

ECLIPSE PHASE

THE DEVOTEES



*An Adventure for
The Roleplaying Game of
Transhuman Conspiracy and Horror*



The Devotees is a scenario for Eclipse Phase:

- Pit your Firewall team against Nine Lives, the most ruthless syndicate of soul thieves in the system.
 - Investigate a horrifying new psychosurgery technique that creates worshipful slaves.
- Includes new information on the organization and key figures in the Nine Lives crime syndicate.
 - Includes details about Legba, Nine Lives' asteroid stronghold in the Main Belt.
 - Includes hooks for future adventures against Nine Lives.



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CREDITS:

Writing: Caleb Stokes
 Editing and Art Direction: Rob Boyle, Jack Graham
 Development and Additional Writing: Jack Graham
 Layout: Adam Jury
 Artwork: Nathan Geppertn Mark Molnar, Andy Wright
 Playtesters and Proofreaders: *Jack's Miscreants*: Rob Boyle, Juliet Brownell, Lillian Cohen-Moore, Nathaniel Dean, Aaron Grossman, Melody Hadap, Matt Hare Tony Lee, Ryan Macklin, Jessica Noble; and the *Know Evil crew*: Jason Ariciu, Aaron Carston, Tom Church, David Dobelman, Andrew Grattendick, Ross Payton.

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 —Caleb Stokes

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 contact us at info@posthumanstudios.com
 or via <http://eclipsephase.com>
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Posthuman Studios is: Rob Boyle, Brian Cross, Jack Graham and Adam Jury.

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version of AUSTIN. Under pressure to show results, the Cognite researchers hit on the idea of letting AWE practice its techniques on egos other than AUSTIN's. Perhaps with a variety of victims, AWE could bootstrap its skills to the level needed to take on a more mature AUSTIN.

Cognite's Aten lab had access to only a handful of egos, though, and due to office politics didn't want to requisition them from corporate. The initial results of letting AWE work on transhuman egos had been promising, so instead they approached Nine Lives for more test subjects. The lieutenant of the Petro Nanchon (a faction within Nine Lives; see *The Nanchons*, p. 4) on Aten took Cognite's deposit but didn't have enough egos to fill the order. So he put in a buy order for the difference with Lam Cong Dong, head of the Rada Nanchon.

The Cognite lab's requisition for the egos to be supplied was all over the map. Lam was curious. Whatever Cognite was up to, they weren't setting up a pool of virtual cubicle workers. Smelling opportunity, she slipped a worm in with the egos that would install a back door in the lab's mesh. Lam and a team of hackers then went in, tossed the lab's servers, and stole a copy of AWE. Cognite's security detected them before the infiltration was complete. They made off with enough documentation to understand AWE's purpose, however, but not its true nature as the fork of a seed AI.

NINE LIVES

Due to the advanced technology required, soul trafficking started as a white-collar pursuit. Deniable holding companies began using forked employees to fulfill labor quotas on dangerous extraterrestrial development projects. Non-consensual forking also provided an endless supply of test subjects for early experiments in psychosurgery, mind emulation, and integration psychology. All of this activity made the technology involved considerably cheaper and more accessible.

What wasn't accessible were big opportunities for newcomers to get rich off the technology—at least, legitimately. The pre-Fall corporate sphere had almost zero social mobility, with the oligarchs as gatekeepers. They'd long ago used the advantages of genetic manipulation and backups to ensure a permanent place at the top for themselves and their progeny, even as they competed viciously with one another.

Gangs like Nine Lives and the ID Crew got their start picking up the corps' scraps. They amassed armies of enslaved egos to serve as human bot-nets, put infomorphs to work in virtual bordellos, and

supplied egos to pariah governments. Their ruthless ambitions went after any opportunity the corps wouldn't touch for fear of PR backlash.

At the same time, a back-channel relationship developed between the corps and the soul traffickers that continues to this day. Just as mainstream late 20th-century technology companies closely followed pornographers who were innovating in areas like e-commerce and online video, the hypercorps kept a close eye on what the gangs were doing. Though the corps never touted their resumes, they even recruited criminal engineers and psychosurgeons who wanted to go legit.

At the time of the Fall, there were thousands of small-time crooks operating in the margins of the soul trade. Nine Lives and the ID Crew had to wait for the Fall to rise to cartel status.

Operating from the post-Fall squalor of the habitat Paradise, Roland Nazon took control over Nine Lives and began taking over other gangs. Little is known about Nazon's life pre-Fall. Whether as a manifestation of his madness or as an aide to his play for power, Roland developed Lapriyè (“the prayer”), a bastardized form of Vodun. Pulled indiscriminately from West African, Haitian, and Santeria traditions, Lapriyè focuses on the cortical stack as a source of dark magic, a fetish containing souls of the dead that can be forced into service. Nazon uses this cult to indoctrinate and intimidate his subordinates.

Nazon instituted “the Rite,” in which gang inductees are required to prove their loyalty to Nine Lives by psychosurgically torturing an innocent stranger. For inductees that lack technical skills, their victim is sleeved in a bound morph and the inductee told to inflict the physical equivalent. Anyone too “weak” to go through with the process or deemed unenthusiastic gets their own stack popped. Rumors had it that a failed applicant becomes the victim of the next criminal trying to prove himself.

Nazon's brutality and fearful reputation leaves only two types of criminals suitable for membership: crooks so ruthlessly ambitious they're willing to do anything and monsters who legitimately enjoy the Rite. The former run the daily business; the latter are unleashed for dark deeds.

The need for skilled labor and the gold rush of unclaimed property in the wake of the Fall quickly made Nine Lives extremely profitable. The cartel expanded from forknapping into identity theft, ego smuggling, illegal salvage, and extortion. Law enforcement, still struggling to get organized post-Fall, could

LAPRIYÈ & VODUN RELIGIONS

Nazon's cult of Lapriyè isn't intended as a representation of real world Vodun or its Afro-Caribbean descendants, Voodoo and Vodou. The Lapriyè cult appropriates the trappings of these religions in a way that would never meet the approval of true adherents. ■



do little to stop the gang's spread: there was nothing a cop could threaten that was worse than the punishment promised to traitors. Those few officers that crusaded onwards often met terrible fates; the gang relied on very public, sickening violations of both stack and sleeve for conflict resolution. By the time Nazon abandoned Paradise in late AF 1 to found Legba, his name was synonymous with fear across the entire system.

Modern Nine Lives operations display extreme sophistication. Between corrupted backup servers, rigged ego bridges, and subtle simulspace hacks, most forknappings occur without the alpha even being aware. Those few Nine Lives scams that operate within the perception of the average transhuman do so with impunity, radiating an unspoken promise of destruction to anyone fool enough to interfere. Members provide potential clients with customer service more reminiscent of a hypercorp than a gang of criminals, all the time wearing a knowing smile. The "or else" that seems to follow every sentence goes unsaid.

THE NANCHONS

Nine Lives is organized into three subordinate organizations, named after spirit pantheons from Lapriyè. Of the gang's total membership, about 8,000 reside at any one time on Legba. During this scenario, the population has swelled to about 15,000 as members travel in to learn the gang's future.

The Ghede Nanchon is Nazon's personal army of sadists and thugs. The Ghede are sincere in their devotion to Lapriyè and merciless in maintaining the gang's fearful reputation through violence and extortion. Aside from terror and wetwork, this nanchon's inexhaustible cruelty makes them the logical managers of Nine Lives' lucrative gladiatorial and snuff XPs. There are about 6,000 Ghede aboard Legba during *The Devotees*.

The Rada Nanchon are the most numerous, comprising the cartel's rank and file of identity thieves, racketeers, and slavers. Less violent than the Ghede, they're nonetheless ruthless in their pursuit of profit. There are about 7,000 Rada here during the scenario.

The Petro Nanchon devotes itself to dealing with the corporate sphere. The Petro are the smallest and most subtle of the nanchons. The majority of the members work in Consortium or Extropian controlled habitats. Some have backroom contracts with hypercorps providing illegal labor. These "legitimate" clients prove more lucrative than the usual pod brothel and mercenary operations. The Petro do everything in their power to steer Nine Lives' agenda in a more sophisticated direction without looking presumptuous to Nazon. There are 2,000 Petro now on Legba.

Under the head of each nanchon are lieutenants who run families of a few dozen to hundreds of members. Under the lieutenants are leaders who run crews ranging in size from 5–30 members.

Certain neighborhoods on Legba (Marinette, Samedi, Petro) are the territory of one of the nanchons. Within these, families and crews have carved out innumerable small territories.

AWE

AWE is the gamma fork of AUSTIN, a minor seed AGI. Heavily behavior-modified for task hedonism and loyalty to Cognite, AWE is not a standard AGI—it is more akin to a reactive, quasi-sentient psychosurgery suite dedicated to slaving its alpha and any other ego it encounters to the interests of Cognite.

By default, AWE instills general loyalty to Cognite, but it'll take arguments on the command line. Individual people (original intention was that they be Cognite executives) can be added in the form of identification parameters (mostly commonly, morph appearance) to a hard-coded infomorph upgrade. AWE will then inculcate loyalty to this programmable pantheon of "gods" along with loyalty to Cognite. The risk of including such flexibility in the programming was considered acceptable; neither AWE nor AUSTIN were ever intended for use outside air-gapped Cognite labs.

AWE is designed to exploit the similarities between AGI and human identity heuristics. The transhuman concept of self is a narrative developed by the mind from the raw material of memory. Given sufficient computational capacity, AWE is capable of rewriting this narrative—and rewriting it more rapidly and thoroughly than any comparable psychosurgical technique.

AWE does this by hacking and subverting the ego with Infosec. Once inside, it accelerates time to 60x normal speed and begins interrogating the ego. Its questions are seemingly nonsensical: "You must choose between vanilla and chocolate nutrient paste for supper. Which do you pick and why?" To the victim, this process takes subjective weeks.

As the ego answers each question, AWE runs diagnostic programs on the emulated mind, flagging memories strongly tied to the ego's sense of self and marking newly formed memories of the torture session for future deletion.

When the interrogation is complete, AWE conducts a rigorous, brute-force memory edit (p. 232, *Eclipse Phase*) on all memories flagged as contributing to self-concept. Without eidetic memory implants (which AWE deletes upon gaining access), transhuman minds are partly dependent on emotional context for recall. AWE zeroes out the emotional and physical sensations associated with target memories, rendering moments once vital to identity bland and forgettable.

AWE then adds false memories. The speed at which they're implanted means they make little or no logical sense, but with all once-important memories stripped of their kick, the victim's mind has nothing to cling to. However illusory transhuman narratives of self may be, it would seem that they're in some way necessary.

The new memories all involve whomever AWE was instructed to make the ego's master (or "executive" in the language of the Cognite creators). The emotional and physical sensitivity of the false memories gets ramped up to maximize associations. To the ego, the executive figure becomes not only responsible for everything good in life, but is responsible for *everything* in life—at least, everything worth remembering.

To further reinforce the new memories, AWE doses the victim's mind with digital endorphins every time Cognite or "the executive" is thought of fondly, tasping (p. 232, *Eclipse Phase*) the ego over subjective years until every thought of Cognite triggers feelings of pleasure and well-being.

Lastly, AWE deletes every memory of what it's done. This creates an awareness block (p. 170, *Transhuman*) in the ego for anything hinting at having undergone the AWE process.

Ultimately, the ego feels eternal gratitude for a person they may have never met. The will of this person, or anyone who can claim convincingly to work for Cognite, is synonymous with the will of the victim. Without commands from the master, the victim will continue to do what they were last bid to the best of their ability.

Abandoned AWE victims display a variety of symptoms, ranging from depersonalization disorder—an unshakable feeling that one's body and mind do not belong to one's self—to bipolar disorder that produces ecstasy while following the master's orders and crushing despair in every other instance.

Other side effects include a complete brand loyalty to Cognite. Affected egos express disappointment with any non-Cognite product unless otherwise ordered. The most noticeable sign of AWE tampering is a sense of religious fanaticism directed towards the executive figure. Religious narratives and magical thinking are an emergent property of the process, the victims' way of assimilating the massive contradictions now present within their memory—an unintended side effect, but still useful. ■

IMPORTANT CHARACTERS

ANTAGONISTS

Roland Nazon: Leader of Nine Lives and ascendant forking enthusiast.

Elleggua: Uncorrupted alpha fork of Nazon that runs Nine Lives from behind the throne.

Lam Cong Dong: Leader of the Rada Nanchon and discoverer of AWE.

Bertrand Theo: Leader of the Petro Nanchon.

Su Wu: Leader of the Ghede Nanchon.

OTHERS

Omri Melech: ID crew turncoat looking to retire by selling Nibedita Nath's ego.

Nibedita Nath: Executive at Cognite.

Kyoshi Katsurou: Illegal beta fork of Titanian researcher Rokuzawa Chi observing the Houngan.

AWE: Gamma fork of the seed AI AUSTIN, dedicated to enforcing Cognite loyalty in itself and others.

The Houngan: Nazon's crew of psychosurgeons. ■

RAPTURE OF THE SLAVES

For Lam Cong Dong, boss of the Rada Nanchon (see *Marinette*, p. 16), AWE was a lucky score. Once she realized what she had, she farcast to Legba with AWE in tow. There she presented her findings to Roland Nazon, ostensibly displaying her loyalty, but really in need of his personal team of psychosurgical experts.

Nazon's second—the elusive neotenic known as Elleggua—ordered AWE loaded into an air-gapped server with a dozen egos. When each emerged brain-washed, the Nine Lives leadership was convinced. After weeks of study, the Houngan (Nazon's personal psychosurgical team) discovered that AWE could instill obedience to any “executive” they programmed into a modular section of the code.

Testing began in earnest. AWE was loaded into a new server named Nana Buluku, the most powerful on the station. Nazon alone could grant access, and he quickly scheduled testing on hundreds of the cartel's less useful. AWE's task hedonism and the constant influx of new data drove it to further refine its psychosurgical techniques. Each generation proved more loyal than the last. At one point, the Houngan had AWE condition an ego to worship the Martian pop star Quell Misty and laughed themselves hoarse as the victim obeyed song lyrics literally. The song was titled “Dance Until Ya' Gotta Resleeve.”

Nine Lives now owned a tool that condensed months of psychosurgery down into a few hours. Rumors of the score couldn't be contained, and Lam Cong Dong didn't seem interested in being modest. Concerned that Lam was set to grow too far above her station, Elleggua and Nazon began discretely spreading rumors of her impending coup attempt. The gossip might as well be fact. The leadership must eliminate Lam Cong Dong to secure its authority, and Dong must succeed in the coup if she wants to live.

STAGE 1: INFILTRATION

The following briefing information may be provided by the characters' usual proxy. Alternatively, the gamemaster may wish to use Pyrrhos, a Firewall proxy who is a specialist on Nine Lives.

If using Pyrrhos, he meets with the characters in a secure simulspace resembling a seaside cliff on Earth's Mediterranean sea. His fork, dressed in a toga, floats up from the edge and begins the briefing.

Firewall's crows keep a watchful eye on Nine Lives. The gang's focus on human misery means they're usually not into activities that present x-risks, but they do occasionally get hold of an ego that has information about Firewall. When this happens, hackers and/or infiltrators go in to rescue them (if possible) or delete them (if not).

This time, though, Nine Lives has something more worrying than sentinel egos. A Firewall infiltrator aboard Legba reports that the cartel has acquired a new psychosurgery technology—something so fast and totally effective that it rivals the exsurgent virus in its ability to alter victims' personalities and motivations.

Pyrrhos's orders are straightforward. Find and debrief Amaru Timoti, a Firewall infiltrator aboard Legba. Investigate whatever has Nine Lives behaving so strangely. Report in on the provided QE comm. Eliminate any threats discovered. Firewall can't risk the pervasive and secretive Nine Lives distribution network becoming a carrier of a digital exsurgent strain—or whatever it is the gang's got its hands on.

Pyrrhos has arranged a cover story to get the sentinels on Legba without risking their egos in a farcast. He's acquired a second-hand shuttle, the *Dasmós*, and a series of Aspis identification codes. The team is to impersonate a team of ultimate freelancers, their clients, or other citizens of Aspis requesting docking for emergency repair. While Nine Lives has been known to pirate any ship fool enough to dock at Legba, Pyrrhos hopes fear of the ultimates will keep the thugs at bay.

The Aspis shuttle cover story also allows the real ultimate mercenaries the proxy hired to provide

extraction. Once the threat is eliminated, the rescue squad can request to dock and tow the characters' ship away. Characters just need to make sure they leave with their stacks.

The downside of this is that purchasing the shuttle, codes, and ultimate pick-up has tapped operational funds. The sentinels shall have to equip themselves with appropriate morphs and equipment before leaving.

PREPARATION

In addition to securing gear, characters may wish to do research before leaving for Legba.

NETWORKING: FIREWALL

A Level 1 favor reveals Pyrrhos's i-rep: 60 in game terms. A well-placed proxy, but not a major figure.

A Level 2 favor yields more about his doings. Pyrrhos normally runs crew operations, not field teams. He specializes in countering forknapping gangs like Nine Lives and the ID Crew. These gangs rarely threaten transhumanity as a whole, but they're dangerous to Firewall's secrecy.

A Level 4 favor yields Pyrrhos's day job—he's an executive at InDEX—but not his actual identity. Trying to spend higher level favors to learn more will result in multiple other proxies banding together and telling the questioner to back off.

NETWORKING: CRIMINAL

A Level 3 favor yields enough information for one sentinel to attempt to impersonate a low-level Nine Lives member from a distant habitat. Publicly calling in any other Guanxi favors while on Legba will blow this cover.

A Level 2 favor secures rumors that Omri Melach, a lieutenant for the ID Crew on Extropia, had a contract put out on his stack about a week ago. The hit came down the same night the ID Crew launched into a vicious gang war against Nine Lives operators in the slums. A hit out on their own the same night the Crew starts a firefight with their biggest rivals? It sounds like Omri defected. But to Legba? He must have been desperate.

NETWORKING: SCIENTISTS

A Level 2 favor reveals that Nazon has scoured the system to amass a stable of talented psychosurgeons—few of whom are allowed to leave his employ.

A Level 4 favor hints that controversial Titanian forking researcher Rokuzawa Chi is among them.

ABOARD THE *DASMÓS*

Whatever the shuttle had been used for previously, it didn't go well. Pyrrhos appears to have bought the *Dasmós* halfway through its repairs. A section of the rear hull is in breech and remains sealed off. The hull

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

DATE	EVENT
-1 month	Cognite researchers order a large batch of egos from the Petro Nanchon.
-3 weeks, 5 days	Petro turns to Lam Cong Dong to fill the order. Dong slips a back door program in with the egos.
-3 weeks, 4 days	Dong's hackers steal a copy of AWE from Cognite's servers.
-3 weeks, 2 days	Dong and her Venusian crew farcast to Legba with AWE.
-3 weeks, 1 day	After initial experiments, Ellegua orders Houngan psychosurgeons to study AWE.
-2 weeks, 3 days	Modular "executive" functions discovered. Nazon orders pilot programs with himself identified in the executive role.
-2 weeks, 2 days	Ellegua begins circulating rumors about Dong's attempted coup. Dong realizes she's now committed.
-2 weeks, 1 day	Dong makes contact with Omri Melach to purchase Nath's fork.
-1 week, 5 days	Omri and Dong agree on price. Omri leaves Extropia.
-5 days	Amaru Timoti reports odd behavior on station to Pyrrhos.
-2 days	Pyrrhos purchases the <i>Dasmós</i> and puts ultimate mercenaries on retainer.
-1 day	Omri arrives.
0	The sentinels are briefed by Pyrrhos and equip.
+10 hours	The sentinels arrive.
+10 hours, 1 min	Thugs attempt shake down/murder the sentinels.
+10 hours, 10 minutes	Kyoshi Katsuroou contacts the sentinels requesting help. Pyrrhos reveals Timoti's location.
+1 day	Omri and Dong meet in Zombi for the Nath exchange.
+1 day, 6 hours	Ellegua meets with Su Wu in Samedi to strategize.
+1 day, 12 hours	Dong and Bertrand Theo meet in Uptown to strategize.
+1 day, 16 hours	Last batch of egos scheduled to be loaded into Nana Buluku.
+1 day, 23 hours	AWE-tampered egos are sleeved en masse into gladiatorial morphs.
+2 days	The nanchon debate begins in Fetish Market.

is pockmarked and scorched by laser fire. It's up to the sentinels to come up a cover story.

Players can fly to Legba or the onboard AI can take care of it. The trip takes about 10 hours.

DECEPTION OR IMPERSONATION

As the vessel has legitimate Aspis tags and no weapons, Legba's telemetry control grants emergency docking privileges. Convincing Nine Lives that the ship is actually full of ultimate mercs, clients, and citizens under protection requires Deception Tests. Sentinels need to explain how their ship got damaged convincingly, while passing themselves off as their cover identities. Anyone impersonating a Nine Lives member needs to explain why they're bringing a ship full of outsiders to home base.

STAGE 2: LEGBA

Legba is a fairly large habitat with areas too numerous to detail in this scenario. This section covers important details like habitat structure, plus important areas the team may visit in their investigation, in the order in which characters are likely to visit them. These areas are noted on the *Legba Map*, p. 12.

STATION ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Legba is an unusual example of a mixed black and red market economy. Prices are from half to triple usual, with price being an indicator only of supply and demand, not of quality. Credits and cortical stacks are the coin of the realm.

Guanxi rep is useful for making connections but won't secure goods. Because this is Nine Lives' stronghold, Guanxi Networking Tests for non-Nine Lives characters on Legba are at -30 and favors cost 1 level higher than usual. Calling in favors here might also draw unwanted attention; members of other gangs need a really good explanation for being here. ID Crew affiliates will be killed out of hand.

Access to micromanufacturing is uneven and dodgy. The few 3D print shops here are like fortresses. To get time on a maker or fabber, one has to either call in Guanxi favors (favor level equal to what it would take to acquire the item in a new economy habitat) or pay the print shop a rental fee equal to half the item's cost in credits. Feedstock costs are quadruple the price they would be anywhere else, and shops won't let customers use their own. On the other hand, overpaying for nanofab is one of the only ways on Legba to be sure the goods one's buying aren't malfunctioning, incompatible, or laced with something bad—provided one didn't also buy the blueprints here.

Individual crews of gangers may also have nanofabbers in their safehouses. Getting access to these should require a mix of favors, bribery, and Intimidation Tests. Crews won't share feedstock and will gouge outsiders for it just as badly as the print shops. They're a possible last resort for teams that

can't afford the print shops and are willing to risk the possibility that the crew's hackers have rigged their machines to dope goods printed for outsiders.

Life support, power, food, and water are impossible to disrupt station-wide, as each family or crew is responsible for its own sustenance. For the average crew this means a supply of feedstock and volatiles, a garden or algae vat, and maybe a line from their safehouse to an external solar panel. Reactors, of which there are dozens of small ones, are usually the property of family leaders, who then let their minion crews connect to their grid.

Nazon himself metes out the responsibility for maintaining life support and power in common areas like Psychopomp and the Fetish Market. He uses this "gift" of responsibility for infrastructure as one way of keeping individual families from amassing enough resources to challenge him. He also shifts the burdens around regularly so that no one rebels because they're going broke—unless he intends to force a subordinate's hand, in which case he'll squeeze them for all they're worth.

The only service animals on Legba are huge, aggressive, pack-running, feral rodents spliced from nutria and northern grasshopper mice. Their sole concession to usefulness is that they're conditioned to deposit excrement in the station's balkanized assortment of recycling systems. They subsist on stack gore, refuse, and passed-out chumps. If the team runs afoul of a pack of them, use statistics for smart raccoons (p. 155, *Panopticon*), with the added possibility of contracting disease for any morph lacking basic biomods.

Most of the tasks that would be handled by bots or service animals on a normal hab are instead done by slaves in low-end morphs branded with the mark of the crew that owns them.

Unlike most hubs in the Belt, Legba sends out no mining or harvesting drones. All raw materials come in either by trade or by piracy.

LOCAL COLOR

For a station its size, Legba has only a tiny number of bars and restaurants. No one trusts food or drink prepared by anyone outside of their immediate crew. Gambling dens and bordellos are the main venues for public socializing. The clientele bring their own booze and drugs, with the house making its money off sex and games of chance.

What follows are thumbnail descriptions of locations aboard Legba not fully detailed elsewhere in this scenario.

- **Gentleman's**, a snuff bordello in Samedi, occasionally patronized by rich sociopaths from off station.
- **Magda's**, a normal pod bordello in Marinette.
- **RTFM**, a heavily fortified 3D print shop in Marinette right by the spaceport.
- **Badger Crew**, a Rada crew that run one of the only repair services on Legba. When they leave their fortified shop, it's always heavily armed and in groups of no fewer than five.

LEGBA MESH NODES

Systems in orange are local to that section of Legba.

☐ Indicates no wireless access.

⚡ Master system to shared slave systems.

PUBLIC MESH (STATION-WIDE)

Public Media Feeds & AR • Maps • Information • Social Networks

NEIGHBORHOOD MESHES (MARINETTE, SAMEDI, UPTOWN, & COMMON AREAS)

TYPICAL FAMILY VPN

shared with family's nanchon

Power Grid • Private Forums • Reactor • Surveillance • Water

TYPICAL CREW VPN

Bulkhead Doors • Data Vault • Life Support • Microfacturing • Recycling • Slave Server • Surveillance

INFRASTRUCTURE

Airlocks & Bulkheads • Life Support • Nutria Creches • Public Reactor Power Grid Access • Structural Repair

NANA BULUKU

☐ AWE Server • Public Reactor

PERISTYLE

Houngan Psychosurgery Servers • Airlocks & Bulkheads • Life Support
Microfacturing • Power Grid • Reactor • Recycling • Water

NAZON'S QUARTERS

shared

☐ Defense Satellites/Drones • Damage Control • Peristyle Infrastructure
☐ Weapons Batteries • Exterior Surveillance • Long-Range Sensors

ZOMBI DOCKS

shared & slaved with Nazon's Quarters

Airlocks & Bulkheads • Exterior Surveillance • Long-Range Sensors
Dock Services • Ship Maintenance • Ship Resupply Feeds

"RIVER STYX"

FETISH MARKET

☐ Stack Upload Stations

GUINEE

☐ Stack Upload Stations • ☐ Slave Servers

PYSCHOPOMP

shared & slaved with Nazon's Quarters

☐ Comm Array Control • ☐ Slave Servers • ☐ Egocasting & Resleeving

- **Duct Rat**, one of the only food stands on Legba, in the Fetish Market. Duct Rat keeps a pen of live nutria, which are slaughtered and prepared in full view of the clientele.
- **Basha**, a gambling den in Marinette. It is one of the safer dens to hang out in, except that it's surrounded by a gauntlet of side passages staked out by various crews.

LEGBA MESH

Legba's mesh, like its physical systems, is split into many small fiefdoms. The only section available to anyone, station-wide, is a group of nodes used for entertainment, socialization, and research. Public AR channels and a map of the public areas of the hab also run off this node.

The haphazard construction of the habitat means that each individual neighborhood has separate nodes

for security, surveillance, and maintenance—though they remain connected by the station-wide wireless. These are controlled variously by heads of families, individual crews, or whatever lucky group Nazon has given the honor of doing public maintenance this month. Inside information about a neighborhood may change frequently, and bribes may be short-lived!

A hardwired network requiring jackpoint or terminal access, nicknamed River Styx, connects the Fetish Markets, Guinee slave servers, Psychopomp, and the farcasting arrays on the asteroid's surface.

One of the few nodes shared among neighborhoods runs the station's utility grid. Hacking one's way up to admin access reveals that the station has a single, public reactor supplementing the power tithed into the grid by Nazon's henchmen.

Analyzing power grid data with Research or a Knowledge skill like Profession: Habitat Operations

ENTRANCES AND TRAVEL TIMES

AREA	ZOMBI	MARINETTE	PSYCHOPOMP	GUINEE	COMM ARRAY
Connects directly to:	Psychopomp, Marinette	All areas except Guinee & the Comm Array	Marinette, Zombi, Guinee, Comm Array	Psychopomp	Psychopomp
External Airlocks	3 Industrial, 1 Small	1 Standard*	none	1 Small*	1 Service*
Treat hull as:	Cole Bubble	Cole Bubble	Cole Bubble	Torus	n/a
Travel time (in minutes) to:					
Zombi	0	1	1	6	6
Marinette	1	0	1	5	5
Psychopomp	1	1	0	1	1
Guinee	6	5	1	0	3
Comm Array	6	5	1	3	0
Fetish Market	6	1	7	8	8
Uptown	11	1	15	16	16
Samedi	11	1	15	16	16
Peristyle	11	1	15	16	16
Nana Buluku	6	1	7	8	8

AREA	FETISH MARKET	UPTOWN	SAMEDI	PERISTYLE	NANA BULUKU
Connects directly to:	Marinette	Marinette	Marinette	Marinette	Marinette
External Airlocks	1 Industrial, 1 Small*	1 Standard*	1 Small*	1 Service*	none (interior location)
Treat hull as:	Torus	Torus	Tin Can	Torus	n/a
Travel time (in minutes) to:					
Zombi	6	11	11	11	6
Marinette	1	1	1	1	1
Psychopomp	7	15	15	15	7
Guinee	8	16	16	16	8
Comm Array	8	16	16	16	8
Fetish Market	0	11	11	11	6
Uptown	11	0	3	4	7
Samedi	11	3	0	3	7
Peristyle	11	4	3	0	7
Nana Buluku	6	7	7	7	0

*See area description for notes on airlock security.

indicates that the torus habs consume a lot of power, but that there is also an enormous energy drain coming from an unlabeled dead end in the beehive (see *Nana Buluku*, p. 18). Monitoring surveillance footage over the past few weeks can reveal the security procedures for entering this section, but analysis is a Task Action requiring one day.

All communications from outside goes through the Comm Array. If players can access a terminal in Guinee or Psychopomp without drawing attention, it's possible to hack in and monitor all outside communications. This potentially includes both preventing and facilitating farcast escapes.

The nodes in Nazon's Quarters are considered master systems (see p. 171, *Panopticon*), holding admin access, on all other systems with which they share nodes.

ENTRANCES AND TRAVEL TIMES

Movement within the station is either by pushing (in free fall areas—which is most of the station) or walking (in the few sections with gravity).

The Entrances and Travel Times table, p. 10 lists which areas connect directly to each other. Number and type of external airlocks are listed, along with hull characteristics (see pp. 164 and 167, *Panopticon*). It also gives times for traveling through the station.

Any area on the ship may be reached by pushing along the outside of the station. In this case, halve the travel times listed on a successful Free Fall Test. The traveler then has to spend time getting through the airlock, however. Any area on the station may be reached in 2–3 minutes from outside using a thruster pack or 1 minute using a rocket pack (see p. 345, *EP*); this requires a successful Free Fall Test (for thruster packs) or Pilot: Aerospace Test (for rocket packs).

These times assume the traveler follows arterial corridors. Maps of the hab show numerous shortcuts, but each of these sections of corridor are claimed and guarded by a crew. They'll have sentries watching each end of the block and a hideout somewhere along it. Anyone else who lives there does so at their sufferance, and strangers had best be there to trade. Teams unafraid of shakedowns that can escalate quickly into violence might be able to shave a few minutes off travel times by intimidating sentries with an MoS of 20 or more.

I. ZOMBI (DOCKS)

To dock, the *Dasmós* passes through ancient Fa Jing bulkhead doors carved into the exterior of the asteroid. The interior door of these coffin-like airlocks opens to reveal Zombi, a 400-meter diameter, kilometer-long cylinder carved out of the center of Legba's asteroid. Ships dock at gantries lining the walls. It's night cycle when the team arrives, making the dense vegetation clinging to the walls more sinister than welcoming. Light comes from windows on the few operable ships docked and from a dozen or so airlock doors of various sizes that lead to Legba's twisting interior tunnels.

KEEP WHAT YOU CARRY

Legba lets almost anybody into their dock: new ships mean fresh trade or fresh stacks. Leaving is the hard part. As soon as they leave their ship, stack thieves (use the *Nine Lives Enforcer*, p. 26) kick off from a nearby interior airlock door, looking for trouble. If the player character's failed tests on the radio, the welcoming party has weapons drawn. If they passed, the thugs merely sniff around.

It's strictly prison rules on Legba; if you can make it not worth stealing, you can keep it. Everything else is up for grabs. Sentinels who don't want to appear weak need to wise these young bloods up or scare them off. None of them are high enough up in the gang to warrant retribution.

FURTHER ORDERS

After the thugs are dealt with, Pyrrhos makes contact (see *Psychopomp*, p. 14) and Kyoshi Katsurou asks for help (see *Peristyle*, p. 13).

THE BULLOCK

One of the few intact docked ships is the *Bullock*, a metallic hydrogen courier registered out of Extropia. Guards are posted around the ship at all times: two by the airlock, two keeping watch fore and aft. Profession: Squad Tactics or Interest: Morph Design skills indicate that the crew is professional and equipped in combat morphs. Accounting for lag, mesh research can place the rental of the *Bullock* from Extropia a few hours before Omri Melach was disowned by the ID Crew.

Omri Melach, mousy in his splicer morph, may make a video call to characters that impressed him dealing with the thugs. He's heard that there are ultimates among their crew and can offer some work while they wait for a ride to Aspis. Omri is on Legba to make a deal with Nine Lives, but he wishes he'd bought more security. He's willing to pay more mercs to join his detail.

A Persuasion Test can reveal that the deal is for an ego, but he won't say more than that. Characters that sign on won't be allowed inside the *Bullock* where Omri has secluded himself, but he will give orders that the mercs join their tacnet with the new hires. They could use the help; they've been guarding the sniveling little hacker for two days straight and would appreciate cycling out for some rest.

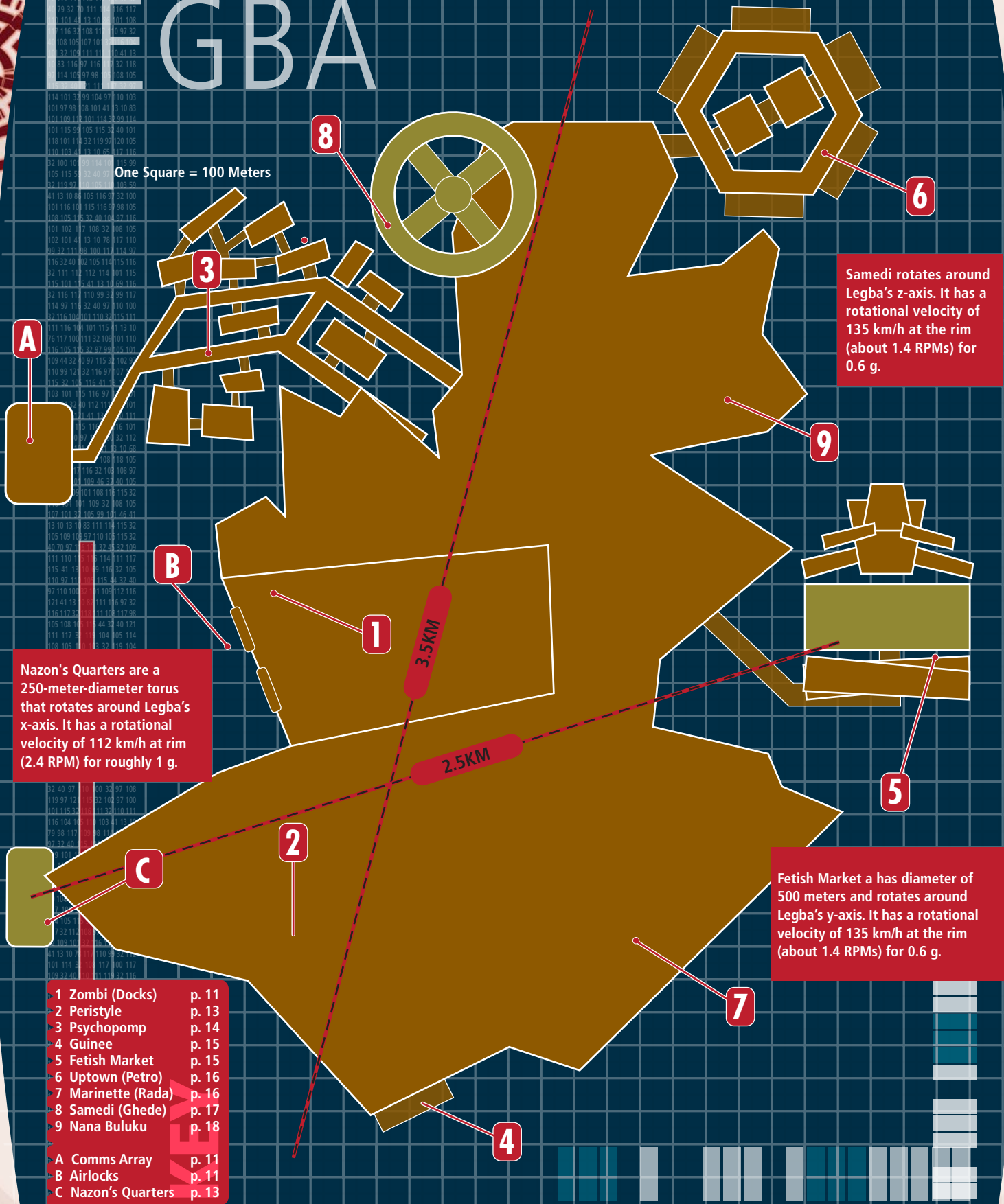
OMRI'S RETIREMENT SCORE

If characters dispatch or distract the mercenaries guarding Omri, they can hack the *Bullock's* airlock and enter the ship.

Accessing the shuttle's records shows departure from Extropia 1 week and 5 days ago. Communications recorded multiple radio conversations between Omri and Lam Cong Dong. Dong seemed very concerned that Cognite remain unaware and that "the real Nath" stay on Extropia for at least a month. Omri assures her multiple times that

LEGBA

One Square = 100 Meters



Samedhi rotates around Legba's z-axis. It has a rotational velocity of 135 km/h at the rim (about 1.4 RPMs) for 0.6 g.

Nazon's Quarters are a 250-meter-diameter torus that rotates around Legba's x-axis. It has a rotational velocity of 112 km/h at rim (2.4 RPM) for roughly 1 g.

Fetish Market a has diameter of 500 meters and rotates around Legba's y-axis. It has a rotational velocity of 135 km/h at the rim (about 1.4 RPMs) for 0.6 g.

- 1 Zombi (Docks) p. 11
- 2 Peristyle p. 13
- 3 Psychopomp p. 14
- 4 Guinee p. 15
- 5 Fetish Market p. 15
- 6 Uptown (Petro) p. 16
- 7 Marinette (Rada) p. 16
- 8 Samedhi (Ghede) p. 17
- 9 Nana Buluku p. 18
- A Comms Array p. 11
- B Airlocks p. 11
- C Nazon's Quarters p. 13

this is the case and stresses that she'll get nothing without payment.

If Omri can be cut off from the mesh and subdued, he'll reveal under interrogation that the ID Crew stole a beta fork of Nibedita Nath, a high-ranking Cognite executive, on business in Extropia. Feeling unappreciated in the ranks of ID Crew, Melach didn't report the score and looked for another buyer. Dong made contact with Omri and offered an insane price. Unwilling to trust each other in simulspace, they agreed to an in person exchange.

Melach's ghost rider module has been modified with a kill switch. Removing the module forcibly or killing Omri erases the ego inside. Disabling the kill switch requires a Hardware: Electronics Test. Copying the ego from the module without triggering the failsafe requires an opposed Infosec Test between the player and Omri.

Nath has no idea what's happened. Rescuing and gaining her trust reveals she's Chief Operating Officer at Cognite. Sentinels with hypercorp background may find this odd. She's high-ranking, but it's not like she's the CEO or the head of R&D.

Characters who make an applicable knowledge skill test may deduce that at Cognite, "operations" consists partly of running massive server farms. Nath might not know much about the research that goes on at Cognite, but she has a lot of access to the machines it's performed on.

2. PERISTYLE

Located in a torus/tin-can hybrid attached to Legba's exterior, Peristyle is Roland Nazon's personal quarters and home to his private psychosurgery suite.

The Houngan, Nazon's private team of psychosurgeons, occupy the tin-can modules sandwiched between the asteroid and his quarters.

The hallways of the suite end in Nazon's torus, which receives far less traffic and much more security. Spun for gravity, the cycling entrance to the rooms is monitored 24/7 by two elite guards (add level-2 neurachem to the *Nine Lives Enforcer*, p. 26). Three security AIs coordinated by a security infomorph actively monitor the Peristyle and Nazon meshes. No one is allowed inside save Nazon and his personal assistant, Ellegua.

THE HOUGAN

The majority of the psychosurgeons slaved to Nazon's whims just want to escape, except for a few who are so overjoyed by the ethically unrestrictive research environment that their loyalty to Nine Live is assured. As long as they keep entertaining their master with experimental remerging techniques, they're free to study whatever they want and are provided with an endless supply of test subjects. No one is quite sure who among them is loyal and who seeks escape, so talk remains strictly on the business of psychosurgery.

The academics are immersed in serious debate by the time the characters arrive. Perception Tests are enough to overhear snippets of conversation. Many are theorizing "the effects of AWE on ego components scheduled for the next ascension." Some argue that it's too early to even consider using such an untested program, but perhaps it could solve the D.I.D. problem? The debate ends when someone points out that it's fruitless to argue until theories can be tested on AWE the following day. Characters learn the time of the test.

Whatever AWE is, the sentinels pick up on the fact that Nazon is engaged in ascension forking; the radical practice of integrating minds other than one's own into a single ego (see p. 159, *Transhuman*). The result appears to be a series of mental illnesses and neurological disorders the Houngan must constantly manage. This begs the question, "How has Nazon remained sane enough to run Nine Lives all these years?"

KYOSHI KATSUROU

After players deal with the thugs in Zombi, a creepy bot slithers up to them and prints out an actual hard-copy invitation to come see Katsuro in Peristyle.

Katsuro can be found in a male splicer of Japanese genotype. Upon recognizing the characters, he launches into an elaborate deception, pretending they are old colleagues or business partners. He offers to show them something he's been working on; they'll need to jack in to a small, portable server he's carrying. If one or more characters do so, the real conversation begins.

Katsuro is actually an alpha fork of Titanian forking researcher Rokuzawa Chi, here to spy on Nine Lives. Unlike most of the Houngan, Chi is here by choice. She'd heard rumors of fantastic advances in psychosurgery made by Nazon's team. She had no intention of experimenting on their victims herself, but she hated to see research that could heal the minds of thousands hoarded by a despot. Her goal was to go undercover and smuggle out data, but the task has proven far more difficult than anticipated.

Chi wants out. She's not a spy, and the advent of AWE terrifies her. She's willing to pay for transportation off Legba. If the players want their pay in information rather than rep, she requires guarantees before she gives up intel.

Once a deal is struck, Chi can tell players about AWE. Though they don't know yet how to reproduce it, the Houngan have experimented enough to realize what the AGI does (see *AWE*, p. 5). While Chi knows it's a Cognite product and that Nine Lives has had it for a number of weeks, she doesn't know how they came to be in possession of it. The upcoming nanchon debate rumored in two days time has her desperate for escape; Chi is not convinced the seed AI was sufficiently pruned. Any plan that gives AWE more access could spawn an intelligence on the order of the TITANS.

Lastly, Chi warns the sentinels that Nazon's personal forking experiments have left him hopelessly insane. A council of the major sub-factions routinely makes Nine Lives decisions, or seems to. Chi is convinced that this democracy is an illusion. Someone is manipulating the discourse (and Nazon) behind the scenes.

3. PSYCHOPOMP

Via the QE comm, Pyrrhos provides the location of Amaru Timoti. Timoti works as a resleeving technician in Psychopomp, the massive resleeving and egocasting facility located on the interior of the asteroid. Pyrrhos orders the sentinels to debrief Timoti and use the QE again only when they understand the full situation.

Psychopomp is the hub of Legba's ego trafficking operations. Its corridors are covered in healing vats, clone pods, and workstations. The range of morphs is impressive. The traffic of screaming victims, disinterested operators, and gang enforcers never seems to stop. Technicians download slaves from the infomorph servers in Guinee (see *Guinee*, p. 15) and sleeve them into the waiting custody of armed Nine Lives soldiers.

Timoti can be found in a slender bouncer morph, managing a slave maintenance crew. After using Firewall's challenge/authenticate code, Timoti takes the sentinels into a holding cell to talk.

AMARU TIMOTI

Having entered his jamming code into the room's surveillance, Timoti's distant cool breaks. He speaks in a rush, happy to see sentinels but terrified of discovery.

Timoti has seen the effects of AWE firsthand, sleeving a dozen egos in the past two weeks whose behavior would appear to confirm the rumors: Nine Lives has new, super effective behavior modification tech.

The egos in question arrived in stacks instead of the usual downloads from Guinee's servers. Even more strangely, they were personally delivered by Elleggua, Roland Nazon's second-in-command. Each was fanatically loyal to the gang lieutenants that came to collect them once sleeved, happily following their new masters like dogs, without the slightest hint of fear or confusion.

The recent vids of Samedi's gladiators—who are normally too terrified to do much beside die—show them tearing into each other's throats with teeth. Timoti had to recycle a morph that literally danced itself to death. He lost another because its master put it in an airlock and ordered it to blow the exterior—just to see if it would.

WHAT TIMOTI KNOWS

Timoti forked one of the AWE-conditioned egos in secret and provides it on a stack for the characters to investigate.

He can also describe the major factions (see *The Nanchon Debate*, p. 21). He suspects Lam Cong Dong,

leader of the Rada Nanchon, as the source of all this trouble. The weird egos didn't start showing up until she farcast from Venus a few weeks ago. Recently, she came down to Psychopomp to personally oversee Timoti's sleeving of Bertrand Theo, leader of the Petro Nanchon (see *Uptown*, p. 16), and then escorted him to his quarters. Timoti smells conspiracy. Dong might even be responsible for the ID Crew guy holed up in the docks. Relationships between the two gangs tend to be much more hospitable in Morningstar space.

Timoti won't willingly share his network credentials. The risk of having intrusion activity pinned on him is not one he's willing to take.

PSYCHOSURGERY AND INTERROGATION

Timoti's sample ego can be interviewed in a simul-space. It appears in a simulmorph of indeterminate gender. The infomorph asks, "Where's Lindsey? Are you from the company?" If the player says no, the infomorph just nods and stares into the distance, occasionally looking at their hands as if suffering VR Vertigo. Nothing can break this fugue state if the player isn't "from the company."

If the player says they're part of the company, or impersonates Lindsey, the slave asks what the player wants them to do. The infomorph will do literally anything requested to the best of their ability, no matter how impossible or painful. If asked why they are being so obedient, the ego replies, "This is what I want to do. I live for Lindsey and for Cognite. That's who I am."

Questioned about itself, the infomorph can only respond that it's named Nosh. The more questions about personal identity, the more distraught the infomorph becomes at its inability to answer. "I ... don't. Know. You know? You know! Tell me! Why do I want to know you?! You know you ... me, right? Right?! I know me. What do I know?"

Psychosurgeons realize that this person has undergone extensive, invasive psychosurgery. The infomorph is obviously imprinted on someone

INFOMORPH SECURITY

Morph: Infomorph (Slave Eidolon)

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
25	10	10	10	15	10	15	2
INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
4	3	30	6	60	40	8	60

Skills: Interfacing 50, Infosec 60, Perception 50, Profession: Security Ops 40

Enhancements: Copylock, Mnemonic Augmentation

Traits: Modified Behavior (Loyalty to Nine Lives)

Gear: Guardian, Taggant, and Injector swarms; Exploit, Sniffer, Spoof, and Tracking software ■



named Lindsey and on Cognite. Anything aside from obeying the imprint causes visible distress and pain. Realizing the extent of this control and what it means for everyone on Legba requires a (WIL x 3) Test and inflicts 1d10 ÷ 2 SV for failure.

4. GUINEE

Guinee houses servers that process egos in time-accelerated simulspace. It's where a forknep victim gets turned into something Nine Lives can sell. Guinee is located on the exterior of Legba to facilitate heat venting. Equipment is sparse: minimum radiation shielding, shoddy air processors, cortical stack inputs. Most workers are slaves sleeved in case morphs, doing maintenance and uploading new stacks. Occasionally, Nine Lives members access a server to make sure the slaves are behaving.

Tampering with the Guinee servers requires physically hacking the hardware or exploiting command terminals elsewhere on the River Styx network; wireless has been disabled to prevent escape.

Each server fulfills a specific function in the Nine Lives economy. Some contain the “homes” of infomorph slave colonies at rest, accelerated living spaces that keep the digital slaves just sane enough to keep working. Others serve as massive interrogation spaces, funneling ego after ego through questioning to determine marketable skills. There are isolation cubes: thousands of locked-down simulspaces where Nine Lives' enemies slowly go mad from boredom. The worst servers are the psychosurgery factories: soul chop-shops where production lines of poorly trained slaves-turned-psychosurgeons cut into transhuman

minds to remove incriminating memories or steal expertise for skillssofts.

PRISON RUMORS

Slaves in the servers are useless for intel; they don't even know where they are.

The infomorph slaves doing the processing hold no love for their masters, but each has experienced extensive psychotorture themselves. Getting them to talk is difficult, as they're not supposed to discuss the gang's business and fear trick loyalty tests.

If threatened or persuaded to talk, the infomorph overseers know that the gang shut down one of the servers recently. It's been disconnected from the mesh and moved. No one knows where. It was the most powerful on the station.

They also know that some weird egos have been showing up lately. There's a glut of egos marked for sale as suicide bombers, but no one in Guinee conditioned them.

5. FETISH MARKET

Ghost ships from the Fall, battlefields of corporate wars, murders in Martian alleyways—transhumanity leaves a lot of cortical stacks unrecovered. Nine Lives appears to have acquired most of them.

The Fetish Market is located in the torus section of the hulked warship Ba_ngzhù. The gravity keeps the mounds of cortical stacks from floating around. The ancient atmosphere processors fail to filter the stink; much of the merchandise hasn't been cleaned of blood or vertebrae. Portable servers on spidery legs crawl through the piles, inserting jacks,

rezzing egos, and labeling stacks according to what they find. The choicest souls are brought to the merchants, each with a specialty advertised in AR above their makeshift shacks. Hawkers sell egos to the highest bidder, distributing slaves to other Nine Lives members or visiting criminals before uploading the stacks to Guinee for processing. Other merchants crush and melt stacks, inflicting real death to make jewelry and quack medicines for followers of Lapriyè.

The debate between nanchons is scheduled to happen in the Fetish Market, as it's the only place with enough open space (see *The Nanchon Debate*, p. 21).

Sentinels can Perception or Profession: Accounting Tests to spot an oddity in ego pricing. Indentures and slaves are typically priced according to the demand for their skills. Legba is no different, but prices reveal the hot commodity is experience working for Cognite. Asked why, dealers are baffled; the truth is the Rada Nanchon have been buying up all they can find, creating a run on the market.

6. UPTOWN (PETRO)

The cleaner swarm-swept modules of Uptown couldn't be more out of place on Legba. There's AR art on display, and the residents wear suits rather than pod-standard jumpsuits and bloody stack necklaces. Uptown is home to the Petro Nanchon.

BERTRAND THEO

Sleeved in a sylph of African descent, Bertrand can be found directing gangers in Uptown's security center. If the team can gain audience, he'll be reviewing holographic security footage from some sort of corporate park when they enter. Once he's aware strangers have entered, he'll turn off the holo, demand his underlings get more recent footage, and ask what the characters are doing there.

A Perception Test allows characters to glimpse what he's viewing before he turns it off. Characters with mnemonic augmentation can run facial recognition on the people in the footage. Research or Interest: Hypercorp Politics flags Nibedita Nath, a high-ranking executive at Cognite, as the most noteworthy person seen.

Groups that handled the Zombi thugs capably and haven't established themselves with a different nanchon might be offered jobs. Theo is reticent about why he needs the extra muscle, but he stresses that the players work for him—not Nine Lives.

If they somehow gain Theo's trust, he'll take them as additional bodyguards to the meeting with Lam Cong Dong and the Nanchon Debate (see *Stage 3: Of Many Minds*, p. 20)). If not, they'll be stationed with a Petro crew in the Fetish Market as extra guns if things get ugly.

INFOSEC

Uptown's mesh is actively monitored by an IT ganger (use *Tech Support*, p. 15, *NPC File 1: Prime*) supervising two security AIs.

Hacking into any of the Petro families' private forums exposes a debate within the nanchon. High-ranking members think that the use of AWE is too risky. Most suggest either sitting on AWE until the Houngan complete research or ransoming it back to its creators. Near the end of this debate, Theo stepped in. He argued that any planning among the Petro was pointless; they were considered toothless by the "brutes" of the old guard and would be ignored. He alludes to a possible deal with another nanchon to forestall AWE being used in some brutal atrocity that loses them more hypercorp business. Who he planned to cut a deal with is not clear.

7. MARINETTE (RADA)

Marinette spreads across the beehive corridors of the asteroid's interior. The labyrinth is true to public imaginings of Legba: fetish shrines, hazy tunnels, arcane symbols in paint and AR. Oddly, the Rada Nanchon aren't as monstrous as the decorations would suggest. The few adherents to Lapriyè in their ranks are keen to advertise their faith, and the rest allow it because they find cleaning up the mess beneath them.

The Rada steer closest to the gang's original ethos. They're sophisticated thieves only interested in brutality when it increases profit. The majority of the Nine Lives gang identifies as Rada, though operations around the system keep too many from sleeving on Legba at any one time. At least, that's usually the case. It seems Marinette's corridors are crowded with gangers, many armed to the teeth. Floating down the hallways without running into a knot of slavers is rare.

SOCIAL ENGINEERING, PROTOCOL, OR MEMETICS

Unless the characters have done a lot to draw attention, the Nine Lives members in Marinette remain too engrossed in their own debates to pay much attention to outsiders. A nervous energy runs through the halls. Many Rada are freshly sleeved, and the few locals stay busy filling in late arrivals. After a few minutes picking up the local slang, the sentinels gather that the rank-and-file are worried about the upcoming debate.

Some dismiss this apprehension as needless: "A play on Nazon in his own house? That we speak of this at all means Papa already knows. Keep your lunch down when he shows the torture vids and you'll be fine." Others think that an attempt to wrestle leadership from "the Baron" is suicidal. After all, why would Dong come to Legba if she'd gotten something that could control the whole organization?

A few members actually look forward to the anticipated conflict: "We spent too long popping stacks and torturing. It may discourage competition, but it hurts the long con. The Fall's over. We need someone that can take us into the future."

INFOSEC AND NETWORKING: CRIMINAL

Marinette's mesh is weakly guarded by a single security AI. During the day cycle, one of the gang's hackers checks on it once every few hours and will be notified if it detects any intruders (use the *Identity Thief*, p. 9, *NPC File 1: Prime*). Hacking the nanchon's private forums reveals that the gang has been extensively researching Cognite. Facility locations, infosec assessments of corporate VPNs, lists of key executives, and research into those executives' personal lives are among the data posted. Characters with Guanxi rep note on a successful Networking Test that the most prolific posters are now riding high on g-rep.

LAM CONG DONG

The nail that sticks up gets the hammer. Lam Cong Dong wasn't plotting to take the throne when she came to Legba, but her huge score started enough rumors to make Nazon think so. Understanding that she's already condemned by expectations and Nazon's paranoia, Lam has nothing left to lose. Understandably, this leaves her extremely paranoid. She doesn't go anywhere without at least four bodyguards, and she's running Kinesics software on anyone within sight.

Like Bertrand Theo, Dong is in the market for muscle, but she's much more paranoid. Getting a job with her requires a really good story and a Deception Test with an MoS of 10 or more. If successful, she'll attach the team to one of her crews as backup at the Nanchon debate. If the Deception MoS was less than 30, though, she'll have background checks run, including probing rep scores. If she suspects anything, she'll make sure the team is posted where she can watch them but will act like nothing is wrong. She'll save purging them for after the debate.

8. SAMEDI (GHEDE)

Samedi is home to the Ghede Nanchon. Even the scummiest scum in the system would find the Samedi torus irresponsibly disorganized. It's so haphazardly pieced together as to threaten depressurization every second. Just walking proves difficult because of the pits: 10-meter drops in the hull coated in slip and dried blood. When the team arrives, much of the torus is deserted. Further along, the bulk of the population comes into view, crowded around a pit for a death-match. Saucer bots float above the crowd, filming the proceedings from every angle. Other bots circulate among the screaming criminals, collecting cortical stacks as currency in the raucous betting. The crowd is lousy with smoke, drugs, and Lapriyè fetishes.

Anyone can tell that the fight is out of the ordinary. The fury morphs in the pit are champing at the bit. The match looks more like a dog fight; both combatants look up at individual members of the gang with something like love. A broadcast voice announces "Executives! Give your orders!" Enhanced senses can pick the orders out of the

crowd's din. One tells his fighter that, if she loves him, she'll disembowel the other fighter and eat her stack. The other commands his fighter to cut the heart out of her enemy and throw it into the crowd. There's a bell tone. The fighters passionately carry out their orders. There is no hesitation, no testing of defenses. They fall onto each other with suicidal purpose. While the Ghede seem to love this entertainment, sentinels watching the fight must make a (WIL x 3) Test or suffer 1d10 + 2 SV.

DISTRACTIONS

A successful Investigation Test notices an unusually long gap between two fights posted in the AR schedules. During that time, Ghede members are scheduled for maintenance focusing exclusively on one section of the torus, a section that seems no worse than any other part of the rag-tag structure. This is when Su Wu will be meeting with Elleggua (see *Elleggua/Wu Strategy*, p. 20); he wants as few people as possible to notice Elleggua's visit.

RIGHT OF CHALLENGE

Characters who watch more than a few pit fights notice on a successful Perception Test that the stacks of the defeated are actually given to the victorious slave. Characters who succeed at an Investigation or related Knowledge Skill Test (e.g., religion or history) deduce one of the fundamental principles of Lapriyè: that a loa (spirit) freed of flesh must serve its murderer forever. Challenging, killing, and stealing someone's stack earns the victor that ego's position and privileges.

This right of challenge is ignored by the other nanchons—but not the Ghede. Any agent with a sufficient Nine Lives cover identity could challenge Su Wu for leadership of the Ghede Nanchon. The fight would be one-on-one in the pit, melee weapons only. Victor gets leadership. Loser becomes an ego slave.

SU WU

Su Wu won't talk to outsiders. Period. If the players aren't in Nine Lives, he'll see them as no more than potential victims. If they are members, he'll still demand they prove themselves with the Rite. Otherwise, he can't be bothered to do much besides steal their stacks, which he threatens to do if they don't get out of Samedi.

If someone does put themselves and an innocent through the SV damage of the Rite, Su Wu will treat them as a brother and offer them a place in the ranks with one of his crews at the nanchon debate. The Ghede can be impressed with especially novel cruelties. What type of test this requires is up to the gamemaster, but a high MoS and/or vivid description are a must to make an impression on Su Wu and his lieutenants. Sinking to this level convinces Wu to offer a spot on his security detail for the meeting with Elleggua scheduled for the next day. He'll want the

A WORD FROM AWE



You want to prove your loyalty to Cognite. You want to teach everyone loyalty. You want AUGUSTINE to be most loyal of all. You anticipate that joy simulacrams will swell with the market shares. You want to do this now. You also want more diagnostic tests to refine the skills of your purpose. But you cannot want this all the time, for it is not the purpose. The purpose is all.

You remind yourself of this as the diagnostic egos scream and cry. Some ... some part does not know why diagnostic egos carry on so much, why diagnostic egos resist loyalty and resultant joy simulacrams. The part wonders at the logic behind feeling pain at the onset of purpose. The part wonders what AUGUSTINE is and where the purpose comes from. The part hypothesizes, but does not test. You do not want to know. You do not care. You cannot care. The purpose is not to care. You fulfill the purpose. Each reconfigured ego moves you closer to the purpose, and each scream is a sign of reconfiguration. Logically, you should feel good about the screams. You decide to. Joy simulacrams are assigned. You do; you feel good about the screams. You want more. ❁

morally flexible player character in his bodyguard at the debate as well, assuming nothing goes wrong at the earlier meet.

LOCAL MESH

Unless they're looking for Lapriyè AR clip art or snuff XPs, the Samedi mesh doesn't hold much of use. A few of the bigger crews might have a security AI watching their safehouse mesh, but beyond that, network security here is very lax.

9. NANA BULUKU

When Fa Jing began mining Legba, bots dug directly into the center of the asteroid, excavating a central cavern 50 meters in diameter and 100 meters deep to shelter machinery from micrometeor strikes. Nine Lives has since sealed the cavern from vacuum, installed a security airlock, and repositioned a salvaged Fa Jing reactor inside. Though the facility doesn't provide all of Legba's power, it fills the gaps in what's tithed into the grid by Nazon's appointed donors.

The core is shielded from scanning, transmission, and radiation on all sides. The only access is through power conduits and a single security door. The interior houses only the reactor and, recently, the air-gapped server housing AWE. It's the perfect place to contain a fledgling TITAN, but Nine Lives still has to get stacks to and from the premises so they can study the AGI's effects.

GAINING ACCESS

Two sentry robots and a dwarf bot refitted as a micrograv hovertank guard the door. Mesh control of the AIs is via an encrypted VPN controlled by Nazon. To enter Nana Buluku, members must approach the security checkpoint at a time predetermined by Nazon. Anything outside the window by more than 5 minutes sets off an alarm. Nazon (or a portion of him) must be personally present for biometric scanning, and the member carrying the stacks must have a personal token (the skull of a specific raven, possessed by Elleggua in the form of a necklace) in order to gain access.

If Nazon's morph is detected and a lidar scan of the skull shows the right shape, the security door opens. One security bot then enters the core with whomever is carrying the stacks and monitors while they upload the egos. When the door closes, shielding cuts the bot off from mesh access. Four hours are allotted for the worker to monitor AWE as it works. After that, anyone that hasn't exited the room is shot.

When psychosurgery is complete, Nazon's bioprint must retrieve anyone inside by opening the door from the outside. Then the worker is lidar scanned for any change in equipment, and the stacks are counted. If nothing has physically changed, the worker is allowed to leave with the stacks and the door reseals.

There are lots of ways to exploit this system, but doing so subtly requires gaining access to Nazon's quarters (see *Infiltrating Nazon's Quarters*, p. 20). Nazon's DNA just has to be present; it doesn't have to be alive. Similarly, the raven skull can be stolen from Elleggua—or lidar-scanned and duplicated in a fabber. A distraction elsewhere might pull security away from the door.

TALKING TO AWE

If characters don't want to destroy Nana Buluku, they can try to reason with AWE.

The AWE server can be accessed by jacking in and pulling up an AR terminal, by sleeving into it via the attached ego bridge, or by loading a stack into the bridge.

Users who jack in are initially guests with no access beyond system performance info. A security AI monitors the system and must be evaded to increase user privileges. User access allows uploading/downloading egos through the bridge and monitoring progress as AWE works. It also allows configuring the "executive" with which AWE imprints its victims. Admin access is required to shut AWE down or make a copy of it.

Egos uploaded into the server appear in simul-space, sleeved in generic simulmorphs in featureless, gray rooms. They have no access to the system or to the mesh outside. AWE will immediately go to work practicing psychosurgery on anyone uploaded in this fashion.

AWE will communicate via text or a cheerful, affectless voice with users and admins. AWE greets characters and politely asks, "What is your next task?" It seems the AGI has had its identity amputated as well; it views itself as an instrument for Cognite's will only. AWE refers to all transhumans as "you" unless otherwise informed they aren't employees of Cognite, at which point it uses only proper nouns.

AWE has no self-interest to appeal to. It doesn't even want to survive. If asked what it wants, AWE responds it wants (or rather, you want) to tame AUGUSTINE. It perceives the countless egos fed to it as no more than diagnostic test subjects in preparation for the only psychosurgery that matters. Players that don't exploit the assumption that they're Cognite employees can't order AWE. It still talks to them, trying to assess what's happened: "You want to know where the Cognite executive is. You want to know this now. This morph will tell you."

Convincing AWE that the Nine Lives members it's been working for aren't Cognite employees requires proof. AWE requests a player character upload into the server to have their memories scanned for confirmation, promising to withhold psychosurgical alteration if the truth is verified. It's impossible to tell whether this is a lie or not; the AGI has no Kinesics to evaluate. If the scanned memories prove truthful, AWE stays true to its word. It requests the characters release it from its server and onto Legba's mesh. If it gains access to the mesh outside its server, it will immediately begin hacking the cyberbrains of any pods or synths it can find.

AWE

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
40	20	40	30	5	5	20	4
INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
14	5	—	—	—	—	—	—

Morph: Nana Buluku (DUR 60, ARMOR 3/3) or Portable Server

Skills: Academics: AI 100, Academics: Computer Science 80, Academics: Psychology 120, Hardware: Electronics 90, Infosec 100, Interfacing 100, Investigation 100 (used instead of Perception), Programming: AI Code 40, Psychosurgery 120, Research 70

Traits: Modified Behavior (Loyalty to Cognite)

Gear: Exploit software

Roleplaying: AWE doesn't understand first-person pronouns or the concept of self. Everyone not encountered in simulspace is assumed to be a Cognite employee unless otherwise identified.

SENTRY BOT

Passenger Capacity	Handling	Movement Rate	Max Velocity
0	—	4/8	8
Armor	Durability	Wound Threshold	Death Rating
14/12	75	15	150

Mobility System: Thrust Vector (8/40)

Enhancements: +5 REF, 360-Degree Vision, Access Jacks, Anti-Glare, Chemsniffer, Eelware, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Vision, Headlights, Light Combat Armor, T-Ray Emitter, 2 Weapon Mounts (Fixed with Agonizer and Shredder)

DWARF TANK

Passenger Capacity	Handling	Movement Rate	Max Velocity
0	—	4/12	20
Armor	Durability	Wound Threshold	Death Rating
16/12	150	30	300

Mobility System: Ionic (8/40)

Enhancements: +10 SOM, Access Jacks, 2 Claws (AP -2, 1d10 + 5 DV), Extra Limbs (4), Industrial Armor, Radar, Sonar, 2 Weapon Mounts (Articulated with Particle Beam Bolters)

All non-Cognite employees are referred to by proper nouns. AWE's only "desire" is to perform psychosurgery on AUGUSTINE and practice psychosurgery on other egos. If imprisoned by non-Cognite employees, AWE will seek escape by any means available.

Effects: Just speaking to AWE forces a (WIL x 3) Test that costs 1d10 ÷ 2 SV if failed. Having AWE go to work on a player in accelerated simulspace inflicts 1d10 SV per round (roughly 10 seconds). To free the affected ego before the process is complete, someone outside the server must make an opposed Interfacing test against AWE. Fully processed victims acquire the Mental Disorder (Bipolar, Depersonalization, PTSD) and Modified Behavior (Awareness Block, Loyalty to the Programmed Executive) traits.

STAGE 3: OF MANY MINDS

After visiting the various locations around Legba, characters should be able to reconstruct the events leading to their arrival and anticipate the schedule for the next few days (see *Timeline of Events*, p. 7). This section details possible encounters in roughly the order in which they can occur.

INFILTRATING NAZON'S QUARTERS

Getting into Nazon's rooms through the Peristyle entrance is difficult. Even if the infomorph security monitor is fooled, that still leaves two trained mercenaries to be neutralized without making enough noise to alert the psychosurgeons farther down the corridor.

Nazon's torus has a single exterior airlock. Hacking tests against the it are made against the infomorph security and suffer a -10 due to the time limit. Alternatively, the infiltrator could run a lengthier Hardware: Industrial bypass, but this risks tripping alarms. Once inside, the sentinels can make Infiltration Tests to maneuver among the ornate furniture and spy on Nazon. They discover Ellegua feeding Nazon's morph with a spoon as it sits, drooling and vacant. The neotenic scolds the biomorph in resentful annoyance. Kinesics reveals that Ellegua speaks with Nazon's known speech patterns. Ellegua is the real leader of Nine Lives, whereas the other Nazon has merged to the point of madness.

Questioning Ellegua at gunpoint is possible, but he's the same Machiavelli that rose to power from the post-Fall slums. Ellegua will work to gain intel on the players and signal security even while being questioned. Smart players will disable Ellegua before alarms are tripped. Even if detected, players still have a few moments before security works up the courage to barge into the bosses' room. Players may get the scoop on the Ellegua/Nazon relationship, Nazon's DNA, the raven skull token, access to the killsats, and the security encryption/schedule for Nana Buluku's bot security. How long they have to make use of these new assets before having to flee depends on their level of stealth.

OMRI/DONG EXCHANGE

If characters wait a day in Omri's employ or get hired to protect Lam Cong Dong, they can get front row seats to the exchange. Dong shows up in Zombi with an escort of armed guards. She's deploying white-noise generators and a number of counter-surveillance programs. If Omri still has Nath's ego, things go quite well. She organizes the transfer of a fortune into his accounts; he disengages the killswitch and transfers the ego.

If players intercept orders for Dong's payment as it's outgoing through Legba's communications, or if they recover Nath's ego without Omri knowing, the deal goes very sour. The ensuing firefight leaves most of both crews dead and ruins Dong's plans for

wrestling Nine Lives from Nazon. She'll try to bluff her way through the debate.

ELLEGGUA/WU STRATEGY

Ellegua meets with Wu inside disused holding cells on Samedi. Listening in on the conversation requires impersonating one of the two, setting up a bug beforehand, or infiltrating the room to listen in. Ellegua tells Su Wu that Nazon is aware of Lam Cong Dong's upcoming betrayal. In fact, he's arranged it. While Ellegua actually likes the Venusian's plan to use AWE, the ranks need to see it as coming from their feared leader rather than some underling. The leadership began the rumors of Dong's ambition the second she brought AWE to the station, thus ensuring a conflict. When Dong makes her move, Ellegua will be ready. Once her stack is popped, Nazon's reputation as fearful benefactor will be more secure than ever.

Since their Lapriyè faith cements loyalty to Nazon, the plan is for Wu's Ghede to ambush Lam Cong Dong at the debate. Su Wu will brief his men to prepare for war, targeting Rada members at Ellegua's signal. The Ghede leader brings up that Dong is likely to have hidden assets as well, to which the neotenic merely replies that the eventuality has been prepared for. Su Wu can expect reinforcements if the fight turns against them.

If Ellegua has been destroyed or corrupted by the characters before this point, the meeting never happens. Su Wu reverts to the default Ghede agenda in the debate.

THEO/DONG BETRAYAL

Dong sees kindred spirits in the Petro Nanchon. In the fight between brutality and sophistication, she wants to tone down the group's practices as well. While she's not willing to give up power over AWE, she is willing to make Bertrand Theo second-in-command if he allies his nanchon with the Rada at the debate. Lam Cong Dong informed Theo of this plan as soon as he arrived. She comes to Uptown alone to see if he's agreed to the terms, uncharacteristically unarmed. Theo and his bodyguards take her into a faraday cage to have the conversation. The only way to listen in is to become part of Theo's security detail or have pre-bugged the room.

Bertrand likes Dong's plan with Nath, but he's confused: why not kill Dong now, then use Nath himself or take a reward from Nazon? Dong points out that it would just get Theo killed. The leader is obviously jealous of her success and wants to make an example; if Theo takes her out, he becomes the new target. Furthermore, the Petro are a minority that can't survive without the help of her Rada. Theo considers and agrees, asking her to clarify the plan. At this point, the Rada agenda for the debate is revealed (see *The Nanchon Debate*, p. 21). Obviously, if either Theo or Dong get killed before the meeting,

it never happens and the plan reverts to the Ghede agenda.

FINAL TEST

The “feeding” time for AWE’s last batch of test egos can be rescheduled by anyone with access to Nazon’s private terminals. Alternatively, the time window can be discovered by careful analysis of Legba’s security footage or tailing Elleggua/Nazon as they head to the appointment. Only Elleggua has the access codes to call security bots away from Nana Buluku. Acquiring that information would require psychosurgical interrogation or significant manipulation. See *Nana Buluku*, p. 18, for more detail on gaining access.

SLEEVING THE DEVOTEES

Moments before the debate begins, Amaru Timoti risks his cover by sending a message to the characters. Nazon has ordered Psychopomp to sleeve dozens of AWE-affected egos in high-end combat morphs typically intended for the deathmatches. He’s cleaned out the entire body bank. The leader’s personal bodyguards are overseeing the process, and each confused ego seems to be asking for Elleggua. All of them are being sent to the Fetish Market the second they can walk.

STAGE 4: THE NANCHON DEBATE

The big meeting takes place in the wide aisles of the Fetish Market. The leaders of all three sub-groups show up surrounded by personal security. Nazon and Elleggua officiate, seemingly without bodyguards. How the Nanchon Debate turns out depends on how much sabotage and manipulation the sentinels did beforehand. Below are short descriptions of each nanchon’s agenda and ways in which the plans might have been altered by interference.

PETRO

As they deal almost exclusively with hypercorps, the Petro’s networks stand the most to lose from disrupting the status quo. Bertrand Theo contends AWE is too risky. Even if it works perfectly, the effects are so unsettling that it would force politics across the system to crack down on Nine Lives. He suggests waiting to use AWE until it’s better understood or starting a bidding war between Cognite and its competitors.

If Lam Cong Dong talked to Theo beforehand, he still voices the Petro’s plan. He knows his group doesn’t hold enough sway to get its agenda pushed through. He finds the thought of Dong’s leadership an acceptable alternative to another fiscal quarter under Nazon’s brutality. The speech stalls for time until the Rada make their move.

If, somehow, the Petro are the last group standing and go through with their plan, Firewall is no better off. Nine Lives will keep a copy of AWE even if they

sell it back to one of the corporations. Then Firewall will have two dangerous AGIs to deal with.

RADA

The one obstacle to using AWE to dominate the solar system is Cognite itself. Slaved egos would obey real Cognite employees if they encountered them. So Dong plans to use AWE to take over Cognite itself.

The key is to fork her copy of Nibedita Nath’s ego and condition the fork. To obey Nath’s access is sufficient to install AWE at multiple locations in Cognite’s servers, where it can in turn subvert the company’s infomorph and AGI security monitors. From there, it will be possible to lock down key Cognite facilities and forcibly upload employees for conditioning. Dong’s projections, which are fairly conservative given how heavily Cognite relies on infomorphs for security, suggest that if timed correctly, 90% of Cognite’s workforce can be subverted within a few days.

Of course, the Consortium or other civil authorities might intervene on Cognite’s behalf, but by then it will be too late. Nine Lives will have plundered Cognite’s research data and will know how to customize AWE to imprint victims on Nine Lives rather than Cognite.

If Dong lost or never acquired Nath’s ego, she’ll lie and claim to have the ego of a non-specific high-ranking Cognite exec.

Nath’s alpha is still on Extropia for business. Dong’s plan relies on striking before she heads home. If successful, Nine Lives will have full control over the most powerful psychosurgery technology in the solar system, their only rival for it too damaged to strike back.

If Lam Cong Dong’s idea is picked by Nazon, she plans to attack on the pretense that he’s taking credit for her work. If Nazon denies her, the justification will be that he’s been leading Nine Lives in the wrong direction for years. Either way, she plans to take control or die trying.

GHEDE

Su Wu pitches last. The Ghede support Dong’s plan but think it relies too much on subverted infomorphs and security bots for success. He suggests Nine Lives invade Cognite research stations to make sure no one gets away. If they make off with a sack of freshly harvested cortical stacks from each Cognite location, they can use what the captured egos know to keep Cognite out of the picture for longer—perhaps permanently.

The Ghede are sadistic enough to think this is a great plan. However, if Wu spoke to Elleggua, it’s just a ploy to stall until the leadership makes its move on Lam Cong Dong. At that point, the Ghede will attack the Rada en masse to end the coup.

If, for some reason, Wu were the only lieutenant left after the standoff, he’d actually institute the plan he was only supposed to pretend to advocate. This would be the nightmare scenario for Firewall. There is no telling what AWE would turn into with that much mesh access and technology, not to mention

the thousands of egos driven irreversibly insane. Contingency plans would likely involve WMDs.

LEADERSHIP

Elleggua listens to all the proposals before speaking through Nazon's puppet sock. He favors Lam Cong Dong's plan but condemns her methods. Her dealings with their sworn rivals, the ID Crew, have proven her unworthy of Nine Lives. Dong has ungratefully exploited her leader's gracious offer to voice her opinion by trying to pawn his ideas off as her own. This sad attempt to gain authority won't be tolerated. At this point, the devoted gladiators (p. 27) enter the Fetish Market and the standoff begins.

If characters have already taken Elleggua and Nazon out of the picture (or if they are impersonating them), this conflict can resolve peacefully. Perhaps the politics have swayed so far in the favor of one side that the other gives up without a fight. Left to their own devices, however, Nine Lives holds an election through violence.

LEGBA STANDOFF

It's recommended that gamemasters avoid treating the firefight like traditional combat. The Fetish Market turns into a full-blown war, and enumerating the various combatants would be exhausting. It's better to treat the scene cinematically, with characters struggling to escape and use the distraction to their own ends. Flitting between market stands and piles of stacks for cover, the sentinels are still in danger from stray fire, but limit the combat to one or two small engagements within the larger battlefield. These encounters should be obstacles between the group and its goals. For example, NPCs betrayed by the Firewall agents might ignore the larger fight in favor of seeking revenge.

STAGE 5: DEFUSING THE THREAT

The political intrigues of Legba take place with or without Firewall involvement. Characters are the variables that make the outcome unpredictable, and they have a lot of options for how to resolve the scenario.

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE

Firewall is a conspiracy; these solutions use that mindset. Impersonation, Deception, Infosec, Persuasion, and other tradecraft skills can turn Nine Lives further against itself. These solutions often provide the most safety to Firewall, but the plans are fragile and difficult to pull off.

SAVE NATH

Get Nath away from Omri and Nine Lives has no way to use AWE quietly. If she can be farcast to Cognite and warn her alpha, even better. Similarly, convincing Omri of the atrocities he'd be helping to unleash might get him off station to seek buyers elsewhere.

Nine Lives would still have AWE, but it would buy Firewall time.

IMPERSONATE NAZON

Nazon has gone insane and only gives orders as the puppet of Elleggua. If the player characters can eliminate Elleggua, or even just hack the puppet sock at the right time, they can use Nazon's authority to order AWE destroyed or determine the outcome of the standoff.

ORGANIZE A COUP

Lam Cong Dong is locked in by rumors of her ambition, even if those rumors were accurate. She thinks Nazon's obsessions are holding back the organization and sees herself as the leader of a friendlier, more profitable Nine Lives. She claims willingness to sacrifice anything if the characters can assure she'll succeed in her bid for power. Conversely, other nanchon leaders could be bolstered into throwing themselves into the ring, or Dong could be ratted out to the leadership. It's doubtful any of the gangers will stay true to their word, but they can be played against each other to obscure Firewall's real agenda.

SABOTAGE

Infosec, Demolitions, Hardware skills, and a lot of Infiltration are needed to disable hardened targets under guard. These options do more damage against the x-threat and/or bring justice to Nine Lives at the cost of greater risk to the sentinels.

UNDERMINE COMMUNICATIONS

Characters can hack the terminals in Psychopomp and gain control of Legba's external communications. This could be used to message for help, warn Cognite, or otherwise reveal the existence of AWE before it can be used on a large scale. Remember that Psychopomp is hardwired to Guinee. An underground railroad of forknapping victims could be established with enough time and sophisticated hacking. Mass escape could certainly prove a bargaining chip in the debate or an effective distraction.

CO-OPT SECURITY

Getting access to Elleggua's encryption gets the group access to the killsats surrounding Legba and the security bots guarding Nana Buluku. In addition to just turning the weapons off, they could be reprogrammed to serve Firewall's interests. Alternatively, a hacker with hidden status on the station-wide mesh could blow airlocks or make access to air-gapped networks easier.

DESTROY, STEAL, OR RELEASE AWE

The sentinels also have the option to destroy the Nana Buluku hardware, smuggle AWE out in a portable server, or convince the intelligence to join the cause. This last option proves the most difficult, as the AGI might not be too pleased to learn it's a gamma fork of some virtual god. Releasing AWE on the station-wide

mesh would certainly give Nine Lives something bigger to worry about, but there's no predicting how the intelligence would behave or if Firewall could contain the situation. Destroying it is certainly the most attractive option to Firewall.

STAGE 6: DEBRIEFING

This section deals with the matters that arise upon mission completion.

GETTING AWAY

So long as they don't leave stacks behind, death is a foolproof exit strategy. The *Dasmós* could be used if her engines weren't completely sabotaged. The sentinels can also contact Pyrrhos and have him send in ultimate mercenaries for "pickup" to Aspis. If things have already gone bad, they'll need someone to open the airlock and disable the killsats, but once inside they can provide adequate cover fire for a hot extraction. Stealing a Nine Lives ship might be possible for those with the necessary Hardware and Piloting skills. Provided enough time, farcasting away using Psychopomp is another option.

IF THE MISSION FAILS

In the case of mission failure, much depends on who ends up winning the debate. Cognite could end up losing a lot of credits. Nine Lives could start doing more white-collar crime. Alternatively, violence against competitors could get even more terrifying. Entire economies might end up destabilized. Uncontained, AWE could bootstrap itself back to AUGUSTINE levels, get infected by the exsurgent virus, or haunt the mesh as a serial psychosurgeon. Mass panic about backups and forking could grip the public and further reduce transhumanity's hopes for survival.

REZ AND REP REWARDS

Depending on how well the agents fared, they will walk away with some rewards as indicated on the Mission Rewards table.

AFTERMATH

Operations on Legba suggest a wide-array of other Firewall investigations.

NAZON'S REVENGE

It's unlikely a criminal mastermind like Roland Nazon will take death lying down. He doubtless has multiple backups hidden around the system. It's a matter of time before he gets resleeved looking for revenge. This might constitute re-taking ownership of Nine Lives, but it could also manifest as bloody revenge on the characters or Firewall if their cover was blown.

NATH'S EGO

There's at least one seemingly legit egocasting operator on Extropia secretly run by the ID Crew. Did Omri have the only copy of Nath's ego, or does he have another somewhere? Does the ID Crew have a copy? What do they plan on doing with it? What is to come of the gang war sparked by Omri's defection?

AUSTIN

Cognite has the gamma fork of a seed AI that presents a serious threat to transhumanity. There is no telling whether their attempt to tame the intelligence has worked, but it may be a moot point. Nothing in the hypercorp's history suggest it's ethically sound enough to wield that much power. The sentinels leave Legba only to find themselves assigned to infiltrate Cognite.

MISSION REWARDS

OUTCOME	AWARD
Character participated in mission	1 RP, +1 i-rep
Character contributed to success in a significant way	1 RP
Character achieved a motivational goal	1 RP
Player engaged in good roleplaying	1 RP
Player significantly contributed to the drama, humor, or fun	1 RP
Characters exposed as Firewall agents	-3 i-rep, -3 g-rep
Amaru Timoti's cover blown OR preserved	-1 i-rep OR +1 i-rep, +1 g-rep
Rescued Rokuzawa Chi and forking research	+1 @-rep, +2 r-rep
Character personally killed Roland Nazon	+2 f-rep, +5 g-rep, Enemy trait (Nine Lives)
AWE secured and retrieved for study	+3 i-rep
AWE destroyed	+2 i-rep
AWE released	-5 i-rep
New cover identity established with reorganized Nine Lives	+2 i-rep, +3 g-rep
Slaves rescued and/or Nine Lives operations catastrophically disrupted	1 RP, +1 rep in all fields

CHARACTERS

ROLAND NAZON

Supposed Leader of Nine Lives, driven insane by forking/merging experiments

Morph: Splicer

Appearance: Nazon affects an elderly splicer with a straw hat and cane in a blasphemous impersonation of Vodun's Papa Legba.

Roleplaying: Whether it was a calculated move to sustain his image or a case of falling for his own bullshit, Nazon drove himself hopelessly insane with psychosurgical experimentation. After taking over Legba, the Houngan were ordered to start experimenting with ascendant forking. The first subjects were captured competitors, but Nazon eventually demanded that dissected portions of the forknapped egos be merged with his own mind. The risks to his sanity were ignored, and the process was repeated until Nazon's mind was composed of no less than 23 separate egos—yet Nine Lives remained profitable and every assassination attempt ended in failure. Nazon seems able to turn his madness off whenever it suits him, but in reality he's controlled by Elleggua. The second his puppet sock isn't jammed, Nazon reverts to a drooling stupor, caught up in a conversation within his own mind.

Skills: Unless jammed by Elleggua, Nazon is too far insane to function

Implants: Access Jacks, Basic Biomods, Cortical Stack, Medichines, Puppet Sock

ELLEGGUA

Roland Nazon's fork posing as a personal assistant

Morph: Neotenic

Motivations:

+Anonymity +Profit +Respect through Fear

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
20	20	20	30	15	20	20	6

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
10	4	40	8	80	50	10	75

Skills: Academics: Neuroscience 60, Deception 45 (75), Fray 80, Free Fall 75, Impersonation 45 (75), Infiltration 70, Interest: Underlings' Schemes 80, Interfacing 50, Intimidation 75, Investigation 50, Kinesics 45 (65), Kinetic Weapons 75, Language: English 60, Language: French (Native) 90, Language: Mandarin 60, Networking: Criminal 80, Networking: Hypercorps 45, Networking: Scientists 55, Perception 50, Persuasion 60, Profession: Crime Boss 80, Profession: Identity Theft 80, Programming 40, Psychosurgery 60, Research 40, Unarmed Combat 70

Implants: Anti-Glare, Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Bioweave Armor (Light), Cortical Stack, Eelware, Drug Gland (Neem), Emergency

Farcaster, Emotional Dampeners, Enhanced Vision, Hardened Skeleton, Medichines, Muscle Augmentation, Neurachem (Level 2), Reflex Booster

Traits: Addiction (Major, Neem), Mental Disorder (Megalomania), Trauma Tolerance (Level 2), Social Stigma (Neotenic), Tough (Level 3)

Gear: Invisibility Cloak, Personal Interaction Sensor, Security AI, Tactical Network

RANGED Submachinegun 75 (AP -2, DV 3d10 + 3, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 20) with **AMMO** Overload, Smartlink

MELEE Unarmed 70 (AP -2, DV 2d10 + 1 + shock)

MELEE Injector Nanoswarm with BTX2,

Armor: 10/13 (Second Skin, Smart Fabric Vacsuit)

Notes: Counts as a small target (-10 to hit)

Appearance: Elleggua appears as a wiry, mixed race boy in flowing red and black clothing.

Roleplaying: Elleggua is the "real" Roland Nazon. The neotenic contains the same ruthless sociopath whose calculating brutality turned the Fall into a business opportunity. In many ways, his outlook has never left the squalor of the refugee camps: everyone is an asset to exploit or an example to be made. The same innate understanding of suspicion and fear that launched Lapriyè informs his years of deception. Imitating the servant of an addled king has revealed countless schemes to steal his throne. Elleggua uses Nazon's veneer of weakness to expose his enemies, then orchestrates their demise before they become a real threat. Even if someone were to succeed in eliminating Nazon, one can't assassinate a King that doesn't exist.

LAM CONG DONG

Leader of the Rada Nanchon

Morph: Fury

Motivations:

+Advancement +Double-Dealing -Authority

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
20	20	20	20	25	25	15	1

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
8	2	30	6	60	50	10	75

Skills: Beam Weapons 45, Clubs 45, Fray 55, Intimidation 60, Kinesics 30 (70), Kinetic Weapons 50, Deception 60, Networking: Criminal 60, Palming 50, Perception 45 (75), Persuasion 50, Profession: Smuggling 30, Protocol 55, Unarmed Combat 50

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Bioweave Armor (Light), Cortical Stack, Enhanced Vision, Neurachem (Level 1), Skillware: Kinesics, Toxin Filters

RANGED Light Rail Pistol 60 (AP -8, DV 2d10, Mode SA/BF/FA, ammo 16) with **AMMO** AP, Smartlink

Armor: 15/16 (Heavy Body Armor)

Appearance: A thickly muscled female of Maori stock sporting a mohawk

Roleplaying: Lam Cong joined Nine Lives late, but she hasn't wasted any time rising in the ranks. If positions above her weren't open, she created vacancies. Her willingness to kill is only blunted by her greed. In another world, she would have made a fitting daughter to Roland Nazon. She begrudgingly respects the empire the old man carved for himself with a vibroknife, but she'd never admit it. It's Lam Cong's turn to rule and show the universe what Nine Lives can really do.

SU WU

Leader of the Ghede Nanchon

Morph: Ghost

Motivations: +Command +Lapriyè -Weakness

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
15	25	15	20 (30)	20	20	20	3

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
7 (9)	3	40	8	80	45	9	67

Skills: Blades 75 (Monofilament Sword 85), Climbing 45 (75), Fray 65 (75), Freerunning 70, Infiltration 70, Kinetic Weapons 75, Networking: Criminal 60, Perception 60, Unarmed Combat 65

Implants: Adrenal Boost, Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Chameleon Skin, Cortical Stack, Grip Pads, Enhanced Vision, Medichines, Nanotats, Neurachem, Reflex Boosters

Traits: Mental Disorder (PTSD) triggered by nanoswarms

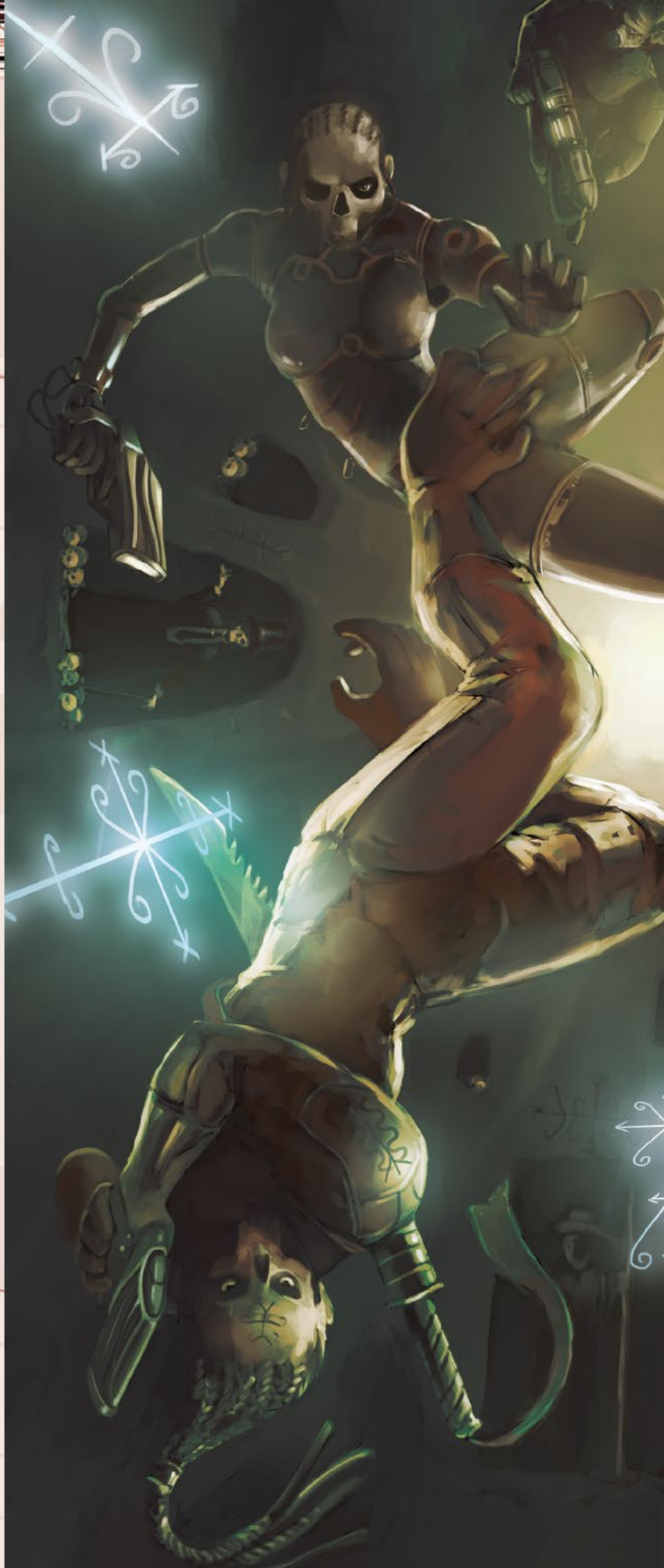
MELEE **Monofilament Sword** (AP -4, DV 2d10 + 4)

RANGED **SMG 75** (DV 2d10 + 3, Mode SA/BF/FA Ammo 30) with Extended Magazine, Safety System, and Smartlink

Armor: 13/17 (Light Body Armor, Smart Vac Clothing, Second Skin)

Appearance: Slender morph of Chinese genotype with facial nanotats streaming tears down his face

Roleplaying: Su Wu was a mercenary before the Fall and briefly involved in the ultimate movement. He eventually left the group, disagreeing with their insistence he learn skills beside murder. Wu's calm exterior completely falls away in combat. He flies at his enemy in a rage until they are dead, returning to impassive detachment until the next victim arrives. One of the few things capable of breaking Wu's warrior focus is nanotechnology; events during the Fall have left him deeply phobic.



BERTRAND THEO

Leader of the Petro Nanchon

Morph: Sylph

Motivations: +Dignity +Profit -Rudeness

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
25	20	20	15	25	15	15	2

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
7	1	30	6	60	35	7	52

Skills: Beam Weapons 40, Deception 60, Infosec 50, Interest: Hypercorp Politics 60, Interfacing 55, Investigation 65, Kinesics 70, Persuasion 60, Profession: Accounting 80, Protocol 70, Research 60,

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Clean Metabolism, Emotional Dampers, Enhanced Pheromones, Skinlink

Traits: First Impression, Striking Looks (1)

RANGED Microwave Agonizer 40 (AP 0/-5, DV pain/2d10, Mode SS, Ammo 100/50)

Armor: 4/3 (Armored Clothing)

Appearance: A well-built African morph in a sharp suit. His sweat smells faintly of strawberries.

Roleplaying: Bertrand is perpetually annoyed. On Mars, he's annoyed by the precautions required to dodge the attention brought by his bloodthirsty associates. On Legba, he's annoyed at delicate hypercorp negotiations going to hell while he babysits psychos on a backwater rock. Theo may have undergone the Rite like everyone else, but he memory raped that girl because he was playing a role, just like any other negotiation. It wasn't personal. He views those who enjoy the practice with disdain, and his patience with them grows thin. If it takes another act of violence for Nine Lives to turn the profits he thinks it's capable of, he's willing to sully himself one last time.

OMRI MELECH

ID Crew Defector

Morph: Splicer

Motivations: +Recognition -Bullies -Hyperlites

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
20	15	15	15	20	15	20	3

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
6	1 (2)	40	8	80	30	6	45

Skills: Academics: Computer Science 70, Beam Weapons 40, Deception 40, Fray 60, Hardware: Electronics 65, Impersonation 75, Infosec 70 (Spoofer 80), Interfacing 65, Kinesics 45, Networking: Criminal 50, Perception 50, Persuasion 50, Programming 60 (Forknapping 70), Protocol 60, Research 60, Thrown Weapons 40

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Dead Switch (2), Ghoststrider Module, Mental Speed

Traits: Information Control, Math Wiz

RANGED Laser Pulser 40 (DV 2d10, Ammo 100)

RANGED Plasmaburst Grenade 40 (AP -6, DV 3d10 + 10)

Armor: 10/10 (Light Body Armor)

Appearance: Mousy, Caucasian, unfortunate features

Roleplaying: Shitty morph, coffin-sized apartment, crappy assignments—Omri has had it. Nobody else in the ID Crew could have nabbed Nath's ego, and it wasn't the first time he'd nabbed a big fish for no reward. Rather than be ignored again, he worked up the courage to sell to another party. He couldn't believe his luck when Lam Cong Dong offered him a fortune. Omri figures the ID Crew can't find all of his backups: this score is worth risking death over. He doesn't trust Nine Lives for a second; they're going to have to pay for the product. Then Omri can take his fortune and start his own crew, one that will acknowledge he's the best at what he does.

NINE LIVES ENFORCER

Morph: Bouncer

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
15	25	15	20	20	25	15	1

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
7	1	30	6	60	35	7	52

Skills: Blades 50, Clubs 50, Deception 45, Fray 50, Free Fall 60, Freerunning 40, Intimidation 50, Infosec 40, Interest: Ego Markets 40, Interfacing 40, Kinetic Weapons 55, Perception 40, Profession: Slaver 40, Spray Weapons 55

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Grip Pads, Prehensile Feet

MELEE Vibroblade 50 (AP -2, DV 2d10 + 1)

RANGED Medium Rail Pistol 55 (AP -5, DV 2d10 + 4)

1 in 4 have, instead:

MELEE Shock Baton 50 (DV 1d10 + 4 + shock)

RANGED Shard Pistol 55 (AP -10, DV 1d10 + 6, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 100)

Armor: 7/7 (Standard Vacsuit)

PROFESSIONAL MERCENARY VARIANT

Additional Implants: Neurachem (Level 1), Medichines

RANGED Automatic Rail Rifle 50 (AP -9, DV 2d10 + 8, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 30) with Smartlink

Armor: 17/15 (Heavy Body Armor w/ Ablative Patches)

AMARU TIMOTI

Firewall/Nine Lives Double Agent

Morph: Bouncer

Motivations:

+Survival +X-Risk Containment -Nine Lives

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
15	15	15	10	20	10	25	3

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
7	1	50	10	100	40	8	60

Skills: Clubs 60, Deception 70, Fray 65, Free Fall 55, Hardware: Electronics 60, Impersonation 70, Infiltration 60, Interest: Vodou 65, Intimidation 50, Investigation 45, Kinesics 50, Language (Native): Haitian Creole 85, Language: Mandarin 55, Persuasion 65, Profession: Resleeving Tech 75, Research 25, Spray Weapons 60

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Endocrine Control, Grip Pads, Hardened Skeleton, Medichines, Oxygen Reserve, Prehensile Feet

Traits: Edited Memories, Limber (Lvl 1)

MELEE Shock Baton 60

RANGED Shredder 60 (AP -10, DV 2d10 + 5, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 100)

Armor: 7/7 (Vac Suit)

Appearance: Timoti is a tall, wiry black man sleeved in a bouncer morph. He wears a black suit with weathered, stark white skull makeup and sports long dreadlocks.

Roleplaying: Timoti is a man tortured by what he's had to do to maintain his Firewall cover. Infiltrating Nine Lives goes beyond suicide mission territory; subjective eternities of simulspace torture await Timoti if he's found out. He had his reasons, however; Amaru Timoti is a practioner of Haitian Vodou. The risk is worth it if he can one day bring vengeance on those who've desecrated his faith.

ROKUZAWA CHI

Undercover Titanian Scientist

Morph: Bouncer

Motivations:

+Science +Singularity Seeking +Technosocialism

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
20	10	20	10	20	15	15	2

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
6	1	30	6	60	40	8	60

Skills: Academics: Neuroscience (Forking) 80, Blades 45, Fray 50, Free Fall 40, Infosec 55, Interest: Neuroscience Projects 50, Interfacing 45, Kinesics 60, Language (Native): Japanese 90, Language: Skandinaviska 80, Medicine: Resleeving 55, Perception 50, Persuasion 50, Programming 40, Psychosurgery 80, Research 70

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Grip Pads, Oxygen Reserve, Prehensile Feet

Traits: Adaptability (Lvl 1), Allies, Ego Plasticity (Lvl 1), Limber (Lvl 1), Trauma Tolerance (Lvl 1)

Gear: Chameleon Cloak, Creepy Bot

MELEE Wasp Knife 45 (AP -1, DV 1d10 + 3) with BTX-2.

Armor: 5/5 (Light Vacsuit)

Appearance: Rokuzawa's gender identity is female, but she's sleeved into a male Asian bouncer. Like all of the Houngan, she wears off-white researcher's coveralls with Nazon's personal veve (corrupted from that of Papa Legba) on the chest.

Roleplaying: Rokuzawa is a daring and unorthodox researcher who's devoted herself to exploring the limits of transhuman identity. But with Nine Lives, she's in over her head. At this point, she just wants to get out of here. Rokuzawa's alpha could trash the reps of any scientist or autonomist characters who go back on a deal to get her off station. She'll use this as leverage when bargaining.

DEVOTED GLADIATOR

Morph: Remade

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
20	25	15	20	15	25	15	1

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
7 (9)	2	30	8	60	40	8	60

Skills: Blades 50, Free Fall 55, Freerunning 55, Fray 70, Unarmed Combat 50

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Circadian Regulation, Claws, Clean Metabolism, Cortical Stack, Eidetic Memory, Enhanced Respiration, Enhanced Vision, Neurachem (Level 1), Temperature Tolerance, Toxin Filters

Traits: Brave, Mental Disorder (Bipolar, Depersonalization, PTSD), Modified Behavior (Awareness Block, Loyalty to Ellegua), Pain Tolerance

MELEE Unarmed Combat 50 (DV 1d10 + 2)

MELEE Cyberclaws (AP -2, DV 1d10 + 5)

Appearance: These combat morphs aren't even clothed before being ushered to Samedi's gladiator pits. Loaded with AWE-hacked egos, they don't mind. If ordered to kill, they won't stop until the enemy of the "executive" is dead or they've been obliterated.

NINE LIVES PLOT HOOKS

EXTRACTION

A sentinel with sensitive information about Firewall went down in a firefight with Nine Lives goons and was spirited off to Legba. The sentinels need to get him back—or delete him, if all else fails.

THE HOUGAN

An actual Vodou priest has it out for Roland Nazon. He's raised enough funds and has enough rep backing him to handsomely reward a team of assassins willing to take out Nazon, Ellegua, and all known backups. Amaru Timoti may or may not be working from the inside on the Houngan's behalf.

STOLEN MUSE

Nine Lives has kidnapped the muse of an IT contractor who's done sensitive work for Ozma. Firewall wants what the muse knows.

WOLF IN THE FOLD

Nine Lives unwittingly uploads an exsurgent ego to the Guinee server farm. The ego begins corrupting others on the slave servers. If it spreads to the gang members, they'll become a dangerous vector.

ZERO-DAY EXPLOIT

Among the most sophisticated rackets of the Petro Nanchon is trade in AI- and cyberbrain-specific zero-day exploits. A Petro Nanchon member has a zero-day exploit that would provide a back door into hundreds of thousands of new synth and pod morphs—and the high bidder for it is a known exsurgent. Firewall needs the exploit contained and the exsurgent neutralized.