes ... the power's still running to most of the city, including the Core (how long it'll stay that way is another question). That means that most of these buildings still have power, which means that the automated security systems of these buildings are still doing their jobs. Think about it. If you were building an automated expert security system, wouldn't you build in some kind of lock-down procedure for the site? Sort of, "Hey, Security System, all us authorized types are leaving now, so kill everyone that comes inside who doesn't give you the encrypted password." Something to think about, *neh?*)<<<<<
—Tinker (16:34:25/12-07-55)

>>>>>(Not to rain on anybody's parade ... aw frag it, here comes the deluge—it's my understanding that the Mitsu building in Chi-Town was an administrative office only. There might be wiz payroll and supply routing files, but hardware? I think not.)<<<<<
—Audrey V. (147859) (22:19:40/12-07-55)

Yamatetsu Corporation
LOCATION: 111th Street and Morgan

>>>>>(All you chromed boys and girls will like this place. Everyone knows about Yamu's drek-hot biotech work—smartgun interface technology, modified wired reflexes, that kinda drek. They tested a lot of that drek here, and they left in such a hurry that they forgot quite a bit of it.)<<<<<
—X-Terminator (23:45:10/11-19-55)

>>>>>(Thanks for letting out the secret, musclehead.)<<<<<
—Rat Boy (02:51:33/11-28--55)

>>>>>(Beware the Yama building! At least two nests have taken up residence there, roach and beetle spirits (and the beetles are the big nasty stags, as far as I can tell).)<<<<<
—Johnny Darke (23:14:56/11-29-55)

>>>>>(Ya also gotta watch out for target-specific fire from the Wall. You'll note that the Yamu building stands within burst-fire range of the Wall, and the guards have orders to lay harassing fire into any bug (or anything else) they see crawling on or near the Yamu building. The rounds don't really hurt the bugs, but it does piss them off.)<<<<<
—Tiger Faux (01:29:42/11-30-55)

Jason Miller (order #578877)

>>>>>(Word on the street also says big-nuyen collectors are putting down top dollar to hire runners to recover some of the art treasures left behind in the Core. Remember, when the Loop went under and the Art Institute was looted, a lot of Picassos, Van Goghs, and other pretty pictures ended up in the board rooms of the Core. Now quite a few are in the Zone.)<<<<<
—Jasper (14:28:07/12-01-55)

>>>>>(Don't forget the corp ammo dumps. When the Wall went up and the wasps started making their homes in those skyscrapers, lotsa corporate muscle just stood up and got the hell outta there. They grabbed what they could, but they left a drekload of goodies behind. Most of the corp properties no longer mount permanent security details, but you're likely to run into corp tac teams and other runners if you go treasure huntin'.)<<<<<
—Zapatista (23:36:19/12-09-55)

>>>>>(No one's mentioned the most important commodity of all—DATA! The Chicago Matrix nodes crashed when the Wall went up, and I doubt the corps had the time to crash the files or to get everything out. What gives?)<<<<<
—Dreyfus (04:35:12/12-12-55)

>>>>>(There's a reason no one mentioned it, you stupid hoophole.)<<<<<
—Flynt (09:46:33/12-15-55)

COUNTY HOSPITAL

CHICAGO>MEDICAL FACILITIES>COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL
EXCERPT HOSPITAL DIRECTORY
COOK COUNTY PRINTING OFFICE

Cook County Hospital is a state-of-the-art, 5,000-bed facility that provides county residents with high-quality medical care. The facility is staffed by more than 1,000 highly trained doctors, nurses, technicians, and specialists, all dedicated to serving the people of Chicago.

Today's Cook County Hospital was built in 2005 on the site of the original county hospital at 1835 West Harrison Street to meet the needs of the rapidly changing ...

Jason Miller (order #55848

>>>>>(Almost all of the staff is gone now and looters have ransacked the place for drugs, equipment and other supplies. But at least one medico, a woman by the name of Dr. Nemur, still works out of the place. Nemur did time as a combat surgeon before coming to County Hospital and then got caught in the Zone when the Wall went up. She does pretty good work considering the equipment and supplies she has to use, and she adjusts her fees depending on the patient's ability to pay. But she's no charity worker—customers who can offer the most money or barter get treated first.)<<<<<
—Ripsaw (13:29:36/12-05-55)

>>>>>(She's not that bad, baka-boy. She's got a heart, but she only lets it out on occasion. The position she's in, she can't be too charitable or she'd be flooded with opportunists, and those who really need help would be left to suffer and die. She gets "unofficial" support from both the UCAS military outside (I know for sure that she gets supplies dropped to the VTOL pad on the roof) and from local warlords—which keeps them and theirs high on her "priority" list, should the need arise.)<<<<<
—Hawkmann (24:21:44/12-06-55)

>>>>>(I've also heard that she'll work in exchange for favors, with either short– or long-term repayment. She's also issued vouchers for later work—do something for her now, like find her 50 ampoules of metacyllin, and she'll prioritize you later.)<<<<<
—Vince. D (214783) (20:31:29/12-07-55)

>>>>>(Dr. Bob runs his body shop outta County Hospital, too. He's very expensive, but if you need work on some damaged cyberware that just can't wait, Dr. Bob's your man. Or bring your own cyberware and Bob'll install it for you. Every now and then he comes across used cyberware that he offers to customers, but he doesn't guarantee such equipment.)<<<<<
—BeBop (22:43:02/12-07-55)

>>>>>(Hey, didn't I read somewhere else that a swarm of flies or beetles or something was living in the Cook County morgue? Ain't that here?!?!)<<<<<
—JOCKO SWEAT (24:13:59/12-07-55)

DALEY GARDENS

CORE/NEWS/ARCHIVES
New LAKEFRONT DEVELOPMENT ANNOUNCED
March 23, 2025

Parts of the former Lincoln Park will soon be home to a 45-million-nuyen, 100-story luxury lakefront condominium complex under a plan announced Tuesday by Mayor Richard M. Daley.

The project marks a new era of cooperation between the city and private developers and is designed to revitalize Chicago's downtown by attracting young corporate professionals back to the area, mayoral spokeswoman Lotte Krapp said Tuesday. The estimated completion date for the project is May, 2027.

The city donated the land for the planned Daley Gardens Complex and provided numerous tax exemptions and other financial incentives to persuade investors ...

>>>>>(Unfortunately, the young suits never bit. The buildings looked pretty enough from the outside, but anyone with half a brain only needed to set foot in one of the buildings to see they were just a buncha drekholes dressed up with shiny glass. And so the mayor got his pals in the UCAS government to lease the complex as low-income housing, which enabled its developers to realize a handsome profit after all. Convenient, eh?)<<<<<
—Roy Ko (04:18:32/12-07-55)

Jason Miller (order #938877)

CORE/CITY/LOCALS
RE: Daley Gardens infestation
Excerpted from an interview with Subject 32 NS-R (a.k.a. "Squeaky")

The Daley Gardens? That was one of the most fragged-up runs I ever been on. It was all the elf's idea—get in, take a little look around and see if the buzz about the ammo cache was true, then get out. What could go wrong? So what if the fraggin' places were filled with wasps and flies. The fraggin' things liked the top floors, and we'd be down on the ground floors and the underground garages anyway, right? And we'd be there at night, when the buzzin' things would all be chillin' out nice 'n' cozy. That's what the drek-for-brain elf said, anyway.

We'd only been in the first building for about ten minutes when our mage detected another group o' poor slots wanderin' around—probably had the same idea we did. They didn't see us, so we spread out and started circlin' around 'em nice and slow like. We were just about to make our move when one of 'em starts screaming like an old lady and lettin' loose with his automatic. I though I was good as geeked. Slugs were bouncin' offa the ferrocrete walls and all over the fraggin' place, so I just kept my heinie down. Then Hoghead popped a flare out toward the commotion to get a better look and I nearly drekked in my synthleathers. The poor fragger was on the ground, squirmin' around like a chipped-out party girl as a ten-foot-long centi-fraggin'-pede lay on top of him. The thing's two front legs kept chompin' on the mess of fleshy red pulp where the slot's head had been a few seconds before. Hoghead hit it dead center with an anti-armor round, and the fraggin' thing broke in half. Both parts went scurryin' off in opposite directions. I don't know what happened after that, cuz I got the frag outta there.

>>>>>(From korporate kondos to nest of vermin—I guess the neighborhood hasn't really changed that much after all.)<<<<<
—Rat Boy (13:04:27/12-10-55)

THE DODGER

CORE/CITY/CLUBS
EXCERPT FODORR'S '29 CHICAGO
FODORR'S TRAVEL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2029

The Dodger (1734 W. Wabansia St., tel. 312/555-0203). The Dodger presents a wide range of artists, from national acts to the cream of the local crop, and a wide range of rock styles. People come to see specific acts, so the crowd will vary according to the attraction. The Dodger also features dancing seven nights a week.

>>>>>(U won't find any live bands here no more, but u can still shake yer booty, as they used to say. And now there's plenty of parking.)<<<<<
—Markos (02:41:55/12-01-55)

>>>>>(And there's no cover charge, either! Of course, you'll have to bring your own goodies—the Dodger's bar was looted a long time ago. But there's plenty of drek-hot old music, courtesy of Nicky—the rail-thin, ancient-looking elf who runs the place. The crazy slot spins vinyl on an antique turntable, on and on and on. He never seems to get tired of it. And he never seems to repeat songs. Buzz on the street is that Nicky had a chance to get outta the Zone before the Wall went up, but he couldn't bear to part with his records—he's got thousands. Said that life without music just wasn't worth living. Now he carries on about how people gotta dance no matter how bad they feel. Says it's the only way outta this mess. After a coupla hours of dancing you start thinking he may be right.)<<<<<
—Scenester (05:32:18/12-13-55)

>>>>>(I'd be careful about who I hung with if I were you. After Kaleidoscope went up in flames last month, the crowds have been more interesting—and weirder.)<<<<<
—Harvester (04:23:51/12-17-55)

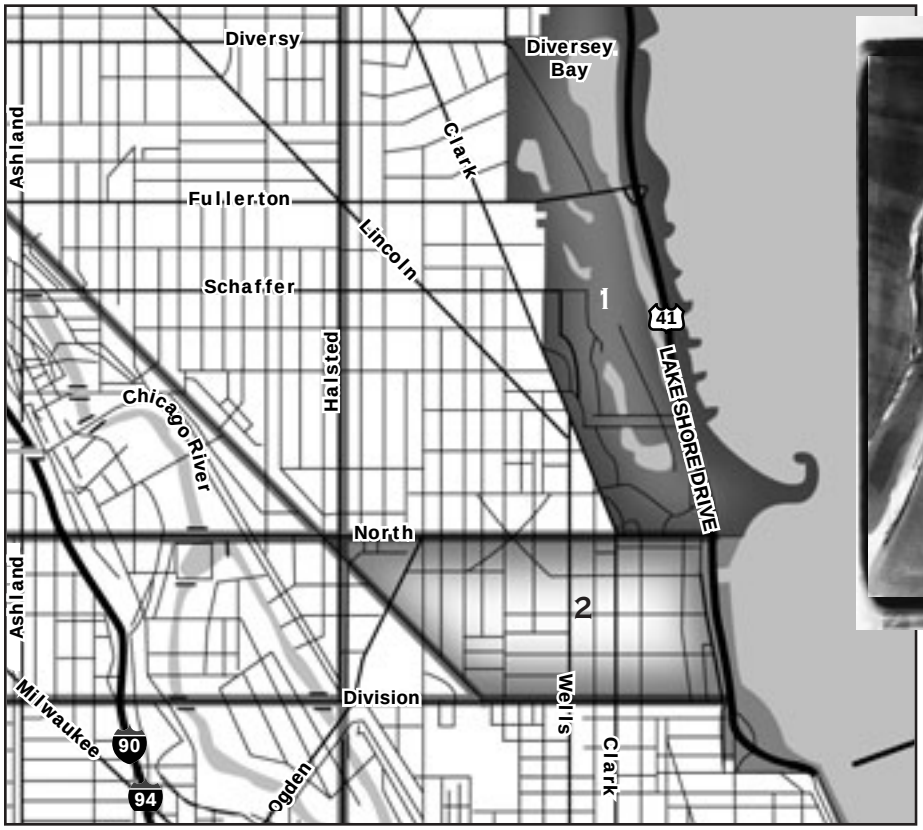
Jason Miller (order #55848

>>>>>[GHOULTOWN [HAVEN]

:::::prepared by HAPPYJACK

PIXFILE

CHICAGO>MAPS>GHOULTOWN



1- DALEY GARDENS
2- GHOULTOWN

The haven now known as Ghoultown was originally a low-income housing development named Cabrini Green. Over the years, Cabrini became a notoriously dangerous place to live. Violence and crime became so commonplace that periodic searches turned up guns and drugs in massive amounts but did nothing to curtail the various illegal activities conducted there.

In 2039 the Mather Group bought the development from the city and attempted to evict the Cabrini tenants, triggering a riot that resulted in 32 deaths and caused millions of nuyen in damages. In the end, Mather was forced to abandon its urban-renewal plans and assume the role of de facto landlord. Mather managed to profit from this unforeseen circumstance by hiring various local gangs to provide "security"for the development. In reality, the gangs simply continued to conduct their illegal activities at the site while sending a percentage of their profits to Mather in exchange for the development group's non-interference.

When in 2053 the Justice Network broke the "Mather Syndicate"story as a pay-per-view trideo event, public opinion shamed the city into reassuming control of Cabrini. However, the city refused to recognize the tenants' contracts and proceeded to declare the buildings abandoned, thereby freeing itself from any legal obligation to provide services to Cabrini residents.

At the same time, the plight of the ghoul in urban America was quickly becoming a hot issue in certain liberal circles. The New Guard of Chicago politicians were scrambling for causes to champion, and several took up the banner of ghoul's rights, a fashionable choice thanks to the efforts of the Metahuman Rights Coalition. When public opinion polls recorded the approval rating of Mayor Ronald Quince at an all-time low, Quince himself jumped on the metahuman-rights bandwagon. With the mayor on board, the Metahuman Rights Coalition began a renewed lobbying effort and soon convinced the city and the state to pass Special Order 162, also known as the Cabrini Refuge Act. The special order established Cabrini as a refuge where ghouls who requested asylum could live in a controlled and protected environment similar to the Native American reservations.

Naturally, the idea of a ghoul refuge in the middle of the city was unpopular and Cabrini became known to the residents as "Ghoultown."A series of attacks led ...

Jason Miller (order #9388877)

GHOULTOWN GREENLIGHT
15 NOV 2053
CHI TRIB>NEWSNET>JACE BRENNAN

After months of posturing, the Cabrini Refuge Act was finally passed after a narrow vote Tuesday. The passage of Special Order 162 marks the first time since the Awakening that the UCAS government has formally recognized the rights of a new metahuman race and accorded such a race legal protection.

The first refuge will be located in Chicago, on the site of the former Cabrini Green Public Housing Development, a UCAS spokesman said. A federal judge has ordered the city to secure the area within 60 days or face undisclosed fines, the spokesman said. City officials plan to move the estimated 600 squatters now living in Cabrini to temporary housing units in the Robert Taylor Megaplex.

The passage of the refuge act represents a major victory for the fledgling Metahuman Rights Coalition. At first glance, the passage also seems a victory for Mayor Ronald Quince, who surprised many observers by announcing his support for the measure in May. Political analysts speculate that Quince backed the plan in an attempt to bolster his sagging approval rating among voters. Quince seems to have misjudged public opinion, however, as our exclusive RediResponse poll shows a staggering 64 percent of his constituents opposed to the Refuge Act.

NEWS AND VIEWS
16 NOV 2053
CHI TRIB>NEWSNET>STAFF

"How do you feel about the Cabrini Refuge?"

Daniel "Brick"Garrety, 32, human
Night Watchman, R.A. Malcom and Sons ReSalvage
"You mean that Ghoultown drek? They actually went through with it? I can hardly believe it. We already gotta live with the orks and the trolls, now we gotta live with the fraggin' GHOULS? Un-fraggin-believable. What is this city coming to? Quince's gotta be on simchips or somethin'."

Mari Anders, 24, elf
Teaches "metahuman awareness"at the Discovery Depot
"Nice to know there are still a few people in our government with compassion for our less fortunate brothers and sisters. Without tolerance we have anarchy. Have you forgotten the Night of Rage? I for one am grateful to our mayor for having the guts to stand up to the system."

"Wicked,"41, ghoul
Unemployed, has not sought asylum
"What amazes me is that so many people seem to think they are doing us a favor. We get to live where you decide and may only feed when and how you say. Not a great deal, to my mind. If being an outcast is the price of freedom, I think I'm ready to pay."

Allin Klarc, 36, human
Shift supervisor, Thriftrite Athletic Shoe Outlet Superstore
"They eat human flesh. Eating human flesh is wrong. Giving them permission to eat human flesh is wrong. I am not the only one who feels this way. There will be a reckoning and those who dance with the devil will get what's coming to them. Mark my words."

Grace, 9, human
Enrolled in the William Morris presecretarial program
"I never met a ghoul but I know they do bad things and I am afraid because they are moving in over by Lina's house but Mom says they will be locked up tight and if they try to do bad things to us the police are going to take them away so I guess it's OK."

Jason Miller (order #55848

::::MATRIX BACKFILE: DATA/POST LOG (CABRINI/GHOULS DISCUSSION)
::::Excerpts 2092871–2092951

>>>>>(They say it's pretty bad in there. I haven't been inside myself, but I hear it's like living in a sewer and feeding time is like a zoo. Poor bastards—why didn't we just kill them and get it over with?)<<<<<
—Garbo (12:45:31/11-22-53)

>>>>>(I hear dat's da plan. Get 'em all in one place and set up a happy accident dat blows 'em all to hell. Whizbang idea if ya aks me. Shoulda done da same to da trolls. We'd all be better off.)<<<<<
—Mistah Happy (03:44:21/11-24-53)

>>>>>(Just erased 4 MP of death threats against the Happinator. Might be a good idea to keep the rhetoric down to a dull roar. Play nice or I will have to shut you down.)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (23:54:11/11-27-53)

>>>>>(Genocide was the plan from the beginning. I am in a position to know. The entire project is a sham intended to eliminate an awkward problem before it becomes a major national issue. As soon as I gather sufficient evidence to prove my claims, I am going public and we are going to put and end to this monstrous charade before Cabrini becomes a death camp. Any assistance I can get from the shadows will be greatly appreciated.)<<<<<
—NewFile "BitBurn"(23:59:13/11-27-53)

>>>>>(You realize you are a dead man.)<<<<<
—PhillyBuster (24:22:19/11-27-53)

>>>>>(Not too smooth, Bitsy. You must be new here. There's a time and a place for everything—which you won't have time to learn if Philly's right. Haven't you been introduced to Mr. Johnson?)<<<<<
—Calgon Green (16:21:44/11-30-53)

>>>>>(I just intercepted a nasty traceback/blackout nanocycles before it fried our innocent little NewFile. I don't like foreign burners in the system, so his problems have become my problems and now they are your problems. Do what you can to help "BitBurn"and I will get you that extra datastore you've all been clamoring for. Deal?)<<<<<
—SYStem 05 (09:53:28/12-01-53)

>>>>(Switching over to Naked City. Catch me at the BitBurn SIG. Looking forward to filling up the new dumpster.)<<<<<
—Calgon Green (12:55:35/12-01-53)

CABRINI FIREFIGHT
07 DEC 2053
CHI TRIB>NEWSNET>JACE BRENNAN

An estimated 100 people died at the Cabrini Refuge Thursday night when a group of vigilantes attacked the residents of the protected area.

The incident began when members of the extremist Humanis Policlub attacked the housing development with automatic weapons and at least one rocket launcher, police said. Apparently, Cabrini residents had been expecting such an attack and had moved underground or to unused areas of the complex. As soon as the majority of the Humanis force moved onto protected soil, the ghouls attacked in force, overpowering and consuming their foes. Attorneys for the beleaguered refuge claim that under Article 16 of Order 162, the residents were within their rights to devour anyone found on their property. Apparently Article 16 classifies trespassers as "fair game." Edward Talbot of the Intemperance League has filed a class–action suit against the UCAS government on behalf of those who were slain.

Police said tensions between ghouls and nearby residents had been high in past days, apparently as a result of persistent rumors of a citywide conspiracy to exterminate the population of the Cabrini Refuge. The refuge was created by a special order of the UCAS Congress acting at the request of Mayor Ronald Quince.

Jason Miller (order #9388877)

CABRINI STANDOFF CONTINUES
23 DEC 2053
CHI TRIB>NEWSNET>AMMONDELL

The respected Knight–Errant private security firm will honor its contract to provide security in the Cabrini Refuge, the company announced Tuesday.

An estimated 100 people died at the refuge Thursday during a raid by members of the Humanis Policlub. Despite continued violence at the refuge in the wake of that tragedy, Knight–Errant plans to honor its contract with Refuge Interim Director Jonathan Mier, a Knight–Errant spokesman said Tuesday.

"Knight–Errant has a reputation for dependability,"the spokesman said, reading from a prepared statement. "Anyone who has dealt with our firm knows that we will honor our contracts under the most extreme circumstances. We have even maintained service with foreign clients after the government that signed the contract had collapsed. Regardless of continued pressure from powerful special interests we have no intention of changing our policy now. Anyone who tries to enter the Cabrini Refuge without proper identification or authority can expect to face our trademark efficiency. It's like we say in our adverts: Knight–Errant—you can depend on us."

KE ABANDONS CABRINI
04 JAN 2054
CHI TRIB>NEWSNET>JACE BRENNAN

Knight–Errant will not renew its temporary contract to provide security at the Cabrini Refuge, a company spokesman said Saturday.

Citing an "overcommitment of regional resources,"Knight–Errant personnel will evacuate the refuge at midnight, when the contract between the Cabrini Refuge and Knight–Errant Security elapses, the spokesman said.
Despite eleventh-hour efforts to resolve the refuge situation peacefully, bloodshed seems unavoidable, as protesters from both sides of the issue have gathered in force outside the refuge, forming a teeming throng that has blocked all access to the housing project. In an ironic turn of events, the city apparently has secured the services of Knight–Errant to subdue the crowd should violence erupt.

Channel 32 has won the rights to broadcast live any fighting that may occur, but the Urban Combat Network will rebroadcast highlights on a ten-minute delay.

Jason Miller (order #55848

GHOULTOWN>CABRINI REFUGE>RIOT/KNIGHT–ERRANT
EXCERPT DIARY OF A SAMARITAN
DOUBLEDAY (JAN/04/54)

When you volunteer for an intervention team, you expect anything and everything. I have helped dwarf programmers through picket lines, pregnant elves get into free clinics that would not admit them, and I've rescued a troll baby from human kidnappers who intended to sacrifice him to some kind of toxic spirit. But I have to admit I never expected to be called in to help defend a ghoul lair.

I wasn't able to attend the meeting where we decided to consider ghouls a sentient metahuman race, deserving of our protection, but I understand it was a real circus. Apparently, the highlight of the whole thing occurred when some lunatic wheeled in something that appeared to be a human corpse. It was lying on a bed of greens with an apple in its mouth, cooked up all nice and brown and everything. It was supposed to be shocking—you know, some kind of statement about the gruesome fate that awaited us all if we decided to help them—but it didn't come off that way. Some droll eleven mage offered the poor bastard a bit of thigh, and the joint went up for grabs.

Sitting in the back of our van the night the Knight–Errant contract expired, I had some time to think about our new "brothers."Can't say as I approve of cannibalism, but the biologists claim the ghouls don't have a choice. My brother was twisted by some magic and wound up with a face like a mound of rotten fruit. He didn't ask to be an ork. Did they ask to become ghouls? I doubt it. It all made sense as long as you could keep everything nice and rational, but on some gut level the whole thing sickened me.

We were not the only ones who showed up at the party—far from it. Everybody knew the trid crews would be there, so anyone who could think of a reason to be there showed up. And they all brought every member they could muster—as well as a few street people thrown in to beef up their contingent if they didn't look important enough. A couple hundred bleeding hearts from the Metahuman Rights Coalition showed up, along with a small horde from the newly formed Society for Traditional Values and clusters of tough-looking characters who waited until the last minute to pull on their Humanis hoods.

All we had to do was look for heavy weapons—anything that could make a real difference if it came down to cases. It was a damn good thing we were there, as it turned out.

As zero hour approached we got the order to circulate. The detail contained only five of us, but that's all we'd ever needed before. Cronk and I swept the rear, looking for anything the others might have missed. Then five minutes shy of midnight Cronk spots a kid wandering through the crowd. He tells me there's something strange about the kid's thermal signature, so we check him out and frag if he ain't a ghoul. He seems disoriented, so I go to check him for injuries but before I can reach him I fall unconscious.

A couple of days later I woke up in a private hospital unable to move anything but my eyes and the fingers on my right hand. When Cronk showed up he told me the ghoul kid had canisters of nerve gas taped to him. Apparently, the Humanis boys needed to build some popular support quick, so they decided to frame the ghouls for a massacre. If it weren't for that extra filter in my right lung I would probably be dead right now. And if Cronk hadn't iced the kid as quick as he did, the riot might have gotten really out of hand.

Would have been nice if the city had stuck to its guns. What happened to the Refuge was a fragging shame. Thank god I didn't end up a ghoul.

Jason Miller (order #9 8 877)

GHOULTOWN>CABRINI REFUGE>SO 162
Excerpt from the pretrial hearings in the class–action suit brought by Jonathan Meir against the legislative firm of Dumas, Alexander, and Tate on behalf of the residents of the Cabrini Refuge. Dumas, Alexander, and Tate were employed by UCAS to draft and administer Special Order 162. The following is the testimony of Gery Alexander as submitted to Judge Andrew Gregory.

The charges were eventually dropped, but not before Alexander confessed to receiving funds from alleged members of the Humanis Policlub in exchange for adding the phrase "fair game"to Article 16. He was disbarred and served 16 years of a 25-year sentence as a conscripted courier for the Justice Department before his suicide in March 2055.

ALEXANDER: When we drafted Special Order 162 we had no way to gauge the hostility it would elicit among many longtime Chicagoans.
GREGORY: Come now, Mr. Alexander, you expect us to believe that you had no idea that there would be an unfavorable reaction to the Special Order, Article 16 in particular?
ALEXANDER: Our initial surveys suggested some resistance to Articles 11 and 16, as well as the program as a whole, but nothing on the level we encountered after the Knight–Errant pullout.
GREGORY: Do you normally base your human rights policy on the ability of the victim to defend himself?
ALEXANDER: Of course not. For the record, I must object to your tone and to the hostility of the entire panel. This is a board of inquiry. No charges have been filed, yet you are treating us as if we've already been convicted.
GREGORY: Withdrawn, but I would like to add to the record that this is your third objection of this kind and that you have phrased your complaint in exactly the same way each time. We have brought you here to get answers, not speeches.
ALEXANDER: Understood.
GREGORY: What led to your decision to recommend that Special Order 162 be repealed?
ALEXANDER: In the 48 days following the Knight–Errant pullout, there were 218 deaths among the residents of the Refuge.
GREGORY: The situation was turning into a war.
ALEXANDER: Exactly.
GREGORY: On what did you base your recommendation?
ALEXANDER: Look, I know what you want me to say, but I won't. You have to understand what was going on at the time. As soon as we realized that we were dealing with more than a couple of isolated incidents, we tried to protect them but we just didn't have enough manpower—and the attrition rate among those assigned to garrison the Refuge was unacceptable by anyone's standards. We explored freelance security options but after the Knight–Errant debacle the low bid was outrageous. No one would go near the place.
GREGORY: It wasn't worth protecting them.
ALEXANDER: We couldn't protect them.
GREGORY: So you cut them loose.
ALEXANDER: Yes.

MUNDANE DEFENSES

The residents of the Refuge were better prepared than the rest of the city to fend off the attacks of the bugs—as well as the desperate Chicagoans trapped in the Containment Zone after the Wall went up—because Ghoultown was already an armed camp before the bugs came, thanks in part to the smuggling efforts of ghoul sympathizers. And the UCAS itself provided the beginnings of the haven's outer walls. UCAS authorities enclosed the cluster of buildings with a prefab wall the very day Special Order 162 was repealed. This wall was meant to contain the ghouls in the Refuge, but–now serves quite well to keep bugs and other enemies out. The ghouls have put a lot of effort into shoring up the relatively flimsy prefab construction and have transformed it into a respectable barrier complete with catwalks and guard towers.

The ghouls may not have sophisticated electronic equipment or magical wards, but every last guard can see in the dark and in the astral plane, which leaves Ghoultown better protected than most government installations. The ghoul guards simply walk the catwalks that line the tops of the walls and man the towers in pairs. Most are armed with light automatic weapons (they got a crate of Crusader machine pistols from Knight–Errant shortly before the pullout), but the tower positions contain some heavier stuff, including a couple of Colt M22A2 assault rifles. In addition to the guards on the walls, snipers—armed with Walther MA 2100s fitted with telescopic sights—

Jason Miller (order #55848777)

are stationed on the roofs of the three main buildings. These guards watch for anyone trying to breach the wall. In addition, the central building is topped by a makeshift pillbox that contains a Vindicator minigun; the ventilation cowlings on the roof conceal a couple of surface-to-air missiles.

The ghouls don't have much cyberware, so wired samurai will have an edge against them. But remember, the Refuge contains a large stockpile of ammunition and hundreds of ghouls who have managed to hold their own against the bugs—so even chromed runners are going to have a tough time if they try to slug it out with the man-eaters straight up.

MAGICAL DEFENSES

The population of Ghoultown contains few magicians, but the ghouls' dual nature has provided them with an excellent defense against the continued threat of the bugs. Because ghouls are inherently magically active, they can see into the astral plane and affect astral beings.

However, this dual nature hurt the ghouls during the first wave of the infestation. The powerful insect spirit forms could see the ghouls quite clearly in astral space, which made them obvious targets. But after the bomb went off and most of the bugs were thrown into torpor, the tide turned; the ghouls could locate the dormant bugs easily and cleared the things out of Ghoultown in a matter of days. As a result, the Ghoultown haven is one of the places in the Containment Zone where one can enter astral space in relative safety.

Because astral space has been "cleared up,"magicians can perform magic here without waking bugs. In addition, astral space in Ghoultown is no longer toxic, so the haven experiences few of the derangements that afflict the rest of the city. This has made Ghoultown one of the most peaceful and orderly places in the Zone.

Of course, the state of the astral plane here means spirits can be used against the ghouls, who have few magicians capable of dispelling such astral weapons.

GETTING IN

For many people, the real question is why would you *want* to in the first place? Well, we'll leave that answer to you. Your biz is your own, and we're not going assume we know it for a second. Just remember, the ghouls have received rather drekky treatment from the rest of metahumanity, and they feel little, if any, sympathy for their neighbors; as a result, appealing to their good nature is usually a waste of time. Anyway, short of blasting your way in (good luck, you'll need plenty of it), you can probably gain entrance to Ghoultown in one of three ways: by becoming a ghoul, having something they want, or sharing a common enemy.

Become a Ghoul

I realize this is not an option most will consider, but it is worth mentioning so you know what's going on (and in case you get *really* desperate).

Ever since Special Order 162 was repealed (an event ghouls call "the Betrayal"), ghouls have cultivated racial pride. (Unfortunately, they have become intolerant of other metahumans and humans in the process.) The ghouls have also set about strengthening their position by building up their numbers. Unfortunately for the rest of us, most ghouls find the standard method of metahuman reproduction repugnant, given the available partners. As a result, they have turned to infection as a means of increasing their numbers.

As an outgrowth of this, the residents of Ghoultown have extended an open invitation to anyone willing to become a ghoul. The ghouls even hold regular recruitment drives, which have been more successful than you might expect (probably because many unfortunate people trapped in the Zone have had to resort to cannibalism to survive already, making them less resistant to life as a ghoul). Thanks to these drives, Ghoultown has grown from an encampment to a thriving community in a matter of months—and the ghouls seem to have every intention of one day running the city. And perhaps more.

Have Something the Ghouls Want

The ghouls have more supplies than most people in the city, but like everyone else, they are far from self-sufficient and must compete for the limited resources of the Containment Zone. As a result, you may be able to "buy"your way into Ghoultown by bringing the ghouls sufficient quantities of something they need. The more immediate the ghouls' need for your wares, the more likely you are to succeed.

One of the commodities always in high demand in Ghoultown is meat—preferably human and the fresher the better. If you're willing to deliver a dozen or so live people to the ghouls they may allow you to remain in Ghoultown for a week or so. If you're supplying freshly killed corpses, you'll need about twice that number. However, the ghouls will view you with contempt, and they will eventually add you to the menu if you fail to make them fear you. And remember, acting as a "butcher"will hardly endear you to your fellow man; in fact, in many parts of the Zone they'll shoot you on sight if they know you're a butcher. Despite these dangers, at least two gangs have made a business of supplying the ghouls with fresh flesh (see **Fleshmongers** and **Living Dead**, p. **119**).

Jason Miller (order #9838877)

Because of their extensive stockpiles, the ghouls aren't as desperate for ammunition as everyone else (indeed, they've even been known to trade bullets for bodies). On the other hand, every ghoul is suffering from a debilitating infection, so medical supplies are always at a premium in Ghoultown. Any runner who can offer medical assistance will be welcomed and put to work in the hospital, where he may stay—as long as the head nurse believes he is doing some good.

Share a Common Enemy

Ghoultown is one of the few places where the bugs do not present a unifying threat. The ghouls themselves were once considered a dangerous paranormal threat that could not be tolerated for the good of the nation, and so they have little sympathy for the problems caused by what they see as another paranormal threat of a similar kind. They will not allow bugs into Ghoultown, but they will not go out of their way to protect anyone else from the bugs, either.

The ghouls do have other enemies. The Zone still contains roving remnants of the Humanis Policlub who would like to drive the ghouls out of their lair and use it themselves. And the Volk (see **Volksville**, p. 113) are bitterly antighoul (and anti just about everyone). They even offer bounties for ghoul heads. So if you can prove to the ghouls that you're going up against Humanis, the Volk, or their allies, you'll have some man-eating friends for life.

POPULATION

Ghoultown society contains two factions. The hard-liners have embraced the idea of "ghoul power."These individuals seek to create a separate nation of ghouls, starting with Chicago and the surrounding area. The second faction—known as the moderates—are content with the measure of freedom they have attained and are satisfied to coexist with (meta)human society.

The ghoul nationalists preach a doctrine of ghoul superiority and espouse a hatred for humans, metahumans, and others who have persecuted and oppressed the ghoul race. They reject the culture of greater (meta)human society and seek to create a true ghoul culture and society to replace it. Perhaps the most obvious symbol of this rejection is the practice of renaming, whereby a ghoul drops his old surname and assumes one of the five "ghoul names"of the most important ghoul leaders—Grey, Hammond, Meir, Thomkins and Van Zandt.

At present, the ideas of the ghoul nationalists are rapidly gaining ground among the residents of Ghoultown.

⊖⊖⊖⊖⊖⊖[GOOSE ISLAND

:::::prepared by UNCLE VINCE

CORE/GEOGRAPHY/GOOSE ISLAND
EXCERPT EXPLORING CHICAGO: A GUIDE TO THE CITY
PRIZE PRESS, 2020

Goose Island was created in 1850, when the Chicago Land Company cut a channel from the Chicago River between Chicago Avenue on the south and North Avenue on the north. The channel formed the eastern edge of the resulting mile-long island, while the river formed the western edge. Originally, Chicagoans dubbed the area Ogden Island, after William B. Ogden, Chicago's first mayor. Later, Irish-Americans settled the island, planting cabbage patches and raising geese.

As the city grew, the island became home to a brewery ...

Jason Miller (order #55848

>>>>>(And much, much later a band of whacked-out gangers called the Jolly Rogers claimed the island as their own. These fraggers like to race up and down the north branch of the river in tricked-out boats and hovercraft. They claim the north branch as their "turf."Not too many Zone-dwellers would contest this, as the river's become a pretty miserable place to be, now that its banks generally swarm with roaches attracted by its putrid waters.)<<<<<
—Koostow (23:04:25/11-29-55)

>>>>>(The gang is a very sensitive bunch, too. Once I saw them bid farewell to a poor slot who decided he no longer wanted to be a Roger. They tied a rope to a meat hook, stuck it through his shoulder, then dropped him into the river as lamprey bait. Now, for years all kinds o' weird drek has been swimming around in the river, but no one I know has ever seen anything like what was hangin' onto that poor frag when they pulled him out. He was covered with the things. Some were as large as him—slimy, pulsing red things gorged with the fragger's blood. I saw him open his mouth like he was trying to say something, and out came this shiny, brown-colored leechlike thing.)<<<<<
—Wanda (22:03:55/11-30-55)

>>>>>(Mmmmmmmm—escargot anyone?)<<<<<
—Leo (06:23:51/12-02-55)

>>>>>[HAYMARKET NATION

:::::prepared by TOMCAT

CORE/PARKS/GRANT PARK
EXCERPT>"FODORR'S '23 CHICAGO"
FODORR'S TRAVEL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 2023

The heart of beautiful Grant Park lies east of the intersection of Balbo Drive and Michigan Avenue. On a hot summer night in August of 1968, the park was filled with young citizens of the United States protesting the Vietnam War, and a presidential nominating convention was taking place in a hotel blocks away. Later, hundreds of Chicago police officers viciously attacked the crowd with tear gas and truncheons. Scores of demonstrators, reporters, and bystanders were injured and jailed in the violence that followed, which also prompted then-Mayor Richard J. Daley's infamous shoot-to-kill order.

Today, this well-preserved park features a mix of gardens, tennis courts, a bandshell ...

>>>>>(Remember Balbo!)<<<<<
—Tanya (321879) (03:21:47/12-01-55)

>>>>>(Ahhh, the good old daze. Abbie and Jerry would be proud to see the park today—well, Abbie would be, anyway. Not a cop or a soldier for miles around. Those old Yippies would probably feel right at home in the so-called Haymarket Nation. Basically, anyone who's fleeing the authorities can find refuge among the orks, trolls, mages, and other assorted freaks who live in the park—the anarchists who run the place see to that. Within the park and surrounding environs, everyone basically polices him or herself.
The Panthers—the loosely organized security force for the nation—take care of the occasional UCAS agent, bounty hunter, or Volk who wanders in. It's kinda amazing, a little like a lotus floating in the middle of the cesspool of the Zone.
It's like nothing you've ever seen before. It'll blow yer mind.)<<<<<
—Hippie Chick (23:44:31/12-03-55)

>>>>>(B sure to put some flowers in yer hair!)<<<<<
—Sunshine (02:55:21/12-05-55)

>>>>>(Actually, the idea is not as "new"as you think, HipChik. Chicago once was a hotbed of progressive political activity. About 150 years ago, the Wobblies (International Workers of the World) were born here. Your leaders, in fact, named their new "nation"in honor of those who died following the Haymarket Incident.)<<<<<
—Robbie the Red (22:30:45/12-10-55)

Jason Miller (order #9388877)

CORE/HISTORY/HAYMARKET
EXCERPT NEW YORK TIMES
MAY 5, 1886

Chicago, May 4 — The villainous teachings of the Anarchists bore bloody fruit in Chicago tonight, and before daylight at least a dozen stalwart men will have laid down their lives as a tribute to the doctrine of Herr Johann Most. There had been skirmishes all day between the police and various sections of the mob, which had no head and no organization. In every instance the police won. In the afternoon a handbill, printed in German and English, called upon "workingmen"to meet at Des Plaines and Randolph streets this evening. "Good speakers,"it was promised, "will be present to denounce the latest atrocious act of the police—the shooting of our fellow workmen yesterday afternoon."

In response to this invitation 1,400 men, including those most active in the Anarchist riots of the past 48 hours, gathered at the point designated ... the area known as the Old Haymarket. ... A light rainstorm came up and about 800 people went away. The 600 who remained listened to speeches from the lips of August Spies, the editor of the *Arbiter Zeitung*, and A.B. Parsons, an Anarchist with a negro wife. The speeches were rather mild in tone, but when Sam Fielden, another Anarchist leader, mounted the wagon from which the orators spoke, the crowd pressed nearer, knowing that something different was coming ...

>>>>>(Apparently, when the boys in blue marched in to break up the fun, someone tossed a bomb at the unwelcome party crashers (can't really blame the slot for being a tad paranoid—the cops had killed six men while breaking up a workers' meeting the previous month). Anyway, the boys in blue responded like any other Chicago cops would—they fired into the crowd. End result—seven cops killed and 70 people wounded. The authorities never caught the bomb thrower, so they did the next best thing—they arrested, tried, and sentenced to death seven men who advocated socialism, anarchism, and—God help us all—the eight-hour work day! Four of them were hanged, despite international protest.)<<<<<
—Robbie the Red (24:34:52/12-03-55)

>>>>>(Thanx for the history lesson, Prof. Red. I'll be sure and remember it if I ever do some time travelin' in the city. Now does anybody ...)<<<<<
—the Jackal (05:38:44/12-09-55)

UCAS>CHICAGO>SECTION 3
ATTN: Commander Romero
SUBJECT: Haymarket Nation
Agent Rebecca Washington reporting

The group calling itself the "Haymarket Nation"is actually a group of human and metahuman individuals living in the area once known as Grant Park. A small cadre of self-appointed leaders do little more than oversee a 20-member "security"force that prevents any military forces from the UCAS and other organized governments and corporate security personnel from operating in the area.

The group displays no territorial ambitions, although apparently they are waging a running battle against a roach infestation in the old subway tunnels under the Noose. The group appears to be hostile to the group called the Volk.

The leaders of the so-called nation seem to have given tacit approval to the market that has appeared along the shore of the old Chicago Harbor. Vendors here do a brisk trade in illegal simsense chips, supplies, gears, food, medicine, weapons, military hardware, and vehicles. And evidence suggests that smugglers have run the blockade and entered the harbor in the past.

Under the present circumstances, I recommend the Haymarket Nation be kept under surveillance but no immediate action taken against it.

Jason Miller (order #55848777)

>>>>>[LEO'S LUNCHBOX

:::::prepared by JIMMY DONUTS

CORE/RESTAURANTS/NEAR NORTH SIDE
EXCERPT AKBAR'S GUIDE TO CHICAGO EATERIES
CHOW NOW PUBLICATIONS, 2019

Leo's LunchBox is one of the best of the many storefront restaurants found throughout Chicago. The unpretentious room features plain wooden tables, walls covered with photographs of visiting celebrities, and an extensive collection of vintage popular music from the 1970s. Diners can choose from an eclectic selection of ethnic, traditional American, and nouveau French dishes. The sweet potato burrito is especially recommended. 1809 W. Division St., tel. 312/555-1969. Reservations not required. No credsticks. Closed some holidays. Inexpensive.

>>>>>(At least some semblance of civilization survives in Chicago. A long-time favorite of the Milwaukee Avenue sophistos, Leo's is as unpretentious as ever. In fact, that's probably what saved the place—it's never looked worth looting. Of course, the menu has become quite limited now—customers never have more than two entrées to choose from and often don't even have that choice. The hours have become very irregular, but the place keeps packing them in anyway. Must be that people are hungry for a little touch of luxury to take the edge off of life in the Zone.)<<<<<
—Gourmand (19:45:39:12-10-55)

>>>>>(A restaurant in the fraggin' Zone? Is this place for real?)<<<<<
—Zelda (09:45:33/12-13-55)

>>>>>(Very much so, Zelda my dear. Rumor has it the place had been a favorite of UCAS intelligence officers working the Noose in the days before the Wall went up. They covertly supplied Lydia, the cook, with food and kept an eye on the place. Apparently, Lydia always made a point of making everyone feel welcome at her establishment, and the neighborhood residents have returned the favor by watching out for anyone who might mess with the place. I believe Leo's is the only operating restaurant in the Zone, which also may explain why the place has been allowed to remain.)<<<<<
—Gourmand (21:33:20/12-13-55)

>>>>>[LITTLE EARTH

:::::prepared by TIGER FAUX

CORE/UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO/LITTLE EARTH
EXCERPT NEO-ANARCHIST'S GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICA
SHADOWLAND DATA BASE

The University has also become a mecca for the fringe elements of the magical world. Those who don't make the cut for the U, or who just want to gather with others who share their particular point of view, have taken over an area near the campus. It's called Little Earth, a term taken ...

>>>>>(Actually, the area called Little Earth encompasses the southeast lakefront portion of the U of C campus that once was Jackson Park. The area is home to mages, shamans, and other magical adepts who lived in the pre-Containment Zone Little Earth, as well as f aculty and students from the U of C's magic program who didn't make it out of the Zone when the Wall went up. The group has scavenged magical artifacts and foci abandoned in the U of C campus when the Wall went up and has formed a kind of mutual aid society. These people tend to be very wary of strangers, but a persistent mage can obtain all manner of magic supplies here—provided he or she has something to barter.)<<<<<
—BlackStone (04:33:21/12-11-55)

Jason Miller (order #938877)

>>>>>(The place is a hotbed of idealism as well. If you need some magical help and your cause is just, you may be able to find it here at no cost.)<<<<<
—Kee Hó Tay (20:17:43/12-13-55)

>>>>>(These fraggers got balls, too. I've seen squads of Earthling wizards take on roaches, ants, even wasps. The crazy slots even send their people up against the Calumet Roach shaman known as the Foul One.)<<<<<
—BlackStone (02:34:55/12-15-55)

>>>>>(That's fraggin' suicide. No one in their right mind would set foot in the toxic Calumet swamp. Drek, there are things living in there that even the fraggin' bugs avoid.)<<<<<
—Johnni Q (09:23:41/12-17-55)

>>>>>(Like I said, the place is a hotbed of idealism.)<<<<<
—Kee Hó Tay (09:09:36/12-18-55)

>>>>>(It never fails to amaze me how closely idealism and stupidity are intertwined.)<<<<<
—Hawkeye (24:21:43/12-19-55)

>>>>>(As I said before, Little Earth is the closest thing left to a magical marketplace in the Zone. In addition to supplying magical gear, the area also offers several magical healers.)<<<<<
—BlackStone (22:31:37/12-28-55)

>>>>>(Please don't overestimate the number or power of the magicians in Little Earth. I hang there a lot, and I can tell you that only a few are left, but they get around.)<<<<<
—Conrad (23:34:02/12-29-55)

Jason Miller (order #55848

◦◦◦◦◦◦[SHATTERGRAVES

:::::prepared by DEFCON 5

PIXFILE

CHICAGO◦MAPS◦SHATTERGRAVES

CORE/GEOGRAPHY/SHATTERGRAVES
EXCERPT NEO-ANARCHIST'S GUIDE TO NORTH AMERICA
SHADOWLAND DATABASE

Three days after the Night of Rage, members of the Alamos 20,000 committed the most outrageous act of terrorism yet. Using a combination of magic and explosives, the group destroyed the IBM Tower, sending the building down to the street during a weekday lunch hour. The falling debris destroyed blocks, worth of buildings, streets, and sidewalks. Thousands were crushed to death, and the collapse ruptured gas lines, causing a conflagration in the Loop that claimed 26,000 lives.

The area crushed by the tower became known as the Shattergraves. All forms of human and inhuman creatures, as well as the ghosts of those killed in the building's fall and aftermath, are said to roam the mazes of steel and concrete.

Jason Miller (order #9388877)

>>>>>(The Shattergraves has gotten a little bigger since then. Now it covers an area bounded by Lake Street on the north, Polk and State streets on the west and south, and the expressway on the west. And since they moved the ghouls out, the place ain't half bad—if you can stand the ghosts. The bugs can't stand the specters, and I'd wager the ol' Graves has gotta be one of the most bug-free areas in the entire Containment Zone.)<<<<<
—Squatter (22:31:54/11-29-55)

>>>>>(If you can stand the ghosts? Easier said than done, Squatling. We're talking some hostile specters in there, some lost souls that are very unhappy about their deaths. They don't take kindly to human—or metahuman—visitors.)<<<<<
—Barnabus (23:18:09/11-30-55)

>>>>>(I'd say about 15 or 20 people have settled in the area. Of course, most of them don't make very good company anymore. They're mostly hermits, paranoid individuals who are just as likely to lop your head off as you sleep as to run screaming at the sight of you. I had a friend who tried out the neighborhood. He came back after about three or four weeks; really was never the same again. Always seemed to be talking to someone who wasn't there and glancing over his shoulder like he expected to see the big bad bug ready to pounce. He used to sleep with the light on, and he still would wake up screaming—it drove my old lady nuts. Then one day he up and popped his own eyes out with a spoon.)<<<<<
—Lovecraft (20:34:21/12-02-55)

>>>>>(And then what ?)<<<<<
—Amok (04:50:32/12-05-55)

>>>>>(Then the next day he wandered off without so much as a good-by note. We didn't bother to look for him.)<<<<<
—Lovecraft (07:56:34/12-07-55)

>>>>>(Don't listen to him, he's just trying to frighten you off. The place IS full of ghosts—and a few paranormal creatures that probably don't exist anywhere else in the world. But anyone with their wits about them and a healthy supply of dum-dums can spend a few days in the Graves without suffering any permanent effects. And few people are going to go in there looking for you.)<<<<<
—Polly Esther (09:56:17/12-08-55)

>>>>>(I don't know about living there, but it does make a great place to visit when you're being tracked by Big Momma Roach and her brood ...)<<<<<
—Uncle Vince (24:25:14/12-09-55)

>>>>>(Can anyone confirm the rumor that a banshee has moved into the Shattergraves?? Sad Tim from just south of Volksville was telling me about her the other day.)<<<<<
—Lou D. (549387) (20:18:23/12-20-55)

>>>>>(Hmmm ... don't know, but if it's true, that makes a couple of other things make sense. It also forces me to rethink a terrible thought I had ... what if Chicago becomes a magnet for things unnatural? You know, the city's sealed off from the rest of the world and it could be considered a "safe"environment, which might make it enticing for the vampires and such to come for a stay. Just wondering. ...)<<<<<
—Earth Mother (23:45:09/12-21-55)

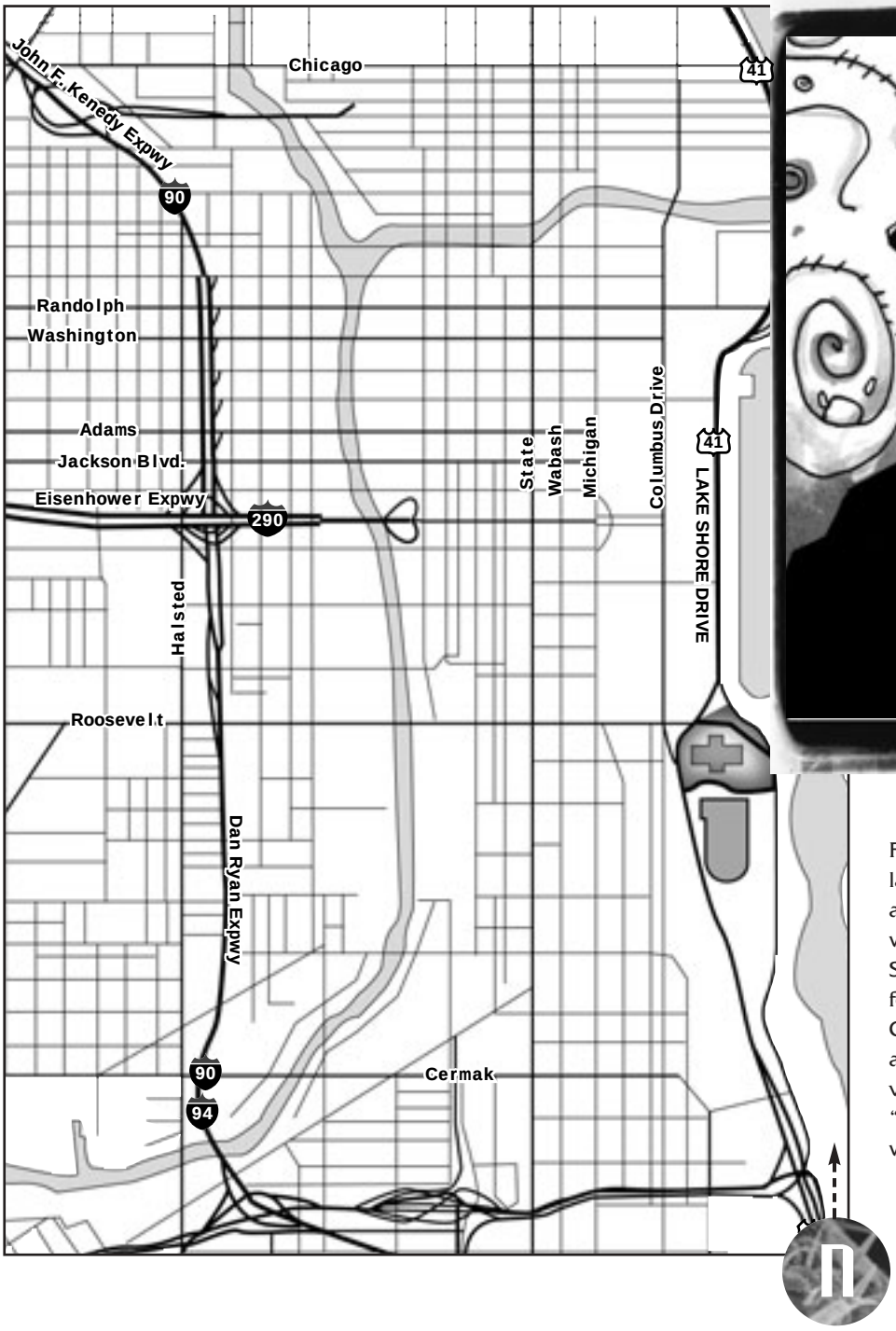
Jason Miller (order #55848

[THE SANCTUM [HAVEN]

:::::prepared by SERAPH ADELAIDE

PIXFILE

CHICAGO•MAPS•SANCTUM



The Sanctum, formerly known as the Field Museum of Natural History, is the largest haven in the Containment Zone, after Gh oultown and the Wrigley Dome. It was founded by the renowned Jason Two Spirits, a charismatic Owl shaman and professor of magic. Two Spirits came to Chicago about six months before the appearance of the insect spirits and tried in vain to warn the populace about some "approaching danger."His warnings met with ridicule and hostility. Big shock, *neh*?

Jason Miller (order #9788877)

CORE/NEWS/TRANSCRIPTS.ARCHIVE
Excerpt from the Transcript of Episode 324 of "Good Morning Evanston."Interview between Jason Two Spirits and segment host David Bryant.

TWO SPIRITS: Let's assume for a moment that you are convinced something terrible is going to happen and that you only have one year to prepare. What do you do?
BRYANT: How terrible do you mean?
TWO SPIRITS: Something so terrible that out of everyone you know only one or two will survive.
BRYANT: Gosh Jason, I'm not sure. Maybe I would start by getting booked on a couple of interview shows.
TWO SPIRITS: You miss my point. There is only one answer—you would have to do everything you thought might help. I am in such a position, and if there is a chance that I can reach even one person by agreeing to perform on your little circus I will do it. I will do whatever is necessary to save you whether you like it or not.
BRYANT: And I sure do appreciate it. But when you say "whatever is necessary"what exactly do you mean?
TWO SPIRITS: My statement seems clear enough.
BRYANT: I mean, how far will you go? There are those who believe that you are a dangerous man who should be locked up before your delusions get the better of you. Personally, I think you are a harmless old man looking for attention.
TWO SPIRITS: In one year a cataclysm will destroy this city. And if we are not prepared, the entire Midwest will be in grave danger. Most are deaf to my warnings, but those of you who understand will find a way to contact me before I am silenced. Help me save your future.
BRYANT: Ohhhh-kaayyy ... We have been speaking with Jason Two Spirits, Owl shaman ...

When the bugs did appear, proving Two Spirits right, respect and admiration replaced the ridicule his warnings had elicited earlier. Many people who witnessed or heard of his heroism against the bugs sought out his advice and protection. Others, of course, feared him more. ...

Jason Miller (order #5584877)

CORE/CURRENT.UPLOAD
Excerpt from an interview with Abbot Walker, Field Museum director, conducted by UCAS Intelligence Service

My name is Abbot Walker. I am on the board of directors for the Field Museum of Natural History. Two days ago I took a meeting with some investors in the Undersea World Dining Room and stayed to inspect a few of the new exhibits.

I was in the Hall of Dinosaurs when I felt a peculiar vibration—something like a minor earthquake, followed by several smaller tremors. I had passed a guard in the Geronimo Room, so I rushed back.

As I rounded the big buffalo, I heard some kind of commotion up ahead so I slowed down and peered carefully between a couple of display cases. I saw a nightmare scene. The guard was lying on the ground in a pool of his own blood as a brownish black thing with a glistening shell, crouching over him, apparently burrowed into his chest cavity.

Terrified, I backed away as quietly as I could manage, but the thing noticed me anyway. It reared up, dripping gore, and started toward me. It resembled a cockroach of tremendous size, but it had a bizarre, almost human face from which black eyes glared at me with malevolence. I had the distinct feeling that it wanted me dead and for no better reason than it liked to kill.

Now, no one has ever accused me of being a street samurai, and I had no intention of starting then, so I ran headlong through the Great Gallery past Triassic Park toward the Control Room. Panicked though I was, I remembered to yell and scream and wave my arms as I passed each security camera.

When I hit the Treasures of the Ancient World display, I stumbled into a slaughterhouse. Blood flowed down the steps over the remains of a dozen tourists. It then occurred to me that the museum was still open, but I had yet to see anyone else since the tremor hit. As the enormity of the tragedy struck me, the roach closed in, scurrying across the tile on four pairs of legs. Exhausted and nearly paralyzed by the terror before me, I sagged against a railing, resigned to my fate. I don't think I even raised an arm to ward off its mandibles.

Suddenly an earsplitting thunderlike boom and a bolt of energy filled the room, emitting a bright blue light just long enough for me to recognize Professor Two Spirits standing behind the death mask of Tutankhamen. The bug was burned to a crisp, and as it died it let out a high-pitched shriek that shattered the glass in an entire row of display cases.

Two Spirits walked right past me and down the stairs toward the gift shop. I was caught up in his wake along with a small crowd that he seemed to have rescued from similar circumstances. One of them seemed more focused than the rest and carried a large rifle. He told me that insect spirits were attacking Chicago and that Two Spirits knew it was going to happen and had prepared for it.

When Two Spirits applied for his grant I was one of those who voted against him. I felt we didn't know enough about his background, and I had seen him on "Good Morning Evanston," which had left me with a bias that prevented me from recognizing his academic achievements. If I knew then what I know now, I would have welcomed him with open arms and done anything to help him. Not only is the good of the city his first priority, he is one of the most compelling men I have ever met. We owe him our lives, and I for one intend to repay him.

As more and more people came seeking his aid, a group began to form around Two Spirits. Runners, mages, ordinary citizens—they all came to Two Spirits, united by their common enemy—the bugs. Soon, Two Spirits and his followers had fortified the Field Museum, transforming it into a haven that they dubbed the Sanctum. They dedicated themselves to providing shelter to Zone residents who needed it, fighting the bugs, and most important, researching ways to defeat the invaders.

The museum's vast collection contains thousands of artifacts, foci, and other items, and Two Spirits and his mages work around the clock testing them for magical properties and conducting magical experiments. And these people are not mere academicians. The Sanctum contains several combat-experienced mages, adepts, and mundanes willing to test their theories and weapons against bugs in actual combat.

MUNDANE DEFENSES

The Sanctum relies primarily on magical defenses for protection against the bugs, and so the haven maintains only minimal mundane defenses. A security force of ten men and women armed with assault rifles, shotguns, and light machine guns provide the Sanctum's primary mundane defenses. A fixed submachine gun nest is located near the Sanctum's single entrance on the north side of the building, and approximately 20 residents—armed with light and heavy pistols—supplement the security force.

Jason Miller (order #938 877)

MAGICAL DEFENSES

Two Spirits himself oversees the magical defense of the Sanctum. He personally directs five full-fledged mages, who in turn command about 25 magic students. The group contains a mix of shamanic and hermetic practitioners and uses its collective strength to create wards and spells and summon spirits to protect the Sanctum. They are constantly experimenting with different techniques, and so one can never be certain what types of magical protections will be in place around the haven at any given time.

GETTING IN

Any human or metahuman who's willing to put his or her life on the line to fight the insect spirits is welcome at the Sanctum. Members of the haven frequently visit the Haymarket Nation to the north and Little Earth, down near the old U of C campus. These individuals are always willing to speak with anyone interested in joining the haven.

POPULATION

The Sanctum is home to about 270 people, including Two Spirits, his five mages, and the ten-person security force.

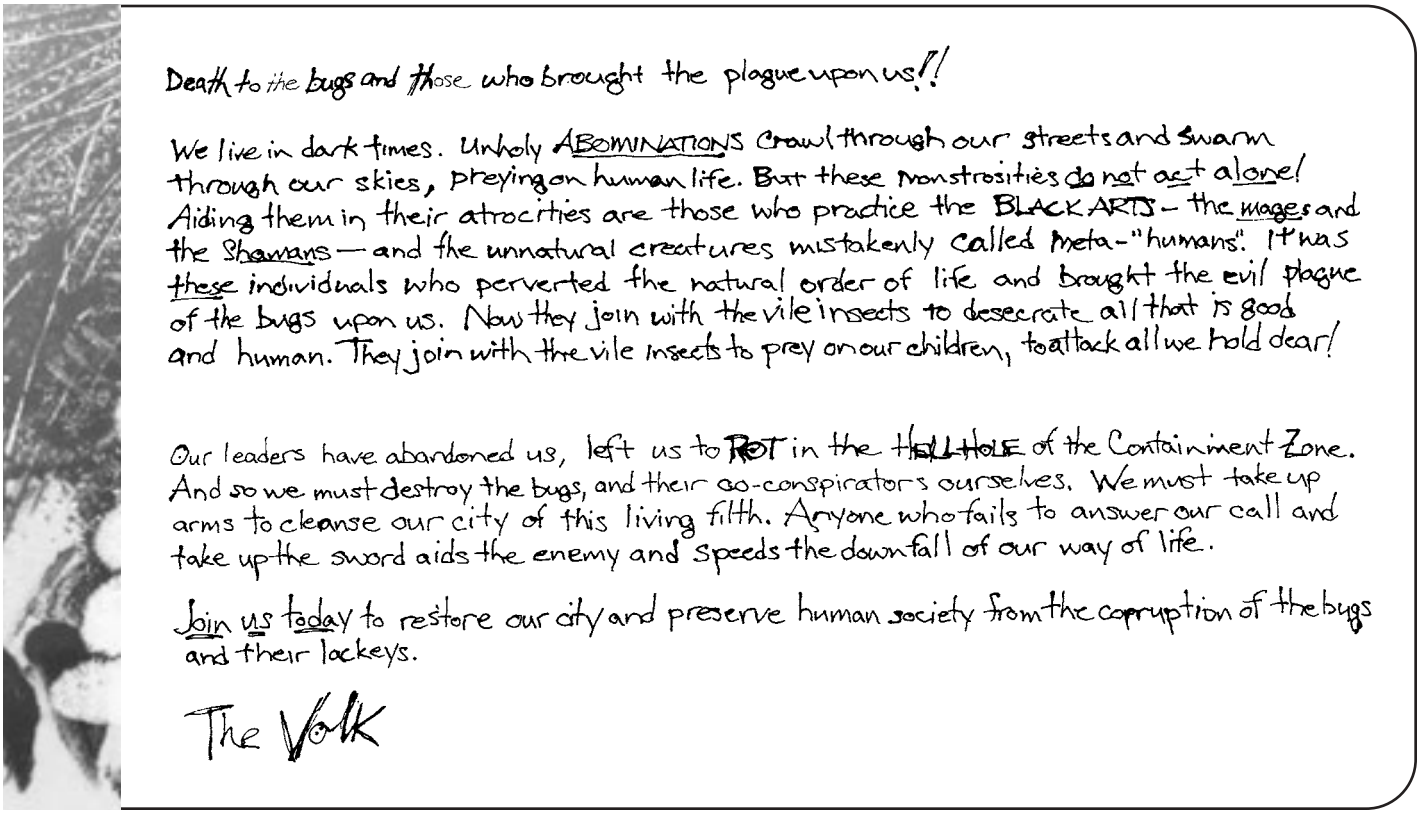
Two Spirits is a very charismatic leader, and he enjoys an almost cultlike following in the Sanctum. As a consequence, the vast majority of residents gladly follow his orders and react suspiciously to anyone who questions his authority.

>>>>>(So far he's been a benevolent leader, but I'd hate to be inside that place if he ever starts whacking out.)<<<<<
—Jimmy J. (24:21:15/12-10-55)

>>>>>(Ya know, I wonder. Nobody's ever been able to work prescient magics, and yeah, I know "he talks to the totems," but still ... *how did he know??*)<<<<<
—Tanner Tim (03:30:27/12-15-55)

⊖⊖⊖⊖⊖[VOLKSVILLE

:::::prepared by HARVESTER



Death to the bugs and those who brought the plague upon us!!

We live in dark times. Unholy ABOMINATIONS crawl through our streets and swarm through our skies, preying on human life. But these monstrosities do not act alone! Aiding them in their atrocities are those who practice the BLACK ARTS – the mages and the Shamans — and the unnatural creatures mistakenly called Meta-"humans". It was these individuals who perverted the natural order of life and brought the evil plague of the bugs upon us. Now they join with the vile insects to desecrate all that is good and human. They join with the vile insects to prey on our children, to attack all we hold dear!

Our leaders have abandoned us, left us to ROT in the HELL-HOLE of the Containment Zone. And so we must destroy the bugs, and their co-conspirators ourselves. We must take up arms to cleanse our city of this living filth. Anyone who fails to answer our call and take up the sword aids the enemy and speeds the downfall of our way of life.

Join us today to restore our city and preserve human society from the corruption of the bugs and their lackeys.

The Volk

Jason Miller (order #5584577

UCAS>CHICAGO>SECTION 4
ATTN: Commander Trenn
SUBJECT: The Volk
Agent Jane Rutherford reporting

Although the Volk remain largely unorganized and their leadership remains divided, they present a threat that the UCAS ignores at its own risk. Their leadership espouses anti-metahuman and antimagic sentiments and also calls for the overthrow of the UCAS government. The group currently lacks the power to make good on its threats to bring down the government, but I believe they have been directly responsible for the deaths of at least three UCAS agents operating in the Zone as well as the deaths of numerous informants.

The group apparently began as a sort of mutual-protection society. In exchange for bartered goods and cash, a handful of founders offered Zone residents a safe area and eventual escape from the Zone. The group originally claimed a small parcel of land in abandoned rail yards just north of I-55, along the southern edge of the Westside Zone. At first, the group simply offered the promise of protection and escape from the Zone for residents who could pay. Its founders—a mix of former UCAS troopers, Eagle Security, and Knight–Errant personnel trapped within the Zone—used weapons taken from an abandoned Illinois National Guard armory to secure a small area against bugs and marauding gangs.

Within weeks, former members of the defunct Chicago chapters of Alamos 20K and Humanis Policlub infiltrated the group's leadership and took control. The group then ejected the handful of metahumans and mages who had sought refuge under its protection, christened itself the Volk, and began to articulate its anti-metahuman, antimage, and anti-UCAS rhetoric.

Since that time, the Volk have begun actively recruiting former corp security and military personnel trapped in the Containment Zone. The group now controls a corridor along I-55 and the Sanitary and Ship Canal between the western border of the Containment Zone and Pulaski Avenue.

>>>>>(Those fraggin' Nazis are startin' up their own private army down there in Volksville. If you're not a mundane human, I'd stay outta there. And even if you are, I'd watch your step. Those fraggers are likely to geek you for your weapon or anything else of value you might have.)<<<<<
—Partisan (12:34:54/12-07-55)

>>>>>(I hear they've put up a big fence around the place, topped off with concertina wire. They say it's to keep the creepy crawlies out, but there's some buzz on the street that a coupla people been killed tryin' to leave without saying good-by.)<<<<<
—The Professor (12:39:12/12-07-55)

>>>>>(Some people claim the Volk leaders are in bed with the UCAS government, despite the group's antigovernment rhetoric. They say the government slips the Volkies food and supplies across the Wall when no one's looking. In exchange, the Volkies provide intelligence on the Zone and help in the fight against the bugs and the covert war against the ghouls. And their antigovernment line enables them to attract and identify potential enemies of the state before these individuals can gain any followers.)<<<<<
—Stone (12:45:49/12-07-55)

>>>>>(Wouldn't surprise me.)<<<<<
—Chompski (14:56:31/12-07-55)

>>>>>(Oh, and by the way. The Volkies don't like runners either.)<<<<<
—Partisan (23:05:06/12-07-55)

Jason Miller (order #9388877)

>>>>>>[WIND TRANSIT TERMINAL

::::::: prepared by CAVILCADE

CHI TRIB>NEWSNET>ZIMBRAKOS
NEW BUS CENTER OPENS
SEPTEMBER 4, 2044

Wind Transit christened a new eight-million dollar bus terminal on the northern edge of the Core Thursday.

"This new facility will enable Wind Transit to continue providing the prompt and courteous bus service Chicagoans have come to expect and to better meet the transportation needs of Chicago in the years to come,"said Earl Alot, Wind Transit president.

The new facility, built primarily underground, is located in the area bounded by 107th Street on the south, 103rd Street on the north, Western Avenue on the west, and Vincennes Avenue on the east. The terminal can accommodate up to 500 buses and boasts state-of-the-art maintenance facilities, Alot said at a news conference. Construction on the project began in June, 2042, shortly after Wind Transit was awarded a contract to provide bus service in the city ...

>>>>>(Now the Wind Transit Terminal is the Containment Zone's biggest used–car lot. Come on down and take your pick, no money down and no payments till—come to think of it, no payments, period. The only catch is those nasty beetles that live down in the sub-levels. But if you can get around that little problem, you can grab yourself your very own "people's limousine."These fraggin' things seat about 100 people and boast impressive armor for civilian vehicles. And the driver's seats are all enclosed in bulletproof glass. Mount a couple of automatic weapons on one of these babies and you have yourself quite the little party wagon.)<<<<<

—Rex Karz (10:06:44/11-27-55)

>>>>>(Soundz good, but keep in mind these boats get something like eight liters to the kilometer. If you're going any considerable distance, you'll wanna install an extra gas tank.)<<<<<

—Mario A. (13:23:45/11-28-55)

>>>>>(But don't ever try to flag one of these things down. In particular, beware of a certain bus with a psychedelic paint job. It's the preferred ride of the Happy Family. These slots are usually chipped out of their fraggin' minds and armed to the teeth. They're totally unpredictable. Once I seen 'em mow down an entire group of refugees just for the helluvit. The poor slots were just trudgin' along the edge of Armitage Avenue toward the Zone border, just mindin' their own business. Suddenly this bus pulls up, blaring some kinda crazy-ass music-box tune out of an old rusty speaker on the top. The fraggers in the bus yelled something at the refugees—sounded like "Come on, get happy!"to me—and then automatic weapons fire just poured out of the side windows.)<<<<<

—Orlov (11:54:01/11-29-55)

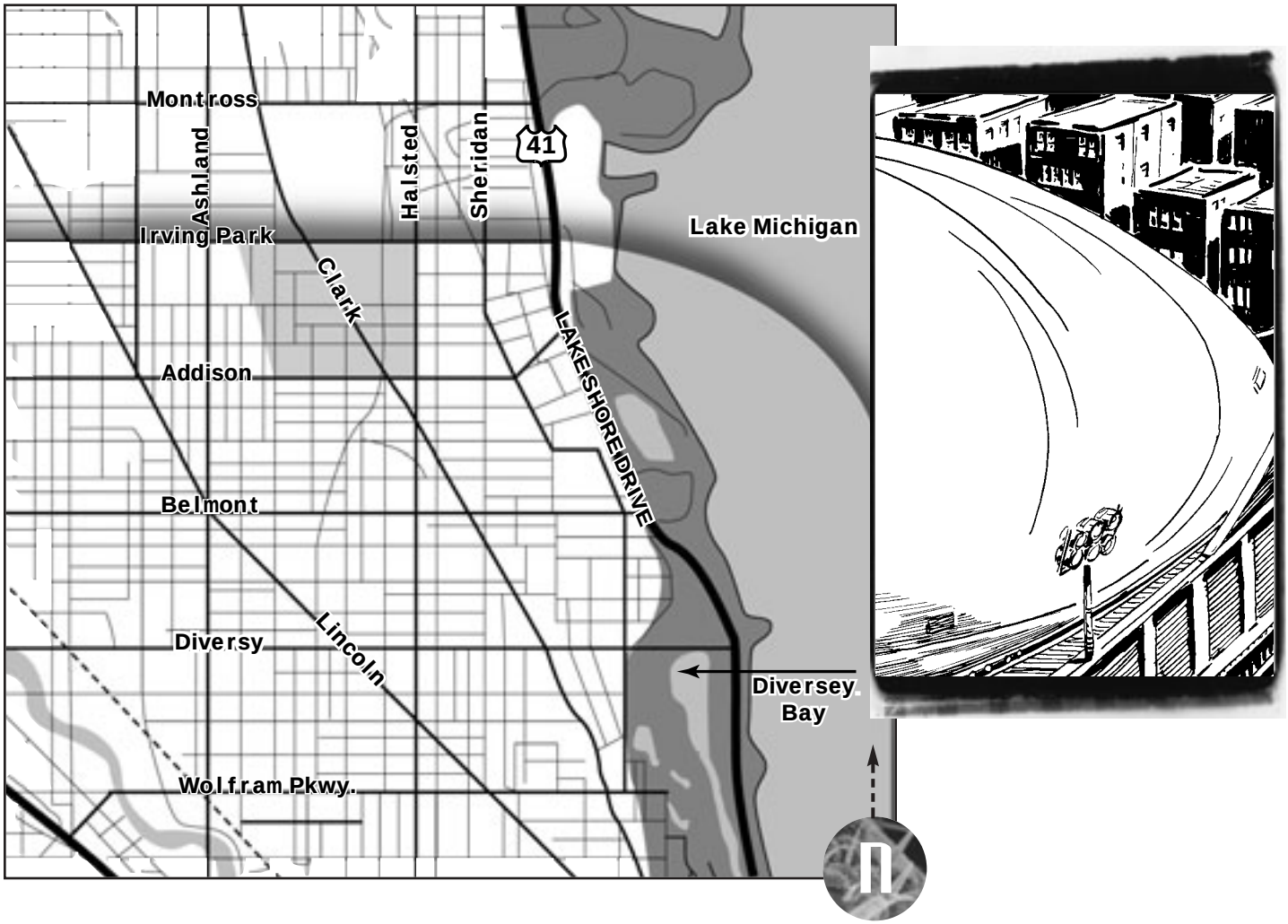
Jason Miller (order #55848

∘∘∘∘∘[WRIGLEY DOME [HAVEN]

:::::prepared by NIGHTHUNTER (under duress)

PIXFILE

CHICAGO∘MAPS∘WRIGLEY DOME



The Wrigley Dome is one of the most hospitable and secure havens in the Containment Zone. It is located at the northern edge of the Zone, in a former sports complex bounded by Irving Park Road on the north, Addison Street on the south, Halsted Street on the east and Clark Street on the west. The Dome is located less than half a mile from Lake Shore Drive and also contains an old elevated train station, which has been heavily secured by the Dome's residents.

MUNDANE DEFENSES

The residents of the Dome rely heavily on the construction of the Dome itself to provide protection against mundane threats. The ferrocrete outer walls of the facility are approximately fifteen meters high, and the transparent plasticrete roof dome fully encloses the structure.

The Clark Street side of the facility contains four entrances, three of which have been permanently sealed. The remaining sides each contain three entrances, but all of these have been permanently sealed except for one on the Halsted Street side. Fixed heavy machine guns and antivehicle missile launchers have been installed at the open entrances, and approximately ten guards armed with high-power sniper and assault rifles patrol the catwalks on top of the outer walls. The Dome's arsenal also includes at least one surveillance drone and a small supply of defensive, concussion, and offensive grenades.

Jason Miller (order #9388877)

Fifteen Knight–Errant officers and troopers founded the Wrigley Dome haven, and about half of the founders usually perform security duties at any given time. Approximately the same number of other residents of the Dome have also been trained in the use of firearms and help with security. The group of Knight–Errant founders also contains demolitions and surveillance experts and an experienced commander, whose skills greatly enhance the Dome's security force. All the Knight–Errant personnel are highly trained in armed and unarmed combat and have extensive combat experience. All members of the security force carry sidearms, and several also carry light machine guns.

MAGICAL DEFENSES

The Dome security force includes an experienced combat mage who is training three or four magically adept individuals from the Dome's population to bolster the Dome's meager magical defenses. It is also rumored that the leader of the Dome, one Captain Anne Ravenheart, is a mage also. ...

GETTING IN

The haven's Knight–Errant founders—particularly Captain Ravenheart—have so far tried to maintain an "open-door"policy. Under this policy, anyone who requests sanctuary in the Dome is admitted, as long as they agree to surrender all personal weapons, accept Ravenheart's supreme authority, observe basic UCAS law and to not disturb the orderly operation of the Dome. Additionally, all must accept work assignments set by Ravenheart or her officers.

POPULATION

Approximately 450 people live in the Dome in addition to the haven's Knight–Errant founders. Most are human, but the population contains some metahumans as well. These residents come from all walks of life, from former corporate employees to street people. This diverse mix has created tensions and occasionally minor confrontations, but Ravenheart is a fair leader who does not hesitate to expel "troublemakers."

All entry applicants must submit to an interview conducted by Ravenheart and her aides. Anyone with skills useful to the haven—such as medical or mechanical skills—receives first priority. Similarly, anyone who can offer useful supplies—such as ammunition, medicines or food—receives preferential treatment.

>>>>>(Ah yes, the old distinction between the haves and the have-nots—some things never change.)<<<<<
—Zapatista (05:06:27/12-01-55)

>>>>>(Well, it only makes sense. And nobody gets turned away. Some may get in sooner than others, but no one's turned away.)<<<<<
—Marcia L. (741369) (08:03:59/12-05-55)

>>>>>(That may change soon. More and more people are beginning to seek shelter at the Dome, and soon Ravenheart won't be able to oversee everything herself. And some of her aides are not quite as evenhanded as she.)<<<<<
—BeBop (04:39:12/12-09-55)

>>>>>(The rumors persist that the Ares team had something to do with causing all this—the bugs and the CZ and all. I think those rumors are unfounded, but it does mean that occasionally some group of badders will decide to teach the Domers a lesson and get themselves shot up.)<<<<<
—Trance (10:11:55/12-13-55)

>>>>>(If they didn't have anything to do with it, then how come they're still here? Don't you get it? They ain't just a group of Knight–Errant troopers—*they're a combat team*. You know, storm the plane, free the embassy, that sort of thing. And that ain't a surveillance drone they're flying, it's a *combat drone.*
Any a you jokers been down near Randolph and Sangamon? Huh? Something trashed a pair of big-ass trucks—combat–support vehicles—down there, just *ripped apart* their armor plating. There used to be a pile of bodies, all KE troopers from the looks of it, littered throughout the area. When did this happen? The night it all started, oh my children. The night it all started.)<<<<<
—Corp Killer (09:16:34/12-18-55)

>>>>>(Some people have reported seeing a VTOL making drops through the Dome's retractable roof section. Was it UCAS? Nope. Then why didn't they shoot it down? Well, a friend o' mine who saw one of the drops says it was a *stealth* VTOL ... and that smells like Ares ...)<<<<<
—JonRon (11:49:16/12-19-55)

Jason Miller (order #55848777)

ooooo[GANGS

:::::prepared by PATTY DAY

UCAS>CHICAGO CONTAINMENT ZONE>SECTION 3
ATTN: Commander Trenn
SUBJECT: Gang activity
Agent Justicia Jones reporting

Gangs have proliferated as another consequence of the lack of law enforcement in the Containment Zone. With no one left to keep them under control, they have multiplied like rats in a garbage dump. Some follow traditional pursuits—extortion, illegal chip trade, ultraviolence for fun and profit. Others—such as the Living Dead and the Fleshmongers—have found new ways to prey on their fellow residents in the unique environment of the Zone. And because turf and resources are scarce in the Zone, all gangs have become particularly ruthless.

Based on reports from informants, I'd say approximately 100 gangs are currently operating within the Zone. Unfortunately, we simply don't have the manpower to infiltrate more than a handful of these groups.

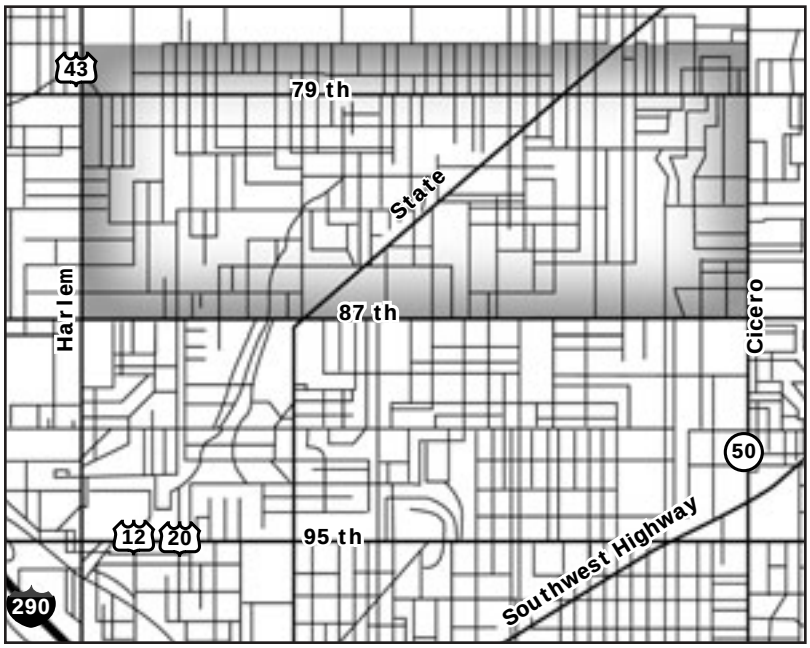
At this point, I cannot in good conscience recommend that we cultivate any single group for covert work—I simply lack adequate information.

I will keep you posted per standard procedure.

BLUE BOYZ

The Blue Boyz comprise an assortment of former Lone Star and Eagle Security personnel, ex-military types, and a few former corporate hitters. Like so many other Zone residents, the Blue Boyz were simply abandoned by their former employers when the Wall went up—no two weeks' notice, no severance pay, no going-away party. And like so many others, they were understandably angered by the shabby sendoff they received and now vent their hostility on their fellow residents. But unlike most others, their special training and gear has left them particularly well equipped to do so in an often lethal manner.

The Boyz specialize in intercepting military drops into the Containment Zone. They have a few security vehicles at their disposal, and they use these machines to dispatch strike teams to drop sites. The Blue Boyz have also successfully subjugated a number of smaller gangs in the areas surrounding their main turf. Apparently, these smaller gangs pay tribute to the Blue Boyz in the form of arms, goods, and information.



Headquarters/Turf

The Blue Boyz maintain a base of operations in the old Burbank MegaMall near the intersection of Narragansett and 87th streets. Their turf extends from 75th Street on the north to 87th Street on the south, and from Harlem Avenue on the west to Cicero Avenue on the east.

Members

Approximately 25 former law-enforcement, corp security, and military personnel form the core of the Blue Boyz. This core includes a number of experienced assassins, demolitions and weapons specialists, and others whose training make them especially dangerous. Another 25 lower-level "soldiers"round out the gang.

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Affiliations

The Blue Boyz exhibit a marked anti-metahuman bias and maintain friendly relations with the nearby Volksville enclave. They allegedly maintain ties with several governmental intelligence agencies as well.

>>>>>(These slots are fraggin' dangerous. They got missile launchers, armored vehicles—and they don't hesitate to use them. Damn straight they work for the feds. How else would they get all those goodies?)<<<<<
—T-Bone (03:14:56/11-29-55)

>>>>>(Hey Bone-head, getta clue. I agree these slots are dangerous, but lotsa the Boyz worked for the UCAS when the Wall went up. Their bosses left 'em to rot without a second thought. You really think they'd wanna help the slots who fragged 'em in the first place?)<<<<<
—Buzzcock (02:49:26/12-13-55)

>>>>>(Sorry, Bedrock, but I'm with T-Bone on this one. There's no other way to explain all their wiz mil-spec gear and the way they always seem to know when and where the drops are gonna happen. I wouldn't be surprised if they were spying for their masters as well.)<<<<<
—Stone (03:15:32/12-21-55)

>>>>>(I say we all go over there right now and string the quislings up!)<<<<<
—Shriekin' Sheila (04:01:42/12-27-55)

>>>>>(Right away, Sheila—you go first.)<<<<<
—P Body (03:38:21/12-30-55)

FLESHMONGERS/LIVING DEAD

Residents of the Containment Zone universally fear and hate the Fleshmongers and the Living Dead. That's because the Mongers and the Dead are what's known as "butchers."They supply the residents of Ghoultown with fresh flesh—human, that is. In exchange for live human (and metahuman, sometimes) captives, the ghouls provide the gangs with ammunition and guns.

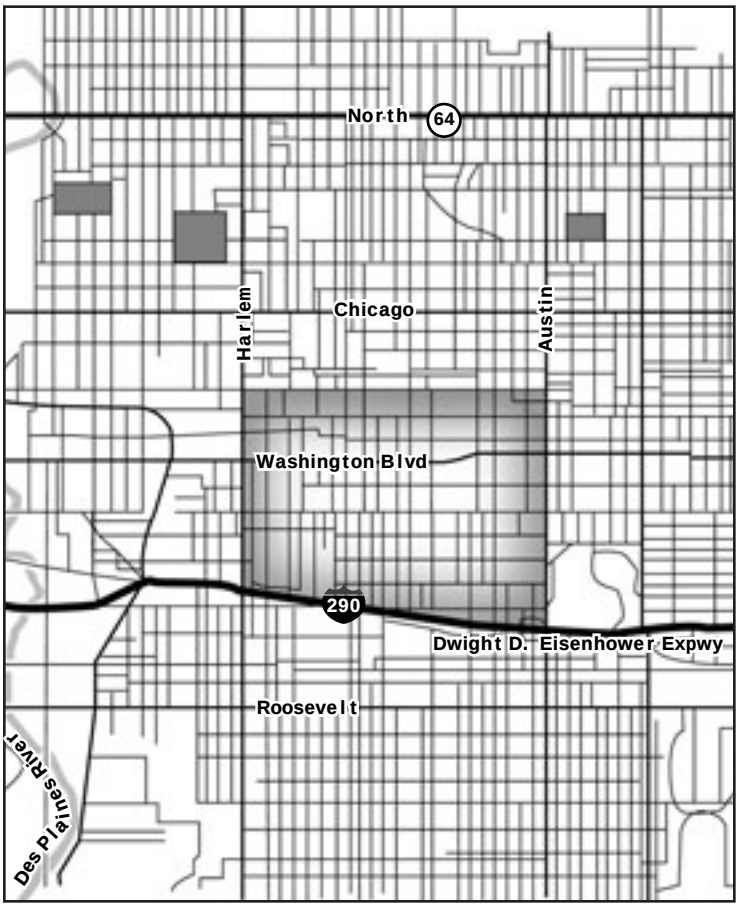
>>>>>(And those fraggers need plenty of both. The Mongers and the Dead are the creme de la slime. I mean, ghouls can't really help themselves—they gotta eat people to survive. But these people are betraying their own kind just for the profit. Even feeding them to the bugs is too good for their likes.)<<<<<
—Scream Queen (02:42:11/12-11-55)

The Fleshmongers usually use numerical superiority to subdue their victims by force. On the other hand, the Living Dead more often resort to trickery. For example, someone in the group may pose as a fixer to lure a victim into a trap.

Headquarters/Turf

The Fleshmongers operate out of the old Oak Park neighborhood. They use a large semi as their mobile headquarters—they gotta keep moving or people would rip 'em to bits. They range up and down the old Eisenhower Expressway, watching for the lone motorist or setting up roadblocks to capture their victims.

The Living Dead concentrate their activities in the northern half of the Zone, but they have been known to operate throughout the Walled City. They, too, are constantly mobile, probably



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for the same reason the Mongers keep moving. The Dead seem to favor armored trucks and old delivery vans as their transport, and they usually operate at night.

Members

The Fleshmongers' numbers hover around fifteen to twenty at any given time. The Living Dead contains about ten to fifteen members. However, the strength of both gangs fluctuates.

>>>>>(That's 'cause anyone with a nine iron or a Saturday night special is always happy to geek one of these dreks. And every now and then when the delivery is a little short, the ghouls will grab a couple of them to round out the menu.)<<<<<
—Julia C. (05:46:45/12-10-55)

Affiliations

Both gangs are affiliated with the residents of Ghoultown. No one else will deal with the Fleshmongers or the Living Dead.

JOLLY ROGERS

The Rogers are a band of would-be pirates who patrol the north branch of the Chicago River in tricked out motorboats—old police patrol vessels, sightseeing boats, and the like. They survive by selling illegal chips, preying on unsuspecting folks crossing the bridges, ferrying passengers into and out of the Noose, and collecting the odds and ends that get tossed into the river's putrid waters.

Headquarters/Turf

The Jolly Rogers maintain a base of operations on Goose Island, in the northwest corner of the Noose. From there, they venture out along the north branch of the river, from just north of Wacker Drive to the northern boundary of the Containment Zone at Irving Park Road.

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Members

The number of Jolly Rogers changes constantly, but it generally hovers between ten and twenty.

>>>>>(Their numbers hover cuz these drekheads like to get chipped out of their tiny little brains and then tool around in their little speed-boats. They're their own worst enemy.)<<<<<
—Kap'n Krunch (24:35:03/12-17-55)

Affiliations

The Rogers are a group of whacked out, totally unprofessional individuals, and so very few people want to deal with them. As a result, they are pretty much a solo act. However, they are rumored to have dealings with the Nasty Grrrls, a small all-female gang that frequents the area of the Noose called Wicked Park.

>>>>>(What would the Rogers want with *that* group of crazy babes?)<<<<<
—Sir Isaac (03:55:12/12-02-55)

>>>>>(One guess. It starts with "C"and that rhymes with "T"and it stands for trouble.)<<<<<
—Muzik Man (04:02:55/12-06-55)

>>>>>(You mean *chips* ?)<<<<<
—Sir Isaac (04:10:13/12-12-55)

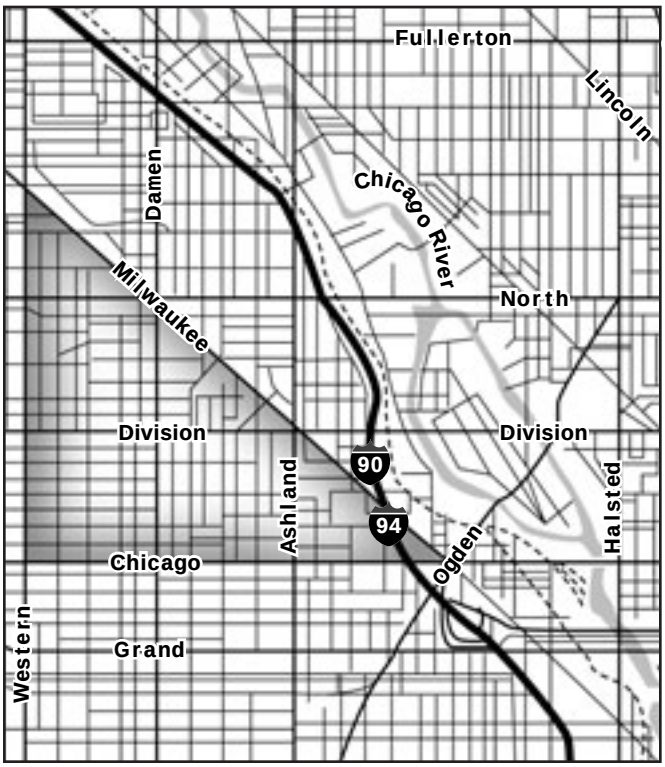
>>>>>(Give ze mon un cigar!)<<<<<
—Zigmund Floyd (03:49:01/12-17-55)

NASTY GRRRLS

Little is known about the group called the Nasty Grrrls. Some claim the gang is nothing more than an urban legend, spawned by the fevered dream of some chiphead. According to the usual account, the Grrrls target male runners by exploiting the male ego. They mesmerize their victims with their stunning looks and portray themselves as helpless individuals trapped within the Zone who are searching for a strong male runner to help them escape, survive, or rescue an aging mother or younger sister held captive by some evil warlord or gang. The victim goes off to help the "damsel in distress"and simply disappears, never to be heard from again.

>>>>>(This is NOT just some street rumor! The Grrrls are very real and very dangerous. And they're not human either—they're mantid spirits. They'll do you then SURPRISE!—they'll bite your head off and chow down.)<<<<<
—P Body (13:51:48/12-01-55)

>>>>>(Come now, Mr. P—you simply don't want to believe that the human female can mix it up with the best of them. I mean, it's only the oldest trick in the book. And any slot stupid enough to fall for it probably should die anyway—it stops the propagation of the drek-for-brains gene.)<<<<<
—Gloria S. (348870) (07:12:54/12-10-55)



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>>>>>(Done in by their own deluded sense of male superiority. Some kinda poetic justice in there.)<<<<<
—Nell C. (547829) (09:56:03/12-18-55)

>>>>>(It's like I always say—a pretty face and a gun will always get you farther than just a pretty face.)<<<<<
—Annie O. (109875) (12:33:15/12-19-55)

Headquarters/Turf

Generally, the Grrrls prowl the area bounded by Milwaukee, Western, and Chicago avenues—the old Wicked Park neighborhood. However, they have been known to strike as far north as Armitage and as far west as Kedzie. They are rumored to maintain a headquarters at the old Everleigh Club at the corner of Milwaukee and Damen.

Members

The standard rumor places membership of the Grrrls at five to ten members.

Affiliations

According to rumors, the Nasty Grrrls have been known to supply illegal simchips to the Jolly Rogers in exchange for live victims.

>>>>>(Now that one sounds improbable. From everything I've heard, the Grrrls are one very competent group. So why would they want to deal with a bunch of losers like the Rogers?)<<<<<
—Gloria S. (348870) (22:37:11/12-20-55)

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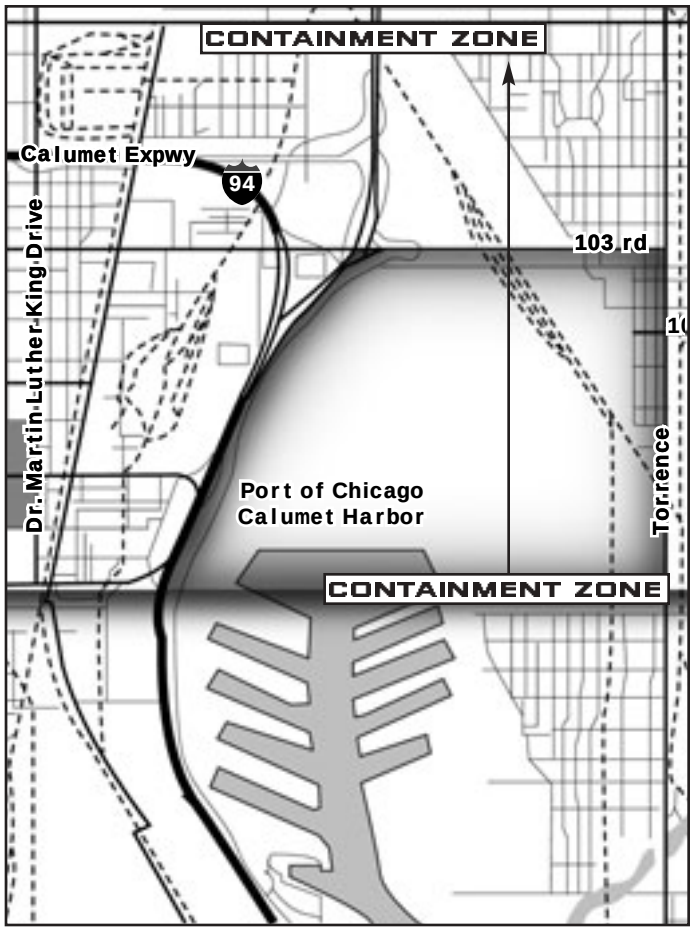
SWAMP THANGS

The Swamp Thangs are probably the most hated gang in the Containment Zone, because they cooperate with the bugs—thereby breaking the single taboo observed almost universally by Zone residents. The gang follows a reputed Roach shaman known as the Foul One. Few individuals venture into the putrid dump the gang calls its turf, and so the members regularly venture out into the nearby areas of the Zone to kidnap victims. The gang then presents the victims to the Foul One, who uses them as hosts for roach spirits.

>>>>>(The bloody slots don't care about the taboo because they're not human—they're flesh-form roach spirits summoned by the Foul One.)<<<<<
—Razorback (16:44:12/12-19-55)

Headquarters/Turf

The Swamp Thangs control the Calumet toxic swamp, which lies a few miles east of the Core along the southern boundary of the Containment Zone. The swamp, located on the north end of Lake Calumet, has been a dumping ground for industrial wastes for nearly 200 years. It was virtually uninhabited until the Foul One recently appeared and the Swamp Thangs took up residence in its foul environs.



Members

The Swamp Thangs contain about ten to fifteen members, in addition to their leader, the Foul One.

Affiliations

The gang has no known affiliations with any other groups.

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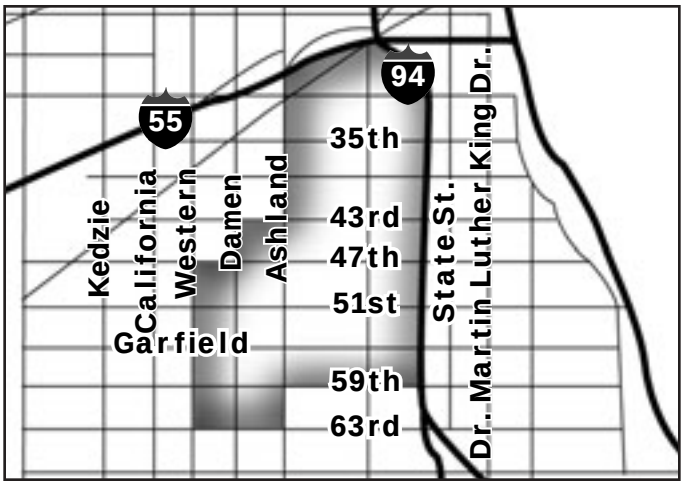
[WARLORDS

:::::prepared by HAWKEYE

In addition to gangs, numerous petty and not-so-petty warlords have arisen within the Containment Zone to fill the power vacuum created by the absence of traditional organized crime outfits. Some control vast areas and command small armies of followers, while others are scarcely larger than most gangs. Generally, these warlords are more sophisticated and powerful than the countless gangs of the Zone, and they often expand their territories by subjugating gangs and then making them pay "taxes"or contribute "soldiers"to the warlord.

Generally, the warlords support themselves and their armies by looting old stores and warehouses in their territories, intercepting food and supply drops, robbing any outsiders who wander through their territories, and extorting money from less powerful warlords and gangs.

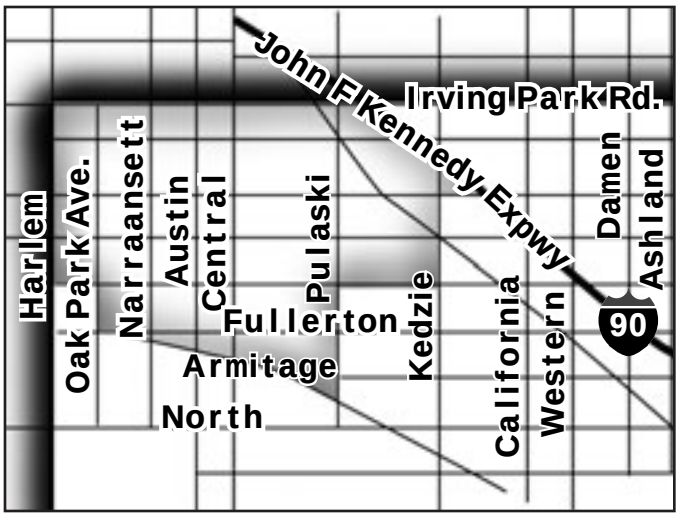
I'd guess that between 50 and 60 warlords operate in the Containment Zone. The two most powerful warlords, Catherine the Terrible and King Vlad, are described here. No other warlords control anywhere near the amount of territory these two command.



CATHERINE THE TERRIBLE

Cathy Cunningham, more commonly known as "Catherine the Terrible," is probably the most powerful warlord in the Containment Zone. A former UCAS intelligence operative, Cunningham has a charismatic personality that she has used to amass a small army of humans, orks and trolls that exerts control over a large area south of the Noose. The area contains about 150 gangs, all of which pay tribute to Cunningham. Her army includes a small detail of combat mages and is extremely well equipped. Its arsenal includes armored vehicles and mil-spec weapons, which has led many to believe Cunningham still has contacts with the UCAS intelligence service.

Though Cunningham deals ruthlessly with any challenges to her power, she is fairly generous to those who accept her authority. Undoubtedly it is this generosity that enables her to rule the numerous gangs in her territory.



KING VLAD

Vlad, the self-proclaimed king of the orks, is Cathy Cunningham's only serious rival for power in the Zone. Vlad and his army, which he has dubbed the Raging Horde, reign over a large area in the northwest corner of the Containment Zone. The Horde, however, often ventures out to raid small havens and gangs throughout the Zone.

Vlad and his Horde lack the mil-spec weapons and combat vehicles of Cunningham's army, but they do possess a large number of rifles and handguns, as well as a considerable fleet of old cars, trucks, and motorcycles—all modified for combat use. They specialize in hit-and-run tactics and display an unmatched ferocity. Vlad is anything but a generous or tolerant ruler, and so he must constantly fend off small rebellions and plots from the small gangs within his territory.

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GAME INFORMATION

The following section offers suggestions and behind-the-scenes information to help gamemasters run Bug City. In addition to providing some rationale for the events of this book and explaining why those events took place, this section includes rules for the physical and economic changes that characters face in Chicago, specific information on the insect spirits infesting the city, and profiles of the new movers and shakers in the City that Works.

WHAT IS BUG CITY?

Bug City is a sourcebook for the **Shadowrun** game. In addition to providing information on the state of the City of Chicago and how it came to be in its current condition, **Bug City** accomplishes a few other things. The events in Chicago change the **Shadowrun** world for the first time since the creation of that fictional universe in 1989. After **Bug City**, things work a little differently in the Sixth World. Most of the general populace now accepts the existence of insect totems, even if they don't understand exactly what that means. Governments and common folk alike now see that grave threats to the world exist on a scale of which they never dreamed.

The Awakening certainly changed the world beyond many folks' comprehension, but most viewed it as a sort of benign transformation of much the same nature as technological progress. Many more never concerned themselves with the deeper implications of the fundamental difference the presence of magic made in the world. What happened in Chicago falls into the category of the in-your-face kind of bad most people try to ignore.

Bug City also clearly illustrates that the UCAS government not only failed to plan how to handle a threat of this magnitude, but it clearly cannot manage the current crisis in any acceptable way. See **The Outside World,** p. 127, for more on this thought. Suffice it to say that the citizens of UCAS feel less confidence in their government than they used to feel. Life in the UCAS may suffer long-term repercussions from that loss of confidence, but only time will tell.

USING BUG CITY

The John Carpenter film *Escape from New York* best exemplifies the Containment Zone in Chicago—with the added distraction of the horrifying, voracious alien bug spirits. The CZ is a dark, violent place where emotion rules over reason and survival of the fittest is a way of life. The sign at the gate of Dante's Hell, " All Hope Abandon,Ye Who Enter Here," may well be nailed to the wall of the Containment Zone.

Gamemasters running campaigns and adventures in Chicago may find the events described in **Bug City** upsetting and downright disruptive to their games. These events, however, need not change everything for all runners. Gamemasters may simply choose to ignore the massive bug infestation and breakout in their **Shadowrun** game. If the gamemaster and players in a group want to keep their stomping grounds from becoming a combat zone, the gamemaster can easily move the events of **Bug City** to some other place. It is not essential that the bugs devastate Chicago, only that they wreak havoc on this scale somewhere. If the gamemaster wants the bugs to erupt in the city where his players' characters usually hang rather than Chicago, that's cool too.

Gamemasters can fit the events of Bug City into their campaign even if the existing time line of their ongoing **Shadowrun** games do not match the dates in this book. Simply change the dates. Begin with the hatching of the first hive and the initial stages of the quarantine, incorporate the Cermak nuke-blast and its repercussions, then customize the rampant deterioration of local conditions to forever alter the way the characters think about their world. The events of **Bug City** (shameless author plug) are most vividly recounted in the **Shadowrun** novel **Burning Bright,** by Tom Dowd, currently available through your local game or book retailer. The **Bug City** sourcebook focuses on what happened *because* of the events that take place in the novel.

Finally, gamemasters should feel free to rearrange the order and even the nature of the events described in **Bug City** to create the best possible fit into their existing **Shadowrun** stories. Much like the **Denver** boxed set, the design of **Bug City** allows, even encourages, the gamemaster to customize the current conditions in Chicago to suit his group's and his own style of play and the setting of his ongoing campaign. **Bug City** goes beyond simply describing what FASA has decided about Chicago and incorporated into the current and future time line. What happens in Chicago depends largely on the individual gamemaster.

In the Long Run

One of the dangers of basing a story line solely on published material is the possibility that any given product might radically change the way the fictional universe works (rather like this book, in fact!). The changes that **Bug City** brings to **Shadowrun** will remain in effect for some time.

FASA's return to the Containment Zone may take the form of novels or additional game products. Any further comment on the CZ, however, will focus on the reactions and actions of outside agencies regarding Chicago. The city itself is isolated,

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cut off from the rest of the world—and that makes it a perfect gamemaster playground. Future FASA products concerning Bug City will address a potential resolution to the crisis, but the UCAS government (and others) will need at least a year, and perhaps more, to deal with the problem of Chicago. Outside forces (i.e. the government and others) will do their best to guarantee that the conditions and events inside the Containment Zone will have little to no impact on what is happening outside.

GAMEMASTERING BUG CITY

Gamemasters can use the **Bug City** sourcebook in two primary ways: as part of an ongoing **Shadowrun** game in which Chicago becomes a place the runners journey to on special missions and other adventures, or to create an independent or parallel **Shadowrun** story line to be played out entirely within Chicago using a different set of player characters.

Not a Nice Place to Visit ...

Gamemasters who choose to use Chicago as a source of shadowruns should find a way to emphasize the following elements. Because this document reveals the truth of the situation inside the Containment Zone (or what people believe to be the truth), the player characters now know what factors they must take into consideration in order to safely get in, get their job done (in what has become an alien environment), and get out again.

Gamemasters should allow the player characters to face the major elements of Chicago's Containment Zone headon. Because the runners only visit the city, they can meet and interact with the insect spirits, warlords, gangs, and so on every time they set foot inside the CZ. Every story set in Chicago can be wild and wooly, action packed, full of big risks and potentially bigger payoffs.

The gamemaster should never, however, allow the runners to ignore the plight of the citizens of Chicago. The city should not become a shooting gallery where runners can act without conscience because no law or law enforcement exists to stop them. The gamemaster should stress the true horror of the place, the day-to-day terror its inhabitants must face every moment while hoping to survive. Most of the people caught in the Containment Zone are ordinary citizens coping with fading hopes and fragile emotions. Make Chicago a terrible place to visit, not just an opportunity to cut loose.

... And I Gotta Live There

Gamemasters who choose to set ongoing campaigns within Chicago should give their version of Bug City an entirely different feel. Supplies of all kinds are scarce, emotional and racial tensions run high, and the bugs are everywhere (at least they seem to be ...). The Chicago that the runners must live in is a desperate place full of people trying to survive long enough to escape.

While stories centering on runners living inside the CZ must also account for the warlords, gangs, bugs, and other unpleasant facts of everyday life inside the Wall, constant encounters with these major factors quickly will become tiresome and rapidly

exhaust the player characters' ammo and other supplies. Player character interaction with a haven or warlord should be a big deal, a major, unusual event in their lives. As with the corporations in the outside world, the gangs and the warlords are the real powers-that-be within the Containment Zone and should not be treated or dealt with lightly.

The main focus of stories set within the Containment Zone always should be people, people with real emotions, thoughts, goals, dreams, hopes, and fears. Powerful stories can be told by allowing characters to interact with and perhaps help the ordinary people of Chicago, stories that cannot be resolved with a couple of well-placed bursts of machine-gun fire or a few mana blasts.

The player characters may eventually escape from the prison of the Containment Zone, but that action must represent a long-term goal. If escape were accomplished easily, more people would have done it by now. And leaving the Zone offers the gamemaster a wonderful opportunity to present the characters with a new set of dramatic problems—when the characters escape, how many others can they take with them—and who should they include in their breakout?

THE OUTSIDE WORLD

The following time line outlines the information of which the general public is aware and the information the government has released (which may be two different things) concerning the events in Chicago as well as the rumors and gossip rippling through the shadow community. Events noted in parentheses are not public or common knowledge.

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TIMELINE

Date	Event
Before August 2055	Reported incidents of missing persons increase in most major North American cities. (Following the events of the **SR** adventure **Double Exposure,** various insect nests/hives increase their "recruitment" efforts.)
August 22, Late Afternoon	(The mega-hive west of the Noose erupts following an attack by Knight–Errant.) Eagle Security is flooded with bizarre calls reporting "giant bugs."
August 22, Early Evening	(A description of the true nature of the Chicago "problem" reaches Washington, F.D.C. Higher-ups begin to panic over the possibility that the population of an entire city may turn into "bug-men.")
August 22, Late Evening/ August 23,	(Plans for the quarantine begin. The UCAS mobilizes Army and Early Morning National Guard units. UCAS government agents assume control of Eagle Security and begin a disinformation campaign aimed at the people of Chicago and the UCAS proper in an effort to keep the population calm and stationary until the military units can move into place.)
August 23, Early Morning	(UCAS intelligence agents sabotage the three major Chicagoland Matrix/newsgrid relay stations. The government now finds it neccessary to cajole, negotiate, or extort the silence of the major news organizations.)
August 23, Late Afternoon	UCAS military and National Guards units establish the Containment Zone perimeter. The Federal Government issues a formal notice announcing the presence of a new strain of VITAS and declares Chicago under military quarantine. (Smaller news stories about bizarre events in a number of North American cities describing the activities of other insect hives/nests are buried by the pressing importance of the Chicago story. UCAS, corporate, and local officials successfully deal with these lesser bug threats.)
August 23, Early/Late Evening	Rioting begins within the Containment Zone as thousands of citizens attempt to flee. UCAS troops fire on the rioters, killing at least 50. The government begins construction of the physical containment wall.
August 26	Supply drops into the city begin.
October 1, Early Morning	Someone detonates what is apparently a subtactical nuclear weapon north of the Core near Cermak and Halstead. (Responsibility remains unassigned, though rumors connect the event to a corporate strike team.)
October 4	Containment Zone walls are effectively in place. (Various warlord wannabes begin consolidating power.)
October 5	(UCAS officials learn that the Cermak nuke blast knocked a large percentage of the insect spirits into an apparent torpor. Certain factions suggest detonatiing additional nuclear weapons to neutralize the remainder of the insect spirits, but the National Security Council fails to recommend the plan to the president.)
October–November, 2055	The general public continues to believe that the City of Chicago is infected with a new form of physically contagious VITAS. (Warlords and gangs continue to consolidate power and define turfs. Various havens are established, and the Chicago under Siege BBS becomes stable within the CZ.)
November–December, 2055	The general public becomes suspicious of certain "irregularities" regarding the events in Chicago. The World Health Organization questions the validity of the VITAS claim. (Rumors begin to circulate in the Matrix and on the Shadowland BBS regarding the true nature of the Chicago "problem.")
Late December, 2055	The City under Siege file compilation appears at the Nexus in Denver. The sysops verify the contents, broadcast the file to all Shadowland nodes, and disseminate it to the public at large. The secret is out.

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Permanent Solutions

As soon as the Matrix file reached the world outside of Chicago, international pressure came to bear on the UCAS to come clean about the Chicago situation. That pressure included strongly worded encouragement to use military force to resolve the problem. However, the UCAS government is already taking advice from a powerful counsel—the government of Tir Tairngire and the Great Dragon Lofwyr. Those forces have convinced the UCAS that conventional forces could not liberate the city from the insect spirits and that a large-scale magical strike would only serve to waken the bugs currently in torpor—a definite no-win situation. The Tir Princes and the Great Dragon suggest that the UCAS adopt a wait-and-see posture, and claim to be working on a solution of their own.

Only the future knows what that solution might be and when it will be ready. In the meantime, the City of Chicago remains isolated, the government of UCAS continues to suffer enormous internal and external pressure to resolve the situation, and people in Chicago continue to die. …

THE WALL

For general information on the nature and structure of the Containment Zone wall, see **Living In Oblivion,** pp. 55–57. When reading that description and the following information, keep in mind that the Containment Zone barrier was designed to keep people *in*, not out.

ON LAND

The physical barrier of the Containment Zone consists primarily of debris, which makes moving through it, over it or under it very difficult and treacherous. Attempting to climb the wall is dangerous because the materials in the barrier tend to be loose and unsupported. Big explosions just tend to move the crap around.

The following rules simulate the difficult, precarious task of climbing through huge piles of shifting debris. Hand- and footholds give way without warning, and what seems stable rarely is. Generally speaking, climbing the wall (moving from the ground on one side to the ground on the other side) requires 2D6 Complex Actions. Each time the character attempts to climb the wall, he must make a Climbing (2D6) Test. The character need only achieve 1 success in order to move forward, but if more than one half (round up) the dice rolled to make the test have a result of 1, the character has slipped and must take an additional 1D6 ÷ 2 (round down) Complex Actions to complete the climb. When a character slips, he also must make a Damage Resistance Test using Body against a Target Number of 4 (base Damage Level of S). Impact armor reduces the target number. Characters that attempt any physical action while climbing must add a +2 modifier to all target numbers.

The debris barrier has a Barrier Rating of 12 against explosives or explosivelike attacks such as elemental-effect blast magics, and 24 against other attacks, such as firearms and unarmed combat.

Spotting Climbers

To determine if the Containment Zone guards spot a character on or near the debris barrier, make a Perception Test for the guards using an Attribute Rating of 5. Determine a target number based on the range to the target using the shotgun ranges on page 88 of **SRII,** applying appropriate Perception Test modifiers from page 185, **SRII,** and the Visibility Modifiers from page 89, **SRII**. At the gamemaster's discretion, he may declare sensors to be present at that site and add an additional 2D6 ÷ 2 (round up) dice to the Perception Test to represent the sensitivity of those sensors.

The Towers

Every tower is equipped with two high-power spothand floodlights that can illuminate a ten–meter-radius area anywhere within 150 meters of the tower to the equivalent of daylight. Armored glass of Barrier Rating 9 protects the lights, which have a Barrier Rating of 3. Characters shooting or attacking directly into the light must add the Visbility modifier for Glare to their target number (p. 89, **SRII**).

Steel towers/barriers and wooden towers/barriers have Barrier Ratings of 18 and 14, respectively. When applicable, use the standard Partial Cover modifier or the expanded Cover Modifiers rules from p. 78, **Fields of Fire**. The equipment of each tower also includes at least one set of low-light/thermographic binoculars and a load of flares capable of illuminating the area within 75 meters of the tower to the equivalent of daylight.

Each guard in the tower is equipped with one Colt M22A2 assault rifle with Recoil Reduction 3, a laser sight, an under-barrel grenade launcher and six concussion minigrenades. Some towers also offer Ingram Valiant LMGs mountable to a tower-attached tripod (one-half Recoil) and 200 belted rounds for that weapon. Some towers also stock six regular-sized neuro-stun grenades and the occasional rocket launcher with two HER rounds. Any SAMs used against the residents of the Containment Zone are fired from dedicated APCs outside the wall, not from the towers.

The Guards

For the guards' statistics, use the Corporate Security Guard Contact, p. 205, **SRII,** with a Threat/Professional Rating of 2/2. They wear the equivalent of an armored jacket (5/3) and have access to the weapons described in **The Towers.** Most also carry a personal sidearm, usually the Beretta Model 101T.

Because the guards primarily represent regular UCAS Army of Illinois State National Guardsmen, they feel reluctant to fire on people trapped within the Containment Zone. They firmly believe, however, that if any of the bugs escape from Chicago it could mean the end of life as they know it. Still, when push comes to lethal shove, some guards will hesitate to take the proscribed action. To fire with lethal force, a guard must make a Willpower (9) Test and achieve at least 1 success. The guard must make this test once each action for as long as the target remains in his line of sight, until the test is successful, or the target passes beyond line of sight. Guards reflexively

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avoid shooting at women and children; add +2 to the target number for the first shot against such a target. If a target is attempting to climb or penetrate the CZ barrier in some manner, reduce the guard's target number by 1 for each Combat Turn that passes in which the guard does not shoot. If shot at, all guards immediately return fire.

OVER WATER

For statistics and descriptions of the water- and airborne vehicles mentioned in **Living in Oblivion,** p. 55, see the **Rigger Black Book**. For the game statistics of the guards manning those craft, use the guards as described in **The Towers** and **The Guards.**

A swimmer striking out from shore is at minimal risk of detection. The further he swims, the more likely he is to be spotted. Roll 2D6 for each minute the character stays in the water. On a result of 4 or less during the day and a result of 2 at night, the patrol spots the swimmer. When the character moves to within 50 meters of the sensor-buoy chain, the gamemaster need only roll 8 or less and 4 or less, respectively.

IN THE ETHER

To determine if an astrally projecting character can pass the wall of the Containment Zone without being detected, consult the Astral Patrolling rules on page 92 of the second–edition **Grimoire.** Standard astral security for the wall is represented by a Rating 4 watcher spirit patrolling less than 2,000 square meters in Tight Terrain. Apply the appropriate modifiers from the Spirit Patrol Modifiers Table on that page. If the watcher detects the astrally projecting character, use the Astral Evasion rules from p. 149, **SRII,** to determine the outcome of the encounter. When a character is detected, the gamemaster also should roll on the Astral Security Table to determine if there are additional astral security assets in the area.

ASTRAL SECURITY TABLE

Die Roll (2D6)	Result
2–3	Same as 6–8, plus a Combat Mage (see p. 50, **SRII,** Threat/Professional Rating 4/3)
4–5	Same as 6–8, plus 1D6 watchers
6–8	An additional 1D6 ÷ 2 (round down) Force 4 watchers
9–10	An additional 1D6 ÷ 2 (round down) Force 6 watchers
11–12	A single watcher guards the area

COUNTERFORCE TEAMS

The UCAS military recruited these special forces teams from within their own ranks to take care of any necessary dirty work within Chicago. Each counterforce team comprises a mix of combat mages, street sams, cybered mercs, and other operatives highly armed and trained in the fine art of death-dealing. The gamamaster sets the number of team members and the team's composition based on the role he intends them to play in the ongoing story. As a general rule, play these nasty boys as extremely disciplined warriors who have little love or patience for warlords or shadowrunners. And they don't take no lip from nobody (unless ordered to.)

OTHER ASSETS

The containment wall and those who guard it represent only part of the security assets the UCAS maintains in Chicago. The UCAS has posted encampments of additional guards, support personnel, medical units, and supplies at various points around the Containment Zone, in addition to at least two helicopter/VTOL field pads (with fuel and ammo reloads), several counterforce-team staging areas, and strategically placed headquarters/bunkers belonging to the military supervisors.

The UCAS also maintains an impressive amount of heavy duty mil-spec gear near the CZ, ranging from attack helicopters to light scout and medium combat LAVs. Approximately two battalions of UCAS troops (about 1,900 men) are encamped in various company-sized groups (about 110 soldiers each) around the outskirts of the wall and receive additional support from the nearly 300 members of the Illinois National Guard attached to those units.

Because characters who attempt to escape from the Containment Zone may choose to do so at any location along the Wall, the gamemaster should determine the placement and configuration of these other assets in the manner that best suits his purposes. Without a clear indication of where the UCAS places these assets, the players must accept the possibility that their characters might make it over the Wall and stumble right into the kill-zone of an LAV out for a midnight manuever.

The UCAS carrier *Wolverine,* stationed on Lake Michigan, provides air support for the UCAS troops stationed near the Wall, mostly troop-transport helicopters, VTOLs, and other ground-attack support craft. The gamemaster may choose to have the carrier also support an additional battalion of UCAS Marines. The carrier is also equipped with half a dozen naval fighter-bomber jets similar to the Federated-Boeing Eagle VTOL on page 91 of the **Rigger Black Book**.

THE SHADOW MARKET

For all intents and purposes, nuyen is worthless inside the Containment Zone. Some people insist on hoarding it against the day they escape from the Zone (hah!), but most people inside believe that you've gotta live for today, and that what you have now is all that is worth having. That makes barter the economic word for the times.

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Because the barter system of economics has never really worked in the real world, it seemed futile to try to create a game system that adequately represents that system. Instead, we suggest that gamemasters translate all items and services to adjusted nuyen equivalents and use those values as the basis for any exchange. Quite frankly, however, it's difficult to decide the best way to set a price in the barter system when exchanging goods for services (the main problem with barter in our world). The players and gamemaster will just have to wing it and hope everything evens out in the end.

The Containment Zone Costs table, p. 59 in **Living in Oblivion,** provides the adjusted value of various common goods in the **Shadowrun** game. If player characters want to barter with or for an item or service that does not appear on that list, begin negotiations with the price of the closest 1994 equivalent (U.S. dollars = nuyen).

Demand obviously plays an important part in determining the adjusted value of goods or services. Because demand is a strictly story-based element, the gamemaster must determine barter value for specific items or services central to his adventure or campaign. A warlord in desperate need of Medicine X to save the life of his only child will, for example, willingly pay or trade a value significantly higher than will a person only interested in the medicine's non–specific value. In the seller's market of the Containment Zone, the gamemaster makes the value judgment.

GETTING FOOD

Fortunately, lack of food is not one of the problems of the Containment Zone. The UCAS government drops enough food into Chicago to go around. Granted, the food the feds drop is not very tasty or satisifying, but they drop enough of it to keep people alive and healthy. It would take only a few people to begin hoarding the food supplies, however, or a warlord deciding to hit a food drop or two to throw off the delicate balance. The feds drop only enough to eat, not to store, and no real buffer exists to keep people going if the food stops flowing …

GETTING WHAT YOU WANT

Real or perceived value aside, some goods and services will be prohibitively expensive (however one pays for them) or completely unattainable because certain things just are not available in the Zone. To reflect this fact of life, modify the Availability Code and Street Index for the following items as shown on the Rare Items Availability/Street Index Table, p.132. For example, the Availability modifer +3/x3 instructs the gamemaster to increase the Availability target number by 3 and multiply the base time needed to acquire the item by 3. Generally Unavailable indicates that the item(s) in question are usually not for sale; at the gamemaster's discretion, the characters must find a way other than barter to acquire these items. The Street Index further reflects the Generally Unavailable classification by indicating that the item belongs to a seller's market (Seller) and the price usually exceeds the Street Index given in parentheses.

Unless otherwise stated, use standard rules for Availability.

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RARE ITEMS AVAILABILITY/STREET INDEX TABLE

ITEM	AVAILABILITY	STREET INDEX
Weaponry		
Ammunition		
Normal	+2/x2	8
APDS	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Other Ammunition	+2/x3	10–12
Rockets, APR and HER	+4/x3	15–20
Other Rockets	+3/x3	Seller (30+)
Missiles		Generally Unavailable Seller (40+)
Mortar Rounds	Generally Unavailable	Seller (40+)
Explosives		
Standard Grenades	+4/x4	15
IPE Grenades	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Commercial Explosives	+2/x2	18
Other Explosives	+2/x2	15–18
Firearm Accessories		
Smartlink (Lvl I)	+3/x3	6
Smartlink (Lvl II)	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Recoil Compensation, Rating 1–3*	+2/x2	6
Recoil Compensation, Rating 4–5*	+4/x3	12
Recoil Compensation, Rating 6*	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Imaging Systems, Optical	+2/x3	6
Imaging Systems, Electronic	+4/x3	10
Low-Power Laser Sight	+2/x2	15
Target Designators	Generally Unavailable	Seller (40+)
Firearms		
Hold-out Pistols	+2/x2	5
Light Pistols	+3/x2	6
	Burst-Fire Capable	+5/x3 12
Machine Pistols	+3/x3	8
Heavy Pistols	+3/x2	10
	Burst-Fire Capable	+5/x3 20
Special Weapons**	+4/x3	12
Submachine Guns	+3/x2	9
Sport Rifles	+2/x2	8
Sniper Rifles	+5/x4	Seller (30+)
Shotguns	+3/x2	6
	Burst-Fire Capable	Generally Unavailable Seller (30+)
Assault Rifles	+4/x2	10
	w/Grenade Launcher	+5/x2 18
Light Machine Guns	+4/x2	18
Steyr AUG Weapon System	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Laser Weapons	Generally Unavailable	Seller (50+)
MMGs	+4/x2	18
HMGs	+4/x3	25
Assault Cannon	+4/x2	20
Grenade Launcher, Under-Barrel	+2/x2	12
Other Grenade Launchers	+5/x3	20
Missile/Rocket Multi-Launcher	+2/x2	15
Rocket Launchers (LAW/MAW)	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Missile Launchers (Dragon/Ballista)	Generally Unavailable	Seller (50+)
Mortars	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Melee Weapons, Standard	+1/x1.5	1–1.5
Katana	+3/x2	6
High-Tech	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Projectile Weapons	+1/x1.5	3
Throwing Weapons	+1/x1.5	1-2

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RARE ITEMS AVAILABILITY/STREET INDEX TABLE

ITEM	AVAILABILITY	STREET INDEX
Armor and Clothing		
Armor		
Ballistic Rating less than 5	+2/x2	3
Ballistic Rating 5	+3/x2	5
Ballistic Rating 5–8	+4/x3	15
Military Armor	Generally Unavailable	Seller (40+)
Regular Clothing	No Change	1.5
Security and Surveillance		
Communications		
Telecoms and Phones	Generally Worthless	.25–.5
Personal Computers	2/48 hours	2-3
Data Displays	2/48 hours	2-3
	Heads-Up Display	+2/x2 10
Security Devices		
Micro-Camcorder, Recorder, Transceiver	+2/x2	15
Tactical Communications System	Generally Unavailable	Seller (40+)
Maglock Passkey	+4/x3	Seller (30+)
Other	+2/x2	15
Surveillance Countermeasures	x4/x3	12–18
Surveillance Measures	x4/x3	12–18
Survival Gear	+3/x2	8–10
Vision Enhancers	+2/x2	6–8
Electronics		
Cyberdecks	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Programs	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Cybertech/Biotech and Related		
Biotech, less than .75 Body Rating	+3/x2	15
.75 Body Rating or greater	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Bodyware or Headware, less than .5 Essence	+3/x2	10
.5 to 1.5 Essence	+5/x3	18
greater than 1.5 Essence	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Compounds	+4/x3	20
Gene-Tech	Generally Unavailable	Seller (50+)
Matrixware	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Magical Equipment		
Hermetic Library	Generally Unavailable	Seller (50+)
Magical Supplies	+5/x5	20
Magical Weapons	Generally Unavailable	Seller (50+)
Power Foci	Generally Unavailable	Seller (50+)
Ritual Sorcery Material	x4/x3	20
Spell Foci	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Vehicles		
Aircraft	Generally Unavailable	Seller (50+)
Boats	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Ground Vehicles	+3/x2	20
Military Vehicles	Generally Unavailable	Seller (50+)
Appropriate Fuel	4/48 hrs	20
Biotech		
Medkit/Medkit Supplies	+2/x3	10
Stabilization Units	Generally Unavailable	Seller (30+)
Doc Wagon™ Contracts	N/A	—
Slap Patches	+2/x3	8–12
Illegals		
BTLs	3/36 hrs	.75

*Includes recoil compensation of all kinds: gas vents, bipods, gyromounts, and so on.
**Includes tasers, narcoject weapons, and so on.

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RADIATION HAZARD

The area immediately surrounding the epicenter of the Cermak Blast remains radioactive and therefore hazardous. Use the following system to simulate exposure to radiation. Though the system does not exactly reproduce the effects of radiation exposure, it is effective enough for game play.

The critical figure in the equation is the total number of rads (a measurement of radiation dosage) that a body absorbs over time. Virtually anything can become irradiated and subsequently irradiate something else. Simply getting away from a high concentration of radiation does not make you safe—anything you carried in with you will most likely be irradiated and therefore continue to affect you after you leave.

Due to the unique circumstance of the Cermak Blast, the irradiated zone is smaller than it should be for the size of the weapon detonated, but the rate of exposure increases uncharacteristically quickly as one approaches the blast center, and peaks higher than it should at the center.

CERMAK BLAST IRRADIATION TABLE

Distance from Blast Center (in meters)	Rate of Irradiation
200+	Negligible (no effect)
200–150	2 rads per day
150–125	2 rads per hour
125–100	2 rads per minute
100–75	1 rad per second (3 rads/Combat Turn)
75–50	5 rads per second (15 rads/Combat Turn)
50–25	50 rads per second (150 rads/Combat Turn)
25–0	500 rads per second (1,500 rads/Combat Turn)

PROLONGED EXPOSURE

A character must make a Body Test every time his irradiation level increases by 100 rads, using a target number of (rad level ÷ 50 [round up]). For example, a character with a rad level of 100 would make a Body (2) Test, at 200 a Body (4) Test, at 400 rads a Body (8) Test, and so on. Characters need achieve only 1 success to avoid radiation poisoning. Failure to roll even 1 success means the character falls victim to radiation sickness.

Only genuine radiation-protected clothing reduces the risk of radiation exposure, and only the military and certain elite corporate units possess real radiation suits. The X-ray vests that hospital radiologists and X-ray technicians use for their work do not protect against levels of exposure measured in rads (as opposed to milirads). Rate any radiation suits available to the characters on a scale of 1 to 20, where the rating times 100 equals the number of rads per Combat Turn the suit allows the wearer to ignore. (One can only imagine the cost and availability of such an item in Chicago.)

The severity of radiation sickness depends on the total amount of radiation the character's body has absorbed. Radiation sickness manifests approximately 24 hours after peak exposure. Every 24 hours after peak exposure, the character must make a Body Test using a target number equal to twice the amount of rads absorbed (at peak exposure) divided by 100. Failure to achieve even 1 success means the character suffers a wound per the following breakdown:

Total Rads at Peak Exposure	Wound
100–400	Light Stun
500–800	Moderate Stun
900–1,000	Serious Stun
1,100+	Deadly Stun

Stun damage taken in this manner cannot be healed normally until and if the character successfully throws off the radiation sickness. Only when the player fills the character's Stun damage column and the character begins taking Physical damage from the sickness can the Physical damage be healed normally, by medical or magical means. Neither medicine nor magic can, in 2056, free the body from radiation itself.

Because we feel generous, if a character makes seven consecutive successful Body Tests (one solid week's worth), he may throw off the effects of radiation sickness. If the character never makes seven consecutive successful Body Tests, he will eventually die from exposure. Throwing off the effects of the sickness only means that the character no longer feels sick. He is still irradiated and must repeat the entire Body Test procedure again at the next 100-rad threshold.

An irradiated object exposes someone in direct contact with it to one-half its level of irradiation. For example, an object irradiated at 15 rads per Combat Turn would expose a person making direct contact to 7.5 rads per Combat Turn. The irradiation level decreases rapidly with distance.

Distance from Object (in meters)	Rate of Irradiation (% of rads/Combat Turn)
.5	50
1	25
2	10
4	1
8	.01
16	.0001
32	.00001

DIRECT EXPOSURE

In addition to the effects of long–term exposure to radiation, characters can also be burned by radiation exposure. At the time of exposure and every Combat Turn thereafter in which the character remains within range of the radiation, the character must make a Damage Resistance Test using Body against a target number equal to one-half the radiation level divided by 100. For an exposure of up to 400 rads, the Target Number would be 2, at 800 rads it would be 4, at 1,200 rads it would be 6, and so on. The character takes base Physical damage of a

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number of boxes equal to the target number. Each success in the Damage Resistance Test reduces the damage by 1 box.

INSECT TOTEMS

Insect "totems" differ from traditional totems in several important ways. The most obvious difference is that an insect shaman can actually summon a spirit that directly embodies the totem, something a shaman of a traditional totem cannot do (as far as we know). Furthermore, the so-called insect totems bestow nothing on their shamans beyond normal spellcasting ability and the admittedly powerful ability to summon insect spirits, and they do not impose strictures (in game terms, Advantages/Disadvantages) on their shamans as do traditional totems.

The reasons for these differences remain unclear. However, some of the more powerful and coherent insect spirits refer to the place they come from (presumably some other metaplane) as "crowded," which might suggest a place where insect spirits of all types wait to be summoned, like some extradimensional doctor's office. The unique nature of insect totems must somehow be related to the insect spirits' uncommon place of origin, but no one knows enough to explain that relationship. In fact, no one knows whether the place these insects refer to is real, like the home planes of the totems, or a symbolic Place like those experienced in an astral quest.

Perhaps the most important difference is that the spirits of insect totems seem far more nebulous than the spirits of traditional totems such as Coyote or Raven. Though insect shamans speak of following Wasp, Ant, or another insect spirit, most simply answer a call from an undefined force. Almost all insect shamans experience the obsessive desire to summon an insect Queen or Mother, and when summoned they quickly embody the focus and direction of the totem. And so the question arises—does an insect shaman actually hear the call of some greater totem or simply respond to the cries of a Queen/Mother insect spirit? This book cannot answer that question.

Information on insect spirits previously appeared in the second edition **Grimoire** sourcebook (**Grimoire II**) and in the adventures **Queen Euphoria, Universal Brotherhood,** and **Double Exposure.** The game statistics, as well as the methods and powers of insect spirits, Queens, and insect shamans varied from each of these products to the next, mainly to keep both players and characters unsure of what they faced. These rules change the insect spirits yet again, but gamemasters should feel free to use the version of the insect rules that best fit their game. The numbers really don't matter—the horror of the bugs goes deeper than mere game statistics.

Because this book is all about bugs, some of the information presented in previous products has been reprinted in **Bug City** for the gamemaster's convenience. Note that the Threat Rating for Insect and Toxic Threats (per p. 107 of **Grimoire, Second Edition**) is now referred to as Potency in order to avoid confusion with the more common use of the term Threat Rating (see p. 187, **SRII,** or p. 100, **Prime Runners**).

INSECT SHAMANS

The **Shadowrun, Second Edition** rules state that shamans rarely use insects as totems because most shamanic cultures view insect spirits as a dangerous or evil influence. Some societies, however, consider insects "power animals" that are not inherently evil. These societies regard insect shamans as beings of special power and even view some insect spirits as beneficial. But regardless of their inherent evil or good nature, insect spirits are inarguably *alien* beings.

As a result of the alien nature of insect spirits, insect shamans often seem aloof from human concerns, though they may be active in society and its affairs. These shamans are in touch with powers of nature that rarely impinge on the collective metahuman consciousness and feel a connection with a primitive intelligence that remains incomprehensible to the human mind. In fact, the typical astral quest of an insect shaman would probably drive any other magician insane. For these reasons, we recommend that gamemasters NOT allow player characters to follow insect totems. The goals of insect totems are simply too self-serving, and individuals devoted to these goals would not make good characters or teammates.

Despite all these considerations, a shaman may seek the power of an insect totem for his own ends. He may succeed in tapping that power to accomplish his personal goals for a time, but the alien nature of the totem inevitably takes over. The shaman finds his plans becoming more and more obtuse and incomprehensible, both to himself and to everyone else. Eventually, he becomes a tool of the power he sought to turn to his own ends.

An immediate gain that an insect shaman receives for following his totem is a degree of personal power known as Potency. An insect shaman's Potency dictates how many spirits he may control before a Queen must be summoned (see **Summoning Insect Spirits**, p. 137) and determines the shaman's Threat Rating (see p. 136 of this book and p.187, **SRII**). The shaman increases his Potency (and often gains material wealth) by gathering food for the hive or nest, ensuring its security and expanding its power in some way (see **Increasing Potency**, below).

Ironically, an insect spirit hive or nest cannot be founded without a human shaman. One theory attempts to explain this by suggesting that the boundary between the physical world and the home of the insect spirits cannot be penetrated by the insect spirits themselves, and so they need a denizen of this world to expend the power necessary to bring them through.

Increasing Potency

Potency is a special rating for insect and toxic shamans, though we will only address the Potency of insect shamans here. (For Potency and toxic shamans, see **Magical Threats,** p.100 in the **Grimoire, Second Edition**, and simply substitute Potency for the term Threat Rating in that section.) The insect shaman's Potency increases or decreases in proportion to his success or failure at furthering the goals of the hive/nest. Additionally, an insect Queen can give the insect shaman a gift of her own Spirit Energy (see p.79, **Grimoire II**) to increase his Potency.

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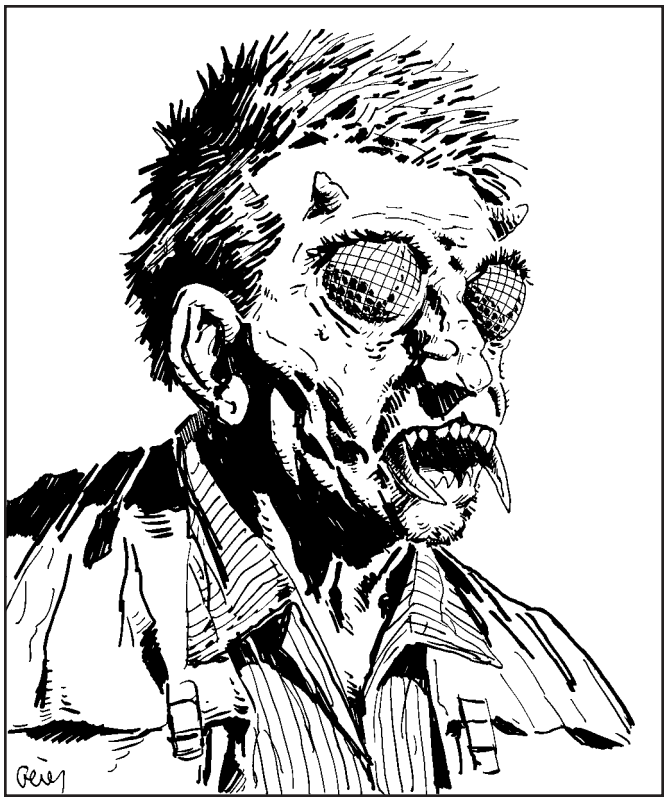

Because an insect shaman's Potency is linked to the welfare of the hive/nest, the shaman's Potency may vary during an adventure. When the magician carries out his tasks successfully, his Potency increases. If he is thwarted, his Potency rating drops. The magician may try to perform these tasks on his own or order his agents to carry them out. Discovering and foiling these activities represent the player characters' major goal during adventures involving insect shamans.

The gamemaster assigns an insect shaman's initial Potency for an adventure using the formula 1D6 ÷ 2 (round down). Then the gamemaster creates a series of tasks the shaman must carry out during the course of play. Each task the shaman accomplishes increases his Potency by 1, and each task he fails to complete decreases his Potency by 1. Each task should be designed to give the player characters at least one opportunity to disrupt the shaman's evil schemes. Feel free to make these tasks seem utterly senseless and unrelated. Likely insect shaman tasks include:

- Disseminating a series of articles distributed in the datanets that level serious allegations against a policlub or other group that directly or indirectly threatens the nest.
- Stealing a series of Neolithic artifacts from several collections (both public and private) to be used as raw materials in preparing a unique enchantment.
- Clearing the residents of certain city block for a week, beginning on a specific date. The shaman may use bribery, extortion, or may even try to capture and possess the residents so that the hive/nest can use the area for some purpose.
- Creating a force of 20 possessed humans to work on a project.

Insect Shaman Threat Rating

An insect shaman's Threat Rating (see p.187, **SRII**) should be equal to his Potency and increase or decrease along with that rating. If the gamemaster chooses to use the optional Threat Rating rules from **Prime Runners** (p. 100), then the shaman's Magical Threat Rating should be equal to his Potency.

INSECT CLASSIFICATIONS

Insect spirits may be grouped according to a number of different criteria. The most basic is type—ant, wasp, beetle, and so on. A second grouping is by social pattern—hive or solitary. The class of an insect refers to its function in the hive/nest—worker, soldier, Queen, and the like. Finally, insect spirits may take one of two forms—true form or flesh-form.

Social Pattern

Insect spirits belong to either a hive or solitary social pattern. Hive insect spirits follow a Queen. All the actions of such insects are directed toward the growth of the hive. For the purposes of this game, ants and wasps are considered hive insect spirits. The bulk of the rules that follow apply to hive-type insects.

Solitary insect spirits are "birthed" by a fertile female, usually referred to as a Mother. Solitary insects have home nests which they feel a compulsion to defend, but that otherwise have little effect on their behavior. Once birthed, they may leave the nest freely and pursue their own devices, though most remain within a short distance of their home nests. Mothers do not exert the same kind of control over their broods that Queens exert over their hives. Most solitary insect spirits follow unique rules described in their respective profiles.

Classes of Insect Spirits

Classes of hive insect spirits include workers (sometimes known as drones), soldiers (sometimes called fighters or warriors), and Queens. Solitary insects are classed as males, females, and Mothers (fertile females). The different classes of insects are described further in their respective profiles.

Forms of Insect Spirits

Most classes of insect spirits can manifest in either true form or flesh-form, though some classes are restricted to one or the other.

True-form insect spirits are true spirits. They are roughly man-sized and bear a distinct resemblance to the natural insect type—a true–form ant spirit resembles a man-sized ant, for example. They have normal spirit powers, abilities, and weaknesses. Only those insects with wings (real ones, not just vestigial) can fly. True-form insects that cannot fly may only move through astral space at a rate of their Astral Quickness x 3 for normal movement and Force x 750 kilometers per hour for fast movement. However, such spirits can move along vertical surfaces (such as the side of a building) at any speed. True-form insect spirits can be banished (see p. 143, **SRII**). All true-form insect spirits have minimum Attribute Ratings of 1, various enhanced senses, and a vulnerability to insecticides. Queens and Mothers must be true forms.

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Only the most powerful insect spirits can exist in this world in their true form. Most insect spirits apparently have difficulty existing in the physical plane without host bodies to serve as anchors. These flesh-form insect spirits manifest as bizarre, twisted, half-man half-bug creatures.

Each flesh-form is unique in appearance and represents some tragic hybrid between the insect type and its host creature (not necessarily a human). When an insect spirit is summoned into a host, the host's body may transform to varying degrees. The effect may be barely noticeable, and the resulting creature may retain a large degree of sentience. Alternatively, the flesh-form may be a hideous bug-like automaton guided solely by instinct or the commands of its Queen.

A flesh-form spirit's Physical Attributes are 1 point less than the host's. Their Mental Attributes are the same as the true form, and they are considered dual beings. The most common flesh-form insect spirit—the flesh-form worker—possesses the power of skill (see **Special Powers**, p. 143) and the weakness of reduced senses (sight). flesh-form insect spirits do not possess the power of enhanced senses or vulnerability to insecticides and cannot be banished.

SUMMONING INSECT SPIRITS

An insect shaman can summon insect spirits in any domain where insects can survive—almost anywhere, in other words. Regardless of the domain, the shaman may summon any class of insect spirit appropriate to his insect totem.

To summon a non-Queen/Mother, the gamemaster uses the standard conjuring procedure found on page 139, **SRII,** with the limitation that an insect spirit must be summoned into a living mammal of some kind. While humans are not the only potential hosts for insect spirits, most insect spirits prefer sentient hosts—such as humans or metahumans—because they offer the spirit increased size, power, and potentially intellect. Insect shamans will use animals only when humanity is scarce, but the number of paranormal animals in the world makes for many interesting possible flesh-forms without using metahumans.

When summoned, an insect worker spirit must be incubate in its host's body for a number of weeks equal to the spirit's Force Rating. Soldier spirits take a number of weeks equal to twice their Force Rating. A summoned worker spirit always manifests as a flesh-form spirit. Other types may manifest as either flesh or true forms.

To determine the final manifestation of an insect spirit, make an opposed Success Test (p. 214, **SRII**) between the host and the insect spirit. The host pits its Willpower Rating against a target number equal to twice the Force Rating of the insect spirit, and vice versa. If a Queen helped summon the spirit, add +2 to the host's target number. Consult the Manifestation Table for the resulting creature.

Without the aid of a Queen/Mother spirit, an insect shaman may only control a number of true form spirits equal to 10 times his Potency (see p. 107, **Grimoire II**). The total number of Force points the summoned true forms may collectively possess is equal to the sum of the shaman's Magic Rating and Potency, times five. (If his Magic Rating too low, the shaman may not have enough Force points available to empower the maximum number of true form spirits he can control.) Summoned flesh-form spirits do not count against this total, and an insect shaman may control an unlimited number of flesh-forms. All these spirits are loyal to the shaman and will act under his direction, unless their Queen explicitly orders otherwise.

Note that an insect spirit may be summoned into a host of any gender, regardless of its own. However, Queens and Mothers must be summoned into a female creature, and mantis spirits are very particular about whom they are summoned into.

Summoning Queens

To summon an insect Queen, use the standard procedure for summoning a great-form spirit (p. 64, **Grimoire II**), with the additions described here.

The insect shaman must be an initiate to summon a Queen. Because non-player characters do not have Karma, the character must sacrifice Potency points to use as the equivalent of Karma when being initiated. (Feel free to modify the statistics of non-player character opponents to provide a challenging game.)

MANIFESTATION TABLE

Host's Successes	Result
0/Spirit generates more successes	The host is destroyed and a true form insect spirit emerges.
1–2	The host body acquires primary resemblance to the true form, such as changes in body shape and mass, additional limbs, and so on. A flesh form is created.
3	The host body acquires some true-form characteristics, including chitinous armor, multifaceted eyes, underdeveloped extra limbs. A flesh-form spirit manifests.
4–5	The host body acquires only one of the physical aspects of the true form. A flesh form emerges.
6+	The host body retains its original form and acquires the free-spirit power of aura masking. It is not, however, a free spirit, and remains under the control of the Queen or shaman. Technically, the spirit is a flesh form, but it gains access to the host's memories and can mimic the host.

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A summoned Queen behaves as a free spirit and follows the standard free-spirit rules (pp. 76–83, **Grimoire II**). However, note that Queens are not actually free spirits and do not possess free spirit powers or abilities—with the exception of Spirit Energy—unless they actually gain freedom from their summoners.

Once summoned and present, the Queen may boost the shaman's effective Potency to increase the number of spirits he may directly control. She does this by giving him points from her own Spirit Energy, which increases his Potency at a 1:1 ratio. If she later uses that same Spirit Energy to boost her own Force Rating, the shaman loses the bonus.

The Queen and the shaman struggle constantly to control the hive, and the Queen may demand that the shaman sacrifice points from *his own* Potency to increase her Spirit Energy at a ratio of 2 Potency points for every 1 point of Spirit Energy. The Queen may simply take back any Potency points she gives to the shaman.

To determine the number of spirits a Queen and an insect shaman may summon, add together the Queen's Force Rating, the shaman's Magic Attribute, and the shaman's unmodified Potency. The total represents the cumulative Force Rating points worth of spirits they can summon per day. A soldier insect spirit is worth twice its Force Rating in points, and a worker spirit is worth a number of points equal to its Force Rating.

To determine the maximum number of true form soldiers a hive may include, multiply the Queen's Force Rating by the shaman's Body Attribute. To determine the number of true form workers, multiply the Queen's Force Rating by the shaman's Willpower, times 10.

INSECT SPIRIT PROFILES

The following profiles provide brief descriptions of the typical behavior of the most common insect spirits and statistics for the various spirit classifications.

ANT

Ants are highly social beings, and so ant spirits cooperate exceptionally well within a single hive. Ant hives are comprised of numerous workers and soldiers and a single Queen. The strong territorial instincts of ant spirits, however, often lead to intense rivalry between different hives.

Ant spirits are builders. They construct complex, multi-level warrens whose logic is indecipherable to humans. Most often, ant spirits construct their hives below ground in space they tunnel out or in exisiting cavities they modify.

Clean, tidy, and quiet, ant spirits only rarely work alone. Generally they act en masse under the direction of the Queen or her shaman. When a situation demands subtlety, ant spirits work in small groups of two to four—provided the shaman can convince the Queen that rolling out the army will do more harm than good.

Ant Spirit Soldier (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 1	(F + 4) x 4	F + 4	—	F	2	F(A)	F x 2*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attack: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Paralyzing Touch, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: Solider spirits are exclusively male and winged. These statistics represent the physically manifest soldier. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force.

Ant Spirit Worker (flesh-form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
H – 1	(H – 1) x 3	H – 1	—	F – 2	1	F(A)	3	None

Initiative: 3 +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: 1/2
Attacks: None
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Skill
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: All workers are infertile females. H indicates the host body's Physical Attribute numbers.

Ant Queen

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 5	(F + 6) x 5	F + 6	F	F	F	(F)A	F x 3*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(S) or as Power
Powers: Animal Control (Ants), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Paralyzing Touch, Share Minds, Share Willpower, Summoning, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: Ant Queens are fertile females who have lost their wings after mating. These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force.

BEETLE

Beetle insect spirits are solitary creatures. The male beetle superficially resembles the terrestrial horned stag beetle. Infertile females resemble the more common ground beetle. Mother beetles usually appear as a cross between the two.

Beetles usually dwell in or around nests overseen by one, and occasionally two Mothers. Beetles usually tunnel into damp or moist ground to build their nests. Male beetle spirits, which count as soldiers for the purposes of summoning, are

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generally more aggressive than the females and tend to travel and hunt alone. They are also quite territorial and seem to engage in nondamaging "sparring" with other male beetles in which they lock horns and appear to wrestle. Female beetles tend to move in groups of two or three when traveling or hunting. Additional beetle spirits are summoned in the same manner as roach spirits (see p. 142).

Beetle Spirit Male (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 3	(F + 1) x 4	F + 6	—	F	2	F(A)	F x 2*	F x 2

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attack: Skill = Reaction, Reach +1, Damage = STR(S) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell)
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: Male beetle spirits are winged. These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force.

Beetle Spirit Female (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 2	(F + 2) x 3	F + 2	—	F	2	F(A)	F x 2*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attack: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M)
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell)
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: Female beetle spirits are not winged. These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force.

Beetle Mother

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 2	(F + 2) x 4	F + 4	F	F	F	(F)A	F x 3*	F x 2

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(S)
Powers: Animal Control (Beetles), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Summoning, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force.

CICADA

Cicada insect spirits present little danger, but male cicadas produce a loud, infernal buzzing using their abdominal membranes to announce that a cicada Mother or Cicada shaman is investing new cicada spirits. Summoning and investiture occurs as for roaches (see p. 142), except that the incubation period takes a number of weeks equal to the Force of the summoned spirit.

Male Cicada Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 2	(F + 1) x 4	F + 3	—	F – 1	2	(F)A	F*	F – 2

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(L) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell)
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: Treat male cicada spirits as worker spirits for the purposes of summoning. These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. All male cicadas have wings.

Cicada Mother

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 3	(F + 2) x 4	F + 2	F	F	F	(F)A	F x 2*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Animal Control (Cicada), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Summoning, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Cicada Mothers are winged.

FIREFLY

Firefly spirits appear as soft-bodied beetles that intermittently emit a yellow-green glow from their lower abdomens. Male and female fireflies exist, though the females are infertile. Generally, male firefly spirits glow only when agitated or when within a few dozen meters of a firefly Mother. Female fireflies flash when their nest Mother or summoning shaman is investing new spirits. Large groups of males sometimes cluster together in buildings or trees and engage in long sessions of synchronized flashing.

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Male/Female Firefly Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F	(F + 1) x 4	F + 1	—	F	2	(F)A	F x 2*	F – 2

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(L) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell)
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: Treat male firefly spirits as worker spirits for the purposes of summoning. These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Firefly spirits are winged.

Firefly Mother

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 1	(F + 2) x 4	F + 1	F	F	F	(F)A	F x 2*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Animal Control (Firefly), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Summoning, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Firefly mothers are winged.

FLY

Fly spirits live in hives of sorts, but unlike ants or wasps, they have no caste system. All members of the hive are male except for the Queen. The males serve as both warriors or workers, but prove less skilled and less effective than ant spirits at either role. Fly insect spirits reproduce and exist in hivelike formations, though their terrestrial counterparts do not.

Fly hives are chaotic, noisy, ill-kept messes that reek with the overpowering odor of refuse. Fly spirits can settle their hives almost anywhere, but they prefer ramshackle, broken-down spots.

Male Fly Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F	(F + 1) x 4	F + 2	—	F – 1	1	(F)A	F x 2*	F – 2

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Pestilence
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: Treat male fly spirits as soldier spirits for the purposes of summoning. These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Fly spirits are winged.

Fly Queen

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 4	(F + 4) x 5	F + 4	F	F	F	(F)A	F x 3*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(S) or as Power
Powers: Animal Control (Fly), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Immunity to Normal Weapons, Summoning, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. The Fly Queen is winged.

MANTIS

Mantis spirits fly in the face, so to speak, of what humanity knows about insect spirits. Generally considered destructive and malign, mantids differ from other insect spirits in one interesting respect. Though other insects single-mindedly seek to propagate their species, one of the mantis's primary goals is to consume other insects.

Singularly powerful, mantis spirits can be difficult for the shaman to keep under control. The male mantis spirit, substantially less intelligent and less powerful than the female, apparently exists primarily to serve and service the female. Male Mantis shamans are nearly unheard of, because the stronger and more cunning female Mantis spirit chafes under male control. Female Mantis shamans can develop a stronger partnership with mantis spirits, though they, too, risk their safety by dealing with these formidable beings.

Male mantids serve a female until the female is ready to create more mantis spirits. At that time the male and female spirits merge, which enables the female to produce more spirits. This merging destroys the male spirit.

At any one time, a Mantis shaman can only control one female mantis spirit and a number of males equal to the shaman's Potency. The shaman summons male mantis spirits according to the conjuring rules on page 139 of **SRII.** To summon a female mantis spirit, use the procedure for summoning a great form spirit in **Spirit Forms,** p. 64 of **Grimoire II.**

The female mantis spirit can create new mantids every 2D6 weeks. When she is ready to create new spirits, she must merge with and consume at least one male mantis spirit to produce the energy necessary to invest the new mantid spirits. She can consume a number of male mantis spirits whose total Force Ratings equal her Force Rating plus her Spirit Energy. If she exceeds that

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energy threshold and cannot fully consume the male mantis currently merging with her, the male retains only the Force the female could not consume. The next time the female creates new mantids, she begins the process by consuming the half-eaten male. Each merging and consumption takes a number of hours equal to the male mantis's Force Rating.

Following each merging and consumption cycle, a female can invest a number of new mantis spirits with a total combined number of Force Rating points equal to twice the Force she consumed. The investment must be made into a human host body of the same sex as the mantis spirit created. Investing a male mantis costs the female mantis spirit 1 point of the total number of Force Rating points available for each point of Force Rating given to the new spirit. To invest a female mantid, use the great form conjuring procedure, except default to the mantis spirit's Willpower (because the spirit does not have conjuring). Make all tests as if the spirit were a magician. Investing requires the female mantis spirit to give up 2 Force points for each point of Force the newly created female mantid spirit will have, plus a number of her own Spirit Energy points equal to one-half (round down) the force of the new spirit. The investment process takes 1 hour per Force Rating point given to the new spirit. Female mantids always manifest in true form and gain the free-spirit powers of aura masking and human form. Additionally, a female mantid retains the memories of her host, whom she can mimic. Male mantids always invest as true forms. As long as a shaman controls her, a female mantid spirit cannot produce other female mantid spirits, unless the shaman allows it.

Mantids tend to live among humanity, becoming as much a part of it as their alien nature permits.

Male Mantis Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 2	(F + 5) x 4	F + 3	—	F – 1	2	(F)A	F x 3*	F + 1

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell)
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force.

Female Mantis Spirit

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
H* + F	(H + F) x 4	H + F	F	F	F	(F)A	F x 3**	F

*Use the host's Attribute Rating as the base.
**Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(S)
Powers: Animal Control (Mantids), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Summoning
Weaknesses: Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force.

MOSQUITO

Mosquitoes are among the most feared of insect spirits because of the female's ability to suck blood from warm-blooded creatures. The mosquito usually feeds on prey that has been physically subdued or is sleeping and drains the prey's blood until the creature dies. Male mosquito spirits are fairly benign (as such things go) and usually protect the Mother mosquito while the females go hunting for blood to feed the Mother. Mosquito "cocoons" must be deposited in still or near-still water. They are summoned according to the same rules and procedures that govern roach spirits (see **Roach**, p. 142).

Male Mosquito Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F	(F + 3) x 4	F + 3	—	F	1	(F)A	F x 2*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Paralyzing Touch
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Mosquito spirits are winged.

Female Mosquito Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F – 1	(F + 3) x 4	F + 2	—	F – 1	2	(F)A	F x 2*	F – 1

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M); Damage inflicted on the target is stored as "blood" for the Mother mosquito. Monitor the amount of damage a mosquito causes and modify the mosquito spirit's Initiative as though it had *taken* the damage.
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Paralyzing Touch, Pestilence
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Mosquito spirits are winged.

Mosquito Mother

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 2	(F + 3) x 4	F + 2	F	F	F	(F)A	F x 2*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6

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Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Animal Control (Mosquito), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Paralyzing Touch, Pestilence, Summoning
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Mosquito spirits are winged.

ROACH

Roach spirits build nests; not because they need to but because they like to. Male roach spirits cluster around the female that "birthed" them, thereby creating the nest. More than one Mother roach spirit can occupy a nest (subject to the group dynamics of the females) but more than three females rarely share a single nest.

A Roach shaman summons male roach spirits according to the standard rules for summoning non-Queen insect spirits (see p. 137). Determine the number of roach spirits a Roach shaman can control by multiplying his Potency by 10. When the shaman reaches that number, he cannot summon any more roach spirits without the aid of at least one Mother roach spirit. Each additional roach Mother allows him to double the number of roaches he can control.

Mother roach spirits are much harder to summon than male roach spirits. The shaman conjures a mother roach spirit according to the standard conjuring rules for a great form spirit (see p. 64, **Grimoire II**), However, when calculating the Drain the magician must resist, add 50 percent (round resulting fractions up) to the mother roach spirit's Force Rating. For example, a mother roach spirit summoned at Force 5 would have an effective Force Rating of 7.5, or 8, for the conjurer making the Drain Resistance Test. A Mother roach spirit possesses Spirit Energy (see **Free Spirits**, p. 79, **Grimoire II**), but has no other free spirit powers or abilities unless she gains her freedom.

Each day, a Mother roach spirit can create male roach spirits by investing host bodies with Force, using up to a number of Force Rating points equal to her Force Rating plus her Spirit Energy. Mother roach spirits cannot create other Mother roach spirits unless the shaman allows it. To do so, she must sacrifice her own Spirit Energy to use as the Force of the new Mother, up to a maximum of her own Force minus 1. Producing another female requires a number of days equal to twice the "birthing" spirit's Force Rating. During the time the female spends birthing another female for investment, she can create no other roach spirits.

From birth to maturity, investing a spirit into a host takes 10 days. To determine whether or not male roach spirits are true form or flesh-form, follow the rules for producing spirits found on page 137. Mother roach spirits only manifest in true form.

Roach spirits build their nests anywhere, and like physical roach nests, usually appear where players least expect them.

Male Roach Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 2	(F + 4) x 4	F + 2	—	F – 1	1	(F)A	F x 2*	F + 1

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M)
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell)
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Roaches are not winged.

Roach Mother

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 3	(F + 3) x 4	F + 1	—	F	2	(F)A	F x 2*	F + 2

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space bonus and +10 modifier when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(S) or as Power
Powers: Animal Control (Roach), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Summoning, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Roach Mothers are not winged.

WASP

Wasp spirits live in hives but have no caste system. Male wasps are territorial but not overly intelligent, unlike female wasp spirits, which possess a malign intelligence especially prominent in wasp Queens during egg laying. Multiple female wasp spirits may inhabit a single hive, but only the Queen reaches sexual maturity.

The wasp Queen must deposit her eggs in the body of a host creature. The Queen secretes a toxin that she uses to paralyze the host first, usually during a spirit summoning, then deposits her eggs. The wasp larvae either merge with the host and become flesh-forms or feed on the host, eating their way to the outside world as true forms.

Wasp hives are far smaller physically than the hives of other insect spirits, but they are complex structures that may house a dense population of wasp spirits. Wasp spirits prefer to build their hives in the upper stories of buildings and other high places open to the air.

Male Wasp Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F	(F + 4) x 4	F + 3	—	F – 1	1	(F)A	F x 2*	F – 1

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.

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Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Paralyzing Touch, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Wasp spirits are winged.

Female Wasp Spirit (True Form)

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 1	(F + 4) x 4	F + 4	—	F	2	(F)A	F x 2*	F – 1

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(M) or as Power
Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Paralyzing Touch, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Wasp spirits are winged.

Wasp Queen

B	Q	S	C	I	W	E	R	Armor
F + 4	(F + 5) x 5	F + 5	F	F	F	(F)A	F x 3*	F

*Receives a +20 Initiative bonus in astral space and +10 bonus when physically manifest.
Initiative: (Reaction +10)/(Reaction + 20) +1D6
Threat/Professional Rating: Force/4
Attacks: Skill = Reaction, Damage = STR(S) or as Power
Powers: Animal Control (Wasp), Compulsion, Enhanced Senses (Smell), Fear, Paralyzing Touch, Share Mind, Share Willpower, Summoning, Venom
Weaknesses: Reduced Senses (Sight), Vulnerability (Insecticides)
Notes: These statistics represent the physically manifest spirit. When present in astral space, all statistics are equal to its Force. Wasp spirits are winged.

SPECIAL POWERS

Insect spirits possess the standard spirit powers per the basic **SRII** rules, as well as certain special powers not described in **SRII**. Most of these powers are limited to the Queens of insect hives.

Animal Control (Insect Type)

The animal control power enables a Queen to send swarms of spirits from her hive to gather information, attack en masse, and so on.

Compulsion

The Queen can create overriding compulsions in (meta)humans by exuding a wide variety of pheromones that affect any character within a distance in meters equal to her Force Rating. She can also secrete these pheromones in a form that can be mixed into food or drink, administered like a drug, or blended with other substances.

Enhanced Senses

Many insect spirits have enhanced sensory capabilites such as heat-sensing organs, sonar, improved hearing and sense of smell, low-light and thermographic vision, motion detection, the ability to sense electrical or electromagnetic field disturbances, and the like.

Fear

The fear power enables insect spirits to overwhelm their prey with terror of either the insect itself or the terrain it occupies. The prey panics, running as fast as possible to what it perceives as the nearest safe place. To determine the degree of terror generated, make an opposed test of the insect's Essence against the target's Willpower. One success means the prey runs likes crazy. Two successes means the prey runs and does not return. Four successes means the prey flees, does not return, and sweats blood if anyone mentions the insect or place. Six or more successes saddles the prey with a disabling phobia.

Paralyzing Touch

The paralyzing touch power applies to all of an insect spirit's melee hits, whether or not they cause damage. When the insect touches prey, make an opposed test of the insect's Essence against the prey's Willpower. Any net successes the insect rolls reduce the prey's Quickness by 1 point per net success for a number of minutes equal to the insect's Essence. Multiple touches can cause multiple reductions of the prey's Quickness Attribute. Prey whose Quickness drops to 0 cannot move a muscle; to continue breathing, the prey must make a Willpower Test for each minute it is paralyzed, using the insect's Essence as the target number. If the prey rolls no successes in any of these tests before the paralysis wears off, it stops breathing and will die after a number of minutes equal to its Body Attribute unless someone applies first aid. A surviving victim regains lost Quickness points at a rate of 1 point every 10 minutes.

Pestilence

An insect spirit with pestilence power infects its victim with a disease similar to VITAS-3 (see p. 186, **SRII**). To avoid infection, the prey must make a successful Body Resistance Test against a target number equal to the insect's Force + 2. Armor does not help resist this damage.

Share Minds

The share mind power provides an insect Queen with a two-way telepathic bond with all the spirits under her control. The bond enables her to see and hear anything they see and hear. This telepathic link, however, only connects the Queen to her subjects. For a subject to contact another subject, each must relay messages through the Queen. This happens rarely, however, as few subject insects care to inconvenience their Queens by asking them to relay any but the most crucial messages.

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Share Willpower

This power enables a Queen to envelop her subjects in a protective blanket of sheer Willpower. Anyone attempting to use a mind-controlling or mind-reading spell on a protected subject insect must overcome the Willpower barrier.

Skill

When summoned, a worker can be given any non-magical Build/Repair or similar skill the Queen requires. The worker's rating for the skill is equal to its Force.

Summoning

The summoning power allows an insect Queen to summon insect spirits to do her bidding (see pp. 102 and 104, **Grimoire II** and p. 137 of this book).

Venom

The venom power enables an insect to make one or more poisonous attacks with a Damage Code of (Essence)S unless otherwise noted. Treat as a toxin (p.186, **SRII**) with a speed of 1 turn.

WEAKNESSES

In addition to special powers, almost all insect spirits possess the weaknesses of reduced senses and vulnerability.

Reduced Senses

Any or all of the insect's senses may be limited in effectiveness. Typically, reduced senses function at half their normal effectiveness rating.

Vulnerability (Insecticides)

The metabolism of some insect spirits can be disrupted drastically by weapons or attacks that use insecticides. Increase the Damage Level of such weapons/attacks by 1 level when used against a vulnerable insect. For example, a 2L insecticide-treated club becomes a 2M weapon against an insect spirit vulnerable to insecticides. However, insects with vulnerabilites recover normally from wounds inflicted by such weapons. Treat simple contact with the substance as a Nuisance allergy (irritates the insect but has no significant effect in game terms). If a player character tricks the insect into ingesting the substance, the insect suffers the effects of an Extreme allergy. These effects include extreme discomfort and physical harm (automatic Light Wound).

SPIDER TOTEM

At the gamemaster's discretion, players may create Spider shamans as part of character creation using the standard rules.

Spider shamans, perhaps more than other shamans (but who can truly tell), seem to find themselves involved in larger plans and mysteries that can only be the working of Spider herself. Little that happens to a Spider shaman occurs by chance—Spider weaves her webs through everything.

SPIDER

Spider is the Great Weaver, the builder of all things Here and Before. Her gaze links everything, showing what was and what should have been. She is eternal change, the cycle of life and death, the center of all things. Her smile is both benevolent and fearsome, according to the time of day and her mood. And she waits, for in time all things come to her.

Characteristics: Spider has many aspects, from creator to destroyer to trickster. She is whispering death, she is the brilliance of a new dawn refracted through the dew on her web. She waits and she plots, carefully and deliberately. Her web is intricate and delicate, yet sturdy, and she strikes quickly and without remorse.

Favored Environment: The quiet, dark places where few seldom look.

Advantages: +2 dice for all illusion spells, +1 die for conjuring all spirits

Disadvantages: Spider prefers the dark, secret, shadowy places. Add a +2 modifier to target numbers for all magic tests made by Spider shamans out in the open and away from immediate shelter. Her manner and ways are mercurial, though she does nothing without a plan. At the gamemaster's discretion, add a +1 modifier to a Spider shaman's target numbers when Spider does not have sufficient time to consider a situation.

INSECT TORPOR

The Cermak Blast knocked many insect spirits into a form of hibernation popularly referred to as torpor. This may be a result of the nature of the blast, though other spirits were not affected, or it might have to do with the mass destruction of the hive. In any event, many insect spirits that were existing solely in astral space at the time of the nuclear blast have gone dormant.

The gamemaster decides the locations of the bugs in torpor and how many are in any one location. Undoubtedly, a few smaller, immature hives or nests were knocked completely into torpor, but the blast mostly affected those bugs or groups of bugs that were out and about when the bomb went off. Though a huge number of insect spirits went into torpor at the Cermak site, making it the largest known collection of bugs in the Chicago area, the radiation present and the background count of the area make it virtually impossible for anyone to reach them. And because no one really knows why they're sleeping, no one can guarantee that they might not wake up just as suddenly as they went into torpor.

Bugs in torpor can be woken by proximity of a living being and by the use of magic nearby. When a living being passes within of number of meters equal to 1/2 Essence or Magic (whichever is greater, round down) of a bug, the gamemaster makes an Essence or Magic (whichever is greater) Test for the person against a target number equal to the Force of the insect spirit. A single success wakens the bug.

The gamemaster makes the same test for magic items; active, sustained, or Quickened spells; or spirits that are passing by or used within a number of meters of a bug equal to the

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Force of the item, spell, or spirit. The target number is the Force of the insect spirit. A single success wakens the bug.

If a spell's area of effect includes a bug in torpor, the gamemaster makes the Essence or Magic Test as if the insect spirit were within a number of meters of the spell's center equal to the bug's Force.

Conjuring another spirit within a number of meters of the insect spirit equal to 10 times the Force of the spirit being summoned requires the same test as for items or spells. Again, a single success wakens the bug.

Insect spirits woken from torpor are aware but remain immobile for 1 Combat Turn following their awakening. On the second Combat Turn they act and move normally.

BACKGROUND COUNT

The general background count for most areas in Chicago is 1. The gamemaster should assign higher levels of 2 or 3 to the sites of significant harmful magical activity such as former hives. The only place where astral space is clean (and so has no background count) is within the walls of the Sanctum, formerly the Field Museum. The death and destruction that took place in the Shattergraves gives that area a background count of 4.

The site of the Cermak Blast is another story entirely.

ASTRAL POLLUTION

The rules for background count on p. 89, **Grimoire, Second Edition**, describe Background Counts of 1 to 5. These ratings cover areas where significant uses of magic, outpourings of emotions, or loss of life have created strong background resonances that impede magical manipulations and astral activity. (Though the **London** and **Tír na nÓg** sourcebooks both describe situations in which a character aligned with the power of a site can *increase* in ability.)

Beyond a Background Count of 5, astral space becomes damaged or polluted. This phenomena cannot occur through normal uses of magic, or even through human endeavor that remains within the laws of nature. Something twisted or unnatural must occur for the background count to rise above 5.

In the case of the Cermak Blast, a nuclear weapon was detonated on the site of an insect hive that was in the final stages of investing approximately 1,000 new spirits. In addition, the insect shamans of that hive were performing ritual magic to create a barrier or ward to keep instruders out until that investiture took place. The nuclear weapon detonated inside that magical barrier.

The Background Count at or near the center of the blast ranges from 5 in the near vicinity (within 1,000 meters), to 6 (within 200 meters), and finally peaks at 7 (witihin 100 meters). The effects of being within an area with a Background Count of 5 appear on page 89, **Grimoire II.** The effects of occupying an astrally polluted area appear below.

Effects

Magicians operating within an area of polluted astral space suffer three immediate effects. First, the magician must add a modifier to the target number of any astrally related Success Tests the magician attempts in the area, per the rules for Background Counts of Ratings 1 through 5. This modifier applies to any detection spell target numbers as well. The second effect is that the Drain target number for any spells cast in the polluted area increases by 1 for every Background Count rating point beyond 5. For example, a Background Count of 7 imposes a +2 Drain target modifier.

The third effect applies only if a magician astrally projects or perceives. The character must resolve a Damage Resistance Test (using Willpower) upon projecting/perceiving into a polluted area, or at the start of any Combat Turn while projecting or perceiving. For example, a character who begins projecting into a polluted area in the middle of Combat Turn "A" must immediately make a Damage Resistance Test. If he continues to astrally project into the start of the next Combat Turn (Combat Turn "B"), he must resolve another Damage Resistance Test regardless of the fact that he might use his first Action Phase of the Combat Turn to stop projecting. If the character takes damage, he takes Physical damage according to the Background Count Damage Table.

Detecting Background Count

Magically active characters entering an area that has a background count (polluted or not) may notice that something is amiss before they perceive or project. To determine whether or not the character notices the background count, the gamemaster should resolve a Magic or Essence (whichever is lower) Test against a Target Number equal to 12 minus the Background Count. For example, an area with a Background Count of 4 would have a Target Number 8, while an area with a Background Count of 8 would have a Target Number of 4. Characters gain no bonus for attempting to "actively" feel out an area—such an action constitutes Assensing and so requires astral perception.

BACKGROUND COUNT DAMAGE TABLE

Background Count Rating	Damage per Combat Turn
6	6L
7	7L
8	8M
9	9M
10	10D

TRAVEL TO THE METAPLANES

The Containment Zone does not in any way modify target numbers or otherwise penalize characters attempting astral quests or other metaplanar activity. An almost palpable psychological heaviness, however, seems to hang over such tasks.

CONJURING

Despite what the people living inside the Containment Zone might believe, conjuring spirits within the CZ is not unusually difficult, though it is more dangerous (see **Insect Torpor**, page 144).

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Spirit summoning may also attract the attention of any active insect spirits within an area in meters equal to 10 times the Force of the spirit being summoned. To determine if any nearby insect spirits respond to the power of the summoning, resolve a Success Test using a number of dice equal to the insect spirit's Force against a target number equal to 10 minus the Force of the spirit being summoned.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

The following collection of powerful, influential, or noteworthy individuals can be found within the Chicago Containment Zone. The gamemaster may use these profiles as a starting point to determine each non-player character's statistics and abilities. By leaving this information to be decided by the gamemaster, the players remain unsure of exactly what they face, and the gamemaster can tailor the NPCs to suit his unique spin on **Bug City** (see **Gamemastering Bug City**, p. 127). The characters appear in order of relative power or influence in the Containment Zone. The suggested Threat and Professional Ratings use the expanded Threat Rating rules offered in the **Shadowrun** sourcebook **Prime Runners.** Gamemasters who prefer to use the standard Threat Ratings explained in **Shadowrun, Second Edition,** should use an average of the Threat Ratings given (rounding up).

KYLE TELLER

Half Anglo and half Amerind, 37-year-old Kyle Teller is a powerful hermetic mage. In Chicago to track down the missing son of corporate CEO Daniel Truman, Kyle was trapped behind the Wall when the UCAS army sealed off a large chunk of the city. These days he lives in the Wrigley Dome haven, helping maintain its magical defenses against the bugs.

Cool and intelligent, Kyle Teller is very good at his magical craft. Until the Chicago debacle, he made a living as a freelance mage, regularly tracking down missing persons. Before that he worked for the UCAS FBI's Department of Paranormal Affairs, but he was forced to resign after his affair with a senator's wife came to light. The affair also led to Kyle's divorce; in its aftermath, his ex-wife and daughter moved to Chicago. Kyle knows the city fairly well, having visited his family there every so often. Both his ex-wife and their daughter went missing when the insect spirits infested the city, and Kyle fears they may be dead. Until he knows for certain, however, he intends to go on looking for them, aided by his powerful former ally spirit, Seeks-the-Moon.

Though Kyle can be ruthless when necessary, he usually rejects the hard option in favor of a plan that won't cost lives. He cares about the people around him and will fight as hard or harder for them than he will for himself. Not one to play games with the truth unless he must, Kyle has a sharp nose for lies and evasions. He doesn't care much for either, having spent most of his career dealing with the fallout of other people's deceptions. Used to making his own decisions, Teller tends to take charge in most situations. He is willing to follow the orders only of people he respects, and even then only if he agrees with what needs to be done.

Game Notes

Kyle Teller is a hermetic magician, currently self-initiated at about Grade 4. He knows a smattering of combat spells, but is focused primarily in the areas of investigation and detection. He often uses elementals and watchers as guardians and patrollers. Teller has a number of foci in a variety of forms. He has four spirit foci in the form of rings, one for each of the four elemental types— diamond for air, sapphire for water, ruby for fire, and emerald for earth. He has two metal bracelets braided from heavy wires of silver, copper, and orichalcum. The one he wears on his right wrist is a detection spell focus, and the one he wears on his left wrist is an illusion spell focus. He carries a power focus in the form of an amulet made of coppery-gold metals and dominated by a large opal. He also possessed a weapon foci in the form of an ornate silver and orichalcum dagger in the Egyptian style. The dagger is lost somewhere within the CZ, and though he can find no trace of it astrally he is concerned because it is a direct link back to him.

He also has a few pieces of custom headware that he uses for data collection and management.

Recommended Professional Rating: 4

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 4, Magical 7

ANNE RAVENHEART

A full-blooded Sioux and a high-ranking member of Knight-Errant's security forces, Anne Ravenheart is a talented mage and a crack shot with a gun. Captain Ravenheart ended up trapped in the Chicago Containment Zone along with her old friend and classmate, Kyle Teller. She now runs the Wrigley Dome haven, a four-block–square area between Irving Park, Addison, Halsted, and Clark streets. As the highest-ranking officer among the Knight-Errant personnel who founded the Dome, Captain Ravenheart oversees its day-to-day operations, including its defenses, and also determines whom to allow inside.

Anne is a striking woman somewhere in her mid-30's, and she wears her thick black hair cropped short in a military style.

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A former member of the Sioux Special Forces, she went to Columbia College to study magic on a military scholarship. After serving for several years with the Special Forces, she joined Knight-Errant Security and quickly rose to a position of considerable responsibility. A natural leader, she keeps a cool head in a crisis. As the commander of one of Knight-Errant's elite FireWatch teams—special ops personnel equipped with heavy-duty cyberware and magical talent—Ravenheart has faced her share of deadly threats. She and her team had been keeping tabs on the bugs for years before the Chicago disaster and had pinpointed the city's insect hive as the major hive in North America. Persistent rumors suggest that Ares's initial attempt to wipe out the hive actually spread the bugs throughout Chicago, resulting in the UCAS army blockade.

In the months since bombing the main hive, Captain Ravenheart has directed all her efforts toward helping the locals against the bugs. Her loyalty to Knight-Errant and to its parent company, Ares—unshakable before the disaster—has been steadily weakening ever since she began to suspect that Ares has written off the personnel caught in the Zone.

Game Notes

Anne Ravenheart is a combat mage with a heavy dose of cyberware, including basic Wired Reflexes and a headware Tactical Computer. She is highly skilled in the use of most weapons and has extensive experience in diverse tactical situations. She favors direct, aggressive combat spells and transformation/damaging manipulation spells, but she rarely uses spirits of any kind.

Ravenheart is a Grade 3 Initiate.

Recommended Professional Rating: 4

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 6, Magical 6

SEEKS-THE-MOON

Formerly Kyle Teller's ally spirit, Seeks-the-Moon became free when Teller nearly died in a spectacularly unsuccessful Knight-Errant raid on the main bug hive in Chicago. Rather than

leaving his creator, Seeks-the-Moon chose to stay with Kyle and help him search for his ex-wife and daughter—and to help battle the bugs intent on taking over the city. Because Seeks-the-Moon is a powerful magical being—a free spirit—the bugs can "smell" him in his astral form; to protect himself from the insect spirits, he spends most of his time manifested and masked.

Kyle Teller created Seeks-the-Moon using the so-called Rigetti method, named for a mage who was also a Jungian psychologist. Jung's concept of the "universal unconscious" deeply influenced Rigetti, and his spirit-creating ritual reflects that influence. As a result, Seeks-the-Moon is a reflection of the repressed portion of Kyle's personality. He is intelligent, quirky, prone to sarcasm, and independent minded, especially now that he is no longer bound to Kyle. Seeks-the-Moon appears as a tall Amerindian male just past middle age, clad in black jeans and a tattered blue denim jacket with the sleeves torn off. He wears two silver bracelets on one wrist and a leather band on the other, and walks around in black canvas sneakers. He wears his black hair in a long pony tail and sports a black hat with a red-white-and-black band around it.

Game Notes

Seeks-the-Moon is a free ally spirit, per pp. 76–83, **Grimoire, Second Edition.** He is a Force 7 spirit, with a current Spirit Energy of 2. He retains only the ally spirit power of Sorcery but has gained the powers of aura masking and human form.

Though he is free, he remains within the Containment Zone for reasons he cannot fully communicate. Sometimes he believes it is because of loyalty to Kyle Teller, the human that created him. But sometimes he feels as if he has another purpose, one that he remains unaware of at this time.

Recommended Professional Rating: 4

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 7, Magical 7

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HANNA ULJAKEN

Formerly a special assistant to Daniel Truman, CEO of Truman Technologies, Hanna Uljaken now uses her job skills for survival. She stayed in the heart of Chicago when the Trumans flew out in order to coordinate an ultimately unsuccessful search for Melissa Truman. Forced to flee the relative safety of Truman Tower when insect spirits invaded it, Hanna met up with Kyle Teller near ground zero of the tactical nuke blast that decimated the insect hive. She is now active in the day-to-day running of the Wrigley Dome haven.

Ms. Uljaken's Nordic ancestry shows in her appearance. She is tall and slender, with almost-white blonde hair and strikingly beautiful features. She wears a single earring that can be used as a low-level magical focus to enhance her considerable natural charisma. After the infestation, when Kyle Teller explained to her that the spell lock made her susceptible to attack from astral space, she had the item temporarily deactivated. Perceptive and discreet, she has little true experience with magic, but her growing friendship with Kyle Teller is giving her a rapid education.

Game Notes

Hanna Uljaken is fundementally the Corporate Secretary Contact (p. 205, **SRII**) though she is smarter, more agile, more skilled, and more charasmatic than the young lady depicted there (Hanna was, after all, Dan Truman's personal assistant).

Recommended Professional Rating: 2

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 1

MELISSA TRUMAN

Sixteen-year-old Melissa Truman is the youngest daughter of corporate magnate Daniel Truman. Until the Chicago disaster, Melissa earned a rich girl's pocket change on the international modeling circuit. She was close to her brother Mitch, who was kidnapped and ultimately killed by insect spirits. The two of them shared a dissatisfaction with their comfortable but restricted lives and a powerful resentment toward a father they perceived as not caring much about them personally. Melissa is now somewhere in the Chicago Containment Zone, having missed the family pullout by giving her Knight-Errant guards the slip. Her location is unknown, but the Ares Wrigley Dome guardians have heard persistant rumors that she has become

associated with one of the warlords. Neither the identity of the warlord nor the validity of the rumors have been confirmed.

Melissa has dark hair and eyes, quick wits, and a sharp tongue. Restless and dissatisfied, she looks for excitement everywhere, but is easily bored because she doesn't really know what she wants. Her parents are prepared to pay a good deal of money for her return, or even for reliable word of her whereabouts; if Melissa is still alive, she is an extremely valuable commodity.

Game Notes

Melissa Truman is an ordinary person. She has straight Attribute Ratings of 3, except for her Charisma which is a 4 and her Willpower which is a 2. Prior to the creation of the Containment Zone she had no appreciable or valuable skills. Who knows what she has learned since then?

Recommended Professional Rating: 1

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 1

LINDA HAYWARD

For all intents and purposes, Linda Hayward no longer exists as a human being. Her body has become the host of a mantis spirit, and her former human identity exists only in the memories that the spirit retains. The human Linda Hayward was born in Chicago in 2019, lost both parents in 2039, and lived quietly on her own in the city until 2051. At that point, all records of her disappear, indicating that the mantis spirit probably possessed her at that time.

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The mantis is a member of a gang known as the Desolation Angels, every one of whom is a female mantis spirit and all of whom can adopt the outward physical form of (meta)human women. Linda's human host body is stunningly beautiful, with bright blue eyes, dark hair, and a good figure. While in human shape, Linda met Mitchell Truman, Dan Truman's 17-year-old bisexual and deeply troubled son. Linda began a romance with him, intending to use him as a vessel for a male mantis spirit, but became too fond of the boy to invest him with a spirit. She attributes Mitch's mental breakdown and death to other insect spirits, whom she claims to be fighting.

Her location and activities within the Containment Zone are unknown.

Game Notes

"Linda Hayward" is a mantis spirit as described on page 140 of this book. She is approximately Force 6.

Recommended Professional Rating: 4

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 6

JEROME STANDISH

A former Mayor of Chicago, Standish lost the last election held before the Wall went up. Since the sealing off of the city, Standish has become one of the more powerful of the many so-called warlords divvying up territory inside the Chicago Containment Zone, and rumor has it that he may be trying to become the de facto "mayor" of the entire enclosed portion of the city. Little is known about his motivations for such a power grab; the active rumor mill offers several conclusions, from directionless megalomania to a sinister secret plot to place the Containment Zone under the control of zombies. The latter rumor springs from allegations made during Standish's term as mayor that he was "pumped full of bad juju" and was really some kind of undead being.

Standish's appearance and manner lend credence to the accusation; his pasty face, wasted frame, and not-all-there behavior make it clear there's something weird about him. His shadowy past includes a stint as a mercenary for an unidentified government in the Caribbean League, where rumor says he fell in with voodoo practitioners. As near as anyone can tell, Standish is somewhere in his mid-40, and is a Chicago native. Both parents were killed in a freak accident, when local movers accidentally knocked a heavy sofa off a fifth-floor balcony onto the couple. No record exists of Standish's ever having a wife or children, though during his term as mayor he defended himself against seven different paternity suits.

Game Notes

Jerome Standish's statistics, skills, and possible powers/abilties (assuming he has any) are all left up to the gamemaster.

Recommended Professional Rating: None

Recommended Threat Ratings: None

CATHERINE CUNNINGHAM

According to her opponents, this powerful human warlord came honestly by her nickname of "Catherine the Terrible." Intelligent, charismatic, and ruthless toward her enemies—or those she perceives as enemies—Ms. Cunningham has amassed immense power inside the Containment Zone within a very brief time. Though she appears susceptible to flattery and can become enraged over trifling offenses, opponents who dismiss her as unbalanced and irrational often live to regret it (very, very briefly).

Those loyal to her believe she cares deeply about their welfare, and stories abound of her generosity and personal sacrifices on her followers' behalf. She appears to be without prejudice toward any of the racial groups among her "subjects." Her temper is as legendary as her charm, but she never allows anger to overwhelm her rational judgment.

Of Russian extraction on her mother's side, Catherine is proud of her ethnic heritage and finds her nickname ironically appropriate. Tall and slender without appearing fragile, she has light gray eyes and blonde hair so pale it almost looks white. She appears to be anywhere between 30 and 40 years old, but

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no one knows for sure. Little is known about her past other than her service with UCAS Intelligence. Many of her supporters believe she is a powerful hermetic mage, but there is no objective evidence of her abilities (or lack of them).

Game Notes

If Catherine the Terrible is a hermetic mage, she is certainly an Initiate of at least Grade 2. She prefers to work with air and fire elementals and employs a cadre of powerful watchers that act as her messengers and bullies. If she is not a hermetic mage, then she assuredly possesses enormous amounts of cybernetic headware that potentially offer gigapulses of data storage and manipulation capability. She may also still carry an encrypted headware communications system capable of penetrating the UCAS jamming.

Recommended Professional Rating: 4

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 5 (If mage, then 3)
Magical 6 (If not mage, then 0)

KING VLAD

This warlord is a huge ork with an ego to match his size and a grudge against the world. He calls himself "King of the Orks," a title that increases his appeal to many of his supporters. Some of his other followers, however, feel doubts. Vlad is prone to paranoia, and some of his "lieutenants" in his personal army have died for displaying too much initiative at the wrong time. Vlad's unsettling tendency to veer between rewarding and punishing talented followers makes many of them nervous. He has held onto power so far through a combination of intelligence and brutality; he always knows exactly what is going on in his domain, and happily uses overkill to quash rebellions.

Vlad despises non-orks, though he concedes that they have their uses (as garbage collectors, say, or latrine cleaners). As he sees it, the world has stepped on orks at least one too many times, and he intends to make the world pay. Rather than settle the debt in blood, however, he prefers humiliation. He particularly enjoys humiliating elves, whom he believes are most in need of being taken down a peg.

Vlad says he grew up in Blood Town, and that his father's death in a preventable accident at Fast Flesh Enterprises forced his mother into prostitution to keep food on the table. He claims he walked to school barefoot in the snow every winter because his mother couldn't afford to buy him shoes. Half of his left ear is missing, and he tells people it froze off during the infamous winter of '35. Persistent rumors, however, attribute the injury to a knife fight.

Game Notes

The gamemaster should determine Vlad's game statistics. He probably has the abilities, equipment, skills, and attitude of a street samurai, or perhaps a mercenary if the tech seems too expensive. The bottom line for King Vlad, however, is his vast and varied experience on the streets. This experience should give Vlad a very high Combat Threat Rating.

Recommended Professional Rating: 4

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 9

TAMIR GREY

Tamir Grey is an important spokesman for ghoul rights and one of the primary leaders in the ghoul haven known as Ghoultown.

Grey was one of the few relief workers brave enough to volunteer to help the ghouls in the days before the creation of the Cabrini Refuge. He spent three years in the sewers doing everything he could to help those afflicted with what would later be identified as the Krieger Strain of the HMVV virus. During that time he earned the respect of the ghouls he worked with and was one of the few humans allowed safe passage through the ghoul lairs.

When Grey himself was infected, the "unfortunates" he had helped took him in. Fortunately, he was in good health when infected, and his will was strong enough to resist most of the psychological effects of the transformation. As a result, he emerged with his personality intact.

Over the next five years Grey continued his work, as a

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ghoul himself. He became an eloquent spokesman for the cause of ghoul rights and was one of the first to petition the Metahuman Rights Coalition for formal recognition of ghouls as a legitimate metahuman race. He was given the ghoul population's highest honor when they chose Grey as one of the first "ghoul names."

Game Notes

Tamir Grey is physically weaker than most ghouls, but smarter and certainly more charismatic. He has normal human skills and knows the ways of the streets and the ghouls better than most. He is also a crack shot with his classic Ares Predator heavy pistol.

Recommended Professional Rating: 3

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 3

BLAINE HAMMOND

Blaine Hammond is an important leader of the militant ghoul nationalist faction in Ghoultown, where he is responsible for the community's security.

Born and raised as a ghoul, Hammond is one of the few second-generation ghouls whose appearance remained mundane enough for him to interact in human society. He ventured out of the sewers at the age of twelve and proceeded to learn a great deal from those he considered his prey.

Shortly after the passage of Special Order 162, Hammond became one of the first ghouls to apply for asylum, determined to help the other ghouls fight the many battles he was certain would come. During the early days, he organized a watch program and helped the residents resist the attacks of human extremists. When Knight-Errant refused to renew their contract to provide security at the Refuge, he organized and headed a security force of Cabrini residents.

Hammond is a tough customer, strong as a troll and able to see into the astral plane, and a master of both armed and unarmed combat. Hammond's only real weakness is the blindness that afflicts all second-generation ghouls. Unlike others in his position, he has learned to compensate for this weakness with his other senses, rather than correct the condition with transplants or cybernetics. As a result, he has difficulty targeting opponents at anything farther than 20 yards or so (depending on prevailing winds).

Game Notes

Hammond is one butch ghoul, tougher and smarter than most. He knows most ordinary human skills, and is frighteningly proficient in unarmed combat and firearms. He proudly displays the scars he's earned from confrontations with racists and police.

Recommended Professional Rating: 4

Recommended Threat Ratings: Combat 5

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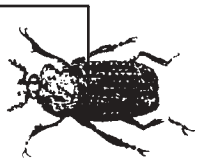

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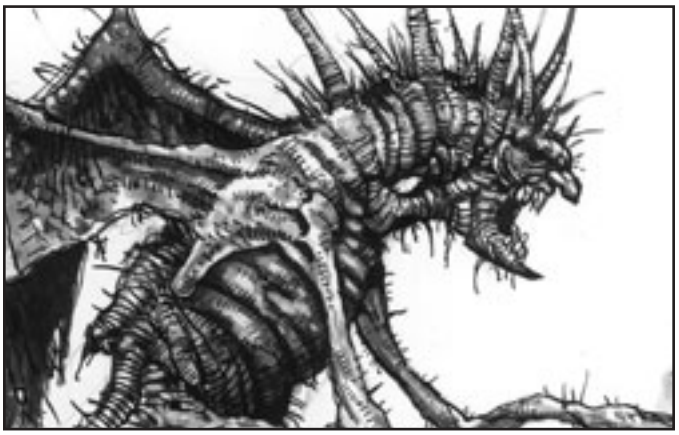

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- Nasty Grrrls Turf
- Midway Airport
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- Haymarket Nation
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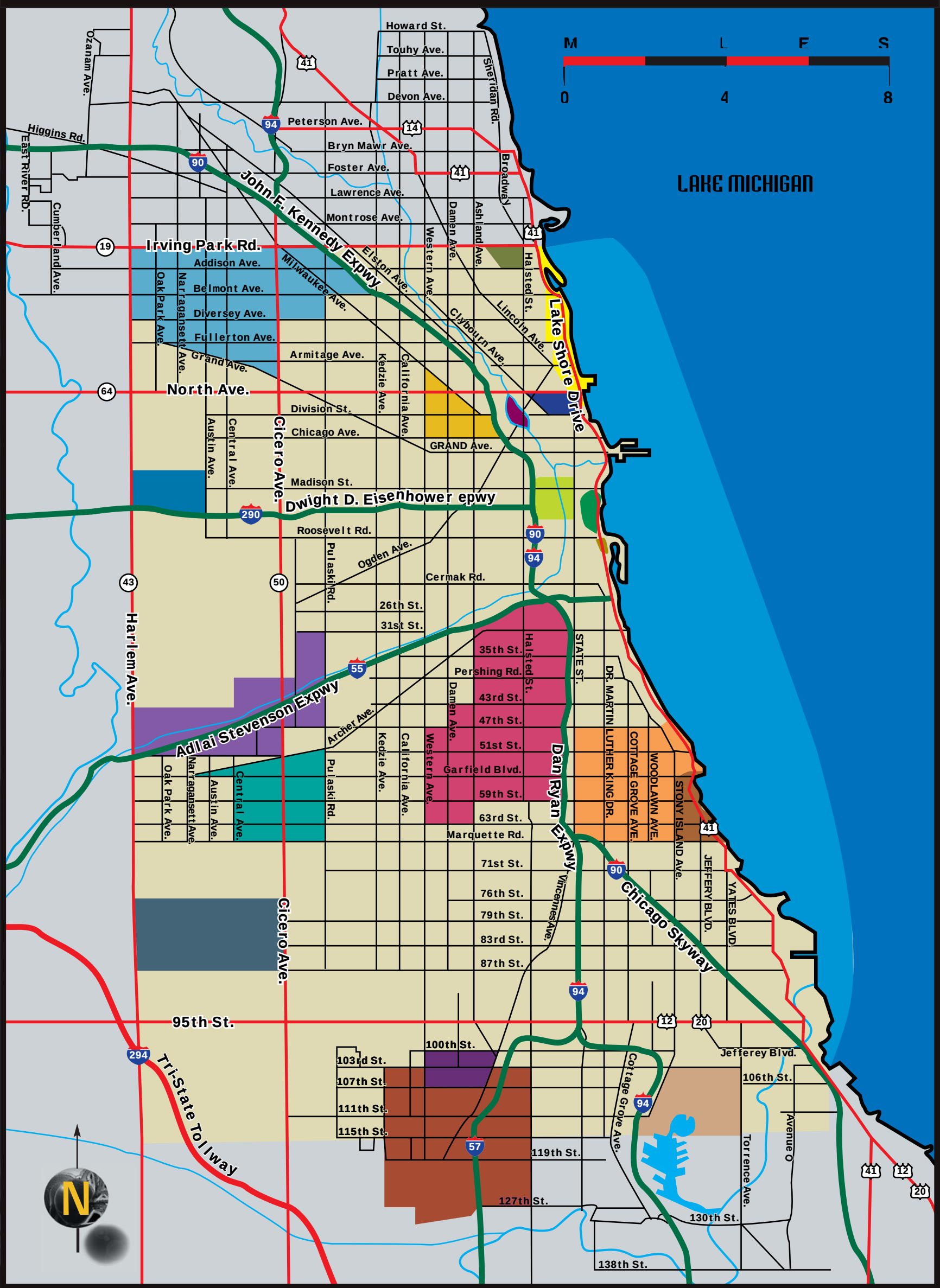
- Wind Transit Terminal
- Little Earth
- The Core
- The Sanctum
- Old U of C Campus
- Fleshmonger Turf
- Daley Gardens
- Volksville
- Territory of Catherine the Terrible



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