

JACKPOINT

CONNECTING TO JACKPOINT VPN...

...IDENTITY SPOOFED

...ENCRYPTION KEYS GENERATED

...CONNECTED TO ONION ROUTERS

>>>LOGIN: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

>>>ENTER PASSCODE: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

...BIOMETRIC SCAN CONFIRMED

YOU'RE IN. USE IT WELL.

◊ "WHEN YOU ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY, HAVE TO KILL EVERY MOTHERFUCKER IN THE ROOM; ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES." -SAMUEL L. JACKSON

JACKPOINT STATS

12 Users are active on the network

LATEST NEWS

◊ A large bore pistol is still an acceptable answer to any problem. -Anon

PERSONAL ALERTS

◊ You have 13 new private messages.

◊ You have 81 new responses to your JackPoint posts.

◊ A PAN is broadcasting the identity "Rip Van Wrinkle" from within your 100-meter exclusion zone. Do you wish to enact Escape Plan Bravo?

There are three Members online and in your area.
Your Current Rep Score: 123 (16% Positive)

THE INNER CIRCLE

◊ You are visible to your closest 2 levels of contacts.

◊ Your Eyes Only posts have been viewed 10 times

◊ **Current Time:** 12 Aug 2079, 0617 hrs

WELCOME BACK TO JACKPOINT, CHUMMER:

Your last connection was severed 9 days, 23 hours, 46 minutes ago

TODAY'S HEADS UP

◊ Raging against the machine is the easy part. -Slamm-0!

INCOMING

◊ The Matrix has become the hurry of a number of different "friends" [Tag: 10 AIs]

◊ Everyone's life has another chapter, until it doesn't. [Tag: Seattle Gambit]

◊ What waters? We're in a desert!. [Tag: City by Shadow: Casablanca]

TOP NEWS ITEMS

◊ Sony has confirmed to independent news outlets that a body resembling Henry Daystrom has been located in their compound's waste reclamation facility. Thus far the corporation has declined an independent investigation into the Councilman's disappearance. [Link](#)

◊ Gunfire claimed the lives of three children outside of Seattle's popular Rhine restaurant this morning. Knight Errant has secured the scene and has begun a search for multiple persons of interest. [Link](#)

◊ United Nations investigations into the Manila Massacre were officially closed today. Citing the lack of evidence to support the charges of an organized effort, the body has stated the incident is a local matter best handled by local authorities. [Link](#)

FINAL TRANSMISSION

“You can’t be serious!”

Doctor Robert Hammond winced with irritation as his elfen colleague’s high-pitched exclamation pierced both his eardrums and the tense air in the underground lab’s control center. Doctor Thomas Cochran’s voice was grating even at the best of times, and the current situation was definitely *not* one of those times.

“Doctor Cochran, I am telling you for the last time to *shut the hell up!*” Dr. Hammond barked. “I’m calling in a cleanup team and that’s that!”

“We can’t!” Cochran shouted back. “Do you have any idea how much Ares has invested in this project? How much work it took to summon just **one** of the subjects, let alone as many as we have? If we call in a cleanup team, it’ll all be destroyed!”

Hammond sprang up from his seat and grabbed the elf by his lab coat, his patience at an end.

“If we don’t get help from Ares HQ, *we’ll* be destroyed!” Hammond screamed. “Do you understand that?! We’re the only ones left, and we can’t banish all those things ourselves!”

Before Cochran could reply, a loud *boom* shook the room and a faint ripple of electricity filled the air.

It’s them! Hammond thought. *They’re trying to break in!*

Hammond hurled Cochran to the floor and sat back down at the computer terminal.

“Now stay out of my way and pray the ward on that door holds,” Hammond said. “If you want to make yourself useful,

prepare to fight those things in case the worst happens.”

Hammond mentally prepared himself for another round of arguing, but was pleasantly surprised to hear nothing as Cochran stood up and dusted himself off. Turning his attention back to the terminal, Hammond entered his login information and prepared to fire off his message.

Come on, come on, Hammond thought, drumming his fingers nervously on the desk, the seconds it took for the e-mail program to load feeling like an hour.

Before he could type more than a few words, Hammond felt another room-shaking *boom* coupled with an electric ripple in the air—both sensations much stronger than last time.

“Dr. Hammond, look!” Cochran shouted with barely-contained panic.

For once hoping that Cochran was just being his usual over-emotional self, Hammond jumped from his seat, spinning around just in time for another *boom* to shake the room.

A feeling of terror rippled through his gut as he saw the control center’s door bulge inwards under the impact.

The ward’s failing already?! It should have held longer than that! Unless they’re all working together...

“Get ready!” Hammond yelled, forcing the fear out of his mind so he could focus on the entities about to barge in...

Less than a minute later, all that was left of Dr. Cochran and Dr. Hammond were desiccated corpses. And the only testimony to Dr. Hammond’s desperate, failed attempt to call for help was a few words on the terminal screen:

SITUATION CRITICAL - MASS HOSTILE SPIRIT BREAKOUT
- SEND FIREWAT_



PROFIT AND LOSS (OF LIFE)

Lethal Forces is a *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition* adventure for experienced runners. If you're looking to send your runners on an adventure that's both challenging and very lucrative (not to mention potentially fatal), look no further.

The adventure centers on a seemingly straightforward breaking-and-entering mission that quickly gets more complicated. The runners will need all of their skills, wits, and luck to make it out alive and get the big payday they were promised.

It cannot be stressed enough that this adventure is a deadly one. Help is provided for gamemasters who want to tone things down, but as written, *Lethal Forces* is for veteran runners.

Players should stop reading now—the rest of *Lethal Forces* is for gamemasters only!

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

With products such as the Predator pistol and Alpha assault rifle, along with subsidiaries that include Knight Errant, Ares Macrotechnology is the megacorporation most people associate with the military and security fields. However, guns and body armor are not the only things soldiers and security officers need to worry about in the Sixth World. Magic also plays a major role, and it's there that Ares tends to fall behind the competition.

While Ares has carried out magic-based, security-related research in the past—their experiments with Strain III FAS and insect spirit-infested security animals come to mind—the company largely focuses more on the concrete, physical aspects of their chosen specialty fields. This is an oversight that some within the corporation, including Damien Knight, seek to correct by any means necessary, fearing that Ares will not remain competitive if they do not address it.

To that end, Knight has recently allocated a staggering amount of black budget funds to Ares "magical task forces." These are groups of Ares employees dedicated to researching weaponized magic, which is defined as any type of magic that could be used by military or security forces in an offensive capacity. These task forces engage in a wide variety of activities, from researching magical theory in labs to arranging shadowruns against organizations that possess magical items or secrets that Ares wants. It was on one of these runs that the *Liber Excidi* was found.

The *Liber Excidi* ("Book of Destruction") was recovered during a shadowrun against the Atlantean Foundation, along with several other magical tomes. The books, all of which had gone untranslated by the AF due to being designated "low priority resources," were shipped back to Ares headquarters, where they soon discovered what a prize the *Liber Excidi* was.

A centuries-old Latin translation of a far older text, the *Liber Excidi* is a book of specialized and dangerous magical lore. It serves as a guide to summoning and controlling a terrifying

type of spirit unknown to most magicians of the Sixth World—beings of pure entropy whose very touch brings death and decay. These spirits are violent by nature and difficult to control once summoned.

Realizing the possible military value of such destructive beings, Damien Knight ordered the *Liber Excidi* transferred to a recently completed top-secret lab located in a basement level of an unassuming Ares office building in Seattle. The lab was quickly and secretly staffed with some of the best magical minds in the company, led by an expert in military magic named Dr. Robert Hammond, and its personnel charged with finding a way to reliably harness the dangerous beings described in the book. The lab was locked down for the duration of their work—nobody was permitted to leave for any reason, only essential supplies were to be sent in, and extensive precautions were taken in case something went wrong, including wards built into the lab's walls, ceiling and floor. The only way the lab personnel could communicate with the outside world was through a wired Matrix connection linked directly to Ares headquarters in Detroit, and wireless-dampening material incorporated into the lab's walls prevented any wireless communications from getting in or out.

The sudden burst of hush-hush activity caught the interest of the office building's assistant security director. An undercover Aztechnology operative planted in the building two years previously, this man (codenamed "WebMaster") kept an eye on the mysterious goings-on surrounding the conversion of the basement level. After sneaking a look at the faces of some of the personnel transferred in, he did some digging and discovered they were all distinguished Ares magical theorists. He also discovered that none of them had been seen aboveground since their transfers. Suspecting that something interesting was going on, he reported this to his Aztechnology handlers.

Unfortunately, something terrible has happened in the underground lab, and the shadowrunners hired by Aztechnology are about to walk into a nightmare from which they may not escape ...

PLOT SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins as the runners are contacted by their usual fixer, who has a job offer from a Mr. Johnson. He says that the meeting will take place at a Downtown Seattle bar called The Swooping Seahawk in three hours.

When the runners get to the bar, Mr. Johnson is waiting for them. He wants them to perform a "challenging" B&E job and offers excellent compensation for it. Until the runners agree to the job, he will not give any details other than the payment amount and, if pressed, the job requiring the utmost discretion. Once the runners agree, he tells them that they are to break into a high-security facility controlled by Ares Macrotechnology, which is located in the Kighthawk Building in Downtown Seattle. Their assignment is to steal any data related to a certain magical research project, destroy Ares' copies, and then deliver the stolen data. They will be assisted by an



LETHAL FORCES A SHADOWRUN ADVENTURE

undercover agent in the building, code-named “WebMaster,” and he can provide them with some information and support; he will also be the person the runners will need to signal once the job is completed. When the runners see WebMaster’s contact information, they will realize that they are working for Aztechnology on this job, something the Johnson confirms if the runners voice their suspicions. The Johnson closes the meeting by once again insisting on discretion from the runners; no fireworks if at all possible, at least not before they enter the facility. Once they do, they can neutralize personnel as they see fit.

Once they have the job, the runners should plan how they’re going to get in, preferably with WebMaster’s help. This is meant to be an open-ended scene, with the players planning the break-in according to their characters’ strengths. WebMaster can provide information on what sort of security measures the runners will face—the facility is underground and accessible only by elevator, for one thing—and will also tell them how to signal him once the job is done. He also advises them to prepare their escape plans; he has reason to believe that there will be no way to communicate wirelessly from within the facility, so if they plan to involve him in their extraction, they’ll need to tell him beforehand.

As long as the runners’ plan is good, they should eventually gain entry to the lab, which appears deserted. They soon find the desiccated corpses of the scientists assigned to the lab, along with information on what they were researching—previously unknown, incredibly destructive spirits and how to harness them for military and security purposes. During their investigation, the runners are ambushed by these spirits and forced to defend themselves. Eventually, they find all of the paydata and destroy Ares’ copies. They also find a final set of notes from one of the scientists, who doubts the lab wards will keep the spirits contained for much longer and fears the world will be in danger if they escape. This should motivate the runners to end the threat the spirits pose. This is a challenging task, but not an impossible one, and the information the runners have recovered can help them defeat the spirits.

Once their job in the lab is done, the runners must get out of the building. This is another open-ended part of the adventure, and the plans the runners made earlier will pay off here. WebMaster will fulfill his end of any escape plan, which should allow the runners to escape with a minimum of fuss.

At this point, WebMaster gives the time and place for the drop-off, and all that’s left to do is deliver the data as agreed. However, the runners may have serious reservations about letting Aztechnology have data that would allow them to summon such destructive spirits—they’ve seen firsthand what happens when those spirits are unleashed, and the research notes indicate that it’s difficult for even experienced mages to control them. For this reason, the adventure has a number of possible endings.

If the runners don’t understand the implications of Aztechnology having the data, or if they simply don’t care, they can deliver the data to Mr. Johnson. They will be handsomely rewarded as promised, but Aztechnology will have some dangerous information, the misuse of which could result in disas-

ter somewhere down the line. This should worry runners who know of Aztechnology’s track record with such things.

Alternatively, the runners could decide to sell the data to someone they can trust to destroy it. However the runners go about this—whether they tell Mr. Johnson to his face that the deal is off or simply don’t show up at the drop-off—the will get interesting for them as Aztechnology operatives try to steal the data and kill the runners. The runners can eventually find a shadowrunning team dedicated to finding and destroying such information, but if the runners know the right people they might attract the interest of the great dragon Arleesh. Their payment will be lower than if they had turned the data over to Aztechnology, even if Arleesh is involved, but they’ll have the satisfaction of knowing that neither Ares nor Aztechnology has the dangerous data. Naturally, Aztechnology won’t be too happy about this, which could have consequences in the future.

Finally, the runners can cut out the middleman and destroy the data themselves. Obviously, they won’t get paid at all if they do this, and they’ll also have to convince Aztechnology that they no longer have the data. Once Aztechnology is convinced, they’ll back off the runners, since there’s no profit in killing them now. They won’t forget what the runners have done, though, which could negatively impact the runners’ careers and lives somewhere down the line. Then again, whoever said being the hero was easy?

Scene 1:

MEET & GREET

SCAN THIS

In this scene, the runners’ regular fixer contacts them and says that a Mr. Johnson wishes to meet with them at a Downtown Seattle bar called The Swooping Seahawk.

At the bar, the Johnson hires the runners to break into an Ares facility, retrieve any data relating to a magical research project, and destroy Ares’ copies of that data. The runners are promised generous payment for this task, although the Johnson insists they be discreet in their law-breaking. He also gives them the contact info of an undercover Aztechnology agent who can help them with their mission.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Figures. The first peaceful sleep you’ve had in days, and you get jarred out of it by your commlink’s ringtone. Groaning to yourself, you grope around your nightstand, eventually finding the commlink.

“Hello?” you answer.

“Hey chummer, how’s my favorite client?” your fixer replies in his usual “sleazy Hollywood agent” voice. “Just got a call from someone who’s interested in interviewing you for a *very* well-paying job. Time and place is The Swooping Seahawk-



LETHAL FORCES

A SHADOWRUN ADVENTURE



you know, the bar downtown—three hours from now. If you're interested. So whaddya say?"

Three hours. At least you've got some time for a bit more shut-eye before heading down there. You tell him to set it up.

"Excellent! Don't be late!"

With that, he hangs up, leaving you to your pre-meet nap.

WHEN THE RUNNERS ARRIVE AT THE SWOOPING SEAHAWK, READ THE FOLLOWING:

Sports bars are nothing new to you, but this place is a whole 'nother level of fandom. Every square inch is decorated with the Seahawks' colors, along with a piece or five of team memorabilia. Each one of the bar's dozen trid sets shows a different Seahawks game, from last Sunday's contest to matchups from the 20th century. Even at this noon hour, all the stools at the bar and most of the booths are occupied by Seahawks fanboys, who cheer at the games on trid like they're seeing them for the first time. The whole scene feels almost cult-like, making you shiver a bit as you take it all in.

HOOKS

There are several elements of the bar that can help set the tone for this scene. The most evident and pervasive one is the constant background noise; a combination of past and present football announcer voices, crowd noises and drunken cheers from the patrons. The runners and Mr. Johnson should both need to speak louder than they normally would to make themselves heard, though the ambient bar noise and Mr. Johnson's white noise generator mean there's little chance of the patrons overhearing their conversation.

The joviality of The Swooping Seahawk should also be highlighted. This is a place where people go to indulge their love of the local sports team, have a few drinks, and have fun. Don't make this scene feel like a "standard" meeting with a Johnson. The Seahawk's patrons don't mind their own business because they're also up to no good, like most runner bars; they mind their own business because their business is having a good time. They basically think, "If the newcomers don't want to join the crowd, who cares? Time for another soybeer!"



BEHIND THE SCENES

The Swooping Seahawk is a fairly casual bar, meaning that there's little in the way of obvious security. The bartender, an ork named Eric Holmes, has a shotgun and Panicbutton under his bar for emergencies; other than that, the only security features are a doorman to check weapons and a few cameras. The surrounding environment does most of the security work—this part of Downtown Seattle has a security rating of A from Knight Errant, meaning that anybody who looks like they mean to cause trouble is going to be noticed.

The doorman, another ork named Mora, will check the runners' weapons, using his own sharp eyes to thwart any attempts to sneak one in. If the runners check their weapons voluntarily, they can pick them up when they leave. If not, have any runner trying to sneak a weapon in make an Opposed Palming + Agility [Physical] Test versus Mora's Perception + Intuition [Mental] dice pool of 9 [Mental Limit of 5], with the standard concealability modifiers (p. 420, SR5) applying for Mora's test. If Mora detects any hidden weapons, he will politely ask the runner to relinquish them for the duration of his visit; drunks and guns don't mix well, and he knows it. If the runner refuses, Mora tells him to leave.

Occupying the bar are 30 Seahawks fans, ranging in age from early 20s to late 50s with various metatypes represented. None of them will notice the runners as they enter, even if they're not dressed to fit in with the bar's ambience; they're too engrossed in the sports chatter and the games on the trid screens. Wearing a rival team's clothes will draw a few jeers from the fans, but nothing beyond that; hassling the runners is too much work, and they're there to have fun. Only if the runner deliberately start a fight will they get belligerent (see **Interrogating**).

Mr. Johnson is an average-sized Hispanic human in his mid-40s named George Guzman, casually dressed in a Seattle Seahawks t-shirt and jeans to fit in with the crowd. Once the runners pass Mora's door check and start looking around the bar, he will wave them over to his booth. A female human server in a Seahawks jersey will arrive to take their order soon after. Once she leaves, Mr. Johnson pulls a white noise generator out of his pocket and deftly sticks it under the table, activating it as he does so.

THE JOHNSON THEN STARTS HIS SPEECH. READ OR PARAPHRASE THE FOLLOWING:

Mr. Johnson lowers his voice to the point he can barely be heard over the ambient noise of the bar and the white noise generator.

"Thank you for meeting me in a place like this," he says. "Sorry if the surroundings aren't typical for discussing business; I figured the noise might assist my electronic friend here in keeping eavesdropping to a minimum.

"I have a job for you. It's a challenging job, but very well-paying—50,000 nuyen for each of you. Interested?"

The quoted amount should raise some eyebrows among the runners. If they wish to make a Judge Intentions Test (Charisma + Intuition), let them succeed; they will find no indication that Mr. Johnson is lying about the offered payment.

The Johnson will not go into any more detail about the job until the runners agree to do it. If the runners demand more information and threaten to walk if they don't get it, the Johnson will only say that the job requires the utmost discretion. Nothing will make Mr. Johnson say more than this; if the runners refuse to agree to the job without more information, he graciously says, "That's your call." and walks out of the meeting.

The runners can negotiate their payment at this point. Have the runners roll Negotiation + Charisma [Social] against Mr. Johnson's dice pool of 11 (with a Social Limit of 7). Each net hit raises the offered payment by 5,000 nuyen per runner. He will not raise the offered payment by more than 50 percent. He will pay the runners up to half the final amount up front, but not before they agree to the job.

ONCE THE RUNNERS AGREE, MR. JOHNSON CONTINUES:

"I'm glad to know we can do business. Your job will be infiltrating a highly secure facility within the Kighthawk Building in Downtown Seattle. This building, as I'm sure you know, is owned by Ares. We've heard from a reliable source that something very hush-hush is going on in one of the basement levels of that building—access has been completely cut off to building personnel, and nobody has been seen entering or exiting that basement level for the last two months. Even more interesting, we know that several of Ares' best magical theorists were transferred to this level just before it was locked down.

"We suspect that Ares is conducting some sort of secret magical research project in that basement—you don't sequester some of your best magical minds unless you really want them to concentrate on what they're doing. We want you to get into that facility, discover what exactly they're researching, retrieve the data, destroy their copies of it, and then deliver it to us.

"I know it sounds like a difficult job, but you will not be alone in this. We have an undercover agent inside the Kighthawk Building who will be able to help you. He works as a spider, which gives him access to both the building's security systems and a number of its other systems, which will no doubt be extremely helpful. He goes by the code name WebMaster, and I will give you his contact info. Once you make your escape, you are to signal WebMaster; at that point, he will tell you where to make the delivery.

