

SECRETS WORTH KILLING FOR

In 2072, Roger Soaring Owl, CEO of Knight Errant, resigned.

In 2073, Roger Soaring Owl was attacked on the streets of Denver. Witnesses were not clear on just what attacked him, but most say it was meaner, stronger, and faster than any metahuman.

Now it's 2074. It's time to find out what Roger Soaring Owl learned.

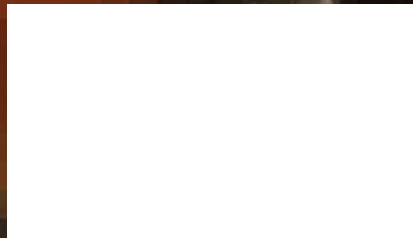
Corporate machinations don't get any meaner than this. Rivals of the megacorporation are certain it's hiding some dark secrets, and they're willing to spend significant nuyen to uncover this information. Runners are going to have to infiltrate an Ares subsidiary and gain the corporation's trust if they want to discover the secret—and if they do, they will have to find a way to survive with what they have learned.

Sacrificial Limb is the second in the *Boardroom Backstabs* series of adventures for *Shadowrun*. It has plot information, NPC details, player handouts, and everything needed to throw players into the depths of corporate espionage, digging for the paydata the megacorps want to keep hidden.

Sacrificial Limb is for use with *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*.



Sample file



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Sample file

BOARDROOM BACKSTABS

SACRIFICIAL LIMB





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... SACRIFICIAL LIMB ...

She chose a Horizon charity ball as her coming-out party, a way of making her return public knowledge. Not that people didn't already know she had returned from her self-imposed exile, but the act of coming to this party declared her intentions loud and clear. Nadja Daviar was back and loaded for bear.

They swarmed to her like butterflies scenting nectar in a particularly fragrant flower. Dressed in bright colors and over-polite mannerisms, they came seeking approval, asking favors, and determining intent. Some even came for information, stepping through the dance of politics and peppering the air with open-ended questions. Nadja waited with a saccharine smile that encouraged them all to spill their treasured secrets while holding close to her own.

Nicholas and Arthur visited her first, of course, sounding her out for possible alliances. They asked after Gavilan Ventures, if she planned to reclaim her proxy vote authorization, and if she intended to help them topple Damien Knight. She nodded and mumbled in all the right places, letting the two men walk away with smug expressions plastered on their faces.

Knight came next, brushing away Nadja's other admirers with the sheer power of his intimidating aura. "Well, well," he greeted. "Look who finally crawled out of her hole."

Nadja gritted her teeth from behind her politician's mask. "Hello, Damien. Lost any company resources lately?"

His eyes narrowed, an inferno of rage flaring to brief life behind them. Then ice descended. "None we couldn't afford to lose."

"Some would beg to differ, dear heart. Given the nosedive in Ares' stock price after Roger left—"

"A temporary market blip that corrected itself two days later," he interrupted with a snap.

Oh, how she loved watching him squirm like a fish on her hook. "I look forward to hearing your detailed explanation at the next board meeting. Especially since that pesky sword seems eternally stuck in its stone."

His shoulders tightened, pulling back military-style like a general who'd just been given distasteful orders. "Don't ask questions you don't want the answers to, Nadja. The results could be disastrous."

With that he stalked away, leaving a flurry of gossip in his wake. Across the room, Arthur and Nicholas glowed in satisfaction, assuming she did this all for them. She didn't—it was mostly for her. And picking the recent scab of the Excalibur wound was particularly satisfying.

After Damien came the parade of politicians, celebrities, and various people of influence. Executives of other corporations paid their

respects, treating her with equal parts respect and cautious awe. They talked of simple things, hoping she'd drop some hint of where she'd been, what she'd done, and what she planned to do. But still she remained silent, waiting for the one butterfly she truly wanted to catch.

Samantha Villiers.

Samantha drifted around the room, refusing to fall into the honey trap with the ease so many others had. Clever woman that she was, she instead flirted with those who had left Nadja's company, no doubt plying them for details about their brief meetings. Her path took her on a slow, deliberate spiral around the center of activity. By the time she stood before Nadja, her presence seemed an accident of social coincidence rather than a planned meeting.

Which was one of many reasons Nadja wanted Samantha on her side.

Taking a pull from her lavender-scented e-cig, Samantha gave Nadja a gracious nod. "Welcome back."

She asked no questions and made no other commentary.

Nadja returned the nod. "Thank you. So how are things going at NeoNET lately? Is Richard treating you well?"

Samantha waved her e-cig in the air, letting the vapor create a haze around both women's heads. "As well as can be expected, considering the circumstances." That was her all-purpose expression used to cover up all manner of chicanery between the two.

"I feel your pain. Men do have a talent for making a mess of things, don't they?"

"They do," Samantha agreed.

"What would you say if I told you I had a solution?"

A slight grin tugged at the edges of Samantha's lips. "I would ask what price such a solution carried."

Nadja grabbed a pair of champagne flutes from a passing waiter, handing one over to her potential partner. "Nothing complicated. A favor for a favor. You have Richard, I have Damien. I propose we swap problems. You deal with mine. I deal with yours. Anyone following the money trail doesn't find the culprit they expected, which protects us both from any in-house retaliation."

"Assuming there is a money trail to follow." Samantha sipped at her drink, her face a mask of disinterest to the curious and distant onlookers. "Perhaps we should continue this discussion in a more private venue?"

Burying her triumphant expression against the edge of her glass, Nadja replied. "Absolutely."

Finally, ten long years of meticulous planning were about to pay off.



INTRODUCTION

Sacrificial Limb is an adventure designed for use with *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*. While this adventure is not designed specifically with novice players in mind, it can be easily tweaked to suit a range of player experience.

Boardroom Backstabs adventures are designed to give players the opportunity to experience the intrigue and dangers inherent in the vicious competition between the megacorporations, and the cutthroat extremes that these world-dominating companies will go to in order to undermine their competition. *Sacrificial Limb* features Ares and its world-famous security subsidiary, Knight Errant. In 2072, Knight Errant CEO Roger Soaring Owl had a famous falling out with Ares CEO Damien Knight. The public assumed Soaring Owl quit on his own, and Ares' PR machine did everything to support that view. In truth, the two old friends disagreed about certain projects occurring at another Ares subsidiary called Unlimitech, and Knight fired Soaring Owl over it. The ramifications of this disagreement have left shockwaves in the shadows. A lot of powerful people are very interested in the reasons why Soaring Owl left Ares, and they also would like to gain access to the proprietary company knowledge he carries around with him. Since Soaring Owl refuses to share what he knows, the corporate players have turned to the shadows to obtain the paydata they seek.

Only gamemasters should read beyond this point. Advance knowledge of the secrets and plot revealed in the following text could reduce the enjoyment of playing this adventure. *Sacrificial Limb* is the second adventure in the *Boardroom Backstabs* series. Gamemasters and players who wish to play all three should keep in mind that the player characters' actions and contacts in previous adventures could have ramifications in this one.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

Sacrificial Limb takes place over seven distinct stages. Four are small, self-contained missions, the first of which is a trial run to give the players a hint of what they will encounter. The other three stages are capstone pieces, meant to introduce the missions to the players and give them the opportunity to do legwork they may not otherwise have time to do. The default setup assumes this game takes place over three or four sessions, but expansions are possible.

Throughout the book, you'll find hints for side missions that you can use if you and your players are interested in lengthening the process. There is no right or wrong timeframe in which to run this adventure. You can treat it as a single-session marathon or a year-long campaign. Choose what feels right for you and your group. If you prefer the multi-session method, this mission can be run as a series of short adventures or expanded into a full campaign. Subplots and sidebars are designed to give the game-master flexibility in how to approach each scene.

This adventure takes the players to Detroit (home city of Ares headquarters), where the player characters will initially infiltrate Knight Errant's training academy, and then on to Chicago (Bug City) to follow up on the intel they have gathered. Handouts on both cities are included in this book and can be given to the players at the relevant scenes, or used as additional information-gathering sources when the players research the cities in preparation for their runs.

The default campaign assumes that the characters involved are a little above average, but is perfectly playable for 400 BP characters. It may be a bit tricky, but it's designed to be a memorable challenge for characters of almost any level. Some of the scenarios will present relatively daunting odds if approached head-on. That's intentional. There are a number of situations that the runners won't be able to stomp roughshod over unless they're at the absolute high-end of the power scale. This adventure requires a certain amount of subtlety and stealth as it strips the player characters of their usual tweaked-out gear kits in favor of gear that may put them at a disadvantage during an all-out O.K. Corral-style gun fight. Encourage your players to think through their decisions, and give them plenty of options to achieve their goals. This is a perfect opportunity for them to get even more creative than usual with their roleplaying.

Additional information about Roger Soaring Owl can be found in the *Street Legends* supplement. The *Spy Games* supplement can also be used to spice up the subplots. However, it is not necessary to have either book, as everything in this adventure is self-contained.

MAIN SECTIONS

This book is divided into several sections designed to assist you in bringing this adventure to your table:

- **Preparing the Adventure:** A plot synopsis, necessary background information, and other useful details and data.
- **Adventure Scenes:** The adventure itself, broken down into individual scenes.
- **Aftermath:** What to do when the adventure is finished (awarding Karma, money, and contacts).
- **Legwork:** Summaries of information and data the player characters might find during their research.
- **Cast of Shadows:** Profiles of the primary NPCs with whom the player characters will interact during the adventure.
- **Player Handouts:** Information designed for players.

ADVENTURE SCENES

The adventure itself plays out over a series of sequential scenes. Each scene contains some or all of the following subsections:

- **Scan This:** A brief summary of the events in the scene.
- **Tell It to Them Straight:** A text selection that can be read directly to the players or paraphrased when the player characters reach specific points in the scene.
- **Hooks:** Descriptions of ways that characters might be encouraged to play a scene.
- **Behind the Scenes:** The mechanics behind each scene, including NPC motivations and any secrets or special instructions.
- **Subplots:** Secondary adventures—or red herrings—that offer avenues for gamemasters to develop to make the adventure less linear for players.
- **Pushing the Envelope:** Suggestions for gamemasters on altering the scene to challenge more experienced players or more powerful player characters.
- **Debugging:** Suggestions for getting the adventure back on track if the player characters' actions derail it.
- **Places of Interest:** Locations featured in the scene, including descriptions and ratings for security systems and Matrix systems.
- **Grunts and Moving Targets:** NPCs in that particular scene. NPCs that are featured in multiple scenes are found in the *Cast of Shadows*.





GAMEMASTERING THE ADVENTURE

Sacrificial Limb is an adventure designed for *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, and is the second in the *Boardroom Backstabs* series, which involves player characters in the machinations of the megacorporations as the latest battles of the corporate wars get underway. In this adventure, players and their characters will see what lengths a megacorp can go to for that extra competitive edge that can make or break a corporation.

Here are a few suggestions that will make gamemastering the adventure more smooth.

Step One: Read the Adventure

Reading through the adventure prior to introducing your group to it ensures you know what's coming down the line and are familiar with the entire story. This helps when your players (inevitably) come up with something not presented in the adventure.

Step Two: Assess the Adventure

Rarely does any gamemaster take a written adventure and run it without any changes. You may decide it needs to be more challenging for your players, or perhaps they form a specialized team (such as all mages) who will undoubtedly approach certain tasks in unique ways. You may want to switch certain NPCs with characters your players are familiar with from their game, such as a common fixer or corporate contact. Assessing the adventure lets you make notes on how you want to customize it to best fit your game and your gamemastering style.

Step Three: Know the Characters

You should have a copy of each character prior to running the adventure, so you can assess their individual (and group) skills, contacts, qualities, and abilities. If a scene calls for them to fly a plane through the Rockies, and none of them have a Pilot Aircraft skill, you may need to tweak the scene

so they'll still have a chance at success. If a character is sidelined for parts of the story due to lack of abilities or skills, the gamemaster should consider adding scenes that play to that character's strengths.

Step Four: Take Notes

Written notes help you keep things organized. You may want to jot down a note to give a particular handout to players at a specific moment or highlight important details about an NPC or combat scene. Taking notes during the adventure helps you remember characters' actions, which can be useful when awarding Karma and handling contacts at the conclusion. Since this is the second adventure in a series, these characters may have played through *Damage Control*, and you may want to refer to your notes from that game. Likewise, it is not unlikely that the players' decisions in *this* adventure might come back to haunt them later!

Step Five: Don't Let the Dice Run the Game

Dice rolls normally dictate the outcome of events in a roleplaying game. Sometimes, however, the dice fall in such a way that they interfere with the story. Remember, as gamemaster, you can always tweak the dice to enhance the story. As a rule of thumb, a gamemaster shouldn't fudge the die rolls to hurt player characters, but occasionally might tweak the roll to help them out or to help the story progress (softening a roll to seriously injure a player rather than killing them is one example).

Step Six: Don't Panic

You'll make mistakes. *Everyone* makes mistakes. You may forget a rule, misread a scene, or forget an important clue. Don't worry. The reason you're there is to have fun, and fun is far more important than a flawless performance. If you or the players make a mistake, do your best to straighten things out, then keep moving forward.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are crucial to bringing any adventure to life; they include the allies, enemies, and contacts the characters will interact with during the shadowrun. Important NPCs have relevant profiles, including stats, in the *Grunts and Moving Targets* section for each scene. Major NPCs who appear in multiple scenes are listed in the *Cast of Shadows* section at the end of this book. Some of the grunt NPCs can be treated as recurring characters from the previous *Boardroom Backstabs* adventure, *Damage Control*; they have additional background provided that reveals more of their motivations. Gamemasters can and should tweak the NPCs to make them more or less challenging opponents (see *Prime Runners*, p. 284, SR4A). NPCs in groups benefit from Group Edge (p. 281, SR4A), while individual NPCs in this adventure possess their own Edge stat to use.

BACKGROUND

In February 2072, Ares announced the resignation of Knight Errant CEO Roger Soaring Owl, saying that he had returned to his Sioux Nation home to do consulting work. Soaring Owl's resignation coincided with his return from a visit to an Ares research facility called Unlimitech, Inc., located at the Chicago O'Hare corporate complex. While many big names in the shadows took notice, the public remained unaware of the significance and connection between the two events.

Seven months later, amidst unfounded rumors that he was selling proprietary Ares secrets on the black market, Soaring Owl was attacked in Denver by a former Knight Errant Firewatch captain. Some stories claim Damien Knight put out a hit on Soaring Owl. But eyewitnesses saw the captain as a flesh-form insect spirit murdering innocents on the streets of Denver, stopped only by the bravery of Roger Soaring Owl. The Denver

