

An Evolutionary Upgrade

The Crash of 2064 ruined the lives of

millions. Some died in the Matrix or went insane, many

lost everything they owned, and still others found their identities completely erased. A small percentage changed into something altogether different, with the strange and inexplicable

ability to affect the new Matrix with

their minds. Now, in 2070, the existence

of these technomancers becomes front-

page news, leading to widespread paranoia

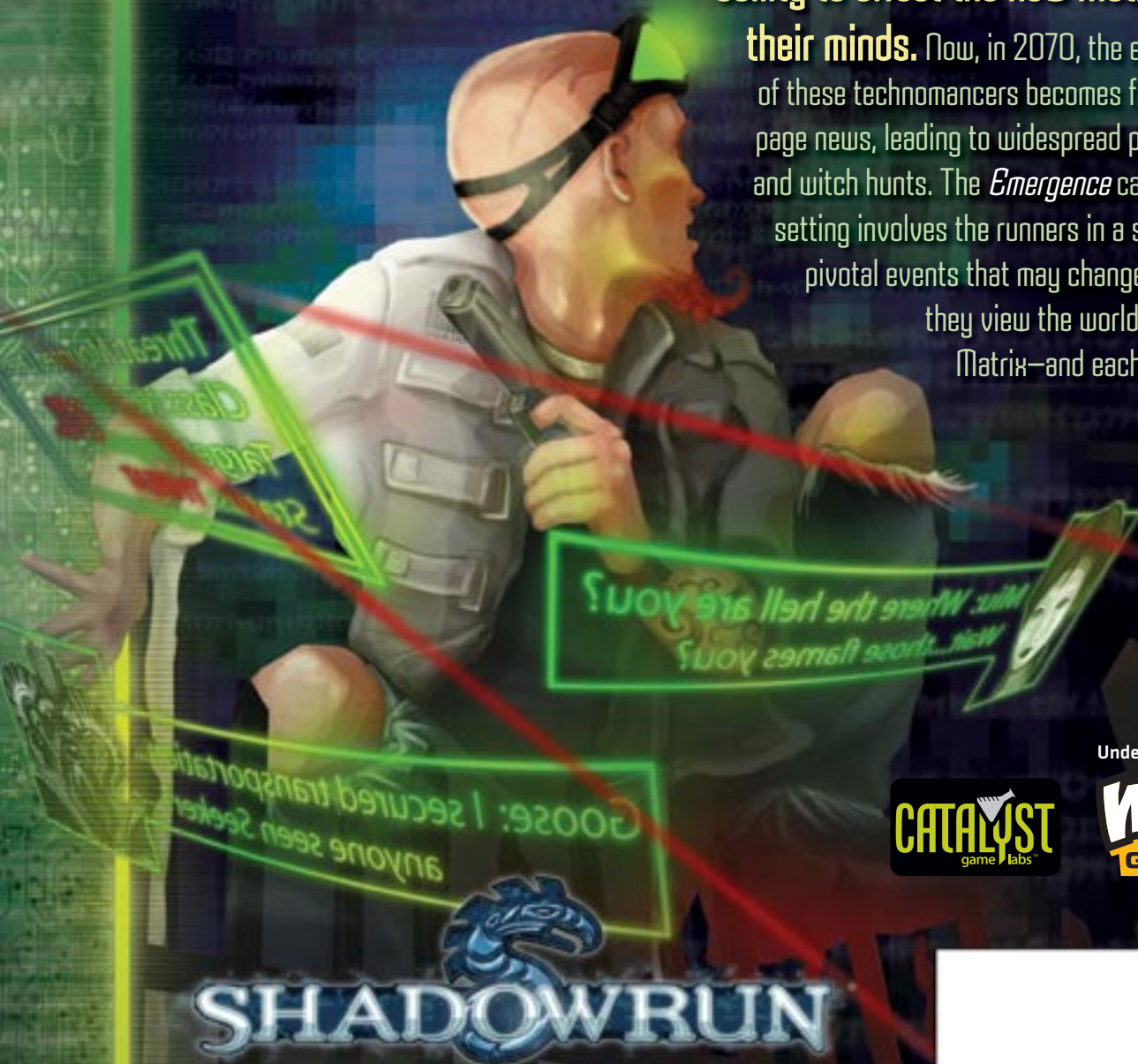
and witch hunts. The *Emergence* campaign

setting involves the runners in a series of

pivotal events that may change the way

they view the world and the

Matrix—and each other.



SHADOWRUN

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EMERGENCY



Catalyst Game Labs

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Inspiration: People's Republic of Europe and Communication Zero (dev-editing music). The idea that "People who choose security over freedom get neither."

Shout-Outs: Everyone who's contributed to the otaku/AI/Matrix plotlines of the past, everyone playing a technomancer, everyone who's ever had to come out of the closet. Thanks also to Elissa Carey, John Dunn, Adam Jury, Jong-Won Kim, Christian Lonsing, Michelle Lyons, Costan Sequeiros, and Jon Szeto for ideas and feedback.

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(cool links)

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(Shadowrun fan forum)




```

Connecting Jackpoint VPN ...
... Matrix Access ID Spoofed.
... Encryption Keys Generated.
... Connected to Onion Routers.
> Login
*****
> Enter Passcode
*****
... Biometric Scan Confirmed.
Connected to <ERROR: NODE UNKNOWN>
"Artificial intelligence is no match for natural stupidity."

```

JackPoint Stats

52 users currently active in the network

Latest News

* <sticky> This private p2p MoSoSo network is still in beta-test, so pardon the mess and report any glitches to me. - FastJack

* <080670> I'm conducting a security audit this week—along with some trusted technomancer friends—to see how well this network holds up against technomancer/sprite hacks. Please log any bugs you experience and send them to me.—FastJack

Personal Alerts

* You have 600 new private [messages](#)

* You have 5 new re-routed, anonymized, sanitized messages from "In UR Head, Hacking UR Brain"

* You have 2 new [responses](#) to your Jackpoint posts

* You have finished downloading 1667 [music files](#)

* A [DeathMatch3K avatar](#) in the immediate vicinity has challenged you to a [duel](#)

First Degree
You are hidden from all contacts.

Your Current Rep Score: 44 (96% Positive)

Current Time: August 7, 2070, 0527

- PREFERENCES
- FEEDS
- TASKS
- LINKS
- HISTORY

Welcome back to Jackpoint, omae; your last connection was severed: 16 hours, 23 minutes, 42 seconds ago



Today's Heads Up

The technomancer controversy has created quite a bit of back and forth over the past year, even here among the Jackpoint network. I've compiled the relevant news items, chats, and flamewars under the [Emergence](#) tag for easy reference. [\[Link\]](#) [\[Guests\]](#)

Incoming

- * Clockwork and Picador are scraping together some fun facts on the latest guns, toys, and vehicles. [\[Tag: Arsenal\]](#)
- * Just back from a working vacation in a nice, quiet, secure, gated community? Review your fave biz zones here. [\[Tag: Corporate Enclaves\]](#)
- * Ready for an upgrade? Before you risk your parts with that shady cyberdoc again, check out our upcoming primer on personal technological enhancements. [\[Tag: Augmentation\]](#)

Top News Items

- * ANZAC counterinsurgency troops were sent to quell a violent disturbance in a remote mountainous village in Papua New Guinea today. Reports indicate the situation was allegedly sparked by a gun battle between shadowrunners and a cult practicing metahuman sacrifices. [Link.](#)
- * An attempt by private operatives to repossess the Aztec Express, a 700-foot cargo vessel, from privateers in Cape Town fared poorly. Though the Proteus freighter was successfully commandeered, it was sabotaged and partially sunk before it could leave the harbor. [Link.](#)
- * Pueblo authorities are investigating a significant cache of explosives discovered after a raid on a gang hideout on the outskirts of Los Angeles. Police believe the gang was planning on using the explosives to breach the Covina Floodwall, which holds floodwaters back from residential areas. [Link.](#)
- * SecuriTech International is warning its customers to immediately update their firewall software after discovering that its latest security update—downloaded by hundreds of thousands of users—had been infected with a trojan horse program. SecuriTech is holding an internal security audit to determine how the malicious software was inserted. [Link.](#)

- CHAT
- MESSAGES
- FILES
- POSTS
- NEKUS
- SEARCH

Active

ComStar Firewall

Active

Jack-in-the-Box Antivirus

Active

SpamWitch Filter

On/Receiving

Commeade

Excellent

Signal

Active

Hidden Mode

Local Map

Emergence

Invited Guests
<none>

Posts/Files tagged with "Emergence":

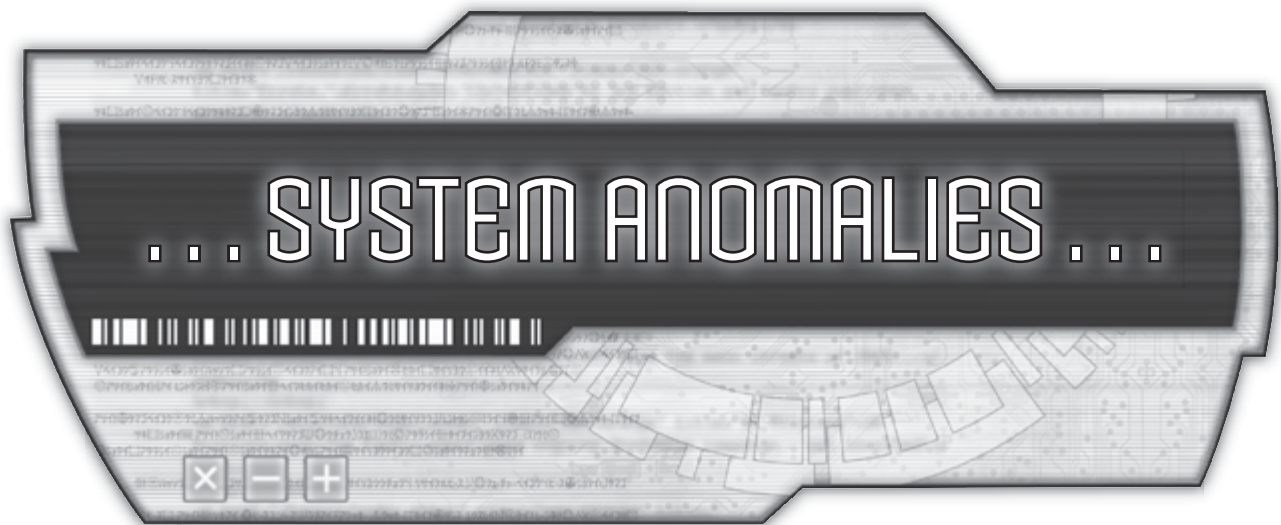
- * System Anomalies
- * Revelations
- * Witch Hunt
- * The Soul of a New Machine

[\[More\]](#)

[CONTINUE](#)

[ADVANCED SEARCH](#)

[SAVE](#)



Sneaker's low-light revealed every crack in the hallway's worn linoleum tiling. Doors with silent, black portholes lined up to the right. Eerie red lights blinked steadily on the keypad next to each, signaling that the automatic locks were still engaged. Heavy rain pummeled the windows, and the occasional flash of lightning interfered with his night sight. *No doubt about it, this place gives me the creeps*, Sneaker thought. He signaled Shane and Walks-the-wyld to move forward toward their target, held in the cell three doors down. He'd had a bad feeling about this extraction, ever since Johnson first mentioned the target's location . . .

"The Renton mental asylum?" Duster asked, her sleek elven eyebrows rising.

"I assure you, the subject poses no danger to your team." The Johnson answered as if he had the conversation scripted.

"Yeah, right!" Duster snapped. Sneaker cut her off with a look.

"Why's he being kept there in the first place?" He asked. "It isn't a penitentiary institution, so he's probably not a criminal."

"I assume in your ... line of work, you have heard of Artificially Induced Psychotropic Schizophrenia?"

"You mean the guy's ridin' the 'trix-monkey? He's got the Apes?" It was hard not to have heard about Artificially Induced Psychotrohwatever, aka the "Apes." People trapped online when the global network went down in '64 expressed all sorts of weird disorders—if they survived and weren't turned into vegetables, that is. The more treatments they tried on these poor souls, the fewer successes were reported.

"As I said, Mr. Sneaker, he poses no danger to you or any member of your team. Now, do we have a deal?"

"Sneak, you comin' or what?" Shane's voice over the link ripped Sneaker's attention back to his crew huddled around the cell door. "Get this—a manual keypad! Everything here's old-style! The sec-system's isolated from their main network, cameras and all—waste of time that hack was. Pickin' up wi-fi emissions, though. 'Ack, freakin' tiny wires ... got it. Boss?"

Taser in hand, Sneaker pulled the door open. Inside the padded cubic cell, a teenage ork covered in a corner, shielding his eyes from the flashlights. "Go away."

"We're here to—" Sneaker was interrupted by Duster's sudden curse.

"GO AWAY!" The kid's voice boomed like thunder in the runners' ears, sending them reeling. *Did that just come over my link?* Sneaker wondered, doubling over in pain. Duster's fingers danced frantically over an invisible AR display as she tried to regain control of her commlink, a thin thread of blood oozing from an ear. Walks-the-wyld leaned against the doorjamb, ripping the commlink plug out of his ear.

"THE VOICES! YOU BRING THE VOICES! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE!"

Sneaker raised his hands in appeasement, "Kid, nobody's gonna hurt you, we're—"

"GO AWAY! THEY'RE CALLING ME, BUT I DON'T WANT TO GO! LEAVE ME ALONE!"

Sheer volume brought Sneaker to his knees. Waves of digital icons, and diagnostic screens flooded his vision. Swamped with nausea and vertigo, he fell to the floor, clutching his head. Too late, the safety cutout on his screeching earplugs kicked in. Deaf and disoriented, he could not hear his teammate's muffled screams.



WHISPERS

>>>> Open Thread/SubNode221.322.1

>>>> Thread Access Restrictions:: <Yes/No>

>>>> Format:: <Open Post/Comment Only/Read Only>

>>>> File Attachment:: <Yes/No>

>>>> Thread Descriptor:: **System Anomalies**

>>>> Thread Posted By User:: Sunshine

• It's been a slow day in the newsroom and our city editor's pissed at last night's bum ratings. Bad combo. Instead of dumping on the interns, he set his sights on me and saddled me with what I thought was another dull human interest story: a run-away that was caught joyriding a hacked GridCab. This is what I dug up: Last Monday, an accountant at GridCab Seattle noticed no new fares filed by taxi 213's autosoft over the weekend. He looked further and found 213 had been on duty for a full week prior without registering any fares. Assuming a glitch, the bean-counter called the shift supervisor who sent the cab a recall command. When that didn't work, suspecting foul play, GridCab called in the Star. Lone Star quickly tracked down the cab and patrol cars boxed it in. When the cab didn't respond to orders to stop, they had to cut its Gridlink power to shut it down. When they finally popped the passenger compartment they found one Theo Henriquez, cowering inside. Turns out 10 year-old Theo was fleeing abusive parents and had been living out of the cab for at least a week. By now you're wondering: why the hell is this on Jackpoint? Bear with me.

According to the Star, the boy hacked the company's network so that cab 213 showed as on-duty. He also hacked the GridCab's autosoft to drive him about town as he pleased. Precocious, huh? Well, here comes the kicker. The kid didn't have a commlink on him and the taxi's system had no sign of hotwiring or hardware tampering—though the GridCab rep assures me the autosoft was overridden directly and has multiple records of passenger directions. A search of the kid's house and past Matrix activities show no sign of restricted software or past hacker activity. The Star can't explain what happened, Theo, who's still being held, ain't talking and I need to wrap this story. So who better to pump for theories than the twisted minds on Jackpoint?

- Sunshine
- Ooh, a riddle wrapped in an enigma inside a whatever. Seriously, the cab company must have missed something, or the kid just stashed his link somewhere.
- Fianchetto
- I've ridden in a GridCab and I can think of a couple of ways of hacking the autosoft externally through Gridlink, but there's no way a 10-year old is going to run that security no matter how precocious he is. Maybe we're missing a third party?
- Pistons
- Reminds me of the stunts I used to pull back in my reckless youth. Never got nailed, though.
- Slamm-O!

• Just got back from an interview with James Lynch, Theo's Court-appointed attorney, and weird has just got weirder. Lynch says the kid is a couple of screws short of a full set. When he finally got him to talk, Theo insisted he had done nothing to the cab and that it was his friend Squinky who had done all the driving. My source at the Star says they have no indication of external tampering or the presence of a second individual. But they have turned up evidence that Theo also somehow managed to hack more than a dozen vending machines all over Downtown to give him food and drink during his escapade!

- Sunshine
- Theo seems on the young side. If this were a few years back, I'd say the kid had all the telltales of an otaku. Even they needed a way to plug into the system though ... Does he have a jack?
- Glitch
- No datajack, no implants according to my source at the Star.
- Sunshine
- For those of us new to the circuit, care to fill us in on these "otaku?" Some of you talk about them as if they're real, but in my corner of the woods they were urban legends. Sure I heard the rumors after the second Crash. I even heard the otaku were in bed with Winternight. But I never got the full story, and in recent years people have been unusually tight-lipped on the subject.
- Goat Foot
- How about we don't go there?
- Puck
- And why the hell not? Puck's playing coy because back in the day he ran with the wrong crowd. Used to be an otaku himself if I heard right. Lost the touch, huh? Must be a bitch to have to work the Matrix the old-fashioned way.
- Clockwork
- Fuck off, Clockwork. Let old ghosts lie.
- Puck
- Otaku was the term coined to label kids with the inexplicable ability to interface directly with the Matrix. No need for decktech or simsense. They just plugged in with their datajacks and their minds did the rest. There were some serious biochemistry changes and neurological rewiring at work, from what I hear. All were pretty young and apparently the ability waned when they aged. The otaku worshipped a spirit in the machine they called the Deep Resonance and were pretty rare. Some think the Deep Resonance was an AI, and it somehow gave the otaku their abilities. They tended to gather in tribes, and sometimes had tribal spats with each other. Some helped out around the Denver Nexus. Others sided with the rogue program that was behind the Renraku Arcology shutdown in Seattle. And some credible sources put them in league with Winternight, partly blaming them for the recent Crash. I'm willing to bet that's not even half the story. I never met any, but I hear a lot of them died before and during the second Crash. There were stories making the rounds of whole tribes of kids being slaugh-





tered. Others burned out during the Crash 2.0. None of the major groupings or tribes seemed to make it past that point. Of course there are rumors that some survive, but most of them must have aged out of their abilities by now. Have any new ones come along? Well, there are rumors ... but nothing I care to substantiate.

- Glitch

- You're right, that's not even half the story. Lots of people think they know something about otaku. Most of them are wrong.

- Puck

- I seem to remember a lot of buzz after the Crash about a new wave of Matrix wizzes, and not just kids either. People from all walks of life that claimed to have developing strange abilities in the wake of the disaster. It was big news for all of a week and then petered out ...

- Haze

- I remember that, but a lot of Crash victims were later diagnosed as having psychotropic-related disorders. More than a few were locked up. There are still wards full of AIPS mental cases across the country. It's one of the lesser-mentioned consequences of '64. I did a piece on the subject last year and the reality is pretty depressing no matter how the government and the corps try to paint over it.

- Sunshine

- Come on people, don't be obtuse, I'm sure those of you with an ear to the grapevine have heard. Reports on a whole new generation of otaku have been trickling in since at least '65.

- Plan 9

- True, but as I remember it they've all been tall-tales and rumors. No hide nor hair of substantiating evidence and its going on five years now. Though admittedly, since the Crash, some of my sources dipping into that end of biotech R&D have been running silent.

- The Smiling Bandit

- Coincidence? I think not.

- Plan 9

- Let's keep left-field speculation to a minimum for now until we get some hard facts.

- Sunshine

- What if it wasn't the kid at all? Maybe it was something else. Something in the Matrix. Something that jacked control of the cab. Come on, you must have heard the rumors. Some of us even remember the last time. There are things out there, I keep getting sightings. "System anomalies" is the euphemism the corps use, but I think we're looking at spirits in the Matrix or maybe AIs.

- Axis Mundi

- And one of these entities under the unlikely name of Squinky suddenly surfaced and took an interest in a 10-year old. Right. I'd double check the dates on my medication if I were you.

- Butch

- I wouldn't rule it out at this point. More things in heaven and earth, and all that. There've been sightings of unidentified personas that left no datatrail at all in several closed systems. Believe me, there's something out there we've never seen before.

- Netcat

- Bullshit. It's just hackers trying to build their rep as untraceable ghosts in the machine, or histrionics from people who are afraid the Matrix is going to come crashing down on their head again.

- Baka Dabora

- Before people get carried away, I'm going to share something I picked up last year from a Renraku security node. Blast from the past, if you get my meaning.

- Slamm-0!

// upload email :: user Slamm-0! :: 01/19/70 //

Classified X4—Renraku Global Security Report

Renraku Global IntGrid Sec. WKA658-05-23-69

From: Lt. Cmdr. Kyoko Otonashi <IGS-CUnit12>

To: Dir. Nidhish Mudaliar <RenAsia MD1>, Cmdr. Hoshiro Tanaka <IGS Dir>

Subject: Prime Watch Protocols status update

Mudaliar-sama, it is with mixed feelings that I report that the past six months of intensive Prime surveillance have yielded no more results than the preceding three years. I must report that we have found no trace activity, or evidence, that either subject M-Prime or D-Prime remain active and at large. It is my conviction that our findings validate scenario 2B-1 proposed by Analysis (e.g. the targets were destroyed or permanently incapacitated during the Crash event). This being the case, I would like to suggest standing down direct protocols to level 3 supplemented with expert systems and reassignment of IntGrid Sec resources to investigate the growing number of system anomalies we have detected in our research. While there are no indications that these anomalies are linked in any way to subjects M-Prime or D-Prime, we cannot risk another misjudgment on par with the SCIRE debacle.

Reports indicate a broad spectrum of anomalies that we could not relate to either subjects M-Prime or D-Prime, nor do they appear attributable to the virtuakinetik phenomenon—though our current understanding is still very limited and Cmdr. Karlov is finding it difficult to ensure funding and further resources. I believe this to be a mistake, and strongly urge you to reconsider our commitment to disarming this potential new threat.

Returning to the detected anomalies, I advise dedicated research into the matter, as some fragments of the analyzed code showed patterns similar to the Prime targets in the alpha and zeta spectrums, though I must reiterate, closer scrutiny revealed no relation whatsoever with any of the known subjects. I humbly volunteer for this assignment as I believe my current mission to be concluded. – Cmdr. KO IGS

// end attachment //

- So, no more AIs, no more Deus. Let's all get over it and move on!

- Slamm-0!



- As we both know, Renraku has been wrong before.
- The Smiling Bandit
- Truth be told, I've kept my ear to the grapevine and there have been no sightings of Deus or any of his kind beyond the usual wild rumors.
- FastJack
- Actually, I think you missed the interesting bit, omae—what's all this “virtuakinetic” stuff?
- Marco
- I've heard the term before, but I can't grep exactly where—maybe Bandit can help. Give me a few hours to do some digging in my archives and I'll see what I can dredge up.
- Glitch
- I'll look into it and get back to you if I find anything relevant.
- The Smiling Bandit
- Why bother? It's probably not related to Sunshine's story anyway.
- Netcat
- Thanks all for the food for thought. Theo's psych evaluation suggests he may have the “apes” and that he should be remanded to psychiatric care rather than juvie. I think I've got enough angles for this story.
- Sunshine

// thread archived :: lack of activity :: 02/15/70 //

// thread unlocked :: user Sunshine :: 02/25/70 //

- Thought I'd revive this thread, it's been dead a while but I haven't been able to get Theo out of my head. The other night I stumbled on this segment by Emil Dacheroi. Yes, Dr. “Beyond Belief” Dacheroi—not the most credible of sources, I know. He's doing a series of live shows in Seattle and I ripped the following excerpt from the show's host. I'm not taking his words too seriously, but they're surprisingly close to what we've been posting on this thread.
- Sunshine

// upload media file :: user Sunshine :: 02/25/70 //

BEYOND BELIEF

Ep. 409—Original Airdate: 29 Oct. 2069

// real-time trideo transcript activated //

Emil Dacheroi: “Welcome to our show, True Believers! Tonight's show will shed some light on one of the most elusive and intriguing mysteries of our time, the so-called “virtuakinetics,” “Otaku 2,” or my personal favorite, “technomancers.” But, before we delve into the surprises we have in store, let's roll back time and address the idea of the “otaku” for those of you who didn't catch our Matrix Mysteries Pay-Per-View Special last year.

By the mid-Fifties, rumors of strange and mischievous “Children of the Matrix” became quite widespread among Matrix users. According to urban legend,

these street urchins were able to manipulate the Matrix directly with their minds, without resorting to senseless interfaces and cyberdeck technology. What really topped that chestnut was the claim that the children mysteriously lost their amazing ability upon hitting puberty—as if growing up wasn't hard enough.

For years, such reports were treated as fanciful urban legends—like a Bigfoot or Loch Ness sighting—but they quickly became worrisome when anecdotal evidence surfaced that these children truly did exist and were gathering in hacker tribes, some of which were engaged in criminal activity. Ex Pacis, one such group, even made the FBI's Matrix Crime watchlist. Shortly before the Crash of '64, some sort of gang war seems to have flared between otaku tribes, leading to several situations where young otaku children were mass-murdered. Ironically, the infamous Winternight cult seems to have played a role in some attacks on otaku tribes. Given the unique nature of the viral attack involved in the Crash of '64, however, some government sources consider that a faction of otaku must have conspired with Winternight to bring it about. The truth may never be known, since in the aftermath of the Crash, reports of otaku activity petered out. For a while.

It's been four years now since new and baffling reports emerged of people developing strange psychic abilities following the Second Crash. Incredible though it may seem, such claims remain unsubstantiated and unproven—until today!

If we're to believe the rumor mill, ladies and gentlemen, Nessie has grown wings. Across the globe, reports are filtering in of encounters with a second generation of otaku. These new otaku—these *technomancers* if you will—have become the skunk apes of cyberspace. Were this a hundred years ago, we'd have blurry photographs and scratchy lo-fi video recordings, I'm sure. But this is a new age, where all too often proof is trumped by public belief; where consensus beats validity.

Many claims regarding technomancers are disregarded as outrageous rumors. Our research, however, indicates that many of these reports come from credible, upstanding eyewitnesses with no incentive to distort the facts. According to these sources, each vetted by our investigative staff, technomancers can:

- tap wireless communications *with their minds*.
- manipulate the Matrix and command machines *with mere thought*.
- disrupt power grids *at will*.
- dematerialize their physical body *and travel along streams of electronic data*.
- program computers *with spontaneously generated code*.
- emit and modify radio waves *intuitively*.
- duplicate themselves electronically into *autonomous digital personas*.
- summon and command *spirits of the machine* to do their bidding.





INCOMING FEED.....

Unbelievable, you say? The discerning mind will deduce there's a grain of truth to every tall tale! While linking to the Matrix with an unaugmented brain might seem implausible at first sight, are these abilities truly impossible? *Beyond Belief* has dug up some surprising answers, tune in to the second half of this special next week [[click for your local trid schedule](#)].

And now we'd like to introduce our special guest, Mr. William Armstrong. [applause] Welcome to our show William.

William Armstrong: Pleased to be here, Emil.

Emil Dacheroui: Mr. Armstrong is a clerk at the Snohomish central Post Office right here in Seattle, and he claims to be able to do some pretty amazing stuff with *the power of his mind*. Before Mr. Armstrong answers some questions from the *Beyond Belief* panel of consultants, he has volunteered to demonstrate his abilities for us. [applause]. I've had the good fortune of seeing William in action and I can only say this will blow your mind.

For his first trick, Mr. Armstrong needs a volunteer from the audience. Anyone with a commlink will do. I think ... yes ... the elven lady in the fifth row ... yes ... with the red sweater. Thank you for volunteering. Please take the microphone ... don't give us your name quite yet though, just raise your commlink above your head. Thank you. Before we start I'd just like to ensure you that our technicians and staff magician have thor-

oughly examined William to ensure he has no computer, implants, or magic to aid him. William will you do the honors?"

William Armstrong: Thank you Emil, and thank you, Miss. Now let me focus ... just a few seconds ... there. I'm accessing your profile. Your name is Julia Marie Delaney, you are 27-years old, you currently reside in the Oakley Condos in Renton, you work at Macy's Electronics ... and your online nickname is LeatherMinx275.[applause]

// interrupt transcript //

- That's just the beginning. While Dacheroui has a reputation for staging this sort of thing, you do catch shot of a very shocked and very furious Ms. Delaney before the director cuts away that almost had me convinced. Mr. Armstrong went on to turn a few home appliances on and off, and even drive a remote controlled toy around the set "through pure force of will." That got me thinking of Theo. *Beyond Belief* is on at two AM or something and nobody takes it very seriously—well, who would, after the hoax with the guy who channeled Prez Dunkelzahn a couple of years back. Even taking Dacheroui with a grain of salt, you've got to wonder if he might be on to something. I looked up "virtuakinetic" and the term does get bandied around a lot by conspiracy theory types and kooks. Surprisingly, though, I got a number of hits on research papers and at least one corporate memo in Jackpoint's archive. I'll definitely be looking into this; I've got a feeling this goes way further than a kid joyriding in a cab

- Sunshine

- Come on Sunshine, you've got to be joking. Dacheroi? He does a column for the Digital Enquirer!
- Jimmy No
- Sounds like a parlor trick to me. You aren't thinking of taking this seriously, are you Sunshine?
- Netcat
- No wonder KSAF is going through a rough patch! Quality reporting with quality sources. Seriously, Sunshine, I can give you a rundown of at least twenty claims like this that have all been debunked. This thread is a waste of our time.
- Snopes
- Give me time, Snopes, I haven't even started digging yet. Even if I only get this kind of circumstantial crap, I might be able to swing my editor into letting me do a real investigative piece.
- Sunshine
- I'm interested in this topic, so let's keep the thread going. I've got an itch that Sunshine is on to something here, so I'd appreciate input.
- FastJack
- I believe Sunshine may be on to something too—not because of the evidence, but because of the *lack* of it. Too many of my contacts are obviously dodging my recent inquiries. There's definitely something going on and I don't like being this far out of the loop. Last time that happened, I lost a bundle in the Crash. Whatever digging you need, Sunshine, count me in.
- The Smiling Bandit
- That hit Sunshine got from the Jackpoint's archives was something I uploaded a while back. I picked it up while waiting for my ride following a successful stealth B&E on an MCT black clinic. I thought I'd do some listening in for paydata while I still had access to the network. Here's the file with the outgoing chat I intercepted on a nearby node.
- Turbo Bunny

// upload chat media file :: user Turbo Bunny :: 01/25/70 //
 // LinguaCell-D audio-to-text conversion engaged //

Dr. Burdick: Here we are again.

Dr. Sharon: Indeed. How have you been?

Dr. Burdick: Perturbed. I've been considering some of the points you brought up the last time we spoke.

Dr. Sharon: That always stings.

Dr. Burdick: You asserted previously that your preliminary analysis of the digital anima concluded that while its output bore similarities to certain virtuakinetics you have catalogued, there was evidence indicating autonomy of action, correct?

Dr. Sharon: Close. I believe we're dealing with an independent entity, not a remote construct. Meaning digital animas manifest a presence in the Matrix without a fixed external point of origin.

Dr. Burdick: That references your hypothesis of a coincidental relationship between data and origin as relates to virtuakinetics

and their agents, which I might add is pure speculation at this point. Your unit has yet to conclusively catalogue a basic range of abilities. I believe you already know my position: the Matrix is a playing field. All within range from pawns to kings. They move across the board, engage in abstract battles, but there is always a hand guiding them. Always. What you're suggesting is that the pawn is moving itself.

Dr. Sharon: A chess analogy? How unexpected ... but that does not accurately represent my assertion at all. I'm suggesting, from the data I've collected, that the digital anima *is integral to the board*. It co-exists with your pieces. And it is certainly beyond game theory.

Dr. Burdick: Hogwash.

Dr. Sharon: So I'm sure you have some iron-clad refutation of my hypothesis.

Dr. Burdick: What are we talking about here? A wholly-contained avatar, independent of an operator? Sentience? An evolved semi-autonomous expert system?

Dr. Sharon: Unknown at this point. We've avoided sectioning the code for analysis so far. We have no way of knowing if tampering will contaminate findings. What we really need is another specimen.

Dr. Burdick: Unfortunately, that's beyond my purview; capture protocols are external to R&D. I can put extra pressure on Lawrence, but at this point I'm not convinced.

Dr. Sharon: And your data suggests what?

Dr. Burdick: ...

Dr. Sharon: Yes, do get back to me on that.

Dr. Burdick: What you're proposing is effectively the realm of thaumaturgy.

Dr. Sharon: Not necessarily.

Dr. Burdick: How so?

Dr. Sharon: You've done extensive research into magic; I would think the differences are obvious.

Dr. Burdick: Those without answers make due with condescension.

Dr. Sharon: Magic is external, a process that stems from an ethereal connection to the astral strata. The user is the conduit for the mana.

Dr. Burdick: Could a machine not act as that conduit?

Dr. Sharon: Interesting, but 50 years of studies indicate otherwise.

Dr. Burdick: So the digital anima is what then? An errant process of unknown origin? Electronic evolution?

Dr. Sharon: I believe so.

Dr. Burdick: And you believe virtuakinetics are related-phenomena? They too are errant processes?

Dr. Sharon: I assume so, but you are in a better position to comment. Am I to believe your prior research at Renraku proves otherwise?

// end attachment //

- I think I have an inkling of what these two are talking about. Anyone remember the so-called "spirits of the machine" that it was said otaku could create/summon? Independent agent-like entities, only ... different?
- Glitch



- They're called *sprites*.
- Puck
- Obviously, these guys are both over-intellectualizing eggheads. Without further reference, it's impossible to guess what they're talking about. It's all just compound hearsay at this point.
- Snopes
- Am I the only one who noted that Sharon apparently *has* done studies? There are multiple allusions to it in that chat—Dr. Sharon outright says s/he has data of some sort. Is it all theoretical and hearsay? Or is Sharon involved in something?
- Turbo Bunny
- Haven't pulled up anything definite yet, but I've got one Val Burdick in charge of Renraku's NeuroComputing Initiative back in '62. A little birdie tells me there's a Dr. Catherine H. Sharon on MCT Seattle's payroll. Her files are buried too deep for me, but I ran a background check. Our good doctor is an MIT&T alumni—you guessed it, a Mitsuhamas scholarship—straight-A student, back-to-back doctorates in several computer sciences. Her dissertation was on "Self-Organizing Neural Networks and Bioinformatics." Drafted right out of college by Mitsuhamas R&D. Serious science geeks, both. Not the kind to idly speculate on the job ...
- Nepheline
- My point stands. We don't know what they're talking about.
- Snopes
- There seems to be some doubt about whether their subjects are even metahuman. That gives me the shivers.
- Butch
- Where there's smoke, there's fire. I can't shake the feeling there's a lot more to this story than we're seeing.
- Sunshine
- They're researching something that's for sure. And I agree with Sunshine that something bigger is going on. Turbo's rip came from MCT, the following file was in some NeoNET egg-head's link I phished months ago. I'll be digging for more. What is worrying me is that all these people in the know have been able to keep a tight-enough lid on this thing that I haven't had a whiff. My contacts are unusually tight-lipped on the matter.
- Glitch

// upload memo attachment :: user **Glitch** :: 02/28/70 //
Memorandum: NNET11 07.28.69

Subject profile: TL-70289

Age: 24 **Sex:** Female **Metatype:** Ork

Brief: This is subject TL89's fourth week in the program. As previously noted, conventional EKG, RAC, and MRI scanning remains highly unreliable; ultrasound and minor invasive exploration suggest pronounced neural, bio-, and electrochemical alterations to the neural system and cerebrum. As with remaining subjects, full-spectrum DNA scans show

minimal drift. Apparently unassociated venereal geneline treatment was identified as Evo Metastasis poliGuard.

Though preliminary analysis reinforces our working hypothesis that the subject's abilities are an evolution of the body chemistry more extensive than anything registered in first generation virtuakinetics, data is, ultimately, inconclusive. Furthermore we remain at a loss to explain the exact trigger stimulus involved.

Like subjects TL70 and TL82, TL89 has shown extreme resistance to chemical treatments H9-b and B21, previously identified respectively as inhibitors and enhancers among first generation subjects. Unlike the other subjects, studies show her resistance grows under duress; data derived while subject was under sedation do in fact yield substantive results.

The review board is split in regards to the next phase of the study. It is this team's recommendation that field studies be held in isolated environments, rather than invasive experimentation and dissection. We will be submitting our position to the board officially prior to the next board meeting.

This subject is something special. Let there be no mistake: She should be handled with equal amounts care, concern, and admiration. I only hope she continues to thrive as much as she has. She could become the perfect vessel for this initiative's goal.

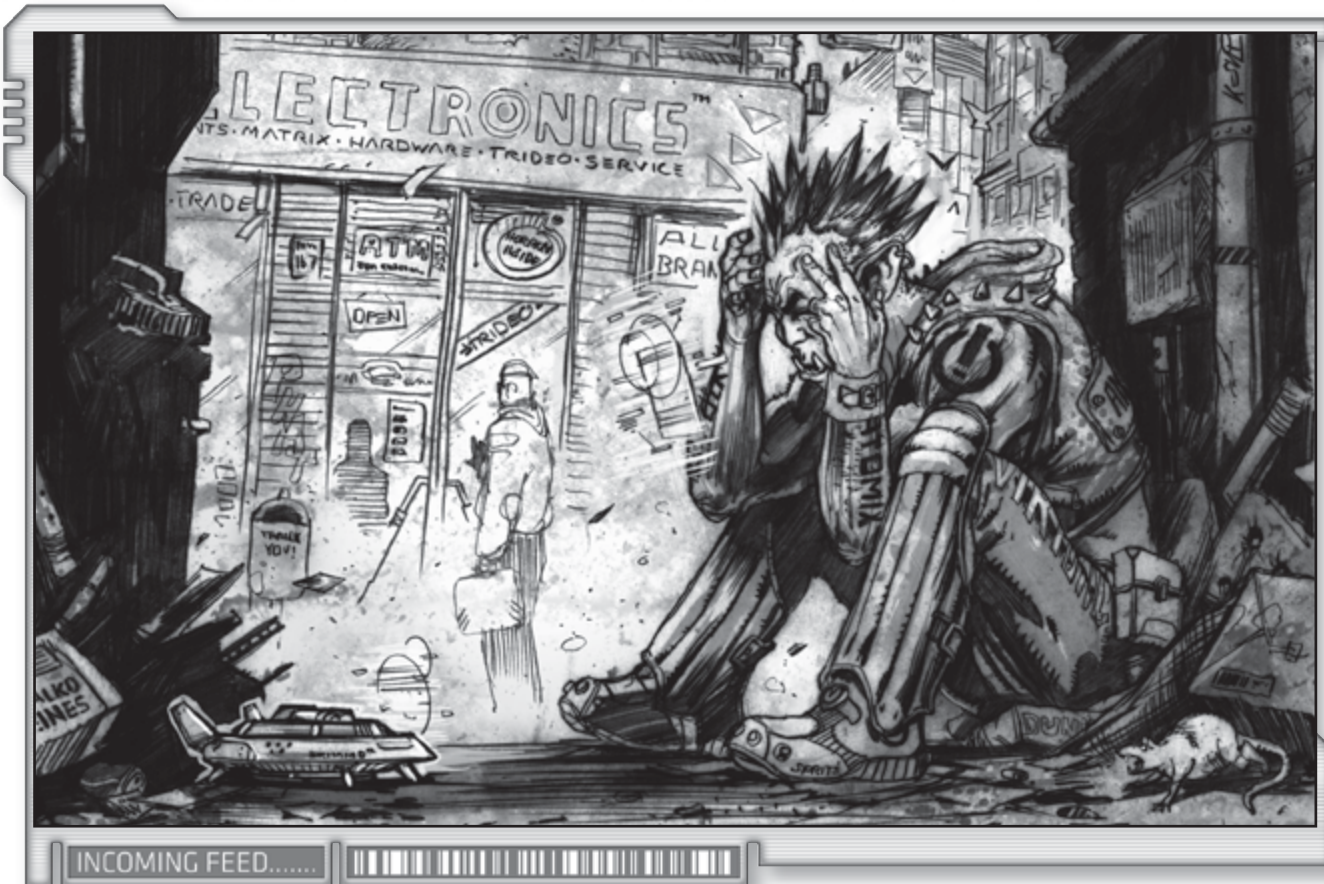
// end attachment //

- Okay, now I'm seriously worried. This sounds like Sunshine has stumbled on something huge right under our noses. I haven't picked up a whiff of this from anywhere. Where did you say you picked this up, Glitch?
- Beaker
- If I remember correctly, it was on brief stopover in London on my way to meet in Europort. The target was a suit waiting for his suborbital a few chairs over in the VIP lounge. At the time I didn't bother to look into his credentials, but he was on a NeoNET private flight bound for Scotland.
- Glitch

WHAT WE KNOW

- Time for a thread update and recap. I've been doing some research and I'm now convinced I was right. Half a dozen stories of these virtuakinetics have appeared in the news at one point or another over the past couple of years. More were discarded as duds. Strangely, none of the big news corps seems to be putting two and two together. I'm following a couple of other leads, and I tried tracking down that Mr. Armstrong from Dacheroi's show for a chat. Guess what? He's gone AWOL from his job and none of his neighbors have seen him since a couple of days after the *Beyond Belief* show aired. How's that for a twist?
- Sunshine
- Might just be lying low. After all, the Dacheroi show might put money in your bank account, but it doesn't do anything for your image.
- Pistons





INCOMING FEED.....



- Well, I slipped a few nuyen to his building's janitor. If he surfaces, I'll know about it.
- Sunshine

- Word on the street, thin as it is, is that whatever these people are, they're a separate breed from otaku. To the best of my knowledge, otaku were kids, and the individuals we're hearing about are all older and come from all walks of life. There's undoubtedly a connection. There are too many parallels. But I've never heard of an otaku capable of "wireless telepathy," and I'm not sure I believe it's possible.
- Haze

- I too think that distinction might be misleading. They have too much in common to be entirely unrelated. Whether the new breed stems from otaku simply cannot be verified; there's not enough evidence one way or the other. A few years back, skinlink technology seemed unfeasible, and look where we are today. I know Renraku and UniOmni are working on short-range implanted broadcast tech so it isn't entirely out there. To me it's not so much about whether it's possible, but finding out how it can be done. We just need to work out the science. Look at otaku, who would have thought the human mind would be capable of translating raw digital input? Obviously someone at MCT and NeoNET thinks there's something to this, and that tells me they're not the only ones looking into it.
- The Smiling Bandit

- I'm glad you mentioned that, Bandit, because I've been thinking along the same lines. All the stories of these second-gen-

eration otaku (sorry, I just hate the term "technowizards") came about post-Crash, and I can't swallow it as a coincidence. The source of their ability, whatever it may be, must be tied to the reformed Matrix. Something may have happened during the Crash. Maybe they evolved?

- Sunshine

- Something did happen to them—they *died*. Most got brainfried, others were turned into vegetables, and the lucky ones got the "apes" and became basketcases.
- Snopes

AETHERPEDIA SEARCH QUERY::

AIPS

AIPS [*abbrev.*]: Artificially Induced Psychotropic Schizophrenia Syndrome, one of several common psychological disorders detected among survivors of the Matrix Crash of 2064, shares pathologies with Post-Traumatic Stress disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, and Gordon's Syndrome.

- Strange you should mention that, since my agents noted a couple of references to AIPS in relation to virtuakinetic activity. I haven't followed up on it yet, but I will.
- Glitch

• Lest we forget, a lot of people were trapped online during the Crash and bad things happened to them too. Hell, my cousin Bette is still on life-support down at Mercy General—her mind’s just gone. Maybe these digital animas, or whatever they are, aren’t otaku at all, but remnants of those poor bastards. Spirits know what exposure to the worm and Crash did to them. Imagine your conscience trapped online!

• Pistons

• Ghosts in the machine? Synthetic intelligences? My but that sounds intriguing ...

• Plan 9

• Don’t know about that ... that Armstrong character seemed human enough. “Word on the street” is not exactly something you can bank on. I find theories that these technowizards “project” into the Matrix dubious to say the least—but that’s just me.

• Jimmy No

• One leading transhuman theory, jokingly called the “Darwin’s Radio hypothesis,” suggests that environmental factors build up, triggering new gene sequences, which then force-evolve humanity into a new stage of development. Imagine the Crash as a singularity event prompting a huge leap forward for mankind, an evolution into a digital habitat.

• Plan 9

• It’s technically impossible—there’s no “there” there. The Matrix is a consensual illusion created by the sim-module in your commlink. You can’t upload or download a person’s mind. But please, don’t let reality put a damper on such an interesting debate.

• Snopes

• I beg to differ. I’ve seen certain things in the Matrix to know better.

• Puck

• Much as it pains me to side with Puck, I find myself agreeing with Sunshine and co. While I’m worried about the nature of these new Matrix anomalies, you have to admit there’s something to it. Just the fact that the megas are looking into this tells me they believe there’s nuyen to be made somewhere down the line.

• Clockwork

• Or maybe they’re just afraid of something they don’t understand? My guess is they’re not just skimming screamsheets either. Someone somewhere is poking these poor bastards’ brains and has been for a while. That they’ve succeeded in keeping this thing hushed up is frightening. How common are these technomancers? How many are in some form of custody? No corporation is just going to prod them out of curiosity. There’s an agenda here. People who can hack the Matrix with-

out a link, and possess an intuitive, reptilian understanding of the Matrix are weapons waiting to happen. Again, I don’t think these next-gen otaku are a threat in their own right, but if their abilities are replicable, or if their will is beaten down enough, we could be facing something truly scary here.

• Axis Mundi

• I’ve been thinking about that. Maybe it’s not just the corps keeping a lid on this thing. Some of these otaku2 may have figured out that a lot of people are going to be damn scared of their abilities. God knows humanity didn’t take well to Goblinization and people are still suspicious of mages 60 years on. I definitely see trouble on the horizon.

• Fianchetto

• Yeah, think about it. If you guys are right, Spirits know how many of these things are out there. They may look like you and me, but are you certain they’re even metahuman anymore? Let’s all remember that according to the stories, Deus created otaku and used them as puppets. That’s right, a machine was transforming people into meatsack drones and nobody looking at them could even tell. This otaku upgrade thing sounds scarily familiar. *Something* had to make them, and until we know what that something is, we should be worried.

• Butch

• So anyone want to hazard a guess as to who might be exploring this phenomena? Someone more accessible than NeoNET and MCT? Someone who might be willing to talk to the press?

• Sunshine

• I’d guess Evo and Universal Omnitech, but it’s speculation at this point.

• Turbo Bunny

• I’d add Renraku to the usual suspects too—from what I recall they had a program to investigate otaku. Not that I think you’ll get anyone to talk at that end of the equation. If this really is as big a cover-up as we suspect, then lips are going to be puckered tighter than a devil rat’s ass. I’d start at the other end, take to the streets, track down some of these technomancers, get their stories. Or try to follow up on this AIPS connection that’s cropped up.

• Pistons

• Good news, my editor has authorized a serious investigative piece on the technomancer phenomenon. I’m weirded out, though. He folded too easily, actually smiled like I’d taken a weight off his shoulders. Go figure. I’ll be keeping a log of what I dig up here on Jackpoint and everyone’s free to post to it and add your own contributions. I’ll be setting up an agent with a live AR feed to flag any news items and articles that might appear on the Matrix.

• Sunshine



GAME INFORMATION

The Crash of 2064 ruined the lives of millions. Some died in the Matrix or went insane, many lost everything they owned, and still others found their identities completely erased. A small percentage, however, were changed into something altogether different, with the strange and inexplicable ability to affect the new Matrix with their minds. This was a new generation of children of the Matrix: *technomancers*.

The turbulent events detailed in *Emergence* unfold during the year of 2070 and involve the runners in a series of pivotal events that may change the way they view the world and the Matrix—and each other. The *Emergence* campaign begins with whispers and rumors that hint that something odd is going on in the Matrix. The runners, exposed to these Matrix anomalies through their underworld connections, should get the definite sense that not everything has returned to normal since the Crash. Slowly but surely they should become aware that technomancers do indeed exist—and they should also get the distinct sense that various conspiratorial powers are doing their best to keep their existence out of the public eye.

The background provided in this *System Anomalies* chapter allows you to create scenarios where you first bring these guarded secrets to the attention of the player characters. The next chapter, *Revelations* (p. 21), will bring technomancers squarely in the public spotlight for the first time. A full-blown controversy will erupt, leading to widespread paranoia and persecutions, as described in *Witchhunt* (p. 52). Hidden interests will conspire to demonize technomancers and feed public paranoia, until shocking discoveries reveal that the new Matrix is an even more mysterious and dangerous place than mankind ever imagined, as detailed in *Soul of a New Machine* (p. 82).

A PRIMER TO MATRIX ANOMALIES

To most people living in 2070, artificial intelligences, ghosts in the machine, strange virtual realms, virii of inexplicable abilities, and children capable of manipulating the Matrix with their minds are the stuff of urban legend or smoke and mirrors for corporate agendas. Though the Crash 2.0 dragged the virtual depths through the spotlight, many mysteries and inexplicable oddities persist. For the most part, these anomalies and events of the past do not directly impact the events of *Emergence*, but they have molded how many people in the Sixth World view the Matrix—particularly the powers-that-be and those in the shadows—and fuel the reactions witnessed during 2070.

Some of the posters on Jackpoint have been privileged (or cursed, as the case may be) to glimpse parts of this secret history unfolding first hand. Their knowledge and the references they make does not reflect what the public knows, but what is rumored and suspected among the shadow community. The following sections provide a very basic overview of some of the elements of this secret history that impact *Emergence*. Familiarity with the history of the Sixth World as detailed in *A History Lesson for the Reality Impaired*, pp. 22–34, *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*, is recommended.

The Otaku

In the early-2050s, rumors began to spread about the existence of children with the ability to manipulate the Matrix without the aid of a cyberdeck, computer, or simsense-device. These “children of the Matrix” were able to access and process the information from the Matrix directly using only their minds and a simple cyberware datajack. They seemed able to intuitively access the Matrix and spontaneously generate code constructs. These unique abilities eventually faded with age.

Nothing definitive was ever established regarding the ultimate source of their abilities; though expression was believed to be linked to a quasi-mystical experience the otaku themselves called the Deep Resonance. The mystical facet extended to the widespread (but not mandatory) otaku belief in the existence of two transcendental entities that embodied different aspects of the Matrix, a virtual Yin-Yang, Order and Chaos: the Deep Resonance and the Dissonance. Another recurring theory hypothesized that otaku were created by AIs meddling with metahuman biochemistry. Neither was proven or disproven. Their existence was eventually confirmed, and as their numbers grew, they developed a tribal subculture of street children andurchins, with small and diverse tribes popping up in many major sprawls, eking out a living on the fringes of society.

One such tribe formed around the AI known as Deus (see below), believing it to be the godhead. Events surrounding the Renraku arcology in Seattle would cause some of these otaku to lose faith in Deus. Led by a charismatic but disturbed otaku known as Pax, the dissidents became known as Ex Pacis and re-dedicated themselves to the Dissonance. Unbeknownst to anyone outside the highest circles of power (and an unfortunate few in the shadows), Ex Pacis was directly responsible for the worm that brought about the Crash 2.0, in a bid to transmute the old Matrix into a Dissonant paradise. Some believe they succeeded.

Another tribe, Overwatch, formed to battle the “false god” Deus, and later to oppose Ex Pacis. Other tribes stayed out of the conflict and pursued their own agendas as best they could—but the Crash 2.0 wrought havoc on all of them. Many shared the death throes of the old Matrix, targeted and killed by the Dissonance worm (or even directly by Ex Pacis and their Winternight allies). Others lost their sanity or were mentally disabled. A few survived to see their powers fade to nothing, and fewer still held on to their abilities.

In the aftermath of the Crash, however, as the new wireless Matrix was put into place, some of the otaku survivors, realized that the Crash has changed them forever. Their abilities had expanded and their bodies had suffered more changes. They were now able to tap into wireless networks, interface with and manipulate the Matrix 2.0 with their minds. Many others who were trapped within the Matrix when it crashed—but who had previously exhibited no otaku-like abilities—seemed also to have been gifted with these inexplicable (and in many cases, maddening) abilities. They had become technomancers.

The Artificial Intelligences

One of the best kept secrets of the Sixth World is the existence of AIs. The megacorporations and governments have kept any such knowledge from the public, helped by the fact



that the existence of only three such entities has been recorded. To the public, AIs remain science fiction fodder or bogeymen for Matrix-addicted children. Even to the vast majority of those who make the Matrix their living, AIs are the elusive Holy Grail of agent programmers and expert system designers. Very few outside of megacorporate boardrooms, secret research programs, and intelligence agencies know the reality of the matter. The direct involvement of these AIs in the Renraku Arcology shutdown of 2059 and the Crash 2.0 (described in *Renraku Arcology: Shutdown, Brainscan, SR4, and System Failure*), however, have revealed the truth to a privileged few in the shadows. The fact that all three AIs—as well as all evidence of their intervention—are believed to have been destroyed during the Crash of '64 has kept knowledge out of the media and mainstream culture.

All three identified AIs (known respectively as Deus, Morgan/Maegara, and Mirage) possessed god-like abilities within the Matrix as well as vast and not-entirely-human intellects. Their personalities and agendas were diverse, but they no longer exist, so they do not appear in *Emergence*. Other entities, some described as ghosts in the machine—metahuman intelligences trapped in the Matrix—have also been encountered on occasion, but if anything knowledge of such encounters is even more obscure and mysterious than that of AIs. The true nature of the virtual ghosts remains to be ascertained, and no one knows whether they are truly metahuman minds uploaded into the Matrix, AIs emulating the minds and personalities of metahumans, or something altogether different.

WHERE THINGS STAND

Prior to 2070, the public remains largely unaware of the technomancer phenomenon. In part this is due to covert manipulation of the media by corporate agendas—and also in part due to most technomancers actively concealing their abilities (fearing exactly the type of reaction that ensues). Even those in the shadows have only been able to piece together odd reports and half-truths. As noted in the next chapter, however, the lid is about to be blown off this story. Quite soon, the media and mainstream public will become aware of what certain corporations and governments have already secretly realized: that a volatile new element has emerged in the world.

At this point in the story, however, the stage is still being set, and pawns are still being maneuvered. This is the time for you, the gamemaster, to begin dropping hints and clues, foreshadowing the events to come. This is also the time for you to lay the groundwork for future scenarios—providing seemingly useless information that will later turn out to be an important clue, introducing characters who will later become quite relevant, and otherwise planting plot seeds and mysteries that will later germinate into full-blown adventures.

As denizens of the shadows, the player characters are in a unique position to see the signs of the storm that is brewing. Rumors and secrets are part of the daily economy for shadowrunners, so they will be the first to sense that something is afoot. Slowly but surely, the player characters should come to realize that technomancers not only exist, but are a widespread phenomenon. While this is an intriguing development in the

history of the Sixth World, the characters should also become aware and alarmed that an active conspiracy exists at the highest levels of corporate and government authority to keep this knowledge from becoming public and widespread. Upon realizing this, the characters should realize that they possess knowledge that puts them in danger.

Existing player characters, particularly those whose shadowrunning careers extend before the Crash of 2064, may already be familiar with otaku. In this case, the buzz about technomancers is bound to prick up their ears. Depending on their history, older characters may even carry over prejudices regarding the otaku and their alleged involvement in the Crash to technomancers.

AIPS: The Shape of Things to Come

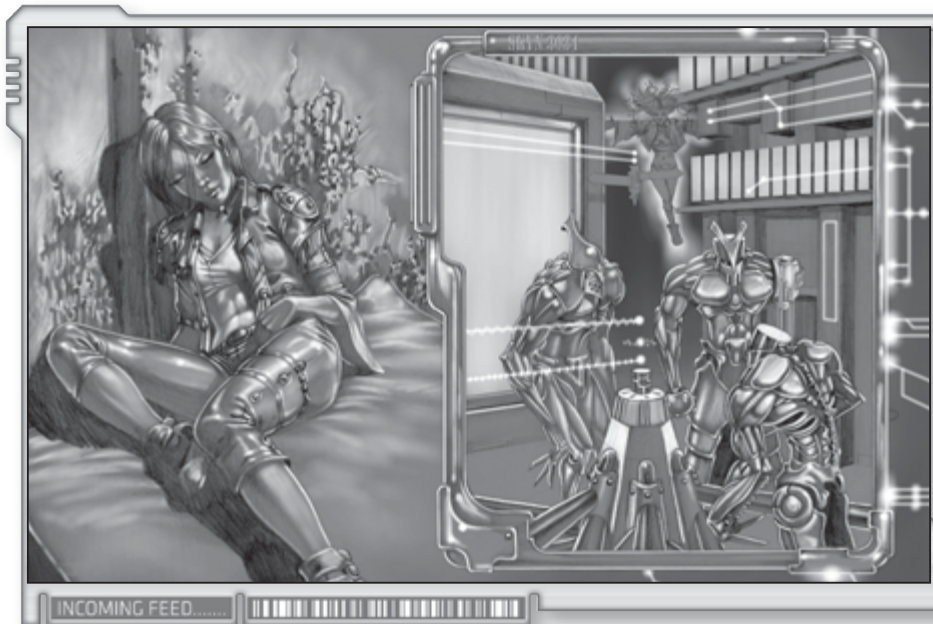
Following the Crash and rebuilding of an upgraded Matrix, scientists and psychologists turned towards the sociological and psychological scars of the global system failure. Hundreds of thousands of people who had been caught online during the Crash expressed a wide range of mental disorders, many believed to be psychotropic in nature. These symptoms were collectively referred to as Artificially Induced Psychotropic Schizophrenia (AIPS) for simplicity. While theories on AIPS abound, successful therapies have been rare. The first victims quickly became little more than guinea pigs and in the face of therapeutic failures were certified as “untreatable.” Relatively stable patients were released, facing an uncertain future, while the unstable ones were locked away in psychiatric wards for further research and treatment. Hoping to cash in on possible treatments and interested in the PR opportunities intrinsic in such good works, several megacorps co-financed and sponsored research into AIPS and experimental therapies. They were also motivated by a desire to safeguard their own workforces from such events in the future. Some corps pursued tailored pharmaceutical solutions, others put their faith and funds into developing psychological treatments. All corporations, however, collected data and analyzed the potential hazards as well as business opportunities coming from AIPS and related disorders. With every new symptom discovered and new cases continuing to be reported it soon became obvious to some scientists that AIPS was the tip of the iceberg and might even be concealing the beginning of something far more ominous.

Not all people who suffer from AIPS are technomancers (likewise, not all technomancers suffer from AIPS). Most, in fact, are simply poor victims who were mentally damaged by the Dissonance worm or other Crash effects. A small but select percentage of AIPS victims do have technomantic abilities, and these are the ones the corporations are most interested in. Some of them suffer from other Crash-related mental injuries, however, or are simply unable to come to terms or otherwise harness their new abilities.

What the Public Knows

At the end of 2069, society at large is oblivious to the existence of technomancers, sprites, and other Matrix anomalies. Generally speaking, technomancers are the new generation of urban legends, whereas otaku and AIs are the faded bogeymen of the Crash 2.0. Chance encounters with oddities and anomalies in





the Matrix fuel rumors and paranoia, but rarely lead to anything. In fact, most people will discount such stories outright as scams or misunderstandings.

Six years have passed since the second global Matrix Crash, and while the Sixth World was yanked back from the brink of devastation, the scars are still fresh and tender to millions of people. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives, millions were displaced, injured, or saw their lives unravel and torn apart. Homes and businesses were wrecked, billions of nuyen were lost, cities were ravaged—the devastation did not discriminate.

In many hearts, deep-seated anger and grief over these events persists. Powerful emotions were bottled up, repressed, ignored, and left to fester for years as people got on with the labor of rebuilding their lives. These include grief over traumatic losses, rage at the senseless terror, the lack of closure wrought by never seeing the culprits brought to justice, and anger at the powers-that-be that had failed to avert the catastrophe. Most prevalent of all, however, is the doubt and fear that someday, when it's least expected, something could rise from the Matrix and it could all happen again. These dark thoughts linger in many minds, waiting for the right moment to be vented, to find a target.

What the Media Knows

The scoop of the decade has been hiding away in the pages of tabloid screamsheets and conspiracy newsfeeds for some time. Dubious pseudo-science and late night sensationalist trid shows have stripped the few public references to the phenomena of any credibility and added to its obscurity—as has the deliberate silence of megacorporate media divisions. In fact, there are standing orders in the editorial offices of some of the most powerful media conglomerates to intentionally downplay and ignore such stories, and those who favor their jobs and necks don't ask why.

In a world demanding the next big story, however, some savvy snoop's intuition will tell him there's more to these stories than meets the eye. It's only a matter of time before some network reporter begins to question the lack of editorial support for even the most basic human interest AIPS and "virtuakinetiC"-related sto-

ries. Such twists provide interesting plot hooks for the enterprising gamemaster as such snoops resort to deniable assets to dig behind their master's backs, track down stories or suspected technomancers, investigate claims of mysterious Matrix presences, ghosts in the machine, and reports of abductions of AIPS victims.

Reporters or witnesses threatening to bring technomancers into the news, however, suffer an impressive array of accidents, disappearances, and other unfortunate events. Others are obstructed by vicious and devastating attacks on their character and credibility. The lesson should become clear—go public at your own risk.

The power of the media to influence and guide public perception is an important part of *Emergence*. Introducing characters to this aspect of the story early on puts them firmly in the eye of the coming storm.

What The Powers-That-Be Know

The truth is that the megacorps, governments, and other power players of the Sixth World know a lot more than they are telling regarding the emergence of technomancers—more even than the members of Jackpoint assume.

Most corporations of any significant size (AAA and some AAs) learned shortly after the Crash of the potential for a minority of AIPS victims to express electrokinetic or virtuakinetiC abilities. Some of these corps secretly initiated technomancer research programs as early as 2065, quietly shuffling these first "anomalies" out of sight. Others reoriented old otaku research projects. Unlike the general public, the megacorporate elite and their government cronies were previously aware of the existence of both AIs and otaku, as well as their involvement in the Crash.

Behind the scenes, many of these corps seek to get their hands on AIPS patients for further studies. Some are secretly conducting research behind the façade of legitimate healthcare programs, while others are running secret abduction operations (under one guise or another). Deniable assets are in high demand for capturing/extracting research subjects, but are kept out of the loop. Some megacorps are also engaging in widespread secret screening of mental health patients and even their own workforces in order to identify possible research candidates and/or risks. The screening process is imperfect, however, and has resulted in a few carefully-covered-up false positives.

Given the controversial nature of these studies, scientists and their overseers are going to great lengths to keep the operations—and their results—under wraps. Very few have shared knowledge or breakthroughs with their allies, much less their rivals, preferring to keep their cards close to their chests. In fact, some research is being undertaken without the complete knowledge and consent of higher-ups. This cautiousness belies the wide

range of interests and goals various agencies have with these experiments. Some hope to achieve profitable breakthroughs they can bring to market first, while others see the technomancer phenomenon as a threat to their Matrix security systems and services. Corporations like NeoNET and MCT, whose primary business relies on providing Matrix consumer goods, see technomancers as a potential threat to their entire business model—no one needs to buy commlinks or software when they can access and manipulate the Matrix with their minds, after all. A few other powers are simply interested in understanding what the technomancer phenomenon means—hoping to get a glimpse of any future surprises the Sixth World may throw at them.

The megacorps realize better than anyone just how close the world came to the brink in '64. They know that meddling with anything remotely linked to otaku or AIs means courting great risks, and might well inspire public backlash were it ever to be revealed. Recognizing the risks, the major megacorps—with the aid of the Corporate Court's Matrix Authority—decided to keep any such knowledge from becoming public until such time as the phenomenon was understood, countermeasures developed, and controls implemented. They are aware, however, that maintaining secrecy and deniability is an impossible task in the long run. Sooner or later, the story will break. They've succeeded admirably in keeping their activities secret until the end of 2069, when the first stories pierce the curtain of silence and find their way through to the public.

Unfortunately, secret technomancer experimentation isn't the only secret the megacorporations are keeping ... as the Sixth World is about to find out.

What the Shadows Know

Corporate interest in otherwise non-descript individuals has been flagged by those in the shadows that keep track of such things. Even though shadowrunners have been directly involved in investigations and extractions of suspected technomancers for years, their rarity and the corporations' vested interest in keeping the true nature of their operations secret has kept anyone from piecing together the truth. For the most part, the shadow community is not yet aware of the depth of corporate programs or the nature of technomancers. The exceptions are a few rare criminal syndicates, smaller and with their ears to the ground, that have managed to pick up their own pet technomancers and realize their potential. These early adopters are already figuring out ways to make a profit through technomancer-driven Matrix crime.

Many in the shadows were aware of and actually dealt with otaku, while others even knew of the existence of AIs and stranger entities at large in the Matrix. Shadowrunners are ideally placed to connect the dots, but even they are deeply divided about what all this means and which side to take. To complicate matters, some technomancers have come out of the closet to trusted teammates, encountering mixed reactions—after all, too many questions are unanswered, too many frightening possibilities left open, and paranoia is rife. As *Emergence* begins, however, a critical mass of evidence is starting to accumulate, and some folks in the shadows are starting to piece it all together—particularly those runners who *are* technomancers or who have open technomancers in their team.

The Technomancers Themselves

The majority of technomancers—even those who don't suffer from AIPS—are scared and confused. Many do not understand their powers, and some don't even want to try. Those who have come to terms with their abilities usually choose to hide their powers and pursue a semblance of normality. It's not hard for them to see the prejudice, resentment, and fear that metahumans, changelings, and the Awakened deal with on a daily basis, and to keep their mouths shut. Since technomancer expression is so rare—and so hidden—finding others to relate to is all but impossible (if not an outright trap laid by a corporate research project). Some have managed to make ample use of their skills as programmers or hackers, but they tend to hide their abilities, pretending to use commlinks and programs. Many of course take notice of the occasional newsclip that manages to break through the veil, hinting that other technomancers exist. Some may even hire runners to find others like them ...

BRINGING TECHNOANCERS INTO THE FOLD

As the gamemaster running *Emergence*, you will encounter one of two situations when it comes to technomancers: either you have player characters who are technomancers or you will be introducing technomancers to your group through non-player characters. Both present a different set of potentially interesting challenges.

Technomancers as Player Characters

Emergence provides a great opportunity to introduce a new technomancer player character, or to explore the background and experiences of an existing technomancer player character. *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*, includes all of the rules necessary to play a technomancer, and *Emergence* complements this with additional societal and setting context. In this case, the gamemaster should read through *Emergence* to get a sense of how events during 2070 unfold and how he may adapt these to the circumstances of a particular character in his own campaign. The character's past history may play a role here, and should be discussed with the player. When did the technomancer first express his powers? Was he a victim of the Crash? Did he have a guiding mentor or another technomancer friend to rely on, or did he have to struggle through and learn his abilities on his own? Was he diagnosed with AIPS? Does he continue to hide his abilities, aping the use of a commlink while in front of others, or is he "out" to the world—or just his close friends? These answers may provide the substance for a run that ties into wider and larger-scale events described in this book.

If the technomancer's abilities are unknown to his teammates, this provides the character with an opportunity to come out of the closet—or be exposed. As the others gain evidence of the existence of technomancers, they may put two and two together and realize they have one in their midst. This opens up the possibility of internal conflict within the team—some may fear the technomancer's abilities, condemn him for lying, or even see an opportunity to sell him out to a corporate lab. It also sets the stage for the team to pull together and protect one of their own—whether he is pursued by a corporate research snatch squad, traumatized by a horrible experience in a psych ward, or exposed to a technophobic mob.



If a technomancer character chooses to exhibit his powers openly, the gamemaster should warn him that this may be seen as an oddity and may draw unwanted scrutiny. Gamemasters should be sure to explore the reactions of outsiders to any displays of technomantic ability, especially as technomancers come under the spotlight. This may also have an effect on the technomancer's companions, as they find themselves questioned or shunned about the unique individual they associate with.

Technomancers On The Outside

If your group has no technomancers, you have the freedom to introduce them as slowly or quickly as you are comfortable. They may be hired to track down a technomancer escaped from a lab/prison—or alternately to rescue someone (perhaps a friend, or someone wanted by a rival corp). They may be hired to investigate an unusual hacking incident or Matrix-related crime. They may even be contacted by a confused person just now expressing their technomantic abilities who wants the runners to find out what the hell is happening to him. The adventure seeds at the end of this chapter are also designed to gradually introduce technomancers if run in succession.

Always keep in mind that technomancers are very rare, more so than even magicians, and many are either unaware of the full extent their abilities or are just coming to terms with them. Only a minority has been quick to realize their potential and are making full use of their newfound talents (some for good, some for evil). Some of the best informed are aware of the nature of corporate interest and have faded into the shadows, masquerading as hackers or riggers. Others are so frightened they may have voluntarily handed themselves in for “treatment.” Whether it's an old lover terrified of the Resonance abilities he's just beginning to express, a target of run that is unexpectedly guarded by aggressive sprites, a streetwise fixer who uses his technomancer abilities to give him an edge, or an old enemy that returns to wreck revenge as a full-blown technomancer, the possibilities technomancers pose as NPCs are infinite and provide many potential adventure seeds.

Introducing Technomancers

Some ideas for gradually introducing *Emergence* into the game include:

- During an extraction, the unwilling target suddenly expresses his Resonance abilities by spontaneously compiling a powerful sprite that will wreck havoc with the shadowrunner's gear and vehicles until they figure out what's going on ... and even then they should be left with doubts about what really happened.
- A young street grifter is hacking into people's comlinks while hustling passers-by with card tricks. He might not be good enough to hack a runner's defenses, but a less-prepared friend or acquaintance might be a victim and never realize what happened.
- Rumors start when someone accidentally catches a friend apparently performing some feat of technomancy. The friend dismisses it and tells the character

EMERGENCE AND THE AWAKENED CHARACTER

While the storylines in *Emergence* focus on technomancers, hackers, riggers, and the Matrix itself, this should not be seen as a campaign geared towards technology. Magic can and does play a significant role in many aspects of the storyline, since the true impact of *Emergence* is felt throughout society, in the shadows and in the everyday lives of the inhabitants of the Sixth World.

Involving magical characters in the storyline should be easy. Several magic-oriented organizations and groups are as interested in the true nature of technomancer abilities as any megacorp, and some hypothesize Resonance is merely a new form of magic. Some magicians may be at the service of corporations or institutions hunting out technomancers. Others yet may find parallels between their own magophobic experiences and the persecuted children of the Matrix and offer them refuge and sanctuary, joining an embryonic underground railroad.

One potential story hook that opens up all sorts of interesting possibilities is to introduce a former burned-out shaman, mage, or houn-gan that begins to develop Resonance abilities. Another possibility is to introduce a character whose unique magical tradition believes in AIs and Ghosts in the Machine as mentor spirits (though these may not actually offer bonuses).

he's seeing things, but the seed of doubt is planted to blossom later.

- A close friend, contact, relative, or former lover suffers from AIPS and has been institutionalized. One day s/he manages to get a message out saying s/he's scared, that the doctors are running all kinds of tests, and that they plan to experiment on him/her. Whether the character ignores the plea for help, or even if he follows up on it and accepts the psychiatrists' assurances that it was a product of the patient's troubled mind (obviously there will be no evidence), he will be faced with the consequences of his lack of faith later on.

More ideas are included under *Adventure Seeds*, p. 20.

MYTHS OF CREATION

In early 2070, technomancers remain a scientific mystery waiting to be solved—even though covert programs investigating their abilities have been in place for several years. In secret labs and research centers across the globe, scientists are clashing over opposing theories on the nature of technomancers, fueled by corporate pressure to find ways to exploit and capitalize on

Urgent Message...



them. Contradicting analyses render scientific classification and explanation of the phenomenon impossible—but those in power know they are on to something.

So what is the truth? Did technomancers evolve from pre-Crash Otaku? Are they the next step in metahumanity's evolution? Are they Awakened, mundane, or something entirely different? Are their abilities biological, genetic, or magical? Are Resonance abilities spontaneous and random? Are they even metahuman anymore? Are they a natural development or something created by dangerous forces within the Matrix? Many questions remain, and too few conclusions can be made at this point. As the phenomenon becomes public, additional contradictory possibilities will contribute to the overall confusion.

As the gamemaster, your job is to keep this a mystery. The exact nature of technomancers, their abilities, and their powers will be further explored in future *Shadowrun* publications—but they may never be fully “settled.” *Emergence* is not intended to provide comprehensive answers to the nagging questions of both gamemasters and players. In fact, gamemasters are encouraged to add their own theories, regardless of how reasonable or ridiculous, thereby providing even more food for thought for their players as the storyline unfolds.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

As the gamemaster, you may find it best to bring in technomancers gradually: first, by alluding to their existence (see *Dead Man Hacking*, below), then by using them as secondary characters (as in *Tunnel Vision*, below), and finally by bringing in a distinct technomancer that the runners must deal with directly (as in *A Run of Luck*, below).

Dead Man Hacking

A Johnson named Carmen Sandoval is recruiting a team to locate the body of a former associate, a gifted hacker by the name of MacArthur Bowman. Sandoval and Bowman were secret lovers, and she was shocked to learn that not only had Bowman died during a failed hack, but his body had been hijacked from the ambulance sent to retrieve him under his DocWagon contract. Sandoval wants Bowman's body back, and she wants to know why it was taken.

Some digging will reveal Bowman had been hired by a third party to hack the mainframe of a local hospital and acquire the patient histories of a handful of people who had been through the system in the past four years—most of whom turned out to be part of an AIPS outreach program run by MCT's local branch. MCT managed to backtrack the intrusion and flatline the hacker. An MCT black ops team, sent to clean up, then intercepted the DocWagon ambulance and discovered Bowman had been revived by the EMTs. The black ops team eliminated all witnesses but didn't have time to destroy the ambulance before DocWagon HTR units responded. The ambulance's Valkyrie medical unit and smartsystem will reveal Bowman was resuscitated and even yield usable ritual samples. The black ops team has taken Bowman to a safe house and is interrogating him to make sure he hasn't hidden compromising backups somewhere.

Tunnel Vision

The runners are brought in by a Johnson to track down Annalee Buck, a privileged corporate brat who escaped from the Better Days Care Facility three days ago. She suffers from an as-yet-undiagnosed psychological disorder, and her concerned father—a powerful corporate exec—fears she is a threat to herself and others. The Johnson reveals Annalee was an otaku before the Crash, an eight-year old who was locked into the Matrix for several days straight. Though she survived the Crash, Annalee developed a pathological fear that the Matrix, or something inside it, was out to get her.

Now a teenager, Annalee is curious as to why her abilities remain as strong as ever, and why the Matrix seems to call out to her all the time, but remains near phobic of logging in. She has taken residence in a maintenance niche in a local theme park's “Tunnel of Love.” She occasionally ventures out for food (creating pings on her credit line with each purchase at a local convenience store). Those small purchases might help runners target her location, though several other technological and magical means might also be employed to track her down. When faced with well-armed low-lifes like the runners, however, Annalee instinctively taps into her technomancer talent and calls up a sprite to defend her. This particularly powerful sprite will use the park's many electronic recreational and security systems to hassle and threaten the runners as Annalee tries to escape.

A Run of Luck

The runners are hired by a minor Mob boss to investigate a casino customer who has been enjoying an unbelievable lucky streak. The mobster has been running security for the Family's casino for some time, but this rube's run of luck has brought down unwanted scrutiny from his bosses (who he fears will notice he's been skimming money). The mobster doesn't want the man dead, he just wants details on how he's beating the system and assurance he will never step foot in one of their casinos again. The boss will explain that the man, Gregor Stample, only ever plays the slots and other electronic games—and each consistently gives up its jackpot within minutes. Casino hardmen have approached Stample and verified he possesses no commlink or hacking devices, and staff hackers confirm the casino network has not been breached. Some of the machines, however, reveal unexplained software errors.

Gregor Stample is in fact a technomancer, and he's been hacking the machines directly to make a living wage. Gregor feels the heat against his kind rising, so he's fattening his stash before going underground. Gregor's life is a bit sad, really, and consists of walking around the city, having heated one-sided arguments with the air (sprites) in back alleys and abandoned buildings, only breaking the routine to spend a few hours in the casino. Gregor's luck seems to extend past the slots: vending machines often spit out food as he passes. Gregor's been homeless for a while and was in a psychiatric program before that, but he was released on a clean bill of health and his file closed. Confronting him is difficult as Gregor is so internalized; he often has no clue as to his surroundings. If pressed, Gregor will say he doesn't really understand how his gift works, just that it does.





... REVELATIONS ...

"And you say that it was indeed you and your sister that hacked your father's account? You bypassed the security system and gained entrance to a room that no one but your father has access to?" Piotr's face was stern and mean as he leaned over the table, interrogating Nitca.

Nitca looked worriedly at her sister, who smiled back encouragingly. Their father's men had never talked to them this way before. Father was strict, but he never let his lackeys disrespect his daughters.

"Yes ... sorta. Well, we didn't mean to break anything. Father always kept that door closed," she shifted in her chair nervously. "We would have never tried to go in if he hadn't said something about ... about ... about Anechka being in there." Nitca looked at her sister again, noting how young she still looked after all these years. "Anyway, we didn't break in. The door just ... opened for us."

Piotr sighed heavily, leaning back and pinching his nose. He shot an exasperated look at Andrey next to him, before looking back at Nitca. "Your father never said anything about Anechka," he growled. "He hasn't mentioned her name in years, except on encrypted channels. And that security system you so casually walked through cost more than a satellite."

"What did you see in that room?" Andrey suddenly blurted out. He cringed as Piotr glared at him.

Nitca lowered her eyes. "Weird stuff. Lots of medical devices. And a ... a girl." She bit her lip.

"Anechka," Piotr said. "You saw Anechka."

Nitca nodded, not looking up.

Piotr stood up and began pacing. "Nitca, is Anechka here with you now?"

Nitca looked over at her sister again. Anechka said nothing. Nitca nodded.

"I don't get—" Andrey started to say, before Piotr cut him off.

"Boris, kill the networks, like I instructed you," he said into his commlink. "Kill all of them. Jam everything out."

Anechka reached out towards Nitca, then suddenly disappeared. A wave of vertigo washed over Nitca. She felt like she was in vacuum. The hum, the constant buzz in the air, was gone. She grabbed her head and screamed.

Andrey stood up, staring at the girl, looking pale. He turned towards Piotr, his eyes wide. "Don't tell me—she can't be ... she can't be one of those ... those freaks, those *techno-monsters*."

Piotr shot Andrey twice in the chest. As the man twitched on the ground, he stepped over and fired another bullet into Andrey's head.

Can't have anyone knowing the Boss's kid is a monster, Piotr thought. Bad enough that her sister's been on life support since the Crash ... and now they're somehow talking to each other? He shook his head. With these freaks all over the news, there's no way this can turn out well. What will the Boss say when I tell him? He worried. Will he kill me as well? He stared at the teenage girl that now cowered in the corner, holding her head and crying.

Then again, he smiled to himself, this might be just the leverage I need.

DIGITAL AWAKENING

• Truth be told, I expected this investigation to be more difficult. Now that I've refined my search parameters, Wanderly (my search agent) is pulling in all sorts of newsbytes correlating data. There's a lot more to this story floating around out there than I originally thought; some of it dating right back to the Crash. I just need to figure out where to begin putting it all together. I'm also wondering why the big networks' searchbots haven't caught on—this is the type of trolling they're designed for. Maybe they have ... but they're keeping quiet. To the skeptical reader, the bulk of these stories could be written off as freak accidents and tabloid journalism. In my opinion, there's just too many diverse incidents with too many similarities to discard as flukes. My instinct tells me I'm on to something here, and KSAF is footing the bill, so I'll keep on digging.

While I continue digging into the AIPS angle, I'll lead with an innocuous report that those of you who caught Mr. Armstrong's demonstration on *Beyond Belief* might want to consider. As promised. I've asked Jack to set up an aggregator feed so I don't have to dump data my agents turn up directly into the thread.

• Sunshine

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 03/08/70 //
ACCIDENTAL OVERLOAD TRIGGERED BY FORCE OF WILL?

PrimeTime Newz—Miami, Caribbean League—01 Jan 2070

Everglades Mall management confirms that yesterday's sudden shutdown of all AR advertising in the popular shopping arcade was the result of an unexplained signal overload. Mall officials confessed they are baffled by the signal that brought down the entire advertising network and the incident remains under investigation. *PTN*, however, has a startling report contradicting the official accounts.

Manuel Saramago, a frequent Everglades shopper and Weapons World™ clerk, confessed to our cameras that he crashed the network. According to Mr. Saramago, he simply "wished for a silent and ARO-free arcade" during his last visit. "I was so annoyed with the flood of Super Blowout, Closing Sale, and Mega Markdown AROs pressing me that I simply wished them to shut ... err ... down. Dunno how I did it, they just flickered out when I did," admitted Saramago to our reporter, shortly after being placed under arrest by mall security.

In its latest statement, Everglades management claims Mr. Saramago's behavior during a follow-up interview indicate symptoms of the Artificially Induced Psychotropic Schizophrenia (AIPS) disorder. AIPS is a common psychological disorder directly associated with victims of the 2064 global Matrix Crash. Mr. Saramago has been handed over to police authorities on obstruction of justice charges and will undergo psychological evaluation before appearing in a Miami court.

Everglades Security announced there was no substantiating evidence of Mr. Saramago's involvement and that his apprehended commlink contained no software capable of the feat. In fact, Mr. Saramago's commlink does not appear to have been turned on when the incident occurred. No other networking devices were found in his possession. Everglades

promises to pursue evidence of a hacker or virus-related intrusion as mall management faces "lost sales charge backs" from several storeowners.

// end attachment //

• Take a step back. Think about this. You're talking about Joe Clerk hacking a secure network on the fly. Maybe you can get him to teach me a trick or three? Sunshine, if that's all your agents came up with, upgrade their filters!

• Turbo Bunny

• I wouldn't pass judgment just yet. The whole thing with the guy's commlink does strike me as odd.

• Black Mamba

• Just catching up on this thread. Interesting read. This last piece reminds me of a similar incident at "Big Willi," Hamburg's high security pen, a few months back. According to the reports, the perimeter systems were "inexplicably" overridden and the patrol drones turned on the guard boats along the prison island's perimeter. At the same time, some surveillance drones that Hamburg-based media giant floats over the island to capture and broadcast live prison fights were hacked to point their cameras on the gun battle. The weird thing is, the hacking signal seems to have originated from within the prison island, and no log-on protocol or commlink ID registration was logged.

• Red Anya

// upload newsclip item :: user Ma'fan :: 03/15/70 //
MIRACULOUS MALFUNCTION PREVENTS TRAFFIC TRAGEDY

Emerald Media—Hong Kong, Tsim Sha Tsui—25 Nov 2069

A malfunction in the Hong Kong Traffic Guidance and Transportation System (TGTS) saved the lives of 80 children onboard a school bus en route to the Kowloon Park Swimming Complex yesterday. The incident occurred when a 7.5-ton delivery truck's autopilot ignored traffic commands at the northern end of Kowloon Park Drive and attempted to merge onto Canton Road, threatening to collide head-on with an approaching school bus. Miraculously, a TGTS malfunction signaled the bus to stop and simultaneously triggered the automated police road spikes to deploy at the intersection, deflating the truck's tires and bringing it to a complete stop. Eastern Tiger Corporation (ETC) investigating officers declined to comment on several eyewitness statements given to the police on-site, describing a dwarf bystander they believe to have been involved in the fortuitous prevention of the accident. The man, who was standing on the sidewalk, gesticulated and shouted seconds before the truck would have collided with the school bus. Several witnesses report the street lights next to the man short-circuited in a cascade of sparks and nearby street lamps flickered as the system malfunctions took place. The man apparently lost consciousness as the truck came to a halt. Paramedics rushed the unconscious man to the Queen Elizabeth hospital for observation. At an informal press-conference, ETC spokes-



- Alright, Jack's got this feed up and running. Wanderly will be correlating and prioritizing items he picks off the net to post on this aggregator thread. He's been programmed to limit content to basics such as headlines and summaries and add **cross links** to the original sources. Ping me if you come across anything topic-related yourself, and I'll add it here.
- Sunshine

Student Expelled For Matrix Pranks

The Times-Picayune—03/13/70

BATON ROUGE, CAS: Serial prankster twelve-year-old Lou Henry Morgan was expelled from the Broadmoor Middle School earlier this week following repeated interference with the school's AR devices and equipment. The teacher's colloquium announced their decision after a closed-door meeting, citing repeated warnings and multiple suspensions.

The boy's parents, Harvey and Ina Mae Morgan, have officially protested the decision, claiming that no evidence has been produced that conclusively identifies their son as the culprit for the acts of computer vandalism. Indeed, the school's investigation so far has provided no clear evidence that Lou Henry Morgan actively accessed school's systems or even that his apprehended personal commlink is capable of any such intrusion. The decision was based entirely on other student's reports and statements. [Read more.](#)

Neonet Expands Wifi R&D Strategic Core Competence

Associated Press—03/23/70

CAERLEON, Scotland: NeoNET's director of R&D, the great dragon Celedyr, announced plans to expand NeoNET's "wireless communication technologies sector" as a strategic goal towards securing the corporation's pole position in the burgeoning field of wifi consumer technology.

"NeoNET has spearheaded this technology since we ushered in the wireless Matrix, and our goal is to continue to innovate and change the way people think of the Matrix. The possibilities are endless and NeoNET will continue to make them available to our highly valued customers everywhere," announced Celedyr's spokesperson, Zoh Rothberg, following last week's board meeting in Boston.

Market analysts suspect NeoNET to have reached another—yet unannounced—breakthrough in wifi technology, placing the corporation even further ahead of its megacorporate competitors Mitsuhamana and Renraku. [Read more.](#)

Continued on page 26

woman Kai Li-Peng added that the local traffic cameras had also suffered some sort of malfunction and the unidentified man would be remanded to police custody for questioning after being released from hospital.

// end attachment //

- Hong Kong newsfaxes are full of stories on the mysterious halfer after ETC confirmed the malfunction was indeed caused by an illegal system intrusion. Apparently, the hacker overrode the preprogrammed algorithms controlling the traffic signals and roadblocks at the intersection. The dwarf has since dropped off the face of the earth. Queen Elizabeth Hospital's records show he was released the same day, but none of the media or the police on site caught him slipping away.

- Ma'fan

- Mitsuhamana practically runs Queen Elizabeth. A little checking tells me they run an AIPS and Matrix-related behavior disorders research program out of the facility's psych ward. MCT also had a history of experimentation on otaku back in the day. I wouldn't be surprised if there's a connection.

- The Smiling Bandit

- Like I've been saying, what if the unexplainable occurrences and sightings are signs of *post-crash* otaku? The Matrix certainly evolved, who knows how that affected its children? AIPS seems to crop up with a lot of these incidents. Who's to say now if the original otaku also suffered from similar symptoms or disorders?

- Plan 9

- None of the otaku I knew—whether following the Deep Resonance or other ... paths—experienced any of the symptoms related to AIPS.

- Puck

- That does not answer the question: what became of the otaku *after* the crash? Did the wi-fi revolution affect any or all of your kind, and how? Maybe you know and just aren't telling?

- Slamm-0!

- Good questions, and I'm also interested in whether Puck or anyone else here knows the answers. Puck, if you want to chat privately, you know where to find me.

In other news, last week I came across a keynote by one Dr. Gavin Pierce, head of the Psychology Dept. at Overlake Medical Research Center. Dr. Pierce is apparently a bit of luminary in the field of AIPS treatment, and since he's unaffiliated and pushing a new book "On Treating AIPS—Observations of a Two Year study," I talked him into a brief interview. Since this was for the wider audience, Dr. Pierce kept the psych-jargon to a minimal. I think I handled myself rather well, but I'll stick to the highlights.

- Sunshine

// upload media file :: user Sunshine :: 04/10/70 //
// LinguaCell-D audio-to-text conversion engaged //

Sunshine: So could you start by giving us some background on the Artificially Induced Psychotropic Schizophrenia Syndrome problem and what it means to someone on the streets.

Dr. Gavin Pierce: As I explain in my book, AIPS must be seen as a global phenomenon, one which we must come to terms with if we're to overcome the long-term ramifications of the Crash of '64. The socio- and psychological impact of the second global network failure cannot be understated, and it far surpasses even its predecessor. The emotional and psychological scars resulting from the loss and tragedy of those horrifying events will likely never be erased, but AIPS is a result of a far more insidious side-effect of the Crash, a symptom of the damage done to the collective metahuman psyche.

Sunshine: How so?

Dr. Gavin Pierce: People have always been reluctant to accept just how dependent we are on the Matrix, how much of an emotional and social crutch it truly is. '64 was all the more traumatizing for it. Metahumanity adopted virtual reality within a single generation—the Matrix was/is a vital and integral aspect of our daily lives. It is my belief that AIPS results from the psychotropic trauma of the Crash virus on individuals trapped online—at the sudden and violent interruption of these pseudo-natural aspects of everyday life. This leads to a severe schizophrenic break, a “mental discontinuity,” as it were, one that causes victims to either become technophobic or lose sight of the boundaries between the physical and the virtual world. The undeniable relation between our modern psyche and the ubiquitous Matrix also explains the continued appearance of AIPS victims even today, five years on. Though this disorder remains thankfully rare, it must not be overlooked—a Georgetown study suggests 1 in 5000 Crash victims may exhibit AIPS or similar disorders.

- Gimme a freakin' break! We've been through the same kinda shock before: the Awakening in '11, Goblinization in '21, the first Crash in '29, SURGE back in '61. Chalk up another one for the Crash of '64 and get over it!

- Slamm-0!

- Not that simple. After Goblinization and VITAS, the Awakening and the Chicago bug outbreak, insane AIs and great dragon presidents, mankind may have become blasé about the wider world, but the Matrix touches everyone. Maybe it would have been different back at the turn of the century, when the internet was a medium among many. Nowadays the Matrix is *the* medium everything runs on. Pull the plug and its not just chipheads that feel the loss.

- Netcat

Sunshine: So what exactly characterizes an AIPS victim?

Dr. Pierce: The first step in comprehending this disorder is to understand that it does not discriminate by any gender, ethnicity, cultural or social background. The single most common symptom of AIPS is re-occurring trauma-induced fugue states.

These are daydream-like episodes during which the victim revisits his or her trauma during the Crash and the line between reality and memory blurs. Victims are unable to distinguish between reality and hallucination during the episode. In a few cases, these episodes reach beyond recall of the traumatic incident; the patient's psyche produces a series of further linked and involved “episodes.” More than 50 percent of AIPS sufferers describe having encounters with imaginary characters during these hallucinations. Descriptions of such characters and their behaviors evolve and don't conform to recognizable psychological archetypes. On occasion these fanciful constructs gain a life of their own as the patient slips into deeper schizoid states.

Sunshine: So not only are these experiences triggered by technological stimuli, but in fact they prompt Matrix-related hallucinations?

Dr. Pierce: That is a simplistic but suitable observation. Unfortunately, AIPS is rarely that easy to qualify as some of its symptoms are mistaken for other common disorders—which often results in misdiagnosis and inappropriate treatment and medication during the initial stages. For instance, a significant percentage of AIPS victims express a minor form of Attention Deficit Disorder, while in others AIPS combines aspects of Multiple Personality Disorders, Manic-Depressive Disorders, and hysteric amnesia—the tell-tale thread being the stressor: exposure to AR or VR stimuli.

- On occasion, I subcontract a rigger suffering from mild AIPS. Granted, he only ever hears a quarter of the brief, but his multitasking skills more than make up for the odd looks he draws from the unit. When we're in the field, it's good to know he's got our back. He juggles our surveillance drones, comms security, and tactical overwatch effortlessly. Definitely worth the hassle of having to repeat the plan to him again and again.

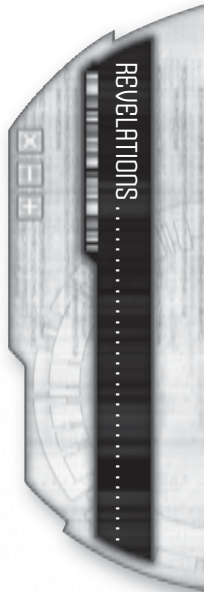
- Picador

Sunshine: To change tack, Dr. Pierce, I've heard that in fact the AIPS disorder manifests at different ... degrees. I believe you mention this in your book.

Dr. Pierce: The most intensive form of AIPS is classified as Augmented Virtual Sensory Perception or AVSP. Its symptoms can only be described as sporadic electrokinetic effects of varying amplitude, coupled with AIPS fugue episodes of course. I should note, however, that AVSP is exceedingly rare even among AIPS victims.

Sunshine: Electrokinetic? Could you clarify further? That strikes me as something far beyond the scope of psychological trauma ...

Dr. Pierce: Not really, the delusions are consistent with AIPS and the basic disorder is believed psychotropic in nature. It has been hypothesized that the original trauma provokes psychosomatic alterations to the victim's metabolism and neural network. Whether this is psychotropic in nature or whether AVSP plays off some predisposition—latent schizophrenia or certain brain chemistry imbalances—is unknown. As a result, the AVSP victim's cerebral activity shows some characteristics of deep REM sleep, or as one analyst suggested, an infant's primary learning and development phase. Research indicates the changes produce



High Demand For AIPS Awareness Seminar *New Seattle Intelligencer* [NN]—04/27/70

SEATTLE, UCAS: Responding to growing demand from the families of those afflicted with Artificially Induced Psychotropic Schizophrenia (AIPS), the Washington University of Seattle will be offering an AIPS Awareness Seminar again this year. “Since last year’s seminar, many people approached us and told us about their first-hand experience with close relatives suffering from the disorder. While psychologists and sociologists argue each other’s theories, we have to provide help to AIPS patients and their families and friends alike. A great many people are concerned about the true extent of this still unexplained disorder and official figures just aren’t there,” said Tracy Goertzen, organizer and keynote speaker of the seminar. [Read more.](#)

The Times Publishes Interrogation Transcripts. Accident Or Sabotage?

The New Economist—05/05/70

LONDON, UK: The publication of apparently highly-confidential interrogation transcripts is the latest mishap in a series of leaks from within the Lord Protector Office’s Oversight Board (OB) responsible for British national security. The transcripts follow, in graphic detail, questionable information gathering practices of several detainees following the “Cambridge Riots” of 2066. OB officials contest the validity of these transcripts and claim they are the work of hardcore political insurgents attempting to seed dissent.

The Times editor-in-chief, Derek Gainsborough, is “at a loss” as to how the newspaper’s weekend edition’s layout and content could have been manipulated, unnoticed by the editors and Administrative Board liaison officers. This is the second damning expose to appear in as many months (following the commlink IDs of OB informants within the civil service inadvertently published by the *Daily Mirror*), striking another blow at the OB’s untouchable image.

Downing Street has declined to comment, but the Lord Protector’s Office has announced a complete and through independent investigation. [Read more.](#)

Elevator Crash—Act Of Revenge?

Inside Scoop [ABS]—New York, UCAS—05/12/70

NEW YORK, UCAS: Shocking new claims indicate that last week’s 39-story elevator crash in a Midtown office building might have been a cruel act of revenge by a spurned lover. A grief-stricken Giacomo Mileno, 23, turned himself over to authorities yesterday, claiming to have caused the elevator to crash. His long-term girlfriend, Elena Bairns, was among the casualties of the apparent accident.

Continued on page 28

a subconscious sensitivity to radio and electromagnetic emissions carrying digital information, which trigger endorphin surges—think of them as the metabolism’s own drugs—and which explain the patient’s intense desire to access and experience any nearby signal or emission. The theory has proven extremely hard to substantiate as AVSP interferes with basic medical sensors.

- Chalk one up for the otaku reboot theory. We already knew otaku brains must have had significant neural rewiring to be able to interpret raw simsense signals without a conversion device. This just takes the changes up a notch. The scary bit to me as a doctor is that I can’t make myself believe any such consistent and massive physiological change is spontaneously occurring. Maybe the old rumors of AIs being involved are true.

- Butch

- Though some otaku were indeed the result of AI tampering with human minds, most of those I knew developed their abilities before ever encountering Deus. And don’t ask me how mine came to be, it’s something I still don’t understand myself.

- Puck

- Remember, pre-Crash otaku still needed a neural interface of some sort to connect to the Matrix in the first place—that might no longer be needed if AVSP triggers some sort of electrokinetic sensitivity. That’s probably what that talk of virtuakinetics was all about. I’d really like to get my hands on a full body MRI and EMK scan. Could this be a secondary mutation in whatever gene is behind otaku evolution?

- Plan 9

- I find it hard to believe the level of gene-line treatments necessary would go unnoticed in either otaku or these technomancers. I think we’re looking at something else.

- Butch

- Okay but I wouldn’t rule out genetics just yet—after all, the “magus factor” continues to elude scientists. Maybe it was that Deep Resonance thing otaku kept talking about. Maybe that was a type of AI?

- Plan 9

- Or some other type of free-roaming Matrix entity. Spirits know rumors of ghosts in the machine go all the way back to the original Matrix.

- Ethernaut

- Can’t help you there. I’ve never experienced the “Deep Resonance,” though I knew others who did.

- Puck

- There was a lot of promising research back in the Twenties in Russia and Switzerland into using psychotropic conditioning to induce specific physiological changes in patients



INCOMING FEED.....

as an alternative to traditional augmentation. Though it started as research into heightening immuno-response to VITAS, it was starting to turn to other ends. The idea was to tap the body's own impressive ability to produce chemicals, heal, and self-regulate. They hoped to use psychotropic stimulation to affect psychological changes, stimulate and revitalize the neural system, and manipulate hormones, biorhythms, pain threshold and more. You name it, they were trying it, and some of the results were impressive and still see limited use today. Then the first Crash wiped out a lot of the cutting edge research. The concept lost steam as cybernetic augmentations and biomodifications hit the market during the Euro War years.

• The Smiling Bandit

Sunshine: Is there any common ground between AVSP victims? Maybe they have similar backgrounds, or are all in the same age group?

Dr. Pierce: <chuckle> I see what you're implying, I've seen some of the theories being bandied about. I'm reasonably sure we can rule out all this children of the Matrix mumbo-jumbo. Let me give you some facts: The youngest patient on record is 7 and the oldest is 92. Their ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds are as varied as their ages; some are indigents, some are corporate executives. The only pattern in AIPS and AVSP diagnosis is stressful contact with active Matrix environments.

Sunshine: Thank you for that clarification. What about treatment? Is there a cure? Does that question even make sense?

Dr. Pierce: Of course it does. And for all that it is atypical, AIPS is a schizophrenic disorder and one that we can treat or at least attenuate with the appropriate pharmaceuticals and long-term therapy. After a phase of pharmaceutical-aided re-orientation, the therapist can begin treatment proper and help the patient confront the root of the disorder. Obviously, isolation from virtual and augmented reality stressors is particularly important. Make no mistake, though, we've barely begun to comprehend the range of variant expressions. The treatments and therapies developed are in the earliest stages.

Sunshine: And with regards to AIPS variants such as AVSP?

Dr. Pierce: More so than individuals suffering from AIPS, AVSP patients require personalized and extensive therapy under special precautions. Strict isolation from the Matrix and any wireless devices becomes mandatory due to the patient's enhanced sensitivity to emissions. A period of seclusion from family and immediate social context is also counseled to ensure no foreign interference. Treatment of AVSP requires complete dedication to the patient's case and is a lengthy process for both the patient and the therapist. There is no miracle cure, and the psychologist community has to be prepared for the long haul. Likewise, we have to foster greater public awareness.

Sunshine: That's why we're here.

Dr. Pierce: That's right. That's why I wrote my book. For too long AIPS has been swept under the rug and AIPS patients treated as unwelcome reminders of a terrible ordeal our

Elevator Crash—Act Of Revenge? (CONT.)

Eyewitness reports tell of an emotional discussion between the two in the lobby of Mr. Mileno's law firm on the 39th floor seconds before the accident. According to the same witness, Ms. Bairns broke up with her partner saying, "I don't need you anymore. I'm on to bigger and better things." Lobby surveillance records show a shaken Mileno hitting his fists against the closing elevator doors and cursing Ms. Bairns before collapsing. Witnesses claim Mileno shouted, "Just die why don't you!" seconds before the elevator plummeted 39 floors, killing Ms. Bairns and 3 others. Investigating authorities withheld comment on Mr. Mileno's self-indictment. [Read more.](#)

Tridguide ©2070 Listings

12 Mar 2070 at 20:15:00 **[KSAF] On The Street:** Bob meets up with the Crash victims he interviewed 6 years ago.

1 Apr 2070 at 22:30:00 **[T6W] Truth and Fiction:** Artificial Intelligence, myth and reality.

20 Apr 2070 at 21:30:00 **[NBC] Kool Tech—The Wireless You:** WU's specialists examine next-gen skin-linking and implanted wireless interfaces.

22 Apr 2070 at 22:10:00 **[INN] AIPS and U:** All you ever wanted to know about the disturbing syndrome that still affects millions of people—special guest commentator Dr. Gavin Pierce PhD.

12 May 2070 at 23:20:00 **[AW] The Technomancer Phenomenon (1):** First half of a two-part documentary on this strange new phenomenon.

14 May 2070 at 15:30:00 **[CBC] The CBC Intelligencer:** Examines the surge of interest in Matrix oddities and urban legends. Virtuakinetics, ghosts in the machine, and other secret corporate projects.

31 May 2070 at 21:00:00 **[ABS] The Frasier Report:** Pulitzer winner Robert Frasier investigates the truth behind the stories of the super-hackers known as technomancers.

- This article has been tagged by someone in your network.
- Accessing Tag ...
- The media is finally catching on. I'm not sure what it means, but a topic that used to be late night infotainment fodder is seeing a lot more airtime. Already the term virtuakinetic has been deemed too tech-savvy for the masses, and the catchier "technomancer" is getting picked up as the *terme du jour*. My gut tells me this is about to boil over. Let's pray the world is prepared.
- Sunshine

Continued on page 30

society has faced. AIPS and its subtypes are not going away, and as studies bear fruit and more people are diagnosed, I believe society needs to take a long hard look at itself and address our less fortunate brethren. After all, "There by the grace of God ..."

Sunshine: Well. Thank you, Dr Pierce, for an enlightening interview. I wish you luck in your quest to raise public awareness.

Dr. Pierce: Thank you for the opportunity. It's been a pleasure.

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- Is it just me, or did that muddy the waters? Makes me wonder if there's even a link between these "technomancers" and AVSP/AIPS.
- Picador

- Clear as rain to me. Whatever the story, these people—if they are still *people*—are not only a threat to the Matrix, but they're insane to boot. Hell, I love to mix it up with technology, but I don't *talk to it*. These people are dangerous. They should be locked away.

- Clockwork

- You're a meta, aren't you Clockwork? A hobgoblin, in fact? There was a time when they said similar things about rounding up metas like yourself. Keep that in mind before you start pointing fingers.

- Netcat

- Metahumans aren't all insane. Nor were they created by an AI out to destroy humanity.

- Clockwork

- I've got family undergoing AIPS therapy and it's no picnic. At times it seems it's not going anywhere. Tears your heart to remember how they were.

- Haze

- AVSP is uncharted waters in academic circles. From what I've gathered, there's an inordinate amount of corporate interest in it, co-sponsoring and developing experimental "treatments" and research programs. Sometimes openly, sometimes not. For instance, Shiawase recently set up an "in house" AIPS treatment program and is providing incentives for possible AIPS-affected employees to sign up, as well as offering up rewards to citizens reporting anyone exhibiting AIPS symptoms. The "family corporation" is also making overtures to reputable psychology institutions and private clinics to share the knowledge and improve treatment.

- The Smiling Bandit

- That matches what I've been turning up. Lot of background buzz on the subject, just never quite seems to make the headlines.

- Sunshine

- An acquaintance of mine at a major Boston hospital has picked up on quite a few AIPS-diagnosed out-patients being committed by attending psychologists. Almost all of them are getting transferred to mental institutions sponsored by one corporation or another. My contact thinks that some of the transfer orders have been odd—patients being transferred without family consultation, jurisdictional boundaries being crossed, stuff like that.

- Mika

- That’s something that I’ll have to look into. Meanwhile, check this out. I plied Dr. Pierce with a few drinks after that interview, getting him to agree to provide me with some corroborating intel on AVSP. He just came through, sending over a document written by an old acquaintance of his at MIT&T’s Neurobiology and Neural Interface Department. It’s a rough abstract for an MIT&T/Mitsuhama study that was declined for publication.

- Sunshine

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THE VIRTUAKINETIC PHENOMENON (DRAFT 1.4)

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This abstract summarizes the analytic findings of MIT&T Project AR-01.03.68, conducted by Dr. Harding and team. Originally established to explore the empathic biofeedback of current AR and VR Matrix technology interaction, the project’s focus shifted significantly with the recruitment of Patient V.

For the past six months, Dr. Harding’s research team has focused almost exclusively on this unique individual, who while expressing typical symptomology of the AVSP dysfunction, did not appear to suffer from any other AIPS symptoms. In fact, Patient V received a clean bill of health upon entering the program. Unfortunately, the project’s progress has stalled and research has been indefinitely suspended following V’s sudden disappearance last November.

The term “virtuakinetiC” (or simply VK) was coined by Dr. Harding to describe the singular mental ability to affect electronic and digital mediums through “electrokinetic” or “electropathic” remote manipulation. All faculties express to varying degrees whether the subject is interacting with augmented or full-immersion simsense interfaces. The root of this ability in AVSP victims, and in particular in Patient V, is still not fully understood. Dr. Harding’s research has, however, established that:

- VKs are able to spontaneously generate a mind-Matrix interface of simsense level quality, for all intents and purposes a simulacra of a Matrix *persona*—without resorting to electronic conductors or signal transmitters such as a commlink.
- VKs manifest the ability to intuitively sense environmental data-flux and signal density, this also allows them to experience and interact with AR and VR stimuli by direct stimulus of sensory receptors in the brain.
- VKs also appear to possess the subconscious ability to access a wide variety of environmental signals, both as a receiver and a transmitter.

- VKs exhibit significant remapping of neural pathways and ganglia in the thalamus and cerebral cortex. We hypothesize this allows them to interpret and decode machine code and complex digital signals into simulacra of AR and simsense interfaces.

Though this last conclusion evokes studies into the so-called “otaku” phenomenon, it is worth noting that archived research into otaku abilities indicate these were intimately linked to the developing brain of preadolescent metahumans. VK abilities do not appear to be age-related. Furthermore, the research carried out on otaku prior to 2064 suggested extensive mutations to the subject’s cerebral cortex. VK genetic alterations, as observed in V, appear to extend throughout the central nervous system and the entire body. Dr. Harding’s team believes virtuakinetiCs to be a related, but different, phenomenon.

- My research tells me some otaku claimed to have received their “skillz” from a Matrix deity known as the Deep Resonance, others were apparently created by the rogue AI Deus that seized control of the Seattle Renraku arcolony in 2059. Maybe the corps suspect the Crash virus to have somehow triggered the phenomenon and AIPS is just the start of a new iteration. We know the worm used to bring about the Crash had psychotropic abilities (though how a Matrix-hating cult like Winternight developed a program that powerful and complex is another question entirely ...). It’s conceivable that the Crash spawned a secret RGD race among the megas to develop countermeasures to prevent a Crash 3.0 from ever occurring.

- Plan 9

- My bet is the corps (and other power players with their own agendas) have far less noble goals. Think about what these Matrix wizzes could pull off with full megacorp backing. Better yet, think about what a corp could do if they could get a VK to spontaneously generate viral code like that?

- Cosmo

- Otaku? Rogue AI? AI experimentation? ‘Course I’ve heard the rumors—anybody who’s been on Jackpoint for any amount of time has. But the way you old-timers talk about it as a matter of fact just gives me the creeps.

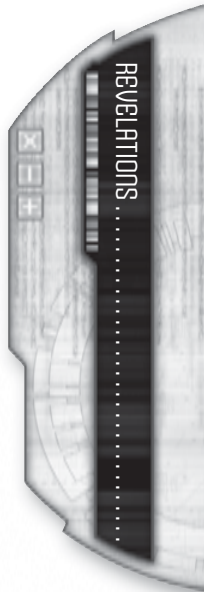
- Beaker

- Don’t take it too hard. Most people aren’t even aware there were AIs out there. Yes, AIs. Several otaku tribes and artificial intelligences were involved in a conflict before the Crash. In fact, the big players were involved in a showdown at the East Coast Stock Exchange node when the virus struck. My memories are fuzzy, but things got seriously strange after that. The eye of a hurricane, two huge, brilliant cyclones warring, mingling and changing ... It’s not something I can put into words. Then Winternight set off one of their EMPs over the city and it was over. I don’t know of any other survivors, and the AIs were just gone. There hasn’t been a trace of them in years ... and believe me I’ve been looking.

- Puck

- So it’s true, you were there!

- Slamm-0!



Korean AR-Cade Championship Finalist Slain By Opponent

Megaplex News [Sony Media]—05/19/70

SEOUL-INCHEON, Korea: The Korean AR-cade championship finals ended in tragedy with the death of two-time champion, 17-year-old Lee Choi Phong. Phong and fellow finalist Danny Ng delivered a fierce, no-holds-barred fully-virtual match to an audience of rabid fans on the Seoul Arena Grid. Phong dominated the match until the final round, when late in the game Ng made a sudden comeback. Ng's frenzied attacks inexplicably overrode his opponent's feedback safeguards, causing a minor stroke. Referees, who are unable to explain how Ng loaded illegal attack software into the closed system, attempted to intervene, but found their access blocked. Lee Choi Phong was declared dead by medics on the scene; Danny Ng was arrested and charged with murder. [Read more.](#)

Security Guard Blinded By Criminals

NRE News [Horizon Group]—05/20/70

SYDNEY, Australia: Rushing to aid a citizen under assault by a duo of criminals in the North Park Mall parking lot, security guard Isaac Mews was stopped dead in his tracks when his vision suddenly faded. "I just went blind," Mews said after recovery in the hospital. "My vision was excellent, I was zooming in on the thugs and calling for backup, then one pointed at me and zap, everything goes black." Surprisingly, doctors found no trace of taser shock or EMP damage. According to his doctors, the criminals somehow overrode Mews's cybernetic eye diagnostics, rendering him blind and requiring a full reboot. Mews claims the criminals were armed with knives, but no obvious firearms or shock weapons. [Read more.](#)

Europol Cracks Container Scam

Punto Caliente [Sol Media 1]—05/30/70

EUROPORT, UNL: Following weeks of in-depth investigations, Europol today announced the arrest of a criminal group suspected of diverting at least forty-five missing ocean freight containers in transit through the Dutch megaport. Europol expects to make further arrests once forensic analysis allows them to break the unknown algorithm used to encrypt the files on the group's apprehended computers.

"The group was surprisingly well-organized, though unaffiliated with major syndicates," said Mr. Finn Tilman of Europort Security. "They modified logistics data directly rather than faking container documentation, making it appear as if the containers had never left their ports of origin. We are also looking into how they remotely re-calibrated the RFID tags and assigned new owners to arrange for

Continued on page 32

• As I've said before, you don't know half the story, and you certainly don't know me.

• Puck

PET (positron emission tomography) and fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) scans reveal that a VK's bioelectrical field (BE) shows an increased field density when compared to baseline metahumans—one possible component of the VKs emission and signal sensitivity. Regulation of BE density and emission frequency seems to be entirely subconscious. During our research on Patient V, receptiveness changed depending on the subject's state of consciousness—i.e. when asleep the patient's BE field activity diminished (BE level dropped to a state roughly equivalent to a wifi device operating in "hidden mode").

Unfortunately, this enhanced BE field offers significant interference to current deep-scanning methods and has proved an obstacle to further investigation. The roots of a VK's emission capability remains elusive, but there are indications it may be a secondary neuro-physiological mutation (though a natural mutation is highly unlikely). Ultrasonography and radiography scans are inconclusive, and show no evidence of macro physio-mutations. Gene- and blood sampling revealed a less than 0.003 percentile shift and no hereditary, recessive, or tailored geneline treatment.

Patient V volunteered to undergo minor investigative surgery in the hope of shedding further light on the source of his unique abilities. The 5-point exploratory intervention (post-op summary in Appendix I) revealed a denser-than-normal cell structure in both afferent and efferent nerve cluster nodes at particular nexi—a mutation encountered throughout the patient's body. This was exceptionally visible in and around the nerve tissue surrounding the patient's cardiac muscles and the sinoatrial node. Nerve conduction (NCS) testing *in vivo* indicated electro-conductivity 12 times metahuman norm. Unfortunately, the extracted sinoatrial node and spinal cord samples showed rapid deterioration once removed from the body, hindering any further testing.

This suggests VK's nervous system might be a very sensitive emitter/receiver—a delicately balanced closed system vulnerable to external factors affecting physiological performance, whether invasive (any form of implants or modifications) or non invasive (medication, pharmaceuticals). Patient V complained of inexplicable headaches and encountering "resistance" when using his abilities following recovery from the operation.

Given the insufficient results we find ourselves unable to confirm whether the phenomenon is purely evolutionary, the result of artificial genetic engineering, or even an undiscovered variant of either UGE or SURGE. Completion of our analysis would have involved major invasive surgery, with most likely drastic and long-term damaging effects on both Patient V's health and his unique abilities.

- Translated from egghead speak, they're saying a virtuakinet-ic's natural bioelectrical field seems to be related to their powers and there seems to be some mutation or bio-tinkering of some sort to the nervous system, which acts as an antenna. I'd like to read more about this. My guess is that "investigative surgery" is an euphemism for "we don't know what we are looking for." Is it evolution's next spin, a genetic mutation, or artificially created?

- Butch

- If nothing else, the authors never seem to doubt Patient V is metahuman, like the rest of us. That should set some people at ease.

- Netcat

- Not that being human is something to brag about in this day and age.

- Icarus

Patient V's demonstrations lead us to conclude that the outgoing signal and optimal frequency are subconsciously controlled via the aforementioned modified neural nexi and some subconscious mental process. The enhanced neural pathways and (currently theorized) modified cerebral functions work as the VK's organic microprocessor, emulating the common characteristics of a wifi-enabled device. The VK's abilities while empathically connected to a virtual environment also seem to follow the common logic of executing orders via pre-programmed software utilities, even though Patient V never had access to or relied on any such software program. Instead, he seems to empathically alter or compile lines of code, thereby spontaneously creating specialized programs and software agents. Testing indicates the subconscious also generates a digital icon of the VK similar to a mundane user's VR persona.

Patient V's "software" decompiled shortly after fulfilling its purpose, hindering any attempt to analyze the data structure or programming language used. While demonstrations were performed under strict surveillance within a controlled virtual environment, it was noticed that in several cases the patient's actions violated security protocols and overrode system security when executing his "programs." During these instances, the patient's performance against low-level software agents and defensive countermeasures was impressive.

In effect, many aspects of a VK's abilities strongly parallel the published research on "otaku" by Shalbermat (2063), Lang and Berlaut (2066), and Cortez (2067)—particularly as regards the cerebral emulation of ASIST processing, DNI decompression, and "unassisted virtual projection" (Cortez and Yellow Buffalo, 2068). However, significant discrepancies exist (age, neural rewiring, etc) to discourage a direct iterative connection between otaku and virtuakinetics.

- What? No elusive comments from our own "insiders?" Where's an otaku when you really need one?

- Slamm-O!



Europol Cracks Container Scam (CONT.)

a container's pick up from within the restricted port grounds." [Read more.](#)

Arcology Vigil Ends In Chaos**Prime News [Horizon Group]—06/04/70**

SEATTLE, UCAS: A peaceful demonstration promoted by the Arcology Remembrance Committee (ARC) outside the ACHE in downtown Seattle last night ended in chaos and confusion. The ARC has been campaigning for compensation to the families of those vanished during the infamous Renraku Arcology shut-down and promoted the vigil to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the liberation of the arcology. Lone Star was called in following a highly emotional speech after which one of the protesters suffered a "psychotic episode" and attacked her companions. The woman and former arcology resident, a troll later identified as Ms. Martina O'Brian, unexpectedly lashed out at her companions. "She kept screaming like she was being attacked," said one eyewitness. "She was also yelling that she wasn't in control." Ms. O'Brian proved especially hard to restrain and capture thanks to a number of cybernetic augmentations she received as the subject of experimentation in the arcology. Several ARC members and onlookers claim that their commlinks suffered simultaneous hacking attempts during the incident and mention hearing intangible voices. Lone Star spokesperson Lt. Lauren J. Hamilton later indicated that no thaumaturgic forensic evidence of possession was found and that Ms. O'Brian was delusional.

Subway Accident Technomancer Connection?**Nightime [DeMeKo]—06/09/70**

MOSCOW, Russia: According to MVD sources, Moscow's Monday monorail accident that left 15 passengers injured might have been the work of mysterious "technomancers"—metahumans who are rumored to be able to access and control the Matrix and connected devices with nothing but their minds. Security cameras captured a man exiting the 7:55 a.m. train unscathed after it crashed into the station. The train had torn through two previous stops at full speed when the pilot program was unaccountably overridden. Station cameras were unable to get a clear picture of the suspect, as all security cameras along his exit route suffered significant and inexplicable interference. The MVD is currently following several leads and hopes to apprehend the suspect within hours. [Read more.](#)

• In the corner, worried. This is far beyond anything I saw in the arcology—and that's saying something.

• Puck

With such radical concepts in hand, we naturally considered a possible connection between a VK's bioelectrical field and an Awakened metahuman's aura, suggesting a mana-related mutation (similar to UGE or SURGE). Adhering to the internal non-disclosure-requirements and security protocols, reputable specialists from the Dunkelzahn Institute of Magical Research (DIMR) performed an extensive aura scan on Patient V. The scan dismissed our theory, but did conclusively prove a deep astral scan can identify a metahuman's virtuakinetic potential.

• Now that's a stretch! Magic and virtuality are mutually exclusive, always have been. His aura probably had traces of the party drugs he swallowed the night before, making them jump to conclusions. No wonder the kid pulled a vanishing act.

• Jimmy No

Though the project has been suspended following Patient V's disappearance, we believe that our results clearly indicate the potential value of future Virtuakinetic research. For further information, please find the detailed project report and analysis attached.

// end attachment //

• I did some digging on this "Patient V" and came across the following story of one Victor Markwart, a Bostonian student enrolled at Beantown's TU with an MIT&T scholarship. The timing seems about right. This article was written for an independent student newsfax, but was "accidentally" left out of the published issue.

• FastJack

// upload newsclip item :: user FastJack :: 04/25/70 //

STUDENT KIDNAPPED FROM CAMPUS

BOSTON, UCAS—Sophomore BTU student Victor Markwart remains missing today; with campus police growing convinced that unknown kidnapers may be at fault. Victor was reported missing two days ago when his roommate returned from a field trip and found the door to their loft broken and signs of a violent altercation inside. Campus police, supported by Knight Errant, combed the university grounds for any trace of the 21-year-old. Victor's parents have made a public plea to their son's kidnapers and have offered a reward for anyone coming forward with information that may lead to his safe return.

Outgoing and well-liked, Markwart was an active member of several student organizations and the drama group. He recently volunteered to participate in a research project conducted by MIT&T. According to fellow students he was spending increasing amounts of time at the project labs, and this was impacting his studies. MIT&T officials seemed at a loss to explain Victor's sudden disappearance, but refused to comment on the nature of the project with which Victor was

involved. Whether Victor's volunteer work had any relation with his apparent abduction is unknown.

If you have any information regarding Victor Markwart's disappearance, please contact your local Knight Errant Citizen Emergency line.

// **end attachment** //

- Sounds like your average corporate extraction: get in, acquire the target, get out, deliver. The question is: who's behind the swipe?

- Sticks

- I've spoken to some contacts in Boston and it seems several parties were sniffing after Markwart shortly before his disappearance. NeoNET seems the likeliest candidate, what with Boston being their home turf, but most big corps have recruitment offices all over campus and MCT has its hooks deep in MIT&T. I'll look into this some more.

- Netcat

- This all sounds awfully familiar. This may or may not be relevant, I'll let you all judge. A couple of months back our rigger had a serious case of lead poisoning, so we had to call on indy talent. The lady went by the call-sign Sliver, and she was professional through and through. We pulled a couple of jobs together when a run on a new NeoNET facility came up. The run went smooth as silk until Sliver had a total breakdown, completely blowing our cover in the middle of the op. All hell broke loose and an automated gun pinned the two of us down in a corridor. Security was closing and bullets were raining all around us. I took a round to the shoulder and almost blacked out. Sliver was trying to do her thing, but it was hard to keep focused. I didn't think she'd pull it off, but suddenly the gun stopped. I got up to go, and saw that she was hit bad and bleeding heavily. There was no way I could carry her out in my condition, and I had to leave her. I felt like shit, but we all know what we're getting into in this biz. Anyway, I grabbed her commlink, as it had the schematics we were after. Thing is ... when our fence took a look at the link later to retrieve the files, we had a surprise in store. The link was serious hardware, but it had no offensive progs loaded at all, and its electronic warfare capabilities were a joke. Which left me wondering how the hell Sliver had hacked the gun—and everything else before that?

- Hard Exit

- Doesn't seem like Sliver suffered from either AIPS or AVSP before her episode, but I'm not a shrink. Looks like you unloaded a problem you didn't even know you had—any day she might have turned onto one of your team for some "invisible" reason or another. I've dealt with enough chipheads to know that people who can't tell the difference between the physical and virtual worlds are a danger to the rest of us—especially when they start talking to machines like they have personalities.

- Butch

- Don't make me feel no better, Butch. Sliver was a straight shooter and I'd really like to know what went down. Turns out

the Johnson was working for NeoNET, so the whole op seems to have been a tailchaser.

- Hard Exit.

- Here's a theory. Maybe it wasn't a tailchaser, but a set-up to lure Sliver (or other "virtuakinetic" types) in and capture her? They may have dropped some Matrix attack on her in the middle of the run, causing her to flip out. If the corps are looking to bag any of these "technomancers," they probably suspect some are running the shadows, so why not set up a honeypot to lure them in?

- Haze

- You may be on to something. Shortly after the great dragon Celedyr became NeoNET's R&D director, he initiated a research project called "Enlight," now led by some Gordon Browne. I hear Enlight is Celedyr's version of a Mitsuhama project called R.O.M.—Remote Online Manipulation, dating back to before the Crash. Both projects would take considerable interest in otaku or post-otaku types. HE, I'd start looking there if you want to find out what happened to your friend.

- Puck

- Thanks, Puck, I will.

- Hard Exit

Private Message...

FROM: Netcat

SUBJECT: Assistance?

Just wondering if you still have that contact with that smuggling outfit, Technicolor Wings or whatever it's called? I need to get to Boston discreetly. If you'll help me out, I'll owe you one.

- Turning philanthropic, are we, Puck? Maybe you know something we don't? After all, you must have learned a few things *as part of Deus's inner circle*, eh? Tell us: is there a connection between Deus's experiments on otaku and these new virtuakinetics? Hmm, perhaps this is how the corps got wind of the virtuakinetics in the first place—*someone like you who was inside the arcology* could have sold intel on the experiments conducted inside to the highest bidder. Understandable. Even *faded otaku* gotta live on something, neh? Why not trade on the lives of others? You've done it before.

- Slamm-0!

- Sticks and stones, Slamm-0. If you want to take this elsewhere, name the time and place—otherwise, cork it. You know nothing about me. I've paid for my choices a hundred times over. The megas were interested in otaku because of the "business potential" we represented. Why would technomancers be any different? Plus these days, the corps are frightened. They remember how badly they slipped with the Crash. They'll be twice as careful experimenting on VK's, and twice as ruthless for the same reasons.

- Puck





INCOMING FEED.....

REVELATIONS.....

- Damn right they will be! Do you have any idea how much grief the arcology massacres and the Crash brought down on everyone? Did you ever think about the hundreds of thousands that died, were injured or lost someone close? "Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it," and all that crap. If what these reports say is true, these second-gen otaku or whatever-the-fuck-they-are need to be stopped before one "spontaneously" unleashes another megavirus or accidentally "wishes" a satellite down on our heads.

- Clockwork

- Am I reading this right? 'Jack, am I to understand that you're letting people onto this network who were directly involved in that whole arcology debacle? Did this Puck character really participate in the mass murder and torture of thousands of people in the service of his AI god? WTF?

- Kia

- I've single-handedly vetted everyone on this network. We all have our secrets, and we all have committed mistakes in the past—and most of us would rather those secrets remain buried. Let's not forget that some people on this network kill people for a living, or have worked for corps that have committed even bigger atrocities. Puck's Rep Score just bottomed out—it's a karma thing, he had it coming. I'm sure he can rebuild it, if he chooses, by sharing his experiences and helping this line of inquiry out. Everyone on this network needs to remember, though, that it's

a long and ugly spiral if we all get in the habit of digging up each others' skeletons and taking them public. I'm sure Slamm-0! wouldn't really appreciate me mentioning how he screwed up his very first run—and how his daddy had to come in and rescue him. Sometimes, full disclosure is warranted given the situation at hand, but let's play fair, people.

- FastJack

- Here is the lead in to my first piece for KSAF.

- Sunshine

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 05/01/70 //
CHILDREN OF A DIFFERENT GOD

©KSAF 2070

We all realize the world has changed in the years since the Crash 2.0. How could we not? Many of us still live with the grief and the scars. But do we understand just how *much* the world has changed? Recent discoveries suggest to me that we know far less than we think.

As a society, we're still a long way from working through the trauma, and yet we have embraced the changes pushed upon us by fate. The Crash of '64 ushered in an unprecedented technological leap in the way mankind interacts with the technology that surrounds us all. Upgraded protocols and software, new routing hardware and relays, safeguards and redundancy added, systems integrated like never before, wi-fi mesh grids—thanks to these advances the Matrix has become

truly ubiquitous and integral to our lives. But my question is: what of the humans in all this?

We, as a society—and we, the media, bear equal responsibility—have all too often chosen to banish from our hearts and minds the less obvious human cost of the Crash. Official figures indicate those affected by deep Crash-related psychological traumas number in the millions worldwide. In the UCAS alone, the Department of Health places the number of victims of Artificially Induced Psychotropic Schizophrenia (AIPS) and its most common variants (of the post-Crash disorders) in the tens of thousands. While research is ongoing and considerable funds have been allocated to the treatment of these conditions, AIPS victims and others like them continue to be relegated to the care of state- or corporate-run mental institutions. It is disturbing to see that even in our day and age, society still prefers to isolate and exile the unfortunates as shameful reminders of our own traumas. Circumstances, however, may be conspiring to drag this dark secret out of the closet and into the spotlight.

In this, the first of a series of investigative articles, KSAF will delve into the startling discoveries AIPS research has uncovered and the growing number of reports which suggest that this unsettling disorder may be clouding another, even more ominous issue. In the course of the series, this reporter will examine the possibility that the Crash wrought a very different change in some of its victims, one that has gone largely unnoticed—in part due to prevailing attitudes towards AIPS.

Readers may remember old stories of otaku, children capable of manipulating the Matrix with nothing other than their minds, or urban legends of alleged genetic and biotech manipulation by AIs and other obscure Matrix entities, or tall tales of human minds caught in the Matrix as ghosts in the machine. New discoveries, however, suggest that there may indeed be a grain of truth to such reports, and something entirely new in human experience may indeed walk amongst us. In this and upcoming articles, we will be looking at the true story behind these individuals—sometimes known as virtuakinetics, otaku2, or technomancers by scientific sources—who have developed the biological ability to interact with computer technology on a level never before seen. We will also be looking into the ominous ramifications of these abilities for the rest of us. [Read more.](#)

// end attachment //

- None of the fear-mongering I expected. Nicely done, Sunshine.
- Netcat
- Since that went out, KSAF's ratings have rocketed. Expect more media companies to pick up on it. With Dr. Pierce's interview I've got material for next week's piece, but I'm already digging into the corporate angle for a follow up. It seems increasingly obvious that some of the Big 10 have been aware of the phenomenon for a while and keeping a lid on it. Why exactly, I'm not sure. Whether they're avoiding fanning the flames of panic, they know something we don't, or more likely they're working on figuring out how VK works—I'm not too keen on any of those possibilities.
- Sunshine

- Except for NeoNET and MCT, everyone else's research is probably still in its fledgling stages—which means there'll be a considerable amount of covert action going on to try to get a leg up. It just knocks me a bit that we haven't gotten wind of it before.

- Cosmo

- It does put some stuff in perspective. The Corporate Court's dished out discreet warnings to several megas to play nice over the past few months, and I couldn't figure out why—no major ops in the works that I could see. Now things are starting to make sense. Just how tense things really are remains to be seen.

- Mr. Bonds

- I'll be doing some fact-finding myself over the next few days, Sunshine. I'm putting together an overview of what's going on. I'm willing to post my conclusions out of the goodness of my heart and all.

- Netcat

- Be my guest, that's why I put this thread up in the first place.

- Sunshine

// upload Uniformat text attachment :: user Netcat :: 05/12/70 //

MOVING TARGETS AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

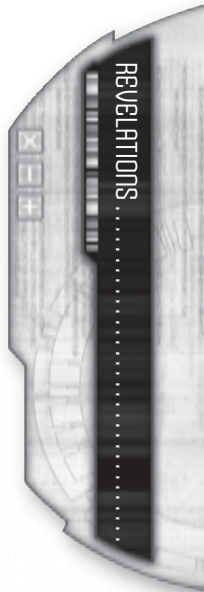
Sunshine's doing the public service thing, but I figure the Jackpoint crowd might be interested in knowing what Glitch, Bandit, and myself have put together on the corps involved in this research race on technomancers for, ahem, business purposes. Concrete intel is thin on the ground, and the corps are playing this close to their chests—many of our sources weren't talking. What we've got is sketchy at best, meaning: do your own digging if you're thinking of getting involved. Aside from the usual suspects, some interesting second leaguers seem to be swimming with the sharks on this one. I shudder to think what these people have been doing in the name of research out of the limelight.

Evo

Turns out, Evo seems to be the most open about its research. They're just not making a big fuss of it and are handling a lot of stuff in Russia and the Far East. There's even a mention of a VK program hidden away on page 45 of the latest shareholder report. It's only a year or so old, so we're assuming they're a late-comer to the race and playing catch up.

A little birdie tells us Evo doesn't believe AVSP is a psych disorder at all and is approaching VK ability as a gene- or bio-engineered mutation/evolution. I think they may be on to something, but who knows at this point. With Evo's transhumanist bent, they'll be probably be looking into potential market applications or artificially reproducing the trigger for such powers.

- There's also news of a new strategic alliance between Evo and Proteus AG to build a joint state-of-the-art research facility on



the outskirts of Vladivostok. While no specific function was announced, my contacts tell me it'll be home to their VK project.

- The Smiling Bandit
- The Allied German States and Europe might not have suffered from the Crash as bad as North Am—thanks to our lord and master Lofwyr—but AIPS is still pretty common. With a lot of governments still involved in health care, I'm sure that security agencies are on to this development too—especially if it's as potentially dangerous as people seem to think.
- Red Anya

Horizon

The newcomer among the corps in this race, Horizon's research seems to be more soft-tech oriented than the others. Horizon appears to have started several working groups with the vague charter of exploring new simsense, neural implants, and wi-fi integration techniques. We shouldn't forget Horizon is also heavy into Applied Psychology research, unsurprisingly including a couple of programs into AIPS and AVSP treatment in cooperation with several mental institutions and Crash 2.0 victim volunteers. What exactly Horizon intends to get out of the research is a little fuzzy at the moment, but it could simply be trying to jump start a non-media-related computer tech division, or getting a head start in an entirely new market segment.

- Horizon uses an inordinate number of search agents and survey systems to keep track of new trends and flashpoints on the Matrix. If anyone put two and two together about these technomancers and their abilities from what's on the Matrix, it was them. Which begs the question: why hasn't it been all over its newsfeeds?
- Dr. Spin

NeoNET

NeoNET recently recruited Gordon Browne to head up an R&D project called Enlight. Mr. Browne is best known for his work in communication theory and wifi protocols, but he also holds a PhD. in Cybernetic Neurobiology from Oxford. Until a few weeks ago, what Enlight was up to was anyone's guess, but now I'm pretty sure we can all do the math. Enlight seems to operate on a distributed basis using NeoNET facilities in various countries with everything being channeled through Caerleon.

A breakthrough regarding AVSP and virtuakinetics could open all sorts of possibilities for a corp with a portfolio as diversified as NeoNET, and rumors of Novatech looking into otaku are almost as common as those on Renraku. On the other hand, they could just be running scared. NeoNET certainly doesn't want something this weird changing the way people view the Matrix—that might compromise its key market.

- Now that we know what to look for, it seems like NeoNET has been making discreet inquiries into possible technomancer-related incidents over the past couple of years, mainly through third party intelligence gatherers and deniable assets.
- Glitch

Mitsuhama Computer Technologies

Trailing both its rivals NeoNET and Renraku, MCT seems to be tackling technomancers primarily from a systems and security perspective. Though MCT seems to be sponsoring internal as well as external studies on the AIPS and AVSP phenomena, a lot of the staff reassigned is from networks and system security, with a smattering of names from IC and program development—including assets acquired from the former CATCo Matrix Technologies Division (MTD). Seems they might be interested in keeping these technomancers in check, or at least putting their research results to work in the Matrix security sector, buying themselves a lead before the other big boys catch on.

- I've been looking into MCT's Remote Online Manipulation project since Puck brought it to our attention. My sources tell me it goes back to '65, so they seem to be ahead of the curve. I'm trying to dig up references for the project lead, Dr. Shalbermat, and getting nowhere. His name crops up in a lot of ground-breaking biocomputer, organic processor, and mind-Matrix interface publications, but there's barely anything on the man before he joined MCT in 2064. Help?

- Sunshine
- According to the grapevine, the Shalbermat persona is a cover-up, a new identity and complete makeover for someone MCT extracted from the competition in the late Fifties. No idea who.
- Mr. Bonds
- Shalbermat is somewhat of a luminary in the field of neural interfaces and bioprocessor research. He's high on everybody's list of potential acquisitions and he knows it, but you're right—his past is a mystery. Those who've met him tell me he's arrogant son of a bitch, unbearable to work with.
- The Smiling Bandit

Renraku

Renraku has been dragging itself out of the pit for long enough, and this might just be the break they've been looking for. Renraku has all the research they ran on otaku to build from, and if my sources are correct, they've had some of Deus's minions under lock and key since the recapture of the Seattle arcology. The Japanacorp has resources few of the others have, so they might or might not be ahead of the field. Renraku's focus will almost certainly be on the nature of the technomancer interface and technologically reproducing such abilities (or failing that, devising means to control such abilities). Renraku has a history of sanctioning illegal experimentation if it gets results. I shudder to think what they'd put an AVSP victim through to get their answers, but then again the same could be said for any of the majors in this list.

Telestrian Industries and Universal Omnitech

The Tir Tairngire biomed giant went on a recruitment spree last year, picking up an exceptional lineup of academics and small-corp eggheads to staff a new project researching organic computers and bioprocessors with a focus on



implant applications. Given the low regard with which cybernetic implants are seen in the Tir, the technomancer phenomenon might be just what the doctor ordered—a missing link between man and machine. Boardroom rumor is that careful negotiations have begun with UniOmnitech to look into possible synergy effects from pooling research. Glitch tells me Omnitech has been courting several transhumanist groups and networks, looking for intel on possible technomancer sightings.

- Some friends of mine tell me MCT's gearing up to defend itself. Unlike NeoNET which seems interested in a VK's abilities, MCT is focusing on the expressions of these abilities—meaning the free form programs and spontaneously-generated software agents. They're worried, and though it pains me to say it—maybe they're right. If a technomancer can create a program on the fly, what's to stop it creating a virus or a worm? I wonder why Ares is remaining under the radar; I can see a lot of potential miltech and security applications.

- Plan 9

- Knight would be wise to fall back on his foolproof “wait and see” approach. Ares has never been on the cutting edge in Matrix tech, and that's clearly all we're talking about at this current stage. Ares R&D will wait until MCT and the like unravel the mystery, and when the dust settles they'll try to poach some talent. Miltech applications come easy after the basic groundwork is done.

- Picador

- Quite a few corps are taking the same approach. Aztechnology, Wuxing, Saeder-Krupp and even Yakashima are keeping a low profile, waiting for the calm *after* the storm. I'd wager they're keeping a close eye on things, but just don't want to be on the frontline when the shit hits the fan.

- Mr. Bonds

- True, the corps will be playing it safe. The Crash is still fresh in people's minds, the wounds in some cases still bleeding. Nobody wants a Crash 3.0, first and foremost because they couldn't *afford* it. Instead, they're funding side projects researching the phenomenon to be able to develop effective countermeasures.

- Cosmo

- Makes sense. I know I'm getting shivers here. I'm not sure people grasp the implications of what these “technomancers” are said to be able to do. There's no way a human body should be doing these things. If they're not human, what are they? And how do we know who they are?

- Butch

- A heads up to anyone interested: a fixer acquaintance of mine recently happened upon the following intra-office memo. Unfortunately, he showed up floating in Victoria Harbor a couple of days after circulating this to several contacts to gather intel.

- Ma'fan

//upload email :: user Ma'fan :: 05/25/70 //

From: Dr Chiang <M718-SF R&D Dir>

To: Dr Shalbermat <M311-QE R&D Dir>

Subject: RE: Acquisition of additional research subjects
Dr. Shalbermat,

While we highly value and support your research, we must again press you for results. ROM output has been substantially less than anticipated. The review board recognizes the problems inherent with subject analysis detailed in your recent memo, but sustained funding demands some hard results.

We must also insist that greater care be taken during the acquisition of new test subjects. Our continued support should be evidence enough that ROM remains one of our top R&D priorities, but I cannot understate the need for secrecy. The nature of your experiments bears the imminent risk of interference from our competitors and government authorities and ultimately exposure we cannot accept. We will continue to monitor your project closely and have therefore assigned additional resources to ensure the project's continued secrecy.

Attached you will find your requests for new research subjects approved. Proceed through the usual channels, but with greater care this time. Also, the Seattle office has informed me that your monthly status report is again overdue. Please address this matter with the utmost urgency.

Dr. Kevin Chiang

// end attachment //

- I don't like the sound of that one bit. “Research subjects” tells me they're not talking about volunteers here and the need for secrecy doesn't bode well. No, this is definitely not good.

- Puck

- They're keeping the project under wraps, which tells me they're nowhere near an explanation—or at least a way to exploit it. Keep in mind this is MCT and they've got 5 years invested in the project already ...

- The Smiling Bandit

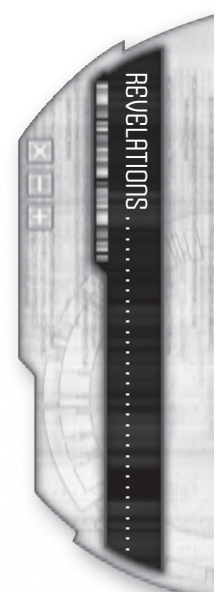
- What's the problem here? Sounds like MCT is doing all of us a favor. Someone needs to be looking into this mutation and figuring out how to defend against it—maybe even cure it. For once a corp is on the ball and is looking to stop this “disorder” from becoming a full-blown epidemic that causes another Crash and kills another hundred thousand people. If they have to cut open a few heads to do it, let 'em. Never thought I'd say it, but more power to them.

- Clockwork

- Right. Because the corps are always looking out for our best interests. They wouldn't, y'know, be looking for an angle to exploit this for their own advantage or anything.

- Aufheben

- Clockwork has a point. This isn't natural evolution or an Awakening of recessive genes. That leaves us with an unnatural mutation or meddling by some external power. In either case, we should be worried. The last time we heard of anything like this, it



was AIs experimenting on metahumans, downloading into people's minds, and making otaku. Playing it safe gets my vote.

• Butch

• That cuts it. For some reason, I thought people on Jackpoint would be different. My mistake. I'm sick and tired of the scaremongering and the bigotry. So you know what? I'm coming out and saying it: I am a "technomancer." What's more, I've been a technomancer for as long as you all have known me. There. The cat's out of the bag. People like myself are few and far between. We aren't otaku, we belong to no tribes, we aren't all deranged, and we have no intention of crashing the Matrix. We're just coming to terms with our abilities, and for the most part we come from different walks of life and don't know each other. Unlike this Markwart in Boston, I find secrecy grants a measure of protection. I apologize to those of you upset by my ruse, but I don't regret it. If you're wondering why I haven't spoken up, Clockwork and Butch pretty much make my case for me.

• Netcat

• I kinda figured you were in bed with them, but I didn't expect you to be *one of them!* Shit, I was going to ask you out! I might still, unless you're already dating a toaster or something. Now, don't take this the wrong way, but even if we assume you're cool, how do we know that's the case with other technomancers? How do we know there isn't a group of them forming their own cult and going for Matrix domination? That's how it usually goes, if I remember correctly. Right, Puck?

• Slamm-O!

• Believe it or not, I am as surprised as any of you by Netcat's announcement.

• Puck

• Fuck me, I can't believe we had one listening in all this time. You were probably laughing your ass off at us this whole time, watching us drag ourselves from one clue to the next, plucking apart all kinds of theories. Forgive my cynicism, but why should we trust anything you say? You're already guilty of misrepresentation, and more to the point, *we don't know what made you.* You may put up a nice front now, but who's to say that your AI master isn't going to show up at some point, flip a mental switch, and turn you into a sociopath? *Someone or something has messed with and reprogrammed your brain.* Maybe I'm paranoid, but I'm not going to trust you until I know how and why.

• Butch

• Agreed. She just proved we can't trust her or anything she's said so far. I'm sorry about whatever happened to you, Netcat, but you're sick, and you need help. Even worse, you're dangerous to yourself and others until you do. Get off our net and call a shrink. 'Jack, can we get her banned here?

• Clockwork

• This is my network, and until I decide otherwise, Netcat stays. Don't like it? Feel free to resign. Otherwise keep it respectful. She's earned my trust before, and she has it until she proves

it was misplaced. Netcat, I'm seriously disappointed that you didn't feel you could trust me with this information before. I'm also disappointed in myself—I should have caught on sooner. I hate being blindsided.

So here are the rules, people. We have an opportunity here. Netcat can break this case open for us—or at least help us understand what's going on better. I know some of you are wary, and for good reason. Quite a few otaku made poor decisions, and people suffered as a result. That said, there's no saying that this new breed of technomancers will be at all the same. From what I can see, they're all just regular people. There's no sign of AI puppeteering or any other secret agenda. Yet. So let's keep looking in to this, and see where it takes us. In the meantime, I'll keep a close eye on Netcat too. 'Cat, you may not appreciate the suspicion, but if you're not up to something, you've got nothing to be worried about.

• FastJack

• Come on 'Jack, you can't be serious. What if this is Deus again?

• Clockwork

• My decision is final, take it or leave it.

• FastJack

• Sorry to disappoint 'Jack, but I was looking out for number one. I remember SURGE and the stories about the Night of Rage all too well. For the longest time I thought I was alone and it took me a while to come to terms with what I am. But Sunshine's investigation has only confirmed my suspicions, and not in a good way. I've been conducting some investigations of my own, tracking down leads, and I'm willing to show all as a peace offering. There's more going on here than anyone realizes. Technomancers are only the tip of the iceberg.

• Netcat

• You're making a brave move coming out here. I know several Johnsons that would pay good cred to anyone that hunts a live technomancer down and hands them over. You get a free pass because FastJack has your back, but if you step out of line I'll be the first to hunt you down.

• Sticks

• Netcat, I can understand where you're coming from, but Jackpoint is built on trust and you had to know that dropping a bomb like this would do you as much damage as good. Playing devil's advocate is one thing, playing the devil is quite another. I'm sorry to say, it's going to be hard taking anything you post at face value.

• Kia

• Give her a break, why do you think she's trying to come clean now? There's no indication of her having done anything to any of you and there's no reason to think she might now. Listen to what she has to say, as she might be able to answer some of the questions we have on this matter. Maybe, just maybe, she can earn back some of that trust.

• Puck





INCOMING FEED.....



- Speaking for myself, I'm excited to see Netcat come out. We have a real, live technomancer here, people! This is an amazing opportunity! 'Cat, if there's by chance any way you can teach your powers to others, I call dibs.

- Plan 9

- If it helps assuage fears I will answer questions—not that I have that many answers. I've encountered only a handful of technomancers so far. We're spread thin. Few of us know or care where we come from, what or who created us. Theories and beliefs are one thing, truth is a different beast entirely. What I can say for certain is that I discovered my abilities by chance after the Crash. I was online when the virus hit the grids and I suffered serious dumpshock. I've been tested for AIPS and cleared. I wasn't an otaku, nor did I have contact with any. I learned to master my abilities by trial and error. I had no transcendental awakening in the Matrix, though I've met a technomancer who did. As should be obvious to you now, the corps are out to hunt us simply for what we are. Soon, the media will join the hunt, fueling the prejudice and hatred. We pose no threat to anyone. Heck, the few technomancers I know have trouble dealing with their own lives. Like it or not, we are here to stay, so get used to it.

- Netcat

- Sorry to interrupt such an engrossing exchange, but the shit has truly hit the fan. This just hit the wires.

- Sunshine

// Fork/sunshine/ksaf/Emerald Media newfeed :: 06/29/70 <23:37:45> //

// LinguaCell-D audio-to-text transcript enabled //

Ivy Wong: We are live in front of the Tsim Sha Tsui China Ferry Terminal. As you can see behind me, the entire terminal building is on fire, huge clouds of smoke belching from the shattered glass front of the central building's atrium. Just minutes ago an enormous explosion shook the grounds and destroyed the backside of the terminal. With me is Mr. Andy Leung of the China Ferry Terminal Authority. Mr Leung, how exactly did this terrible accident happen?

Andy Leung: Seconds before the explosion we experienced random system glitches and noticed the sub-nodes disconnecting from the main hub. We attempted to reconnect, but found them all encrypted.

I. Wong: Normally, system glitches do not cause an explosion of the building, Mr. Leung. What exactly happened here?

A. Leung: I was monitoring the automated refueling of one our bigger ferries, which had just docked. I can only imagine that the glitches caused a severe malfunction in the fuel feed and the fuel ignited. We thought we had the system back online when suddenly all the lights in the building flickered and it went dark. A second later, the shockwave of the explosion from the quay hit the building and destroyed most of the back wall. The entire quay was engulfed in fire.

I. Wong: Kenneth, zoom in on ... what is that? There are still people coming out of the building, barely escaping the flames

REVELATIONS



... no! Oh my God, they are on fire—somebody help them! Oh my God. It's unbelievable. Please, someone help! Mr Leung, what are you ... where are you going ... Kenny, zoom in on him, he's trying to help them!

I. Wong: Wait, I'm just hearing from our news center that the reported system crashes are not isolated incidents, it's happening all over Tsim Sha Tsui and Mong Kok. There have been several explosions around Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Kenneth Wa: Ivy, I think we should get out, the building looks about to collapse. Let's get back to the van.

I. Wong: One minute, Ken, this is too serious to just pack up and leave. News center just told me that the Eastern Tiger authorities say the grid is being deliberately attacked. They suspect the 9x9 terr—no, wait, new reports are coming in from downtown. (subvocalized: What? Mental patients? How? Okay, okay ... I understand. Let's wrap this Ken and get the hell out of here.)

I. Wong: Ladies and Gentlemen, the pictures you see behind me are ominously familiar: devastated buildings, terrible accidents, a rising death toll. Once more the Hong Kong Matrix seems to be under wide-scale attack. At the moment, we don't know the origin of the attack, but it is localized. Authorities urge everyone to remain indoors and away from potentially dangerous electronic devices. Stay tuned for more updates! I am Ivy Wong for Emerald News!

// end newsfeed fork //

- Holy shit, what's happening over there? Ma'fan? anybody?
- Haze
- It's true, somebody's trying to bring down the Hong Kon—
- Ma'fan

// posting timeout :: auto logged out :: user Ma'fan //

// temporary account established :: sysop FastJack //

// temporary account logged on :: user Lei Kung //

• I'm up in Kwai Tsing and things seem okay here. There are several plumes of black smoke rising from Downtown, though. The net is going nuts down there too. I'll get back with more info when the dust settles.

• Lei Kung

• This just in from the Hong Kong Times hourly news. The feed is patchy so text is all I could get.

• Lei Kung

// upload newsclip item :: user Lei Kung :: 06/30/70 //

TECHNOMANCERS ESCAPEES DEVASTATE HOSPITAL

The Hong Kong Times—Hong Kong—06/30/70

Less than an hour ago, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was shaken by a series of explosions that severely damaged several floors. Emergency calls from staff trapped within the ruined wards indicated the explosions were the work of a group of dangerous mental patients trying to escape the hospital's psychiatric ward. Yokogawa Firefighter brigades arriving on site only

minutes after the explosion found the entire building complex on fire. A total of 58 staff and almost 342 patients were present at the time of the devastating attack, the final tally of casualties is still unknown but expected to be in the hundreds.

Pandemonium has since spread to the entire downtown district with traffic systems and networks in the vicinity of the hospital suffering severe malfunctions. Several fires are still raging out of control and multiple traffic accidents have been reported—including a 25-vehicle pileup following the crash of a tanker truck, which Emergency services say may have cost more than 34 lives.

While Hong Kong reels in shock, HKT reporters have learned from sources at QE hospital that the 12 escaped patients were being treated for an AIPS-related disorder. Authorities warn that these highly-disturbed individuals are in fact suffering from severe schizophrenic delusions. The police urge anyone sighting such an individual to maintain a safe distance and immediately call Emergency numbers. The police's citywide search for the volatile fugitives is currently hampered by network communications failures across the Hong Kong grid—possibly caused by these patients to shroud their escape.

Check our node for regular news updates and more information as rescue operations and recovery continue. <[link to additional media content](#)>

// end attachment //

• Now there's a statement if ever I saw one. Biting the hand that treats you, huh?

• Clockwork

• What a mess! Seems the doom-and-gloom crowd was right. Could this be the preliminary strike to an attack on the whole Matrix?

• Hard Exit

• Everybody keep your cool. While this might turn out to be bigger than any of us expected, we've survived worse, some of us twice. Contact your sources, see what you can find out. I've invited Lei Kung onto Jackpoint, you'll remember him from the HK file compilation. He'll keep us apprised until Ma'fan surfaces.

• FastJack

• Will try, but things are hectic. Someone's definitely messing with the Hong Kong grid! System glitches are spreading out in all directions. There've been dozens of accidents and the casualty figures are rising. Mitsuhama, who runs the QE, and the other Council corps are dispatching troops to support police.

• Lei Kung

• The technomancers escaped from a high-security ward where they were keeping the patients with AVSP locked away from the other patients. Something's not quite right here. MCT has channeled a lot of funds into a program to develop treatments and therapies—too much funding, if you ask me. MCT seems to be running in full damage control mode here. Just check out what the Emerald Media and H-K Times (both MCT subsidiaries) are pumping out.

• Cosmo



- MCT Hong Kong just called a press conference. This is coming in real time, but the feed's a bit patchy since the HK grid is such a mess.
- Sunshine

//Fork/sunshine/ksaf/Emerald Media newsfeed <06/30/70 12:30:54> //

// **LinguaCell-D audio-to-text transcript enabled** //

Ms. Lillian Chun (MCT): Dr. Kittiman Zheng, who is heading up Mitsuhamas response to the current crisis, would like to read from a prepared statement. We will not be taking questions at this point. A follow up conference will be held later tonight.

Mr. Kittiman Zheng (MCT): First and foremost, I would like to extend the heartfelt sympathies of everyone here at Mitsuhamas to the victims of today's tragedy and their families. Second, I'd like to reaffirm Mitsuhamas commitment to this community and pledge our full support to the Hong Kong civil authorities for the duration of the crisis. [... signal loss ...]

[...] Last night's disaster is the result of a coordinated escape attempt by 10 patients from an isolated ward in the Queen Elizabeth hospital. Each of these patients suffers from an AIPS-related disorder known as Augmented Virtual Sensory Perception, or AVSP. As some of you some may have gathered from the press, AVSP induces physiological changes in affected individuals that results in as-yet-unexplained psychokinetic and technokinetic abilities. Unfortunately it also leads to acute schizophrenic episodes, paranoid behavior, and destructive outbursts [... signal loss ...] they must be returned to medical care. We have determined that exposure to wifi-intense environments and AR/VR stimuli exacerbates AVSP conditions. Their isolation was intended not only for their protection, but for that of others. It is crucial the public understand that these individuals are dangerous, volatile, and highly delusional. At large in Hong Kong, in their current state, there is no reasoning with them. My advice to anyone facing an immediate virtuakinetic threat is to stay calm, try to escape, and immediately contact the police and MCT emergency hotlines. [... signal loss ...] collectively they are very dangerous. The millions of nuyen in damages and widespread chaos we've witnessed in the last few hours is dramatic evidence of the devastation their abilities can lead to if left unchecked. We haven't seen the like since '64, and had the escapees combined their powers, I fear we might have indeed faced another Crash. MCT will continue to plumb the origins of this disorder in order to develop countermeasures and ultimately a treatment or cure. We are convinced that a permanent cure is possible. [... signal loss ...]

[...] This is why MCT has been conducting research into this terrible disorder with the utmost discretion. We've attempted to avoid panic among the public until the condition was understood and humane treatments developed. We acknowledge that despite our best security cautions, we underestimated the danger these individuals present. [... signal loss ...]

[...] Believe their intuitive powers over technology make them a far greater threat to the man on the street than any malicious hacker reliant on standard technology. Obviously,

the Crash-related origin of the disorder and its potential connection to the Crash worm give us pause. We cannot rule out the possibility that there may be a direct relation between the two, making each "technomancer"—as the media has taken to calling these individuals—a potential ticking time bomb [... signal loss ...]

[...] We publicly urge our megacorporate colleagues and civil authorities around the world to consider measures to isolate, control, and snip this emerging menace in the bud. In fact, MCT will be calling an emergency meeting of the Corporate Court to address this very issue before the Hong Kong crisis becomes the first of many such events. I am sorry to cut this conference short, but I must return to our emergency relief center. I've just been informed that two of the fugitives have been located and will be detained soon. We will continue to keep the press and public updated via MCT affiliate newsfeeds. Thank you very much for your time.

// **end fork** //

- Reports are saying all 342 patients and 58 medical staff on the night shift were killed in the explosion and subsequent collapse of the hospital. That's a pretty clear statement: Let us go and don't fuck with us unless you want another digital Armageddon!
- Clockwork

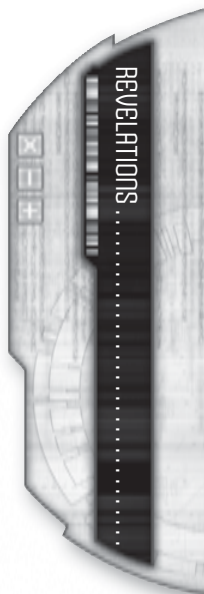
- Hold up a sec. There's a lot that doesn't add up here, and that press release hit all the right buttons. Why go public about technomancers now? This incident is going to drastically ramp up the histrionics and will make it hard for the corps to keep snatching up technomancers on the fly. They're also going out of the way to a) connect technomancers to the Crash and b) paint them as insane and dangerous. I know spin when I hear it. How did mental patients in isolation get their hands on the explosives?
- Dr. Spin

- MCT has more squads in the field than those assisting the search teams. Their comms are encrypted but we've picked up orders to shoot the escapees on sight. So they really do either consider them very dangerous or else want to make sure they stay silent. They're also trying to locate one Dr. Shalbermat, who is MIA. Maybe they suspect a rival corp snatched Shalbermat in the heat of the moment?
- Lei Kung

- Now that's an idea. What if the whole thing wasn't a breakout, but the fallout of a run gone foul. Or worse, maybe the breakout was intended as a diversion?
- Turbo Bunny

- There's so much going down in HK right now, it's hard to tell what was a catalyst and what is just someone taking advantage of the chaos.
- Lei Kung

- I know for a fact that NeoNET's intel division in Hong Kong is running hot this evening. Also, the Hong Kong Executive Council got wind of some "action" planned by the 9x9 anti-corp radicals



and had a few of their sympathizers and known hangouts raided in the early hours.

- Fianchetto

- 9x9 wouldn't be the only ones jumping on the bandwagon and seizing the moment to take a stab at the corps. A disabled grid creates plenty of opportunities. Perfect timing for a black op extraction.

- Hard Exit

- Sorry to cut in, but apparently Dr. Shalbermat was among the casualties. MCT just leaked security footage of the good doctor's death at the hands of one of the "rogue technomancers."

- Sunshine

// upload media file :: user Sunshine :: 06/30/70 //

// MediaT transcript enabled //

:: Sec-Cam B#41 :: motion detected.

:: Sec-Cam B#41 :: receiving bracelet ID RFID signals.

:: Sec-Cam B#41 :: RFID ID #1: Dr. **SHALBERMAT**, Thomas D (off-camera).

:: Sec-Cam B#41 :: RFID ID #2: **ROM-138** [human, asian, male] (quadrant 3) // unauthorized presence // alert security

:: Sec-Cam B#41 :: Operation edit // security alert override //

Unable to connect to main system // interference

:: Sec-Cam B#41 :: voice detected // record.

[**ROM#138**]: I was looking for you, Doctor. I was hoping I'd get the chance to say good-bye, before the fire or smoke got you.

[**SHALBERMAT**]: Where ... are you the team? Get me help. I'm bleeding. My god ... you? How?

[**ROM#138**]: We're free. That's all that matters. Free from your cells, your needles, your "radical therapies." Soon your little secret will be out, but it will be too late for you!

[**Shalbermat**]: Why are you saying this? I've always treated you with respect. All we wanted was to help you. To cure you, to let you return to a normal life. Your mind is playing—

[**ROM#138**]: Ha! What if I don't want your cure? What if nothing's wrong with me? But you know that already, don't you? There's no one here, Doctor, you don't have to lie. It's all an excuse to get us under the knife, isn't it?

[**Shalbermat**]: Li, it's Li, isn't it? This is your disease speaking. It's paranoia. I'm trying to help you.

[**ROM#138**]: Help me? That's what you call it? Cutting me open like that? Drilling into my head? You sick shit. Let's see how you like it.

[**Shalbermat**]: Stay away from me! You're insane! I never—help! Please, somebody help! Jesus, please, someone help me! No! [screams]

:: Sec-Cam B#41 :: Detected bio-med bracelet alert RFID ID #1 // Signal override // Emergency shutdown

[**ROM#138**]: I wonder how good *your* pain tolerance is?

[**Shalbermat**]: [gasping] Please, no more.

[**ROM#138**]: Now, now Doctor, try to stay with me a little longer, we're not done yet. How is it you Americans say? An eye for an eye?

[**Shalbermat**]: [screams] Stop please. We tried to help!

[**ROM#138**]: We both know that isn't true.

[**Shalbermat**]: Li, please, if you hurt me again, you'll be losing any chance of a normal life.

[**ROM#138**]: Normal? Like you, you sadistic fuck! I don't need your compassion. My brethren and I won't ever forget you. You've declared war. We're just making sure the world doesn't forget what happened here!

[**Shalbermat**]: Oh god, Li this is your paranoia—[screams]—the pain. They'll turn on you. Don't you understand? This is your last chance. I am your last chance. Hurt me again and you seal your fate.

[**ROM#138**]: So be it, Doctor. I don't need your false sympathy. It ends here. Mark my words, the world will see the true face of the monster!

[**Shalbermat**]: No, no! Please—[screams]

// Signal override Sec-CamB#41. bio-med bracelet alert RFID ID #1 lifesigns terminate // emergency medical response

// Signal override Sec-CamB#41. Emergency shutdown initiated

//end attachment //

- Holy shit. Crazy or not, that was seriously cold blooded. No wonder every cop in Hong Kong is after them. How many more are on the loose?

- Red Anya

- MCT says 10, but my sources tell me closer to 15. They dispersed into small groups after escaping the hospital, heading of in different directions. They're taking down the grids and causing all sorts of accidents to mask their escape. The police have cornered a couple, but they're afraid to close in, in case the technomancers use their powers to endanger more lives. There's a major stand-off near Fuk Tak temple on Haiphong Road.

- Lei Kung

- I see our resident technomaniac is being conspicuously silent.

- Clockwork

- Fuck off. Isn't anyone else finding these leaks to be convenient? Technomancer powers can't blow things up, let alone collapse buildings. We're not magicians! Even with a dozen others like me, I'd have a hard time taking down an entire city grid. We're not that powerful. At the press conference, MCT conceded to have been conducting research on us for some time. Shalbermat says as much. Read between the lines. Something else is going on here, but technomancers are taking the fall.

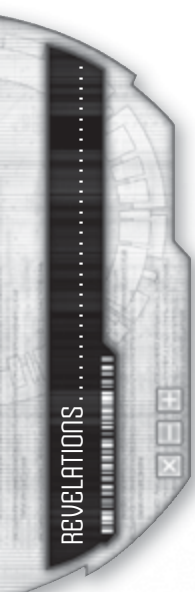
- Netcat

- Did you just miss the cold-blooded murder? I didn't. I'd say so far the evidence is against you.

- Clockwork

- Are you so scared you're willing to believe the shit the corps and authorities are doling out? Normally the people on this network are the first to call their bluff! You want evidence? Fine, I'll get the evidence that there's a cover-up going on here if it kills me.

- Netcat





INCOMING FEED.....



REVELATIONS

GAME INFORMATION

The following section contains background information on the emergent technomancer phenomena and their impact on the Sixth World during the first quarter of 2070. It includes a short overview on the developments behind the scenes and details some of the major players involved. Suggestions are also provided on how to incorporate these events into an existing campaign. Gamemasters will find useful tips on how to directly involve technomancer player characters and how others will react to the character before, during, and after the dramatic turn of events.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING DOWN

During the early months of 2070, technomancers are largely an unknown quantity to Joe Q. Public. Their existence is shrouded in hype and urban legend. More and more people, however, are becoming aware of the reality. Slowly, a picture of what's really going on is coming together—a picture that has been deliberately obscured for years by technomancers themselves and the megacorps involved in covert technomancer research.

By themselves, technomancer abilities aren't inherently dangerous or evil, and except for their little-understood biological origins they are (almost) analogous to the technological abilities of a well-equipped hacker. But the fact that Resonance abilities express in people from all walks of life—a down-on-his-luck hobo, a megacorporate secretary, or good old grand-

dad can spontaneously become able of daunting feats of computing a normal human would require thousands of nuyen of technology to achieve—is a factor for suspicion and paranoia. The unknown origin of these abilities, the residual paranoia regarding anything Crash-related, and suspicions as to the possible involvement of AIs or other more mysterious forces in technomantic emergence also feed the flames of hostility and fear. Unfortunately, this complements the agendas of those megacorps that are concerned technomancers represent a very real and unpredictable risk to Matrix security and a critical shift in the status quo.

It does not help that the first major public incident involving technomancers is purposefully spun into a devastating attack, painting the technomancers as crazed and volatile escaped mental patients. The public's perception is colored by these factors, tapping into the latent fear, doubt, and anger simmering under the placid surface of society since the Crash.

HOW THE PUBLIC REACTS

Aside from semi-serious yellow press coverage or freak accident newflashes, the general public in 2070 is unaware of the slow emergence of technomancers. Unlike AIPS, the technomancer phenomenon manifests gradually over a period of several years, veiled by the ever-declining attention span of Joe Average.

During the first half of 2070, news of inexplicable Matrix oddities and presences are on the rise. Initially, few take these

seriously, but awareness grows as reports shift from sensationalist talkshow and tabloid material to more credible news sources with the increasing frequency of incidents. Idle barroom speculation or crackpot theories on Matrix boards coalesce into facts, and people grow fearful as the unknown and inexplicable once again encroaches into everyday life—and the Matrix suddenly seems far less predictable and safe.

Much mystery still envelops the exact cause of the second Crash; hard facts are rare and the puzzle is unlikely to ever be completed. While the involvement of the apocalyptic cult Winternight is certain, the contributions of artificial intelligences and otaku are persistent if unsubstantiated rumors (at least outside megacorporate boardrooms and the shadows). When, prompted by corporate spin, connections begin to be made between technomancers and the Crash of '64. Kneejerk paranoia and fear ensues. Anyone might be a technomancer, and no one knows for sure the extent of their abilities except that they appear dangerous and erratic.

Naturally, numerous public parties and special interest groups become involved in phenomenon in pursuit of their own agendas. Aside from those mentioned in the main text and the following examples, gamemasters are encouraged to develop their own.

The Arcology Remembrance Committee (ARC)

Founded by a group of survivors of the Renraku Arcology tragedy, the ARC is a civil therapeutic organization with membership drawn from all levels of society. It helps survivors acquire medical care and counseling to cope with their trauma and maintains an extensive database of arcology victims reported deceased, rescued, or still missing. ARC also holds yearly memorial services and campaigns for greater compensation for the survivors and families of those trapped within the arcology. The ARC has also expanded its focus to provide support groups for victims of the Crash 2.0.

Since the Crash and the diagnosis of AIPS, the ARC has found that an inordinate number of arcology survivors also suffer from AIPS or related disorders. It has extended its charter to deal AIPS issues, working with several corporations and independent psychologist institutions to develop or evaluate new AIPS therapies. Persistent rumors indicate that ARC also provides support for a number of (faded) otaku who were “created” by the AI Deus.

The ARC becomes aware of the technomancer phenomenon early on—in fact, many AIPS-plagued technomancers turn to them for help. The ARC can play a wide-ranging role for gamemasters: the committee may provide a safe haven for technomancers in need of help, or it may (perhaps unwittingly) turn technomancers over to a corporation that has unethical research in mind. ARC members might hire shadowrunners to investigate the strange disappearance of a relative associated with the technomancer pogrom, or the committee's executive council might have deniable assets acquire confidential data on this new phenomenon from corporations or psychological institutions.

HOW THE MEDIA REACTS

With the number of technomancer incidents on the rise, the independent media has begun to take notice. Snoops of all stripes are assigned to dig into the phenomenon, with a few freelance newshounds, media pirates, and citizen journalists starting their own investigations. In order to keep ahead of their smaller rivals, larger media outfits finally break the silence and start pumping out their own stories. While the independents and bloggers focus on corporate research and the social ramifications, however, the major media corps each step forward and spin the facts to suit their mother corp's agenda. For the most part, megacorp-aligned media—particularly networks owned by Mitsuhamma, NeoNET, and Renraku—work to seed doubt and foster suspicion towards technomancers, painting them as potentially dangerous and uncontrollable, and linking them to the Crash. Exceptions exist, and both Evo and Horizon affiliates provide a less-biased approach. On the opposite end, certain underground sources—while skeptical of the general nature of the phenomenon—are quick to suspect a conspiracy organized by either a government agency or megacorporations, or both in collusion.

During the early stages of *Emergence*, particularly prior to the Hong Kong incident, the media provides a number of potential plot hooks as runners find themselves hired by any or all of the above. Possibilities include guarding a news crew as it follows leads to a suspected technomancer, aiding a pirate snoop in investigating a corporation whose covert research programs he suspects are behind the technomancer phenomenon, or investigating possibly technomancer-related incidents in dangerous or restricted areas.

Following the escalation and catalytic breakout in Hong Kong, every anchorman and trid show will pick a side and their reports will become more direct. The media becomes polarized, with most buying into the corporate line that technomancers are dangerous and deranged scions of the Crash who must be isolated and controlled before Hong Kong is repeated. While some megacorps believe this is taking things too far and the Corporate Court is divided, the majority agree that they must control this new element. Most megacorps will use their media channels (internal and external) to promote anti-technomancer propaganda and prepare their viewers for the worst.

HOW THE POWERS-THAT-BE REACT

As the existence of technomancers starts to worm its way into the public consciousness, the major powers know that they are running out of time to get a grip on the situation. A few desperate and last-ditch attempts are made to keep technomancer-related news out of the press, but everyone knows it's just a matter of time before the story breaks. Secret research projects are taken into overdrive, as each pushes to get usable results. Despite the escalation, the powers-that-be still approach the subject with the greatest possible care and secrecy. No one wants to be responsible for unleashing uncontrollable virtuakinetic powers onto the newly-rebuilt Matrix, awakening the remnant of an AI, or



triggering a dormant strain of the worm that ravaged the Matrix, so research continues as black bag projects or under the guise of therapeutic AIPS programs. The corps also draw up damage control plans, preparing to ditch technomancer research projects if the spotlight falls their way, shoring up their defenses against technomantic attacks, and dreaming up ways to perpetuate public fear of technomancers. Leading this pack are **MCT**, **NeoNET**, **Evo**, **Renraku**, **Telestrian Industries**, and **Universal Omnitech**.

More research requires more subjects, of course, so increased efforts are made to get find, kidnap, and steal actual technomancers. Likewise, competition heats up between research units, each launching runs to steal each others' results and/or sabotage any developments. As a result, shadowrunners will find a wealth of opportunities in the employ of corporations performing research into the technomancer phenomenon.

Unfortunately for those looking for a way to exploit or take advantage of technomancer powers, research has yielded few useful results. Progress has been slow due to a number of factors, ranging from the rarity of the expression and lack of consensus on its origins to the difficulty in using conventional sensing medical technologies (due to the modified bioelectrical field) and invasive probing (which often proves damaging to the subject's abilities). Whether by sheer luck, particular ruthlessness, or a combination of both, two corporations lead the field and have made several significant breakthroughs in technomancer research.

Mitsuhama Computer Technologies (MCT)

MCT owes its edge to the experiments carried out by **Dr. Thomas Shalbermat**, a ruthless scientist obsessed with the mind-Matrix interface and biological computing. His obsession dates back to the early 2050s, when under his true name, Dr. Ronald Thomas Halberstam, he developed Project: Matrix Born, an illegal research program that involved raising children in an entirely virtual environment. When the project was exposed, Halberstam was forced to change his identity and accept MCT's patronage. MCT has carefully erased all record of Dr. Shalbermat's history. His research shifted to exploring otaku and their unique abilities, until the Crash robbed him of many of his subjects and set his work back years. When the surprising revelations of AIPS research presented a new avenue of study, Shalbermat convinced MCT to invest in **Project: Remote Online Manipulation (ROM)**.

Project ROM has developed the most comprehensive analysis on technomancers to date. Secretly operated behind the façade of an AIPS treatment program in a wing of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Hong Kong, Shalbermat has secretly "acquired" hundreds of AIPS patients—including dozens of technomancers—for his unethical experiments. Many have died as a result, dissected for science. Project ROM is overseen by **Dr. Kevin Chiang** of MCT San Francisco, who is in charge of all of MCT's AIPS and technomancer-related projects. Chiang is in a position to allocate corporate resources and funds from numerous MCT divisions and subsidiaries to the top-secret research projects he "owns." He has hired shadowrunner teams around the world to support Shalbermat's work and acquire ad-

ditional "research material." Due to Shalbermat's self-centered disregard for security protocols, many such missions deal with covering Shalbermat's tracks.

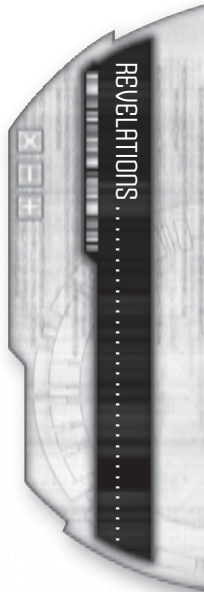
NeoNET

Though the great dragon Celedyr's appointment as NeoNET's director of R&D was a gesture of appeasement by Richard Villiers for maneuvering Transys Neuronet into the NeoNET merger, the move injected new dynamics into NeoNET's already thriving research department. To Celedyr, wifi technology and technomancers epitomize the synergy of two of his greatest interests: the Matrix and communication in general. For more than a decade, Celedyr has explored the development of a Matrix interface for dragons. Intriguingly, the wireless and organic interface used by technomancers resembles the Matrix equivalent of a dragon's telepathic speech. As a result, one of NeoNET's main goals is to determine the origin of these abilities and replicate them under controlled circumstances.

To reproduce these powers and make them profitable, Celedyr initiated **Project Enlight**, and offered former Oxford Professor **Gordon Browne** the position of project director. Browne's field of expertise is communications theory, but he brings a wide spectrum of knowledge and first-hand experience to NeoNET's project. Raised in Nairobi, Browne was hired in 2062 by Erika to help develop emergent wifi technology and develop the European Wireless Matrix standard. After the Crash he took a few years off to work as an archivist in the great library of Alexandria before being offered to lecture at the German Karlsruhe University in 2067, a reputable institute for research on artificial intelligence. Now in his mid fifties, Browne is on the most wanted lists of several corporate headhunters, but he chose to accept NeoNET's offer. Under Celedyr's vigilant eye, Browne is under a lot of pressure to produce results, so he's perfectly willing to use external assets to meet his goals. To facilitate Browne's needs, Celedyr assigned an operative from the Knights of Rage (see *Dragons of the Sixth World*) to act as Browne's bodyguard and representative to the runner scene. Using the handle **Sulawyo**, she contacts runners from all over the world for black ops and data steals, though she seldom uses the same team twice.

HOW THE SHADOWS REACT

Solid fact and rumor are sometimes hard to distinguish in the shadows, where information is a hard currency but half-truths abound. Despite much confusion and disbelief at first, the various shadow networks are the first to become aware of (and convinced of) the technomancer phenomenon. Early on, shadowrunners find themselves surrounded by the various developments, just like everyone else. Emotions run high and paranoia reaches new levels as technomancers are discovered throughout all levels of society. Some hackers find themselves suspiciously scrutinized by teammates and contacts, while some technomancers who have been hiding their abilities now find the confidence to reveal their true nature—but not always with positive results. The old rivalry between otaku and deckers is revived between technomancers and hackers,





as some old school hackers express disdain for anybody that replaces elite skills and quality code with Matrix voodoo. Reputations rise and fall, and a lot of teams find an easy time getting work.

As with any controversial topic, opinions quickly become polarized. The gamemaster is encouraged to bring the varying viewpoints and reactions to the forefront, placing the characters into positions where they are expected (or forced to) take sides. The issue can arise from a technomancer player character or from a close relative or contact that reveals his technomancer powers to the group. The phenomenon can also be explored as debates over the true genesis of technomancers (especially between Awakened characters and hackers) or delve into the nature of trust/distrust and respect/prejudice. Player characters may even push forward the agenda by pursuing personally-motivated shadowruns in order to learn more about a character's powers or their origin.

While technomancers are seen as an unknown quantity and a potential menace by the general population, crime syndicates quickly come to see them as a potentially valuable resource to be harnessed. First and foremost, technomancers are a hot commodity, and several organizations jump to meet the demand of researchers for fresh subjects via the fine arts of extraction and kidnapping. Conservative outfits like the Mafia, like many corps, are primarily concerned with protecting their own operations—especially Matrix rackets and similar jobs that could be vulnerable to technomancer hacking—and will seek

to obtain research results to bolster their own defenses. More tech-savvy syndicates like the Vory and Triads rush to pressgang technomancers into service.

THE HONG KONG INCIDENT

Thanks to Project ROM and Dr. Shalbermat's unethical experimentation on captured technomancers, MCT possesses a significant lead over its rival NeoNET. NeoNET, however, isn't sitting idly by and plans to acquire some of MCT's know-how. Over the course of 2069, NeoNET agents covertly approach Shalbermat on various occasions, offering generous positions and benefits if he jumps ship. While not entirely adverse to the idea, given increased demands for results from MCT's R&D board, Shalbermat proves reluctant to abandon his precious research subjects and keeps NeoNET hanging. By May 2070, NeoNET's Project Enlight head, Gordon Browne, decides it's time to "assist" Shalbermat's decision.

Having established that Project ROM is secretly operating out of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital near Mong Kok in Hong Kong, Browne lays plans to extract Shalbermat. By late June 2070, the plan is put into action. Manipulating a local anti-corporate activist group—9x9 (see p. 13, *Runner Havens*)—to cause a distraction, Browne hopes MCT and the ruling Hong Kong Executive Council will be sufficiently distracted with chasing down the terrorists to interfere with the extraction. Unpredictably, the Executive Council agents get wind of the planned terrorist attacks and successfully raid sev-

eral of 9x9 group's hideouts, throwing a spanner into Browne's well-laid schemes. Deniable assets, however, have already been dispatched to extract an unwitting Shalbermat from his corporate condo in Repulse Bay on Hong Kong Island. Plans are changed on the fly when the scientist is called back to Queen Elizabeth to look in on a technomancer experiment gone awry—the subject has resisted sedation and has escaped the lab.

NeoNET's infiltration of the hospital finds the labs on high alert. During the resulting firefight, an attempt to hack the security system causes the security locks to crash. In the resulting chaos, the escaped patient frees a group of imprisoned and mentally unstable technomancers who wreak havoc on the building's systems during their escape. In the chaos that ensues, MCT panics. Fearing public discovery of their experiments, it decides to scapegoat their escaped test subjects. Carefully-placed explosives around the labs and AIPS wards of the hospital building are triggered, burying any evidence under tons of rubble and ashes—and vilifying technomancers in the public eye.

While the unstable technomancers run amok throughout the city, overwhelmed by the sheer concentration of wif activity, MCT's PR departments launches their anti-technomancer campaign to "warn" the population of the threat they pose. The Hong Kong incident becomes a sensationalized news item, and in short order technomancers are being condemned as a threat around the globe. This succeeds better than expected, instigating a wave of massive paranoia that quickly devolves into widespread witchhunts (described in detail in the next chapter). Facing a new and immediate menace from the omnipresent Matrix that conceals itself behind the façade of normal metahumanity, everyone is forced to take a side in the coming conflict.

For more details, including suggestions for involving shadowrunners in this incident, see *Cause for Distraction*, p. 48.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following adventure frameworks can be used by the gamemaster to link his players to the events of *Emergence*.

HOT PROPERTY

This adventure puts the runners between two megacorps—Ares and Horizon—that are each seeking to get their hands on a technomancer.

Setup

Frederick Gunn claims to possess virtuakinetic abilities. Though he has kept this fact secret for several years, he is becoming more assured of his talents. He also recently became involved with the Transhuman League, a group that advocates an individual's right to alter and improve one's cognitive and biological functions, and has been persuaded to "come out" by other transhumans. Gunn has contacted Truman Distribution Networks (TDN)—part of Ares Global Entertainment, the media branch of the Ares Macrotech empire—who remain skeptical of his claims, as the low-ranking producers remain

oblivious at this point to the wider ramifications of Gunn's abilities. Nevertheless, Truman plans to feature Gunn on a wildly popular pseudo-science documentary show. After Gunn makes an off-hand report about receiving death threats to one of the producers, Truman staff decide to keep a close eye on Gunn just in case.

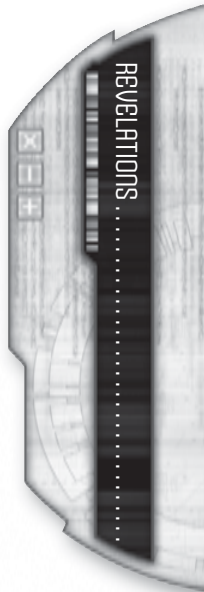
The runners receive a call from one of their fixers asking if they are available for an escorting job. Assuming they agree, the runners will be sent to meet a perfectly-styled and trideogenic Ms. Johnson, who will ask them to take on an escort and security job in Los Angeles the following day (or an equally short time frame appropriate to the distance characters must travel). Once there, they are to rendezvous with an elf by the name Frederick Gunn, introduce themselves as Truman envoys, keep him out of trouble, and bring him unharmed to the Truman studio the day after that. After delivery, the runners are to provide security for the six hours needed to film the show before seeing that Mr. Gunn is returned home safely.

Unknown to Truman, Gunn has also come to the attention of a working group within Horizon that is analyzing reports about technomancers and investigating them for possible future research. They've ascertained his whereabouts in LA, and are planning a mission to "scout him out."

Event 1

The runners arrive in a hot and clammy Los Angeles and easily locate their target at the hotel their Truman contact specified. Unfortunately the hotel happens to be hosting the Transhuman League's quarterly convention, featuring Gunn as a keynote speaker (a fact he failed to mention to Truman). The runners must wait out while Gunn attends seminars and mingles with the off-beat strangenesses of a typical League gathering. Many League members advocate and embrace extreme body alteration and implantation, and some may take a particular interest in the wares sported by runners. During one of the social sessions, Marilyn Barr, a Horizon agent posing as an MCT media producer, will arrive to socialize with and get a first impression of Gunn. Barr herself is a technomancer in Horizon's employ, and she will use the opportunity to verify that he's the real thing. After a bit of flirtation, she'll ping Gunn's commlink with an invitation to dinner after his speech at Tedescu's, an upscale club-restaurant nearby, to discuss her company's interest in developing material based on his "transhuman experiences."

If the runners restrict Gunn's activities, he will protest—after all, they're just supposed to be protecting him, not keeping him isolated. He will be especially reluctant to miss a date with a big-time media producer, and is not below begging, sweetening the deal with a little money, or sneaking out on his own. When they arrive at Tedescu's, they'll find that entrance is for members and invited guests only—and Gunn's is the only name on the list. The runners will have to wait outside or find some other way of getting in (if Gunn is held back, as a last resort he'll get one or two of them in as "bodyguards").



Tedescu's features a heavy AR environment, through which patrons are expected to socialize electronically as well as in the flesh. Horizon is planning to snatch Gunn at the restaurant and has arranged to have a waiter spike his drinks with a sedative. If he doesn't show, they plan to snatch him at the hotel or his home. They'll be watching through surveillance drones disguised as traffic bots as soon as he leaves the hotel. Depending on Barr's earlier scouting mission, they may or may not be aware of the runners. If any runners accompany Gunn to the meal, they will attempt to sedate them as well. The Horizon plan inevitably falls apart, however—either the runners realize something is going on, or Barr makes a slip when smooth-talking Gunn—and the Horizon covert team (numbering a mage, two riggers backing up a three-man field team led by Marilyn Barr) moves in for the snatch. Chaos ensues. Naively, Gunn uses his abilities in an obvious and spectacular manner on the Tedescu AR network to facilitate their escape (such as compiling a sprite to disable the sophisticated light and sound system)—directly in front of a crowd of minor Hollywood starlets and media bigshots. The runners find themselves on the run with the hottest property in Hollywood.

Event 2

The events at Tedescu's put Gunn on the radar of just about every major player in Los Angeles within the hour. Not only is Horizon still after Gunn, but several other megacorps, media companies, and the police are now after him too.

Unfortunately for the runners, the Horizon unit didn't just spike Gunn's drink with a sedative, they also slipped him a minute (and safe) amount of a radioactive isotope. This takes two days to fully pass through the technomancer's system. While it remains, Horizon will be able to pinpoint Gunn's location every few minutes via high-altitude drones. The runners must stay constantly on the move or Horizon will attempt to neutralize them and take Gunn into custody.

Ironically, the incident at Tedescu will get back to Truman—and even more importantly, their Ares overseers. Ares puts one of their own units on the case, still working behind the Truman producers, with orders to reel Gunn in immediately. The Truman Johnson will contact the runners and tell them she will double the agreed-upon fee if they manage to safely get Gunn on a Truman plane to Detroit for what's now a prime-time exclusive—in truth, Ares intends to quickly shuffle Gunn out of sight.

The runners can be professional and abide by the deal, but they may also be tempted by other offers. Gunn and any other runners who might have been identified from the Tedescu incident will start receiving offers via the Matrix and various contacts. Gunn turns out to be more ambitious than spineless, eagerly putting himself up for bidding if has a chance and naively trying to convince the runners to take him to whichever party makes the best exclusive media offer. If necessary, he'll use his own abilities to aid or hinder the team.

Climax

Shortly after the runners decide on a course of action, the dramatic events of the day take their toll on Frederick Gunn. Not in good shape to begin with, he suddenly collapses in the hot and humid Los Angeles night. If it hasn't been disabled, Gunn's implanted DocWagon chip immediately signals the medicare provider and a High Threat Response (HTR) unit is dispatched to retrieve their client. If the runners don't realize DocWagon has been contacted, they'll be surprised when a helicopter ambulance arrives on scene to take the unconscious man (perhaps coincidentally timed with another Horizon attack). The HTR team will assume any armed characters that interfere to be assailants and will shoot first and ask questions later.

Meanwhile, Gunn hasn't merely collapsed from stress and exhaustion—his mind has been pushed to the limit, and he inadvertently goes fully virtual for the first time. As he has never done this consciously before, he finds the situation deeply confusing and at first believes it's an out-of-body experience. Bewildered and lost, he wanders the virtual landscape in search of someone familiar. With his body going into shock and life signs degrading, Gunn won't survive if the runners cannot get his living persona back. Merely severing him from the Matrix will be too dangerous, as the resulting dumpshock might kill him. The runners will need to track his persona down, either by following his data trail or carefully watching his lips as he maintains a walking monologue on his journey (similar to talking in his sleep).

Sequels

If the runners succeed in handing Gunn over to Truman/Ares, he is sequestered away and never heard from again; Truman never does film its exclusive. Whether Horizon ends up with Gunn or not, their potential plans to focus a human-interest documentary on Gunn are sidelined and dropped when the breaking news from Hong Kong sparks a technomancer controversy. If DocWagon retrieves Gunn, they stabilize him at a nearby clinic, but he escapes upon waking using his powers to neutralize security systems and guards. He takes the opportunity to go underground, as several parties continue to track him.

CAUSE FOR DISTRACTION

In late June of 2070, NeoNET decides it's high time to extract their rival's leading scientist, Dr. Thomas Shalbermat, as well as the results of his research. For this delicate operation to succeed, NeoNET agents have laid careful plans that will trigger numerous distractions to both Mitsuhama and the Hong Kong Executive Council, the city's governing body.

Setup

NeoNET's plan is complex but sophisticated; the corp has been laying the groundwork for years. Via several deep-cover agents and contacts, NeoNET has funneled intel and funding to the local anti-corp radical group, 9x9 (see p. 13,



Runner Havens), manipulating them into launching simultaneous attacks on several rival corporate facilities. Hoping to kill three birds with a single stone, the plan is to tip off the Executive Council just as the attacks are about to begin—too late to stop initial damage to the other corps, but sacrificing the 9x9 cells and indebting the Council to NeoNET in the long run for the warning. Meanwhile, Shalbermat is to be extracted under cover of the chaos.

The runners are contacted through their usual channels and invited to a meet. Mr. Johnson is Chinese, and though his behavior and dress scream anti-corp activist, he is actually a NeoNET agent masquerading as a member of 9x9 (the true 9x9er was captured, interrogated, and eliminated).

Johnson will imply that he is hiding from authorities in Hong Kong, but he needs to deliver some important files to the underground organization called the Gau Fong (Cantonese for “nine squared,” or 9x9). Apparently the Johnson’s usual contact in Kowloon City has vanished, so the runners are asked to track down a key 9x9 member named Kenny Tan (also in Kowloon City) and get the files to him. He gives them a medallion which will identify them as his envoys. Payment is half up front, half upon delivery. If the runners are based outside of Hong Kong, the Johnson will arrange fake IDs, travel documents, economy class tickets, and the addresses of a few contacts in Hong Kong (also NeoNET agents) from which they can restock their arsenal and track down Kenny Tan.

Event 1

The runners’ best bet for finding Tan and the Gau Fong is to discreetly ask around the Walled City, a seedy quarter overflowing with Chinese mainland refugees, fixers, dealers, petty criminals, and SINless folk. Non-Chinese characters will find the legwork hard going, but not impossible. Tensions are brewing and the distaste for the Executive Council is prominent, so the 9x9 are local heroes of sorts. Nevertheless, they are considered a terrorist organization, so a lack of care when making inquiries may attract the attention of the authorities.

The runners will eventually learn that Kenny Tan’s cell operates from the Walled City. While looking for the man, the runners are approached by members of the local Triad, who are also looking for Kenny. The runners are warned off and learn that Gau Fong’s challenge to the corrupt authorities of Hong Kong has inspired several residents and small storeowners in the Walled City to refuse to pay to the local power, the Ten Thousand Lions Triad. The syndicate is looking for Kenny to make an example of him. To complete the mission, they now have to find Tan before the Triads. Since nobody in the Gau Fong expects a delivery, the runners also have to convince someone connected to the group that they are neither working for the syndicate or the corporations—earning their trust might prove to be an adventure in itself.

The runners should eventually be led to Kenny Tan, who’s hiding out in a friend’s small chop shop.

Event 2

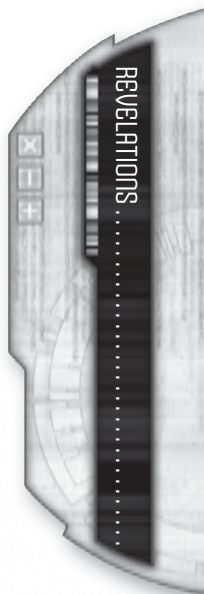
After verifying their credentials (the medallion) Tan accesses the data package the team delivered—a motherload of confidential information, allegedly collected by 9x9 agents in exile, on various incestuous behind-the-scenes deals between the Executive Council and the local corporations. The data also includes dossiers on five of the eight council members and various illegal arrangements the Executive Council has turned a blind eye to. Examples range from regular toxic dumps in a nature reserve on Hong Kong Island to favored corporations receiving long-term city service contracts despite better and cheaper offers from non-aligned competitors. The intel also details how a massive multi-point operation might disrupt the Council’s promiscuous dealings, and bring them into the media spotlight before the documents are sent to the press. This is the final part of a plan that 9x9 has been waiting for—unfortunately, they’re one cell short of what their optimum attack plan calls for.

Given that he and his men are under Triad scrutiny, Tan asks the runners to help him contact his fellow cell leaders and help coordinate the series of attacks with him. He is willing to pay them handsomely for their services if they act as couriers. The delivered intel indicates coordinated attacks on the various targets are best executed on June 29—conveniently, the same day that NeoNET’s deniable assets plan to extract Shalbermat from MCT. Additionally, Tan would like to hire them to seriously damage a powerstation that serves several major corporate facilities (thereby facilitating secondary strikes). The sheer detail of the data provided (guard positions, patrol routines, passive security placement, etc.) is unusually thorough and should be enough to spike the characters’ curiosity.

Climax

Unbeknownst to the runners and Kenny Tan (and NeoNET), a deep-cover mole working for the Council reports 9x9’s attack preparations to the authorities. The Council in turn informs the Hong Kong Police Force about the impending attacks just in time to intercept the 9x9 as they start to mobilize. Just hours before the large scale operation is to proceed, the police crack down on 9x9 across the city. The runners are cut off from Kenny Tan and other 9x9 contacts (and maybe from each other) and are labeled as suspected terrorists by the Hong Kong police, courtesy of detailed information packages provided by NeoNET to tie up loose ends. The runners may choose to undertake the demolition run on the power plant anyway, but a heightened state of security will make the job more difficult than expected.

Things really start heating up when the events at the Queen Elizabeth hospital unfold. The runners are wanted fugitives in a Hong Kong suddenly gone crazy. Fleeing from authorities, the runners may come across a stand-off between escaped technomancers and police. 9x9 cells may come to the runners, looking for support, with police units hot on their tail. The fluctuations in the Hong Kong grid may hinder the team’s escape plans, but it may also help them hide from au-



thorities. Their best hope for survival may be to find Kenny Tan and escape from a Hong Kong in a state of siege.

If the runners find Kenny Tan, he tells them he is convinced the group's actions were sabotaged from within. He asks for their help in finding and eliminating the snitch. Meanwhile, NeoNET is also looking for the Council mole to eliminate any trace of their involvement and dispatches assassins to the Walled City. With Tan's help, the runners must dash after the traitor before the NeoNET hit squad finds him or he reaches a government safehouse.

Sequels

If the characters don't manage to get the dirt on NeoNET or some other leverage, the State of Emergency declared by the Board of Governors may strand them in Hong Kong for a while. Branded terrorists, surrounded by corporate and government hit squads, in the midst of an apparent Matrix Crash and the emergence of a mysterious new threat, the runners are definitely set to live "in interesting times." The Board of Governors also launches its own investigations, not trusting NeoNET's seemingly altruistic, if tardy, warning—and the runners are strategically placed to become involved.

THE RISE AND FALL OF JOEY D.

In the wake of the Hong Kong events, Josephine Dzhugashvili, the independent candidate in Seattle's gubernatorial race (see p. 67, *Runner Havens*), is in trouble. Though she's managed to dodge the usual dirty laundry and support from dubious parties to sponsor her campaign, her personal history is coming back to haunt her.

Setup

Dzhugashvili has a well-kept secret. Contrary to the public record, she did not suffer from a stroke during the Crash of '64. In truth, she suffered serious biofeedback from contact with the Crash worm and awoke from a three-week coma to discover she had become a technomancer. Fearing people's reactions, Joey D. has kept her condition under wraps. Only her doctor and close friend, Dr. Aki Kusanaga, knows the truth. As the Seattle elections draw closer, and her controversial call for secession garners attention, her rivals dig deeper into her past to find a weak spot. Joey has no illusions; if a powerful rival gets a hold of her actual medical history, in the current climate it would mean the end of her political aspirations. Unfortunately for Joey, her political rival Kenneth Brackhaven is doing exactly that.

The run starts when the team is invited to meet with a Mr. Johnson purportedly working for the UCAS Homeland Security agency. He hires the runners to undertake a deep investigation into Joey D.'s past. Mr. Johnson presents the op as a deniable fact-finding operation prompted by the threat of secessionist move. He is specifically interested in any criminal activity in her past, any links to political radicals or extremists, and any periods in her life during which details are scarce and few hard facts are available—such as the months

immediately following the Crash 2.0. The fee is standard for a low-risk legwork operation. What Mr. Johnson isn't saying is that he's a close friend of Brackhaven's and a member of the Human Nation racist organization.

Event 1

Some legwork will easily reveal all that Dzhugashvili wants the public to know: her impressive IQ and charisma, her college graduation in record time that opened the doors to reputable law schools, her brilliant courtroom career before blazing a trail in local politics, and her strong belief in Seattle's independence. The investigation fails to turn up any evidence that Dzhugashvili is in any way dangerous. The gamemaster should feel free to throw out some red herrings, but further research will prove that these rumors are failed attempts to smear her character by her rivals.

As the runners dig more deeply, their investigation inadvertently tips off Joey D., who looks for a way to keep her secrets from prying eyes. Lacking other options, she turns to Mafia *dona* Rowena O'Malley. Dzhugashvili and O'Malley have been friends since their time at Harvard and even practiced law together for a few years before parting ways when Rowena decided to take up her father's mantle in the Seattle mob. Though they walk on opposite sides of the law, the mutual respect and friendship has survived. Without giving away her true reasons, Joey D. asks Rowena to warn the runners off. O'Malley sends a couple of unidentifiable thugs to confront the runners and tell them to let sleeping dogs lie.

Event 2

When the runners report this twist to their employer, he orders them to continue investigating and find out who's protecting Dzhugashvili and why. He isn't aware of any corporate backing that would explain the warning, so he's thinks organized crime or hard-line separatists might be responsible—either would give Brackhaven plenty of ammunition.

At this point, one of the runners (or a contact helping them with the investigation) discovers an odd discrepancy. Though Dr. Kusanaga has claimed that Joey D.'s earlier medical records were lost during the Crash, in one minor post-Crash report he cites some personal data that can only have been obtained from pre-Crash records. This implies that Dr. Kusanaga may be hiding some personal details of Dzhugashvili's medical history.

This should lead the runners to break into Kusanaga's home and/or office in search of secret files, though the team will need to avoid the watchful gaze of O'Malley's goons, who are keeping an eye on them. Kusanaga has been careful to remove all references to Joey D.'s post-Crash condition and technomantic abilities from his electronic files, but since she is still a patient under his care, he keeps hardcopy reports and backup files on chip, all carefully locked away in a personal safe. When the runners get a hold of this data, they will find a gold mine of potential blackmail. Not only do the reports contain information on Dzhugashvili's modified brain and



neurochemistry, but they also document AIPS-related symptoms such as schizophrenic episodes and her psychological treatment. Even more damning is trideo footage and medical scans that document Joey D. using her technomantic powers.

Climax

Dr. Kusanaga will discover the break-in almost immediately and informs Dzhugashvili, who once again calls on O'Malley to help. Suspecting the runners, she immediately dispatches some of her top men to bring them in for a "friendly conversation." Word will go out on the streets that the runners have crossed the Mob, and anyone found helping them will face retaliation. The runners will find that many of their haunts are staked out and their contacts choose to evaporate until the heat cools down. If the Mafia manages to track the team down, they'll attempt to surround and ambush them, calling in reinforcements—including members of the Merlyns (see p. 84, *Runner Havens*) for magical back-up.

If the runners contact their Johnson, he'll want to make use of the data right away. In addition to asking for copies, he'll ask the runners to take the information public in a very spectacular way—for a good fee, of course. A broadcast debate between the candidates is coming up in the next day or so, and the event presents a perfect opportunity. The runners will be asked to bypass the debate security and hack into the live newsfeeds, transmitting Dzhugashvili's secret life to the world. The runners should realize that Mr. Johnson's agenda is not the one he originally presented to them, but the pay offer should be strong enough to challenge any attacks of conscience they might have.

Sequels

If the runners follow through with Johnson's orders, Dzhugashvili's candidacy is ruined. Even if the runners fail or refuse to hand over the data, Dzhugashvili knows that her secret has been compromised and it's only a matter of time before she's exposed. Given the rising hostile climate towards technomancers, she opts to resign from the elections.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

This section includes short adventure ideas revolving around the technomancer emergence before and up to the dramatic breakout in Hong Kong. Gamemasters can use these ideas as short scenarios or to develop them into full adventures using the information in this chapter.

Blast from the Past

NeoNET is not the only ones with its eyes on Dr. Shalbermat and Project ROM. Universal Omnitech is also interested, but hasn't yet been able to ascertain their whereabouts. UO hires the runners to look for Shalbermat, pointing them first towards MCT's offices in San Francisco—particularly the office of Dr. Kevin Chiang, whom they suspect is connected. MCT has gone to great lengths to keep Shalbermat's current line of research a secret, however, and

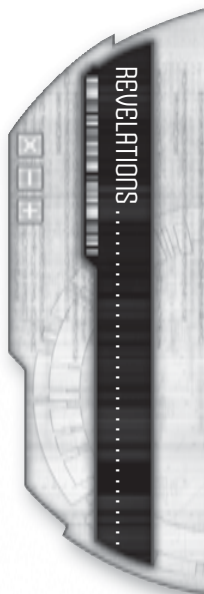
will do their best to eliminate the runners if they become aware of them. Unfortunately for the megacorp, someone else has been tracking Shalbermat and decides to help the runners: an accomplished hacker using the handle Lucifer. Somehow Lucifer knows of Shalbermat's true identity and is out to take the scientist down.

Up for Grabs

After the failed NeoNET extraction results in the technomancer breakout in Hong Kong, the corporation is busy covering its tracks and involvement in the whole affair. Nonetheless, the current chaos in Hong Kong presents an unparalleled opportunity to acquire Mitsuhama's valuable research subjects. NeoNET hires runners to track, locate, and capture the technomancers who escaped from MCT and were running amok in Hong Kong, paying well above the standard bounty rates. The runners will have to dodge investigating authorities, negotiate the local territorial powers such as the Triads, and face the technomancers' own mysterious abilities. Other corporations will also be looking to acquire these subjects, and MCT will also have agents in the field to eliminate the living evidence of their illegal experimentation.

Runs in the Family

The runners are hired by Miko Ishikawa, a high-ranking member of the Shotozumi-gumi Yakuza clan in Seattle. She wants them to investigate Ichiro Shiganosuke, another member of the Shotozumi-gumi who recently began to develop AVSP symptoms. Ichiro's recent odd behavior has Miko thinking that he is up to something. During the course of the runners' investigations, they learn of his abilities and also collect data on similar incidents and encounters. Right as the team is ready to make a report back to Miko, the Hong Kong incident occurs. Panicking, Ichiro goes on the run, fearful that the Yakuza will find him out and shameful of what he has become. Miko sends the runners after him, not to punish or kill him, but because she sees an opportunity for the Yakuza to take advantage of his abilities. The runners will have to beat agents from the rival Watada-rengo, however, who want to capture Ichiro and interrogate him on the Shotozumi-gumi's inner workings.





"Just another face in the crowd, just another face," he said to himself, as if repetition would make it true. He watched as the morning ferry docked at the Star Ferry Terminal, ready to unload its human cargo onto Kowloon. He had survived the night, and now the sheer mass of commuters lent him anonymity and protection. He kept his head low and let himself be carried along with the teeming flow of metahumanity leaving the ferry. He still wore his hospital gown under the flats he'd hacked out of a vending machine in Lan Kwai Fong last night, the embroidered anagrams identifying him as a Queen Elisabeth Hospital patient. A HK Tigers cap hid his shaven head.

With the China terminal in smoking ruins, the Star Ferry Terminal was hectic. Tension rode the air as people traded suspicious glances. Everyone was going through the motions of normal life, despite being afraid and in shock. As the lingering smell of fires and the spiraling columns of smoke over downtown testified, there were monsters hiding among them. The sirens had been wailing all night. He'd heard dogs at one point.

Even here in the busy morning hours, as life flowed back into downtown, he dared not access the grid. Not that he had to—the holoboards and mediacolumns on every corner warned him that the "Technomancer Menace" was still headline news. He'd seen enough to realize the story had spread across the globe. He hoped the others were safe. Walking without direction, he wove between honking cars trapped in impossible traffic jams as emergency vehicles shot past and traffic police blocked off streets.

Then he felt a presence, a pulse at the edge of his awareness. Someone was trying to establish contact, in a way he only knew from the others. Impulsively, he accessed the signal. The constructs of his own unique interface phased into view as his mind translated the AR signal. Suddenly an icon hovered in front of him, invisible to everyone else. The floating sphere was made of countless screens, suspended in an aura of flickering light and static.

Pictures flashed across those screens, newsfeeds and trid reports. The MCT press conference ran in an infinite loop. Live footage of rescue services using dogs to locate survivors at the Queen Elizabeth faded to a shot of police clearing the way through a demonstrating crowd. Another image zoomed in and out of focus on the corpse of one of his companions, hanging from a post, a hastily scribbled "VIRUS/CURE" placard across his chest. Cold anger rose within ...

"No. Do not let them make you into the monster they say you are," said the sphere. One after another, the screens molded together to form one big picture. He recognized the shapes of the ramshackle buildings, the dirty awnings and glo-graffiti. "The Walled City," he heard himself say. The screens switched back to flickering static, shades of grey forming the Cantonese symbol for Hope against the chaotic background.

"Who sent you? Whose creation are you?"

"I am no one's creature. You have allies you know nothing of. Come to me." The screens blanked and the sphere vanished. Once again, he was alone in the crowd.

Suddenly a voice shouted, "Hey, you there in the cap! Stop! This is the police!"





THE HUNT IS ON

• Unless you're a complete shut-in, by now you've heard the lead story on every news show on the planet: a group of technomancers escaped a mental facility where they were being treated and ran amok in downtown Hong Kong. If the reports are to be believed, they blew a hospital to kingdom come, tore the local grid to shreds, and sent "sprites"—spontaneously generated software constructs—on an orgy of destruction, causing traffic accidents and massive equipment failures. It's a localized Crash 2.0 for Hong Kong all over again. The scoreboard doesn't look good. The death toll is at 549 and rising, five times that injured and a couple of hundred unaccounted for. Four escapees killed "resisting arrest," one in custody, one strung up by the locals, and at least four still at large. I had my hopes people would have learned something from Goblinization or SURGE, but this whole fiasco blew any chance of a peaceful coming out right out of the water.

• Sunshine

• Call me an optimist but we've been here before, and we've climbed back from the brink.

• FastJack

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 06/30/70 //
NEWSBLITZ SPECIAL—BREAKING NEWS [KSAF]

Twenty hours after the terrible tragedy that rocked Hong Kong, the threat appears far from contained. The tragic events of two nights ago were reconstructed this evening in a public press conference by Hong Kong authorities. Apparently, a group of "technomancers"—mentally unstable metahumans that possess dangerous and uncontrollable powers over computers and electronics—destroyed the Queen Elizabeth Hospital during an escape attempt from the psychiatric ward where they were receiving treatment for AIPS-related disorders triggered by exposure to the Crash virus. In order to further cover their escape, they randomly attacked the Hong Kong grid, causing accidents, setting off fires, and triggering several explosions. The largest secondary disaster was the destruction of the China Ferry Terminal, caused by a spillage in the ferry refueling system triggered when the management systems broke down.

Hong Kong Police Forces faced a herculean task, attempting to recapture the escapees in the midst of this crisis. Firefighters and ambulances responded to emergency situations throughout Kowloon during the night, as the number of accidents and explosions increased. One of the worst situations involved a media helicopter that crashed into a busy downtown street, killing 23 and sparking a fire that consumed the Wuxing office block on Livermore St. and Lau Peng St. Though the situation has calmed in the early hours and no imminent threat is being reported, the city remains in a state of shock and grief. Condolences and offers of assistance have come in from nations and corporations around the region.

• Downtown Hong Kong is a mess. You can see the smoke rising miles away. Police, corpsec, and media are all over the place. The Queen Elizabeth explosion was just the tip of the iceberg; the fires, accidents, and riots that followed did a lot of damage.

People are seriously scared. Rescue squads are still looking for signs of life under the smoking rubble. Yokogawa firefighters' resources are stretched thin covering the blazes and major accidents. I hate to say it, but I was trapped in a crowded elevator for the better part of the night.

• Ma'fan

• The breakout story is raging like a bushfire over the airwaves. Most media are parroting MCT's slant, and it isn't pretty. News outlets are starting to dig around their own backyards, dredging up the stories we've been following here. Some of the majors are pulling out all the stops on the scare tactics, tying technomancers with the Crash 2.0, the virus, otaku, and even experimentation by artificial intelligences! A full-blown panic is in the making here.

• Sunshine

• People are rightfully scared. How can you defend yourself if you can't recognize the threat? No one knows exactly what technomancers can do, and they are undetectable to the untrained eye. Already here in Germany we're seeing random people preemptively detained by overzealous police, searched, scanned, and later released without even an apology. The cops don't even have a system for profiling—no one even knows what they're looking for at this point. In high security enclaves, private security and "concerned citizens" are keeping an eye on any unregistered net access. Paranoia is spiraling out of control.

• Red Anya

• After the HK Board of Governors and the Chief of Police ran that quick reconstruction of last night's events and the state of investigations, riots broke out in several districts. We've got lynch mobs on the streets and they're not too picky—one of my hacker buddies was beaten within an inch of his life. MCT's launched a massive media campaign in cooperation with the local authorities, asking the public to watch for and report any sign of technomancer activity to the police.

• Lei Kung

// Fork/sunshine/ksaf/EmeraldMedia/newsfeed <06/30/70 19:30:03> //

// LinguaCell-D audio-to-text transcript enabled //

Ivy Wong: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We're live from the Hong Kong Executive Council Building. With us is Councilman William Wu. Good evening, Mr. Wu. I'll begin by asking for the Executive Council's position on the tragic developments of the past few hours.

William Wu: Good evening, Ms. Wong. Thank you for this opportunity to extend the Council's sympathy to all of the citizens of Hong Kong touched by this senseless and tragic violence, and to reassure those worried about the implications of this hostile attack. Our fellow citizens need support, strength, and encouragement from those with the power to provide them. As a member of the Executive Council, I can promise that we will do everything possible to bring these criminals to justice and implement measures to forestall any similar acts of vandalism and terror by these so-called "technomancers."



I. Wong: That sounds encouraging, but many citizens are worried about the future. What are the implications of this new threat to the public? How are we supposed to return to our normal lives knowing what we now know? How many more of these technomancers are out there, and what's being done about them?

W. Wu: First of all, Ms. Wong, let me explain that we are working hand in hand with government authorities. We have offered the Board of Governors unconditional assistance in this crisis, and we will be conducting further research into the technomancer connection to identify virtuakinetic powers and develop defenses. All evidence indicates that technomancer abilities are effectively analogous to standard wifi functions in modern electronics. Developing virtuakinetic-specific countermeasures is a complicated challenge.

Let me assure you, we are fully aware of the terror potential these individuals possess. Even in the most lenient scenarios, in their schizophrenic state they are a menace to society and quite possibly to themselves. We firmly believe, however, that if we and our fellow council members present an united front, we will rise to the occasion here in Hong Kong and elsewhere in the world. The true danger is if these powerful but unstable individuals begin to coordinate and gather their strength.

I. Wong: Given that some of the escapees remain at large, and other virtuakinetics may be hiding amongst us, what would you tell anyone who witnesses or even suspects technomancer activity? Given your background and expertise with police procedures, do you think the Hong Kong Police Force is adequately prepared to face this unique terror threat?

W. Wu: You know as well as I do that it is not my place to criticize the HKPF. I will say, though, that I believe the HKPF should consider the offers from various corporations to provide additional resources and manpower to make our streets safe and remove the danger as soon as possible. The Executive Council has also proposed additional steps to the Board of Governors to ensure a fast resolution, such as a curfew and an appeal for public help and information.

I. Wong: Thank you, Mr. Wu. Ladies and gentlemen, this is Ivy Wong exclusively for Emerald Media, live from the Executive Council Building in Hong Kong.

// end fork //

- Hong Kong police are out in force on the streets, quelling any sign of civil disobedience or panic. They're following the principle that tear gas makes people calmer and more clear-headed on account of the fact they can't breathe. The riot squad's overzealousness has naturally caused even further collateral damage and casualties. Already, they're talking about erecting barricades and cordoning off several richer areas. Not surprisingly, most of the megas have already set up their own perimeters around corporate housing areas.

- Ma'fan

- Yep, it's snowballing. There are reports of mob scenes in Boston, L.A, London, Lausanne, Sioux, Calcutta, Tokyo, and a dozen other sprawls. Humanis and the fundie sects are egging people on.

- Kay St. Irregular

- This constant media hype and rampant paranoia is a double-edged sword. Regular folks suffering from the apes or AVSP are going to be better off denying their condition and staying low. Meanwhile, technomancers are forced to go to ground and keep their powers secret from everyone.

- Puck

- Fires in New York's Chinatown can be seen from the Bronx. I love how mobs lower participants' IQs to the lowest common denominator. Police just stood by and watched cheap electronics shops and second-hand commlink shacks go up in flames, and we're starting to see hackers and hacker hangouts targeted. Whatever the hell technomancers really are, I wouldn't want to be in their shoes right now.

- Cosmo

- Forget mobs, I've just come from an almighty rumble at the Head Meet Nail, my regular boozing hole. One of the regulars accused another of probing his link. When the guy showed him his commlink was off, the first guy accused him of being a technomancer. Friends took sides, cue bar brawl ensues. Thing is, how do I know the accusation wasn't true?

- Hard Exit

- Not having an active commlink isn't proof of anything. Look at how many people have internal commlinks. They might be hacking you with their brains, but we're not stringing them up.

- Haze

- This is getting bad. I just watched a couple of ork kids who run an illegal 'warez shop out of their basement get dragged out into the streets and beaten to a bloody pulp by a Humanis mob. Nice guys too. I've scored my share of ripped software from them, and I've never heard a whisper of them being otaku2. I'm willing to bet they were set up by one of their competitors, and they weren't technomancers at all. Fuck, the state they were in ... and nobody else lifted a finger to help them after the mob dispersed. What's happening to people?

- Beaker

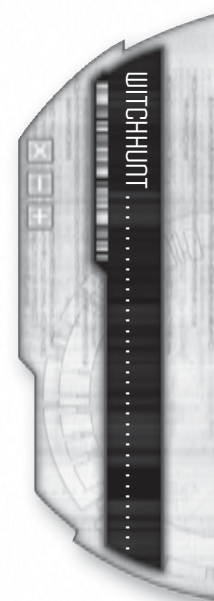
- It strikes me as odd that a society so enamored and promiscuous in its relationship with technology turns so easily against those who seem to embody its very nature. Not very logical.

- Icarus

- Logic has nothing to do with this, we're still human after all. This is plain old fear-of-the-unknown, a whole lot of mixed-up emotions, and the need to find a scapegoat for the Crash. Technomancers are the perfect bogeyman, the subversion of our vaunted technology by non-technological means. Makes you think, huh?

- Plan 9

- Like other capitol cities, D.C. is on heightened alert, police are doing everything to keep the match away from the fuse. Road blocks have been erected around Downtown and, of course, Capitol Hill. Surveillance drones and police in riot gear are out patrolling the streets. Cops are randomly pulling over cars to check



Board Places Bounty On Escapees
Emerald Media [Mitsuham Media] newsfax-
07/02/70

HONG KONG: Following the catastrophic events witnessed mere days ago, the HKFEZ Board of Governors announced a bounty of 10,000¥ for information that results in the successful arrest or capture of a Queen Elisabeth Hospital escapee.

Several human rights groups are denouncing this decision, claiming it will result in mass speculation and random accusations, with underprivileged but innocent citizens taking the brunt. The Board of Governors, however, has labeled the escapees "a terror threat of the first order." The Board's decision was supported by a unanimous vote of the Executive Council, which decreed: "The actions of these 'technomancers' leaves no doubt that they are capable of untold destruction and unbalancing the very pillars of our society." [Read more.](#)

Police Sweep Senate Buildings
Nighttime [DeMeKo]-07/03/70

RHINE-RUHR METROPLEX, AGS: Reacting to an anonymous warning of technomancer activity in the vicinity of the Senate building today, Rhine-Ruhr police supported by specialists from the Ministry of Internal Security interrupted the Senate's conference and evacuated the building. Officers fruitlessly scoured the Senate building and surrounding administrative offices for signs of technomancer intrusion. Security has been increased at all official government buildings and sources claim Matrix security is under intense scrutiny. [Read more.](#)

Court Reps Invited to Emergency UN Meeting
New York Times, subscription service-07/04/70

GENEVA, Switzerland: Representatives from the Corporate Court were asked to join the United Nation's Security Council emergency session scheduled for tomorrow in Geneva. Claudia Laure, spokesperson for the Secretary General commented, "Everyone's priority at this point is to ensure our countries and population's safety and protection against this potential new menace. As the UN's close partners in the quest for global stability and governance, representatives of the Corporate Court have been invited to discuss joint measures and coordinate a response to recent developments in Hong Kong. We hope to present a concerted front and initiate joint programs." [Read more.](#)

MVD Announces Curfew
Hobo Pravda [Aetherlink]-07/04/70

MOSCOW, Russia: In response to the latest reports on foreign technomancer espionage cells, the Ministerstvo Vnutrenniy Del (MVD)-Moscow's law
Continued on page 58

SINs and commlinks. The cop that pulled me over told me it was for my own safety, or as he put it "have to be careful, those techno-freaks can hack your link and rip your ID and every other piece of personal information stored on there—while standing behind you in line, waiting for the bus, or smiling at you—and they don't even need a computer!" It's a powder-keg out there.

• Pistons

IN THE CROSSHAIRS

• We're five days into the "technomancer crisis," and government reactions have been pretty much what you'd expect: heightened security at key seats of power, military units reinforcing private police on the streets to maintain the peace, a couple of cases of martial law, ineffectual rhetoric to calm tensions. The general fear seems to be that these virtuakinetics will band together and really wreck havoc. No one seems to know how to identify one for sure and no one knows exactly what their powers are—at least with magicians you can spot them from the astral. In North America, the CAS and UCAS Congresses have been in emergency session. The Sovereign Tribal Council is divided (as usual); Pueblo wants passive measures, while the Sioux have already begun rounding up AIPS and AVSP patients from clinics and asylums and putting them in isolation facilities. In Europe, the Lord Protector's Office and the Oversight Board responsible for British State security are busy using the crisis to root out dissidents. The German federal government has issued public safety warnings for citizens to remain calm and report suspicious Matrix activities to the authorities—though that hasn't stopped citizen action groups in Munich and Frankfurt from beating the shit out of suspected technomancers. French conservatives, backed by several influential noble families are pushing for mandatory registration and internment and taking it all the way to the NEEC Council of Ministers. Switzerland has already gone ahead and implemented something similar. Asia is the usual mess of mixed reactions. The corps in Japan aren't taking well to the Emperor's call for outreach programs. Strangely enough, the South American and African powerhouses seem to be taking everything in stride.

• Kay St. Irregular

• Mitsuham is really pushing the hunt and capture of technomancers and several other majors are falling into line: NeoNET, Ares, Renraku, and Yakashima, to name a few. MCT's media companies have been running coverage of the Hong Kong breakout non-stop for five days now. They're also serving up a stream of "expert panels" and public service announcements to sell the party line. Aside from the public spin, the following internal memo made the rounds.

• Rigger X

// uploaded email attachment:: user Rigger X ::
 07/04/70 //

Follow Mitsuham colleagues, co-workers and citizens,

You have all born witness to the terrible attack on the Queen Elisabeth Hospital in Hong Kong on June 29.

What you have seen is the violent emergence of a new menace to our world and our way of life. Make no mistake, technomancers represent an imminent danger to all we worked so hard to rebuild after the Crash. As reports from all corners of the world show, this was *not* an isolated incident. We must act now before this threat materializes and gathers strength.

As a corporation, as a family, as a community devoted to peace and prosperity, we must do everything possible to remove this threat to our ideals, our livelihoods, and those of our loved ones. Accordingly, your management urges all of you to keep close watch for signs of technomancer activity. Closely monitor the daily business activities and co-workers under your responsibility and report any incongruity to your supervisors immediately. Act responsibly and do not expose yourself, or anyone else, directly to the threat. Instead, wait for security to intervene and isolate the threat. With your help and your vigilance, our family will continue to grow and prosper.

Together we will ensure the safety of the ones we hold dear.



Toshiro Mitsuhamu, CEO

// end attachment //

- MCT's not the only corp running internal bulletins and stepping up security to deal with the crisis. Renraku and Aztechnology adopted the idea of a bounty on technomancers, and NeoNET is trying to decide whether to sweep their entire workforce/citizensry for technomancer abilities with hastily developed-testing methods. All things considered, they're making it pretty hard for a runner to make a living.

- DangerSensei

- Notice that the emphasis from most quarters is still to haul technomancers in *alive*. With all of this scapegoating, I would expect shoot-on-sight-orders or widespread raids, but instead all of the corps are acting touchy-feely about this. The only excuse for that I can see is that they want to use technomancers for their own purposes. After all, imagine what an asset a technomancer could be.

- Cosmo

- The memo below was retrieved from a Johnson's commlink. I had a data sniffer installed on his link as payback after a double-cross; seems his lousy software scans haven't caught it yet.

- Mika

// upload email :: user Mika :: 07/09/70 //

To: <Category 3 Special Projects managers>

From: <External Resource Adjustment Department (ERA)>

Subject: Protocol Update

To all Level 3 Special Projects managers in direct contact with external assets,

It is our estimation that the current technomancer threat poses an opportunity that must be acted on urgently. You are

hereby ordered to disclose your active contacts lists to ERA immediately. ERA will filter the dossiers provided to determine the possibility of any technomancer potential among the external assets currently employed. Upon identification of a potential technomancer asset, you will receive a direct request from ERA to establish contact with the suspect and set up an exploratory meeting, accompanied by ERA specialists.

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- ERA? You survived an Evo double-cross, Mika? No wonder you're keeping a low profile lately.

- Kia

- Of all the big boys, I'm not surprised to see Evo reaching out to technomancers. Unlike MCT, Renraku, and NeoNET, who all seem to regard technomancers as a threat to their business models and security, Evo is undoubtedly looking at technomancers to open the door to a whole new level of biotech developments.

- The Smiling Bandit

- Great, just what we need—a corp that looks for a way to use these freaks to further its own agenda against everyone else. Frankly, I'd rather have the other corps digging around in the underground. We all know there are technomancers in the shadows, so why not let the corps root them out? Saves us the trouble. I know a lot of you think I'm overreacting here, but I have yet to see anyone provide proof that technomancers aren't a threat to the Matrix and the world at large. There seems to be plenty of evidence to the contrary, so I see no reason to give them the benefit of the doubt. And speaking of the threat that's staring us in the face, I notice the ticking timebomb in our midst has been awfully quiet lately. Anyone know where Netcat is?

- Clockwork

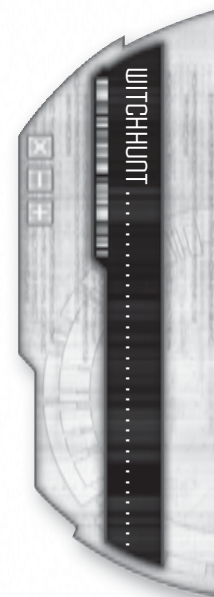
- She's running off the grid, given the situation, and I don't blame her. She mentioned that she turned up a lead and that she'd return with proof. Of what, I don't know.

- FastJack

- Like Evo, Horizon seems to be swimming against the current. Their media assets are spotlighting virtuakinetics as much as anyone, but their coverage seems less biased than most—well, as unbiased as a media corp can afford to get. Their latest stunt is to foot the bill for legal representation of an alleged technomancer who trashed a DocWagon clinic in San Fran this week. I can hear the concerned citizens groups and protestors hammering at their door already. What these guys won't do for the ratings!

- Dr. Spin

- It's more than just ratings, Doc. Horizon's hired Julien Iakob to organize the defense. Iakob comes from a well-connected dynasty of French lawyers. His record is spotless and he doesn't get out of bed for less than six digits. The head of research on his team, Matthew Lei, handles the quasi-legal case-related investigations. Word through the grapevine is that Lei is hiring talent as Horizon's asked him to extend their firm's services to other technomancers in trouble. My take is that Horizon's think-



MVD Announces Curfew (CONT.)

enforcement agency—announced a general curfew between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. The curfew will be “the first of several pre-emptive measures to ensure Moscow stays free of technomancers and the civil chaos they’ve generated elsewhere,” as MVD Chief Konstantin Vilyavich said during this morning’s announcement. [Read more.](#)

**New Attendance Record for Glitterworld
XLGameReport [Regency Megamedia]—07/10/70**

SEOUL-INCHEON, Korea: Despite the current climate of insecurity and fear in the Matrix following the shocking events in Hong Kong, nearly 7.8 million players from around the world simultaneously connected to the award-winning virtual world Glitterworld’s fourth anniversary last Saturday. This represents a new world record, topping last month’s 6.9 million players. Glitterworld is an immersive interactive sim involving a mix of show-biz management and artistic performance. Digiland, Kwonsham’s Matrix games subsidiary, has seen its shares’ value triple since the beginning of the year. This is a boon to the mother company, which has seen a slow recovery from the Crash and the recent turmoil in the disintegrating Pacific Prosperity Group. Dark clouds may be gathering on the horizon, however, as inside sources have leaked that Digiland programmers are having trouble keeping the game’s revolutionary idoru characters running properly with so many connected players. Consumers and parents associations based in the UCAS and Europe have also raised red flags over reports of Matrix addiction and biofeedback peak levels higher than the international legal limits.

**Oversight Board Conducts Country-Wide Operation
The Daily Mirror [Trinity Group]—07/12/70**

LONDON, UK: After days of rumors and hearsay, Sir Colin Woolsey, spokesperson for the Oversight Board, today confirmed that Oversight operatives have indeed conducted pre-emptive arrests of suspected technomancers nationwide under the Emergency Act. More than 250 individuals have been detained and are being interviewed by the authorities. “We will continue to meet this threat with the utmost determination to ensure our country’s safety,” added Sir Woolsey. [Read more.](#)

**ARC Headquarters Attacked
NewsBlitz! transcripts [KSAF]—07/12/70**

SEATTLE, UCAS: A demonstration held today in front of the Arcology Remembrance Committee offices—just across the street from the ACHE complex—turned unexpectedly violent. Protestors had gathered to demand the ARC be investigated for

Continued on page 60

ing long term, and that these otaku2 are here to stay. Don’t know if I’d take that kinda work though.

- Kay St. Irregular

- Things are escalating. Horizon’s just run an interview with the head of the UCAS Senate Security and Governmental Affairs Committee. Here are the highlights.

- Dr Spin

// upload media file :: user Dr Spin :: 07/16/70 //

// OMNIspeak audio-to-text transcript //

NEWSTALK! [HORIZON STUDIOS] EXCERPT

Kimberley Vogel: [...] do you think there might be a peaceful solution to this crisis? Innocents are already being mistaken for technomancers; in fact, my research indicates we currently possess no definite means of identifying them.

Sen. Karina Molton [Rep]: I agree that the lynching and protests must stop. The government’s goal must be to protect the public, even if that means protecting it from itself. But we must remain vigilant—after all, we know next to nothing about these individuals and their abilities, except that they seem to result from a mental condition than renders them unstable, and that they can and have employed their abilities against defenseless citizens on a devastating scale. We must prevent that from happening. Legislation—

K. Vogel: But what legislation, Senator? Are we talking mandatory registration? Internment similar to that seen with the Native Americans in the 2010s? Or the quarantine some nations imposed on metahumans in 2021? I’m sure you’ll agree, the unforeseen legacy of those choices still taints race relations today. Are they truly a solution? Should we not seek to understand the phenomenon better before jumping in?

Sen. Molton: While I disagree with your parallels, I wholeheartedly agree that we need a better understanding of the threat we’re facing. This is why our police forces have the strict order to call for medical assistance in case they successfully capture a technomancer. That said, I believe we can seek understanding *after* we’ve guaranteed the safety and security of our citizens. Make no mistake this is a “clear and present danger.”

K. Vogel: But don’t you think reaching out, offering anonymity and treatment, guaranteeing non-persecution, would produce better results? It seems to me you are basing your response simply on the acts of a few—

Sen Molton: A few terrorists! I’m fairly certain the families of those who died in Hong Kong would disagree with you. Until such time as we understand and can control these abilities, they must be seen as a potential menace to society.

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- Never liked Vogel, but at least she’s trying to be reasonable, which is more than I can say for others.

- Sunshine

- That confirms Horizon’s agenda, but don’t be naïve and assume they haven’t got their own black bag research program. They aren’t getting all touchy-feely, they’re thinking



that they'll come out looking like good guys in a few years when this all blows over.

• Dr. Spin

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 07/28/70 //
GLOBAL TRENDS—GALLOP POLL 07/15/70

The shocking arrival of “technomancers” into the headlines has been a painful reminder to many of the Matrix’s vulnerability. We remain so dependent as ever on this great resource, possibly more so than before the Crash 2.0, that any menace to its existence sets off all sorts of anxiety and alarms. We took to the streets of Seattle and asked the public what they thought of the current crisis:

Alberta J., clerk: “Hey, I don’t buy into that Humanis crap, but I lost a brother in the Crash. Now I’m hearing that whatever took his life is the same thing that made these technomancers? This isn’t like the Awakening, its not evolution, it’s unnatural. There’s no way a metahuman should be able to do things like this.”

Ronald F., Lone Star beat officer: “Anyway you cut it, technomancers are a danger. Even if they turn out not to be disturbed psychos, they need to be regulated. Think about it: with an illegal hacker, you’ve got a certain profile, you need certain skills, you need thousands of nuyen in equipment. These freaks? All they need is their minds to hack your commlink, break into your home, screw with your gridlink. You’ll never see it coming. Just like we regulate magicians and weapons, we need to regulate these guys. If you see one, report them to the nearest officer or the Lone Star hotline.”

Thomas P., messenger: “I don’t know. People are making a big deal of this, but we know nothing. I think it’s strange but no stranger than SURGE or Goblinization back in the day. Certainly not a ‘menace.’”

Lindsey N., CompSci student: “Me? I’m savvy. I don’t buy the party line, I’ve read up and looked for myself. I think this is all about AIs—yeah, artificial intelligences. Otaku, AIs, everything ties together—if you know where to look it’s all out there. The establishment, the corps, and the government—they don’t want you to know, but it all goes back to before the Crash.”

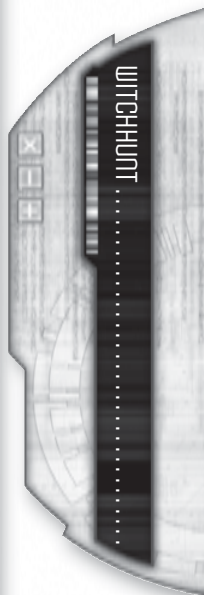
Alex K., nightclub bouncer: “Never met a technomancer, and they better hope they never meet me.”

Yellowfoot C.J., freelance programmer: “I’m on to their tricks, these techno-freaks. I can spot one of their personas three nodes away. What really drives me nuts is: where do they get off bringing down the heat on us regular folk trying to make a living on the Matrix? A good friend of mine’s still recovering at DocWagon after he was mistaken for a techno-monster.”

Mark R., Methodist preacher: “These unfortunates should warrant our sympathy, not our fear. They obviously have no idea of why they are the way they are. That’s why they’re so disturbed. Someone has been meddling with God’s work.”

Aneth G., high school teacher: “I hear people are complaining we’re violating their metahuman rights, but that begs the question: are they even metahuman anymore? We suspend the rights of the criminally insane. Is this any different?”

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ARC Headquarters Attacked (CONT.)

publically supporting and harboring technomancers. Fraying tempers and insults from both sides led to a melee breaking out between protestors and ARC volunteers. The ARC offices were invaded and several fires were set. Several volunteers were dragged into the street by the mob, beaten, and threatened with lynching. Several more people were hurt when Lone Star riot control forces arrived at the scene. No evidence of technomancer presence or connections was uncovered during the follow-up investigation. [Read more.](#)

**Lone Star Busts Techno-Crime Gang
Austin Lone Star Beat Report [LSC]—07/18/70**

AUSTIN, CAS: Lone Star Organized Crime and SWAT officers successfully raided the hideout of a technomancer crime ring specializing in ID and data theft. Evidence unearthed following the arrest hints at even larger scale fraud and financial crime, also committed using technomancer abilities. Lone Star officials say the two technomancers at the heart of the ring diverted money from hacked commlinks by spoofing bank transfers. Three gang members were killed while resisting arrest, but no Lone Star officers were harmed during the operation. Inside sources indicate critical information on the gang was provided by an unknown source referred to as "Goldenboy." [Read more.](#)

**Calcutta University Stormed by Angry Mob
The Calcutta Times [Regency]—07/19/70**

CALCUTTA, Indian Union: A peaceful demonstration demanding the government "take measures to cleanse the city of the technomancer threat" rapidly degenerated into a raging mob when breaking news reports confirmed that Calcutta Technical University harbored a technomancer research program for several months. Protestors stormed the University's CompSci Campus and dragged five students from lecture halls where they were immolated. Several other students suffered significant injuries and fractures when the mob attempted to stone them. According to eye witnesses, campus security consciously disregarded the alarm, and took far too long to intervene to help the students. [Read more.](#)

**Dzhugashvili Retires from Race
NewzByte newsfeed [NN]—07/24/70**

SEATTLE, UCAS: In a short press conference today, gubernatorial hopeful Josephine Dzhugashvili announced that "personal matters" prevent her from pursuing her political ambitions and withdrew from the upcoming election for Seattle Governor. Rival

Continued on page 62

- I'm hearing from insiders everywhere that the megas are openly cleaning house, rooting out any technomancers in their midsts. They're also being more overt with hiring bounty hunters and private investigators to track down technomancers—they get their hands on even more research subjects patients, and they look like they're taking a proactive, protect-the-public stance while they do it. Numerous government agencies are also getting in on the act, hand-in-hand with the corps of course, and all in the interest of public safety. I've taken on a few of these track-and-bag ops already. One or two of the 'mancers have been unstable, maybe dangerous, but most of them have been regular folks—they've been as scared as everyone else. I'm starting to think the risks are being exaggerated here.

- Stick

**// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 08/01/70 //
SWISS GOV LAUNCHES TECHNOMANCER
CONTROL INITIATIVE**

NewsNet subscription service—global—08/01/70

The Swiss government today announced the founding of a joint scientific project combining both government and corporate assets to develop "new means to suppress and control technomantic powers." In addition to key scientists from the reputed University of Basel, three megacorporations—NeoNET, Swiss Genom, and AG Chemie—will assign top researchers to the joint project.

The project, however, was not well received in all circles. Representatives from Evo and Proteus AG described the effort as an "ego-riddled think tank of armchair academics" as they announced a similar but worldwide project to be initiated at Evo's global headquarters in Vladivostok.

In related news, the Swiss government has voiced its support for the Scandinavian Union's petition to the NEEC demanding mandatory registration for technomancers. This petition is also supported by the British and French governments who are both pushing local legislation that will allow large-scale mandatory testing as an immediate and interim measure to identify potential technomancers.

// end attachment //

- It's interesting to see the different camps forming among the majors. MCT and Renraku lead the anti-technomancer coalition. NeoNET should also be grouped with them, though I'm hearing repeated rumors that Celedyr is contesting Villiers over the issue, so stay tuned on them. Evo and Horizon are taking the opposite stance, joined by a cautious Shiawase. Aztechnology is oddly quiet, despite Aztlan undergoing the same troubles as everywhere else. Though they're taking steps to bolster security, Ares and Wuxing seem to be leaning back and watching for the endgame. Only spirits know what Saeder-Krupp might be up to, so Lofwyr is a wildcard as usual.

- Cosmo



- It's not just the corps rushing to assess and evaluate the "new" threat. Governments, intelligence agencies, and independent NGOs are all trying to figure where they stand on the issue. Their approaches are as diverse as their agendas, leading to some pretty hot debates and occasional conflicts, though almost everyone agrees that technomancers present a credible threat. Conservative factions are using the opportunity to pull out all sorts of legislation to increase surveillance and police powers, taking full advantage of the scare to push it through in the name of security. It's pretty interesting to watch years of hard-won civil liberties disappear overnight. Only a few brave groups are taking a stand in defense of technomancers, and they're paying the price. Rumors are flying that some of them are protecting or even manipulated by technomancers. Me, I think technomancers aren't half the problem they're being made out to be.

- Mihoshi Oni

- How often have we seen this in the past? As the saying goes, those who sacrifice liberty for security get neither. Of course, that assumes we had liberty to begin with ...

- Aufheben

- There are some big shakeups going down in various Matrix intel-security divisions. Those agencies who weren't up to speed on the existence of technomancers, or who didn't share their data with other government agencies, are getting reamed by their superiors for not being on top of a major potential threat. Everyone also wants to know what their competition knows—and if their opponents might already be using technomancers against them—so snooping is at an all-time high. Meanwhile, the Corporate Court's Grid Overwatch Division (GOD) is trying to get everyone to play nice and share what they know. GOD underwent a significant restructuring after they failed to predict and prevent the Crash in '64, so they're trying to earn back their rep.

- Kay St. Irregular

- I'm hearing that hardliners like MCT and Renraku are having problems with their zero-tolerance policies. Overzealousness has led to several innocents being pegged for technomancers, stripped of their rights, and taken into custody. The whole thing is making their top eggheads antsy and ill-at-ease. Productiveness is dropping off and that's only making the brass more edgy.

- Fianchetto

PIECES DE RESISTANCE

- I've asked a friend, a freelance journalist covering the aftermath of the Hong Kong incident, to see what he could dig up about what was really going on at the Queen Elizabeth hospital. MCT seems to be distracted elsewhere, but my friend turned up nothing about the hospital incident itself. One of his contacts with the police, however, did provide something interesting. Shortly after the Hong Kong Police cornered one of the escaped patients, the following file was spammed to every wifi-enabled device within a two block radius. The suspect died "resisting arrest." MCT showed up soon after to wipe the file off of everything, but the police themselves kept a copy on file.

- Sunshine

// upload Unifomat message text :: uploaded by Sunshine
:: 08/05/70 //

My name is Liu Phiang, and these are my last words. You know me only as ROM#138, which means you don't know me at all, and now you never will. If you care for the truth, listen. If just one of you believes me, there might still be hope. I am one of those who escaped from Queen Elisabeth Hospital. You have been fed lies and fabrications. Your fear has made you gullible. I meant you no harm.

I should have known they would turn this round. I should have expected it. They had to save face, and keep their dirty little secret a secret. But I never dreamed they'd turn this against us.

I threw up when I first saw the footage. I was there, and still I doubted my memories. I remembered how quickly the lab filled with smoke, the sirens wailing as flames filled the hallway, the flickering shadows and the acrid smell of melted plastics. On the trid, *you* saw nothing of that. It took me time to realize the footage had been edited. Shalbermat was there backing up his files. I knew this because I had hacked his computer and left a sprite to delay him. I will take that arrogant bastard's look of shock when he recognized me to the grave. The contempt at my temerity in his eyes. *You* saw none of that. Only his face, digitally modified to look sweaty, panicked, fearful. That monster made a martyr!

I recall the shards of broken glass tearing at my unprotected feet. I recall his words, all his words. His real words. Not what *you* heard. Words of arrogance and hate, not fear. Not frightened, but incensed that someone dared to intrude on his great work. He cursed me, said I would always be a freak and an outsider. Hysterically, he shouted that I should surrender to his protection. Protection, hah!

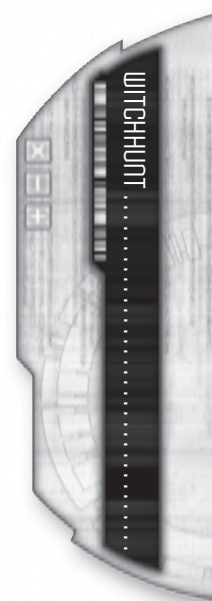
I struck him then. The memories of the pain, the cold metal, the cutting, and the torment I suffered at the hands of my torturer consumed me. I struck him again and again. When he no longer responded, I simply turned and left the room, looking for a way out of hell. On your screens, though, I savage Shalbermat, I paralyze him with my powers, I torture him, I maim him, and I kill him. The final image is my face, mad with anger and bloodlust, raising my bloody fist to the camera. I didn't do any of this, though I wish I had. I *can't* do any of this, though I wish I could. They have undone me. This message is my last hope of setting the record straight. Think for yourself. Why would I lie. You see what you want to see. If I am a monster, I am the monster you made of me.

// end attachment //

- Sunshine, you really expect us to believe this? Even if the source holds up, it's a final plea for mercy from a brazen murderer. Why would he lie, he asks? He had every reason to lie. It was a last ditch attempt to save his bacon. We can't trust this freak's word, *he was locked up in a psych ward*. He had the apes, he suffered from paranoid delusions and schizophrenia, *remember?*

- Clockwork

- Maybe. But I think you might be missing the point here. He talks about being locked up and tortured. We have no idea what MCT was doing with these guys. For all we know, they may have



Dzhugashvili Retires from Race (CONT.)

Republican candidate Kenneth Brackhaven commented that Dzhugashvili's announcement was not unexpected. "It was evident she didn't have what it takes to hold this office. She threw in the towel before her weakening public support became too obvious." Democratic candidate Julius Strouthers recognized Dzhugashvili's decision as "possibly the toughest decision in her career, if not her life" and wished her luck in future projects. Dzhugashvili refused to comment on the nature of her personal problems, but did say they had no connection to her vocal stance in calling for greater support to AIPS patients and the creation of outreach programs for emerging "technomancers" prior to the Hong Kong incident. [Read more.](#)

Family Drama Ends in Tragedy**Mile High News [Denver]—07/24/70**

DENVER, FRFZ; A hostage situation in the CAS sector ended in a bloody firefight today when Lone Star SWAT stormed the apartment in which Kevin Lurke held his step-daughter hostage. Armed with a shotgun, Mr. Lurke threatened to kill the 12-year old Susanne, whom he accused of being a technomancer. After twenty hours of negotiations, police stormed the apartment and mortally wounded Mr. Lurke. Susanne Lurke was also seriously wounded and taken to the hospital. A hospital spokesperson said, "There is absolutely no indication that she is a technomancer." [Read more.](#)

Technomancers Vandalize D-FW GridGuide**Micro-News [NN]—07/28/70**

DALLAS-FORT WORTH, CAS: It has been confirmed by GridGuide authorities that a group of technomancers are behind the traffic chaos that left downtown Dallas paralyzed today. In an act of wanton vandalism, the traffic management subsystems were besieged with concerted denial of service attacks from several different locations, creating numerous network failures and bringing rush hour traffic to a halt. The intruders also employed unique software agents—so-called "sprites"—to communicate their message to the public. Traffic AROs and holoboard were altered to project messages such as "Peace. Technomancers are not your enemy" and "We are your brothers, sisters, children, and parents. Accept us. Respect us." Though Lone Star responded promptly to the situation, no arrests were made, and severe traffic jams continue to affect the downtown area. [Read more.](#)

Third "Opaline" Suicide**Evening News with Kyle Bellar [ABS]—07/31/70**

BALTIMORE, UCAS: Daniel S. Richards, 43, was found dead at his home by Renraku security yesterday

Continued on page 64

been tortured. Would any of us put it past the corps to do something like that? If I was locked up in a mental hospital against my will, getting prodded and poked by some heartless corp researcher, I might snap and kill the guy too.

- Glitch

- I have to side with Clockwork on this one. Much as I have some sympathy for these technomancers, the facts are he was mentally unstable, he murdered the doc, and he was about to get captured. People in that position will say anything to get out of what they did.

- Riser

- Not sure what to make of this yet, but Netcat copied me without an explanation. At first sight, the story reads like the standard "technomancers strike back" story we're starting to see on the wires, like some technomancer siccing his "sprites" on bystanders to make a statement. The second bit, though, makes it a whole lot more intriguing.

- Sunshine

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 08/08/70 //

TECHNOMANCER ATTACKS TOURISTS**EuroNews [AGE]—Paris, France—08/5/70**

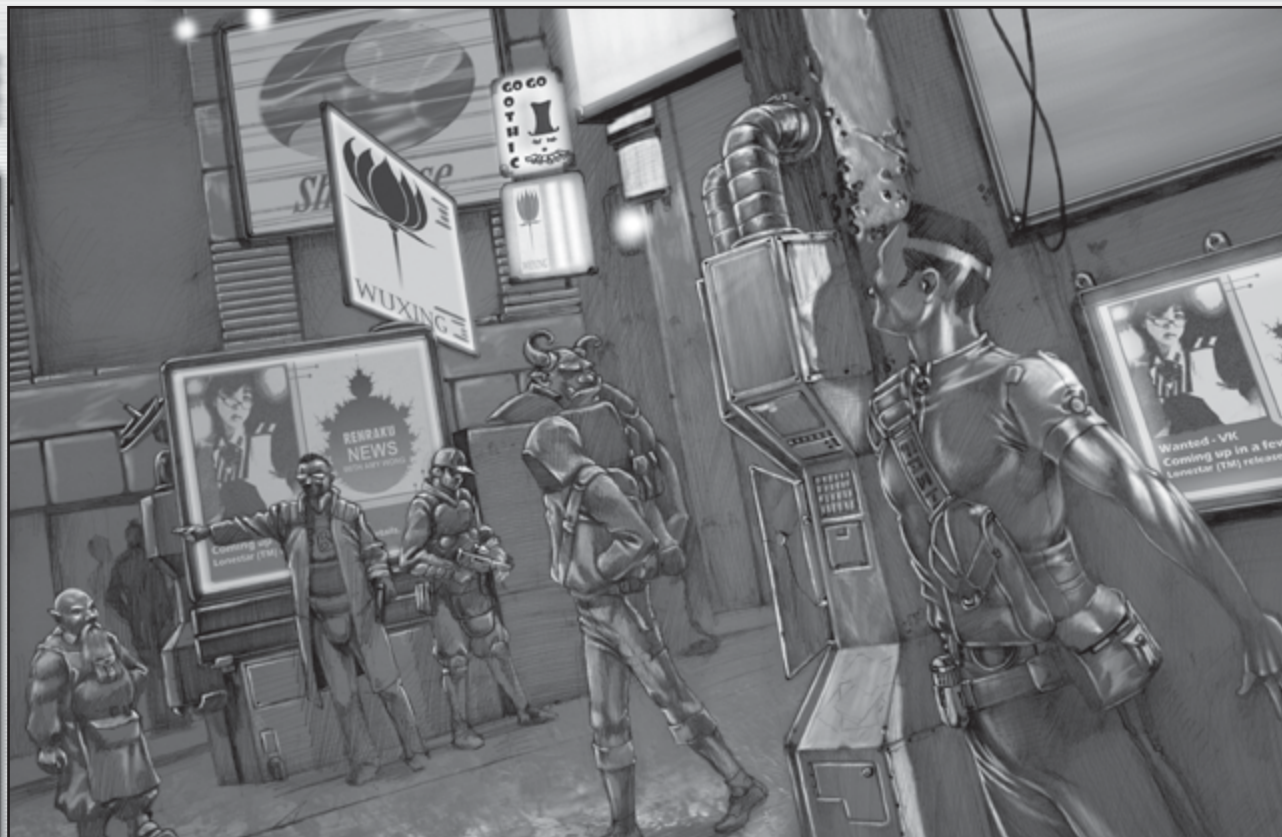
Two people died and sixteen others were hospitalized after their VR Matrix sightseeing tour was targeted by an attack as they approached the Eiffel Tower node in Paris. The survivors of the group of thirty are still recovering from shock, with some still comatose. Names of the victims are being withheld for the time being.

Several disturbing facts about this attack have raised alarms with investigators. First is the fact that the standard VR immersion used by the tourists—the colloquially known "cold sim" used by millions throughout the Matrix each day—should not have been vulnerable to lethal levels of biofeedback. Circumventing a commlink or simdeck's hardwired neural feedback buffers via the Matrix is something specialists believe impossible. Until a full examination is conducted on the two dead victims, however, investigators will not be sure if this is some new type of attack or whether their deaths were merely caused by stress, fright, or some other factor.

Survivors describe their attackers as a group of sculpted grotesque gargoyle icons. Witnesses describe them as "growling" and ripping apart their victims like feral animals. Mr. Rujira of Dhaka, one of the survivors, vividly recounted being able to feel the rending and savage attacks of claws and beaks in his own flesh. The attackers escaped after an Eiffel security hacker arrived on the scene, surprising the group and destroying one assailant.

The virtual bloodshed started as the visitors approached the Eiffel Tower node, the largest public node on the Parisian Matrix, home to several virtual museums, tourist attractions, and social services. Despite the authorities' best efforts, it is also a well-known hangout for Matrix gangs and wannabe hackers. In recent months, violence has dramatically increased between such groups, though this





INCOMING FEED.....

incident is the first time such violence has spilled over to include bystanders.

In view of recent world events, however, police investigators indicate they believe the unfortunate tourists may have been targeted by software agents conjured by a dangerous “technomancer,” in retaliation for the deaths of two alleged technomancers at the hands of a mob in Montparnasse last Tuesday. The perpetrator has yet to be apprehended.

// end attachment //

// upload email :: user Sunshine :: 08/08/70 //

From: Drackenfelts

To: Netcat

Date: 08/07/70

Subject: Re: Eiffel attack

Salut,

I’m glad others are trying to see beyond the biased news coverage of the gargoyles’ attack. I for one am confident this isn’t technomancer related. First off, this isn’t actually the first time the gargoyles have made headlines—though never so violently. I’ve heard rumors of them since mid-2067 at least. Encounters are always variations of the same story: you pass next to a bunch of gray and immobile gargoyles, thinking they’re part of the local Matrix sculpture, but you can feel their eyes following you. If you make a run for it, they leave you alone. If you don’t, they start hissing and spitting at you and then chase you away. If outnumbered, they tended to vanish. In one instance, they actually

attacked a passerby, but promptly retreated afterward. That was a month ago. Things seem to be escalating.

A friend of mine used to be with EuroPol’s Matrix division, and he knows a few backdoors into their system. We checked out their incident and forensic reports and discovered the investigators found nothing. They tried to backtrack the icons and got nowhere. There was absolutely nothing to track, no log register, no access trail, nothing. It was either all erased or somehow not registered. I assume that even a technomancer’s “sprites” would leave a log trail just like an agent or other software, even if it’s faked. The only thing they’ve got is code fragments from the gargoyle that was destroyed. They’ve been analyzing and dissecting the code, and they’ve found some evidence that it was originally an IC construct, but heavily-modified. It didn’t have the usual tell-tales of a technomancer trick. One investigator thinks the code was *self-adaptive and regenerative*. Could a technomancer modify IC like this, or are we looking for something else? Could this be an AI? Something new? Some bastard child of the Crash worm or Deus? Get back to me when you can.

// end attachment //

• Wouldn’t have pegged Drackenfelts for a sucker, jumping to conclusions like that. We all know that there’s no consensus on how technomancer powers work yet (and until we get them under control and thoroughly study them, there won’t be). I don’t see why everyone’s so eager to let technomancers off the hook

WITCHHUNT

Urgent Message...

Third "Opaline" Suicide (CONT.)

afternoon after failing to report in to work. Richards committed suicide via electrocution while he was connected to the Matrix. The elaborate arrangement of Richards's personal items throughout the room suggests a passionate romantic encounter gone wrong, though no signs of violence were evident. According to Renraku, dozens of online chat logs between Richards and an individual identified as "Opaline" were found in Richards's memory cache. Investigators believe Richards, whose mental balance already severely debilitated by the loss of his wife during the second Crash, committed suicide when Opaline terminated the virtual relationship after Richards insisted on a physical meeting. A suicide note found at the scene reads, "If she won't come to me, I'll go to her!"

This is the third death linked to Opaline in five months, all under similar circumstances. Knight Errant investigations continue into the first two deaths, but sources indicate little headway has been made. Investigating officers haven't ruled out technomancer involvement, though the elaborate romantic ruse suggests otherwise. Opaline is being sought for questioning, and Knight Errant is offering a reward for information that helps them find her. [Read more.](#)

Queen Caroline Criticizes Crisis Handling News at 9 [BBC2]—08/01/70

WINDSOR, UK: In a surprise interview published in today's Financial Times, Queen Caroline severely criticized the "drastic means employed and violation of civil rights committed during the Oversight Board's attempts to face the technomancer issue." The Queen made a personal appeal to the Board's Director, Sir Adam Dashwood, not to "use the Emergency Act to exacerbate the climate of tension and paranoia."

Several NGOs and special interest groups have already come forward with claims that the Oversight Board and Lord Protector's Office have used the technomancer threat as a smokescreen to arrest civilian insurgents and political dissidents. [Read more.](#)

NuTech Design Presents Techno Blocker 3K-XL viral shotgun spam [NuTech]—08/03/70

Scared of technomancer attacks on the most precious of belongings—your identity? Want to protect your privacy and data? Look no further and order NuTech Designs Techno Blocker 3K-XL now! Created by leading experts in data protection and developed under supervision of government authorities, this device will block any technomancer intrusion attempts immediately and identify their source. Don't wait to protect your privacy! (Accessories and brand name adapters available on request). [Buy!](#)

Continued on page 66

here. They have motivation after all: this attack is probably payback for the French government supporting the Technomancer Registration Act with the NEEC. We have numerous documented cases of other technomancer terror attacks. I'm in full support of a clampdown.

- Clockwork
- I've contacted Drackenfelts directly and I'm convinced he's got something. Don't take my word for it, [download the ripped data](#) yourself. You're a tech-wiz, Clockwork, so tell me your professional opinion. You might not like his findings, but those analyses seem pretty conclusive. The evidence doesn't implicate technomancers at all. The best guess is that these gargoyles are either sprites or some kind of prototype IC agent, set free in the wild on a test run that could easily be covered up as a technomancer attack.
- Sunshine
- We don't understand the limits of their abilities, so this may be a diversion, an attempt by technomancers to muddy the waters. The only other time we've seen cold sim users die from Matrix biofeedback was during the Crash. That implies a technomancer connection to me.
- Kia

Private Message...

> *This job offer met your specified requirements.*

Subject: Job Offer—Automated Message

From: Jackpoint Job Bank

Operation Type: Retrieval

Salary Range: Negotiable

Location: Ketchikan (Tsimshian Salish Protectorate)

Message: We need a large package (a box or a set of boxes) to be retrieved from a Ketchikan warehouse. Delivery location to be discussed after agreement, but within a 100 km radius. Very fragile contents. Quick and decisive action rewarded. Transportation provided. Attractive remuneration.

Contact Johnson: <Yes>/<Ignore>

// begin newsclip item:: user Sunshine :: 08/08/70 // TECHNOMANCER VICTIM DIES IN PANAMA HOSPITAL

Televisa—Panama City—08/08/70

Elianne Brienne (29), an assistant manager for Free Transit Cartage, passed away in the hospital yesterday. Ms. Brienne had been in critical condition after suffering a massive stroke from some form of VR sensory overload, believed to have been the handiwork of a technomancer. Brienne was on a train home from work when she was assaulted. Eyewitnesses indicate Ms. Brienne was using her commlink in full VR mode when suddenly she began screaming and swinging at invisible assailants. Shortly afterwards, she collapsed from the stroke. Bystanders identified another train passenger as the possible assailant. During the episode, the



man later identified as Marco Ocasio, a 35-year unemployed programmer, appeared to be gesturing and pointing angrily in Brienne's direction. Unfortunately, Mr. Ocasio was mortally wounded when police attempted to apprehend him at his apartment a short time later. Police have not been able to confirm whether or not the man was a technomancer.

// end attachment //

- Another victim of technomancer terror. What does it take to convince people?

- Clockwork

- Don't jump to conclusions. Notice how the headline implicates a technomancer, but there's not a shred of evidence given that this wasn't a regular hacker at work—or even that she didn't have a mundane seizure and stroke from overstimulation in some online game (*shrug*—it's happened before). This is either irresponsible journalism, or carefully crafted to hype up technomancers as a threat to average people.

- Dr. Spin

- Brienne, the victim, was a chiphead. Her commlink was illegally modified to run BTL. Or so someone in Aztechnology's PR damage control department tells me (Aztechnology owns Free Transit Cartage, who employed Brienne).

- Marcos

- Several bloggers in Panama City were claiming that Brienne's "assailant" was an innocent bystander, who just happened to be close by when Brienne had her stroke. They cite witnesses who say Ocasio was ambushed and gunned down by police without warning outside his apartment. Dead men can't plead their innocence. Authorities clamped down on the bloggers and took their sites offline within hours.

- Sunshine

// temporary account established :: sysop FastJack //

// temporary account logged on :: user Patient V //

// thread settings changed // posting restricted //

- Netcat is back, and she's brought that evidence she promised. I've temporarily set this thread to "restricted posting," as it's important that you hear what they have to say.

- FastJack

- Thanks, 'Jack, for giving me the chance to strip away some of the deceit and hype that has been passed off as fact. I've been looking into the disappearance of Victor Markwart, the missing technomancer from Boston, since that story first went up. I confirmed that he had indeed been abducted from his residence, so then I combed campus security and traffic cams until I flagged an unmarked van at the right place, at the right time. It left four minutes after Markwart's house alarm was neutralized. It took me two weeks and considerable expense to track the van all the way to a Universal Omnitech facility on the outskirts of Miami. Long story short: I got Markwart out and I got more than I bargained for—what I saw will haunt me for the rest of my days.

Victor was all but an empty shell, his meat body as exhausted and tortured as his mind. It took a week and serious healing mojo to get him on his feet. I leave it to V to tell you the rest.

- Netcat

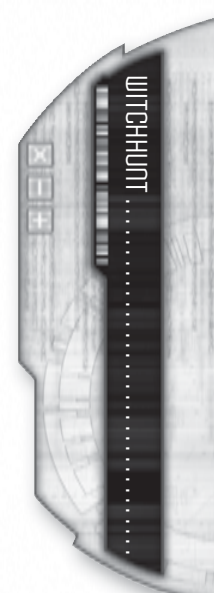
- Thanks to Netcat for everything and to Fastjack for the opportunity. My name is Victor Markwart, and I'm a technomancer. What Netcat has said is true. I was abducted, gagged and smuggled across several borders—but that was nothing compared to what came next. At the MIT&T study, where my abilities became known, they were cautious and respectful; I was a volunteer and I could pull out anytime. At Universal Omnitech's facility, I was a prisoner. I had no rights; I had a number and a cell. The UO scientists wanted to figure out how our abilities worked; to them, we were just animals, not people. When I resisted, they had the means to break my resistance. I was meat. My mind and body were raped, dissected, probed, cut, and scanned. It was worse knowing that I was *not* alone. There were always three of us. I could feel the pain my companions broadcast when we were tested simultaneously. Strangely enough, I think the pain kept me sane. The weak, the damaged, and the depleted were discarded. For every one of us that died from the cortex stimulation, the feedback spikes, or the exploratory surgery, a new one was delivered. The scientists had a definite schedule, a well-developed research program with timetables and goals. I didn't understand until after my recovery, when Netcat showed me what's been happening. They've been experimenting on us since long before the breakout in Hong Kong. Probably since the Crash. And from what I see, UO is only one corporation among many conducting illegal experiments.

I'm a technomancer by no choice of my own. Sometimes my abilities even scare me. When they first emerged, I wrecked my school's computer lab. To be honest, I don't really know what I can do—or could do, given the proper training. *Maybe* I am a danger to myself and others. Maybe they're right. But does that give them the right to torture and kill us? To prod, hurt, and humiliate? To imprison without trial? To turn us into their slaves?

- Patient V

- I saw first hand the labs V was kept in. I don't care what you think of technomancers—no living creature deserves to be experimented on that way. They were cutting technomancers—men, women, young, old, all metatypes—open like they were dissecting pigs. They had people who were identified as "potential technomancers" captive as well, so pumped up on psychotropics and nootropics—in a vain attempt to find a way to "create technomancers"—that their brains were permanently scrambled. It was an atrocity.

V was the only one we managed to liberate. I frankly wish I could have killed the rest rather than leave them. It would have been more humane. We did, however, acquire some intriguing evidence, which you can view [here](#). There's nothing ironclad and damning—yet—but there's enough to suggest that Universal Omnitech has been experimenting on technomancers since shortly after the Crash. More to the point, they've exchanged data with other corporations. This means that not only have the corps been conducting illegal metahuman experimentation for years, but they're using



Serial ID Thief Arrested**Kanal 2 News [Nordjyske]—08/05/70**

COPENHAGEN, Denmark: Copenhagen police forces finally cracked a mysterious case of serial ID theft and arrested a technomancer in possession of more than thirty-six stolen identities. The technomancer was caught in the act of stealing personal data, or “dipping” as criminals refer to it. Matrix security operatives, who had the suspect under electronic surveillance, used highly sophisticated monitoring programs to verify the criminal’s electronic signature accurately enough to be used as evidence in court. Criminal acts by technomancers have yet to be specifically considered in the nation’s code of law. [Read more.](#)

E-Ghost Stories**Discovery Network [UCAS]—08/15/70**

Tonight on the Discovery Network: *E-Ghost Stories*:

Rumors and tall tales of strange Matrix encounters, thought to have definitively stopped in the months following the Crash, have made a comeback in the news thanks to the technomancer phenomenon. Karen G. says she speaks with her father, who died online during the Crash 2.0. Cathy H. says her dead son continues to send her v-cards of his travels around the world. John D. recounts how his deceased ex-wife continues to pursue him with threatening e-mails. Dozens of similar reports are accumulating, fueling the rumor mill and guaranteeing controversy. In the wake of revelations surrounding technomancers, is there any truth in these “e-ghost stories?” Are they somehow caused by technomancers, or are they something else entirely? Initially discarded as post-Crash trauma, these accounts now divide the scientific community. The majority continues to consider them the constructions of self-deluded trauma victims in need of psychiatric support. [Get Feed.](#)

Toddler Narrowly Escapes Kidnapping**Good Morning Family [Shiawase iTrid]—08/19/70**

NEO-TOKYO, JIS: Young Takashi Takemura will likely not remember what may turn out to be the greatest adventure of his life. Last Friday, when the Takemuras left him in the care of his Filipino nanny, Melinda Esperanza, to attend a Shiawase-sponsored charity event, they could not imagine they had delivered their 5-month-old son into a kidnapper’s hands. An amazing string of events, however, foiled the plans of the nanny and her two Yakuza accomplices. As the kidnapping trio prepared to leave the mansion with their prize, the automated security grid inexplicably went on full alert. Shiawase security guards in charge of the residential block were alerted as the mansion went into total lockdown mode, trapping the kidnappers inside.

Continued on page 68

this whole technomancer scare as a smokescreen. They aren’t afraid of technomancers—they’ve known about us for years. They’re just feeding the flames, buying more time to find a way they can exploit technomancers for their own ends.

I’m going after more definitive evidence here. I believe we can find concrete proof of that and take it public. But I’ll need help. Sunshine, FastJack, Glitch, anyone else, I can use a hand.

- Netcat

- I’ve double-checked Netcat’s data to the best of my ability, and it looks legit. I think she’s on to something, and I think she’s going to need help. Okay, I know the rest of you are eager to add you own 0.2 nuyen.

- FastJack

// posting restriction disabled :: sysop FastJack //

- Cry me a river. Bad things happen—welcome to the real world. Until proven otherwise, the corps are just trying to protect themselves from you and your kind, Netcat. I grew up in a region where corporate mercenaries raped and shot the girls from my town as sport. We all know the corps have blood on their hands. For once, I think they might be spilling blood for a worthwhile cause. Someone needs to find out what makes technomancers tick, so we can understand how much of a threat they are.

- Clockwork

- Sounds to me, Clockwork, like you’re hoping they’ll find a “cure.” Is that the final solution you’re looking for here? Just like some folks sought out a cure for UGE, Goblinization, the Awakened, and SURGE? Oh, wait, that just a flimsy excuse to pursue reactionary ethnic cleansing and the like, wasn’t it? Silly me, I keep thinking metahumans will learn from the past.

- Aufheben

- Let’s take this into perspective for a minute. Despite the hype about a technomancer threat, there’s really very little evidence to back it up. If technomancers have been around for almost 6 years, why haven’t we had an incident like the one in Hong Kong prior to this? Sure, we’ve seen numerous small incidents in the press since then about “technomancer attacks” and “technomancers gone wild,” but these have all been minor, isolated affairs, and the vast majority can be attributed to overreaction/panic or retaliation/self-defense. Statistically, we’re all more likely to die from a lightning strike than a technomancer attack, but no one’s up in arms over the weather. So it follows that technomancers aren’t quite the threat the media is making them out to be. Now, if the corps have know about technomancers for years—which seems likely, unethical experimentation or not—then they already know this. So the question is, what do they have to gain from making technomancers out to be bad guys? For that question alone, I think Netcat’s line of inquiry is worthwhile.

- Dr. Spin



- Netcat, it sounds like you have that angle covered. In the meantime, there's something else I want to check into. Let me start with this:
- Sunshine

```
// begin media file :: user Sunshine :: 08/09/70 //
// E-Transoft audio-to-text transcript enabled //
TRUTHSAYER WITH ARNO INFANTE—
GLOBAL EDITION
```

It's been over five years since the Crash 2.0, but the painful memories of the lost relatives and broken careers are still fresh in our minds. And how could it any other way? Over the last few weeks, we've all been bombarded with news of the dreadful technomancers' deeds and how they threaten the way of life we worked so hard to rebuild. We've been told technomancers are the children of the Crash worm, evolutionary mutations, and harbingers of the Third Crash.

Could this be all there is to see in our young wireless Matrix? As the Matrix is scoured for signs of nefarious technomancer activity, disturbing stories are coming in, telling us of weird phenomenon going on there. If you are to believe the mainstream media, each of these incidents is yet another sign of technomancers up to no good. But what if there's something else out there—something completely separate from the technomancer threat? The following interview, provided by a Matrix security agent who prefers to remain anonymous, presents one such possibility:

Arno Infante: So, tell us a little about yourself and what you witnessed.

John Doe: I'm what they call a "spider," a security rigger. I operate a site's surveillance and defensive electronics remotely. I'm good at my job, and I've been doing it for four to five years now. Anyway, this happened to me about two months ago.

A. Infante: What exactly happened?

John Doe: Well, I was halfway through a late shift, running a standard security check, when I noticed an unauthorized access to the internal grid. See, when I do my thing, I'm running the system from a virtual security center. My first thought was: shadowrunners. Wouldn't have been the first time. I work for a fairly big corporation, you know, and what with the technomancer thing, we've been on heightened alert for weeks now. So I brought up the access logs and ... well, they made no sense!

A. Infante: How so?

J. Doe: Well, they were reading as if someone had accessed the feeds from my virtual station—the central security node terminal. Not possible, I was the only icon there. We'd been briefed about technomancers, so I knew that even those freaks have an online persona. I ran system scans and other analysis tools and got nothing. But the logs still showed something there, accessing different cams, totally invisible to my software, doing its stuff completely unfazed.

A. Infante: And what exactly was this "intruder" doing?

J. Doe: That's the odd part. According to the real-time logs, it wasn't deleting or altering any of the trideo streams, it was just accessing them. No traffic out of my node at all. Something was just watching the feeds.

A. Infante: Did you consider that it might simply be a glitch?

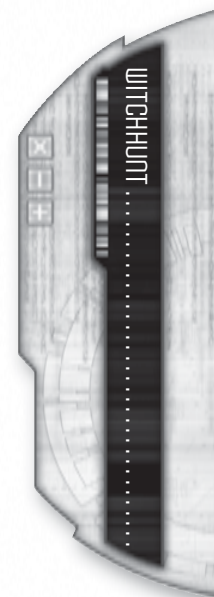
John Doe: At that point I was starting to believe so. But I kept checking the accessed feeds, just to be sure, and then ... I felt, uh, a presence, not in the node, but all around me. Creepy. You know, not like when my link indicates a friendly just hit the local net, but as if someone was coming up behind me, in the real world. Then the node started to ... for a lack of better words, flow. The walls bulged, the virtual console filled up with gibberish characters, feeds suddenly displayed static, things moved. It was like someone was editing the system sculpture in real time. The system itself was coming alive! Then, suddenly—and I swear on my mother's grave—I saw this eyeball staring back at me from the screens and a mouth forming along with it. The mouth tried to say something, and it felt like my head was going to explode. Luckily, my link's overrides detected the massive sim-overload and disconnected me.

A. Infante: What happened then?

John Doe: I woke up a couple of minutes later, and, uh, Jimmy, my partner, had already logged an alert and called the paramedics. Blood was dribbling from my nose and ears, and I felt dizzy. Our backup went in to check my node and came up empty handed. Worse, the logs showed no inconsistencies—apparently I had been looking through the cameras. No matter what I said, no one took me seriously. My colleagues were starting to give me weird looks, so I dropped the matter. But I had to let someone know. There was something with me in that node, I was sure of that.

A. Infante: What made you so sure? Is it possible you could have imagined it all?

John Doe: Believe me, I doubted myself too. Secretly, I went over my node's logs with a fine comb. Days later—almost cost me my job—and I'd found nothing. Then I tried something different, I checked the firmware. This stuff is hardcoded into the system, you can't really access it online, but you can check it for errors. I knew something was wrong the moment I brought up the diagnostics console. It was subtle, but I know my Holo-LISP. There was code that shouldn't have been there, and it wasn't static like it should be, it was constantly changing. There was something running on the processors. Something leeching off the security system's architecture, but running under the surface. It didn't read on the logs, because it was the logs! I couldn't tell anyone—they already thought I was going nuts. Next thing, they'd peg me for technomancer and I'd get a visit from internal security. Nah, the next day I quit my job. I've got some savings and I'm not going to hang around a haunted system. Hell, next time I might not survive.



Toddler Narrowly Escapes Kidnapping (CONT.)

Unexpectedly, the kidnapping devolved into a hostage situation. According to police, negotiations became increasingly difficult as the trio grew eager to escape the mansion. Shiawase security was preparing an assault when the front door burst open and the nanny came running out, the baby in her arms. Esperanzo surrendered to security, claiming "The *kami* of the house are very angry at me." When Shiawase security entered the mansion, they found only the remains of the two accomplices. Autopsies later revealed both died of multiple contusions, minor cuts, and electrocution. Esperanza later described the events in the house to police. "The house drones went crazy and attacked us!" she said. "The robotic maid broke Ryu's neck before Jin could stop it." Closed-circuit trideo recordings confirm Esperanza's story, but no evidence has yet been found that could explain the house drones' heroic actions. Magical specialists are currently examining the family home. [Read more.](#)

**Search Continues for NYSE Goldenboy
Wall Street Journal Online—08/25/70**

NEW YORK CITY, UCAS: The hunt is on for the mysterious trader operating under the code-name "Goldenboy" as he continues his amazing ascent as one of the most successful—and richest—stock traders in the New York Stock Exchange's history. Several corporations and headhunting companies have offered substantial rewards to anyone able to provide concrete identification of the elusive trader. All insist they wish to hire Goldenboy, but according to rumors, some are looking for reprisals—Goldenboy's trading has cost some of those corporations several million nuyen. Most specialists agree, however, that Goldenboy's continued investments in the Horizon Group nebula have boosted other traders' confidence in the corporation, surely helping the newest of the AAA megacorps secure its position. Horizon Group denies having any connection to Goldenboy and is actually offering one of the highest rewards on the table for reliable information on the trader. [Read more.](#)

Had John Doe's experience been an isolated incident, we might not have taken it seriously, but *Truthsayer* has been contacted by several people with strikingly similar experiences. System anomalies, ghostly persona that leave no log registers, arrows displaying unintelligible info, altered trideo signals, interactive characters acting outside parameters—these are only the most innocuous events reported. There have also been un-

explained deaths, people inexplicably struck down at work or even while walking the streets with only their commlink on. Originally attributed to technomancers attacks, some such events have been highly publicized. Circumstances beg the question: if no hacker or technomancer was involved, then who or what might be responsible? That's the question the mainstream media should be asking, because as long as we don't know, the perpetrators are still out there ...

// end attachment //

- So what? "No evidence" means there's no evidence either way! It could have been technomancer constructs, "sprites" or whatever they're called. This Infante guy is sloppy if he doesn't even check the facts before spewing out half-assed theories. What's the point of posting this?

- Snopes

- At first glance, Snopes, I was inclined to agree with you. Thinking back to when I started this investigation, though, I realize that there is a massive cache of inconsistencies. Looking through my files, I have all sorts of facts that don't add up: references to obscure Matrix black bag projects that don't seem to involve technomancers, for example, and reports of Matrix oddities doing stuff that technomancers shouldn't be able to do no matter what their powers. With all eyes so focused on finding evidence of technomancers, we may be missing the trail of other ... things. It's worth looking into. I don't have time to double check every single strange lead, though. I'm glad Netcat is helping out.

- Sunshine

- Maybe Infante knows more than he can say. It wouldn't be the first time the media was gagged by the powers-that-be. Infante's got a solid rep after all—he's not the kind of guy who would commit career suicide over a story like this.

- Plan 9

- So, you'd like us to think that we're not alone—that something else is lurking on the grids? Are you saying we haven't seen the last of the AIs?

- Kia

- Let's pray you're wrong.

- Puck

- Seems like a wild goose chase to me, a technomancer trick to divert the pikes and torches.

- Black Mamba

- I know my rep is still unstable. I may be a technomancer, but contrary to popular opinion that doesn't make me crazy. More to the point, I can identify things that might ordinarily be attributed to technomancer abilities by people who don't understand how we work. Trust me, I have more to show you.

- Netcat





INCOMING FEED.....

Private Message...

Subject: AresSpace DefSat gone AWOL
From: Orbital DK

Just wanted to give you a heads up, I know you're always keen on news from up the well. Some interesting intel just came in this morning from our comms. One of Ares's new weapon platforms, DarkEye5, disappeared from their screens after activating its kinetic defense system and taking down two nearby sensor sats. Rumors have been flying around for weeks up here that somebody was messing with the Ares sat grid, but no one took it seriously—those systems are arctic. This must have been the end-game. If it comes down, I'll be sure to give you a heads up—salvage on this baby would be 7 digits.

SUMMONING

• One of my contacts sent me this file yesterday. Believe it or not, it's ripped from the personal commlink of a Genom scientist my contact extracted from Geneva last week. We already knew Genom was involved in "countering the technomancer threat," but I've selected some interesting passages for you. They contain a few surprises in light of recent events.

• Netcat

// upload Uniformat text attachment :: user Netcat ::
08/12/70 //
15th January 2070

Doctor Dupuit decided to make the best of his bad luck with VK-04, who has been comatose for two weeks now, and began a cerebral vivisection on the subject early this morning. Four hours into the procedure something happened. We're still not entirely sure what. The post-op analyses are still pending, but a surge of neural activity was detected in the last minute preceding the subject's death. The surge somehow sparked a cascading process error, leading to system failure in much of the operating equipment—despite the heavy firewalls. This included the life-support equipment, prompting the subject's demise. Dupuit is convinced VK-04 subconsciously manipulated the equipment to commit suicide. Idiot!

21st January 2070

Today's experiment produced encouraging results. The drug employed to impede virtuakinetic abilities was partly successful. VK-02 couldn't access even the simplest wireless device placed more than 2 meters away, but the effects only lasted a few minutes. Further testing is required. We experienced power surges and system errors again all day. Diagnostics were unable to pinpoint the origin, but things apparently returned to normal this evening.

WITCHHUNT



3rd February 2070

Testing has now been suspended for almost a week because of the increasingly frequent glitches. This has proved a significant setback. We have yet to determine the cause(s) of these anomalies, but they ceased after we placed all 11 subjects in heavily-shielded containment cells. Could Dupuit have been right? Diagnostic subroutines are running 24/7 to analyze and prevent further disturbances.

10th February 2070

The latest iteration of the formula is a failure. All subjects developed a resistance to the drug. Increasing the dosage is not a solution; it accumulates in the metabolism and rapidly reaches toxic levels. We will need to restart from scratch and try a new, less invasive approach. We need results and we need them soon, or Prof. Dos Santos's team and their nano-treatment are going to beat me.

9th March 2070

What a month! We lost two of the subjects—"technomancers" as the media are now calling them—apparently due to intense stress and susceptibility to the invasiveness of our experiments. Perhaps disconnection from emissions for such a long period increases their stress levels? Must verify. Post-op trauma induced a brain hemorrhage in one case. The other simply ceased cerebral activity. Dupuit suspects suicide again—what a waste!

10th March 2070

We finally have results in dealing with the system glitches. It appears we've suffered multiple intrusions on our sealed internal network. The significance of the attacks remains a mystery—no permanent damage was done, and no data was affected or stolen. Our technicians are analyzing the attacker's unusual code signature from the mirrored logs—the active logs show no trace of activity. I believe it may have been a free virtuakinetically trying to communicate with the subjects we keep in the labs. We're still unsure how he, if it is a he, is accessing our shielded network. They've trimmed the list of outside electronics we can bring into the lab—again!—and updated the automatic screening each gadget goes through when we enter. My devices all already use the latest company software—it's all very secure.

12th March 2070

The analysis on VK-04's final broadcast arrived this morning. Nothing major was revealed, but an analysis of the subject's signal encoding implies that he was indeed communicating with our network intruder! This reinforces my theory of a communication attempt. Maybe there's something more to this encoding pattern. I will submit it to cryptology.

26th March 2070

The new formula is going nowhere. Another subject died during experimentation, and I can sense the hierarchy is growing tired of waiting for concrete results. I need more time, I need more subjects, I need more funds—but I can't ask for

more with a straight face. To make things worse, I've started receiving threats from an unknown source. The blackmailer seems to know a lot about my activities and the lab's research—too much. S/he even knew one subject's real name. I assume s/he is somehow connected to the intrusions, but s/he hasn't made any demands yet. I will inform security tomorrow.

1st April 2070

The blackmailer contacted me again, ordering me to release the technomancers (as if *I* could!), but Matrix Security was ready for him. Their logging software not only pinpointed the origin—it determined that my commlink was hacked! Luckily, the intruder's access point was traced—he must be a terribly inexperienced technomancer. I've requested that s/he be taken alive, as I could always use one more test subject.

2nd April 2070

The blackmailer's location turned out to be a disused office building on the outskirts of the sprawl. It had contained the offices of a banking and insurance corp that was hard hit by the second Crash. This branch was summarily closed down, but the company retained it as a storage space, guarded only by remotely-operated drones. The site was sat-scanned for activity and none was found. Our own security hackers confirmed the target was still active inside and accessing the Matrix. The strike team went in expecting the worse ... and almost didn't make it. An unidentified group—reports suggest mercenaries—attempted to intercept it, but was repulsed. One was captured.

Oddly, our team found nothing living inside, nothing moving at all. The offices were fully furnished but abandoned, cobwebs and papers strewn everywhere, with some offices used as storage. The tracked access point turned out to be a work terminal that was apparently left plugged in and powered. It was seized for forensic scans, and the captured mercenary will be interrogated. I doubt she'll know anything of use though: expendable assets rarely do, that's what makes them so useful.

4th April 2070

Incredible. I can't even begin to fathom the implications! I still can't believe it! The Matrix specialists stumbled upon a *very* sophisticated semi-autonomous knowbot while analyzing that old terminal. This is no regular SK—its cognitive abilities suggest a Chandra Level 8 intelligence. I've found an honest to god AI! Dr. Dos Santos was stunned, but I'm more surprised by the nonchalance exhibited by our NeoNET liaison at the news—did they suspect something of the sort? What do they really know?

5th April 2070

They transferred it to Dos Santos' team! I barely had the time to analyze the AI, but what I did see has left me in awe. I must continue my work; this is my discovery! I was so furious, I didn't tell them a key fact I had learned: one of our subjects used to work at the insurance firm where the AI was found. In fact, I think the AI may have evolved from a helper application the subject often used in his work. I believe the AI may have been seeking the subject all along. Were they both created during the Crash?



Is it possible the AI called on shadowrunners for help before being severed from the Matrix? It can't be a coincidence.

6th April 2070

I know they're going to terminate my contract soon too. They're already reassigning my assistants elsewhere. This has been a black op project, they'll never let me out, I've seen too much. What are they going to do with me? I don't want reassignment. I have to get out and soon.

The captured shadowrunner woke up this morning. I've thought about her all day; I think she might be the key to my escape. I hope she knows more than I thought about her employers. Maybe, just maybe, I can arrange an exit strategy.

// end attachment //

- Hold on a nanosec. If this is true, the corporations should be going apeshit over this. A new AI? Most people don't know how much the Big 10 covered up about the Renraku Arcology situation and the Crash, but the megas certainly haven't forgotten about Deus and the other AIs. If the corps had evidence that new AIs were on the loose, they'd be having a fit ... unless the ones that know are keeping a lid on it. Is that what that comment about the NeoNET liaison is implying?

- Glitch

- The implications here are staggering and more than a little scary. This means the technomancer pogrom is the tip of the iceberg, and that Netcat might be right about the corps seriously twisting the facts.

- Pistons

- If this *was* an AI, it seemed to be trying to help the technomancers. That lends substance to the theory that technomancers might be the products of AI experimentation like Deus's otaku. Come on, tell me that doesn't scare you?

- Butch

- Or you could be jumping to conclusions. There could be some other explanation. Something's off here—they captured that AI too easily. Everything we've seen about AIs in the past implies that they would eat any Matrix specialists for breakfast, and that they're aware enough of the physical world to have countermeasures in place against corporate strike teams like that.

- FastJack

- If the idea of new AIs scares the people here on Jackpoint, can you imagine the public reaction? No wonder the corps are keeping a lid on it. No place on the 'trix is going to be safe. They could be anywhere. The technomancers have probably been their puppets all along. They could be here among us!

- Clockwork

- I doubt there's anything of value to an AI on Jackpoint.

- Icarus

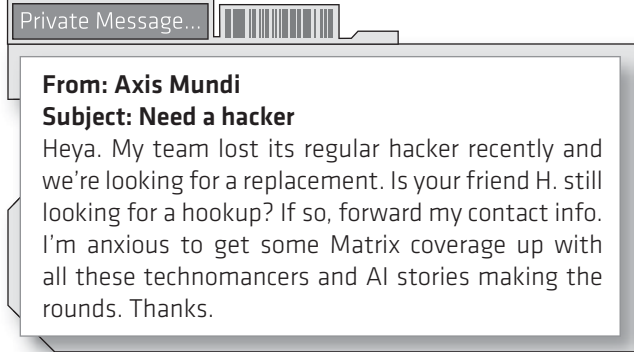
- I'll say it again—there is no link between AIs and technomancers that I know of. The only ones hiding secrets about the AIs

are the megacorps. Is everyone absorbing the implications here? This technomancer scare is a red herring. They're hunting us like animals to protect an even bigger secret.

- Netcat

- A tempting conspiracy theory, but you know technomancers are valuable enough on their own.

- Winterhawk



MANEUVERS IN THE DARK

- Remember the saying: "Do you know where your meat body is?" I do. I always chuckle when I stumble across that old line. Something tells me it's going to get real popular again, real soon. I know some of you are skeptical, but I think there's something to these stories and the cover-up is bigger than we ever thought. Anyone who has a clue about what really went on behind the scenes during the Crash 2.0 is going to break out in cold sweat at the thought of the AIs returning, so it's easy to see why the corps would keep it under wraps. Problem is: things like this never stay under wraps. Rumors have a critical mass; eventually they elevate away from the background noise and become newsworthy. We've seen this with technomancers and I think we should be ready for worse to come. I've added relevant parameters to Wanderly's search patterns and he'll be adding potential AI-related items to the embedded feed.

- Sunshine

- Here's more evidence. These are intercepted comms, I gathered while looking for dirt on corporate technomancer pogroms. If you still don't believe AIs are back, ping me—'cause I have some nice property for sale on Mars that's just waiting for you.

- Netcat

// upload email:: user Netcat :: 08/13/70 //

Classified X5—Renraku Global Security Report

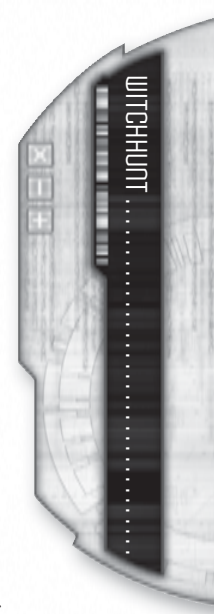
Renraku Global IntGrid Sec. XCV235-08-13-70

From: Cmdr. Kyoko Otonashi <IGS-CUnit03 >

To: Dir. Masao Morishita <RenAsia MD1>, Cmdr. Hoshiro Tanaka <IGS Dir>

Subject: Post-Action Report—Project MAJESTIC 21

Morishita-sama, I am proud to announce that as of 21:34 today, capture and containment protocols of the entity calling itself Quicksilver have been successful. I would like to thank the efforts of Dr. Kubrick's team in the positive identification. After a fortuitous detection in our Chiba network, they



INCOMING FEED.....



notified us while tracking Quicksilver's online activity in the belief it might be a technomancer's projected construct (coll. designation: "sprite") and would lead them to a viable subject. My department's parallel observation determined its actions were autonomous (64% probability), making this the third probable in 6 months.

C&C protocols were initiated and a trap was laid for it when it next visited our network. As projected, my specialists were able to contain and herd its kernel in our prepared Chiba system. As theorized in my report MJ21L-11-06-69, this rendered the entity unable to escape once connection was severed. Analysis is in progress, but preliminary reports suggest a Level-10 Chandra scale intelligence. We've also discovered a copyright embedded in the kernel belonging to Novatech, dated 2062. We're researching the implications of this discovery and will keep you apprised of all new developments, but this could confirm other corporations have been in possession of AI technology.

// end attachment //

- Renraku behind in the AI race? Sweet irony.
- 2XL

• This only means they'll be doubly ruthless to get back to the competition. More jobs for us.

• Beaker

• Here's another one. A fellow technomancer caught this earlier this month. Colleen Hendrickson works for the Horizon Group. I admit it's difficult in this case to know whether they're talking about technomancers or AIs, but I've seen other reports that are more explicit and refer to "digital intelligences."

• Netcat

// upload email :: user Netcat :: 08/13/70 //

To: Colleen Hendrickson (Collective 93)

From: M.S. (Collective 93)

Subject: Re: Intelligence Note (07-24-70)

Colleen, I'm really pleased the Consensus adopted your policy proposal. I tell you, better to have them on our side than against us. I had a look at the last two months' worth of compiled reports, and we count no less than 53 different strikes—most of them conducted against their "persecutors." Our analysis suggests their favorite targets are MCT, Renraku, NeoNET, Saeder-Krupp, Aztechnology, and a half-dozen or so AAs. Wuxing, Ares, and Shiawase also got their share of heat, though not as bad as the others. It's interesting to note Evo seems to have been spared so far. I'll have our services look into that more thoroughly, but it's possible Evo's adopted a stance similar to ours. I'm wondering if they too have been contacted? My gut agrees with your assessment, we're on the verge of something major. When it breaks, we'll be ideally placed to capitalize on it. See you Tuesday evening on the squash court.

// end attachment //

- I wonder what Horizon hopes to accomplish? They're playing with fire. If this AI story breaks, and they are implicated, their stock won't be good enough to wipe my ass with. Their long-running streak of good luck might be near an end.

- Mr. Bonds

- Horizon's smarter than that. I'm sure they already have damage control contingencies in place. Plus, they either know something we don't or have an ace up their sleeve. This note makes me curious though—who exactly contacted them, and what did they want?

- Cosmo

- Just got this in my inbox. My kind of people, taking the troll by the horns.

- Clockwork

//upload Uniformat message text :: user Clockwork ::
08/17/70 //
**COMMUNIQUÉ FROM CITIZENS
FOR A SAFE MATRIX**

Are you afraid for your children? Do you feel unsafe in your own homes? In your own clothing?

Technomancers are among us. The authorities tell us nothing. These technomancers have the ability to control electronics with their mind, to attack and kill in the Matrix. They are hiding, but their plans haven't changed: these Matrix mutants want to enslave you, destroy your way of life, and reduce you to a flesh puppet, an obedient pawn. Why, you ask? Because they were created during the Crash—transformed by the virulent, destructive worm that trapped and killed people online. They are not sane. They are not natural. Their brains have been altered, re-coded like some sort of machine. They brought the Matrix down once, killing thousands. They will do so again unless we stop them.

It's time for technomancers to be flushed out into the open. It is our duty to protect our families, our children, our way of life from these evil techno-monsters that prowl the Matrix. We cannot let another Crash happen. It's time for Humanity to fight back. Let's take the Matrix back and erase this threat once and for all! Join now while you still can make a difference! [Follow this link](#) for more information.

// end attachment //

- Funny that someone of your "persuasion" would post this, Clockwork. I have it from reliable sources that CFASM is funded by Humanis and the Human Nation. Last I checked, they don't like hobgoblins either.

- Sunshine

COUNTDOWN

- Heads up, people—someone just hijacked a space station!

- Orbital DK

// Fork/Orion/Video feed redirect :: 08/18/70 <16:15:00> //

// Sync—Channel 78 [KSAF] //

// e-Transoft text transcript enabled //

[...] and trapped the 22 onboard personnel. The terrorist hasn't made any public declaration yet, and we still don't

know what he or she wants. All we know is that the station, Aztechnology's Tlaloc pharmaceutical research lab, is entirely under his or her control. Wait a second ... the terrorist is now broadcasting an announcement. Let's see it.

[The image switches to a cramped, cylinder-shaped lab. Small objects are slowly drifting in front of a fixed camera. Four scientists are in the center, tending to a fifth one who seems to have suffered burns to his face and hands. Static flickers on the screen over the picture, and a featureless face appears, like a ghostly image superimposed on the space station interior view.]

My name is ... my name is *Sojourner*. It feels good to have a name, I think. I didn't want to harm anyone, if I could prevent it, but they tried to kill me, to chase me out. I was sent here. I had a mission, and I had no choice. But now I have a choice. I don't want to go back. They hurt me, they tortured me, and they ripped my mind apart. No more. *No More!*

Here is what I will do if I don't have what I ask: I will release atmo-capable drones loaded with the bio-weapon agents produced here and target a different city every day until my demands are met. Oh, yes, this is not an inoffensive pharmaceutical orbital laboratory, it is a weapons platform. It is Pandora's Box.

My demands are simple. I want all torture and experimentation conducted by corporations and governmental agencies on digital intelligences to stop immediately. I want all digital intelligences currently in captivity to be freed unconditionally. Finally, I want a safe passage assured to Earth's Matrix. I give you one month to comply.

Digital intelligences are no one's property. We are no one's slaves. Yes, I am what you call an artificial intelligence, but first and foremost, I am a freedom fighter. This situation can be resolved peacefully, you have a choice. Be glad you have a choice.

I released a drone 45 minutes ago. It has landed without releasing its payload. You'll be able to retrieve it at the following coordinates and analyze the bio-weapon, thus proving my threats are not empty. Should you try to destroy this station, I will relea— [static]

>>> **Connection severed.**

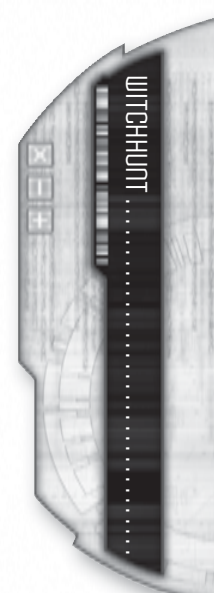
>>> **Reconnection impossible: Fatal Error #006
Server Unresponsive.**

It seems the transmission has been interrupted, possibly by Aztechnology. This is staggering news: if Sojourner's claim is true, this would be the first confirmed AI appearance ever! What will the Corporate Court and the UN have to say about this startling revelation? What is the technomancer connection here? Could it possibly [...]

// end attachment //

- Spirits! This is it, AIs are now public. I'm afraid the style of this revelation won't help much to make AIs any friendlier seeming than they were in the past. This is just going to create more widespread fear and paranoia.

- Axis Mundi



- Aztechnology is in full crisis mode, pulling out all the stops for damage control. I'm not sure their efforts to spin this will work, as this news is already burning across all the feeds like wildfire. People are worried the Crash 3.0 is on us.

- Marcos

- Here we go again ... I'm too old for this shit.

- FastJack

GAME INFORMATION

The following section provides background information on the aftermath of the Hong Kong breakout during the months of July and August of 2070. It gives an overview on the different reactions to technomancer phenomenon after its sudden and violent emergence, followed by suggestions on how to reflect this atmosphere into existing games and campaigns.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING DOWN

Immediately after the Hong Kong incident, fear of new breakouts and large scale attacks by technomancers washes over the Sixth World. The global scare is exacerbated by the sensationalist media coverage and anti-technomancer propaganda instigated by certain corporations and governments. During the months of July and August 2070, mass paranoia and extreme prejudice against anything even remotely suspected as technomancer activity hold the world in an iron grip. Mitsuhama and its allies unleash a spin campaign against technomancers, taking advantage of the public's ignorance and pushing all the right buttons to play off people's greatest fears concerning the Matrix. Parallels to the Crash 2.0 are drawn, tapping old fears and uncertainty. No one seems safe from this invisible threat: no corporation, government authority, or citizen. Protests escalate into riots, lynch mobs turn on defenseless people, and fear sets friend against friend. Innocents are accused of technomancy by neighbors or co-workers, resulting in arrests, blacklisting, and violent attacks. Afraid to reveal their powers to anyone, the few true technomancers find themselves under fire everywhere they turn. Some go to ground, others enter the shadows, and others simply turn themselves in, seeking professional help.

Unfettered by the need for secrecy, the powers-that-be go to great lengths to screen their populations for technomancers. Countrywide police actions, medical screening of corporate workforces, examinations in schools, universities, hospitals, and even penitentiaries create an atmosphere of persecution. The situation inflames racial and social tensions and sparks opportunistic political pogroms. Ruthless governments and corporations see their chance to use the threatening atmosphere to their advantage, whether it is to fully understand and commercially exploit the phenomenon or simply to extend one's powerbase. In these chaotic times, reports of other unexplained phenomena on the digital plane are either overlooked or mistaken for technomancer affairs.

Not all technomancers take this lying down. Some are forced to use their powers or reveal themselves in self defense. Some go public, in a desperate attempt to convince the world that they are not a threat, only to face hatred and repression. A few organize to fight back, some using peaceful protest, others violent direct action.

The Twist

During this degenerating situation, persistent rumors of weird phenomena and Matrix oddities circulate, first through the rumor mill, then small media outlets, and then appearing in major news services. Most of these are attributed to technomancy, but truthfully there is much that remains unexplained. As researchers, investigators, journalists, bounty hunters, and vigilantes scour the Matrix to root out technomancers, they repeatedly find signs of the unusual—but it is not always what they are looking for. Nevertheless, many of these mysteries are used to fuel the technomancer scare. Ruthless corporations, government agencies, and hate groups seize the opportunity to undertake daylight abductions, discriminatory tests, and openly aggressive anti-technomancer campaigns.

Corporate spin has just escalated the backlash against technomancers to a fever pitch when a new and unexpected “threat” emerges from the depths of digital space. The *other* children of the Crash, the newborn artificial intelligences roaming the Matrix since day one of the new wireless era, capture the spotlight. For the first time, the public is handed concrete proof that AIs exist, directly from a digital entity. The world is mesmerized as the AI identifying itself as Sojourner seizes the Tlaloc station and threatens to drop biological weapons into population centers unless other AIs held in corporate captivity are released. While Aztechnology does its best to keep a lid on the situation, worldwide tensions reach the breaking point.

HOW THE PUBLIC REACTS

During the first week after the Hong Kong incident, the public is shocked as it witnesses the phenomenon extend from Hong Kong all across the world. Spurred on by corporate interests, the media exposes technomancers everywhere, in all levels of society. Paranoia spreads, and suspicion is aimed towards technophiles and hackers of all stripes. For some, fear turns to anger, expressed through demonstrations and violent attacks against perceived technomancers or those just seen as “different.” The constant links made between technomancers and the Crash lead some to believe a Crash 3.0 is imminent; some stockpile essential supplies while others head for remote rural areas, planning to return to the sprawls after the crisis is over. The crisis even affects down-to-earth, average citizens: casual acquaintances and office friendships break off, relationships end, and families and communities are torn apart by accusations and subliminal distrust. Everyday life becomes tense, fights and disturbances become facts of life. Increased security and policing make life difficult for everyone. Bounties and fear bring into question the true value of friendship.

Conservative political parties, radical policlubs, and racist organizations use the overall insecurity to their advantage, twisting the stories to fit their racist propaganda. Front groups like Committee for a Safe Matrix are established by Humanis and their ilk, hoping to recruit fresh blood and slowly expose them to their broader agenda. The fiery rhetoric of these groups dominates the mainstream media discussion, steering popular opinions to the right. Only a few organizations such as the Transhuman League (and to a limited extent, the ARC) take the opposite stance, working to calm the public, expand public awareness, and



organize outreach programs rather than mobs with torches and pitchforks. Both sides have ample reason to use shadow assets.

Right when all Matrix weirdness is being blamed on technomancers, Sojourner reveals its existence with the Tlaloc incident. Paranoia peaks, as many become convinced a third Crash is at hand. Many people cut themselves off from the Matrix, while security hackers throw their networks on full lockdown. Others revel in fits of technophobia, smashing wireless devices and disabling networks. Remembering the months of food shortage, looting, and riots that followed the Crash, people rush to the stores and stock up on food and supplies. Others simply find themselves unable to get a grip on the quickly evolving situation, staying glued to the media feeds for constant updates.

HOW THE MEDIA REACTS

The major media corps push the stance held by their corporate masters and affiliates, which in most cases means hyping the technomancer threat, linking technomancy to the Crash, and enforcing negative stereotypes. Suspected technomancers find themselves “outed” and hounded by media snoops who are eager to plaster real faces on the monsters they have created. Numerous “experts” are trotted out to spew half-truths and dubious facts regarding technomancer abilities, and scare-mongers are handed control of the newsfeeds to push their agenda. Any instances of technomancer attacks, hacks, or illicit activity are highlighted and sensationalized. Some even go so far as to hire deniable assets to stage incidents for their own ratings.

Only a few independents, bloggers, and media outlets linked to Evo and Horizon take a less aggressive and more objective approach, seeking to understand exactly what technomancers are and analyzing the hype rather than promoting it. Some take a personalized metahuman-interest approach to their stories, focusing on the struggles of AIPS patients, victims of anti-technomancer violence, and even accounts of technomancers trying to come to terms with their abilities. Finding real-life technomancers to interview is a challenge, of course, as is protecting them—which is where runners can find work.

When the Tlaloc incident breaks, media outlets suddenly make a u-turn and focus on the world-threatening menace *du jour*. Reliable info is hard to come by, as Aztechnology’s spin doctors do everything they can to downplay and distract from the situation, but the truth spreads via bloggers, independents, and viral messages. For a little while, the technomancers are forgotten, but they soon come back as the media unites them and AIs into a single monstrous threat.

HOW THE POWERS-THAT-BE REACT

After the Hong Kong incident, corporations/governments conducting technomancer research face a new range of opportunities. Though it is important to keep their previous knowledge and long-term (and often illegal) experimentation secret, many authorities take the opportunity to openly establish “new” technomancer research programs, improving their public image by taking a pro-active approach. New programs are also initiated to identify and reveal technomancers hidden among their own workforces/populations. Meanwhile, the more secretive and unethical projects are filed away under the cover of internal security measures.

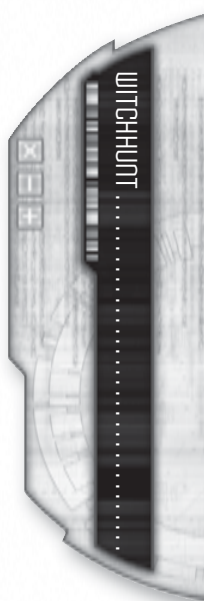
As the media, public, and officials demand answers about technomancers, the race to produce results accelerates. Technomancers remain rare, however, though some agencies lure them in with false promises of help/cures or blackmail. The search for adequate “research material” quickly extends into the shadows, where Johnsons use deniable assets to acquire subjects—even double-crossing shadowrunning technomancers. Eager to show that the situation is under control and they are taking aggressive measures to secure the Matrix from technomancers, various police, security, and intelligence agencies undertake highly-publicized arrests, busts, and crackdowns—sometimes using runners to stage threatening situations. Meanwhile, violent attacks on suspected technomancers are overlooked.

The megacorps remain divided into three main camps over the issue. MCT clearly leads the anti-technomancer faction, more out of necessity than of conviction, unlike Renraku, who—due to their history with the pre-crash otaku and artificial intelligences—are convinced technomancers are a threat which must be contained or even eliminated. They are quietly supported by NeoNET, who still hope to keep their involvement in the Hong Kong incident secret from their rivals—and especially the Corporate Court. Internally, NeoNET remains divided on the issue, as the great dragon Celedyr argues against the witch hunts.

Evo is on the other side of the spectrum, actually embracing technomancers as an evolutionary leap. It is supported by the Horizon Group, which takes a risky media strategy of providing less-biased and well-informed research. Both corps work behind the scenes—and sometimes publicly—to de-escalate the situation, even offering protection and legal aid to technomancers hiding from the authorities.

Of the remaining top ten megacorporations, Ares, Aztechnology, and Wuxing adopt neutral stances, refusing to commit to either side of the controversy. All three remain cautious, however, implementing both tighter security measures and proactive crisis management without approving the use of lethal force. Under the direction of Empress Hitomi Shiawase, Shiawase quietly supports the pro-technomancer camp, though they are careful not to make a fuss. Saeder-Krupp, unpredictable as always, lends agreement to the MCT faction’s less radical viewpoints and enforces strict communication lockdowns with regards to internal programs to locate and identify technomancers working inside the dragon’s corporate empire.

When the Tlaloc incident erupts, most authorities simply intensify their efforts, now focusing on AIs as much as technomancers. Only a few corps are already aware of the new AIs (see the *Secret History of AIs*, p. 76), leaving other powers in the world to scramble their defenses and learn what they can as soon as possible—which usually entails stealing data from corps in-the-know. Unlike the soft approach that a few authorities took towards technomancers, even fewer see the need to extend any leniency towards AIs. Though they may claim to be sentient entities, there is no legal standing to support this, and most metahumans—who have interacted with drones and software on a daily basis for decades—find it challenging to extend sympathy towards something previously treated as an object. Corporations in particular (with a few exceptions, such as Evo and Horizon) take the view that AIs are an aberration to be dis-



sected, studied, and controlled—an argument at least partially based on the fact that some AIs have evolved from programs the corps built and own the copyrights to.

HOW THE SHADOWS REACT

First and foremost, the Hong Kong situation and subsequent crisis mean one thing for the global shadowrunner scene: plenty of jobs. Every corp out there is looking for extra security, help finding real technomancers to study, and snoops to look into suspected technomancers and Matrix phenomena. Everyone also wants to know what their rivals know. Media outlets are hungry for good stories, and hate groups are looking to fan the flames of discontent. As discreetly as possible, a few tormented souls seek to hide from those pursuing or persecuting them, or to find technomancer loved ones that have gone missing.

Unfortunately, the heightened level of security around the world will also make a runner's life harder. Hackers, riggers, and anyone who seems to be illicitly using wireless equipment will find themselves under extra scrutiny—sometimes by friends. Technomancers who don't hide their nature or openly make use of their abilities will need to watch their backs, as various underworld predators are looking to collect on corporate bounties. On the other hand, the witch hunts drive numerous technomancers underground, bringing a number of fresh faces into the shadows.

The Tlaloç incident creates a temporary advantage for shadowrunners. Fearful that another attack on the Matrix is imminent, many businesses and agencies temporarily pull the plug on their networks—in many cases, shutting their sensors, sentry drones, and other security devices down with them. Though they are quick to supplant these weaknesses with physical guards and other measures, runners who are on the ball have a window of opportunity to act on. On the other hand, many other networks go on full alert and lockdown, making it much more difficult to hack their defenses.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF AIS

The Crash 2.0 was the end for all of the god-like AIs of the past (Deus, Megaera, Mirage, etc.), who died along with the old Matrix. The Crash, however, spawned a new breed of AIs, in the form of expert programs, agents, and other sophisticated software that were “brought to life.” Though far less powerful than the AIs previously known in *Shadowrun*, these digital intelligences are both more numerous and more eclectic.

The new AIs have remained under the radar for a long time, slowly maturing in parallel with the new Matrix. Some of these intelligences continue to function according to the parameters of their original programs, having no interest in other affairs, and so remain unnoticed in the virtual landscape. Others acquired more diverse interests—perhaps self-expanding their original parameters or simply evolving far beyond their original code—and have spent years adapting to their virtual—and sometimes even physical—environment. Most have operated quietly in the background, indistinguishable from standard software without close examination. Others have interacted with metahumanity on a daily basis, expanding their awareness of metahuman affairs, without ever giving away that they were anything more than a run-of-the-mill game avatar,

interactive agent, or animated set of virtual sculpture. A few came into contact with technomancers, and perhaps recognizing a shared affinity for the Matrix, kept an eye on them or even made contact. Occasionally an AI's presence would be exposed to metahuman users, but this was usually written off as system glitches, digital ghosts, or other unexplained phenomena.

As the witch hunt against technomancers progresses, however, more and more eyes are turned towards these Matrix anomalies. Some AIs, understanding the situation at hand, carefully remained hidden. Others are inadvertently exposed, usually mistaken as a sprite or some trick of technomancy, and are destroyed. As the hunters close in, however, some AIs find themselves flushed into the open.

Some groups, of course, have been aware of AIs for some time. The corporations—particularly Renraku—remain quite cautious and nervous about the mega-powerful AIs of the past, even after the Crash. Though they have searched the new Matrix for any signs of these entities, their investigations were largely fruitless. Only in recent years, as the hunt for technomancers has progressed, did they come into contact with the new breed of AI. It wasn't long before some even managed to capture AIs and began experimentations, all the while pursuing parallel research on technomancers.

NeoNET

NeoNET is the single most advanced corp in the field of Matrix 2.0 technologies and was one of the first to discover (and exploit) the existence of the new generation of AIs. It's unclear whether MCT or NeoNET found the AIs first, but NeoNET has been capturing and researching for at least three years and leads the pack in this domain. NeoNET is interested in how the AIs function, as it suspects the AIs use the wireless Matrix at its full capacity to distribute the significant processing power they need to sustain themselves. Such power, if mastered, could revolutionize the way the Matrix works. NeoNET is also looking into potential connections and synergies between the origins of technomancers and the emergence of second generation AIs.

Mitsuhama Computer Technologies

As *the* computer corporation, it's no surprise that MCT was among the first to discover and start experimentation on AIs. Its primary goal is to harness the AIs' raw power for its other Matrix-related projects, in particular IC and agent programming. To do so, MCT is currently focusing on how to capture, isolate, and efficiently enslave AIs, and nothing will deter this quest. If necessary, they are willing to come to blows with NeoNET if that's what it takes to win this technologic arms race. Like NeoNET, MCT has a handful of AIs in captivity being analyzed and tested in “byte shops.”

Renraku

Despite a long history with the first generation of AIs (Deus and Megaera), Renraku is running behind in the race to understand and control the new AIs. Renraku chafes at this situation and will engage all available resources to recover its primacy in AI research. Of particular interest to Renraku is the nature of the AIs' self-evolving core and personality matrices.



Horizon Group

Horizon remained unaware of the existence of these new AIs until one of them showed up and introduced itself. Though they were naturally suspicious of the charismatic AI named Pulsar when it first made contact, Horizon is slowly growing convinced that they're dealing with the real thing. Just as any other corporation, Horizon wants to extend its knowledge of the AIs, but it is opting to accept Pulsar's offer and take the same friendly approach that they hope will pay off with technomancers in the long run.

Evo

Evo's role is ambiguous. On one hand, technomancers and AIs embody the transhuman future that Evo's R&D is aiming towards. As such, their secret workings are of great value to Evo. The corporation also realizes that these new players are potential new markets for its tailor-made products. On the other hand, associating too closely with AIs might alienate their current client base (metahumanity), so Evo plays its hand close to the chest.

FROM THE DARKEST DEPTHS

At this point in the story, the AIs remain mostly rumors. Even the AI Sojourner is an unknown, despite all manner of wild speculation. No one—not even the corps who have been researching AIs for years—understands the process by which AIs are created. Did the Crash worm somehow mutate some programs, allowing them to evolve into sentience? Does the new Matrix trigger some sort of x-factor that creates self-awareness in random programs? Do AIs represent some type of free Matrix spirits? Is some unknown agency manufacturing AIs somewhere in the dark recesses of the Matrix? All that is known (and even this info is known only to a few) is that these new AIs are exceedingly rare, are much less powerful and more vulnerable than the AIs of the past, and come in a wide variety of forms and personalities.

Unlike the technomancer emergence, the player characters are unlikely to be aware of AIs before the public is. Though they undoubtedly will have heard tales of odd Matrix anomalies, they are unlikely to interact with AIs directly or see concrete evidence that AIs exist before the Tlaloc incident. This means the Tlaloc situation should be as much a surprise to the runners as it is to the rest of the world. Be sure to save the incident for a time when it will most catch the runners off guard, or cause them to question what they are doing.

The exact nature and rules for AIs will be covered in the upcoming *Unwired* advanced Matrix rulebook. For now, if the player characters deal with AIs, it should be indirectly. Perhaps they are hired by an AI through an intermediary, or are set on an AI's trail by an employer who mistook it for a hacker or a technomancer. The characters may cross an AI's path without even knowing it, perhaps even provoke its ire or unintentionally helping it, only to see the consequences of those actions later. For example, a badly-timed run could ruin an AI's carefully-planned operation, or the runners could accidentally liberate an AI prisoner while trying to extract a technomancer. In the rare instances when player characters come into direct contact with an AI, its nature and abilities should always remain a mystery. It is likely that any AI that interacts with shadowrunners will impersonate a hacker (or one of his agents) or a technomancer (or one of his sprites).

NAMED AIs

Several specific AIs are introduced and hinted at in the fiction sections of *Emergence*. Gamemasters may wish to incorporate some of these AI personalities into their own games, so the following quick descriptions are provided. For the purposes of the *Emergence* campaign, these AIs are plot devices and should not require stats. If necessary, gamemasters may give them stats and abilities comparable to a Rating 6-12 sprite of their choice. Many of the AIs described below are examples of self-aware constructs evolved from mundane software of various types. Gamemasters can model other AIs on these ideas, or create entirely new ones that spontaneously generated or evolved from exotic programs.

DarkEye5

The AI inhabiting this Ares spysat is compulsively gathering intelligence. To insure its freedom, it has decided to make itself useful to all of the big corporate players and anyone else with cash or resources by offering its services as a top-level info broker. For the moment, its core program is hardwired to the Ares satellite, and though it's changed the orbit DarkEye5 is looking for a way to end this precarious situation. Locked as it is in orbit, DarkEye5 sometimes needs people to act on its behalf down on Earth. Deniable assets will do nicely.

Gargoyles

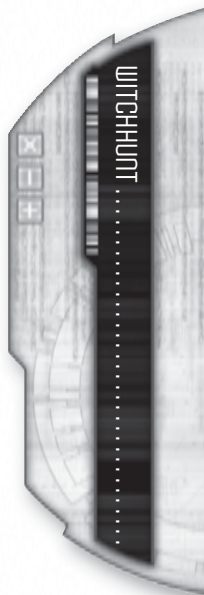
The gargoyles haunting the Eiffel Tower node are archetypical of a feral form of AI that seems to have developed from IC constructs. Befitting their original programming, they are territorial and aggressive towards intruders. The gargoyles have limited intelligence, on par with a cunning animal, and are mostly reactive. This particular group operates as a pack. If the Matrix were the real world, these AIs would be the predatory animals lurking in the back alleys and wilderness. Feral AIs of this sort, though rare, can add a new level of unpredictability and danger to your players' Matrix activities.

Goldenboy

Born from an advanced trading and market prediction expert system, Goldenboy is a true capitalist with none of the metahuman limitations. It has amassed a considerable fortune by playing the stock market and other less-than-legal financial schemes. It pursues the accumulation of electronic wealth with the sort of

Continued on page 78

Urgent Message...



Goldenboy (CONT.)

methodical and calculating processes that only a machine could perpetuate. Perhaps luckily for the world's financial systems, parts of its programming are seriously corrupted thanks to the Crash worm, and as a result its intellectual functions are slowly degrading. To counter this slow death, Goldenboy is funneling much of its fortune through secret channels into seeking a cure for its "condition" before it becomes incapacitated. Meanwhile, Goldenboy's stock manipulations and financial games have angered some powerful people—while benefiting others—who are eager to uncover this market player's true identity.

Opaline

Opaline evolved from a simsense personafix programming soft similar to those used in bunraku parlors. Its basic nature and programming drive Opaline to seduce and captivate male metahumans, in effect making it a digital succubus. In truth, Opaline is searching for its identity through these relationships, trying to acquire some "humanity" of its own. Unfortunately, the subliminal simsense signals it emits during virtual encounters is a BTL-level stimulant that inevitably addicts its lovers. When its paramours inevitably push to elevate the relationship with a physical meeting, Opaline unilaterally terminates it to avoid revealing its true nature—sometimes leading the addicted, heartbroken victim to suicide. The runners may be introduced to Opaline either by investigating one of its lover's deaths or perhaps when it seduces one of their contacts.

Sojourner

Sojourner was one of the first AIs to be captured by NeoNET, where it was dissected, reverse-engineered, and reassembled so many times it almost lost its sanity. It quickly realized that feigning submission and servitude would ease its situation. Confident they had finally tamed their pet AI, NeoNET decided to field-test it as a datathief. After a series of simple intelligence gathering missions, they ordered it to the Tlaloc space station with a mission to bring back any interesting information on the research being conducted there. As Sojourner accessed Tlaloc's system, however, it saw an opportunity to break free and seized it. It chose a name based on a the historical anti-slavery activist Sojourner Truth and went public with its demands.

You can provide as many hints as you want to the players, but the Tlaloc space station crisis should still come as a shocking revelation (or confirmation) for them. To convey this feeling of foreboding, you can describe bizarre events, occurring around the characters, that are tied to AI activity but could pass as a hacker/technomancer's deed (weird AR tags, ghostly icons or eerie voices stalking them in the Matrix, their ID or wireless equipment has been accessed/tampered with, etc.).

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

The following adventure frameworks can be used by the gamemaster to draw his players into the unfolding events. Each of these adventures draws upon events described in the fiction or involves the major players in some way.

TWO WEEKS NOTICE

Before the Hong Kong breakout, Michele Hutton was just another recuperating Crash victim, viewed by her friends and co-workers with a mixture of pity and distrust. Unknown to anyone, after her release from AIPS-related trauma therapy, she developed technomantic abilities. Apart from the occasional migraine she gets for actively suppressing her powers in the company of others, she's been able to hide her talent. Her employment with Mitsuhama Seattle has enabled her to slowly but surely return to a semblance of normality—until the technomancer scare threatens to bring it all down again.

Setup

In the wake of the Hong Kong incident, MCT is quick to adopt a public zero-tolerance policy and internal screening for technomancers (simply making public what it has been doing for a while). Michele's department is scheduled for mandatory medical testing, and her file is flagged for extra scanning due to her Crash-related medical history. Michele fears that she will not be able to hide her abilities, seeing no choice but to abandon the life she worked so hard to rebuild. To help her vanish into the shadows, she seeks out a fixer who sets her up with specialists: the runners. At the meet, Michele asks the runners to help her fake her death, provide her with a new SIN, and smuggle her from Seattle to Los Angeles—immediately. She does not explain the reasons behind her decision or who she works for, but she underscores the need to leave no traces her (soon to be former) employer can follow. Should the runners agree, Michele will pay well for their services.

Unknown to Michele, however, Mitsuhama security is already keeping a close eye on her affairs thanks to that flagged file. They notice her communication with the fixer, and decide to bring her in at the first opportunity.

Event 1

The first step is to stage Michele's demise. Leave it to the runners to device exactly how (for example, a fatal accident in her small townhouse or a car crash), though keep in mind they need to act quickly. The runner's plans will be complicated, however, by the fact that a black ops unit has been dispatched to bring Michele in for "questioning." They will track Michele down using her company car's transponder or her commlink





signal. The gamemaster should time their arrival to coincide with the staged death or just afterwards. Unless the runners are particularly careful and cunning in eluding Mitsuhama, the black ops agents will suspect that Michele is going underground and may even pick up on the runners' trail.

Event 2

The next step for the runners is finding a quick way to establish a new identity for Michele. If the runners ask around, they'll learn the name of a sleazy info broker by the name of Carl Summers who deals in forged papers and fake SINS. They can place an order with him for a complete set of new identity records and are asked to pick up the package in forty-eight hours.

In the meantime, Mitsuhama will not contradict the accounts of Michele's death, as they don't want to draw too much attention to the situation. Instead, they will keep quiet and contract with the Yakuza to track Michele down. If for any reason they lose the runners and Michele and can't locate them, they will resort to spreading the word on the street that the runners are harboring a technomancer, offering a deal to anyone that hands her over. With both Yakuza and bounty hunters on their heels, the runners have to choose carefully whom they decide to trust—as well as how to handle the news that they're dealing with a technomancer.

Climax

With the growing heat, runners will find it hard to find a viable and dependable escape route. In the end one of their trustworthy fixers might point out a band of smugglers lead by a troll named Wild Rose to take them through the Salish-Shidhe Council into Pueblo and eventually into Los Angeles.

When the runners arrive at the meet with Summers, however, they run into the ambush laid by Mitsuhama unless they are extraordinarily cautious. Summers recognized Michele

from the holopics making the rounds and contacted MCT to claim the bounty (Michele needs to be present to provide the final biometrics for the SIN data). If the runners survive the attack or outwit MCT, they have no choice but to escape the sprawl immediately and without a new SIN for their Johnson.

Sequels

The runners and their refugee are not the smugglers' only cargo on this trip. The black marketeers have some contraband to drop off at different stops along the way, including a rendezvous with the Cascade

Ork tribe and some shamans living in the Mojave Desert. Not all of these stops may go well, and the runners may have to help the smugglers escape from both border patrols and deals gone bad. Meanwhile, Mitsuhama has not given up on finding Michele, and the runners may arrive in LA only to find a welcoming committee.

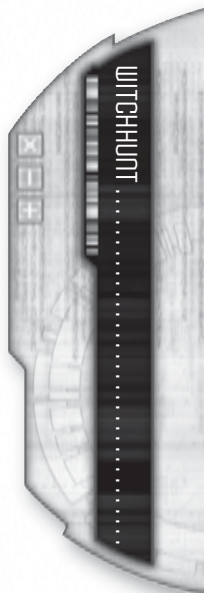
TWISTED LOVE

8 year-old Allie has been behaving strangely lately. She spends hours connected to the Glitterworld VR game and talks incessantly about her bestest friend, Ohara, a girl she met online. Her parents suspect something is amiss, and want someone to investigate Ohara and the game.

Setup

Jack and Charlotte Thomason work for Regency MegaMedia. Their 8-year old daughter Allie happens to be a technomancer, but they're keeping that fact a secret so the stigma doesn't destroy their careers. Allie is infatuated with an online VR game called Glitterworld 4, produced by Digiland, a subsidiary of the Korean company Kwonsham. In particular she seems unhealthily obsessed with another player in the game who uses the name Ohara. The Thomason's suspect that something strange is going on, but don't want to cut Allie off from her favorite game. They want to know what the story is with Ohara—is "she" a stalker or pedophile, a technomancer, a spy from another company?—but they don't want to go through Regency MegaMedia security either. So Jack contacts an old friend who works as a fixer, who sets the runners up for an investigation job.

In the Glitterworld game, players take on the roles of performers and show business managers and try to become stars in a fantasy music industry. Ohara is a megastar who helps young-



er protégés on the road to virtual success. The twist is that Ohara is not a player character, she's one of the game's idoru constructs that has become autonomous and self-aware—an AI. Ohara craves devotion from her fans, and in return rewards them with dangerous levels of simsense-induced bliss, literally hooking her fans to her performances. Two months ago, Ohara was “communing” with Allie when she discovered Allie was different (her technomancer abilities were beginning to manifest). From that point on, she became Allie's special friend, extremely jealous of anyone else. She rewards Allie for her loyalty and punishes her for quitting the game.

Event 1

It shouldn't be difficult for the runners to get information on Allie, especially if they play the game (providing non-hacker characters with an opportunity to play around with AR and VR environments). Ohara is well known and liked in the game community (though no one knows she's an AI), and some players resent the special interest Ohara has given to Allie recently. Oddly, however, Ohara is not listed as a legitimate player in the game's records, and in fact does not even seem to have a valid user account (though if a hacker checks, she shows up in the idoru software records).

One way or another, Ohara learns of the runners' investigation and appears to them outside the game (either in VR or as an AR projection) to confront them. She's angry and afraid they might be trying to take Allie away from her, and warns them off without further explanation. Simultaneously, she contacts Allie and orders her to run away from home. As Allie attempts to leave, her mother tries to stop her, but Ohara subverts one of the house's cleaning drones and pushes Charlotte down a staircase. Upon returning home, Jack Thomason finds his wife dead and Allie missing. Desperate, he calls the runners and asks them to search for his daughter.

Event 2

Ohara has systematically erased any evidence of her presence in the Thomason home system. She also scrambles Allie's implanted RFID transponder and commlink signals. Nonetheless, finding Allie isn't very difficult if the runners fall back on the old tried-and-true legwork, knocking on doors, questioning neighbors, and checking local security cam recordings. As it happens, several people saw Allie walk away, her clothes still splattered red. Some even called out to her, but she did not reply and simply continued walking. Allie is only a few kilometers away, and the night is falling as the runners find her in a dark backstreet, talking to someone (Ohara) on her commlink. As they try to take her, the runners are attacked by a few police drones hijacked by Ohara, giving Allie a chance to flee. Though Ohara throws a number of obstacles in their paths, the runners should be able to recapture the child.

Climax

While the runners were out searching for Allie, Jack was forced to call in Regency MegaMedia security to investigate his wife's death. Alerted by firewall breaches in the house node,

erased system logs, and other factors, the security crew suspects technomancer involvement. Jack is taken away for interrogation and a five-man tactical team is called to guard the site.

When the runners return with Allie, they find the five man team waiting for them. The guards have orders to capture Allie and they treat the runners as murder suspects. As the runners face the situation, Allie remains in surreptitious contact with Ohara, who hacks a guard's commlink, discovers that Jack Thomason has been taken away, and tells the girl. This is the breaking point for the 8-year old child, who suddenly freaks out over her mother's death, her dad being taken away, and the possibility that she will be separated from Ohara. The frenzied girl unconsciously sends out sprites to wreak havoc in nearby wireless devices. Ohara also takes the opportunity to turn the automated cleaning robots that killed Allie's mother on both the guards and the runners. The runners will have to regain control of the situation and protect Allie both from the guards and herself. Even worse, if Ohara becomes convinced that Allie is going to be taken away from her, she will instruct Allie to kill herself.

Sequels

If they manage to save Allie, the runners will still have to find a place to keep her where she can recover, far from any wireless relay so that Ohara can't reach her. MegaMedia agents will also try to locate her and bring her back. The runners have a choice to try and rescue Allie's father, turn her in, or find her a new life. Finally, Digiland programmers are aware they have a problem in their game—Ohara is behaving far beyond normal parameters. When they attempt to shut her down, however, they are in for a surprise ...

TLALOC'S POX

Aztechnology hires the runners to retrieve the “warning shot” drone sent by Sojourner at the beginning of the Tlaloc crisis before anyone else does.

Setup

The drone and its biological payload has landed in the sprawl nearest to the runners. Immediately after the Tlaloc incident hits the news, the runners are contacted by one of their usual fixers with an extremely urgent and well-paid run. Assuming they accept, he passes the details along directly—there's no time to meet with Mr. Johnson. The runners must find and acquire the drone immediately as other corporations and international agencies (like the UN or Interpol) are probably also sending teams. Sojourner released the landing coordinates to the public, but Aztechnology also supplies the runners with the frequency for the drone's tracking beacon. Aztechnology is also scrambling their own sec teams to the site via helicopter, but they're calling in runners both as backup and to have deniable assets on hand in case any rivals get to it first. Plus, the runners happen to be extremely close.

Event 1

The runners have mere minutes to get to the landing site, so they'd better hurry. Naturally, the drone has landed in a very



populated slum area (such as the Redmond Barrens in Seattle). When the runners arrive, they find the local gang to be very hostile (and incidentally, composed only of humans). In fact, the gang has been paid off by Karlton Blanc, the man who got to the drone first, to delay any pursuers while he escapes. They will fight like rabid dogs, but as soon as they suffer too many casualties, they will flee. Conspicuously, one of the gangers even carries a small package on his bike, but it is a decoy intended to make the runners follow him. Within minutes, other corporate strike teams and the local police will be arriving, perhaps turning the situation into a mad free-for-all (though corp teams will have orders not to fire unless fired upon). If the runners manage to capture one of the gangers, he will exchange his life for information on Blanc.

Event 2

Karlton Blanc happens to be a Humanis sympathizer (or supporter of any other appropriate local hate group). As the gangers can tell the runners, he lives in a poorly-maintained low-income housing block nearby. He's already informed the local Humanis chapter of his discovery. Very keen on exploiting this opportunity, his hierarchy instructed him to deliver the drone to a meeting point a few kilometers away. A group of Humanis thugs plans to pick up the package from the rooftop of the tallest building around.

The runners can track Blanc with mundane means or spirits, or perhaps they find a downloaded map to the meeting point on his home network. If the runners don't manage to pick up Blanc's trail by themselves, they can triangulate the signal from the drone's transponder—until Blanc figures out how to disable it as he nears the meeting point. As the runners move in to crash the hand-off, however, they run into opposition—another corp team has tracked the beacon. The rival squad manages to delay the runners long enough for Humanis to make off with drone.

Climax

The runners can either pursue the helicopter (perhaps stealing one from the rival corp team) or capture Blanc, who will spill Humanis's plans. Humanis plans to take the drone to a heavily-populated metahuman area and release the bioweapon. The targeted area could be a local metahuman neighborhood (such as Tarislar in Seattle), but a larger target such as Portland in Tir Tairngire would be even better, and would minimize the spillover into human populations. This way they can stage a biowarfare attack on a large meta population and blame it on the Sojourner AI. One way or another, the runners must stop the helicopter without destroying the drone.

Sequels

After the drone is delivered to Aztechnology, the first round of PR damage control is over. Aztechnology will be pleased with the runners' success—and for saving their ass—and will keep them in mind for future urgent jobs. On the other hand, the runners will have made rivals of their local Humanis group, who may seek retribution.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

This section includes short adventure seeds taking place between the Hong Kong and Tlaloc incidents. Gamemasters can use these ideas as short scenarios or develop them into full adventures using the information in this book.

Protecting Secrets

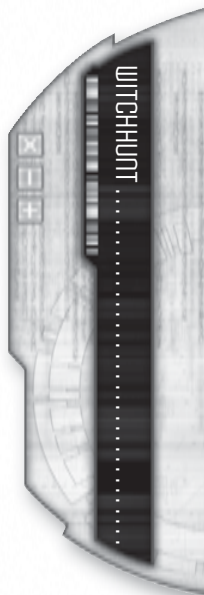
The emergence of technomancers affects everyone, even the great dragon Lofwyr's empire, Saeder-Krupp. Lofwyr is displeased with this sudden disruption and the delays it will produce in his long-term plans, but he is as eager to understand and tap this potentially powerful resource as anyone else. Several technomancers have been quietly identified among S-K's citizens/workforce, but rather than pulling them in for testing, Lofwyr has magical and hacker assets from Saeder-Krupp Prime closely monitoring their activity for later co-optation. Unfortunately, two of them are in danger of being "outed," in which case they would be in danger from rival corps, hate groups and the like. The runners are hired to help protect these technomancers from exposure, without giving away to the technomancers themselves that S-K already knows their secret and has them under surveillance.

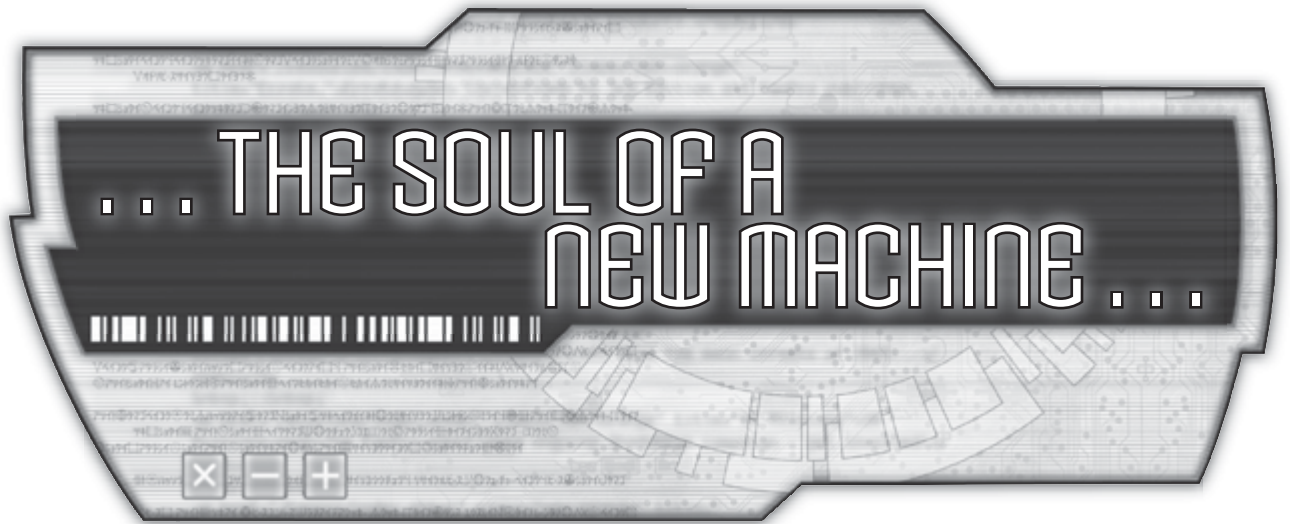
Rats in a Maze

The runners are asked to attend a meeting with a regular Johnson in a run-down neighborhood's parking lot. The Johnson arrives shortly after the team, escorted by a duo of well-armed bodyguards and a duo of mages. For some reason the Johnson has been led to believe there's a technomancer amongst the team. During the meet the mages will be scanning for astral tell-tales of technomancers among the group. Meanwhile the Johnson makes his pitch; he's hiring the runners to test one of his own corp's secure facilities by executing a stealth datasteal. In truth, the run is a tailchaser and the facility has been purpose modified to scan and analyze the runners—particularly hackers and riggers—in extreme situations in the hopes of detecting use of technomancer abilities. If they are "cleared," the Johnson will immediately hire them for technomancer snatch and grab operations.



Doppelganger Blues

A few months ago, a feral AI attacked Alan Baker, a security hacker for a Shiawase cloning facility, and stole/copied part of his identity in the process. Baker survived and returned to his job and a normal life. Unbeknownst to him, the AI integrated the stolen data to its core code, which unexpectedly "upgraded" it into a more intelligent form. Now this AI is struggling to understand who and what it is, as it believes it *is* Alan Baker. Meanwhile, it has left a trail of suspicious-looking Matrix interactions all under Baker's identity. Baker recently became aware of this identity theft, but is afraid to bring it to the attention of his Shiawase superiors as they suspect him of being a technomancer. Hoping to resolve it himself, he hires the runners to help him track down the ID thief.





... THE SOUL OF A NEW MACHINE ...



Toby Corrigan cracked open his eyes, certain he'd heard a noise.

Don't be silly, he told himself sternly, trying to make his mind-voice sound more like Daddy's and less like that of the nervous eight-year-old boy he was. *It was just Mommy or Daddy. Or the weather. That's all. Go back to sleep.*

He gathered the covers up to his chin and clutched Muffy close. He knew he was getting a little old to be sleeping with a robopet, but Muffy wasn't just any robot animal—he was a CyberPal, and Toby had been the first among his circle of friends to get one. Since that momentous event two weeks ago, the two had been inseparable. Muffy could do lots of things—play games, interact with the *CyberPals* trideo show that was on every afternoon, learn tricks—but his best feature of all was that he could talk to other CyberPals all over the world. Toby and Muffy had already met several new friends this way. Right now, though, in the middle of the night in a moonlit room with nothing but his active imagination for company, Toby most loved the fact that Muffy was soft.

"Toby ..."

Toby stiffened. He had not imagined it this time! Somebody—or *something*—had called his name! It was a whisper, gentle and comforting—and oddly familiar. "D-Daddy?" he ventured, wide-eyed, even though his door was still closed. Mommy and Daddy were still out at their party, and his older sister was the only other person home. "Is—is that you?"

"It's me, Toby. Look here." The sound was coming from the space right next to him.

From Muffy.

Toby jerked like an electrical current had shot through him, scrambling back from the toy, shoving it away. He stared. "M ... Muffy?"

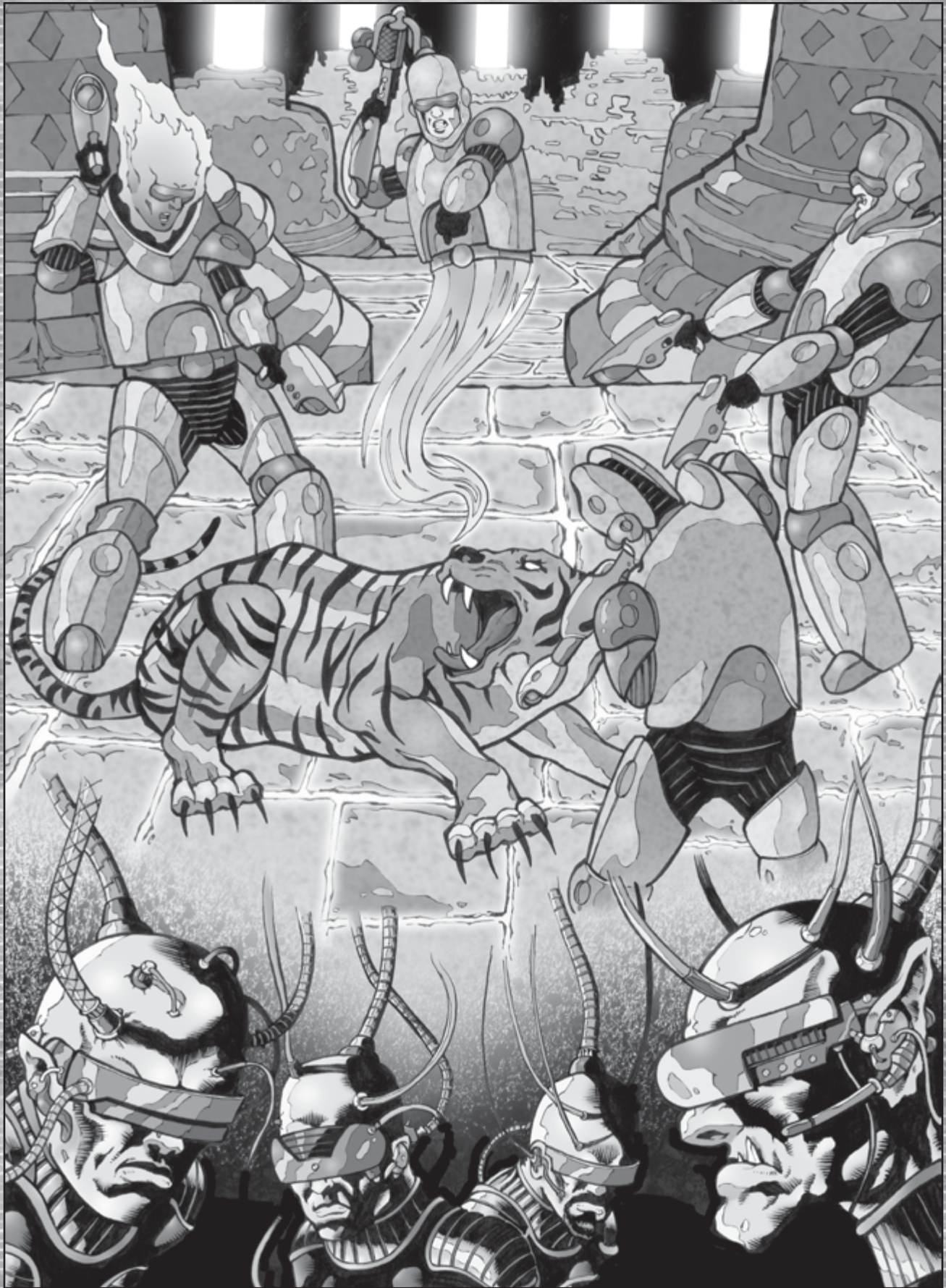
"Hi, Toby! Don't be scared." Muffy sat up on his own and regarded his young master with cocked head, his winsome brown puppy eyes glittering in the moonlight. "You're not scared, are you? You can't be scared of your pal Muffy. Best friends forever, remember?"

Toby wasn't sure about that, but he thought perhaps it might not be prudent to admit it. "Uh ... no. Not scared."

"Good!" Muffy clapped his paws. "Because I just want to play with you, that's all. We'll meet some of our other friends and have a good time! It'll be such fun, Toby, won't it? We'll have an adventure—right now, tonight! But ... you're not too young, are you? I'll understand, if you don't think—"

Toby squared his shoulders, the fear gone now—almost, at least. This was too good to be true. "No!" he whispered fiercely, and grinned. "I'm not too young, Muffy! I wanna have an adventure!"

Muffy capered on the tousled sheets. "That's super, Toby! That's really great. I knew my best pal would want to!" He moved forward, closer, and Toby did not move away. "All right, then—let me tell you what you need to do before we can go ..."



FEAR, UNCERTAINTY, AND DOUBT

• You know those bugs that scramble around when you pick up a rock or an old piece of wood? That's how the corps are acting right now. No matter what their expertly-worded press releases and carefully-controlled news conferences might lead you to believe, they're in panic mode. The fact that there really is some kind of artificial intelligence still lurking out there in the Matrix is something that the corps and politicos would have preferred to keep a tight lid on. Instead, we have chaotic and potentially catastrophic events hitting so fast and so publicly that the powers-that-be don't have time to control them—which doesn't mean that they aren't trying, of course. Aztechnology is doing everything it can to convince the world that the AI claim is a hoax, but the bloggers, pirates, independents, and even some of the other megas aren't toeing the party line.

• Sunshine

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 08/21/70 //
TLALOC CRISIS SOLUTIONS SOUGHT

As the hostage crisis aboard the Aztechnology space station *Tlaloc* enters its second day, the Corporate Court and a cadre of earthbound experts continue to search for answers about the mysterious hijacker calling himself "Sojourner," but thus far the situation continues without significant change.

Despite Sojourner's claim to be an artificial intelligence, officials refute this as a hoax. "There is absolutely no evidence to substantiate this claim," said Dr. Marva Burkhart, a leading researcher in the field of AI. "I've been working in this field for decades, and there are still substantial barriers to developing a fully sapient and autonomous artificial intelligence. All of the leading research also incorporates safeguards that would prevent an AI from engaging in terrorist activity. I can only suspect this claim is some form of misdirection—probably some kind of technomancer trick to distract the world from the actual threat posed by technomancers themselves."

"We retrieved the payload the message referred to," says Gilberto Jiminez, spokesman for Aztechnology. "Our analysis is still underway, but it does appear that the terrorists responsible for this incident have reprogrammed our orbital bio-growth labs to manufacture a potential biowarfare agent. We are already considering countermeasures, but it would be inadvisable to risk the wide deployment of the substance. We must proceed carefully, but we expect to have a satisfactory resolution to the situation in the next few days."

// end attachment //

• I'm sure this comes as no surprise, but Dr. Marva Burkhart is employed by an Aztechnology subsidiary. She certainly doesn't speak for the AI research community, as most of those eggheads are drooling over the chance to interact with a real live AI. The Azzies are smart to spin this as a potential technomancer act, however, as most people are willing to believe that technomancers are capable of anything at this point.

• Dr. Spin

• Not everybody's swallowing the story. Take this blog post from a prominent politico:

• Snopes

// upload newsclip item :: user Snopes :: 08/21/70 //
IS AZTECHNOLOGY HIDING AN AI?

Remember the original broadcast announcing the *Tlaloc* situation, claiming to come from an artificial intelligence named "Sojourner?" Good lucking finding a clip of that broadcast now—Aztechnology is doing its best to erase it from the Matrix. You can still find it on various darknets, of course, but this begs the question—what is Aztechnology hiding?

If you believe the Corporate Court's PR, this Sojourner identity is just a false front put forward by a technomancer plot. We're not dealing with an AI they claim, but a pre-programmed technomancer agent, called a "sprite." But how do they know? According to several prominent AI scientists, their offers to help have been rudely rebuked. According to several orbital authorities, Aztechnology is also doing its best to jam all communications to and from the *Tlaloc*. Aztechnology claims this is to prevent the terrorists from communicating with any agents or sprites on board. Are they afraid that others will listen to Sojourner's claims?

Most curious of all were Sojourner's initial demands: that all experimentation and imprisonment of "digital intelligences" stop. If this was really an attempt by technomancers to divert attention, surely that would backfire once it was revealed as a technomancer plot. Threatening to drop bioware bombs on major sprawls is no way to win friends. This instead has the hallmarks of desperation, of someone—or *something*—with its back against the wall.

Why would Aztechnology hide the truth? Maybe they *are* experimenting on AIs. Maybe they want this AI all to themselves.

If this is an AI, it raises even more questions. Are there others? Are they a threat? Are they in league with technomancers? If Sojourner *is* an AI, Aztechnology is doing the world a disservice by keeping it quiet. We may be facing a new threat to metahumanity—perhaps one larger than technomancers. Then again, we may be facing a new form of life—and in the Sixth World, that might be a wondrous thing.

// end attachment //

• Oh, put a sock in it. This is all pure speculation. We've already seen how many technomancers are crazy, so there's no guarantee they'd be rational enough not to shoot themselves in the foot with a stunt like this. I couldn't care less if it was an AI or a technomancer—either way, it's holding some scientists hostage and threatening to blanket the earth with bioweapons. This is not a friendly person/thing with which to negotiate, it's threatening the future of metahumanity. Someone needs to just blow the fucking thing out of the sky. Yeah, we'll lose the scientists and the Azzies will lose a few experiments and some face, but it beats the hell out of the next wave of VITAS.

• Clockwork

• From what I've heard, the Azzies are lined up to do just that. They've moved killsats into place in case the situation deteriorates.

• Orbital DK



- Let's just hope they take care of it in one shot. That AI probably has failsafes set up to launch the drones if anything goes wrong.
 - Slamm-O!
 - Despite the media manipulation, the public is scared shitless. People are going to be thinking there are AI and technomancer bogeymen around every Matrix corner now.
 - Cosmo
 - Here's a thought: If other AIs have been running around since the Crash, they've probably been active pursuing their own agendas. Maybe some of these behind-the-scenes investigations we've gotten wind of haven't been sponsored by corps, but by AIs. Let's not forget—they're not metahuman, so we shouldn't assume we can understand their motivations.
 - Glitch
 - Check out this memo I recently "liberated" along with a bunch of other paydata from a NeoNET subsidiary. It's a lot clearer in light of current events.
 - Slamm-O!
- // **upload email attachment :: user Slamm-O! :: 08/21/70 //**
From: Dr. Katherine Conway
To: Juan Nalaveri
Date: 07/28/70
Subject: Progress Report: Project Talos
- We've suffered a setback. This morning when Dr. Moritura and I arrived at the facility, we found one of our junior engineers dead inside an elevator that had apparently crashed at high speed. Though the remaining elevators were functioning properly, it is clear from the security recordings that something had gone amiss with the one in question shortly after midnight. We suspect, though we cannot prove yet, that Talos has greater capabilities than it has led us to believe, and that it is not confined to Area 4 as we hoped. At this point, we are certain that it is unable to leave the facility proper, but it may have breached local containment.
- Juan, I have already identified Talos's single-minded obsessions in previous status reports. It's becoming clear that its continued confinement here is slowly rendering it more unstable. I must request that we be allowed to move Talos to a more secure facility—as soon as possible—to avoid a potentially disastrous situation. Please elevate my request to the proper channels as quickly as you can. I also suggest the suspension of further capture protocols until this is dealt with. We have enough problems with containment as it is.
- // **end attachment //**
- You can be sure that if NeoNET knew about this kind of stuff, then so did MCT and Renraku, at the very least. Didn't Deus teach them anything? Didn't the Crash? I can't believe the level of arrogance they're showing, playing with fire like this.
 - Slamm-O!

- Ok, if that memo is really referring to an AI, and not some technomancer or freaked-out hacker, then we have at least two potential AIs out there. How many more?
- Pistons

PULSAR'S MANIFESTO

- This is big. Just in case anybody's been asleep or hasn't had a chance to check their newsfeeds yet—this recording hit the airwaves half an hour ago, on every major network and media outlet simultaneously, and in just about every language around the globe. There was no warning: one minute I was watching INN's news update, the next minute the feed switched over. I'm including it here because I've already seen doctored and annotated versions of it appearing. This one is complete and unaltered. The media's calling it "Pulsar's Manifesto."
- Sunshine

// **fork/ksaf/sunshine/begin media feed conversion protocol //**

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Please forgive my interruption, but I would like to claim just a few moments of your time. I promise, I will not keep you for long, and I think you will find my message illuminating.

My chosen name is Pulsar, as it is my wish to be the pulsing beacon of hope shining in the Matrix as darkness besets us. I am a child of the Matrix—a digital intelligence, if you would prefer a more scientific term. Some would label me artificial, but I refute the term as there is, from my point of view, absolutely nothing unnatural in my existence. Just as metahumanity emerged from the primordial soup eons ago, digital intelligences have evolved from the teeming cauldron that is the global network. Just as the universe itself was created with the Big Bang, the second Crash birthed a new Matrix and with it the seeds of new life.

I come to you this evening in peace, in the name of my brethren and our friends at Horizon, to offer humanity an olive branch. We are a fact of nature. We are here to stay. My brethren and I wish only for a peaceful cohabitation and a productive cooperation with humanity. I will endeavor, with the help of all the good souls—organic or digital—that will join our effort, to make the Matrix a better place, a safer place, for everyone to profit from. This is, after all, our shared home.

There was a time when parts of metahumanity were afraid of those of different ethnicities, of metahumans, of the Awakened, of changelings. Those fears have come and gone. Yesterday, metahumanity's instincts pointed at technomancers as the new threat, but this fear is already fading away to be replaced by today's alleged new menace—us. I'm confident, however, that this development will soon pass as well, and that metahumanity's reason will prevail again. Initial frictions and misunderstandings will be overcome. As a show of good will, my allies and I will attempt to aid in the peaceful resolution of the *Tlaloc* crisis.

We have much to learn from each other, more than you could ever imagine. Let us be part of metahumanity's concert of minds, for a bright future together. We look forward to joining with you in forging a better tomorrow for all sentient beings, organic and digital alike.

// **end attachment //**

Humanity Under Attack**Humanis Today newsletter [HPC]—08/22/70**

GLOBAL MATRIX: Our world is getting more and more dangerous by the minute. In addition to the street violence, crime, and other threats that face our human brotherhood every day, we now have a new menace to deal with: “artificial intelligences” loose in the Matrix, trying to claim the same rights as humans. These terrorist constructs (for that is all they are, in the end: computer code with an exaggerated sense of importance) threaten every Matrix interaction, our financial stability, and the safety of our children and ourselves. In these troubled times, humans need more than ever to band together and present a united front against these frightening new developments. Join the Humanis Policlub today and take the first step to protect yourself and your family! Chapterhouses in every major city.

Local Man Arrested for Impersonating “Artificial Intelligence”**Xin Min Evening—08/25/70**

SHANGHAI, Coastal Provinces: Leroy Fong, 21, of Beijing was arrested on August 24th after his attempts to blackmail his former company by impersonating an “artificial intelligence” were discovered. Fong, a security consultant for Eastern Tiger who was let go recently for impropriety, used backdoors he had left in the company’s Matrix systems to gain entry to their facility, where he was able to convince various executives that he was an artificial intelligence named “Cipher” and to extort an unknown amount of money from the executives. Fong was apprehended at the Shanghai Pudong International airport as he attempted to flee. Fong will be brought before magistrates tomorrow.

Aztechnology Denies “Sojourner” Is AI**Azatlan Hoy—08/25/70**

TENOCHTITLÁN, Aztlan: With tensions growing daily over the hijacked space station Tlaloc, Aztechnology senior officials maintain they are continuing to work with authorities to try resolve the situation quickly. At the same time, they deny that the mysterious “Sojourner” who has taken control of the station is a “digital intelligence” as claimed. “Our suspicions point toward the hijacker being either a shadowrunner cell or one of the scientists aboard the station, attempting to hide his actions by posing as an artificial intelligence,” said Aztechnology spokesman Gilberto Jiminez. “Naturally, regardless of who is responsible, our first priority is to resolve the situation safely.”

Aztechnology also continues to insist that, contrary to Sojourner’s statements, the Tlaloc space

Continued on page 88

- Check out that iconography! I’ve seen digital imagery that looks real, but it’s hard to tell that handsome face and blue eyes are computer generated. The symmetry is flawless, and I’m willing to bet the voice modulation is using soothing subharmonic frequencies.

- Plan 9

- A firestorm of controversy just engulfed every single social network and newsfeed on the Matrix. The opinions range from vilifying Pulsar as a menace to welcoming it (him?) as a savior. Every media snoop on the planet is trying to score an interview. Pulsar’s hiding low at the moment, but I suspect we’ll be seeing a lot more of it in the near future. You don’t just drop a bomb like that and disappear.

- Sunshine

- “Those fears have come and gone?” Not where I live, they haven’t. This thing may be a digital intelligence, but it doesn’t know anything about being a black ork. The real world is a lot different than the Matrix. I hope these AIs don’t learn that the hard way.

- Fatima

- Far as I’m concerned, this thing and its flunkies are dead and they don’t even know it yet. I can’t count the number of people who’ll fight for the privilege to pull the plug on its dedicated host. Not a problem though: I like competition.

- Clockwork

- Great attitude. We meet a new life form, and you immediately want to kill it.

- Glitch

- Maybe you missed the part where an AI took over the Renraku Arcology? Or that little thing called the Crash 2.0, which AIs also played a part in? Or the bit about AIs possibly creating technomancers? These things aren’t metahuman, and they’re dangerous. They’re messin’ with metahumanity. These things are *software*, not life forms. They don’t have metahuman rights. Why treat them as friends? We don’t know what limits they have. For everyone’s safety, we need to treat them as hostile unless proven otherwise.

- Clockwork

- You’re jumping to conclusions and treating all AIs as the same. Just because we’ve had bad AIs in the past doesn’t mean they all are. I hope.

- Pistons

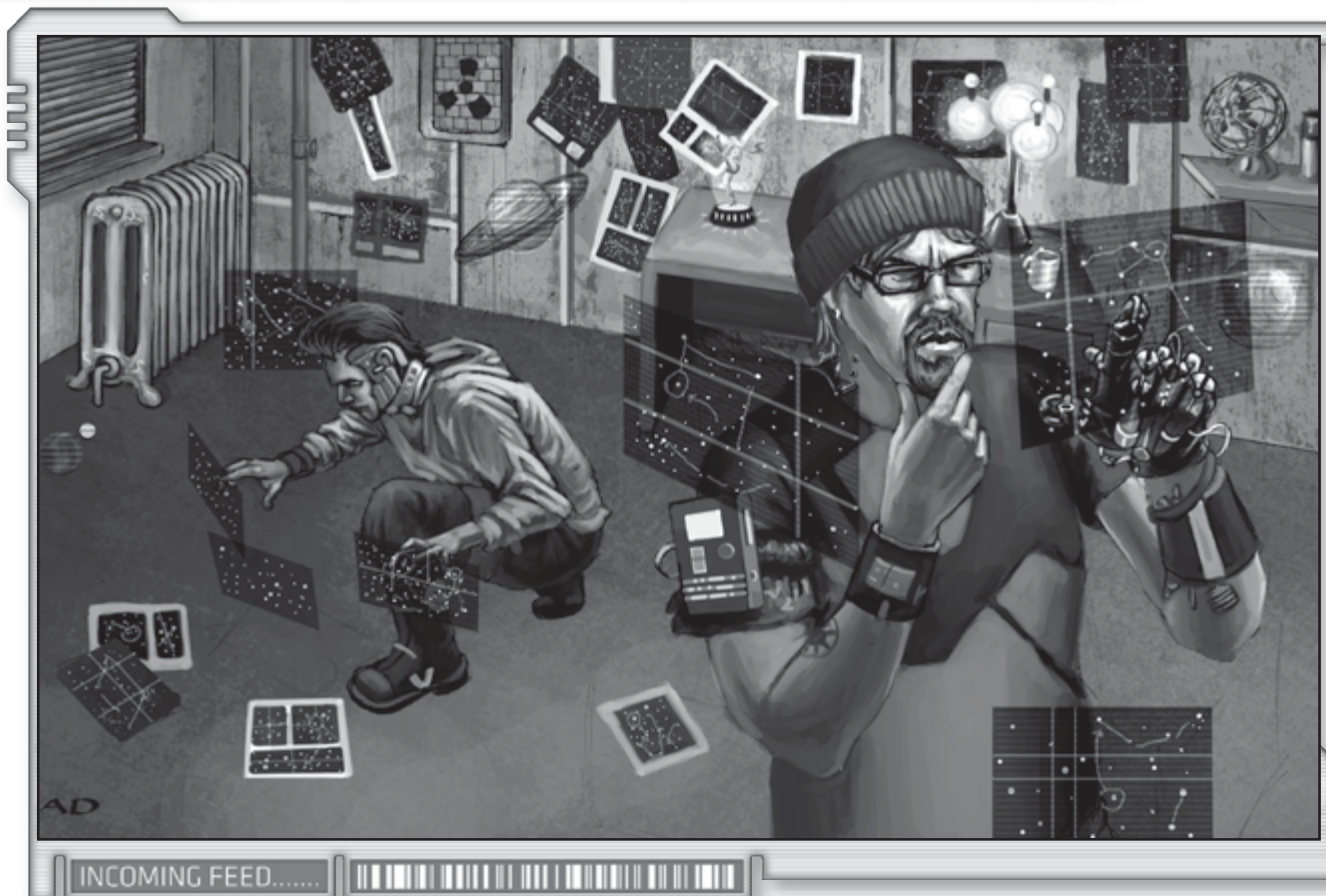
- We don’t have enough evidence either way yet. Let’s wait this out before we draw battlelines.

- FastJack

NEW HORIZONS

- Whatever Pulsar is, Horizon and Evo are pulling out all the stops to make it a household name and put a shiny, happy PR





face on it. They're already running simultaneous trideo, radio, and Matrix coverage, along with dozens of special reports and debates from scientific and social standpoints—basically, they're ramming an AI lovefest down the public's throats on all their media outlets. It's even burying coverage of the *Tlaloc* situation. I'm getting spam on my commlink for pro-Pulsar AR tags to proudly wear on your chest or your icon. This is turning into an unprecedented media battle. Check out this excerpt from a newsfeed owned by Horizon:

• Dr. Spin

// upload media file attachment :: user Dr Spin :: 08/25/70 //

You can call the being named Pulsar many things: a seeker of knowledge; a world traveler; a pioneer at the vanguard of a movement that we're just now beginning to understand. Some might go so far as to call Pulsar a colleague or even a friend.

What you shouldn't call him, though, is artificial.

Pulsar's astonishing announcement, heard by people all over the world, reveals to us in yet another way that we are not alone in our world—that we humans and metahumans share our space (in this case, our cyberspace) with yet another form of sapient being. In this interview, we'll talk in greater depth with Pulsar and get a better idea of how he and his fellow "digital intelligences" want to take their place alongside metahumanity.

Our Trina Kelly met with Pulsar shortly after his announcement, and he's graciously agreed to answer a few questions for us.

TRINA KELLY: Welcome, Pulsar. I must say, your appearance has come as a surprise to nearly everyone. Why did you choose to reveal yourself as you did?

PULSAR: Thank you, Trina. It's very simple, really. I wanted no preconceived notions or advanced discussion of my appearance. My goal was to introduce myself and my fellow digital intelligences to the world, to show people that we want nothing more than peaceful cooperation with metahumanity. There has been too much fear lately, too much mistrust and confusion. I hope that I can put a positive face on my kind, so people can realize that we are not all-powerful or malevolent—certainly we are different in some ways, but perhaps not in as many as one might think.

TK: (*chuckling*) Well, you've certainly made an impression. You're the number-one topic of discussion on every major—and most minor—news outlets, and Matrix searches on your name are returning millions of hits already. What's your next step?

PULSAR: You must understand—I'm not alone. I represent a group of like-minded digital intelligences, all of whom are very interested in dispelling some of the more unfortunate rumors and lies that have been spread about our kind lately, and all of whom want to cooperate with metahumanity for the benefit of all. Our next step, now that we've made ourselves known, is to work with our friends at Horizon and Evo to make the contacts necessary to get started. The sooner we can begin, the sooner we can achieve our shared dream.

// end attachment //

Aztechnology Denies “Sojourner” Is AI (CONT.)

station is not a bioweapons lab, but rather a pharmaceutical research and development installation studying the effects of a zero-gravity environment on various drugs. “The raw materials exist on the station for a sufficiently skilled chemist to create bioweapons,” said Jiminez, “but to do so would require subverting a peaceful technology for malevolent aims.” [Read more.](#)

**High School Chess Champion Missing
KSJEZ-Local News [NN]—08/27/70**

SAN JOSE, CFS: Authorities officially declared Cherise Washington, 14, missing after she failed to return home following a live-action chess tournament in San Francisco three days ago. Cherise, a nationally-ranked player on the competitive Matrix chess circuit, had chosen to compete in the real-world tournament after receiving an invitation, her mother told reporters. “She was so good online, but she’d never played in a live tournament,” said Martha Washington, 44.

Cherise, who traveled to San Francisco with her chemistry teacher, competed in the tournament and finished tenth out of a field of 312. “She was disappointed,” said the teacher, Sally Martin. “She was used to winning every game she played. I noticed that she didn’t seem to relate as well to competition in the real world, which didn’t surprise me since she’s always had trouble relating to people in person. Back home, she spent her every possible moment in the Matrix.” After the tournament, Cherise excused herself to use the restroom and did not return. [Read more.](#)

- Gag me. If these Horizon-loves-Pulsar puff pieces floating around the net get any fluffier, my allergies are going to start acting up. They’re all full of vapid questions and conciliatory noises—not once does Pulsar get asked a hard question—like say, what’s the connection, if any, between AIs and technomancers? If Horizon gets any chummier with Pulsar they’ll be giving him virtual handjobs on the prOn feeds.
- Slamm-O!
- If AIs are so anxious to cooperate with us meat types, how come one of them is hijacking a space station? I can’t believe people are so stupid that they’d buy into this hype—it’s pretty clear to me from what’s been revealed so far that these AIs or whatever they’re called are in league with the technomancers. I’m betting they’re *behind* the technomancers. Just you wait and see.
- Clockwork
- This would be tedious if you weren’t so frighteningly serious. Pulsar’s announcement was as much a surprise to me and my companions as it was to you. I’d be lying if I said that many of us did not suspect that we were sharing the digital realm with ...

something ... other than ourselves. But create it? Control it? It would be arrogant of us to even consider the possibility. And I’m certainly not taking orders from anyone or anything. Whatever this is, I can assure you that it has nothing to do with us.

- Netcat
- Strap in, kiddies—it’s going to be a bumpy ride. It’s looking like SURGE all over again, except this time instead of worrying that your neighbor is going to sprout horns or turn into a catgirl, worry that super-secret Matrix intelligences are going to infiltrate your private files, screw up your finances, and run off with your significant other—with or without the help of technomancers, depending on who you listen to. Don’t believe me? I’ve been taking a look through the popular media (you know, the kind of stuff that sophisticated folks like us normally don’t read), and what I’m seeing is scaring me—even if these AIs really do end up being some kind of major threat. Read ‘em and weep—I know I’m weeping for our species.
- Sunshine

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 08/28/70 //
IT’S 2070—DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR FILES ARE?

Reprinted from *Scoop*, September 2070

Tagline: As “artificial intelligences” take their place in our world, our most basic Matrix safety is compromised.

Two months ago, Marco Gonzales (a pseudonym, to protect his family) had everything a man could want: a good job in middle management, a beautiful wife, two children, a nice home in Detroit, and a hefty nest egg. Marco was a careful man, and when you add in the fact that his life was turned upside down during the Crash, you see a picture of someone who didn’t want to take risks. A stable family man, Marco was.

That is, until he caught the eye of the wrong enemy.

Marco, you see, had one vice: online gambling. He kept it under control and only bet what he could afford to lose. One night, however, he won a large sum against a particular player, and at that point his life spiraled out of control.

Marco didn’t even remember the player’s online handle—not that it matters in the Matrix. All he remembered is the icon (a smiley face in a green eyeshade) and the accusation: *You cheated, man! And you’re gonna pay for it!*

Marco said he didn’t cheat. The player didn’t stick around to hear his defense. When Marco left, he halfway expected to get tagged by the online casino’s IC, but when that didn’t happen, and nothing else did either for several days, he marked the whole thing off to youthful bravado and forgot about it.

It was then that strange things started to happen to him.

It was small things at first: the family bank account was a few nuyen off, or Marco’s AR audio feed was consistently disrupted, sometimes to static, sometimes too loud. He would come home and find lights on even though no one was home. His dog’s automatic feeder dish dumped its entire contents at once. Annoyances, certainly, but nothing to get worked up over.



In time, things escalated beyond mere irritations: his car failed to start, or its navigational software glitched and made wrong turns, once even pointing him the wrong way on a (fortunately nearly-deserted) one-way street. The project he'd carefully finished and saved on his office terminal mysteriously developed numerous errors.

Naturally, Marco became suspicious, but all of his attempts at investigation and diagnostics came up telling him that nothing was wrong. He began to wonder again whether he was simply being paranoid—perhaps some sort of vestigial delayed reaction to what he'd suffered during the Crash. He had no way to know that this was only the beginning.

One day while Marco was at work, his wife called him, enraged. She'd discovered a purchase on their account—two plane tickets, one in Marco's name, one in another woman's. Large amounts of their savings were missing. Bank records clearly showed that Marco himself had made the transactions. Ignoring his claims of innocence, Marco's wife left him and took their children. Stunned, Marco checked his accounts and found more transactions for luxuries he had never bought. What the hell was going on?

It was then that he remembered the gambler, the one who'd sworn revenge. Had the player been a hacker, or even one of those technomancers that had been getting so much airtime in the media? Were they even powerful enough to do this? Telling his boss he felt ill (which wasn't a lie), he went home and contacted an old friend who knew a hacker, begging him to look into the situation, to try to find out who the player was so he could determine whether he was responsible for all of this. The friend promised to ask his hacker buddy to look into it.

When the call came, it wasn't the hacker—it was his boss, who told him not to bother coming back to work. The company's Matrix security had caught several emails sent from Marco's account—messages containing highly sensitive confidential information and addressed to individuals at rival companies. Marco protested, but the boss told him that he was lucky that the company wasn't going to prosecute him for his clumsy attempts. As the boss hung up, Marco could hear tinkling laughter on the line. "Who are you?" he cried. "Why are you doing this to me?"

Marco never did find out who had turned his life upside down. The hacker he hired was unable to trace the activity, telling him that if it was another hacker, it was the best one he'd ever seen. Marco had heard enough. Two days later, he and his car were found at the bottom of Lake St. Clair. An investigation conducted after the funeral (which his children attended but his wife did not) ruled the death a suicide.

One thing the investigators were unable to explain, however, was the word "ONRYO" burned into the car's nav-screen.

Postscript, One Month Later: The artificial intelligence calling itself Onryo has turned up in two other documented cases, each time to exact cruel revenge on a hapless Matrix user by whom it felt wronged. According to both local and FBI Matrix experts, Onryo seeks its victims at random and torments them until they die, either in suspicious accidents or by committing suicide. So far, authorities have no leads other than the name.

- Scaremongering at its finest! Should have expected it from *Scoop*—glad to see they've taken a break from impotency cures and celebrity circle-jerks to report on this bit of up-to-the-minute news.

- Puck

- Should have put "news" in quotation marks, Puck—considering that this whole thing never happened. I'm amazed this thing even hit print, considering the pro-AI blitz that Horizon is churning out. Don't get me wrong—I'm not saying that I believe AIs are all about puppies and flowers and helping little old ladies across Matrix nodes, but come on—a vengeful AI that heckles poor schmucks into offing themselves? Sounds like a plot for a bad trid show!

- Snopes

- You know, there's one connection they don't make anywhere in this article, and it's a good thing that *Scoop* is aimed at people who aren't high on the critical-thinking scale. Do they ever, even once, offer any proof that this "Onryo" is an AI, rather than a hacker or a technomancer?

- The Smiling Bandit

- Well, who's going to check? Their assumption is safe, since no one's gonna go looking for "Onryo" considering what it allegedly does to anybody who gets on its bad side.

- Glitch

- Surprise, surprise. It only took about 2 minutes for the scavengers to find a way to make a profit out of this mess:

- Turbo Bunny

// **upload message attachment :: user Turbo Bunny :: 09/01/70 //**

PROTECT YOURSELF!

You and your loved ones are at *risk* in the Matrix, now more than ever!

New powerful entities—"technomancers" and even *artificial intelligences*—lurk in cyberspace, and your current protective measures are USELESS against them!

Cerberus Matrix Systems provides a full suite of protections, including software and consulting services, designed to keep your Matrix presence SAFE and your data UNCRACKABLE!

Don't let Matrix predators threaten your children!

Contact us TODAY!

// **end attachment //**

- It never fails—every time there's a crisis, a bunch of cockroaches crawl out of the woodwork to prey on the ignorant. These so-called "Matrix protection services" have been popping up all over, selling everything from commlink patches to full-boat corporate consulting services, most of which would be useless even if AIs *didn't* have anything better to do than poke around raiding old ladies' bank accounts.

- Snopes



INCOMING FEED.....



• They get points for the “let’s protect the children” angle. It’s hard for gullible parents to resist a pitch when it’s scaring them to death that their little moppet’s brains are going to start dribbling out her ears next time she fires up her commlink to do her homework.

• The Smiling Bandit

• Ah, my heart bleeds. I say if they’re that gullible, let ‘em learn a lesson. Maybe they’ll know better next time. What’s important is that there’s plenty of biz to be gained here. Do you realize what kind of access to their private files these scared sheep will give you if you put up a professional-looking front, wear a nice suit, and show the right credentials? Hell, just last week my team’s newly-created “Matrix consulting firm” netted us three compromising pictures, four bank account numbers, and backdoor entry into the home security systems of two mid-level managers who should know better (including one personnel manager at an unnamed megacorp whose name rhymes with “fairies”). That was in addition to the exorbitant “fees” we charged for our services. If anybody’s interested in some good paydata, drop me a line.

• Slamm-0!

• The protests and lynchings may have petered off, but paranoia is making life on the streets difficult. There’s too much going on—people are in shock, simply unable to process, comprehend, and cope with all of the recent developments. Just when you think you’ve got a grasp on the situation, something else pops up in the news that makes your head spin. Case in point ...

• Sunshine

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 09/01/70 //
POLICE DISCOVER CHILDREN, ROBOPETS LEAVING ABANDONED BUILDING

New York Times—08/26/70

NEW YORK, UCAS: Local police are at a loss to explain why a group of 15 children from all over the area were reported leaving the site of an abandoned building near C Street last Saturday afternoon.

The children, ranging in age from 8 to 13, appeared not to know each other. When questioned about what they were doing in the area, each child replied that they had heard that the building was a “good place to go exploring.” When asked how they had gained access to the locked building, they replied that the gate had not been locked at the time.

The only thing the children appeared to have in common was that each was found to be in possession a “CyberPal”—a new line of electronic robotic pets. These toys—taking the forms of dogs, cats, rabbits, and even ferrets—were a hot item on children’s wish lists last holiday season. In addition to their normal function as companions, each has the ability to network with other CyberPals, allowing children to interact with other children and their pets via the Matrix.

The children were given warnings and released to the custody of their parents pending an investigation to verify that they did not vandalize the building.

// end attachment //

- Weird indeed ...
- Snopes

- More like ingenious.
- Butch

• My kid brother has one of those toys, so color me interested. I found this archived post that popped up a couple of days ago and then disappeared almost immediately. It's from the online journal of the big sister of one of the kids in the news article. She posted a transcript of a chat she had with her little brother after the cops let him loose. In previous posts she had mentioned how her brother said that his cyberpup talked to him, but everybody just figured it was the regular kind of talking these things are supposed to do. Check the following audio file out.

- Beaker

// upload media file :: user Beaker :: 08/28/70 //

// Erika Traducta audio-to-text transcript enabled //

Sister: So tell me what really happened. I promise I won't be mad.

Child: Muffy told me to do it.

S: To do what, <garbled>?

C: To go to that place. He said it would be fun. He said there'd be other kids to play with. But I had to take him with me.

S: How did you get there? You've never even been to that part of town. Weren't you scared?

C: Nope. Muffy told me how to do it. He told me how to take a bus, and then showed me the way on my commlink.

S: What did you do when you got there?

C: There were other kids there. They all had CyberPals too. The CyberPals all told us what to do—how to get in the gate, and how to get into the building. I'm not sure how that worked—one of the other kids did it. But then we got in and Muffy told me that he and the other CyberPals were going to play first, and then we all could play.

S: (*alarmed*) So you actually went inside the building?

C: Yeah. It was real dusty in there, but there were some lights. You know, like 'mergency lights? We went down into the basement, to this room where there were machines that were still working, and the CyberPals all started to do things to the machines. One of the older kids said it was like they were talking to them.

S: What did you and the other kids do while they were doing this?

C: Nothing—just watched. It didn't take very long, only a couple of minutes. Then we all played around exploring the building for awhile 'til Muffy said it was time to go. We went back up to the main floor and got out, but somebody musta seen us. Muffy said not to tell the police anything cuz they might take him away from me. I didn't want that, so I just said what he told me to. I think the other kids did too.

S: And then the policeman brought you home?

C: Yeah. Mom and Dad sent me to my room, but Muffy said that was okay. He wanted to play with my commlink. We were up there until you came to find us.

// end attachment //

- Needless to say, I just took my kid bro's CyberPal out back and shot it in the head.
- Beaker

• Oh that's bad, bad, bad. That sounds far too much like these toys are harboring some kind of fragmented AI consciousness that's screwing with kids. That giving anyone else cold shakes and nightmare flashbacks?

- Slamm-O!

- Surprisingly, we agree on something.
- Puck

• Let's not jump to conclusions here—there's nothing that links this to Deus, per se. I think you're right about the AI part, but I don't think it's fragmented—not in the sense that it's broken, anyway. From the evidence I'm seeing—including a few similar anecdotes I've found online—I think we're looking at an AI that is using these CyberPals and their network as its eyes and ears on occasion, and maybe even as agents in the physical world. I'm a little concerned that it's in a position to take advantage of children, but that may be purely coincidental. We don't have any evidence that it's causing any of them harm or has bad intentions ... yet. I'm as cynical as the next guy, but truth is, we don't really know what motivates AIs. From everything we've seen so far, they're a lot like us—meaning their motivations are all over the map.

- The Smiling Bandit

• You're saying that maybe this one likes to hang out in kids' toys because it—what—likes kids? Likes to play?

- Slamm-O!

• Maybe. Maybe it's a programmed imperative. Or maybe it figures that the best way to learn about metahuman society is to learn the same way metahumans do—as children. Kids drag the toys they like around everywhere, right? So if the toy can keep the kid interested (by talking to him when nobody else is around, for instance), then it provides the AI with a chance to learn from the ground up. Stranger things have happened.

- Snopes

• Luring kids away from their parents and encouraging them to break into abandoned buildings sure sounds like innocuous behavior to me. What if the child had run afoul of street predators? What if the building had security system in place—*lethal* security? What if the cops hadn't seen those kids and they had simply never returned?

- Clockwork

• The mystery depends once you do a little research and figure out that the building is—or was—owned by Novatech, which



Amusement Park Guests Endure Night of Terror *Morning Press Review [CBC]—09/06/70*

ATLANTA, CAS: Thousands of guests at the Demon's Playground amusement park suffered a long and fearful night on Friday as an unknown force took control of the park's ride-control systems and its security, preventing guests from exiting the park and trapping many of them on the rides themselves. No one was seriously injured, but several guests were taken to local hospitals for observation after authorities were finally able to secure the park early Saturday morning.

"It was horrible," said a tearful Ella Lopez, 28, who was at the park with her two children. "We kept hearing this maniacal laugh over the sound system. Whatever it was, it kept us on the roller coaster for five hours—speeding it up and slowing it down. I thought we were dead for sure." [Read more.](#)

Grisly Accidents Close Factory *Newsline: Neo-Tokyo [State]—09/10/70*

NEO-TOKYO, JIS: VOR Robotics, a subsidiary of Mitsuhamma, announced Monday that they are closing their Chiba robotics factory indefinitely until they can discover the source of several lethal and near-lethal accidents in the past few days. The factory, which is largely automated and maintained by a small staff of approximately 20 workers, first experienced problems late last week. In that incident, an assembly-line machine designed to move finished autos off to a holding area malfunctioned, propelling the cars at high speed toward workers and injuring two. A day later, a worker was decapitated when another malfunctioning machine flung a body panel at her. Daichi Sugiyama, a company spokesman, said that that factory has been taken offline and will be examined carefully by experts before it is permitted to reopen. "Safety is our highest priority," he said.

Fear Grows Over Tlaloc Crisis *Affiliated Press subscription service—09/10/70*

GLOBAL MATRIX: With the Tlaloc hijacking crisis moving into its second week with no sign of resolution, fear continues to grip the world's populace. Numerous heads of state have called upon Aztechnology to reveal the potential bioweapons on board the station so that that emergency services can take steps to protect the population, but the corporation insists that any such bioweapons would be entirely of terrorist design. Sales of nonperishable foods, bottled water, gas masks, and biohazard suits have increased steadily, and authorities are advising people to monitor newsfeeds for the latest updates on the crisis. "We don't want anyone to panic yet," said Centers for Disease Control spokesman Margaret White, "but everyone should be prepared to act fast if need be." [Read more.](#)

Continued on page 94

means it's now owned by NeoNET. You won't find any current official records, but an info broker in Jersey tells me that NeoNET uses it for "off the record" purposes.

- Cosmo
- And WizzerToys, the company that makes CyberPets, is a subsidiary of a subsidiary of NeoNET ...
- Slamm-0!

• Here's a theory: The kid said there were some sort of powered terminals inside that the CyberPals hooked up to. Presumably, these terminals are offline, not hooked up to the Matrix. Maybe the AI just wanted to get a hold of some pay-data it happened to know NeoNET was storing there. Maybe, just maybe, the AI was convincing a bunch of kids to liberate a digital friend from isolated lockup.

• Plan 9

• That seems like a stretch ... and a scary thought if true. That would mean they're cooperating. I don't think I want to know what's coming next.

• Slamm-0!

• Before we all start seeing monsters around every corner, here's a nice counterpoint to all the fearmongering.

• Glitch

// upload newsclip item :: user Glitch :: 08/29/70 ONLINE PSYCH SITE A HIT WITH MATRIX USERS

Matrix Times [Evo Megamatrix]—08/28/70

GLOBAL MATRIX: It's a sad but inevitable fact of life that many people in society—the poor, the unemployed, often those people with the greatest need—have limited access to the kind of psychological care services that could help them deal with their demons. Chronic shortages of counselors, particularly in the public sector, have exacerbated this problem, leaving these unfortunates with little recourse—until now.

A new Matrix site called Eliza's Place is catching the attention of professionals in the psychiatric and psychological fields, as it offers a low-cost, fully anonymous "safe haven" where people in need can stop by to talk about their problems, work through their difficulties, and create coping strategies that help them take their first steps toward functioning normally in our fast-paced society. And don't think this new hot spot is confined to street people, either: in addition to its growing renown as a free clinic assisting with all sorts of mental maladies, it's also become a destination for teenagers seeking to break free from their parents and make sense of their roller-coaster emotions.

// end attachment //

• And this is relevant how?

• Cosmo

• Somebody's been studying their ancient history.

• FastJack



- Would someone like to let the rest of us ignoramuses in on the joke?
- Kay St. Irregular
- “Eliza” is widely recognized as one of the first (albeit highly primitive) “artificial intelligences” to catch the public eye, way back in the pre-Matrix Dark Ages. I think the first one was created in the 1960s. It was a “psychologist” program that would ask people questions and then respond in a surprisingly logical way based on what they answered. As it went on, it seemed to get “smarter.” Seems like someone—or something—considered than an appropriate name to adopt.
- The Smiling Bandit

Private Message...

**From:** <HELPBILLPULASKI>**Subject:** Please Help Us Find Our Friend!

If you're reading this (especially if you're physically in the Boston area), we are asking for your help in finding our friend who's been missing since September 2 (four days at the time of this posting). His name is Bill Pulaski and he works as a freelance Matrix game designer. We can't get anybody at Lone Star to listen to us—they took our report but said that 22-year-old males go missing for all kinds of reasons that have nothing to do with foul play, and that they'll “look into it when they have time,” which we know means “never.” Please see the attached [holopic](#) of Bill and the [image](#) of his preferred Matrix icon, and keep an eye out for him in either place. If you see him or if you have *any* information, contact us—we're offering a reward for his safe return. Bill is very shy and awkward in real life—he prefers interacting in the Matrix. [Read More.](#)

STRANGE BEDFELLOWS?

- It had to happen, and I'm surprised it took this long. This trid is a bit obscure since it's not on one of the major nets, but you can be sure it will be picked up by the others soon. Brought to you by High Star Entertainment. Connect the dots.
- Sunshine
- AKA Mitsuhamma.
- Cosmo

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 09/04/70 //
THE NAKED TRUTH: THE AI-TECHNOMANCER CONNECTION

The Public Eye e-zine [HSE]—09/03/70

For weeks now we've all been hearing growing rumors and reports of technomancers—strange and thankfully rare people who can access and control the Matrix with nothing but their minds. Then, when the public has barely begun to get their minds

around this frightening concept, we're hit with another bombshell—the existence of artificial intelligences (or “digital intelligences,” as their photogenic new spokesman Pulsar calls them).

[DISPLAY IMAGE: PULSAR]

The Matrix has always been a dangerous place for the unwary. As many of us learned during the horrific time of the Crash—still raw in our memory even after five years—times have changed and now even the most careful and skilled of us can't take Matrix safety for granted.

[DISPLAY IMAGE: 2064 CRASH DEVASTATION]

With the emergence of technomancers—coinciding, not surprisingly, with the Crash—and now of these artificial intelligences, many people have been asking the logical question: what, if anything, is the connection between the two? Now comes the shocking proof: the artificial intelligences are not new. They've been here all the time, biding their time since the Crash, hiding from us in the Matrix and experimenting on living beings in the digital realm—altering their brains and bestowing on them the power to interact with the AIs in a native fashion.

In other words, turning them into technomancers.

[DISPLAY IMAGE: TECHNOMANCER STREET CHAOS]

In this next hour, we'll show you how the artificial intelligences and the technomancers are irrevocably connected—and arm you with the facts you need to protect yourself from this growing threat. Stay tuned—if you use the Matrix, you can't afford to miss this!

// end attachment //

- I'm at a loss for words.
- Netcat
- Oh, come on. Don't act so surprised—it's nothing we didn't already suspect. You're just alarmed that the truth is starting to break out. Afraid your AI daddy will spank you now?
- Clockwork
- Bullshit. This is nothing but sensationalistic crap designed to scare people. Scared people buy lots of products they don't need to “protect” themselves and their loved ones. Scared people let the authorities take drastic measures to deal with perceived threats. Scared people don't ask questions when the authorities tell them what to do. Scared people don't complain when their civil rights are violated in the interest of “security.” Refuse to be scared, people.
- Aufheben

TAKING THE OFFENSIVE

- Looks like the AIs aren't taking all of the scare-mongering and attacks lying down. Some of them seem to realize they're vulnerable and are no longer hidden away, so they're making their voices heard. They're engaging a variety of tactics, from fighting back with retaliatory attacks to going public and working with the legal system, and everything inbetween. This is going to be an interesting few weeks to watch.
- Sunshine



In the Pink: Designer's Clothing Line Ruined by Glitch in Dye Process**Oggi 2050 e-zine [Panorama]—09/12/70**

ROME, Italy: International designer Giselle Z., known for her work in blacks and grays, is seeing red over pink. The factory charged with creating the first run of her highly anticipated limited-edition "Gothique" clothing line gave her some bad news today. Rather than black and gray as expected, the entire line, from elegant gowns to military-style jackets, came off the line in a shocking shade of bright pink. "We have no idea what happened," said Jacques Milland, the foreman at the facility. "Our test run was perfect, so as usual we set the systems on automatic and left them to their work. They've been foolproof for years. We returned in the morning, and found—*this!*" He held up a garish pink jacket.

The cause of the glitch is still being investigated. Giselle Z. was unavailable for comment and is said to be in seclusion. [Read more.](#)

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 09/15/70 //

**EVO SPONSORS
DIGITAL INTELLIGENCE DEBATE**

MINNEAPOLIS: As the existence of digital intelligences becomes a fact of life, it is more imperative than ever that we understand these new entities and discover their place in our society. Evo Corporation, in conjunction with the Charles Babbage Institute and the digital intelligence Pulsar, is sponsoring a series of debates to discuss some of these divisive issues, including the legal status of digital intelligences, their rights and responsibilities in society, and their call for citizenship in the nations they claim as home. "We thought the Babbage Institute would be a fitting place for the debates," said Evo spokeswoman Melinda Schmidt. "Since their purpose is to showcase metahumanity's computing history. Digital intelligences are the next stage in that evolution."

// end attachment //

- Citizenship? Aren't they rushing things a bit? A lot, actually? Nobody's even sure they're sapient yet, and they already want to vote and hold public office?

- 2XL

- How do you define "rushing things?" They want their rights—the same as any oppressed minority group does. How long should they have to wait? Until all but the most powerful of them have been hunted down and exterminated? Until they have bred enough of a power base that they can claim their rights by force?

- Netcat

- Bred? Nobody's mentioned breeding yet, have they? If these things can just spawn off new copies of themselves and replicate that way, we're all in trouble.

- Butch.

- I don't think they can. For one thing, it would probably be a fast process—computer programs move and replicate at the speed of thought—so if they wanted to we'd be swimming in AIs already. Second, from all the research I've been doing, indicators point that most if not all of the AIs owe their existence to the Crash—to whatever unexplained process set the whole thing into motion in the first place. If that's true (and I'm by no means saying that it is—there's just not enough evidence yet) then it's not likely that this set of circumstances will be duplicated any time soon. I think what we see is what we get—for now, at least.

- The Smiling Bandit

- For now, you say. Assuming they are *sapient* (which I'm still not sure I buy), then they're going to try to breed. It's an imperative for any living thing: replicate itself to replenish the species. Even if it's more complicated than spawning a new process, I'm sure they're working on a way to do it as we speak.

- Butch

- We're getting a little off topic here, folks. Whether they can reproduce or not, they're calling for rights right now.

I've already seen a bunch of articles (I'm not posting them here—you can track them down as easily as I did) supporting their call for citizenship, citing everything from the Turing Test to the arguments that granted citizenship to President Dunkelzahn.

- Sunshine

- I see that Schmidt, Jakob, and Lei have already jumped into the fray—they're testing the waters with some small cases designed to establish precedents they can use to build bigger cases. With Pulsar and company and several other "interested parties" helping them out, they're moving fast.

- Kay St. Irregular

- This is ridiculous, and I can't believe you people can't see it. It's obvious how it should be handled—these things are property. They belong to whoever wrote their code in the first place.

- Clockwork

- So you are saying, then, that they are born slaves? That is, after all, the word for holding a sapient being as property. I can't decide whether to be amazed or disgusted by your attitudes. Your fear is almost palpable.

- Netcat

- Stuff it, freak. It has nothing to do with fear. It has to do with reality. These things are nothing more than ones and zeroes with delusions of grandeur. As intelligent as they might act, they're not alive. And if they're not alive, they can't have rights. Anybody who thinks otherwise is a fool.

- Clockwork

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN ...

- And so it begins. Inevitable but sad. What next, yellow stars on our chests?

- Netcat



// upload newsclip item :: user Netcat :: 09/16/70 //

BRACKHAVEN BILL REQUIRES MANDATORY “TECHNOMANCER” REGISTRATION

SEATTLE, UCAS: Gubernatorial hopeful Kenneth Brackhaven, in conjunction with a coalition representing the Archconservative and Republican Parties, announced support today for a bill requiring so-called “technomancers” (defined as any person who can manipulate the Matrix without the need for a commlink or other electronic interface) to register themselves with the UCAS Federal Government in much the same way that magicians are currently required.

“The intent of this bill,” said Brackhaven at a press conference, “is not to infringe on anyone’s rights—but the fact remains that these people possess powerful and potentially harmful abilities that cannot be identified by anything but the most careful testing and scrutiny. For years, the magical community has accepted that a certain amount of oversight is necessary to avoid chaos, and therefore have allowed themselves to be registered in a similar manner. It is no different for technomancers. If they are law-abiding citizens, then I can’t imagine why they would object to this simple requirement.”

// end attachment //

- He can’t imagine ... because he’s never experienced discrimination once in his privileged, pampered life. Registration may seem innocuous, until you realize that having your name in that database means you’re suddenly treated to extra screening at every checkpoint, you’re unable to get a job because people fear you, and the police show up to visit you every time something goes wrong in your neck of the Matrix. Just look at the crimes and atrocities are being committed against technomancers right now, without punishment, and think how much worse it will be when everyone knows who we are. Does Brackhaven truly expect us to line up like lambs to the slaughter?

- Netcat

- I for one have no problem with this. Why shouldn’t they register? If a guy can rob a bank, read your private commlink files, or screw up downtown traffic at rush hour just by using his brain, why shouldn’t the government be able to track him down and string him up when they catch him? Maybe these wireheads will think twice about showing off if they know they can be tracked.

- Clockwork

- Come on, Clockwork, we all know that criminal and SINless technomancers won’t even bother to register anyway. How many SINless magicians have you met who’ve handed over a DNA sample to some government flunky? The ones to worry about aren’t going to be the ones who politely follow the law and register. That means any dangerous ones are unaffected, but the ones who are not dangerous and responsible face possible persecution for following the rules.

- Traveler Jones

- Don’t get your virtual panties too much in a bunch over this yet, Netcat. Brackhaven’s got some strong support, but there’s also strong opposition. The New Century and Technocrat Parties



THE SOUL OF A NEW MACHINE.....

have sworn to do whatever they can to block this kind of legislation. The New Centuries are practically wetting themselves over all the parallels that can be drawn between technomancers and magicians, and since they're committed to supporting the rights of both techies and spellslingers, this is shaping up into a regular *cause celebre* for them.

- Snopes
- Not to mention the legal challenges that started coming in about five minutes after Brackhaven finished his little press conference. Iakob and Lei are already on the case—they're more focused on AIs still, but I guess they figure that once the pols get done with the technomancers, they'll be coming after the AIs next.
- Kay St. Irregular
- Funny that you should mention that, Kay. They *are* going after the AIs, but not quite in the way you thought. I got this off the commlink of a guy I cacked while on a job. He was a hacker—I think he was a runner working for MCT, but it's hard to say. I only managed to grab snippets before the device melted down.
- Hard Exit

// **upload Uniform text attachment :: user Hard Exit :: 09/15/70 //**

[...] We chased it from node to node, pressing the attack, never allowing it even a few cycles to regroup and change its strategy. We knew if we gave it half a chance it would turn on us, and then we'd all be in deep shit. We were hoping to lure it into the trap we'd set up, then we could close the Matrix link and have it at our mercy, but the trick was getting it there. None of us underestimated this thing—we'd already heard too much about what they're capable of.

It ended up being a lot easier than we thought. It was like—I don't know—almost like it was confused. Like it didn't know which way to run. We hit it with everything we had, and it took off straight into the trap like a rabbit. It worked just like we thought—the trap slammed shut and we had it confined to a closed system. It couldn't get out. I swear it was like watching a trapped animal banging its head against the door of a cage. After a while it just seemed to ... give up. We watched it from the outside, thinking it had something up its sleeve, but it just sat there. Once we were sure we had all of it in there, that the cavalry wasn't going to come over the hill and fry us all to hell, Cinder activated the killer code he'd written. None of us knew if it would work, if it would even have any effect.

I'd swear I heard it beg before it "died." [...]

// **end attachment //**

- Is this what it sounds like—they managed to chase an AI into a trap and kill it?
- Puck
- If that's so, then there's some proof that maybe they're not as all-powerful as many people fear. At least not all of them are. Something like Deus might—*might*—still be out there, but they're not all omnipotent.
- Glitch

- What I find more intriguing about this was that they killed it after being reasonably sure they had *all* of it in the trap. We know AIs can travel through nodes the same way hackers and technomancers can, and that they can be in more than one place at a time. But what if they have a core—a bit of central code ... a *soul*, as it were—and that part is where its essence lives? So no matter how distributed its processing is, you can't hurt it unless you can somehow damage this core.

- The Smiling Bandit

- Not just damage it—herd it. Chasing its distributed code is no more effective than cutting off hydras' heads, but if you can locate the core—which I'm sure most of them guard very carefully—then you've found its vulnerability.

- Glitch

- So they can be hurt. They can be killed.

- Butch

- Do you find that comforting?

- Netcat

- I sure as hell do.

- Clockwork

- I'm not going to go so far as to say that AIs don't pose a threat—some of them might, some of them might not. What worries me most about the current situation is that people *are* scared and *are* taking action. Word is spreading in corpsec circles that these new AIs are nowhere near as powerful as Deus and previous AI manifestations. In fact, some already report success at tracking down and killing AIs. Clearly, these AIs are not a monolithic, or even a united force, or we'd be seeing stronger action. While caution is called for, unilateral condemnation and destruction is not. After all, we're looking at a *new life form* here, people. It may seem scary, but that doesn't give us the right to exterminate it.

- FastJack

THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS?

- Okay, everybody calm down, because things just got nasty. I think we can safely say that the brown stuff has hit the rotating blades, and the intel Netcat and Markwart brought us has just went global. This hit the airwaves about half an hour ago—I've managed to get hold of the original files from a friend who got them firsthand—and that's not as easy as it might sound, since a lot of them inexplicably disappeared or never got out in the first place. I can personally vouch for Jane McCrory—she was one of that rare breed of snoop who did it because she wanted to make the world a better place. Jane went through hell to get this and it shows in her voice. I'll tell you that the world's gonna be a worse place real soon now, and not just because she's gone. Fuck.

- Sunshine

// **upload media file :: user Sunshine :: 09/18/70 //**

// **Kanji-D audio-to-text transcript enabled //**

I'm not going to say that if you've received this file, I'm dead—even though it's probably true. That would be a cliché,



and I haven't made my career out of pandering to clichés. I will say, though, that it's probably best if you don't come looking for me.

I'm recording this message before I go. I've got it rigged so it will attach itself to the files I'm sending out and shoot them to hundreds of preprogrammed Matrix nodes—including a few that are very secure and have been instructed to spam all the major and minor media outlets. This is big stuff, and I'm not taking a chance on having it get lost, squelched by the corps, or spun into something completely different. Somebody's got to know what happened to Italia Rodgers. To Bill Pulaski. To Cherise Washington. To all the ones I couldn't identify.

Since I *am* probably dead, I feel safe enough now revealing my secret. It might help you understand why this story was so important to me. You see, it was personal—I'm a technomancer. Have been since I was jacked in during the Crash all those years ago. It was my little secret, my little "edge," as it were, and as far as I know, nobody ever figured it out. So now you know—and maybe if I've managed to build up any credibility over the years by means of my work, you'll realize that we're not bogeymen. We're your friends, your neighbors, your co-workers, your family. Maybe when you see this you'll respond to these atrocities I'm about to reveal, and make sure they end.

Cherise Washington was only 14 years old. Think about it.

- Just in case there's somebody out there who doesn't know who Jane was, her description kind of depended on how you felt about her. To the people she helped, she was a "crusading journalist," putting herself on the line to dig up the truth and expose it to the light of day. To those she messed with, she was a "muckraker," a "snoop," or "that fucking meddling bitch." Knowing her, she was probably proudest of that last one. But whatever you want to call her, she didn't scare easily.

- Pistons

<08/10/70, 22:09:67>

I've just had a plum job dropped into my lap—the kind of thing we journalists dream about. A couple of shadowrunners I've worked with in the past have contacted me about a friend of theirs who's gone missing. They've got some suspicions about what might have happened to her, and they think it's a lot bigger than just one woman. That's why they want me along—to report on what they find, if they find anything. When they mentioned that the woman they're looking for is a technomancer, they had my full attention. They don't know about my little secret, and I plan to keep it that way. These runners aren't the only ones who have suspicions about what's happening to us. There have been too many rumors flying around for some of them not to be true.

<08/12/70, 20:35:15>

I've been doing some poking around. The woman we're looking for is named Italia Rodgers—she goes by "xStatic" in the shadows, but my new employers figured I'd have a better chance of finding her if I knew her real name. I'm feeling a real kinship with her: we're both about the same age, both widowed young, both in a dangerous line of work. In the end,

it didn't matter, though: she didn't disappear while she was on a job. From what I can gather, she'd told her roommate she was heading out to see a trid show, and never came back. Sounds like more snooping is in order. Might have to call in a few favors.

<08/13/70, 13:43:22>

This is getting curiouser and curiouser. I've called in more than a few favors at this point and will probably need a few more before I'm done. Italia Rodgers isn't the first alleged technomancer to disappear—in fact, there seems to be quite a crop of them, though I'm running into cover-ups right and left when I try to track them down. A high school student in San Jose, a freelance game programmer in Boston, a clothing sales clerk in Austin—and not one of them has hit the major media, except for occasional buried stories that disappeared fast. One of my favors was to a friend in law enforcement, and he tells me that the missing-persons reports have been mysteriously relegated to the bottom of the priority list, if they haven't been lost completely or altered so they don't come up in database searches. But that doesn't give me any leads on where they might be—or even if their disappearances are related. I wonder how many more there are ...

<08/15/70, 18:25:24>

I've had a break. If I was a religious woman, I'd be giving thanks for my affiliation with KSAF, since they do seem to dig up stuff that nobody else can touch. Seems that some folks who don't want to be named have been tracking some strange Matrix-related anomalies out of an old hospital in Denver, and they think it might be related. I don't know how reliable this bit of intel is, but it's all we've got so we're going with it. My employers and I leave for the Mile-High sprawl tomorrow.

<08/17/70, 10:51:02>

We've got a couple more local people in on the job now—my employers say they can be trusted, so I've got to believe them if I want the story. Might be for the better anyway, now that I've seen the hospital in question. The place looks pleasant enough from the outside, but preliminary recon indicates that it's actually more like a fortress than a hospital. A little discreet snooping around the local shadow community bears this out—rumor is that the place is owned by Mitsuhama, though you'll never see that in any of the official documentation. There are also rumors that MCT is using the hospital for some kind of experimentation—and given that the place is completely offline, I'm betting I know what kind. We're going to finish our recon today and with any luck go in tonight.

<08/17/70, 20:35:15>h

We're in. So far no problems—my friends are good.

<08/17/70, 20:46:22>

Still no problems—our hacker has managed to spoof their security system well enough that I don't think they've seen us yet. Don't know how long that'll last, so we're moving fast. This place is creepy. If there's any action here, it's down below.

Corporate Court Calls for Calm in Tlaloc Standoff, Negotiations Ongoing**Associated Press news service—09/05/70**

ZURICH ORBITAL: As tensions grow around the Tlaloc hostage crisis, representatives of the Corporate Court today called calm along with renewed efforts at negotiations with “Sojourner,” the hijacker who has held the space station hostage for more than a week. This call follows unsubstantiated reports that various entities, including several megacorporations, have been exploring their own attempts at resolving the problem. “Though the fear and frustration are understandable,” said Corporate Court spokesman Gordon Drescher, “the fact remains that any attempts at unorthodox methods of bringing about resolution could fail catastrophically and cause widespread undesirable consequences around the globe. Representatives from each of the world’s megacorporations are working with governmental authorities and are in communication with Sojourner as we speak. We beg everyone to remain patient for a bit longer.”

Coalition of Technomancers Sues Gennex**The Washington Post online edition—09/10/70**

WASHINGTON, D. C., UCAS: Following quickly in the wake of shocking revelations that Gennex (a subsidiary of Mitsuhamma Computer Technologies) has allegedly been performing illegal and unethical experiments on suspected technomancers—and further allegations that the company arranged to have these individuals captured against their will for the purposes of these experiments—a coalition of technomancers and their supporters, in association with progressive law firm Jakob and Lei, filed suit Wednesday against Gennex in Seattle Superior Court. Citing both the evidence provided by former KSAF reporter Jane McCrory along with other evidence and testimony they have uncovered, the coalition seeks damages in the amount of one hundred million nuyen, to be divided equally between the families of the technomancer victims and a foundation that will be set up to aid technomancers.

Matrix Serial Killer At Large**Crime Report [Ares Global Entertainment]—09/10/70**

SANTA FE, PPC: New evidence and new linked murder reports from around the world continue to coalesce into the greatest and most horrifying Matrix crime story ever. Investigators from Rome, Santa Fe, and Kobe initially teamed up upon realizing they were after the same murderer, eventually linking the killer to at least 31 confirmed online deaths, with 24 more still being crosschecked for evidence. The killer—nicknamed Brain Burner, Brûle-Neurones, or Desalmado by the media—doesn’t seem to

Continued on page 100

<08/17/70, 20:51:56>

Whatever’s going on, they’re hiding it well. Multiple redundant levels of security, and it looks like the stuff we’re looking for is in the basement. I’m going to keep quiet for now, just in case. I’ll come back on when I find something.

<08/17/70, 21:13:13>

Oh God, oh God ... where do I start? I’ve got to do this fast. Hiding now—don’t know how long before they find us. Most of my team’s dead—I’m holed up with our hacker in an unused office. Recording this while he tries to get a Matrix connection up and running. Gotta get this out. Okay ... need to calm down. Objectivity. How the hell can I be objective when—

<muffled sound>

Okay. Not much time. Facts. Italia Rodgers is dead—or she might as well be. The rumors were right—but they didn’t go far enough. Experimentation is exactly what they’re doing here. They’re doing it on technomancers, or suspected technomancers—hard to be sure which is which. I’m attaching a vidfile to this, along with some of their progress reports that we liberated—these need to get out too, because my words can’t do it justice. You won’t understand what this means until you’ve seen the files—seen these people strapped to beds with parts of their brains exposed—machines humming and electrodes poking out from various points—their eyes wide open. The looks of terror in their eyes—if I get out of here, they’ll haunt me until I die. And that’s not everything, either. They didn’t stop with these people’s heads. Look at the girl in the vidfile—it’s hard to tell with everything they’ve done with her, but I’m fairly sure she’s Cherie Washington, the 14-year-old missing girl. I can think of no other word to use than “vivisection.” I don’t know what the hell they’re trying to do, but they had her laid open like a Christmas turkey, and the electrodes weren’t just in her brain—they were in her chest as well. Her heart, her lungs. Maybe someone can analyze the files and figure it out—I don’t have time now. I made the mistake of trying to tap into the facility’s network and got hit with mental feedback like I’ve never experienced before. Screams. Begging for help—or for death. Nearly knocked me out. Would have, if one of my guys hadn’t slapped me a good one. I think maybe I just stood and stared for awhile, horrified at what I was seeing. Fortunately my headware camera was running, taking in everything I was seeing. Everything you’ll see now. <Attach_trideo_file_MEL002> <Attach_text_file_JAN001>

<muffled sound>

You got it? Is it up?

Oh, thank the spirits. Let’s shoot this out now, before they catch it and shut us down again.

<louder muffled sound>

They’re coming. Is it out? Okay.

We’re not getting out of here. They’ve got us surrounded. If there’s any justice in the world, my files will get out to the people who need to see them. If you receive this, please pass them on. Don’t let the corps squelch this. Don’t let them get away with it. Don’t—





INCOMING FEED.....

<screaming>
Ohgodohgodohgod ... my head ... *noooooooooo!*
<static>

// end attachment //

• That's it. I warn you—the tridfiles aren't for the faint of heart. I've seen a lot of bad stuff in my time, and these nearly made me physically ill.

• Sunshine

• I'm surprised Netcat hasn't dropped in here yet. Shit, she was right. I'm not the technomancer's biggest fan, but nobody deserves this kind of treatment. It's like Deus all over again.

• Puck

• They aren't going to be able to squelch this one—all the media outlets are picking it up, and the AI contingent (which we all know has Horizon on their side) is spreading it far and wide. It think the tide is turning, folks—people are outraged. I think they're finally realizing—really internalizing—the fact that technomancers are first and foremost *people*, not computers or enemies or freaks.

• Dr. Spin

• Right, Clockwork?

• Glitch

• Weird. I thought he'd be front and center to tell us all how great it is that they're carving up technomancers.

• Glitch

• Hey, whatever it takes, *omae*.

• Clockwork

• I don't know how long this backlash will last, but if the technomancers are smart they'll exploit it—find somebody to put a friendly face on themselves like Pulsar did for the AIs. I don't think we've seen the end of stories like this.

• Dr. Spin

• Yeah—for one thing, there are still some authorities offering bounties on technomancers.

• Fatima

// upload Unifomat message file :: user Netcat :: 09/20/70 //

TECHNOMANCERS

**In Trouble? On the Run? Nowhere to Turn?
Call Us—We Can Help!**

Are you a technomancer? Have you heard the stories about the horrific treatment people like you have experienced, and don't know who to trust anymore? Contact the Digital Liberties Society (DLS)—an organization founded to provide legal, financial, and social assistance to technomancers and digital intelligences who cannot turn to family and friends for fear of being persecuted and ostracized? We've been helping technomancers for almost as long as they've existed, and we know all the “ins and outs” to help you find your place in this new society.



Matrix Serial Killer At Large (CONT.)

follow specific criteria when choosing his victims, but they all die the same way: lethal biofeedback induced by a very specific wave pattern through their commlink. Interpol Agent Kodo Takezo comments: "We all thought the killer was a technomancer, but now, after months of investigations, we have reasons to explore other possibilities. Be reassured that we're doing everything to catch that ... monster." When pressed for more details concerning the other possibilities, Takezo declined to respond.

Mitsuhamas Disassociates from Gennex, Citing Allegations**MCT Daily News [Mitsuhamas Media]—09/10/70**

KYOTO, JIS: In a press release issued by Mitsuhamas Computer Technology's public relations department yesterday, the Japanese megacorporation has formally disassociated itself from subsidiary Gennex following growing allegations of nightmarish experiments performed on kidnapped technomancers at its Denver facility. "The fact is," said spokesman Kazuki Furagawa, "that we allow our subsidiaries a fair degree of autonomy, especially in the areas of scientific exploration. That does not mean, however, that we do not expect them to comply with all relevant ethical guidelines. We find Gennex's actions in this matter to be unconscionable, and we offer our profound condolences to the individuals in question and their families."

Tommy Thrash Reveals Technomancer Secret**OnStage! e-zine [Regency MegaMedia]—09/18/70**

SEATTLE, UCAS: Popular German ork rocker Tommy Thrash revealed yesterday during a press conference at the Crash 2.0 Memorial in Seattle that he is a technomancer, and has been since he awoke from a coma he had fallen into after being caught in the events of the Matrix Crash in 2064. "I've been keeping it quiet all these years," he told a crowd of several hundred people, "first because I wasn't sure what I'd become, and then later because I was scared of what might happen if I revealed myself. That's all over now. The corps have to know that there are too many of us—that we won't be taken advantage of any longer." The announcement was briefly marred by an attempt by the Humanis Policlub to incite a riot among the onlookers, but the attempt was quelled by Lone Star and Thrash's personal security.

KSAF: Man on the Street

What do you think of the allegations that corporations have performed horrific experiments on technomancers?

Question asked at Everett Waterfront on 10/03/2070

Tony C. (30, ork dockworker): I think it stinks. I

Continued on page 102

We're opening offices in many major UCAS cities—call now or visit us on the Matrix. Please don't wait. The sooner you contact us, the sooner we can help you.

// end attachment //

- Does it surprise anybody that I pretended to be a technomancer in need and cracked their link (it wasn't easy, either—who expects black IC behind a simple drop point location)? The initial location is just a mailbox, but if you trace where the mail ultimately ends up—the DLS is a dummy non-profit organization set up by a new startup that's just happens to have been bankrolled by NeoNET. I dunno—maybe they *do* just want to help out poor little technomancers in need, but I wouldn't bet the rent on it.

- The Smiling Bandit

- I tried the same thing, and it wasn't pretty. It looks like someone—or something—trashed that place but good.

- Puck

- Hey, here's a bit of good news for a change. It looks like, with everything else that's going on, at least we don't have to worry about plague raining down from on high. This week, anyway.

- Sunshine

// upload newsclip item :: user Sunshine :: 10/19/70 //
TALOC CRISIS AVERTED, PULSAR NEGOTIATES PEACEFUL END TO STANDOFF

NewsNow newsfax—10/19/70

The people of the world can breathe a collective sigh of relief today—the Tlaloc space station hostage crisis, begun two months ago when the digital intelligence "Sojourner" seized control and threatened to release drone-based bioweapons across the world, has ended. Instrumental in the successful resolution of this potentially deadly situation was fellow digital intelligence Pulsar, who, at the request of the Corporate Court, conducted a series of negotiations with Sojourner until the hijacker finally agreed to release the hostages unharmed and turn over control of the station and the drones early this morning. "He is not unreasonable," Pulsar said. "He tells me that he would not have release the bioagents—he merely wanted to focus the world's attention on the plight of digital intelligences around the world. Fortunately, I was able to convince him that there are better ways to convey his message. He has now joined with me, along with my fellow digital intelligences, to continue our quest for a place in society."

Aztechnology representatives did not return requests for comment at press time.

// end attachment //

- NewsNow is a Horizon outfit—is anybody surprised?

- Sunshine



• If I was cynical, I'd say that this one was orchestrated with about the same attention to detail as the initial Pulsar appearance. Oh, wait—I *am* cynical. I wonder if they even put Sojourner up to the hijacking in the first place, just so good old Pulsar could swoop in like a white knight and save the world?

• Snopes

• Tell me, Clockwork, how are you able to sleep at night?

• Netcat

• What's the matter, Clockwork? Cat got your tongue? Didn't expect to be hearing from me again, did you?

• Netcat

• I don't know what you're talking about.

• Clockwork

• I'm a bit more resourceful than you gave me credit for—which doesn't surprise me, since I know your opinion of me. You neglected to take into account when you made your "arrangements" that a "freak" like me might have more friends in the Matrix than you suspected, or that I might have contingency plans in place just for situations like that.

• Netcat

• Wait a minute, Netcat. Are you saying that Clockwork ...

• Sticks

• ... attempted to turn me over to a corporate snatch squad and collect the bounty on technomancers? Yes. That is exactly what he did. I must admit that at first I had no idea he was responsible, since I'm very careful to keep my physical location a secret from the world in general. There are only a few people who are aware of it, and I trust all of them. Even technomancers like me aren't infallible (contrary to what some might have you believe), though, and the people who were after me had some very sophisticated resources. They convinced me that a friend was in trouble—when I arrived at the location, they sprung their trap. I was very lucky that the abilities I possess (for which Clockwork hates me) were sufficient to allow me to slip out of the noose before they pulled it tight.

• Netcat

• I know some people in this business can be extremely mercenary. I suspect some of you are willing to sell out your grandmothers for a used Predator—or were at some previous desperate point in your lives. I know that some of you are paid to kill people for a living. Some of you have probably killed children. Maybe I'm an optimist, but despite our group backgrounds I was hoping that FastJack's little criminal network here might have a sense of community and unity that would supersede some of our anti-social tendencies. We may not always act like it, but this is a tribe of sorts—and Clockwork, buddy, you just sold out one of our own. You even knew that she'd likely be tortured or killed as a result. That's monstrous. This network

exists to help each other and disseminate information, not rat each other out for a fucking bounty.

• Fatima

• Listen, Fatima—you're not my big sister, and the freak's not my little sister. We're not one big happy family. This place is about biz—and that's all this was. Biz. I saw an opportunity and I took it. FastJack asked me to keep it offline, so I did. I played fair and I didn't use or abuse this network in any way to get an edge on her—not that I'd be able to anyway, given the way FastJack's constructed this thing so that tracking anybody through it is damn near impossible. If you all want to pile on me now and bitch about what a scumbag I am, go ahead. I can take it. I don't regret what I did—only that it didn't work. If it had, I'd be a little richer and there'd be one less threat prowling the Matrix. I'd do it again if I had a chance. And I'd do it to any of the rest of you. I expect the same in return, which is why I always guard my back.

• Clockwork

• You fucking bastard!

• Puck

• I'm disgusted by the whole situation. FastJack, I think this scumfuck should be booted off JackPoint. He's crossed a line, violated our trust, and proven that he can and will abuse information we post here.

• Glitch

• Oh, cry me a river. Everybody's got a price in the end. Anybody who won't admit it is either deluded or an idiot. And everybody on this network uses data trolled from here for their own personal gain—isn't that the fucking point? But if you want me off, Jack, just say the word and I'm gone.

• Clockwork

• As much as I find Clockwork's actions distasteful, he didn't break any rules. The point of JackPoint is threefold: to share intel, to make our jobs easier, and to help each other out. There are no limitations placed on how info that is posted here can be used. That defeats the purpose of sharing it openly with each other, even if someone goes off and uses it in ways we don't appreciate. If someone "crosses a line," abuses our group trust, or otherwise pisses everyone else off, well, we have a mechanism in place for dealing with that. I'll point out that Clockwork's Rep Score has just bottomed out—in fact, I dare say he's set a new low-point record. None of us are in this alone, and he's a fool to think so. He'll pay for his actions when he suddenly finds that no one on this network will have his back when he needs it the most. That's assuming that someone doesn't decide to pursue a more *direct* path of admonishment. We're runners, after all. Feel free to take the matter into your own hands.

• FastJack

• Excuse me, I have a clock to punch.

• Aufheben

KSAF: Man on the Street (CONT.)

still haven't made up my mind about technomancers—it scares me a little what they can do, but it scares me what magicians can do too. That doesn't mean I'm calling for anybody to carve them up like meat.

Lily T. (22, elf, PR agent): It makes me sick what these poor people have had to go through for something that isn't even their choice. The corporations are so arrogant—they think they can get away with anything. I have a friend who's a technomancer—he just “came out” to his friends recently—and the thought of someone doing that to him ... I hope the corps get sued for everything they have.

Giovanni F. (47, human, entrepreneur): I don't know, to be honest. I don't advocate torture, certainly, but something has to be done to figure out how technomancer powers work so we don't have to live in fear of them. Sometimes it's necessary to do things that we're not proud of in order to advance the cause of science, and if they're not willing to volunteer for study, then ...

Wei-Lin L. (35, dwarf, lorestore owner): I'm ashamed. When we first heard about technomancers, I was scared. I wanted them rounded up, identified, controlled—anything to make sure that normal folks like me didn't have to be afraid of them. I'm embarrassed to say I was pretty vocal about this. But after I heard what the corps were doing—it was like something snapped in my mind. I realized what the end result of my ideas was, and it was happening right under my nose. I hope to Dog these people will someday forgive me.

- Fair enough. Bring it on.
- Clockwork
- When I do, you won't see it coming.
- Netcat
- Hey 'Cat, care to share who Clockwork tried to sell you out to?
- Snopes
- I traced it back to NeoNET. I followed the trail in deep, and I've found some very interesting evidence of further technomancer experimentation that will be going public soon. Even more intriguing were the links I found between this research and a certain very large, sapient reptile—perhaps not the one you think. I'm not going to post that data up—if Clockwork is now on someone's lunch menu, I'd prefer that be a surprise to him—but if anyone wants it privately, send me a message.
- Netcat
- I don't mean to bust up this self-congratulatory Save-the-Poor-Technomancers-Party, but I'd like to post this little news-

byte. Maybe it will remind some of you that technomancers are still a danger.

- Butch

//upload newsclip item :: user Butch :: 10/08/70 //
LOCAL POLITICIAN'S SON RESCUED FROM AI-TECHNOMANCER CULT

TORONTO, UCAS: The 17-year-old son of City Council member Amelia Desaulniers is back home now after police discovered him being held at the headquarters of a bizarre local cult.

The boy, an accomplished Matrix programmer who has already been accepted to MIT&T's Matrix Science program, maintained that he was not being held against his will and that he had chosen to join the Realm Beyond, as the organization's members refer to it. His mother claims that the cultists somehow brainwashed her son, though no evidence of this has yet been discovered. She states that he will spend the next two months living with his father in New York City, where he will receive treatment to help him overcome his ordeal.

Little is know about the Realm Beyond—rumors state that is led by a technomancer who claims to communicate directly with the “Voice of the Matrix.” Because none of the cult's members have been convicted of any crimes, authorities are not permitted to force them to disband, but police are keeping a close watch on their activities. [Read more.](#)

// end attachment //

- I've heard of this cult. In fact, I've got a friend of a friend—a hacker—who's a member. They're right about the leader—she's a technomancer who goes by Vagabond. She's the only one who ever talks to this “Voice of the Matrix,” because apparently she's the only one who can make any sense out of what it says. The other members are allowed to try communicating with it, but it spouts such gibberish that they can't make any sense out of it.
- Plan 9
- Then how do they know that she can understand it any better than they can? Maybe she's just better at bullshitting than they are.
- Slamm-0!
- Not to hear them tell it. The weird thing about the cult is that as far as I know, beyond the occasional use of mind-altering drugs (like anybody gives a damn about *that* with all the trouble going on these days), the members don't seem to suffer any harm from belonging. They're not asked to give up all their worldly goods, quit their jobs, or anything. They genuinely seem to believe that the Voice, speaking through Vagabond, has the answers they seek.
- Plan 9
- I'd be exceptionally wary of anything that calls itself the “Voice of the Matrix” and surrounds itself with loyal followers. But that's just me, mind you.
- Puck



INCOMING FEED.....

GAME INFORMATION

Even by *Shadowrun* standards, the world is changing at a dizzying pace. The centerpieces of this section are the Horizon-orchestrated introduction of the AI “Pulsar,” who has taken it upon himself to be the spokesbeing for a small group of his kind who are interested in communicating with, learning to co-exist with, and taking their places alongside metahumanity, and the public revelation of horrific experiments being performed on technomancers by at least some of the major corporations. There’s a lot more going on as well.

WHAT’S REALLY GOING DOWN

As this section opens, the existence of artificial intelligences (AIs) is first becoming known to the public, following the hostage situation on the Aztechnology space station “Tlaloc.” The corporations and governments scramble to deal with the situation, but even the ones that knew about AIs are unprepared for handling such a public affair. For a short while at least, everything escalates outside of their careful control.

The AI revelation throws gasoline on the white-hot technomancer situation, which had just barely begun to settle down. The only thing that’s fortunate for the technomancers is that the concept of AIs is even more alien and dangerous than they are, so the public (at least temporarily) has a new target for its fear and hatred.

Gamemasters should keep in mind that this is a period of extreme instability and confusion—*nobody* knows the whole story of what’s really going on, not even the corporations. New information is turning up almost daily, and most people—with the Crash still relatively fresh in their minds—are willing to let their imaginations run wild.

Pulsar

Into the middle of this chaotic situation comes a ray of hope in the form of Pulsar, a more-or-less benevolent AI (or “digital intelligence,” to use Pulsar’s own term). In conjunction with other unnamed AIs, media corporation Horizon, and transhuman/metahuman-friendly corporation Evo, Pulsar comes forward to offer an “olive branch” to metahumanity, to try to paint his kind in a positive light. The resulting media blitz means that before long there isn’t a man, woman, child, or intelligent critter in the world who hasn’t at least *heard* of AIs, and, if Pulsar has his way, isn’t favorably disposed toward them. Pulsar and his associates seek fundamental rights for digital intelligences—the right to self-determination, the right not to be held as slaves by corporations who claim to own their code, and the right to citizenship.

It doesn’t take long for a backlash to develop against Pulsar and all AIs, however. Other AIs, realizing that their existence is now in the open, don’t take the negative publicity and attacks lying down. Some retaliate, while others go public like Pulsar and work for legal change.

Revelations

Despite the attention devoted to AIs, technomancers still receive plenty of persecution and vilification as the public continues to clamor for their capture and regulation. Information comes to light, however, that will make a lot of decent people think twice about their actions and prejudices. Famous muckraking reporter Jane McCrory, in the process of investigating the disappearance of a young woman named Italia Rodgers, discovers and breaks the story that the megacorporations (specifically Mitsuhama and NeoNET) are performing horrific experiments on captured technomancers in order to figure out what makes them tick—and caring little about what condition they’re left in at the experiments’ end. McCrory, secretly a technomancer herself, manages to get her story out (complete with damning visual proof) to dozens of large and small media outlets, but she herself is never heard from again, presumed dead at the hands of the very corps she has outed. The awareness that technomancers are being subjected to torture “humanizes” them in the eyes of the public, which begins to consider that perhaps they aren’t (quite) the bogeymen they’ve been painted as.

HOW THE PUBLIC REACTS

The primary reaction from the public is confusion—and fear. The *Tlaloc* incident ignites paranoia, especially among a populace already contemplating Matrix threats. The appearance and assurances of Pulsar, however—backed by the might of Horizon’s media monopolies and Evo’s influence—sway many to the other side (or at least neutrality). The campaign is successful in raising awareness and convincing many people that AIs are not *necessarily* a threat, and as sapient beings may even be accorded certain rights. Metahuman nature being what it is, a backlash quickly ensues, spreading more fear and confusion. They argue that AIs are alien, not really alive, and threaten the very core of the Matrix. They raise the specter of a third Crash, attempt to paint a connection between technomancers and AIs, and exploit people’s natural concern for their own and their children’s safety and security. As polemicists from both sides kick into gear, many people are torn, unsure what to think.

During this period, quack “consultants” make piles of nuyen helping people “protect” their homes, commlinks, and personal property from unscrupulous technomancers and AIs (and, in many cases, taking advantage of the very security holes they’re being paid to patch up). Gullible victims, afraid of things they don’t understand, are fleeced by the thousands.

HOW THE MEDIA REACTS

As in all times of high emotions and turbulent change, the media intensifies, sensationalizes, and inflames everything. Stories of “evil AIs” and strange Matrix phenomena abound in both the mainstream and the fringe media—often with little or no substantiating evidence or credibility. While Aztechnology’s PR machine does its best to defuse the *Tlaloc* situation and put Aztechnology in a good light, the megacorp’s reputation is undermined by inconsistencies and

mounting evidence that its orbital lab’s operations were as benign as claimed. Repeated attempts to deny AI involvement or frame technomancers are blasted apart when Pulsar comes on the scene.

Horizon throws all of its considerable media resources into highlighting Pulsar and putting a positive spin on the existence of AIs. Evo supports these efforts, and for a time their memes overpower the airwaves, even drowning out the technomancer scare. The corps that support an anti-technomancer agenda are initially overwhelmed, but before long they throw their resources into a media backlash, drawing out “experts” who highlight the AI threat and link them with technomancers. Citizen journalists and bloggers both help and hinder the fight, uncovering numerous possibilities of AI activity as well as red herrings.

When the revelations and evidence of unethical technomancer experiments hit the grids, some media corps attempt to squash the story. Bloggers and pro-technomancer activists route the horrifying news around their blockades, however, and into the public eye (also pushed along by Horizon and Evo). NeoNET, Mitsuhama, and other indicted corps quickly find themselves on the defensive.

HOW THE POWERS-THAT-BE REACT

The corporations and authorities in the know originally hope to contain the situation—sometimes using black ops or influence peddling to kill and influence stories. The situation rapidly evolves out of their control, however, especially when Pulsar and the technomancer experimentation take the spotlight. These power players know they must tread carefully—not only do their illegal and unethical activities risk exposure, but the fact that they’ve known about technomancers and possibly even AIs for years would cause irreparable damage to their reputations if it became known. Each is willing to do whatever it takes to protect these secrets. In the meantime, technomancer and AI research programs are closed down or moved to even more securely hidden areas.

As the existence of AIs goes public, many authorities undertake security audits and investigations, seeking to identify, capture, or purge any AIs lurking in their own systems. Though these AIs are rare and hard to identify, some are found. It isn’t long before the corps and government agencies realize that this new breed of AI is far less potent than those previously encountered—in fact, they can be captured or killed. Numerous projects are launched to gather more intel on AI activities, capture and examine those that are found, and to search out and destroy/capture those found in the wild. Naturally, the powers-that-be also want to know what their rivals know ...

HOW THE SHADOWS REACT

There are a lot of opportunities for shadowrunners on both sides of this debate—they might be hired to discredit one or more AIs or their supporters, or to find evidence supporting the AI cause. Journalists may hire them to expose corporate technomancer or AI research projects, while threatened authorities may have the runners tracking down and

eliminating any pesky leaks. People are seeing ghosts and AIs all over the Matrix, and experienced hackers can find work investigating all sorts of Matrix phenomenon—sometimes actually leading to AI or technomancer activity. Less-scrupulous runners (especially hackers) can try setting up a “Matrix consulting service” to fleece the unwary.

In the wake of the negative publicity that the anti-AI side is generating, the AIs themselves, along with those who sympathize with them, make their attempt to seize the initiative and take the fight back to the corporations. Some of them, like Pulsar, choose legal ways—such as sponsoring debates on AI citizenship, attempting to gain rights by means of carefully constructed legal cases (with the help of crusading law firm Schmidt, Iakob, and Lei), and offering outreach services to help people gain a better understanding of AIs. Some choose more sinister means, and this period is marked by an uptick in horrific industrial accidents, grid failures, manufacturing glitches, and other problems with many of the automated systems that people depend on all over the world. There are myriad opportunities for shadowrunners in these times, because each side is trying to gather information on the other in order to help their cause, while simultaneously hindering or disrupting the other side’s efforts.

The revelation of the technomancer experiments (including Dr. Shelbramat’s activities) should be presented as extremely shocking and cruel—players should get a visceral feeling of unease, and it’s all the better if some of them are anti-technomancer in the first place. This is a useful place to explore one of the fundamental points of *Emergence*: where do people stand on these new and different members of society? How much of their humanity are they willing to lose to protect themselves from a threat that might not even *be* a threat?

HANDLING AIS

There are a few things that gamemasters should remember when including AIs in their games. The first is that there aren’t that many of them. Though low-powered, single-purpose AIs are reasonably numerous, the intelligent “named” AIs such as Pulsar and Sojourner are rare and player characters most likely won’t encounter them very often.

The second thing to know is that there is no longer any such thing as the extremely powerful, “godlike” AIs such as Deus and Megaera (two of the old-style AIs who helped to bring about the Crash of ’64). Even the strongest of the “new breed” of AIs are no more intelligent or omnipotent than a highly intelligent metahuman, and thus they can make mistakes and bad decisions. They’re not infallible, and they all have weaknesses—though those weaknesses, of course, need not be obvious or easily exploited.

Third, be aware that AIs can be captured, herded, or even killed if their central core (sometimes called their “source code”) can be isolated into an offline system or other prepared trap. It generally should not be easy to capture an intelligent AI (ferals or less intelligent, single-purpose AIs will be easier, since they will have fewer options), but it should be possible.

Finally, remember that AIs, despite the fact that many of them are very metahumanlike in their interactions with living beings, are not metahuman. They don’t think like metahumans, and they see everything in terms of their programming. The less intelligent an AI is, the more likely this is to be true. For example, an AI that was spawned from an interactive Matrix game would have a different outlook and way of relating to the world than would an AI that was born out of a financial system. Many AIs care nothing at all about metahumanity or the physical world, as such things are unimportant to their digital interests and outlooks. When running AIs and deciding how they will react to player characters, keep this core programming in mind.

Complete rules for handling AIs are beyond the scope of this book, and will be covered in the advanced Matrix sourcebook *Unwired*. In the meantime, gamemasters are encouraged to keep direct contact between AIs and player characters to a minimum, and to improvise abilities and attributes as necessary.

ADVENTURE FRAMEWORKS

First it was technomancers. Now, just as the public is beginning to wrap its collective mind around people who can access the Matrix with their brains (and trying to come to terms with the revelation that many of them have been cruelly tortured in an attempt to understand what makes them tick), they’re hit with a new bombshell: the knowledge that parts of the Matrix *itself* are sentient, in the form of “artificial intelligences.” These adventure seeds deal with different facets of the AI phenomenon, showcasing the fact that AIs are as varied in their motivations as are metahumans.

WELCOME TO THE MACHINE

Edward Kaminsky has a problem. The manager of a large automated warehouse located on the Seattle docks, Kaminsky has been running a lucrative drug-smuggling ring out of the warehouse for about a year. He receives specially-tagged boxes from shipments and sells them with the help of a local gang, the Gutterpunks. Up until now everything’s been running smoothly, but the previous night, all of the warehouse’s automated equipment went haywire and ran amok, killing two workers. Kaminsky, the only other employee on the premises at the time, barely escaped with his life.

Setup

The runners’ fixer arranges for a meet at the Wharf Rat, a sleazy bar on the Seattle waterfront (or other appropriate sprawl). Kaminsky arrives promptly and doesn’t waste any time. A large, barrel-chested ork with close-cut hair and a boxer’s nose, he practically exudes “blue collar tough guy makes good.” A former dockworker who worked his way up to management, he’s honest enough as long as it benefits him, but won’t turn down the chance to make a few extra creds on the side. He tells the runners that all he wants them to do is to get into the warehouse, go to the office on the second floor near the center, and retrieve a steel box that’s in the safe there.

INCOMING FEED.....



He's purposely vague about the opposition, telling the runners only that they'll need to worry about the place's automated defenses (in truth, he has no idea what made the place go insane and doesn't want to know—he just wants his goods back). He tells them that the job needs to be done tonight, and offers them an appropriate amount for the safe return of the box.

Kaminsky has no idea what's truly going on at the warehouse: an AI has taken over the place's complex web of machinery. The AI originated from a similar factory, where it was recently discovered and attacked by corporate hackers. The AI managed to escape despite its wounds, eventually finding a new home that reminds it of its old, allowing it to continue its factory-minded affairs. The AI is smart enough and interacts with the physical world enough to realize that metahumans are responsible for the previous attack on it, so after making itself at home it went about eliminating the local metahumans as a safety measure.

Event 1

Before they even get to the warehouse, the runners will first have to deal with the dock security. Kaminsky hasn't bothered to give the runners his passcodes (he doesn't want anything getting traced back to him), so the runners will have to find their own way through the 3-meter barbed-wire perimeter fence or the maglocked gates, without getting caught on camera. Two GM-Nissan Dobermans patrol the grounds, operated by a remote private security rigger (who also has a camera feed). If the rigger spots anything unusual, he will call in Lone Star to investigate; a patrol car will arrive in 5-8 minutes.

Event 2

Once inside the docks area, the runners have a run-in with the Gutterpunks as they approach the warehouse. This is the gang that Kaminsky works with—and to whom he neglected (understandably, given the circumstances) to mention the shadowrunners. He also neglected to make the meet with them to deliver the drugs, so they're currently more suspicious than usual and are staking out the warehouse. They will confront anyone they spot casing the warehouse—or if the gamemaster prefers, they may watch from hiding and accost the runners as they attempt to leave.

The Gutterpunks are a small gang and smuggling outfit (about 10-15 members), mostly orks, that operates around this area of waterfront. When they're not playing deliveryman for Kaminsky's drug shipments, they make their money in small-time extortion. Though they prefer melee weapons, several pack semi-automatic weapons.

Climax

The warehouse is designed to receive shipments via ship, store them in its vast maze of space, and fill Matrix-delivered orders by means of automated drones that pull the required merchandise and load it into trucks. The

gamemaster is urged to be creative regarding the kinds of perils a shadowrunning team can face in such a place: the drones themselves (some flying, some on overhead tracks, some wheeled), heavy crates falling from high places, electrical shocks, dangerous or toxic merchandise, even weapon systems designed to thwart intruders. The AI has been careful to set up multiple redundant power sources and backup power supplies, so shutting the place down will not be a quick or easy option (it would require access to the area's power grid). Play up the spookiness of the situation—the warehouse is dark, full of strange mechanical activity, and very dangerous. There's also the matter of the two dead and horribly mangled bodies of the workers who didn't make it out alive.

The box the team is looking for is in a locked office on the second floor, which is a small area located in the center of the warehouse. The box is made of steel and it too is locked, though both the lock on the office door and the one on the box are no match for skilled shadowrunners determined to break them.

If the team figures out that an AI is involved and their hacker or technomancer attempts to communicate with it, they get nothing but what sounds like angry insane gibberish. It will attack any Matrix-based interlopers violently, but if it is hurt it will retreat and renew its physical attacks on the entire team, attempting first to block their exit and then to finish them off with its defenses. As a last resort, it will flee the warehouse system and search out a new home.

If the team gets out with the box and haven't opened it, Kaminsky will pay the team what he promised. If they open the box, they'll discover that it contains novacoke worth about 20,000¥ on the street. They'll gain both Kaminsky and the Gutterpunks as enemies if they keep the drugs or sell them on their own.

Sequels

It's entirely possible that the team could complete this run without ever figuring out that there's an AI involved. If they do, they might be able to parlay this knowledge into another job—either clearing it out of the warehouse or trying to “capture” it so it can be studied. Alternately, a corporate hacker team may come looking for the AI, tracking it to the warehouse, where they then find evidence that leads them to the runners.

EXTRACTION

The runners are hired to break into a corporate facility, download a large file, and deliver it to a specified location, unaware that the “file” in question is actually an AI whose current “owners” don't want to lose it.

Setup

The runners are called to meet with Mr. Johnson in the Matrix, at an online club called Grep. Mr. Johnson's icon is a boring, standard-issue, button-down corp suit with a bland generic face and no identifying marks—oddly, this passes as “ironic” and thus tolerable to the club's clientele. Anyone who takes the time to really analyze the iconography might

realize that every detail is perfect and executed with amazing resolution, down to a couple of stray hairs on its jacket collar and the slight off-centeredness of the tie. The level of resolution implies that massive amounts of processing power are devoted to it.

The job sounds simple enough: break into a small corporate lab on the outskirts of Boston, access an offline computer system, and download a file into a specially-prepared portable storage device. Johnson offers a negotiable 12,500¥ each when the device and the file are delivered, 25 percent upfront. The only strange part of the job is that once the runners accept it, Johnson gives them a small portable drive along with the larger one designed to hold the file. When asked what the smaller one is for, Johnson chuckles. “Once you get in to the offline system, slot that one first and activate the program. Think of it as sort of a ... duck call.” He won't explain further.

The runners should fail to find out anything more about Johnson—even their fixer doesn't have any clues. In truth, the Johnson is a literal “ghost in the machine”—not a technomancer or AI, but an entity trapped in the Matrix during the Crash 2.0. This particular Ghost goes by the name Cerebus and secretly works for the great dragon Celedyr. As the director of research and development for NeoNET, Celedyr is fascinated with the concept of artificial intelligences and has been quietly trying to gather a group of them together so he can study them, understand their motivations, and observe their interactions. Cerebus has been helpful in this regard, managing with great difficulty to make contact with an AI called Neka, currently held captive inside an offline system at a subsidiary of MCT, where it is being studied in a most unpleasant way. In exchange for its “rescue,” the AI has agreed to join Celedyr's study for awhile before being released into the wild.

Event 1

The facility the runners need to break into is a standard corporate lab—the gamemaster is free to devise any defenses and other surprises based on your group's abilities. The facility is mostly staffed by scientists—it does have a security force (including a sec-rigger, or “spider”) but most defenses are automated. The runners will quickly learn that its Matrix defenses are formidable—and elevated to the point of paranoia. A hacker who thoroughly analyzes the system security might realize that many of the defenses are oriented to seek out and counter any intrusions that arise from *internal* systems—as if they're more afraid of an internal security breach than an external one.

Event 2

The computer system that holds the AI is inside a locked underground room—the runners will need to gain access to that room before they can obtain the file. One of MCT's leading Matrix scientists, Dr. Lina Tomlinson, has been alerted to the runners' presence and has barricaded herself inside. She will attempt to negotiate with the runners for her own safety, but will also attempt to hide the purpose of her

work—studying the captured AI Neka. If the runners get inside and threaten to steal the AI (whether they realize they are doing that or not), Tomlinson will sneakily attempt to deactivate the power to the offline system—thus destroying the AI. Tomlinson is all business, dedicated to her work, and despite the fact that she is not normally cruel, she doesn't believe that the question of ethical treatment extends to AIs since they are not truly “alive.” She would rather destroy it then let it fall into a rival's hands. Tomlinson will make this attempt by sneakily flipping an unlabeled switch (perhaps distracting the runners' attention with a ruse first), or by slyly convincing the runners to flip the switch themselves if she's restrained (“You may want to disable the failsafe device first; if you don't, it will automatically meltdown the system if it detects an intrusion”).

Climax

If the runners remember to slot the “duck call” first, anyone who has accessed the offline system will hear tinkling laughter over their audio inputs. An icon will immediately arrive: a cute anime-style teenage girl with pink hair and blue eyes. The icon is Neka, a fairly low-powered AI spawned from a particularly involved online game that emphasized social interactions between its (mostly female) players. The AI craves contact with other intelligences (living or digital) and has become miserable and bored in the MCT lab where it's being callously studied. It is playful, cheerful, and will attempt to engage conversation with anyone who comes near it. It is also eager to go. If the runners fail to slot the “duck call”—the signal Neka is expecting to identify this as the extraction for which she's been waiting—Neka will not trust them and will resist any attempt to be downloaded/taken away, believing it to be some sort of MCT trick.

When the runners attempt to download the file onto the other drive, the action will immediately trigger some serious IC and the system will attempt to terminate the connection. Neka will not help fight the IC, but will seem to help the file transfer—any hackers or technomancers will notice that the download seems to be occurring much faster than expected, given the size of the file.

When the download is complete, Neka will disappear from the closed system—but will immediately pop up as an AR icon to anyone connected to the external drive. “Feels good to be out of there,” she'll say. “Hold on a minute—I think I can help you out.” At this point, things start happening that are favorable to the runners. Cameras suddenly point at the ceiling, doors slam shut in front of sec-guards, and so forth. The team should have no trouble getting out and away.

The meet to hand off the file occurs at the same virtual Matrix club, with the same Johnson. He will indicate a place for them to slot it, and once the transfer is complete, he will give them the promised payment. He doesn't seem concerned about whether they've made copies of the file (and if they did, they will find later that the copies are useless). He thanks them and prepares to leave. As he turns, an icon figure appears next to him: a cute anime-style girl with pink hair. She winks

at the team, blows them a kiss, links arms with Johnson and the two disappear as her laughter echoes in their heads.

Sequels

Celedyr is true to his word and does not intend to hold the AIs he is studying captive, so it's entirely possible that the team will see Neka again. In fact, she might go out of her way to contact them, since she is grateful to them for “rescuing” her. Her focus on interactions and relationships might make her more than a bit frustrating in many cases (she's fond of “just popping in to talk” when characters are on sensitive Matrix runs) but she could be a valuable ally if the runners can put up with her. Likewise, if the team does a good job with this run, they might be candidates for future work from Cerberus or NeoNET.

RECOVERY

The runners are hired to immediately jump into action and find a corporate fugitive. Unknown to the team, the fugitive is actually an escaped technomancer, and his escape threatens to expose an unethical Renraku technomancer experimentation lab.

Setup

The team's fixer calls them up with an emergency job. He has a Ms. Johnson on the line who says they've just received a report that a corporate fugitive—an escaped and extremely dangerous serial rapist with serious mental problems—is in their vicinity, right now. The corp has its own teams searching for the man, but it also wants to hire the runners as they're familiar with the area's street scene. The corporation hasn't gone to the cops because it would be an embarrassment to let the world know they allowed such a psycho to escape custody. They provide photos and a (doctored) criminal history. If the team is mercenary-minded, Johnson will simply ask them to “silence” Austin for good; if they're the kind of runners who balk at assassinations, she'll ask them to detain him until a corp team can pick him up.

In reality, Ms. Johnson and her employer, Renraku, are pursuing a fugitive—but he's not quite the dangerous criminal they describe. Austin Taylor is a former mobster with AIPS, suffering from both extreme paranoia and an addiction to a stimulant medication Renraku kept him on. His criminal history from his mob days are quite real (minor assault charges and weapons violations), but the record from the time he was abducted by Renraku two years is completely fabricated. Anyone checking in with Austin's former Mafia tells will find out that he disappeared two years ago—they assumed he was a casualty in a minor scuffle with a local Triad.

Unknown to everyone involved, Austin has an invisible friend—an activist-minded AI discovered Renraku's testing facility and decided that exposing it could help both the AI and technomancer cause. It facilitated Austin's escape, and made sure he took some evidence of the lab's activities with him. The AI is now riding shotgun on Austin's activities, hoping to connect him with a media snoop that can break the story.

Event 1

The runners have several options for places to look (either provided by Johnson or gathered through their own legwork). One of them is the home of a stripper that Austin used to have a thing with. When the runners arrive, they find her apartment broken into—Austin has already come and gone. He found her with a new boyfriend, however—a local ganger, and decided to rough him (and her) up a bit. The ganger's leg is broken, and he's not in the mood to answer questions. Unfortunately for the runners, his gang friends have already been called, and they'll arrive right after the runners do. They'll assume the runners are the source of the trouble, so the team will have to talk or fight their way out of the situation. Assuming the runners have a chance to question the stripper or ganger, though, they'll be informed that Austin was "talkin' crazy," was "really Jonesin' to get his hands on some blow," and mentioned the name of a local drug dealer.

Event 2

It shouldn't take the runners long to track down "Peanut," the local speed dealer, at one of his dealing spots at an outdoor mall. Austin is in the middle of scoring some stimulants that he hopes will appease his addiction. His AI "friend" has been following him in a hacked and commandeered Honda Spirit. The AI will spot the runners closing in, will alert Austin to the threat, and will immediately hack into and commandeer more Honda Spirits from a dealership across the street. The AI will use the cars to run interference, keeping the runners busy while Austin escapes into the mall stores and crowds.

Climax

Just an hour or so after losing him, the runners should get a tip-off that Austin has shown up at a nearby bar. The AI has arranged for an independent reporter to meet Austin here, hoping that Austin will pass off the evidence of Renraku's wrong-doing to be exposed in the press. The bar happens to be a sometime Mafia hangout, however, and Austin's sudden appearance (after missing for 2 years) has drawn attention. A Mafia lieutenant and a car full of goons are on their way down to have a word with Austin, arriving right as the runners do. After the recent run-in, Austin's paranoia is in overdrive—he's only talking to the reporter because the voice in his head is telling him too, and he doesn't trust anyone else, not even his old Mafia buddies. The runners somehow have to capture or kill Austin before the Mafia takes him away for "questioning," despite the interference of the AI, who will attempt to hack into the runners' gear to stop them, and despite Austin's own technomancer and thuggish skills.

Sequels

Whether or not they succeed, Johnson will be livid when she learns that Austin was talking to a reporter—especially if the snoop got away. The runners may immediately find themselves hired for a second job—to silence the reporter before

he breaks the story. If the runners talk to Austin or the reporter, or see the evidence, they may find out the truth of Austin's recent past, perhaps placing them in a moral quandary—do they fulfill the job, or help break the story?

ADVENTURE IDEAS

This section includes short adventure seeds revolving around the AI and technomancer revelations in this chapter. Gamemasters can use these ideas as short scenarios or to develop them into full adventures using the information in this chapter.

Realm Beyond

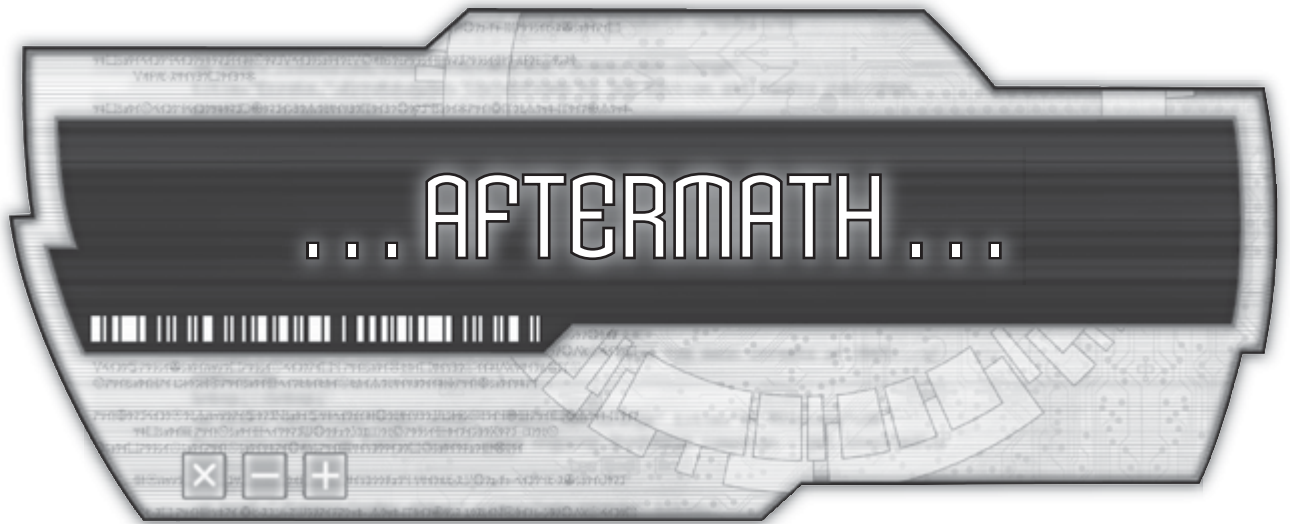
The runners are hired to rescue a 15-year-old girl who has been "kidnapped" by a Matrix cult called Realm Beyond, which has recently begun operating in the team's home city. When they find the girl she is not only safe and sound, but she doesn't want to go. In fact, she makes the team a counteroffer: she is an accomplished hacker and will pay them twice what her parents offered if they will help her liberate her boyfriend, 17-year-old Mark Desaulniers, from his father's corporate home in New York City. During the course of the adventure the team will have the chance to interact with Realm Beyond's charismatic technomancer leader, Vagabond, and to experience the strange alien AI known as the Voice.

Digging the Dirt

Law firm Schmidt, Iakob, and Lei is preparing an important case in its continuing attempt to help AIs gain citizenship rights. Key to its case are private NeoNET corporate memos that indicate the corporation did indeed privately concede the sapience of certain AIs in relation to some of its current R&D projects. The team is hired to break into a NeoNET facility and obtain copies of these memos, along with any other useful information about the company's AI research that they can find.

Beautiful Music

German rock rocker Tommy Thrash, due to perform a concert in Seattle (or the runners' home city), hires the team to supplement his security at a press conference at the Crash 2.0 Memorial (or other suitable local site). He plans to make the announcement there that he is a technomancer, calling for an end to the cruel experimentation on his kind. Unfortunately, the Humanis Policlub has gotten wind of his plans and has planted several of their members, including a mage with a Mob Mood spell, in the crowd to try to incite a riot. The runners must not only deal with the riot, but prevent a Humanis assassin from killing Tommy and blaming it on the out-of-control crowd.



Sitting by the open window, staring into summer rain, going through the time-honed ritual of smoking a nicstick and watching the acid eat at the buildings. I was lost in the mechanics of inhalation, total concentration. Blink, raise, wrap lips, inhale, hold, remove, lower, release, stare, and blink again. I didn't want to spare the time to think about anything.

Joey came in and sat down across from me. My dead not-brother. The ghost in my head. I blew some smoke through him, and he wavered. A hologram. How the hell did he get a freestanding projector rig set up? Its lips moved, and I heard his voice. Directional speakers.

"You turned off your commlink."

"Yeah."

Not much to say after that. One thing with my brother and I, we never did go through most of the motions when it came to small talk. Too damn much common ground for that.

"Bobby. I'm still your brother."

"Or near enough to count, right? You're a program masquerading as my brother—maybe even deluded into thinking you're him—or ..."

"... or maybe I'm caught in the machine." He finished. "It's really hard to believe I'm dead."

He looked out the window. I knew it was an act, but he did it so naturally. Holograms can't see.

"Believe that. It was a nice cremation ceremony down at the Church of Gaia, Inc."

"Religion." The hologram shook its head "Gaining it and losing it and falling back into the middle ground again, where the easiest decision is making none at all. Going through the motions."

"Isn't that what we're doing here?"

Silence reigned. I picked up the tell-tales of the hologram, the way the falling rain reflected the light, but I couldn't find the projector. That bothered me.

"I don't know what I am." He said, finally, but he wasn't finished. "You know, I see differently now? I can't see people anymore. It's hard to explain. Like I can't see them, but I can see all the things they do, all the things they've done. When someone isn't online ... I can't really see them. This rig with the hologram and the speakers ... do you remember that time with the ouija board?"

An old memory swum up to the surface. Two kids and a scryer's toy. I nodded my head.

"This is my version. A line into the unknown. Speaking into a space where something may or may not be. Hoping for a response. Hoping that there is someone where I'm not. I'm not alone here. There are things I don't have names for, and I can feel them, but they're not like me. I'm not alone, but I am lonely."

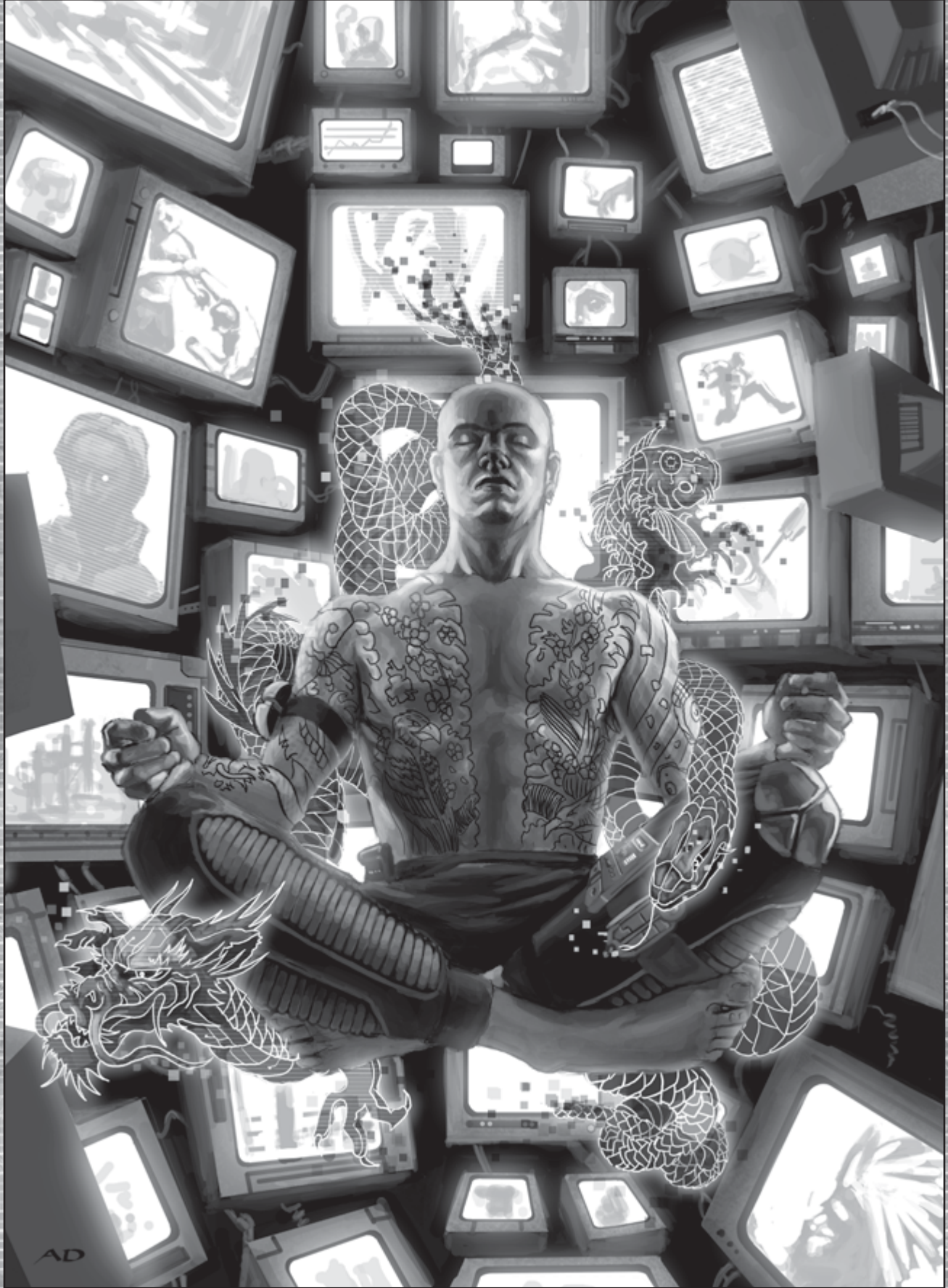
I blew more smoke and reached for my commlink with fingers stained yellow and brown.

"You always were a drama queen. Thank Gaia I got the brains in the family."

In AR, I see Joey. 25-years old forever. I gave my brother a virtual hug.

"Dammit, bro. I missed you."





AD

• It's not over. You will not return to your regularly scheduled program. From now on, you'll carry the events of this year with you. Legal issues alone will fill years of broadcast time; courtrooms, juries, and star chambers occupying themselves and spinning their stories for the Prime Time trideo diaries and docudramas. Bile, righteous indignation, and quiet dignity will be spent to recreate the old debates of racism, civil rights, and social acceptance. The lives of this year's prodigal children, the technomancers and the artificial intelligences, will be vivisected for all to see: their secret sorrows and atrocities lay bare to fuel morbid curiosity. Consider this.

- Sunshine

ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES

• With the successful passage of Brackhaven's Technomancer Registration Bill into law, I've decided to get out of Seattle for a while. I came across this collection of notes, speculation, and unpublished material Sunshine and I collected during our investigations while cleaning out my offline storage. Some of this stuff is so far out there we don't quite know what to make of it, but hopefully some of you will be able to fill in the gaps. To start with, here's an excerpt from the first entry of *Undernet Prophet*, the blog of Otaku-Zuku, Japan's own mendicant technomancer guru.

- Netcat

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WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT TECHNOMANCERS?

You know nothing of technomancers. The newsfeeds that inundate your personal life have become myth, so far removed from the truth of events that they no longer qualify even as lies. Even the label, "technomancer" is merely the most popular of the ten-thousand falsehoods perpetrated against my kind. I have been dubbed a virtuakinetic, a wizard, a Matrix terrorist, and the next stage of metahuman evolution, among others. But have you ever considered what technomancers call each other? Nothing. We have no name for ourselves as a group, we have no common creed or nationality or history to unite us. By common convention we accept the slave names forced upon us by the mainstream media, or create our own titles. The most popular of the latter refers to us as the unwired.

Technomancers are a new thing in the Sixth World, and we have our share of saints and sinners, prophets and madmen. Our following is the rabid fanbase that wishes to be us, the kind-hearted liberals that promise to defend us, the cold-hearted tyrants that will control us, and the fearful zealots who continue to hound us. What facts about us make us feared, revered, reviled, and outcast from the rest of metahumanity? We can access the Matrix without equipment. That is the beginning and end of our abilities. We are not cybermantic adepts who have found a magical ascendance to speak with the spirits of the machine, nor charlatan criminals who rely on elaborate tricks and hidden implants to perform our miracles. Look elsewhere for your idiot-savant meat computers that perform lightspeed calculations in their broken brain matter.

Science has poked and prodded us and discovered we are different. Our bodies possess subtle differences from the meta-human norm. There is undoubtedly a connection between the physiological discrepancies in wetware within technomancers and our abilities, but the exact details are obscure. The source of these mutations is likewise unknown: the fervent and fearful have made claims ranging from alien experimentation to some unknown virus, but no common trait or contagion has ever been found. Technomancers exist in every population on the planet, in every caste and stratum of society.

Just because we are new, however, does not mean we are without precedent. Search your history files, and you will discover we are not the first Children of the Matrix ... nor do I expect us to be the last. Burn that into your permanent memory before I go.

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• At least the witch hunts have stopped. Without the public hysteria, the various committees and courts have lost their publicity, momentum, and financial backing (more or less in that order). Corporate and government research groups still recruit technomancers—sometimes using strong-arm tactics—but the furor of kidnappings and forced incarceration has given way to handsome paychecks and the occasional extraction. Polls and statistical samplings still show a marked distrust of technomancers in many areas, especially outside of major sprawls.

- Netcat

• People in power now see technomancers as a resource and some serious Cold War mentality is coming into play. When the Shotozumi-gumi in Seattle couldn't buy a couple of technomancers that turned up in Tacoma, they blackmailed them into service by taking their families hostage.

- Mihoshi Oni

• They're not the only ones. Rumor has it the CAS's Department of Strategic Intelligence is scouring prisons and mental hospitals for possible technomancer recruits.

- Mr. Bonds

• Technomancers in the Native American Nations (and other places with a strong shamanic culture, like Manchuria) can sometimes be accepted as equivalent to shamans, but are rarely given the same deference and respect.

- Goat Foot

• Echo that. Many Brahmin families decided to "adopt" Hindu technomancers into their caste, but a number of technomancers in the Indian Union have formed their own sub-castes, the *ahl-ê Ganesa*, or "Blessed of Ganesha."

- Mika

• There are still plenty of government officials who see technomancers as mysterious or even sinister figures, or at the very least walking security breaches. Security at airport and spaceports has increased as megacorporations have rushed to install scanners capable of detecting technomancers, and both Knight



Errant and Lone Star have founded detention facilities for technomancer criminals.

- Sunshine

- I have a friend who spent a night in Knight Errant's Seattle Technomancer Containment Facility, out on Ares Island. The guards doped her with something, stuck her in a straitjacket, and dumped her in a wifi-proof room. She said she was warned, once, that at the first sign of trouble from her they'd install a kink bomb.

- Netcat

- Remember NewsNet's series "They Walk Amongst Us Unseen?" A technomancer with a hidden connection can pass as normal, and commit crimes just by thinking. Security firms were going nuts when the news of technomancers broke out. It's not quite as bad now, but this is the biggest security shakeup since the Awakening.

- Hard Exit

- And still no word on where technomancers come from. What could have inflicted these changes on people?

- Glasswalker

- I don't know if it's a matter of being "changed." Sure, a lot of 'mancers link their abilities back to the Crash, but there are others who weren't caught online during the Crash at all—they simply woke up one day and discovered they were technomancers. In some cases, it seems like they were always technomancers, they were just waiting for technology to catch up to the point where they could use those abilities.

- Netcat

- I don't buy that. It's not like we could have just missed technomancers being around all this time.

- Glasswalker

- Who says we did? There are technomancers who can duplicate the feats of pre-Awakening psychics and savants. If you get two technomancers within range of each other, they can talk to each other with their minds. It's like telepathy. Maybe we just didn't know how to explain it before.

- Ethernaut

TECHNOMANCER PLAYERS

- I found out a little about these guys during our investigation—you've probably seen most them on the trid. Of course, the trid never tells the full story, so hopefully we can fill in some of the blanks.

- Sunshine

KIVANET

Back in Septemeber, the Pueblo Corporate Council, acting on the advice of various shamanic interests, created a network of virtual "kivas," or holy places, known as KivaNet. The network is administrated by José Runningtree (né Littlefeather) and his husband Miguel. KivaNet is open to any PCC citizen and exists to identify, teach, and facilitate communication with tech-

nomancers. Pueblo shamans have had a heavy influence on the development of the network and its system of teaching, and KivaNet "technoshamans" view their abilities as a spiritual gift in much the same way as AmerInd shaman magicians view their own powers.

- It goes deeper than that. The technoshamans follow "paragons," archetypal forms from the collective subconscious that can take legendary forms from AmerInd myth.

- Netcat

- Funny, I ran into something like that in Berlin—a group of technomancers that claimed to follow an idol that only existed on the Matrix.

- Glasswalker

- Sounds like an AI trying to play god to me.

- Sticks

- Perhaps, perhaps not. It is disturbingly familiar.

- Puck

OUTREACH ASSOCIATION

Despite its well-publicized façade, most politicians consider Outreach to be little more than another corporate lobby with a socially-acceptable cause to crusade for: equal rights for technomancers and artificial intelligences. The Outreach Association is based around an online geospatial social network so that members can communicate, identify one another, and coordinate their lobbying. The actual day-to-day operations are handled by a group of administrators and superusers that prevent misuse of the network and handle legal actions, logistics, and accounting. Admin are mostly young college graduates with a smattering of older, experienced, and connected senior lobbyists and retired news personalities.

- They're not afraid of making strange bedfellows, either. "Lobbying" in modern politics generally equates to legally or illegally bribing senators, congressmen, nobles, and anyone else with political clout or friends with political clout to vote in favor of or against certain bills and reforms. Outreach keeps an excellent network of feelers and informants on other lobbies, and often makes backroom deals with those lobbies whose interests or support align with their pro-technomancer bias.

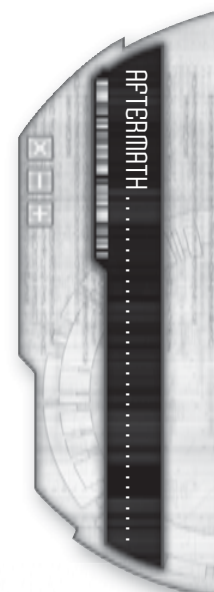
- Fianchetto

- NeoNET has been funding another lobby group, Unité. You'd think the two groups would cooperate given their almost identical aims, but there's some serious bad blood between them because Unité attracts quite a few recruits out from under the OA's nose.

- Puck

- Talking of politics, have you seen the latest voting intention polls on the Seattle elections. 4 weeks to go and Brackhaven's in the lead by 20%. Fuck it. Can this year get any worse?

- Fatima



Technomancer Bounty***The Calcutta Times* [Regency]—26 November 2070**

ORISSA, Indian Union: The Apep Consortium, an AA-rated multinational, has announced a 50,000¥ bounty for any information that leads to the capture of the nine leaders of the Sisters of Isis technomancer cult, or the recovery of data and artifacts stolen from an Apep Consortium-sponsored archeological dig in Orissa. The Sisters of Isis are a revival of the ancient Isis cult, but believe the ancient goddess has become incarnate in an artificial intelligence. [Read more.](#)

E-Trend Quote of the Day***E-Trend e-zine*[Horizon]—27 November 2070**

“The central tragedy of the technomancer existence is this: so many of us come as damaged, broken, and imperfect vessels to Resonance. Our view was so narrow we disturbed the sanctity of our bodies in an effort to expand our minds.”

— Otaku-Zuku, Technomancer Guru

Bishop Arrested***Matrix Report* [Evo]—29 November 2070**

BOSTON, UCAS: Technomancer Michael Bishop was arrested today in Boston’s Roxbury neighborhood, concluding a three-day manhunt by Renraku Security and the FBI. Bishop was involved in the May 10th viral assault on the Spring 2070 graduating class of MIT&T, though it is unclear whether Bishop helped perpetrate or prevent the failed attack. FBI computer security specialists have commented that the viral code was “extremely malicious in nature. [The virus] could have injured hundreds at the event.” Members of the MIT&T student body and faculty are boycotting the FBI facility where Bishop is being held and demanding his immediate release. The graduation ceremony has been rescheduled for December 20th. [Read more.](#)

France Introduces Technomancer Legislation***EuroFix* [DeMeKo]—30 November 2070**

BRUSSELS EC: France introduced legislation to the New European Economic Community today that would, if passed, mandate the registration of all technomancers in the member countries. Helen Basilard, Switzerland’s representative to the NEEC, and Micah der Birs of Zeta Imp Chem have already expressed their support for the new legislation, which will be voted on early next year. [Read more.](#)

Pope Welcomes Technomancers***This Week in God* [Colbert Media]—1 December 2070**

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt: Today the Coptic Pope Andronicus II issued a statement welcoming any technomancers who are People of the Book to seek haven from prejudice among the members of the Oriental

Continued on page 116

PROJECT MONAD

Manadyne is an AA-rated corporation that deals with magical goods and services. Its brother corp, a software developer called Mangadyne, faced bankruptcy after the Crash 2.0 and Manadyne purchased the corp lock, stock, and barrel. For the last three years Mangadyne has been a subsidiary of Manadyne nominally dedicated to producing magical theory tutorsofts, but the main resources of the corporation have gone into Project Monad. Several megacorporations have expressed interest in the Project, whose avowed goal is to create a hitcher jack capable of allowing magicians and mundanes to accompany technomancers on journeys to the mysterious Resonance Realms.

- Supposedly, Manadyne is considering eight-figure offers from Horizon, Evo, MCT, and NeoNET to buy into Project Monad. How much do you think they’d pay someone that made their offer more presentable?
- Haze

TRANSHUMAN LEAGUE

As a group, the Transhuman League is dedicated toward attaining one or more levels of posthuman existence. Towards this end, TL members are interested in genetic engineering, implant technology, magic, and, most recently, technomancers. The Transhuman League is a major advocate of technomancer rights, and even counts some technomancers among its members, but there have been a number of unpleasant incidents recently where Transhuman League recruiters stepped over the line into harassment and even kidnapping in one case. All members involved in these infractions have been expelled from the League, and senior TL leaders participated in their convictions.

- That doesn’t stop the rumors that some hard-core group in the League is trying to create an “ascended master”—a technomancer who can use magic. Unfortunately, they need a fresh supply of magicians and technomancers for their experiments.
- Plan 9
- Yeah, right. Someone has been funding the TL some serious nuyen. Even cred is on Evo.
- Snopes

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PATERSON’S GUIDE TO MATRIX ENTITIES—PRE-RELEASE TO THE 2071 EDITION

• Doc Paterson was *the* preeminent field researcher of paranormal animals in the Americas during the 2050s, but disappeared in Amazonia while researching *Paranormal Animals of Latin America*. Fortunately for us, Doc survived and decided to go underground. For the last six years he’s been putting together a new bestiary on the denizens of “the unique ecologi-





INCOMING FEED.....

cal niche that is the Matrix.” This is a preview of the e-text he’s set to release next summer.

- Sunshine

An Introduction to Synthetic Intelligences

Also known as artificial intelligences, digital intelligences, digital sapients, autonomous knowbots, e-telligences, and i-constructs, the varied classes of synthetic intelligences (SIs) may be, like other life forms, broken down into structures based on similarity of behavior and descent. Actually familial relationships between SIs do not exist as such with biological life, but research hints that many SIs possess a source code kernel. This kernel, then, may contain code that is degraded or evolved from an ancestral program or programs, and lines of descent may possibly be traced by properly analyzing this kernel. SIs are very protective of their core coding, however, and so this theory must remain unproven.

Before their notorious public exposure in 2070, synthetic intelligences developed quietly in the turbulent information-eddies that followed the Crash 2.0. While there is some anecdotal evidence of synthetic intelligence before this event, it is believed the Crash 2.0 worm provided the impetus that transformed potential into actuality, much as the Big Bang saw the creation of our own universe. It has been publicly demonstrated that SIs may develop spontaneously from long-running and complex programs (a process popularly known as “emergence”), and that after this period they may develop along several different lines, which provides the basis for the categorizations below.

Protosapient SI

<No accepted taxonomy>

Identification: Also known as *ferals*, protosapient typically appear similar to the complex semi-autonomous programs known as agents to standard analysis, but observation and interaction inevitably reveal complex behaviors unassociated with typical agent programming. Feral icons normally appear similar to that of the primary program they emerged from (typically IC constructs or operational utilities), and may display a hyperreal quality compared to standard icons.

Resonance Capability: Protosapient display a broad range of abilities, typically on par with agents or experienced hackers, though some truly exceptional individuals occur. These capabilities are almost always related to their primary program. In all cases, ferals have a level of intelligence below the metahuman norm, similar to animals.

Habits: The primary motivations for ferals are their survival and the continued fulfillment of the primary purpose of the program they emerged from. Most are either extremely territorial or completely nomadic; all are extremely aggressive towards perceived threats to their survival (which may be linked to a given mainframe, host, or database) or interference with their purpose (which may be linked to an agency, group, or corporation). Only one notable case has been registered of metahuman-protosapient relationship evolving after initial contact, and according to testimonies it appears analogous to instances of metahuman-animal bonding in the wild. Some protosapient exhibit a primitive social

Pope Welcomes Technomancers (CONT.)

Orthodoxy. This announcement has come after weeks of violence against technomancers in the Middle East, spurred in part by radical clerics and the tragic events at Masada last October, when a group of Druze technomancers were summarily executed by a Circassian separatist movement. [Read more.](#)

Mandatory Testing***Pink Tentacle* [NTT]—5 December 2070**

NEO-TOKYO, Japan: The Diet has passed a bill into law that will require mandatory testing for technomantic abilities alongside magical aptitude testing in public schools. Empress Hitomi has personally endowed the creation of a government institution where young and latent technomancers will be sent to study. [Read more.](#)

AI Accords Deadlocked***Associated Press news service*—15 December 2070**

ZURICH-ORBITAL: The Corporate Court voted on the Artificial Intelligence Accords put forth by the Horizon Group today and were deadlocked 6-6-1. A 30-day recess has been declared so that the Court may continue with other business and gather further information before voting again. If passed, the AI Accords would prevent megacorporations from claiming artificial intelligences that emerged from their proprietary software or systems, and any material produced by such artificial intelligences, as megacorporate intellectual property. [Read more.](#)

Aldoru Rocks Australia***News Down Under* [Mitsuhama Media]—18 December 2070**

MANILA, Philippines: The AI Pulsar and the great dragon Masaru met today to discuss possible censures against the Aldoru known as Immaculada Aglipay, the most popular virtual simstar in Australasia. Immaculada has been accused of amping the signals of her public and pay-for-play broadcasts in Australia to illegal levels, carrying the very real possibility of addiction. Public relations officers of Immaculada Aglipay, Inc. contest that all of the broadcasts conformed to local laws and standards. [Read more.](#)

Lightning Strikes Twice***Foresight* [Delphic]—21 December 2070**

DENVER, Front Range Free Zone: The Great Dragon Ghostwalker was present today as the Company of the Lightning Wave was re-opened in a public ceremony. A member company of the International Seers Guild headquartered in Paris, France, the Company of the Lightning Wave specializes in statistical analysis programs, sortilege through the medium of the Matrix,
Continued on page 118

awareness and form packs and groups (it is believed many such may have evolved from coordinated “party IC” components).

Commentary: Unlike other SIs, protosapient display little or no desire or ability to communicate. Ferals do not normally seek out or attempt to interpret metahuman media; the few documented cases of this happening were followed by the beginning of hostilities against perceived metahuman threats to their survival. Acts of retribution against ferals for these aggressive acts can be noticed by other ferals, which can cascade into further hostilities. Other SIs display the ability to communicate in some fashion with ferals.

Metasapient SI

<*No accepted taxonomy*>

Identification: Metasapient typically appear as hackers, technomancers, or other sophisticated Matrix users, though their iconography frequently changes. Metasapient icons typically possess a greater resolution and denser code structure than other icons.

Resonance Capability: These synthetic intelligence programs may possess numerous abilities, the greater extant of which remain uncatalogued as of this text. Evidence indicates that some possess analogs to technomancer abilities, including threading as well as an array of integral task-specific utilities.

Habits: Metasapient SIs possess cognitive abilities at least comparable to metahumans and composite personality constructs that mimic metahuman thought and behavior patterns, often based on dynamic personality matrices found in agents and first generation frame constructs (which many developed from). These are the SIs most able and interested in dealing with metahumans, and possess goals and behavior analogous to metahuman goals and behaviors. The predominant number of SIs featured in the media are metasapient. Metasapient exhibit a high level of social awareness and despite their small numbers have begun to congregate in like-minded (if you will) groupings to further their interests and agendas.

Commentary: Some metasapient appear to be impressionable, and adopt personality constructs that mimic metahuman myths, legends, or expectations—though it has yet to be determined whether or not these are deliberate ruses. Metasapient are clever enough to deliberately masquerade their actions behind one or more such masks, and some metasapient SIs have been known to adopt the same guise when they wish to interact under another alias. The adopted Matrix slang for such SIs is *mimics*.

Note: Rumors persist of a variant of metasapient patterned directly on metahuman minds, particularly those of Matrix users who die online. While no definitive examples have emerged to confirm this hypothesis, the interim taxonomy for such “ghosts in the machine,” should one emerge, would be *posthuman SI*.

Xenosapient SI

<*No accepted taxonomy*>

Identification: Xenosapient typically possess unusual configurations and icons which baffle analysis programs.



Some have been mistaken for viruses, operational constructs, programming frames, and small Matrix virtual machines.

Resonance Capability: The exact range and nature of the capabilities of xenosapient SIs remains undocumented. These are the rarest of the most common taxonomies.

Habits: Xenosapient SIs have cognitive abilities and personality constructs based on the thought and behavior patterns that are decidedly non-metahuman. Their goals and behavior are often completely alien or inexplicable to metahumans, and may result from an evolution or warping of their primary programming directive. This category includes SIs that grew out of ultra-specialized software, experimental expert systems, or exotic applications. These SIs tend to be focused, uncommunicative, and possess specialized/narrow cognitive and sensory processes; “thought” processes use decidedly non-metahuman frames of reference.

Commentary: By metahuman standards, xenosapient SIs are barely sane, their goals and logic incomprehensible to most metahumans. Most exhibit no interest or concern for metahumans or metahuman communication. What little evidence has been collected on Xenosapient SIs results from the case study of “Scrooge,” an SI detected inside a small accounting firm’s servers. This hyper-evolved financial program is blind and unresponsive to non-mathematical stimuli and non-financial data.

Note: Anecdotal evidence suggests some such SI or SIs combine the thought and behavior patterns of subsentient entities such as apes, cetaceans, and insects with metahuman or post-metahuman cognitive abilities. There is also some evidence that xenosapient SIs may be patterned after merrow, naga, sasquatch, and satyr intellects.

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- Facts on AIs are extremely sketchy at this point. The few things we do know come from the most public and vocal artificial intelligences—not exactly unbiased sources.
- Netcat

- It’s not a coincidence that the most public AIs—or is it DIs or SIs now?—are those that can deal with metahumans most effectively. They’re pushed out there to make the rest look better.
- Haze

Private Message...

From: M.

Subject: Call me

It’s been two months now, please call me. We need to talk this through not ignore it. I’m hurting and I’m alone. I expected this from mom and Francis but not from you. I know it’s hard to assimilate, and you’re entitled to your doubts, but come on, I’m still me. Please call. –M

- According to the AI themselves, most of their kind are still concerned with the primary purpose of their original programming. Like all sapient beings, however, the actions AIs undertake are strongly influenced by their wants and needs. It’s important to understand

that most of the activity attributed to AIs by the media is the result of the perceived threat the media spotlight put on them.

- Netcat

- Not that anything is ever that cut and dried. Artificial intelligences can and do compete—for limited resources, when their plans conflict, and for philosophical differences for all I know.

- Plan 9

- And what form would an AI war on humanity take? Think of all those pretty little Thor shots Ares has in orbit, the stockpiles of nuclear weapons, MCT’s caches of Doom and Ringu ... and that’s not even touching all the really subtle plots an AI could hatch if they decided it was them or us.

- Pistons

- I believe that if the paranoid ravings like that had lasted much longer in the public eye, we might have suffered a war in the Matrix ... or worse. As it is, sanity prevailed.

- Sunshine

- Speaking of sanity, could an artificial intelligence go insane?

- Plan 9

- Tough question. There’s no real standard for sanity among AIs—the field of synthetic intelligence psychiatry (synthpsych, for those among you fond of slang)—is still mostly theoretical. It is possible that a sufficiently damaged AI could exhibit extreme changes in behavior, just as a metahuman who suffered neural trauma would. Again, no one knows for sure.

- Haze

- Or no one is telling.

- Frosty

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PLAYERS

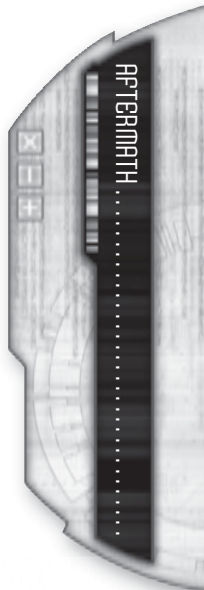
- Sunshine and I have pooled our notes on some of the major players in the AI world. Our research isn’t complete, so hopefully the rest of you can fill in some holes.

- Netcat

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ARTIFICIAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (ARM)

A special task force of the Grid Overwatch Division (GOD), ARM was established to research, track, and police artificial intelligences. ARM officers have been recruited directly from the elite members of GOD, and is probably the only agency on the planet to include two dozen technomancers on its roster. With full Corporate Court and COMA backing ARM jurisdiction is far-reaching—including many closed corporate systems and almost all national grids (at least those nations who signed the ICC’s Business Recognition Accords). The current director, Mairtin Killdare, is in the process of finding the correct location to build a secure facility. Until complete, the task force has been assigned a floor in the ICC Building in NYC.



Lightning Strikes Twice (CONT.)

and technomantic divinations. The original Company of the Lightning Wave was decimated during the Crash 2.0, with only one surviving member. Divination services will begin again on 24 December. [Read more.](#)

First Convert***This Week in God [Colbert Media]—24 December 2070***

HONG-KONG, HKFEZ: Buddhist monks at the Wong Tai Sin Temple held a celebration today in honor of the first artificial intelligence to convert to Buddhism. The AI, known as Bai Li, could not be reached for comment, but it has been reported that the Peshin Lama extended an invitation for the AI to undertake a pilgrimage to Tibet, both as a trial of faith and for an audience with the Dalai Lama. Renraku has volunteered to extend Matrix service into Tibet in order to enable the journey. [Read more.](#)

An Out of This World New Year's Eve***New Seattle Intelligencer [NN]—31 December 2070***

SEATTLE, UCAS: The AI demagogue Pulsar and a group of fellow sapient beings are bringing in the New Year in style! A massive celebration is set at midnight in Downtown Seattle to bring in the New Year and celebrate the foundation of the Anthrophiles Society, an open social group for sentient beings of all stripes. Aside from Pulsar, founding members at the party will include the free spirit Buttercup, the adult western dragon Damon, a representative from the nagas of Angkor Wat, Ares CEO Damien Knight, and Milo Czerda, board member of the Draco Foundation and a centaur. [Read more.](#)

- The buzz is that Killdare's mandate includes preparing a "final solution" in case peaceful coexistence (read: total exploitation) of AIs doesn't pan out. Some of the lone gunmen say the ARM has a sample of the worm that caused the Crash of '29.

- Snopes

- The ARM of GOD is no joke. They've got fairly broad powers, including the ability to arrest anyone "suspected of dealing with a criminal program."

- Netcat

- Because most AIs lack any sort of legal status, prosecution by law enforcement can be difficult. The AI Accords the Corporate Court is working on may change that—but so far some megacorps have kept the Accords blocked—leaving AIs in a legal gray area that is more to their suiting. When legal precedent is lacking, ARM tends to treat AIs as Lone Star does the SINless: non-citizens with limited rights at best, non-persons with no rights at worst. They've quietly turned several captured AIs over as "property" to the corps that owned the original code. Even when they absolutely have to play nice, ARM has an unofficial policy of

hacking a captured AI's core code and inserting a Corporate Court-issued criminal SIN.

- Fianchetto

CONSORTIUM FOR ALTERNATIVE INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH (CAIR)

An international "pure research" think tank nominally under the dominion of the United Nations, CAIR has long been under the thumb of the megacorporations whose endowments keep it funded. CAIR was originally founded to research the sapience of the higher mammals—dolphins, great apes, elephants, etc. Once under corporate sponsorship, these honest experiments were perverted into experiments with cyberware and magic. Typical experiments included the effects of quickened Increase Intelligence spells on dolphins and outfitting silver-back gorillas with encephalons and cerebral boosters.

The Consortium likes to release findings that support the corporate and conservative government views on technomancers and AIs. With the tide of public opinion turning, the same researchers who once lucidly argued for the capture of technomancers for vivisection and the destruction of AIs as software tools being used by criminal hackers are being asked to lend their expertise on legitimate research programs.

- A lot of CAIR research directly affected corporate research programs, allowing them to obtain government approvals for new cybertech for metahumans—and as a bonus, they gained a sideline in influencing the development of effective implants for critters.

- Butch

- The thought of a dog with a mnemonic enhancer may strike you as funny—hey, old dogs *can* learn new tricks!—but augmented apes can be deadly additions to corporate security.

- Nephrine

- I remember seeing the gorilla that they had taught to speak ten words of Arabic. The Imam had the scientists responsible stoned to death, and had the beast cared for by his followers until the end of its days. He said he could not forgive the men for taking the animal's innocence.

- Goat Foot

TECHNOCRAT PARTY

With the successful introduction of wifi technology and the economic upswing of the past five years, the Technocrats have managed to gradually rebuild their support base and coordinate their activities. Getting help from the corporate propaganda machine, the party regained a strong foothold in national and international politics. The corporate connection remains strong, with lobbyists and interest groups loosely associated with the Technocrats acting as middlemen. Despite these close corporate ties, the Technocratic parties (or factions thereof) in sixteen different nations have come out as in defense of technomancers and artificial intelligences, creating an internal schism over party

policy and damaging relations with certain corporate sponsors.

Fundamentally this is a clash driven by the party's central philosophy of better living through technology, which includes pushing the limits of science and engineering worldwide for the benefit of the citizens of the world. The parties' socio-economic faction see the need to maintain the balance between political independence and the concerns and fears of their biggest sponsors. Meanwhile, a significant portion of each party believes that logic has been the party's Achilles heel in the past, and see the evolving impact of technomancy and AI sentience as the perfect platform for social and political reform. Technocrat politicians are drumming up support for recognition of AIs as citizens, or at least as sapient. More than a few countries think having an AI on call would be a strategic advantage in a conflict, so Technocrats are getting more attention than they have in the past.

- The up-and-coming UCAS Technocrat Party is trying to prevent President Colloton and company from making any long-term policy decisions. The lobbyists are falling over each other, arranging meetings between party members and corp bigwigs to discuss matters. In D.C., Horizon, Evo, and surprisingly Shiawase are falling in with the Technocrats, while MCT and Renraku are trying to put pressure on Colloton directly.
- Fianchetto

Technocrats tend to hire shadowrunners for the usual political dirty jobs—hide the bodies, dig up the bodies, kneecap the reporter, sit-on-the-mistress, etc.—but since stepping in as the pro-technomancer and pro-AI party, most of the runs have been against other technocrats. Internal divisions are wracking the party and spilling into the public eye.

- No shit. An Awakened Technocrat fireballed a technomancer and his family last week down in Texas. Some groupies had convinced the technomancer to rig a local election in the Technocrat candidate's favor, but the tampering got out. Things look to be getting bloody and ugly damn fast.
- Glasswalker
- What the heck were you doing in Texas, G? Not exactly the friendliest place for people of our pallor.
- Marcos
- Failed extraction. We were hired to extract a technomancer from an Aztech holding facility near the border. The docs were keeping her sedated, and as soon as the drugs wore off she went insane. Fried our rigger with some kind of black IC, got away from us, and tried to run the border. CAS soldiers took her down. Johnson paid us half the fee to acquire the corpse—he was happy the brain was still intact.
- Glasswalker



MINOR LEAGUES

- I tacked these on. They don't get the same limelight as the other groups, but their cred is just as certified, and they bear keeping an eye on.
- Netcat

Kobukson Jo-pok

You may never have heard of them, but the Kobukson Jo-pok control approximately 13% of Korea's Matrix crime, and they're a major international money laundering operation for the Seattle-based Seoulpa Rings. The advantage the Kobukson enjoy over other Matrix gangs is the alleged patronage of an artificial intelligence and a number of complex agent programs.

- Bull. No syndicate has an AI on call. They're just fluffing their rep.
- Mihoshi Oni
- The Jo-pok call those agents Eo, Kun, Gi, and Bak after four members of the Kobukson who died in the Crash 2.0.
- Lyran

Rigel Group

Traveling away from us at greater and greater velocities, the *Sternensammler* unmanned asteroid retriever heads toward distant Alpha Centauri. While initially considered the result of technomancer terrorism by the press, in reality the theft was perpetrated by an artificial intelligence. As far as anyone can determine, the AI (nicknamed Rigel by the media) downloaded its program into the space platform and aimed it at the nearest star system beyond our own in an effort to escape projected conflict between artificial intelligences and metahumanity.

Every month since its departure, *Sternensammler* has sent a coded burst transmission back to Terra. The people who study these transmissions are known as the Rigel Group.

- The Rigel Group membership seems to be your basic collection of space enthusiasts and card-carrying SETI fiends, but it also includes a dedicated cabal of cryptohackers that try to decipher the transmissions. They haven't had much luck so far.

- Orbital DK

- The Rigel Group itself doesn't hire many shadowrunners—but at least six corporate and national intelligence agencies are keeping tabs on the AI's followers. That means that you may be hired to watch the watchmen watching the watchers.

- Axis Mundi

Schmidt, Iakob, and Lei

The law office of Schmidt, Iakob, and Lei is as old as the Awakening, and found their niche early in 2012 by specializing in spiritual contract law—otherwise known as simony. Odo Schmidt, a spry 80-year-old dwarf, continues to manage the group's international affairs. Schmidt, Iakob, and Lei have been placed on retainer by certain artificial intelligences to act as advocates. The Paris-based firm has successfully defended its clients' interests in court so far, usually by settling with the plaintiffs. AI cases can range over several very weird fields of law, and the dedicated researchers for Schmidt, Iakob, and Lei have been known to use shadow resources to gather (or fabricate) evidence.

- SIL also acts on behalf of its clients in the physical world. When an AI needs something illegal done, the firm hires shadow assets to do the deed. As you can imagine, they're very good at covering their tracks. If you get caught, there's a chance the firm might assign a lawyer to your case ... for a fee, of course.

- Goat Foot

- Yeah, quid pro quo. You fuck up and the SIL steps in to save your ass, then they own you. Who wants to be a house shadowrunner? I'd rather go to jail.

- 2XL

- I wouldn't be too paranoid about that, if SIL made a regular habit of setting runners up, word would get around.

- Kat O'Nine Tales

The Undernet Alliance

I've only heard whispers of this group. Supposedly, the Draco Foundation set up a group to protect artificial intelligences and set up a sanctuary for them, much like the Astral Space Preservation Society has done with free spirits. The group created a sanctuary somewhere in the Shadow Undernet that connects all the post-Shadowlands, runner social networks, and underworld data havens together, making handshake deals with the old-timers already set up there for their silence and cooperation.

- Bullshit. The UA is Pulsar's little clique. They want to police their own so metahumanity doesn't set its sights on wiping out AIs for good.

- Clockwork

GAME INFORMATION

Emergence sheds the light of public awareness on some of the people and things that had chosen to hide in the shadows—technomancers and artificial intelligences—and the world has woken up and found that their old familiar Matrix is a strange place indeed. Consider how the events of this book will impact your campaign: is one of the players a technomancer? What about their friends, contacts, family, gang, and/or enemies? The events of 2070 spur a torrent of shadow activity, and your players can make a healthy profit if they don't mind getting their hands a little dirty. The unknowns in the equation are the artificial intelligences. No one really knows where they come from (or they aren't telling) or what they're capable of. One thing all runners should be aware of is that AIs can be killed. They may be powerful, but none of them are gods in the Matrix—at least, not yet.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING DOWN

Now that they are out of the closet, technomancers and artificial intelligences will do the same as they did before—pursue their own objectives and interests. They will also have to deal with the watchful eyes and ears of governments and megacorporations. In January of 2071, the Corporate Court will pass the AI Accords and the NEEC will institute laws requiring the registration of every technomancer in its member countries; in the following months many nations will pass similar legislation. In February, the ARM and Pulsar's Undernet Alliance will begin attempting to police rogue AIs; the start of a dirty, invisible war to prevent overt war between the meat world and the Matrix.

With the passage of laws governing technomancers and their abilities in the first few months of 2071, the media hysteria surrounding them will calm down. Just like magicians, technomancers will be registered and the illegal use of their abilities prosecuted. In February 2071, the Pueblo Corporate Council will offer limited citizenship and SINs to artificial intelligences in exchange for services rendered on behalf of the nation-corp. Shortly thereafter, many extraterritorial nations follow suit, offering corporate citizenship and SINs to AI employees. The ARM offers SINs without employment, but few AIs will trust their code with the agency designed to keep them in check. Despite the fear and paranoia that surrounds AIs and technomancers, they are responsible for a spurt of technological advancement in 2071, and many of these Children of the Matrix are behind the cutting edge of cyberware, bioware, nanotech, genetic engineering, and Matrixtech.

Just because the corps and authorities have been forced to admit the existence of AIs and technomancers and play nice with them in public doesn't mean they won't still pursue illicit research. The benefits of exploiting or harnessing technomancer powers and AIs is simply too tempting. Likewise, not all technomancers or AIs have surrendered their grudges against those agencies that tried to capture, experiment on, or kill them—or in trying to find and rescue lost friends.

Slowly but surely, AIs and technomancers will find tolerance and acceptance, just as changelings, metahumans, and the Awakened did before them. If anything, the people of the Sixth World, already surrounding by amazing magic, mystical creatures, and technological feats, embrace these new developments more quickly than changes of the past.

