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## JACKPOINT

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Magic

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Cross  
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# JACKPOINT

CONNECTING TO JACKPOINT VPN...  
...IDENTITY SPOOFED  
...ENCRYPTION KEYS GENERATED  
...CONNECTED TO ONION ROUTERS

>>>LOGIN: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
>>>ENTER PASSCODE: XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
...BIOMETRIC SCAN CONFIRMED  
YOU'RE IN. USE IT WELL.

• "PUNK ROCK IS JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR FREEDOM." -PATTI SMITH

## JACKPOINT STATS

74 Users are active  
on the network

## LATEST NEWS

• Johnny Banger calls reports  
of rioting near his performances  
"normal concert behavior."

## PERSONAL ALERTS

• You have 10 new private  
messages.  
• You have 5 new responses to  
your JackPoint posts.  
• The resale value of your Maria  
Mercurial tickets has climbed by  
an estimated eighteen percent.

## THE INNER CIRCLE

There are seven Members online  
and in your area.

## Your Current Rep Score:

717 (66% Positive)

## Current Time: 10 June 2080,

2114 hrs

## WELCOME BACK TO JACKPOINT, CHUMMER:

Your last connection was severed 3 hours, 14 minutes, 19 seconds ago.

## TODAY'S HEADS UP

• This whole VPN is DIY. Take a look at some of the others who are  
operating outside the boundaries—and within them.—Glitch

## INCOMING

• It takes the biggest of bads to make the most legendary runners. [Tag: Chicago Chaos]  
• If we're gonna be honest, you probably should panic. [Tag: The Neo-Anarchist Streetpedia]

## TOP NEWS ITEMS

• UCAS President "rules out nothing" when it comes to acting against  
Ares's proposed move to Atlanta. Link  
• Danielle De La Mar: "I love technomancers! I have one on my  
security team!" Link  
• Asamando officials offer no comment about ongoing low-level  
seismic disturbances. Link

## INTRODUCTION

There is no future.

Express that thought aloud and you'll get plenty of agreement, but for different reasons. For some people, it will be simple nihilism. After all, the Sixth World staggers from crisis to crisis, disaster to disaster, with whatever balances holding the world together always on the verge of total and final collapse. The people who are in charge of the world seem to have little regard for it beyond what they can extract for their enjoyment, and even less regard for the billions of people who crawl its surface. That form of controlling the world would seem to be unsustainable, but it's lasted for the better part of the century. With each year, though, the inevitable ruin comes closer, and it seems increasingly unlikely that there will be anything left but wreckage.

The other way of looking at the opening sentence does not necessarily contradict the first one. Whether the future is bleak or not, whether total destruction looms or not, isn't relevant. Because the thing about the future is, it stays out of reach. There is always a future in front of us, but we always live in the present. The moment you are in is the one that is real. The past is gone, the future doesn't arrive. There is no future because we all live in the now.

So what are you doing with your now? You can be entertained, if that's what you want. Corp drones of the world don't have a lot of free time, while the SINless of the world don't have a lot of scratch, but there are precious few people in the industrialized nations of the world (which is the vast majority of them) who can't find their way to the Matrix and its wealth of entertainment options. You could catch up on tunes, watch some trid

flicks, cheer on your favorite team, or consume news in whatever fashion works for you. If you want to be pacified and numbed, there are more than enough options for you. Your present can be a rest from the stresses and worries of your other present moments, and with the world the way it is, who can blame you?

But you can make your present something more. You can push beyond the bland, corp-sponsored drek that fills every mainstream broadcast, download, or whatever, seeking out a little more and finding the jewels hidden in deep caverns. The bands, singers, and MCs who don't have the glittery sheen of corp production on their music and don't want it. The trid dramas and documentaries that set out searing questions about the way the world is and how it can change. And the news that has the courage to commit to the radical act of telling the truth.

This book is your guide to Sixth World entertainment, media, and culture. It starts with **Look Forward in Anger**, an overview of how the media market looks and why it looks that way. **Blitzkrieg Bops** takes on the music scene, including bands and venues, while **Creation Starts with Darkness** looks at how we consume moving pictures and accompanying sensations, namely through trid, simsense, and BTLs. **Leading and Bleeding** looks at Sixth World news, including the rare few who tell it straight, and **Thrills and Agonies** takes on the sporting scene. **We Suck Young Blood** examines how corps co-opt youth movements in the eternal effort to stay fresh, and **Game Information** brings rules, including gear, qualities, and life modules, tied into Sixth World culture.

The book will let you know what's going on in the world, but only you can decide what you'll do with it. Just choose fast, because there's no time like the present.

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Lake Stevens, WA 98258



Find us online:  
info@shadowruntabletop.com  
(Shadowrun questions)  
<http://www.shadowruntabletop.com>  
(Catalyst Shadowrun website)  
<http://www.shadowrun.com>  
(official Shadowrun Universe website)  
<http://www.catalystgamelabs.com>  
(Catalyst website)  
<http://shop.catalystgamelabs.com>  
(Catalyst/Shadowrun orders)

## NO FUTURE CREDITS

**Writing:** Dylan Birtolo, Kevin Czarnecki, Mark Dynna, Jason M. Hardy, Jason Hawks, Ken Horner, Trevor Laughlin, James Meiers, Sascha Morlok, Scott Schletz, RJ Thomas, Malik Toms, Thomas Willoughby, Russell Zimmerman

**Editing:** Brooke Chang, Jason M. Hardy

**Proofing:** Bruce Ford, Mason Hart, Francis Jose, Sascha Morlok, Louis Ray, Rebecca Welch, Jeremy Weyand

**Art Direction:** Brent Evans, James Mosingo

**Cover Art:** Echo Chernik

**Cover Layout:** Matt "Mmmmm Chunt Please" Heerdt

**Iconography:** Nigel Sade

**Interior Art:** Tyler Clark, Daniel Martin, Brian McCranie, James Melot, Victor Moreno

**Interior Layout:** Matt "Mmmmm Chunt Please" Heerdt

**Shadowrun Line Developer:** Jason M. Hardy



# SALES PITCH

He turns off his eyes the moment the engines start. External sound dampeners engage a moment later, leaving him in a void most people couldn't possibly imagine. In that void there is music; the staccato chatter of beatpace resonating through Yamatetsu-built eardrums, always slashing from one rhythm to the next, an algorithm-driven mixtape that promises to distance him from his flesh and his common sense as the plane lurches upwards and he has to kill his vocal cord array in order to stop himself from screaming.

Samuel "Shuggy" Jones cannot fly. Once, before success bought him all these modifications, he tried to take a commuter jet from Seattle to Los Angeles. They had to stop the plane on the runway, because Shuggy had tried to squeeze his dwarf frame under the seat in front of him. When that didn't work, he made a run for it. The stewardess found him trying to claw his way out of the rear door. That was how the BTL use started. Slot a chip into the new hardware, and you weren't on a plane anymore. You were in Paris, or walking across the African battlefields of the fifth desert war, or sitting in a high chair waiting impatiently for a spoonful of sweet-tasting goop, or perhaps in bed with a busty fomori whose tongue slithered toward you. Problem was, long after the planes landed, the BTLs were still there. It didn't take much for him to reach for them. It didn't take long before that was all he did.

He feels the world around him jostle and wishes he could reach down into his nervous system and find a kill switch for that, too. Instead, he focuses on the music. The algorithm dances into a half-speed offering, abandoning the nostalgia of beatpace maven

Zero Interrupt for the slavgrass twang of Chaker Baker. The music, expertly selected, carries his thoughts away from the flight and the fear. In moments, he is asleep.

Then the plane shakes. Then it drops.

Shuggy feels everything. He feels the plane rocking and his lunch creeping up past the pit of his stomach and holding there as if weightless and he is weightless and holding his breath and there is a tremendous shove from below him and he knows he is going to die. He grabs the hand of the person next to him like a baby clutching a parent's hand and squeezes. He keeps squeezing for all he is worth.

The person next to him—Gesher, a toothy ork, wide-eyed and cautious—punches him in the arm. Hard. Shuggy loosens his grip, reactivates his eyes. Gesher is talking, but there is no sound, just the algorithm overcorrecting to doom arcanometal. Shuggy shuts down the playlist and rekeys external hearing.

"Why'd you hit me?"

"Your nails were cutting through my hand. I thought you were having a bad dream."

Just a bad landing. "No. I was working. Something in the stream caught my attention, so I tried to get your attention so you could make note of it—for the show."

Gesher wears a three-piece suit that probably cost more than both their first-class tickets. He has surprisingly small eyes for such a large head, and they dart around nervously. "We should have brought security, he says. "It isn't safe for you to be put in public like this."

