



# SMOOTH OPERATIONS

Sammyville





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# INTRODUCTION

Out on the streets there is violence, and lots of work to be done. Deep in your heart, you may know you're a warrior, but your weapons are not the typical ones. Your best attacks are not with bullets, blades, or lightning bolts. Instead, you use words, charisma, and a certain intuition that helps you understand what people want and use that to bend them to your will. You negotiate, persuade, cajole, con, bluff, and use a whole host of other tools that help you get what you want without needing to rely on breaking kneecaps.

Some of the skills for these kinds of operations are innate, but as everyone in the shadows knows, there are no natural skills that can't stand to be enhanced. *Smooth Operations* is all about helping faces hone their craft. It starts with *Let Me Have a Word*, which provides an overview of what a face does in the shadows. This includes looking at the ins and outs of legwork, as information gathering is one area where a face shines.

Next is *Maps of Desire*. A good face knows how to operate with what their targets want—getting them to chase the things they really care about is how you get them on your side. This chapter talks about the kinds of wants people have and how a face might take advantage of them.

How do you know what people want, though, especially if you haven't had much time to get to know them? That's what *Getting a Read* is about, looking at tips and techniques to reading people quickly.

*Tricks of the Trade* talks about putting some of those people skills to use. Faces use both short and long cons to get what they want, and this chapter describes some techniques any face should know.

One of the occupational hazards of being in the con game is you build an inherent distrust of others who might be playing you. *Are You Being Played?* leans into this sentiment, helping you identify when someone might be working you over.

Then the book gets into all sorts of character options for faces. *More than a Pretty Face* has qualities, quality paths, and life paths; *Faces in the Crowd* provides stats for six different kinds of face characters to show the ways they can work; *Mana-Infused Manners* has spells and adept powers with a social focus; *Social Shopping* has gear for faces; and *Social Edge* has expanded Edge rules for social situations.

While faces can accomplish a lot on their own, they thrive as part of a team, where they can play off the abilities of others and use their teammates' skills to complement their own. *The Ultimate Team Player* discusses the different ways the face can help other runners in their efforts, while *Complementary Abilities* looks at how others can be useful in the face's work.

Taken together, this provides a wealth of information for faces ready to show how to succeed in the shadows while firing nothing more than a barrage of words.

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## SNOW JOB

BY CZ WRIGHT

Mirrors lined the walls of the nightclub, reflecting a skinny human with a hawkish nose as he slouched toward the VIP section. He pulled the red velvet curtain aside to find a muscular and well-dressed ork lounging in a plush seat book-ended by two bodyguards. Their posture stiffened slightly at the human's arrival just as the ork looked up from his commlink.

"Crieiger, I presume?" the ork spoke languidly. His voice was as deep and rich as his très chic Sleeping Tiger suit. He did not move to shake Crieiger's hand.

"Mr. Knox, a pleasure," Crieiger said as he entered the room. He sat down across from Knox, who waved his hand towards a glass serving bowl filled with oblong red and blue "party favors." Crieiger smiled but shook his head. "No thanks," he said.

Knox nodded, stowed his 'link, and gave Crieiger a once-over. "Your reputation precedes you."

"A good one, I hope," Crieiger said with a grin.

"The word on the street," he continued, saying 'word' like it was in an unfamiliar tongue, "is that you're adequate in a fight."

"Gosh, Mr. Knox," Crieiger said with a quick shake of his head. "You know just what to say to make a boy feel welcome."

Knox's eyes narrowed. "I don't meet with people I haven't already heard of. So, in that regard adequate is more than sufficient."

Crieiger barked a laugh and looked down at the floor. "Glad to hear it."

A black-haired wisp of a waitress poked her head in, and Knox held up his index finger.

"You're skinnier than I expected," he said to Crieiger after the waitress ducked back out.

"Stress of the job," Crieiger replied as he leaned back and hooked an arm over the back of the chair.

"Stress indeed," Knox said, the emphasis apparent in his tone. "I heard you and your team were iced a few months back. You seem to have ... gotten better."

"Ugly rumors," Crieiger said, leaning forward. "Don't believe everything you see on the Matrix, right?" He then leaned back and winked at Knox with a "chk" of his mouth.

Knox examined his manicured fingernails. "So, what can I do for you, Mr. Crieiger? I have a rare break in my schedule and had hoped to spend it not conducting business."

"Sure, you bet. Though I wanna say thanks for meeting with me, Mr. Knox. I know you prime-time fixer-types are busy, so I won't take up too much of your time," Crieiger replied, interlacing his fingers and stretching his arms out before him. Popping sounds emanated from his knuckles as he cracked his fingers all at once. "Thing is," Crieiger said, shaking out his hands, "I need a new crew."