

FALSE FLAG

Sample file

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DENVER: FALSE FLAG

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First Printing by Catalyst Game Labs, an imprint of
InMediaRes Productions, LLC
PMB 202 • 303 -91st Ave. NE, E-502
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DENVER: FALSE FLAG

SIX MONTHS AGO
LOCATION: CLASSIFIED
0447, LOCAL TIME

“Archer Team, in position.”

If Colonel Shane Bennett had been in his meat body, he may have clenched his jaw or exhaled through his nose. But that wouldn't change the fact that Archer Team was two minutes, nine seconds late getting into position. This was still within mission parameters, but barely. Should Archer Team survive, they'd have words about future career opportunities.

Floating in his Matrix command-and-control center, Bennett sent an acknowledgement to Archer Team as he watched the mission chrono tick towards zero hour; only fifty-eight seconds left. Spread out before his chromed Matrix persona were several AR windows linking Bennett to the six teams involved in the operation through linked PITS networks. From there, each window had a sub-window giving POVs from each team member. Two teams, Nemesis and Falcon, were already in motion.

Bennett took a moment to review the mission's progress. All was going to plan. As far as everyone at the target facility knew, it was another boring night. They had no idea their Matrix security was compromised.

In the bright-white virtual command center, AR windows moved around Bennett in perfect synchronicity, like the internals of a Swiss watch. Their black-text information and real-time image feeds reflected off his chrome skin. Some considered his Matrix persona somewhat gaudy, but he appreciated its simplicity.

Every piece in this operation, organic and technological, was working as it was designated to, as *he* designed it to. Precision and timing were the keys to success in any operation. With proper planning, coordination, and operational discipline, any variable could be mitigated.

Reaching casually behind his head, Bennett plucked two orbiting AR windows. Spreading his fingers, the windows enlarged to give a detailed view of Nemesis and Berserker Teams as they approached the target in a pair of recently commandeered APCs.

Bennett smirked. The Aztlans had no idea.

As the APCs reached the gate, Falcon Team reported all security patrols eliminated, and the snipers had eyes on secondary targets. With twenty seconds to go, Static team reported that the target's communications were sleazed, at least for the next eight minutes. After that, there was nothing they could do about the Grid Overwatch Division. With ten seconds left, Nemesis and Berserker rolled in through the main gates unmolested, their forged bona-fides held up to scrutiny. Bennett knew they would—he'd made them.

The mission chrono ticked down to zero, and with that Bennett issued a command to all teams: EXECUTE.

Then, all hell broke loose.

Suppressed shots from Falcon Team took out the watchtower and checkpoint guards in one salvo. With their targets down, the shooters relocated.

Drones and t-birds from Gunrunner Team, circling at high-altitude, dove like dive-bombers. Within seconds, the main power generators and the compound's barracks became bright fireballs.

Rockets and mortars from Archer Team obliterated parked vehicles and aircraft. One overachieving trooper took out a fuel station and an Aztechnology Lobo in one shot. Bennett made note of her.

In the main compound, Nemesis and Berserker Teams burst from their vehicles and gunned down everyone in their path. As Berserker went for the main objective, Nemesis secured exit routes and set up explosive charges at crucial choke-points.

As predicted, enemy commanders tried to rally and counter-attack. But Static Team controlled all communications. They sent false orders and fed bad information, leading those responding into Nemesis' fields of fire.

Bennett watched as his teams systematically eliminated or bottled up their targets. At three minutes, seven seconds, Berserker reached the main objective. Bennett watched the image link as Berserker Three and Four—an ork adept and a troll tank—gutted two enemy troops with their blades as the rest of the team hammered away with assault shotguns. At three minutes eleven seconds, the





main objective, a two by one-half meter cylinder marked: Blue-227-W-0325, was secure.

"Berserker One to Watchtower, primary objective secure. Beginning exfiltration."

Bennett was pleased. They were a full ten seconds ahead of schedule.

Outside the compound, the other teams finished their primary objectives. Archer Team was already falling back for exfiltration while Falcon took up overwatch for Berserker and Nemesis' exit. Gunrunner's drones, weapons empty, had been recalled while the T-birds headed towards the rally points.

Inside the target facility, resistance was stiffening. The compound's commander, General Armando Diaz, had taken control and organized a counter-attack. Two members of Nemesis Team went down in the initial push to well-placed grenades, but the rest of the team held firm and blunted Diaz's efforts for the moment.

Bennett watched as Berserker and Nemesis Teams engaged in a running firefight through the facility. They boarded their APCs and made for the gate, which freely opened courtesy of Static Team. Enemy soldiers with rockets aimed at the APCs, but fell to Falcon Team.

The remaining enemy troops wisely remained inside the base.

At exactly seven minutes, Static Team jacked out of the Matrix, relinquishing control of the enemy base and avoiding GOD. Bennett was barely paying attention at this point. The teams were already heading towards their exit-points, and the enemy couldn't pursue. The mission was over. Berserker would deliver the objective within six hours.

He offered no congratulations. They had performed their task and accomplished their mission. Their compensation was enough. Bennett noted to inquire about Archer Team at a later time; presently, he had other matters to attend to.

Spreading arms wide then collapsing his hands together, Bennett sent all AR windows back into the electronic ether.

He then held his right palm up and touched fingers to his thumb in a quick sequence. He floated in his command center until the white room quickly became black as night. As crypto-programs kicked in, Bennett assumed an attentive position—body ramrod straight, arms at his sides while he waited for his master.

Within ten seconds, two large, draconian eyes appeared, then a large, white scaly face. Bennett bowed his head while his heart skipped a beat.

"Yes, Master, the objective is secured. I will take possession of the objective in approximately six hours. Operational security remained intact. No one will know who was responsible." He didn't bother with any other details, such as casualty figures, because the master didn't care.

"Very good, Colonel" the deep draconian voice rumbled. "Once again my faith in you has been well placed. However, there has been a change in plans. The objective will be taken to a different location. I have arranged for its protection; make sure it is delivered safely. Coordinates will be transmitted once this conversation is complete."

Bennett wondered about the change. Why not bring such a valuable item to Denver as originally planned? But it was not his place to question, just obey.

"Yes, Master. After this task is complete, is there anything else you require of me?"

"No now, but soon. Return to your regular duties. I will contact you when I have need of you."

And with that, the large eye disappeared, leaving Bennett floating in the darkness. With a mental command the darkness became a less oppressive twilight as Bennett jacked out and opened his meat eyes. His office was dim and it took a while for his eyes to adjust. He rose from his custom chair and removed the life-support connections from his stiff body. Securing his cyberdeck and checking his commlink, he had five hours before meeting with Berserker Team. Quickly, he assembled his gear, including his Zone Defense Force uniform.



Listed below are suggestions that should help the adventure run more smoothly.

STEP ONE: READ THE ADVENTURE

Read through the adventure before introducing it to your group. Being familiar with the adventure lets you see how everything connects. This helps you adapt when your players (inevitably) come up with something not in the adventure.

STEP TWO: ASSESS THE ADVENTURE

Rarely does an adventure go exactly as it's written. Some may want/need more of a challenge while sometimes adjustments for specialized teams (such as all mages) may be needed. Others may switch NPCs for characters with whom the players are more familiar. Assessing the adventure lets you customize it to make it more enjoyable and fit your own gamemastering style.

STEP THREE: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

You should have complete information on each of the player characters prior to the adventure so you can assess their individual (and group) skills, contacts, and abilities. For example, if a scene calls for them to fly a plane and no one has the Pilot Aircraft skill, you may need to tweak the scene. If a character is sidelined for parts of the story because of lack of abilities or skills, consider adding scenes that play to that character's strengths.

GAMEMASTERING THE ADVENTURE

STEP FOUR: TAKE NOTES

Written notes keep things organized and make it easier to present the adventure smoothly and effectively. Taking notes during the adventure, including the things the players do and say, and the choices they make is useful in awarding Karma and handling contacts at the adventure's conclusion. More importantly, the choices made in one game will affect the players' options—and the consequences they face—in the next adventure. Players will sometimes make choices they'll regret, and in the shadows that means there's a good chance those decisions will come back to haunt them.

STEP FIVE: DON'T LET THE DICE RUN THE GAME

Dice rolls are used to determine the outcomes of events in a roleplaying game. However, sometimes these rolls interfere with the story. As gamemaster, you have the authority—and the responsibility—to tweak the dice to enhance the story. As a rule of thumb, don't fudge the die rolls to hurt player characters, but an occasional tweak might help them out (going from death to serious injury for example) or recover the story from a catastrophic run of bad luck.

STEP SIX: DON'T PANIC!!!

You will make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. Forget a rule, misread a scene, or forget an important clue—don't worry! You're there is to have fun, which is more important than a flawless performance. When a mistake is made, do your best to straighten things out and move forward.

INTRODUCTION

False Flag is the second of the *Denver Adventures* series for *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*. It gives players the opportunity to experience events in the Denver Front Range Free Zone. The city is on edge after the events mentioned in *Storm Front (Lightning in Denver chapter)* and the previous adventure, *Serrated Edge*.

False Flag is an adaptable adventure; gamemasters can adjust it to suit their player's skills and or team composition. The adventure centers on a false flag operation and unfortunately for the residents of the FRFZ, no one knows who's responsible for what's going on. There are several possible candidates, but the information on whoever's responsible might start a war in the Mile High City.

Players should stop reading now. The rest of *False Flag* is for gamemasters only. It lays out the plots, characters, and secrets in the adventure. Reading beyond this point would reveal major spoilers.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

False Flag uses *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition (SR5)*. However, many of the characters and gear presented are from additional core

SR5 supplements, including (but not limited to): *Chrome Flesh*, *Data Trails*, *Rigger 5*, *Run & Gun*, *Run Faster*, and *Street Grimoire*. Historical information concerning Denver can be found in the *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition (SR4A)* book *Spy Games*, *Sixth World Almanac*, and the transition book *Storm Front*.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

In *False Flag*, the players travel to and around Denver to complete specific objectives. The gamemaster can run all objectives or choose only those objectives best suited to the group. They can also add additional objectives to expand this adventure into a full campaign.

MAIN SECTIONS

This book is organized into sections to assist with running the adventure:

- **Preparing to Play:** A plot synopsis, necessary background information, and other useful details and data.
- **Scenarios:** The adventure itself, broken down into individual scenarios/scenes
- **Picking Up the Pieces:** Information about wrapping up the game. This includes and aftermath, money/Karma rewards, and information pertaining legwork.

