

*Watch your back.
Shoot straight.
Conserve ammo.
And never, ever, cut a deal with a dragon.*
—Street proverb

WELCOME TO THE SHADOWS

2072. Handbasket still in motion.

Since the turn of the century, the world has changed in unimaginable ways. The mystical energies of the universe have been steadily rising in power and concentration, bringing magic back to the world—the Awakening. Elves, dwarfs, orks, and trolls have assumed their true forms, throwing off their human guises. Creatures of the wild have changed as well, transforming into beasts of myth and legend. The many traditions of magic have returned—magicians from all walks of life have carved out a place for themselves in the new world. Though many aspects of the Awakening remain mysterious, modern society has learned much about the workings of magic and how to harness it as a force just as important as technology.

The decades that followed the Awakening were years of panic and turmoil, as the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse seemed to race across the Earth. Cultures that had never lost touch with their mystic heritage used magic in uprisings against the nations that had suppressed them for centuries. The vast global telecommunications network collapsed under an assault by a mysterious computer virus. Dragons soared into the skies. Epidemics and famines ravaged the world's population. Clashes between newly Awakened races and the rest of humanity became common. All central authority crumbled, and the world began to spiral downward into the abyss.

But man and his kin are hardy animals. Out of the devastation and chaos, a fragile new social order slowly emerged. Advanced simulated sensorium (simsense) technology helped eradicate the last vestiges of the computer virus. Amerindians, elves, orks, trolls, and dwarfs formed new nations. Where environmental degradation and pollution have made many areas uninhabitable, eco-groups wage war on polluters, and Awakened powers use incredible magic to heal the earth. Central governments have balkanized into smaller nations and city-states, as fear of the world's changes drives wedges between people of different backgrounds. Vast metropolitan sprawls known as metroplexes cover the landscape; these urban jungles swallow whole regions. Police departments, unable to contain crime waves and civil unrest, have been privatized or had their work contracted out to corporations.

Megacorporations are the new world superpowers, a law unto themselves. The entire planet speaks their language; the nuyen is the global monetary standard; and the highest court in the world is the Corporate Court, made up of members of the top ten megacorporations. The megacorps play a deadly game, paying pawns in the shadows to help them get an edge on the competition. Meanwhile, corporate executives and wage slaves hole up in their own enclaves, safe behind layers of security and indoctrination. Outside the walls



of these arcologies and gated communities, whole stretches of the sprawls have become ungovernable. Gangs rule the streets; the forgotten masses grow, lacking even a System Identification Number (SIN) to give them any rights. These outcasts, dissidents, and rebels live as the dregs of society, squatting in long-abandoned buildings, surviving through crime and predatory instincts. Many of them attempt to escape their miserable existences by slotting addictive Better-Than-Life (BTL) chips, living vicariously through someone else's senses. Others band together, some for survival and some to gain their own twisted forms of power.

Technology, too, has changed people. No longer content with the limitations of flesh, many have turned to the artificial enhancements of cyberware to make themselves more than human—stronger, faster, smarter. Others prefer more natural enhancements, augmented organs grown in clinic vats: bioware. Still others deck themselves out in powerful and wearable computing equipment, and manipulate the Matrix or vehicles as if the optical chips and run-flat tires were parts of their own body.

In the harsh reality of 2070 where profit is the most important mistress, the bigger the metroplex, the deeper the shadows. In the cracks between the giant corporate structures, criminals of all shades find their homes. When the megacorps want a job done but don't want to dirty their hands, they turn to the only people who can pull it off: shadowrunners, deniable assets. Though only the blackest of governmental or corporate databases will even register a shadowrunner's involvement with a corporation, the demand for his or her services is high. Hackers slide like whispers through the databases of giant corporations, spirited away the only thing of real value—information. Street samurai are enforcers for hire whose combat skills and reflexes make them the ultimate urban predators. Riggers manipulate vehicles and drones for a variety of purposes. Magicians, those rare folk who possess the gift of wielding and shaping the magical energies that now permeate the Earth, are sought after to spy on competitors, sling spells against an enemy, commit magical sabotage, and for any other service that their employers can dream up. All these individuals sell their skills to survive, taking on tasks too dangerous for others; many of them illegal, all of them unsavory.

Welcome to the dark side of the future, pal. It's going to be a hell of a ride.

THE BASICS

Shadowrun is a roleplaying game set in the dystopian near-future of 2070, a world where cyberpunk meets magic, where criminal subcultures rub shoulders with corporate elites, and where advanced technology competes with the power of spells and spirits. It is an age of high-tech lowlifes; shrouded in danger and mystery, driven by intrigue and adrenaline. Those who play in the shadows stand on the edge, always on the cusp of adventure.

Shadowrun is designed for two to eight players. Like many other roleplaying games, it has an open-ended style of play. That means the game has no definitive ending—no preset time limit, number of turns to play, or single goal to reach that marks the game's end. Unlike most other games, Shadowrun has no winners or losers. The object is to have fun with the exercise of imagination. When this happens, everybody wins.

Those with roleplaying-game experience will find some of the following familiar. Such readers may want to skip ahead to *Game Concepts* (p. 60), or turn to *A History Lesson for the Reality Impaired* (p. 24) or *Life on the Edge* (p. 40) and delve into the history and background of

the Shadowrun universe. For those new to roleplaying, the following introduction may not answer all of your questions, because a roleplaying game is more easily learned from experienced players than from a book. This brief overview will give you the general concept behind roleplaying. To learn more, find others who already play Shadowrun, and learn from them.

WHAT IS A ROLEPLAYING GAME?

A roleplaying game is part improvisational theater, part storytelling, and part game. It is played by a gamemaster who runs the game and a group of players who pretend to be characters. These characters are created by the players, given a history and personality, and then further defined by a set of statistics that represent the character's skills and attributes—as developed in the character creation process (see *Creating a Shadowrunner*, p. 80). The gamemaster presents the setting and situation; through their characters, the players interact with the storyline and other characters.

Think of it this way: everyone has read a book or seen a movie in which the lead character does something that the reader or viewer finds so utterly wrong that he or she wants to shout out a warning. But no matter what we say, the character will do what the plot demands; we're just along for the ride. Even throwing popcorn won't help.

In a roleplaying game, the players control their characters' actions and respond to the events of the plot. If the player does not want his or her character to go through the door, the character will not. If the player thinks the character can talk him- or herself out of a tight situation rather than resorting to that trusty pistol, he or she can talk away. The script, or plot, of a roleplaying game is flexible, always changing based on the decisions the players make as characters.

The gamemaster controls the story. He or she keeps track of what is supposed to happen when, describes events as they occur so that the players (as characters) can react to them, keeps track of other characters in the game (referred to as non-player characters), and resolves attempts to take action using the game system. The game system comes into play when characters seek to use their skills or otherwise do something that requires a test to see whether or not they succeed. Specific rules are presented for situations that involve rolling dice to determine the outcome (see *Game Concepts*, p. 60).

The gamemaster describes the world as the characters see it, functioning as their eyes, ears, and other senses. Gamemastering is not easy, but the thrill of creating an adventure that engages the other players' imaginations, testing their gaming skills and their characters' skills in the game world, makes it worthwhile. Catalyst Game Labs publishes game supplements and adventures to help this process along, but experienced gamemasters always adapt the game universe to suit their own styles.

In roleplaying, stories (the adventures) evolve much like a movie or book, but within the flexible storyline created by the gamemaster. The story is the overall plot; a general outline for what might happen at certain times or in reaction to other events. It is no more concrete than that until the players become involved. At that point, the adventure becomes as involving and dramatic as that great movie you saw last week, or that great book you stayed up all night to finish. In some ways it's even better, because you helped create it.

There is no "right" or "wrong" way to play a roleplaying game—some may involve much more storytelling and improvised dialogue than others, while other games may revolve more around combat situations and tactical battles. The important part is keeping a balance of these activities that keeps all the players in the game happy!

CORE SUPPLEMENTS

All that's required to play *Shadowrun, Fourth Edition*, is the core rulebook. However, **Catalyst Game Labs** offers a number of advanced rule books and setting supplements that expand the options available to characters and further detail the setting.

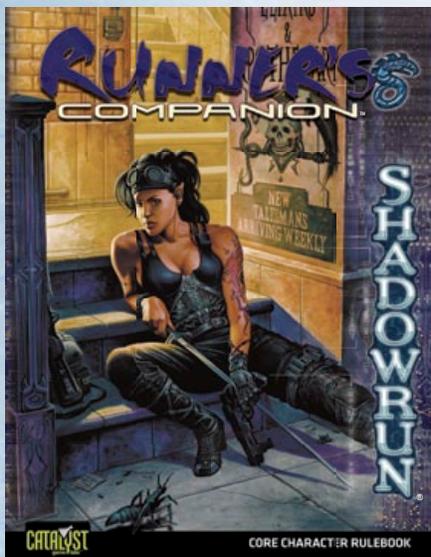
Street Magic: The advanced magic rulebook adds more bang to your spellslingers and adepts alike. *Street Magic* contains new magical traditions, more spirits, more spells, detailed enchanting rules, advanced initiation options, new metamagics, and even a look at magical threats in the Sixth World.

Augmentation: The advanced medtech rulebook is much more than a budding street samurai's upgrade catalog; it introduces more cyberware and bioware augmentations than you can wiggle a prehensile tail at, as well as a selection of geneteck and nanotech enhancements useful to all character types. If that isn't enough, *Augmentation* introduces biodrones, cyborgs, and cyberzombies.

Arsenal: The advanced gear book is chock full of useful gear the enterprising shadowrunner can't live without. *Arsenal's* pages are crammed with guns, armor, spy toys, manatech, survival gear, vehicles, and drones that will have everybody on the team saving up to buy the good stuff. All that plus advanced martial arts, and vehicle and weapon customization rules.

Unwired: The advanced Matrix resource is a guide to the wireless Matrix for both beginners and experts. Hackers and technomancers are treated to all the new tricks, new toys, new echoes, advanced submersion, and new sprites you might expect. *Unwired* opens the world of ubiquitous computing to all character types and showcases how any shadowrunner can use the Matrix to keep her edge.

Runner's Companion: This character-oriented rulebook features advanced options to provide additional depth to character creation and play. *Runner's Companion* not only introduces optional metavariants, sentient races, and unique character types, but also dozens of new qualities, advanced contact and lifestyle rules, and rounds everything out with some basic survival tips for budding runners.



ROLEPLAYING SHADOWRUN

In *Shadowrun*, players characters are typically shadowrunners or other members of the criminal underground. Many varieties of runners exist, of all races, genders, and sizes, each with their own area(s) of expertise.

WHAT RUNNERS DO

Shadowrunners commit crimes, usually for money. When a corporation or other sponsor needs someone to do dirty work, they look to the shadows. As “deniable assets,” runners make advantageous—and expendable—tools.

Runners usually operate in teams. A team can be any combination of character types, depending on what the players want to do. The team should have a plausible reason for working together, such as being old friends or cellmates, having the same interests, or being forced together by circumstance. Different teams will have different capabilities, and the gamemaster should plan accordingly. For example, one team may excel at breaking and entering, while another might be a squad of bruisers who work best as hired muscle. While runner teams will want to work within their strengths, a staple of drama is the protagonists being pulled out of their element and over their heads.

Runners have contacts, who represent other potentially useful people they know. Some of these will be other underworld types, such as gang members or hit men. Others may be ordinary people, useful for information or for “special arrangements”—for example, the corporate secretary who lets you know when the wiz research scientist you're supposed to kidnap will be leaving the building. The more you rely on any particular contact's skills, information, and resources, the more you'll owe them in the end—even between long-standing contacts, money and favors are usually necessary to grease the wheels. A player character's relationship with a contact need not be friendly. Sometimes, the people who can help you out the most are those you like the least.

The most important contact for shadowrunners is the fixer. A fixer acts as a middleman and can usually help the runners find gear, other contacts, or work—all for a fee, of course. A corporation or other employer that needs shadowrunners sends someone to a fixer to ask for recommendations. If a team of runners has a good reputation and meets the job requirements, a meeting is arranged to discuss details and haggle over payment. Because such matters are highly sensitive, anonymity is par for the course, and employers of this type are known simply as Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson may not always be a corporate representative. The world of *Shadowrun* is rich and complex, with many people and groups who may need to hire runners to accomplish certain goals. A criminal syndicate may hire runners to strike at rivals, a mage may hire them to acquire certain rare materials for magic use, or Joe Neighbor may need to find the terrorists who kidnapped his wife. Regardless of the sponsor, if a job involves doing something dangerous and potentially illegal, it's a shadowrun. Just like Mr. Johnson is anonymous, so may be the sponsor—if the price is right, most running teams don't care who's paying. Misdirection is common, and Johnsons will often try to drop false clues, leading runners to think that they're actually employed by someone else entirely.

Shadowrunner teams may even take the initiative, doing jobs of their own accord. For example, a player character may hold a grudge against a certain megacorp, or dislike how a certain gang treats people in his neighborhood. Maybe he decides it's time to get his criminal record erased. Other jobs may be politically or socially motivated; the character or runner team may be members of or regularly work with far left or far right political groups. In the Sixth World, everyone has dirty work that needs doing.

Runners accomplish their tasks by working the streets for information, calling in favors and markers from friends and contacts in the shadows. They take whatever action their job requires: surveillance, theft, breaking and entering, violence, even murder.

Runners do these things because they are survivors. Many of them grew up committing crimes to get by, or perhaps they obtained special training somewhere and want to put it to use. Some may have extended families to feed and no other source of income. Many of them prefer the freedom of the shadowlife, controlling their own destinies as opposed to being a wage slave in some drab business park kissing corporate ass all day. Others enjoy the thrill of running, thriving on its risks. Finally, some are inspired to run by a sense of social justice; they want to damage the powers-that-be however they can while providing for the underclass. These runners are known as hooders for their Robin Hood outlook.

BASIC RUNNER TYPES

The following terms refer to runners who specialize in various fields.

Faces are charismatic individuals—they may be good looking, smooth talking, quick-witted, or just have a great force of personality. The face usually acts as the front-man at any meet, handles situations where legwork and networking are necessary, and negotiates with Mr. Johnsons, dealers, and infobrokers. A face may be all natural, but more often than not they're augmented by bioware such as tailored pheromones.

Magicians use their force of will and the power of their beliefs to manipulate magic and control spirits. Magicians who have similar beliefs often gravitate to one another, adopting schools of thought known as traditions. Magicians of all traditions are able to cast spells and summon and bind spirits. Most can also perceive and project into the parallel mystic realm of astral space. Two magical traditions are common: hermetic mages and shamans. Mages (hermetic magicians) are known for using thaumaturgical abilities in a scientific manner. To mages, magic is about knowledge and structure. Shamans are magicians to whom magic is attunement with the forces of nature.

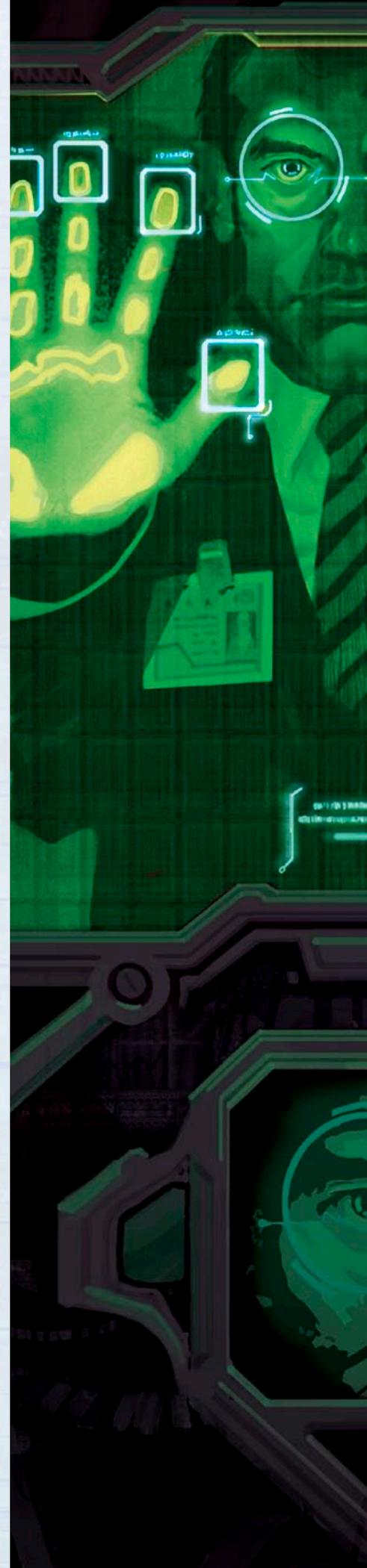
Adepts are the modern-day ninjas and berserkers, using magic to enhance their bodies' abilities. Adepts tend to be athletically oriented, with good stealth and combat skills.

Hackers are characters who specialize in computers, and accessing and manipulating data via the Matrix—either using augmented reality or going full-bore and using virtual reality to do their dirty work. Most hackers use customized computers called commlinks, often with personally written programs that manipulate the Matrix in ways beyond any sysop's intention. While illegally logged into the Matrix, hackers can search and sift through information of all kinds, tap phone calls, and disable and enable other systems at will. Most hackers are experts in cybercombat—a battle of skills and programs against other hackers or intrusion countermeasures (IC).

Riggers are a subset of hackers who focus on using and manipulating modern vehicles and drones. Many riggers are adept at controlling multiple drones at once and using them as “eyes and ears.” Others excel at “jumping into” vehicles through full virtual reality, effectively operating as if the machines were extensions of their own bodies. Similarly, security riggers—typically known as spiders—interface with the sim-enhanced security systems built into buildings and facilities. From this “web,” the spider's reach spans the entire building, allowing him to see through sensors and mentally control security features like locks and hidden weaponry. For riggers looking for work on the sly, good smugglers are always in short supply, and piloting a t-bird across hostile borders or running BTL chips up and down the coast can be profitable shadow-ops. For getting down and dirty with a ride's mechanical and electronic guts, riggers can take tech-wiz jobs to modify vehicles according to a client's (probably illegal) desires—a lucrative biz that also requires less travel.

Street samurai are physically enhanced combat monsters. With implanted cyberware, bioware, and combat skills, they strive to be the quickest, meanest, and strongest killing machines on the streets. Many of them cybernetically boost their reflexes to increase their action and reaction speeds, or boost their strength so that they can inflict more damage. Many are also lethal with firearms, and almost all have a smartlink system installed for increased precision in shooting. Some fight for honor, some because they get paid for it, and others because they are insane enough to go up against anything. Street samurai is a catch-all term—some characters may identify themselves as bodyguards, mercenaries, assassins, or some similar label, but in general a character based around physical skills and non-magical augmentation can be called a street samurai—even if some of them don't like the implication.

These basic runner types are just the tip of the iceberg and are not meant to define a set of character classes. Players can create a dizzying variety of characters using the character creation rules (p. 80)—for example, a detective character who relies on charisma and skill as opposed to cyberware, or a covert operations specialist who has all the gear and cyberware necessary to penetrate electronic defenses. The only limit is your imagination. For more examples of the types of characters you can play, see the *Sample Characters* beginning on p. 98.



SETTINGS

Shadowrun is set only sixty-three years in the future, but the world has gone through tremendous changes. Two of the most significant are the Matrix and the astral plane—two “settings” that will come into play no matter where your shadowrunner is on the globe.

THE MATRIX

The Matrix is the sweeping term generally used to refer to the worldwide computer network and telecommunications grid—or, more accurately, the millions of wireless computer networks and devices that, together, compose the Matrix—a mesh network with no central body. The Matrix is used for all types of communications—voice and vidphone calls are routed through the Matrix, as are text messages and emails.

Almost everyone in developed nations uses the Matrix on a daily basis for work, education, and recreation. In fact, most people are online all of the time, constantly interacting with the Matrix via their commlinks and augmented reality (AR) overlays. Almost everyone has their own personal area network (PAN), a micro-network linking together all of their personal devices with their commlink as the central router and Matrix hub. This wireless connectivity gives users a great amount of freedom, as they can access their files and resources from virtually everywhere, and interact with nearby devices and networks using AR visual sight cues and other sensory data to bring them information on the fly. This technology is described in detail in *The Wireless World*, p. 216.

Of central interest to most casual users are geo-tags that broadcast AR Matrix data that is linked to a specific location. For example, a geo-tag at a shopping mall may broadcast a mall map, information about new stores, and current sale specials. A geo-tag at the Seattle Department of Motor Vehicles would direct you to the proper line, desk, or terminal, inform you of the necessary ID requirements, and offer driving safety tips to everyone entering and leaving.

Matrix users can access multiple systems at once—they may be downloading their email in one augmented reality “window,” referencing research documents in another, and watching the security cameras mounted in their child’s daycare in a third.

Many Matrix services are public and accessible, such as some databases, social clubs, game rooms, or PR offices. Others are semi-private—dating services and stock market trading sites, for example—available to the public in exchange for a one-time or subscription fee. Others are private, layered with IC and security measures and patrolled by corporate hackers. These hosts contain the deepest, darkest secrets of corporations and other entities.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

The astral plane is another reality entirely. Some magicians can perceive its depths or project their consciousness therein. Those who take astral form can move through the astral plane at the speed of thought, but few magicians can stay within this realm for longer than a few hours. The astral plane is the home of spirits, beings of quicksilver and shadow, and is a realm of mystery and danger. It parallels our own physical plane, and auras of living creatures and magic are reflected upon it, where those skilled in the Art can analyze them. The theory goes that the astral is actually sustained by the life force of the Earth and its creatures. From the astral plane, a magician can read the emotional imprints that linger on various items. Sufficiently strong feelings may even pollute the astral atmosphere. Sterile corporate offices, murder scenes, and toxic dumping

grounds, to give just a few examples, all have their own distinct (and unpleasant) astral “flavor.”

Beyond the astral plane are the metaplanes, realms of magic accessible only by initiated magicians. Little is known about the metaplanes—of which there may be an unlimited number, or only one, depending on whose theories you believe. Initiated magicians can travel to any metaplane they choose, though some have strict entrance requirements.

BEYOND THE BASICS

Shadowrun contains many more interesting settings, too numerous to describe in detail here. Players may find themselves in corporate arcologies, self-contained and self-sustainable mini-cities that house thousands of corporate citizens; Awakened lands, where metahumans and dragons work together to purify the often polluted Earth; or the cold edge of space, where humanity is slowly populating numerous orbital habitats as it expands into the void. Most metahumans make their homes in vast urban sprawls, from the glittering skyscraper penthouses of the corporate elite, to the winding homogenous masses of corporate housing enclaves, to the crumbling and blighted ghettos long ago abandoned by civil authorities to gangs and worse. Even corporate thugs and cops fear to tread in many of the sprawl’s shadow regions.

SHADOW ACTIVITY

In Shadowrun, the megacorporations make the laws, and they tend toward laws that favor themselves. Any shadowrunner knows that the corps will bend or break the law whenever they need to. When the corps choose to break the law, shadowrunners get involved as deniable assets. Therefore, when runners hit the streets, they also tend to break the law—a lot. Depending on their current objectives, random chance, or the actions of opponents, lawbreaking can occur in a variety of ways. Most runs involve several specific criminal operations, many of which are described below.

B&E stands for breaking and entering. Most runs involve B&E in some way, whether to steal research, commit sabotage, plant false evidence, or otherwise further the nefarious plot of this week’s Mr. Johnson. Security in 2070 has become an art form, ranging from mundane retinal-scan maglocks to concertina wire electrified fences to patrolling spirits to full-blown security hackers and riggers mixing metahuman sensibilities with the unblinking eye of technology. Any runner team worth its name is going to need the know-how, the creativity, or the brute force to bypass these defenses.

Courier runs are glorified delivery jobs. Most often, the object to be delivered is of strategic or monetary importance or is otherwise valuable and so needs protection from others who want it. Runners hired for these jobs must make sure the object reaches its destination safely and intact.

Datasteals are jobs where a hacker works his way into a computer system and steals information. While this can often be done from a remote location, hackers often prefer to work on site, working their technical magic in concert with the other members of the team—disabling and obstructing security systems, allowing the team to penetrate to the core of even the blackest facilities. This infiltration is often necessary, as many government and corporate computer hosts remain disconnected from the Matrix for security reasons.

Extractions are frequently arranged by corporations who wish to steal valuable personnel from other corporations. Top research scientists, skilled financial agents, and other suits with valuable

knowledge are hot commodities and are suitably protected. The “victims” in many extractions are willing targets—employees who have decided to defect to another corp. Some corporations consider certain personnel so valuable that they would rather see them dead than working for a rival; attempts to extract these people may fall afoul of deadly contingency plans.

Hooding is robbing from the rich to give to the poor, a definition that has gradually expanded to include any run spurred more by a commitment to social justice than anything else. Examples include destroying a pollution-producing factory, mugging the Yakuza protection-racket enforcers and returning the money they stole to the neighborhood, or defending a metahuman community from attacks by human supremacists. Corporations and authorities typically view such acts as “terrorism,” while more cynical people may view such social concern as a weakness to be exploited.

Smuggling is similar to courier work, though smugglers usually have their own specially equipped vehicles for sneaking goods across borders and outrunning (or outgunning) the law. Smuggling can be quite lucrative if the runner knows the markets. Such work usually goes hand in hand with piracy, as pirates are often the cheapest source of illicit goods. Smuggling is done through various means and with many different vehicles, but the smuggler’s choice is undoubtedly the Scout-class, vectored-thrust, low-altitude vehicle (LAV) known as the thunderbird, or t-bird.

Structure hits are sabotage runs intended to do structural damage to the target that will cost time, nuyen, work, and perhaps more to repair or recover from. Runs of this nature often involve large explosions, making demolitions a useful skill. Structure hits can be accomplished via other methods, however, from smart corrosives to rampaging elementals to pushing the right button at the wrong time.

An additional twist is the **tailchaser**, or **distraction run**, where a team of runners may be hired to pull off a flashy run like wetwork or a structure hit ... but really, they’re just around to distract corp security and confuse everyone while another runner team takes on a more understated job such as an extraction or B&E. While security is busy dealing with the fallout from the first runner team’s actions, the second team sneaks in and takes what they want—whether it be a metahuman, a piece of hot tech, or some paydata. This second job may not be fully discovered for hours or even days.

Wetwork is assassination, pure and simple. The world of 2070 contains many factions, each with multitudes of enemies whom they may find most convenient and cost effective to simply remove. Corporations or underworld figures sometimes place bounties on certain individuals; collecting on these can be profitable, if risky. Many runners refuse to take these jobs and view dirtying their hands for money in this way as vile, though equally many have no such moral qualms.

These types of criminal operations are just the beginning of a long list of shadowrunning possibilities. Some runs may be simple investigations or may involve low-level criminal activity such as BTL-dealing, Matrix bank fraud, or holdups. Breaking the law can easily become an everyday occurrence for runners. In fact, some runners break the law simply by existing, because they possess illegal cyberware, practice magic without a license, or are not allowed within certain countries. While some runners have legitimate jobs, many do not have SINs, so they work and travel with false identities. Much of the weaponry and gear associated with shadowrunning is also restricted, and so runners must take care to cache their gear and maintain safehouses. This gets even more complex if the runners have to cross borders, a common occurrence for established shadowrunner teams. Some jobs will take runners across borders or overseas because the sponsor backing the job wants to use operatives that are unlikely to be recognized, or maybe because the sponsor has simply burned too many bridges in that country. Other jobs may lead runners across the globe in unexpected ways—they could be chasing a sim star gone missing, or a piece of art that “walked away” from its museum home.

