



Las Vegas: Chi to the City

A Feng Shui Book by Bryant Durrell

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The section of this work titled Progress Clocks is based on the [Blades in the Dark SRD](#), product of One Seven Design, developed and authored by John Harper, and licensed under a Creative Commons [Attribution 3.0 Unported](#) license. The original implementation of clocks in tabletop gaming was in Vincent Baker's *Apocalypse World*.

The small dice icon used on each page is called [Six Sided Dice \(d6\)](#) from [Vector.me](#) (by wirelizard).

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Thanks to Atlas Games for allowing me to build on their excellent game.



Introduction

State of the Book

I started this project in the summer of 2019 — well, started writing it down, anyhow. I lost momentum when I took a two week vacation, which says something about my persistence at the moment. I don't feel too bad, as testing my ability to do long-form writing was one of the reasons I launched a Patreon around it. You've got to be ready for both positive and negative results.

And then the coronavirus came around.

This is everything I have written to date. Some of it's not terribly well-proofed. I may well come back to it later, although I'm unlikely to spin the Patreon back up.

A Note On Plot Hooks

This book is heavily informed by sandbox campaigns. Most of the plot hooks, campaign ideas, and exciting events presented don't include any kind of forced involvement on the part of the player characters. The GM should make it clear to the players that in Las Vegas, things happen all the time; it's up to the characters to decide which of those things are interesting.

2017 Mandalay Bay Shooting

On October 1st, 2017, a man (who does not deserve to be named) shot 480 people from a suite in the Mandalay Bay hotel. This is not the first time a real world tragedy occurred in a location used in a roleplaying sourcebook, nor will it be the last. It's still relatively fresh, however, and I wanted to acknowledge it here.

Don't use it as a plot element. The shooter wasn't Ascended. He wasn't a Jammer dupe. The Chairman of the Board didn't increase his security because of the shooting. Hotels are more careful, that's fine, but don't put a spotlight on the event.

I don't avoid snipers in my Feng Shui Las Vegas scenarios, but I keep an eye on the reactions of the players and I'm ready to steer clear if someone uses the X card. You might want to discuss all this with your players beforehand as well; if nothing else it's useful as an example. Smart gaming groups will talk about possible trigger events in advance, and talking about that one establishes the precedent that it's OK not to touch on certain things.



History of Las Vegas



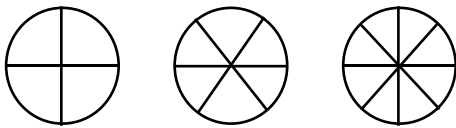
Mechanics

Clocks

One of the coolest techniques in tabletop gaming right now is the progress clock. They were introduced in *Apocalypse World*; the implementation here is drawn largely from their implementation in *Blades in the Dark*. At the core, they're just a visual way to keep track of progress towards a goal — simple enough. By using them to track NPC activity with a randomization element, though, the sandbox experience is enhanced by giving up a measure of control over exactly when things happen.

Clock Basics

A progress clock is a circle divided into segments. Divide the circle into 4, 6, 8, or 12 segments depending on a combination of how challenging the goal is and the pace you want to set. For Chi to the City usage, where we're using them as a way to track faction activity, assume that you'll be filling in 1 to 3 segments per session; that means a 6 segment clock would usually take 3 to 5 sessions to fill in.



A 4 segment clock is good for simple goals: Get Adjunct Professor Corcoran Fired, or Conceal The Armored Car Loot.

A 6 segment clock is useful for more complex goals: Figure Out Who Robbed the Armored Car, or Find Funding for Stage Magician Scholarship.

An 8 segment clock represents a pretty tricky objective! You might use these for goals like Infiltrate University of Nevada Leadership or Forge Alliance with the Guiding Hand.

Finally, a 12 segment clock represents a very difficult, time-consuming task. Complete Building the Golden Bear Casino would be a 12 segment clock. In most cases it's better to use multiple smaller clocks, though, so that the clock mechanic reflects intermediate progress. Save the really long clocks for deeply secret plans which should arrive on the player characters like a ton of bricks.

Complex faction plans can be broken into several tasks, each with its own clock. For example, another way to handle that 12 segment Golden Bear Casino clock would be to split it up into a "Purchase Land" clock, a "Secure Building and Casino Permits" clock, and an "Construct the Casino" clock. The California faction of the Ascended would have to complete all three clocks before cutting the ribbon on their shiny new casino.

Complexity does not depend on the capability of the faction pursuing the goal. Let's look at the 6 segment examples. The Ascended would certainly be able to find a few tens of thousands of dollars to fund a scholarship without much effort; it'd be more difficult for the Eaters of the Lotus. However, it's a 6 segment clock either way. When we're advancing the clock, the Ascended will probably just fill in more segments per session than the Lotus.

Remember that a clock tracks progress. It reflects the fictional situation, so the group can gauge how they're doing. A clock is like a speedometer in a car. It shows the speed of the vehicle — it doesn't determine the speed.

Assigning and Tracking Clocks

Every faction should have one to three clocks tracking projects. Factions that are closer to the player characters should have more, to ensure a rich and interesting set of problems. Factions that are rarely if ever seen should still have a clock. Making



progress towards a goal will keep them feeling real and vibrant.

The faction sections in this book suggest one clock for each faction. If one of the suggestions doesn't match your needs, throw it away.

Sub-factions can have their own clocks. The Chairman of the Board and the Golden Bears have very different goals, even though they're both Ascended. Any time you realize there's a group of NPCs working towards a common goal, give them a clock.

Variability

This mechanic is more swingy than the original *Blades in the Dark* mechanic. That's on purpose: as noted, *Feng Shui* is a game of big epic action with big epic swings, and the Secret War should move a bit more quickly than the grungy underworld criminal milieu of Daskvol. On rare occasions this system will result in backwards progress. If that's annoying, feel free to ignore net reductions in segments.

It's really easy to track clocks on index cards. Use one card per clock, and paper clip them together between sessions. This also makes it easy to dangle an ominous clock in front of players at the beginning of a session. There's nothing sacred about index cards, though, so the GM should do what works for them. Maybe they'd rather track all the factions on one sheet of paper with a row of tick boxes next to each goal; that's pretty cool too.

Clock Mechanics

The basic rule here is simple. Between each session, run through all the clocks. For each clock, make a standard Check. The Difficulty is always 10; the base Action Value depends on the general competence level of the group that owns the clock. There are

three levels of competence:

- 7 Amateurs
- 10 Professionals
- 13 Experts

Always start by filling in one segment, because *Feng Shui* is biased towards action. On a success, fill in another segment. Fill in another segment for each 6 rolled on the plus die. Erase a segment for each 6 rolled on the minus die.

If, in the GM's judgement, a group has an advantage on a given project, they get a Fortune die. Check off an extra segment for each 6 rolled on the Fortune die as well.

Clocks can also move during sessions. If the player characters come into contact with a project, and their actions should have an effect on the success or failure of that project, add or erase a segment. If this activity was the main focus of the session, consider adding or erasing an additional segment. Err on the side of player character impact on the world.

Example

The International Federation of Magicians is a competent, well-run front for the Eaters of the Lotus. They're trying to arrange a scholarship for stage magicians as part of a recruiting drive. They have a 6 segment clock for this.

After the first game session, the GM rolls. In this book, we've postulated that the IFM is a bunch of Professionals, and that works for her campaign so she's not exercising the GM's prerogative to change any damned thing the GM wants. She also throws in a Fortune dice. The IFM has no particular affinity to money or to UNLV, but stage magicians are right in their sweet spot.

The plus die comes up 3, the minus die comes up 4, and the Fortune Die comes up 3. That's a total Swerve of 2, plus the base 10 from being Professionals, for an Action Result of 12 against a Difficulty of 10 — it's a success and the GM fills in 2 segments.

During the second game session, the player characters find some material proving that



the IFM is a bunch of Satanist weirdos and drop the files off at the UNLV Bursar's office. This is a setback for the Eaters of the Lotus! The GM erases one segment from the clock.

Other Clocks

Most games inspired by *Apocalypse World* use clocks for more than just NPC goals. Integrating clocks deeper into the *Feng Shui* system is certainly doable for people who like hacking and modifying systems.

Blades in the Dark makes clocks a central part of its heist system. It uses player-facing clocks to represent progress towards a goal as part of a session. For example, making an escape from a prison can be abstracted as a longer clock. Successes at individual tasks which contribute towards the goal fill in segments depending on the degree of success.

That translates fairly cleanly to *Feng Shui* using the system outlined above. Drop the automatic one segment — it's less appropriate for a tense sequence of player character actions. It might also be necessary to drop the penalty for sixes on the minus die to avoid too much seesawing back and forth. Experiment in play and adjust as necessary.

Player character long-term projects are another great use of clocks. In *Blades in the Dark*, long-term projects are tightly integrated with a downtime system that has no cognate in *Feng Shui*. When designing a hack for this, therefore, consider implementing a way for players to spend resources on progress.



Fremont Street

History

Fremont Street is the heart of downtown Las Vegas. It's where you go for the iconic feel of the classic, somewhat more tawdry Old Vegas. If the Strip is tilted towards high rollers, Fremont Street is tilted towards everyday heroes. It's got the edge over the Strip for Las Vegas history; the Strip isn't even part of Las Vegas proper, so it's not surprising that most of Las Vegas' firsts took place along Fremont Street. However, casinos laboring under the constraints of the Las Vegas municipal codes couldn't compete with the looser regulatory regime of unincorporated Paradise. The Ascended are perfectly able to work around city laws, but why bother if you don't have to?

That made Fremont Street the location of choice for would-be casino owners who weren't in the pocket of the Ascended. If you wanted to build a hotel and casino in Las Vegas, you still had to pay respects to the Chairman of the Board, but you didn't have to pledge him your fealty. That was good enough for mundane casino developers who were unwilling to bend a knee, not to mention a number of independent actors in the Secret War.

The first casino on Fremont Street was the Golden Gate; it dates back to 1905 as a hotel. There's been gambling in that establishment continuously since 1931. A complex series of front businesses -- including a very brief period during which it was owned by the Convent of the Good Shepherd of Las Vegas — has obscured the true ownership. It's actually run by a cabal of assassins descended from European nobility.

Fremont Street houses a lot of the famous images of Las Vegas. That giant neon-limned cowboy is named Vegas Vic, and he's always lived on Fremont Street. The Golden Nugget Casino houses a 60+ pound golden nugget, aptly enough.

Lay of the Land

The part of Fremont Street everyone cares about is anchored by the venerable Golden Gate Hotel and Casino at the west end of the street. It looks as old school as you'd expect, and it's among the smallest hotels in town too. The simple facade is exactly what the Eurotrash assassins who vacation here want. They try not to do work in Las Vegas, for fear of upsetting the powers that be. A good job, a tempting target, or a show of disrespect could convince them to change their minds.

This intersection is also one end of the massive light-up canopy that covers four blocks of Fremont Street. There are over 12 million LED bulbs set into the canopy, along with 220 speakers. The installation is completely computer controlled, and there's a lights and music show every night: Viva Vision. Occasionally, to debut a new show, the music is played live on the main Fremont Street performance stage — also located at this end of the street.

Ying Mei is a talented hacker working for the Queen of the Darkness Pagoda. He has plans to dose all the drinks sold on Fremont Street with psychotropic drugs, after which he intends to play subliminal messages during the Viva Vision show. This plan has not been certified by his superiors; since Ying's boss has a poor understanding of the Contemporary Juncture, he'd want to just slap the Queen's face up there so she can order the peasants to obey.

Down a block, at the intersection of Casino Center Boulevard and Fremont Street, the four major downtown casinos each take up one corner. Clockwise, starting at the north-east:



- The Fremont Hotel & Casino, relatively unexciting unless you love penny slots
- The Four Queens Hotel & Casino, the newest hotel on this intersection (built in 1964)
- The Golden Nugget Las Vegas, the biggest hotel in downtown Las Vegas
- Binion's Gambling Hall and Hotel, home of the famous \$1 million display and the final table of the World Series of Poker

(Readers might think that the World Series of Poker moved to the Rio over a decade ago. That's a misapprehension.)

This is by far the busiest intersection of Fremont Street. It's the only place you can drive across the covered portion of the street, providing plenty of opportunities to add a high speed chase to whatever else may be going on. The two secondary Fremont Street performance stages are also nearby, next to Binion's and Four Queens respectively. It's entirely likely that on any given weekend, some musician or group who was tremendously mainstream popular back in the 2000s will be playing one of those stages.

Perceptive Secret Warriors will note that "Four Queens" is just a couple of gender swaps away from being named after the Four Monarchs. This was originally a coincidence. These days it's a semiotic signifier that shapes the feng shui of the intersection. The old school Ascended don't really understand semiotics so they aren't doing anything about this particular problem. The Golden Bears have a distinct interest but not enough leverage to effect change. Jebidiah Olson and the Eaters of the Lotus like the feng shui of Fremont Street the way it is, so he's doing what he can to shore up the financial underpinnings of the Four Queens.

Binion's is the current Fremont Street feng shui site. Fremont Street has enough metaphysical room for one casino to be significant at a time; the world's current obsession with cold hard cash means that Binion's has the place of honor wrapped up, what with the million dollar display and the World Series of Poker and all.



To seize control of Binion's feng shui energy, you'd have to take ownership of the casino. The current owners are just ordinary businessmen, so financial battle wouldn't inevitably turn into a battle in the Secret War. You can get attuned to Binion's by blowing enough money at the tables to earn regular high roller comps; expect this to cost six figures initially with a partial refresh required on at least a yearly basis.

Attuning to Binion's buys you a +1 on Gambling rolls within Binion's itself. And a -1 on Gambling rolls in any casino outside Las Vegas. Other Las Vegas casinos are neutral enough ground so that there are no bonuses or penalties.

The light show canopy ends at 4th Street, another two blocks down from the four major casinos. There's a huge mockup slot machine at this end of the street, which anchors a zip line running all the way back to the west end and the Golden Gate. To be precise, it's eight zip lines; four of them are 75 feet above the street and the other four are over 110 feet high. That's over ten stories.

There are so many ways to use the zip line! It runs all night, so the fun of hitting 40 miles per hour in a hopefully safe harness can be combined with pounding classic rock and lights. Someone's going to try and shoot someone from the zip line one of these days. Two 35-foot tall show-girl statues flank that giant slot machine; it'd be great to see them turn into giant robots. It's a marvelous toy.

One more block east, visitors can find the massive shopping complex named Neonopolis. This is mostly your standard urban shopping mall, perhaps in a slightly more financially precarious state, with one exception. (Not the wedding chapel, that's standard for malls in this city.)

The only public axe throwing range in the United States, Axeholes, is located on the first floor of Neonopolis. Even if the player characters never visit it, it's nice for the GM to know where there's a convenient source of axes in the area.



Premont Street Problems

Green Music

Khunying Genki, Thai pop star, is deeply in debt to the Seven Seas Family, an infamous Hong Kong triad. They funded her first record; while she's paid back the principle and would have paid off the entire loan at any reasonable interest rate, the Seven Seas Family is not in the business of being reasonable. They also control her producer. If she wants to stop paying them 50% of her record earnings and give back hours of master recordings, she's going to need to come up with five hundred thousand dollars in one lump sum.

She is a competent gambler but even a master blackjack counter would need a sizable stake to get to half a million dollars. Genki has slowly lost about \$50,000 from her initial bankroll and is currently holed up in the Golden Nugget trying to figure out what to do next.

Her brother, Tanawat Nantasurasaknapan, just arrived in Las Vegas. He's a Buddhist monk and a member of the Guiding Hand; he's aware that his sister is in trouble and he's determined to save her by bringing her back to Thailand and marrying her off to a decent man. He has not been outside his monastery since he was thirteen.

Genki has one more idea. There's a karaoke competition this weekend, with a grand prize of \$100,000 — enough money to belly up to a high stakes gambling table and take another shot at the money she needs.

The inevitable complication: the competition is rigged. It's intended to drop a hundred thousand into the pocket of Edwin King, a distant cousin of the Chairman of the Board. (The kid gets huffy when he feels like he hasn't earned his money; fortunately he doesn't have the self-awareness to realize he's an awful karaoke singer.) The obstacles here are a) getting the judges to play fair and b) dealing with Edwin's hurt feelings. Edwin's not afraid to express his emotions via his bodyguards.



Ways To Get Involved

- Ask the players if any of the characters are pop music fans. If so: hey, isn't that Khunying Genki, the hottest thing out of Southeast Asia, wearing some kind of head scarf disguise? Why's she crying?
- The player characters are hired to provide security for the karaoke competition. If the player characters are in good with the Ascended, they might be hired as Edwin's bodyguards.
- If any player character is a martial artist with a good reputation, Tanawat might ask him for help and guidance.

Khunying Genki (she/her)

Genki is reasonably cute but her charisma doesn't really sparkle until she's singing; that's also where her skill is. She has dreams of becoming a respected interpreter of the classic American songbook some day, and if she can get her debts paid off it might just work out. She's short and blends in just fine with the rest of Las Vegas if you don't already know who she is.

She is inclined to trust people, which is one reason she's in debt up to her eyeballs. Characters might assume it's naivety, but in actuality she's fine with taking risks and would rather live that way than close off the world. When she makes friends, they're for life, and when people do her a favor she'll want to pay it back.

Roleplaying:

- If someone offers her a gift or favor, she always accepts, because she's used to it and you never know when people will stop loving you
- She tends to relate things to her favorite lakhorns (Thai soap operas); everything's a dramatic hook
- She hums under her breath when she's thinking, usually Sinatra songs

Khunying Genki: Supporting Player

Toughness Speed

4

5

Skills: Gambling 13, Info: Pop Star 14



Tanawat Nantasurasaknapan (he/him)

Tanawat is a horribly earnest Buddhist monk who is a mile over his head. His intentions are good but his sister is not going to want to have anything to do with his kidnapping plan. (If nothing else, it'd bring the Seven Seas Family down on his monastery.) He is highly suspicious of everything he doesn't understand, and he is primed to trust anyone who speaks his language, whether metaphorically or literally. Unlike his sister, he's not aware of the risks of being so trusting.

Roleplaying:

- He sticks out like a sore thumb: green robes, shaved head, and a graceful stillness that sets him apart from most of Las Vegas
- When he sees other martial artists in action, he badly wants to study their moves; he might even try and copy a good technique in the middle of a fight
- He looks straight into the eyes of whomever he's addressing, which can be disconcerting

Tanawat Nantasurasaknapan: Featured Foe			
Martial Arts	Def	Tou	Speed
14	13	5	7

Weapons: Unarmed Strike (7), Staff (9).

Skills: Info (Religion) 12, Medicine 12

Cyclical Flow: Damage equals current shot number +5.

Prodigious Leap: Spend 1 shot to leap up to 14 meters in any direction.

Shutting It Down

The Golden Bears are chipping away at the edges, causing trouble in too many places: if they can keep the Chairman of the Board busy enough, they'll make progress somewhere. Anything that generates chaos works for this purpose.

So: they aren't trying to take control of Binion's, because that's an obvious play. Instead, they're trying to disrupt business in a million subtle ways until the place has to close for a few months — which opens up a chance for another casino to grab all that Fremont Street feng shui energy. The D Casino, newest of the Fremont Street casinos, would be a great choice. Golden Bear Holdings already owns that one.

Bryce Mackenzie is the Golden Bear agent in charge of monkeywrenching the hell out of Binion's. At any given moment he's got half a dozen different schemes working: wildcat strikes, food poisoning in the kitchens, failures of the fire alarm system forcing hotel evacuations, whisper campaigns about bad luck at the tables, street preachers and their devoted followers picketing the place of sin, and so on.

Ways To Get Involved

- Something Bryce does affects the player characters in a really annoying way. They strike back at the obvious cause, and follow the strings from there.
- A character's friend works at Binion's, and asks for help getting to the bottom of this string of bad luck. From her perspective, it really is some kind of curse.
- If the player characters are working for the Chairman, maybe someone in their organization figures out the pattern. If they're working for the Golden Bears, they could be assigned to help Bryce out.
- Friendly Fire, one of the local Jammers, is well-versed in chaotic patterns and they know the problems at Binion's aren't random. They also really feel like random chaos is their department. Accordingly, Friendly calls on the player characters to either recruit the person responsible or make them cut it out, dealer's choice.

Bryce Mackenzie (he/him)

Bryce is an African-American whiz kid from Boston by way of Cornell's excellent hospitality management program. He always suspected that the world was run by a shadowy conspiracy, he just didn't think it

was going to be an entire society of former animals. No matter; he can fit into that world just as well as the one he thought he'd need to blend with.

He's always in full suit and tie, even on weekends. Business never sleeps. He's a master at making friends at every level of society. He keeps his plans in his head, where they can't be stolen.

Roleplaying:

- He repeats your name three times when he meets you in order to fix it in his memory, probably shaking your hand all the while
- Whenever someone asks him a question, he looks up and to the right to retrieve the answer from the depths of his memory palace
- Violence makes him physically ill to the point of vomiting

Bryce MacKenzie: Supporting Player	
Toughness	Speed
4	5

Skills: Deceit 13, Info: Hotel Management 14

Bryce's Bodyguards

Bryce always has a few bodyguards nearby; he doesn't need the high end variety, because he has a time honored approach to violence which involves running away quickly, so they're just mooks. They wear suits and ties (which do not match Bryce's) and carry poorly concealed guns and muscles.

Roleplaying:

- If you catch their attention, they'll make sure you notice that they're carrying guns
- They're constantly visually sweeping the surroundings
- When it all goes down, they launch a rapid back and forth patter to keep coordinated



Bryce's Bodyguards: Mooks		
Guns/Martial Arts	Def	Speed
8	13	7

Weapons: Knife (8), Beretta M9 (10).



Feng Shui Sites

National Atomic Testing Museum

The Neon Boneyard

The Neon Boneyard is about two and a half acres of neon signs, located a few blocks north of the Fremont Street Experience on the far side of I-515. It's part of the Neon Museum, but most people use the two names interchangeably. Back in the mid-90s, Robin Andre — one of Suzie Q's Dragons — realized that all of Las Vegas' historic casinos had historic neon signs that weren't getting saved when the casinos were demolished. Robin talked the rest of the crew into running an operation to get funding to save the signs, and after a certain number of explosions and financial shenanigans, the Neon Museum was funded.

The museum gained its current location and visitor center in 2005, when a mysterious figure arranged for the museum to receive the shell of the La Concha motel. Everyone was pretty surprised when the feng shui lines of Las Vegas coalesced around the new location: apparently the curvy lines of the new visitor center were exactly what was needed to make the location truly significant.

Today, there are hundreds of neon signs scattered around the Boneyard. It's a bit of a maze, really. Tickets are cheap and the museum is wildly popular. The signs include relics from the Stardust, Treasure Island, the Hard Rock Cafe, the Desert Inn, Caesars Palace, and many more obscure locations.

Everything is very fragile, so when the inevitable fight occurs, don't forget to break things. Someone should climb up onto the neon; many signs are several stories high. Also, the Neon Boneyard is available for weddings and photoshoots, so who knows who might show up from around the corner? Secret Warriors have to get married too.

Who Controls It: Jay Ackle managed to scam his way into a board position on the historic preservation trust that Robin Andre set up. He'd tell you that he was just honoring the Dragon legacy, but you have to keep an eye on Jay. He also greatly enjoys the side benefits to attunement.

Claiming It: First, get yourself appointed to the board of the historic preservation trust. This *a c t u a l l y* wouldn't be all that difficult: like most museums everywhere, the Neon Museum is always short on money, and more money can always go to restoring more signs. Second, either symbolically or otherwise, beat Jay Ackle in battle.

Alternatively, if a new crop of Dragons shows up in town and they wind up on good terms with Jay, which is more likely



than not, he'd let them attune alongside him. This is a great first feng shui site for a player character group, since it's remarkably fragile and needs protecting.

Bonus Features: The Neon Boneyard is all about shedding light in the darkness, but it's also about making the mundane look special. This creates a nifty paradox of illusion versus illumination. Attuning to the Boneyard makes everyone in Las Vegas think of you as a native, no matter who you are or what you look like. It also gives you an unerring sense of how long someone's been living in Las Vegas, accurate to within a few months.

Seven Magic Mountains

The Simpsons House

A dozen or so miles southeast of Las Vegas, a precisely detailed replica of the Simpsons house sits between a pair of mildly confused Spanish styled houses in a completely generic suburban housing development. It was built in 1997 as the grand prize in a promotional raffle. It's no longer painted in bright primary colors on the outside, but it's still recognizable.

The inside is aggressively Simpsons-themed to the point of distraction. Frank Bernardi bought the house earlier this decade and poured most of his savings into restoring the interior to the original condition. In the process, he renewed the house's connection with an incredibly durable piece of pop culture and turned it into a minor feng shui site.

Who Controls It: Frank Bernardi, affable real estate agent and Simpsons super-fan. He's not important otherwise. He's deeply gregarious; above and beyond being a real estate agent, he really enjoys showing his home to visitors. Stop and case the joint and Frank will be inviting you inside before you know it. Have some cookies?

Claiming It: Buying the house is the easiest way to control it. However, any potential buyer will have a difficult time convincing Frank to let go of the place. Threats will work, though; he's in no position to resist once he's convinced the threats are real. You could also take over by establishing yourself as a better Simpsons fan than Frank.

Bonus Features: This isn't really a bonus, but if you decide to live inside a house famous for the stupidity of the pater familias, you're going to pick up some of Homer Simpson's cognitive failings. A good geomancer can predict this problem and with care, you could align with Lisa rather than Homer. Be careful you don't pick up her moral leanings along with her brains.



Fight Locations

The title of the book isn't "Having A Nice Cup Of Tea In Las Vegas," after all. Let's talk about places to get your fight on.

A bunch of really obvious fight locations have already been covered in *A Fistful of Fight Scenes*, a lovely booklet that comes with the *Feng Shui 2 Game Master's Screen*. In particular, you get a writeup of a casino, a nightclub, and a shopping mall — all great for Las Vegas fights. Go out and buy it!

That said, here're some more Las Vegas locations.

Food Truck Park

Food truck culture doesn't reach its pinnacle until a city gives into the inevitable and starts approving food truck parks (or pods, or lots, as you like). As of 2019, this is just starting to happen in Las Vegas. The first one is on North 10th Street in downtown Las Vegas, a mile by foot from the Fremont Street Experience. There will be more.

For the purposes of having fights, you can use this generic location as the original Las Vegas food truck park, or you could assume that everyone loves a good cluster of food trucks and drop it in front of the player characters just about anywhere. The Strip could support a food truck park for hotel and casino workers, UNLV wouldn't mind having one, and any of the lesser off-Strip casinos might want one as an additional attraction.

Description

Six food trucks, give or take a couple, are parked in two uneven rows taking up around half of a parking lot. A handful of picnic tables

occupy empty space in the middle of the trucks. An awning bearing the logo of the Las Vegas Aviators — the local AAA baseball team — provides a bit of shade to the tables. If the tables are full or if someone wants to sit alone, a bunch of those ten gallon plastic buckets make for a decent seating alternative.

The trucks are all hooked up to city power by big thick cables. One or two also have generators, but why use those when your electricity is covered by the lot rental fee? Not all of them are self-powered. The ones that aren't have obvious tow hookups.

The park is busy from the opening hour, 11 AM, up until they close. Closing time depends on the location: the Strip food trucks like to get the late night shift as it leaves the hotels, for example, but the UNLV food trucks don't bother staying open much after 9 PM. Trucks go home when the park closes, to restock and stay safe.

The most popular truck in the park is the fusion street taco truck. It has an exuberantly hand-written menu painted on an old piece of plywood and is operated by a cheerfully squabbling family. They're Latinx; their food incorporates influences from all over the place. The kimchee pork is particularly good.

Next door, the Basque food truck dishes out stews and grilled seafood plates. It's the biggest truck in the park: in a previous life it was a small school bus. Across from the Basque truck, a traditional hipster grilled cheese truck caters to the unadventurous. It's relatively small, manned by a single bearded chef. He'll do you basic sandwiches cheaper than anything else in the park, or add a variety of toppings for a reasonable surcharge. His truck is hand-painted in primary colors.

The cookie truck nearby was decorated by some pretty professional graffiti artists. The couple



who runs it bake their cookies on site, all day long. The food truck park smells great in general but it's their cookies that really dominate the scent profile with waves of cinnamon, chocolate, and vanilla. They also sell cups of milk.

Finally, since this is Las Vegas, a mobile bar built into the back of a panel van occupies one of the last food truck spaces. The bartender is a muscled woman who'll make you just about anything if you ask nicely. Her stock in trade is premixed margaritas, though, because you have to keep the rubes happy.

Things That Can Happen During The Fight

Improvised Weapons: A plate full of hot food fresh from the fryer. One of those long power cables used as a garrote. If you detach an umbrella from a picnic table, it can be used as a lance. Every food truck has its own set of knives. Some food trucks have heavy pots and pans.

- It's not hard to get most of the food trucks moving; at some point someone's going to drive a food truck through the middle of the fight.
- One of those plastic buckets would fit perfectly over an enemy's head, making them a semi-helpless target.
- Safety standards for food trucks are awful. One catches on fire after a stray bullet hits the side.
- Those power cables! They're carrying a lot of electricity. Either on purpose or by mistake, someone's going to get electrocuted.
- Food truck fans are really devoted to their favorite trucks. If it looks like the player characters are menacing the cookie couple, innocents will leap to their defense.

Who You Might Fight Here

Assassins are as likely here as they are anywhere. A target really lets her guard down when she's eating, so the food truck park is the perfect place to strike.

That bearded guy dishing out grilled cheese sandwiches isn't a chef, he's a Guiding Hand spy getting the lay of the land. He thinks the player characters spotted him. Or, perhaps, his



general lack of cooking skill pisses off his customers.

Food trucks still do a reasonable amount of business in cash, so they seem like good targets to petty crooks. (It's amazing what seems like a good target at 2 AM in Las Vegas.)

There are also not so petty crooks interested in these food trucks. The Basque truck is getting famous for its innovative use of Basque traditions melded with modern influences and there are people who'd pay anything to understand their seasoning tricks.

That really annoying celebrity chef would be one of those people if he was criminally minded, but he's not. Instead, he's here wearing a really poor disguise trying to figure out how the Basques do it by taste. He thinks he's macho, so when the fight breaks out, he's going to get involved.

Jay Ackle eats here all the damn time and he's never without either his gun or his conscience. As such, it's difficult to get in a fight here without him picking a side, even if he doesn't want to be seen making moral choices.

Wedding Chapel

There's this piece of trivia that says that there are more churches per capita in Las Vegas than there are in any other United States city. It is true, the story goes, because of the wedding chapels. Conceptually that's amusing enough so that I'm not going to fact check it. Even if it's not true, there sure are a lot of wedding chapels in these parts.

They range from elaborate cotton candy multi-lane marriage processing plants to cheesy storefronts with some lace bunting draped over the front door. One can pay anything from fifty bucks to thousands of dollars for your wedding, as suits one's sense of importance and needs.

If a would be spouse don't know which chapel they want, they can drop by the Marriage License Bureau a few blocks south of Fremont Street. It's literally surrounded by those insistent touts with trench coats full of glossy cards advertising adult wares, except these adult wares happen to be wedding chapels. One of them is actually an Ascended agent routing individuals of potential interest to a chapel owned by the Chairman of the Board, so be careful.



Description

This wedding chapel is mid-range; not too fancy and not too fly-by-night. The exterior is Victorian, with a purely decorative spire that is too large for the rest of the building. The proprietors have done their best to pretend the chapel isn't located in the middle of a desert: it's set back from the road a dozen yards and a few unhealthy Italian cypress trees do their best to screen out the world around.

Patrons can arrive in a limo if they shell out the extra money. The driveway has just enough room for the usual stretch limo to turn around. There's minimal parking in the back.

Inside, the chapel is all bland pale wood, with mostly Ikea furnishings. The entrance foyer is bisected by a desk manned by a cheery receptionist; he does double duty as a witness if a wedding party forgot to bring anyone besides the bride and the groom.

A glass cabinet by the receptionist contains an array of slightly dusty corsages and other floral arrangements, in case a wedding party needs them. The closet behind the reception desk has a few jackets in a limited number of sizes, which never actually get used.

The rest of the chapel is split into two spacious venues. Each can hold 35 people, or more if someone decides to ignore fire codes. The neutral tones of the walls really make the pinks and reds of the pews and the podium pop. Each venue is full of flowers, which on close examination turn out to be plastic.

While one venue has an electronic keyboard set up near the back, the musical accompaniment for weddings is piped in over a decent house sound system. The building is well sound-proofed so that both venues can be used at once without interference.

Finally, there's a "kitchen" in back, but it's not actually someplace you'd cook anything. It sports a big walking refrigerator for catered events and cheap bottles of champagne and three microwave ovens; that's as far as the culinary facilities go.

The chapel has the full range of services available, including an Elvis impersonator. The guy who plays Elvis has been trying out some new impersonations lately, so if customers would like to be married by Dean Martin or Charlie



Sheen, that's available too. It doesn't cost extra to have Charlie Sheen hit on the bridesmaids.

Things That Can Happen During The Fight

Improvised Weapons: That electronic keyboard. The .45 the receptionist keeps in his desk drawer. Part of a pew — they're not constructed all that sturdily. A bottle of champagne from the back. The same bottle of champagne, but with a plastic corsage stuffed down the neck and the corsage is on fire. The priest's spare wooden leg.

- The wedding processional music gets turned up so damn loud people start bleeding from the ears.
- The Elvis impersonator knows kung fu and wants to be a hero. Hey, didn't the real Elvis know kung fu?
- Ultimate meet cute: two combatants realize they've fallen deeply in love in the middle of the fight.
- The wedding going on in the other room is a mob wedding; add a third faction to the fracas.
- An impact knocks loose the forgotten rope ladder leading up to the chapel's spire. Behind the trap door there is:
 - A forgotten stash of US currency
 - A forgotten stash of high explosives
 - A kidnapping victim

Who You Might Fight Here

The chapel's main priest is just a guy making a living, but the backup priest who handles the second wedding is a washed up jewel thief hiding out someplace nobody will think to look. He freaks out when he sees the player characters.

The hottest pop star of the moment has decided to elope with her bodyguard! She is wearing a completely unconvincing fake mustache. There are any number of pop culture outlets who would pay big for photographs.

This is America, so one can't be compelled to testify against your spouse. When all other legal avenues are exhausted and one's high-paid lawyers just can't find an out, one might as well marry the government's key witness. Said witness is not a willing participant in this charade.



A bunch of people who may or may not be the Westboro Baptist Church — depends on how topical the GM feels — are picketing out front. Las Vegas marriages promote casual sex, and of course there're gay people getting married here too. If the GM wants the Guiding Hand to be on the eviler side of the spectrum, the Guiding Hand could be involved with the protest.

Strip Mall

Description

Strip malls are a lot less classy than shopping malls. This is a two story building at most, and maybe only one story. It butts right up onto the street: a tawdry U shape hugging a parking lot between its arms. There's a towering sign in the middle of the parking lot doing its best to draw in traffic. There might be some poor sign twirler on the corner making minimum wage to spin a battered plastic sign.

If it's two stories tall, a concrete balcony provides access to the second story stores. A big box store sells discount electronics at one end of the strip mall; the rest of the stores are smaller. One or two storefronts are vacant at any given time.

It smells of asphalt and oil rising up off the parking lot, particularly in the hot summer months. Closer to the storefronts, you can smell various foods in various stages of cooking. In the more run down varieties of strip mall, there's a distinct undertone of rot.

The center point in the strip mall is occupied by an outsized souvenir store, with a gaudy neon display above the door. They'll also sell tourists local event tickets: tours to the Hoover Dam, a pass to the machine gun shooting range, or tickets to the High Roller Observation Wheel. There's a guy skulking around near that store who can recommend a few strip clubs if anyone asks.

Next to the souvenir store, a storefront has been converted into a martial arts dojo. It's hard to say how authentic the teaching is without closer investigation. The dojo's sign doesn't make it clear what tradition the sensei is following.

A sandwich shop, probably a chain, sits right next to a Chinese restaurant of sorts. The Chi-

nese restaurant has a tourist menu and a real person menu; the latter is not translated into English. A few doors down, there's a decent taqueria and a little further on, a donut shop is happy to serve anyone who's awake between 3 AM and noon.

As far as services go, the strip mall houses a hairdresser with an established and loyal clientele, a payday lender/tax advisor, a dry cleaner, and a Western Union. The fitness center across from the sandwich shop seems to have closed down a month or two ago, judging from the layer of dust visible through the front window.

Next to the former fitness center, a discount liquor store advertises the best prices on cold beer found anywhere in Las Vegas. This is a lie. Nonetheless, it's the busiest store in the entire strip mall.

A narrow alley runs behind the strip mall with just enough room for a truck to deliver supplies and retail goods to the back doors of each store. Along the walls of the alley, wooden pallets and dumpsters make the alley even narrower.

Most of the strip mall stays open until 10 PM. A few stores — the souvenir store and the liquor store certainly — are open 24 hours a day. At night, the mall is illuminated by the colorful neon signs of the stores and the yellowish glow of the sodium street lighting above.

Things That Can Happen During The Fight

Improvised Weapons: Tools from a hardware store. Pans full of oil from the donut shop. A rusty length of banister from the second floor balcony. A length of neon tubing. A florescent light bulb, ripped from its socket. A foot-long sandwich? Only for comedic value.

- A loud thumping sound comes from the trunk of a black SUV parked at the very edge of the parking lot. Friend or foe? Someone's sure to find out.
- The proprietor of the payday lender is running a cash business and has taken appropriate precautions. He comes bursting out of his store with a sawed off



shotgun and no shortage of ill intent.

- A double-decker tour bus, full to the brim with tourists, plows into the strip mall. It comes to rest at a slight angle; the upper deck is even with the balcony.
- Someone leaps into the fray from the second floor balcony. This is nearly obligatory.
- An errant blow or grenade weakens the strip mall sign and it begins to topple. That's twenty-plus feet of aluminum, steel, and plastic coming down on someone's head, and the wiring for the lighting is sparking dangerously.
- A combatant gets thrown through a plate glass window, causing damage to both the combatant and whatever was being displayed in the storefront.
- Bottles of high proof alcohol from the liquor store combined with souvenir T-shirts make excellent Molotov cocktails.
- Need a battering ram in a hurry? Hot wire a car.
- The dry cleaner is full of toxic chemicals. Many of them are also explosive. Blow things up.
- Don't forget the payday lender's cash-driven business! If someone needs a distraction, there are literally thousands of dollars available in cash drawers and more than that in a safe in the back.

Who You Might Fight Here

Martial artists, of course, like the presence of a dojo wasn't a dead giveaway. Most likely they're green novices under the supervision of a more experienced master, but one never knows when one's going to find a secret front for the Guiding Hand.

Cops are more than likely. One or more of the strip mall's businesses is going to be involved with the Las Vegas underworld. These kinds of fly-by-night businesses are great for money laundering. There might just be one patrol car cruising around keeping an eye on the place; there might also be a full-scale raid in progress.

This is the United States under Trump, mind you, so the raid could also be ICE looking for illegal immigrants. How much of that will player characters tolerate?

Speaking of which: fugitives can hide out in the vacant storefronts for a week or so before anyone notices. There are lots of interesting people who might be on the run: Netherworld denizens, former Pledged turned traitor, or demons reluctant to return to the Thousand Hells. (Not all fugitives are good guys.)



Factions

The Ascended

Overview and History

The Ascended rule Las Vegas. It's not subtle. Look at the MGM Grand, right there in the middle of the Strip: that's a pair of lions guarding the doors.

This is how it's been since the Mafia moved into Las Vegas in 1946. When Bugsy Siegel built the Flamingo, Samuel Cheng came right along with him. The opportunity was obvious. Las Vegas was going to be built largely from scratch, and it was going to be full of gaudy, unusual casinos. The casinos were going to be full of people gambling, begging for luck, cursing their fate. The Ascended had learned from their experiences in Macau. There is no better place to build feng shui sites than a new metropolis full of casinos.

And so it was in Las Vegas. The Sahara, the Riviera, Binion's Horseshoe, the Tropicana — all the great casinos of the 50s were controlled by Samuel Cheng and his family no matter whose name was on the paperwork. He put Order of the Wheel members into key positions on the Nevada Casino Board, and made sure only casinos in advantageous locations were approved.

Howard Hughes wasn't Pledged. The Ascended were deeply alarmed when he showed up in Las Vegas in 1966 with his entourage and started buying hotels. He wasn't, thankfully, all that interested in the Secret War by that point. The daring adventurer he was when he was young was long since consumed by the aging, paranoid recluse he'd become. Still, the legend of his exploits as an independent player was well-known, and the Ascended knew Hughes knew what they were up to. Consider his famous quote: "I like to think of Las Vegas in terms of well-dressed man in a dinner jacket, and a furred female getting out of an expensive car." Furred indeed.

The Transformed Lion known today as the Chairman of the Board was only a cub in 1966. He saw the opportunity to make his bones by

handling the Hughes problem. As has become his trademark, he seized his chance. The Chairman spent the next two years engaged in psychological warfare: discovering Hughes fears, exploiting them, and driving Hughes into a frenzy of paranoia.

Hughes left town on Thanksgiving Day, 1970. Samuel Cheng named the Chairman as his heir on Christmas of the same year.

Many of Hughes employees stayed behind to run his Vegas empire. The struggles between Hughes' CIA fixer and the Mormon Mafia who managed his casino holdings are too interesting to be contained in an off-hand paragraph, and have little to no effect on the current Secret War. However, Howard Hughes' Men of Action are (mostly) still around.

Howard Hughes' Men of Action

There were five of them back in the day; best buddies, devoted rivals, brawlers with hearts of steel. Skiff Crane was the front man: a confirmed bachelor with a deft knack for card tricks and smooth talking. Jackie Santiago was the muscle: six foot tall, and punched way above her size. Holst Fischer could drive anything with two or more wheels, chewing on a cigar while he explained how he learned to speed on the autobahns. Cricket "Bullseye" Singh was a crack shot who had a nasty sideline in knife work. And Timmy Grey did a bit of everything whenever it needed doing. He knew people who knew people.

They worked for Howard Hughes, reporting directly into him and taking care of the weird stuff. Hughes wanted the Secret War to leave him alone, but even in the late 60s some people still remembered the real reason he built the Spruce Goose. His Men of Action kept mystic trouble out of his hair.

After the fall of Hughes' Vegas empire, they were left at loose ends, but the enemies they'd made along the way were still dangerous. The five of them elected to stick together, taking odd jobs here and there. Sometimes they'd dip into the Netherworld to shed some heat.



Nowadays they're all in their seventies, albeit well-preserved. They remain unattached to any faction, but they're a great set of mentors for a set of player characters. They'd also make unusual (and surprisingly effective) opposition. A few ideas for using them in your campaign:

- Jackie Santiago is the only one who remembers where a certain body is (literally) buried
- Skiff Crane is dying and he has one last change to redeem his soul by taking down the Guiding Hand sifu who Skiff put into power in the first place
- Jay Ackle is cashing in a debt from the 1980s; he wants the player characters to do well but he has to keep his hands clean, so the Men of Action are going to have to mentor them
- Timmy Grey's nephew is in over their head and the player characters are in a position to help out

And Now?

Smash cut forward to 2015. The Chairman of the Board has ruled Las Vegas with an iron paw since the 1980s, when Samuel Cheng died. There were a few years of neon-colored warfare, but barring a freak portal into the 1986 juncture, the players won't ever need to worry about that. (You're looking for the Miami '86 pop-up juncture writeup from *Secrets of the Chi War*, for the record.)

By 2015, there'd been nearly 30 years of peace, just the way Ascended claim to like it. In 2015, though, the Golden Bears of California showed up to have a violent discussion about which Ascended family deserved to be running Las Vegas. It's been a war at varying temperatures of hot and cold ever since.

The Golden Bears came in hot to start with, correctly assessing the Lions as unlikely to leave peacefully. The hammer was a pair of fraternal twins, Elroy and Sally Kerns. The Kerns were terrible assassins, because they'd never much enjoyed being subtle. As shakedown artists and thugs, they excelled.

The Kerns had a squad of Pledged along with them, and behind them, Landon

Goulet of the Los Angeles Goulets plotted strategy. They figured the old man might have gone soft: one big push, and maybe he'd decide that holding onto a couple of casinos in his old age was all he really needed.

It's *Feng Shui*, so of course they were wrong. Two years later, Elroy Kerns was dead; Sally Kerns was licking her wounds in Reno and plotting revenge; the Unspoken Name had made it very clear to both sides that they needed to dial down the public violence; and Landon Goulet was busy proving that his family should trust him.

In 2018, the Golden Bears started their next offensive strategy. This time, Landon went financial. He'd spent the last year working in Silicon Valley to build up a war chest. Using a dizzying array of shell companies, with a little help from an elite cadre of Transformed Snake hackers, he purchased enough land to get a solid foothold in Las Vegas. Legally.

Now it's a cold war between Bears and Lions. The Chairman of the Board runs the defense from a private suite at the MGM Grand, protected by the fu lions out front. They're just pretending to be statues. Landon's still working remotely, but he shows up at the construction site of the Golden Bear Casino every week or so.

The Lions of Las Vegas

[NPCs and stats to come.]

The Golden Bears

[NPCs and stats to come.]

Stuck In The Middle

The ongoing Ascended conflict opens up plenty of possibilities for player characters to get involved. We're going to explore a couple of those possibilities, at opposite ends of the morality spectrum. For optimal Hong Kong melodrama, consider starting at the most ethically grey end of the spectrum and working slowly towards sunlight!



If you do this, though, make sure the players are on board with the general direction: you don't want to glumly watch characters grow more ruthless if you were counting on them saving the world.

Balance Points

Both of these campaign paths benefit from tracking the relative power of the two Ascended families in town. Thus, this is an excellent place to use clocks. Set up an 8 segment clock for the Golden Bears, and a 12 segment clock for the Lions. Every time the characters succeed in dealing a blow to one of the families, fill in one segment — two if it's something really major. If, at any point, one of the families has twice as many unfilled segments as the other, that family can deal a final blow to the other.

But that's not unstable enough: the players could pretty much control those clocks. Let's spice it up a bit. After every adventure, roll the dice for each family. The one that's ahead on the clocks gets a +1. The family with the higher Swerve fills in another segment of their clock — two if the difference between Swerves is larger than 5. You should come up with the exact means by which one family beats the other, but it should be an event the characters can find out about. Or, if you and your players like player-generated ideas, throw the question over to them. They'll come up with something interesting.

Example: the characters have just finished freeing professional wrestler Tiger Mask VI from the MGM Grand, and the Chairman can no longer use him to promote his casinos. You fill in one segment on the Lions clock; since we're well into the campaign, this brings the Lions down to 6 open segments. The Golden Bears are at 4 segments; nobody falls over yet.

Then you roll dice for both the Golden Bears and the Lions. The Lions get a 6 (plus) and a 3 (minus). Rerolling the 6, they get an additional 2. $8 - 3 = 5$ Swerve. The Golden Bears roll a pedestrian 4 (plus) and 3 (minus). Their Swerve is 1. The Lions beat the Golden Bears, so the Bears fill in a segment and wind up at... 3 segments. Disaster ensues. You explain how Sally Kerns showed up and betrayed the Golden Bears. If you're

running a campaign where the characters are trying to take down both sides, the Chairman starts looking around for those annoying gnats who were his second worst problem for the last year. A new phase of the campaign has begun.

Taking Down The Man

Your players want to be Dragons; or, at least, they want to be good guys. This is the expected mode of play for *Feng Shui*, and Las Vegas is a city ripe for saviors. The Ascended are weakened by their internal struggles, so they're easier to damage and ultimately topple.

The complication along this path is balance. If the characters do more damage (of whatever type) to one Ascended family, they risk tipping the Ascended war in one direction and ending it. If this happens, the victors are not going to go easy on them just because they helped out. This is probably where you'll get the most use out of those Balance Point rules.

Since this is the default type of campaign frame, it's pretty easy to kick this off. Even so, asking your players to provide details is a great trick. "So, what did the secret masters of the world do to you that made you want to seek revenge?" "Hey, how did Rochelle happen to fall in love with the son of the Chairman of the Board?" "What did you witness in the bowels of a Silicon Valley data center that made you decide the Golden Lions needed to be taken down?" That kind of thing.

One cool thing about this campaign frame: you can make the Secret War a much slower revelation than the usual *Feng Shui* campaign. At first glance, the Ascended are just another secretive conspiracy ruling the world. You don't have to get into the Transformed Animal aspects right off the bat. Build up the secret and make sure the player characters know there are things nobody's willing to tell them. The first time they see Jebidiah Olson fry someone with bolts of lightning, it'll be tremendously satisfying for everyone.

Here're a few specific plot hooks to get you going:



- The Golden Bears are throwing a party on the top of their unfinished hotel to celebrate: they just snagged a big UFC fight card for their opening night a year from now. Everyone will be there. If something embarrassing happens to a UFC bigwig, they might lose the card.
- The Chairman of the Board has a father who absolutely refuses to work with him. Big secret. The Golden Bears found out. Worse: the Chairman's father runs the dojo where the player characters work out, and the Golden Bears show up to kidnap him while they're around.
- Plaype notices the player characters doing Secret War things; she's a smart one! She decides to test their morality by hiring them to retrieve an unspecified package from a guest room in the MGM Grand. After the characters have gotten past security and so on, they find out that the package is a baby chimpanzee. Adorable.

Cashing Checks

True fact: I've played in *Feng Shui* campaigns in which our characters worked for the Ascended. It was fun! In retrospect I wish we players had done a better job of talking about expectations and directions, because the campaign fell apart when we had to make some hard decisions about our future employment, but otherwise it was great.

You and your players may want to go this way, either as a starting point before the characters wise up or as a long-term campaign. Let's be clear: the Ascended are villains, even if they sometimes fight people who're worse. As the GM, you can nudge them into a less villainous direction, but *Feng Shui* (and this book) are written with Ascended as bad people. As strongly hinted just a paragraph ago, talk this stuff out before you take it on.

Once you've bitten off this particular piece of action, you'll want to think about campaign entry points. The first question here: do the characters know about the Secret War at the start of the game? If so, they're probably working for one or the other family. They probably have at least one Transformed Animal among them. Ask the players lots of questions about how they

met and how they came to work for a bunch of lions or bears, as the case may be.

If the players want to play a game where they slowly learn about the Secret War and get swept up in events, that works too. Focus your questions on the reasons why they're going to want to accept a job offer from a mysterious woman wearing a perfect tuxedo. That, in fact, is a perfectly reasonable question. Or, perhaps, "How much trouble would you need to be in before you signed over the next five years of your life to someone who could get you out of it?"

While the characters are working for the Ascended, adventures will tend to focus on corporate conflict even if it's expressed with fists and guns. It's no fun being the people who're beating up on independent players like Jay Ackle. Give the players tough peers to play against. If you've decided you want to play a redemption saga, show the players the effects of the Ascended battles on the innocent and play up their superior's demands to do ruthless jobs.

Broaden the scope of the campaign to places other than Las Vegas. Keep Las Vegas as the hub of the campaign, but the Ascended are a global power. Give the players a look into that world from time to time.

Some plot hooks:

- The best sushi chef in the world has agreed to a six-month residence at the other family's flagship casino. It would be an absolutely intolerable crime against cuisine if he were to come to any harm, but he also must not be allowed to lend his prestige to the enemy.
- Your family made the error of hiring a family of rednecks to harass one of the opposition's mid-level businesses. The rednecks are too loud, though, and the Unknown Name can't be woken up. The good news: you can be as noisy as you like about taking them down.
- Kathy Goulet just challenged Bobby Mané to an old fashioned Ascended Transformed Animal duel — naked, no guns, no weapons, tooth versus claw until someone runs out of blood — and either Kathy or Bobby needs you as backup. The other side tries to cheat. Of course.

- Hey, you guys, how about you figure out how to liberate the Maltese Falcon from those assholes who are barely even Ascended? Yes, it's the real one. Yes, it's pretty well-defended. No, it's basically just a prestige thing.

One final option for players who want to be Pledged goons: they could also play the Unknown Name's minions. In this case, they're a secret squad sent to Las Vegas in order to weaken both sides. The Unknown Name can't be seen working against two of the three most important United States families; he's powerful but not invulnerable. Thus, the player characters will need to sabotage, undermine, and discredit both the Lions and the Golden Bears without ever revealing who they're working for.



The Dragons

Overview and History

The Dragons are dead.

In the 90s, the legendary bodyguard Suzie U ran the local Dragon cell out of a back room at the Desert Inn. Talk to anyone who was around back then and you can get endless stories out of them: stories about Suzie and her best friend Robin Andre, and that wall of muscle Bobby Chang, and tech wizard Binary Mode. And more stories about the cast of characters surrounding those four — but they were the heart of it.

It went wrong after the Desert Inn went down. Suzie never found another place she liked, and they say a sense of vague discomfort took the edge off her. In 2007 the changing flow of the world's chi caught up with her, and she took a bullet keeping a movie star alive. Robin went out with her that night. Bobby raged against the whole city all the following week; the outcome of that story was certain but no less tragic for that.

They say Binary Mode is out there somewhere under an assumed name and an assumed life, still tracking down the man who set Suzie up. Might just be something people say to make themselves feel better, though.

Suzie's a legend among the Secret Warriors of Las Vegas. The GM should tell all the stories about her that they can muster without worrying too much about how well they line up. Players also get to make up their own stories about her. The more rumors, the better!

Who Killed Suzie U?

That one's up to the GM. Choose wisely: this is a mystery that should only be spent to define a major antagonist. Options include:

- The Chairman of the Board got tired of the Dragons running wild in his city, so he called in a marker from the Sting of the Scorpion.



- Suzie held the last fragment of the legendary Manual of Five Dragon Punches, passed down through the ages in her family. The Guiding Hand wanted it. She wouldn't give it up.
- Suzie faked the whole thing so she could drop out of sight and retire; everyone gets tired eventually. Bobby helped her out and Robin was in on the whole thing; all three of them are living on a farm in Iowa.
- It was exactly what it looked like: a bodyguard job gone wrong. Nobody set up a thing. The man who pulled the trigger is the only one who heard her last words, and whatever they were, they changed the course of his life. He's been working to pay off the harm he did ever since. If he can set the player characters on the path of righteousness, he can finally set down his load.
- The King of the Fire Pagoda is Suzie's father. He spent a hundred years trying to convince her to join him, but in the end you've got to write off your bad bets before they sour everything.

The Current State of Play

The Dragons are mostly dead.

Jay Ackle is the last person in Vegas who you could call a Dragon, and Suzie U never really trusted the private investigator back when she was alive. It's hard to blame her — Jay's a Transformed Jackal, and he's not too picky about his clients. The Secret Warriors who know him would say he's more of an information broker than a private investigator. He's sold secrets to everyone from the Queen of the Darkness Pagoda to the NSA.

Nonetheless, he's what passes for a benevolent influence in Las Vegas these days. If anyone really knew him, they'd know he's carrying a heavy load of guilt and a finely tuned sense of responsibility. Back in the day, he always told himself that Suzie and her crew would make sure nothing overly terrible happened. These days, he doesn't have that convenient rationale. There's nobody to stand up for the little people but him.



Jay's still not much of an activist. He's risk-adverse and he has no desire to wind up in whatever ditch holds Suzie's corpse. He badly wants to return to the era when he could think of himself as an influencer from the shadows, with a bright brash band of Dragons drawing all the attention. Perhaps the player characters could fill that role.

Suzie U's Files

One thing that's consistent about those Suzie U stories: she kept great notes. She wasn't generous with her knowledge, but she sure knew where the bodies were buried, and she sure wrote it all down.

She kept her notebooks in a series of battered military surplus ammo boxes, each one padlocked, each padlock with a different combination. It's unclear what happened to them after she died. The prevailing theory is that they must have been destroyed, because otherwise the current possessor would have used them already. This theory is popular, in part, because it lets a lot of people sleep better at night.

It's true that the value of those notes would decay over time as people die and feuds are buried and safety deposit boxes are cashed out. On the other hand, even if the half-life of those notes is a decade, that'd mean half of them would still be explosive.

Spoiler: Suzie U's files are not gone. Their exact location is again a matter for you to decide. If someone has the files, they don't know what they have, explaining why they haven't been used. (Or maybe you know better and you have another rationale in mind. We're not the boss of you.)

Here are a few exciting things player characters could find in those files.

The Armageddon Symphony

In 1945, the mad composer Lukas Laukaitis wrote a symphony in violent reaction to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Like so many, he thought nuclear weaponry signified the beginning of the end of the world. Like very few, he had sufficient creative skill to embody his feelings in a direly per-

suasive fashion.

When his untitled symphony is played in full by an orchestra of over twelve members, it drives those who listen mad. (The musicians are fine, although they may feel appropriately guilty.) The first movement is gentle and pastoral. The second movement is a moment of impending dread. The third movement leaves harmony behind and drives listeners into a frenzy of nihilistic despair.

Suzie had a copy of the sheet music and a worn VHS tape containing the only recorded performance. She never tested the power of the tape, of course. She also has Laukaitis' son's last known address.

The Green Man Group

Area 51 had a real alien. "Had," because Suzie U and the Dragons rescued or kidnapped it. The alien is now leading a deeply gratifying life as an assistant principal in Henderson, just southeast of Las Vegas. Nothing weird, just digging the suburban American lifestyle. It grills meat on the weekends.

Suzie did not write down the alien's name or address, because the alien was a client. She did write down the names of the people who hired her to bring them the alien. They wanted to be clients, but apparently misunderstood the whole bodyguarding concept. She never had time to figure out why they were paying for alien specimens, but the Area 51 alien wasn't the only one they were interested in.

Map to the Netherworld

Hundreds of miles of flood drains and other tunnels run underneath Las Vegas. They're poorly charted — even the city records don't have a complete map — and none of the maps in circulation show the location of the Netherworld portals at the very bottom of the tunnels.

Suzie U used to use those portals to hide out when things got too hot. It's tricky to get that far down; the top level of tunnels is populated by people with nowhere else to go and no reason to help a surface dweller out and further down there are giant alliga-



tors and worse. (Suzie treated the homeless like people; that's half the trick right there.)

Read her notes and you'll get most of what you need for easy Netherworld access. Figuring out how to convince the albino Rat King to give you safe passage is up to you.



Eaters of the Lotus

Overview and History

More than one Secret Warrior has been unpleasantly surprised by the Eater of the Lotus presence in Las Vegas. There are no cackling eunuchs — well, one, but he's an exception. The juncture disposition to magic is, as is the rest of the modern juncture, Hostile. Who'd expect a bunch of fanatical sorcerers under those conditions?

It turns out that close-up magicians are pretty dangerous too.

In 1994, a completely average stage magician going by the name The Incredible Jebidiah hitched a ride to Vancouver looking for work. (He had a Puritan preacher gimmick, which was one reason why his employment wasn't steady.) In Vancouver, while drinking near the harbor, he got into a conversation with Joshua Navarro, a deck hand from one of the cruise ships in port. Joshua had too much to drink and told Jebidiah all about this legendary sorcerous manual that had been lost in Seattle during the Gold Rush. He liked to spend his free hours looking for that kind of thing.

Jebidiah was an average magician, but even an average magician makes a pretty good pickpocket. When he left the bar that night, he had Joshua's battered notebook in his pocket. The next morning he talked a short haul trucker into giving him a ride to Seattle. He spent the next two months digging deep into the tunnels under Pioneer Square. Even an average magician needs to be reasonably charismatic; Jebidiah talked to the right people, crossed the right palms with silver, and tracked the legendary Manual of the Silk Ribbon Sorcerers to a rare bookstore in the Belltown neighborhood of Seattle.

After another month of planning and recruiting, Jebidiah and his new crew broke into Arundel Books, stole the Manual, and headed south. Once they got across the Oregon border, they cut east on I-84, then south through Boise and the Nevada desert. 48 hours after leaving Seattle, they were in Las Vegas. Jebidiah figured it was a great city to lose yourself in, especially as a stage magician. He was right.



The International Federation of Magicians

The International Federation of Magicians has one chapter, located here in Las Vegas. As far as most people know, it's just a second-rate professional association where lounge magicians go to feel good about themselves. The members tend to be older or too young to know better. You don't get reciprocal privileges with the Magic Castle in Los Angeles or anything.

In reality, it's Jebidiah's branch of the Eaters of the Lotus. After he made contact with a few Beijing-based sorcerers back in the 1980s, he decided to build his own power base in Las Vegas. He didn't want to control the Lotus, but he did want to have enough clout so that he wouldn't be completely assimilated. Thus, he needed recruits.

The International Federation of Magicians was perfect. In 1995, it had a membership of 5 and no assets to speak of. Jebidiah waltzed in, ran for office on no particular pretense, flashed some real skills based on real sorcery, and took over unopposed. Once his name was on paper as the President, he introduced the useful members to real sorcery. Jack Sanderson said no and got fed to demons. Maggie Choi was smarter than Sanderson — she just went to ground without bothering to resign first, so she's still around. The other three members knuckled under and became the core of Jebidiah's cabal.

Today, the International Federation of Magicians has 15 members. Jebidiah recruits for loyalty and skill, not numbers. They are headquartered in a small warehouse with an office space attached. They could afford better, but Jebidiah has never believed in being flashy.

The IFM Office

The office is located on the far side of the airport, in a dingy industrial park. It's a lone single-story building, about 80 feet long and 50 feet wide, with grey corrugated steel walls. Nobody's ever made any effort to conceal the building's humble nature. There's a small free standing sign outside marking it as the home of the International Federation of Magicians.



Inside, the building is still mostly open space with a small five room office carved out of one corner. The cover story is that the IFM provides storage space for magic show props as a service to its members. In reality, the warehouse space is a sort of sorcerous shooting gallery where members practice their skills.

This results in occasional loud noises, but that's why Jebidiah chose a remote location. He's unaware that a motorcycle gang will be renting out a warehouse next door in the near future. If he's lucky, they won't notice their neighbors.

The actual office space has a reception area, Jebidiah's office, a single bathroom, a second office space with three desks in it, a kitchenette, and a conference room with a table and eight mismatched chairs. The walls are decorated with an array of show posters: tradition says that when a member gets a headlining gig, a copy of their poster goes up on the walls.

People

Jebidiah Olson

Jebidiah's public face: he's an aging stage magician with a ton of raw talent and not very much drive. On the one hand, you've got the greats like Teller and David Blaine, who've figured out how to use their art to create a lifestyle both satisfying and lucrative. On the other hand, you've got guys like Jebidiah who could be great but don't know how to construct a persona. It's a pity, really.

He's President of the Las Vegas chapter of the International Fellowship of Magicians. This is not as cool as it sounds.



The Jammers

Overview and History

The advantage of being a cybernetically enhanced ape in Las Vegas is that you're not going to be the weirdest thing in anyone's field of vision. The disadvantage of being a cybernetically enhanced ape in Las Vegas is not much, actually. Good deal: the Battlechimp will take it.

The Jammers arrived in Nevada in 1998, at one of the early Burning Man events. Talk about a place where an ape won't stand out! Plus it was an excellent source of contacts and information. The first Jammer to visit the playa was a young orangutang who hadn't yet found her freedom name. One day into the madness and she knew her real name wasn't Experiment 8342. She was Plaype.

"No, not Play-ape! Plaype! Damn it!"

She stuck with it anyhow.

By the turn of the millennium, Plaype and her cohorts had a regular camp at Burning Man: the Simian Research Laboratory. The camp was unabashedly simian-themed, as if daring the Ascended or other interested parties to do something about it. Nobody ever did. If Green Rain is correct, and she generally is, it's because every single Burning Man attendee is attuned to a temporary autonomous Feng Shui site at once, and none of them want the outside world to interfere. That's enough signal jamming to keep the Simian Research Laboratory camp safe.

In 2007, Plaype met the exuberantly violent Friendly Fire. Ze was an easy convert to the Jammer cause. Ze was also an accountant, which turned out to be extremely useful for converting the Simian Research Laboratory into a non-profit company based in Las Vegas. Plaype moved from 2056 to Las Vegas permanently once Friendly Fire found some cheap office space. This base made it substantially easier to host a Burning Man camp every year.

The Jammers used (and use) the camp for all kinds of things. It was a great place for

exhausted warriors to recharge their batteries, although in some cases they came out overly pacifistic for Furious George's tastes. It also serves as an swap meet, welcoming other secret warriors who wanted to deal with the Jammers. Mostly they traded information, but now and again someone showed up with useful material goods.

In 2010, Plaype figured out how to build a camp that had a temporary Netherworld portal at the center of it. The cost of this was very high — you need a lot of rare earth elements and just the right collection of artists to make this work — but it was worth executing every few years. Those years were great for smuggling Jammers into the contemporary juncture without being noticed.

After the Chi Bomb went off, Plaype got serious. She'd been drifting away from the Jammers for a few years; their radically explosive ideology was not compatible with the radical inclusion of Burning Man. However, the Battlechimp's new-found remorse fit in just fine. In 2016, she joined the board of the Burning Man Project and solidified the Jammers' safe haven within the Burning Man festival.

Friendly Fire remains allied with the Jammers, more out of loyalty to Plaype than out of compatible ideologies. This situation is not completely stable.

Swap Meet?

Burning Man is supposed to be a gift economy. How does the swap meet work? Well...

Look, it's the Jammers. It wasn't well thought out. After a couple of angry arguments in year one, Plaype revised her scheme and declared her swap meet "just a place where you can offer people things, and sometimes they wind up with extras of a different thing, so they offer those, right?"

These days you have angry fights when two secret warriors aren't on the same wavelengths about their gifts, but that's at least not a violation of the Burning Man ethos.



Simian Research Laboratory

Besides being a tremendously cool Burning Man camp, SRL is a two-person office in Las Vegas, west of I-15. The office is just a couple of rooms in a three story office building. Friendly Fire keeps a server there; it's heavily encrypted.

As a non-profit business, SRL exists for two purposes. As noted, it's the shell company that puts on a Burning Man camp every year. It's also a complex series of tax dodges that allows nootropic drug manufacturers to avoid paying federal taxes in exchange for participating in somewhat dodgy animal research programs. Namely, what happens if you feed smart drugs to other simians?

This is illegal enough so that Friendly Fire has to launder their activities through all sorts of fronts. Player characters could trip over SRL any time they decide to investigate financial weirdness. If they're working for a faction, they might well discover that SRL is behind that inexplicable recurring charitable donation coming from the faction's bank accounts.

A less financially-oriented inevitable consequence: at some point Friendly Fire is going to get tired of being peaceful and organize a heist to free a bunch of monkeys from jail. Um, I mean from a zoo. Xe'll have to hire mercenaries for that, of course. And store the monkeys somewhere.

At any given moment the SRL office is likely to house a shipment of nootropic drugs, legal or otherwise; a smaller simian in transit to someplace better; a small gaggle of Jammers newly arrived in the Contemporary Juncture; or an anarchist computer hacker who needed crash space for a day and who must not notice anything unusual about the place.

Burning Man

Burning Man is the framework for the world's biggest transient feng shui site. It shouldn't really work. Creating a feng shui site isn't just a matter of slapping together a

bunch of concentric circles with a sculpture in the middle; if it was, everyone would be doing it. It works here, though. Apparently if you're very careful about encouraging creativity and you lay down just enough cultural structure to keep people aimed in the same conceptual discussion without laying down so much structure that you stifle them, you can rebuild a feng shui site year after year.

This feng shui site is also known as Black Rock City.

Imagine a circle 1.5 miles in diameter. Two thirds of the arc of the circle is occupied by concentric paths wide enough to drive down. There are also radial avenues extending from the center, about which more later, all the way out to the edge. The other third of the circle is empty.

The streets contain rows of camps. Each camp has a theme; sometimes multiple camps come together as a village with a shared theme. Creativity is highly encouraged. More creative camps with a good track record tend to be towards the middle of the circle.

The 65,000 residents of Black Rock City can be anything and they can have anything with them. That's sort of the point, right? There are painters and sculptors and conceptual artists and musicians; there are also people who love all of the above and just want to revel in it. There are a lot of drugs. There are curiosity seekers and explorers. There are even Silicon Valley technologists who want to be at Burning Man but not be of Burning Man, as it were. Those last are a danger to the creative vibe but nobody's figured out to handle them quite yet.

We're discussing Burning Man in the context of the Jammers, because it's a very important event for them, but it's a sure bet that you'll find other Secret Warriors there. There are Dragons for certain, the ones who're left, but there are also independents and servants of the Four Monarchs and certainly some Eaters of the Lotus. It's such a good place not to be noticed.

In the center of it all, in the center of the circle, you'll find The Man. He's a statue, dozens of feet high, who is ritually burned on the Saturday of each year's event. It's



hard to imagine any better place to stage a fight, although that would be distinctly against the spirit of Burning Man.

At the edge of the center space, in the middle of the empty section of the arc, there is a Temple. This is a place of remembrance and solace. It is also burned every year, the day after The Man, on Sunday.

Who Controls It: Nobody! Not really. There are three distinct entities who control aspects of Burning Man, though: the Burning Man Project non-profit, the Bureau of Land Management, and the people who attend. Any one of these groups could drastically change the nature of Burning Man if they acted in concert.

The Burning Man Project oversees Burning Man as a whole. It's the entity which negotiates land use contracts, sets the rules, and sells tickets. Without the Burning Man Project, there would be nobody who has the experience and contacts to make something this insane work. Plaype is one of 16 board members of the Burning Man Project.

The Burning Man Project also determines each year's theme and selects which Temple proposal will be built. This could significantly influence the chi energy flowing through Black Rock City if someone was of a mind to experiment.

The BLM grants permits to hold Burning Man every year. This provides a destructive means of control, but it's control nonetheless: the authorities have never been totally happy with Burning Man and if it wasn't for that reservoir of chi energy the burners create every year, the event would have been shut down by now.

The attendees are perhaps the most important entity in this triad, but they are also the least likely to make any decisions as a unit. Watch out for trends, though.

Claiming It: If you show up and embrace the spirit of Burning Man, you're going to attune to Black Rock City. This counts as a feng shui site just like any other. You automatically lose attunement at the end of the event as the Temple burns.

Bonus Features: It's one of the best parties in the world. Alternatively, it's one of the

best art events in the world. Alternatively, it's one of the best therapy sessions in the world. Alternatively, combine any or all of the above.

Desert Fighting

Black Rock City is a huge city full of weird ass sculptures and cars and temporary housing structures. It's full of people who are highly invested in a peaceful vibe, and in our world it's not a violent place. But this is *Feng Shui*, so there are going to be fights, and it's a great setting for them.

Not A Total Anarchistic State

Black Rock City is not a pure autonomous zone: the playa is patrolled by no fewer than six official law enforcement agencies, from the local to the federal level. Expect the same degree of police interference in a melee that you'd get anywhere else in this particular genre.

More interestingly, the Black Rock Rangers are volunteer safety agents for the community. They aren't cops and they won't forcibly intervene in a situation but they will use an array of highly effective de-escalation techniques to encourage safety.

Things That Can Happen During A Fight

Improvised Weapons: Neon tubes. A flame throwing autonomous robot octopus. A unicycle. Free pizza hot from the oven. A completely dried out Christmas tree, saved for this special moment. Musical instruments: a didgeridoo, a flugelhorn, a glass harmonica.

- Someone crashes into a plexiglass geodesic dome, sending a bunch of jagged fragments across the ground.
- Pump up the volume: there's a highly directional sound system right there, which could easily be used to blow out someone's eardrums.
- A troupe of gymnasts from Beijing come boiling out of a camp near the fight, looking to settle things down by any means necessary.



- Uh, why the hell is the Man walking under his own power towards the fight? Is this some demented new peacekeeping system?
- Glitter bomb! Followed by streamers, a la Japanese wrestling introductions. You are part of the art.

People

Plaype (she/her)

Plaype is a simple orangutan on a voyage of self-discovery. When she signed up with the Jammers, she expected to be blowing things up and all that exciting stuff. As time went on, though, she discovered her innately peaceful inclinations under a heavy dose of counterculture influence. When the Battlechimp turned over a new leaf, nobody was happier than her.

Her personal goals revolve around uplifting simian comrades in the Contemporary Juncture without the use of all those intrusive cybernetic implants. There's an entire Silicon Valley lifestyle centered around nootropic drugs intended to increase intelligence. Surely if any of them actually work on humans, they'd work just as well on apes.

She'd prefer to work out any disputes using tried and tested conflict resolution methodologies but when she does have to resort to weaponry, she's perfectly capable.

Roleplaying:

- Prone to physical signifiers of respect and affection: she's a toucher
- Always expresses immediate requests in the form of goals — "if you do this for me, we can do this other thing together!"
- Doodles mandalas on notepads, white boards, table cloths, whatever comes to hand



Plaype: Featured Foe

Guns/Martial Arts	Def	Tou	Speed
13	12	6	6

Weapons: Desert Eagle .357 Magnum (11/3/1), unarmed strike (7).

Skills: Fix-It 12, Info: Weird-Ass West Coast Culture 15, Leadership 14

Friendly Fire (ze/zir)

Friendly Fire is an absolutely killer accountant. Ze's always been good at numbers; accounting came first in zir list of skills. The propensity for violence was just a side gig expressed via MMA and other combat arts — occasionally ze trains over at the Davenport European martial arts group at UNLV.

The Jammers were an easy fit for Friendly. Violence with a patina of justification? Sure! Plaype wasn't as psycho as some of the cyberapes, which helped. Friendly doesn't need to be violent all the time or anything; the occasional feng shui site destruction worked out fine for zir. And along the way they became fast friends.

These days the relationship is a bit more strained, because Friendly still wants to blow things up and Plaype is into mediation. On the other hand, the mission is still interesting (if altered) and the work is fun. For the nonce, the balance point between the two is the perfect Jammer ethos.

Ze's a tall, androgynous presenting white human. Ze usually wears a suit and tie, like a good accountant, expressing individuality only with a splash of color as a tie pin.

Roleplaying:

- Doesn't particularly like sitting down — ze isn't jittery, just dislikes chairs
- All zir metaphors are physical: "you look like you just woke up from a knockout punch," or "man, did a grenade hit these balance sheets or what?"
- Habitually twirls a pen over zir fingers



Friendly Fire: Featured Foe			
Guns/Martial Arts	Def	Tou	Speed
14	13	5	8

Weapon: H&K MP7 (12/5/1), broadsword (10).

Skills: Fix-It 12, Info: Accounting 15, Leadership 14

Furious Wrath: If Friendly Fire's last attack missed, zir current one gains +1 Attack and +3 Damage. Not cumulative.

New Simian Army

Overview and History

The original Jammers are a lot easier to understand once you realize that they were the 2056 version of the contemporary juncture's chan culture. They're arrogant individualists who think that normies deserve their lives of quiet desolation. They're all in on violence if it's amusing or productive. Self-reflection, conversely, is the least important thing in the world. They're edgelords in every way; it should have been obvious from their sloppily networked social network, apechan.

The Jammers who followed Furious George down the path of increased violence and decreased responsibility are the Jammers who bought into the edgelord ethos with all their hearts. The Contemporary Juncture is a really happy place for them. It's a chance to reconnect with the roots of their culture.

Unfortunately, those roots are a bit less authoritarian than Furious George likes. Chan culture is a roiling pot dominated by whoever can produce the best memetic material in the moment. Leadership isn't really a strong concept; at best, you've got agile minds guiding the swarm in a more or less coherent direction.

Fortunately, this is a workable milieu for the time being even if it isn't the desired end state. Pontius Primate is really good at capturing the zeitgeist. He's had a few years of practice keeping ahead of Furious George's erratic doctrines, and the penalty for failing there is death. Working out a program to drive the alt-cynical hordes was relatively



easy.

Pontius delegates the grunt work of the Contemporary Juncture to a few trusted lieutenants — apes, of course, holding the rank of Cardinal — who keep their fingers on the pulse of the Internet from well-protected basements called Meme Houses. The Cardinals, in turn, induct a select few like-minded locals into the New Simian Army. As soon as some of the locals survive exposure to various radioactive materials, they'll be elevated to priesthood!

The nearest Meme House to Las Vegas is in Orange County. (It's led by a deeply religious gorilla named Wins Tons.) Las Vegas has other things going for it.

Nevada

From the New Simian Army point of view, the only thing that matters about Nevada is the Nevada Test Site. Between 1951 and 1992, almost a thousand nuclear tests were conducted at the site. Mostly underground, but still. You could see the mushroom clouds from a hundred miles away. Las Vegas is only 65 miles southeast of the test site.

Even today it's one of the most radioactive places in the continental United States. This makes it prime religious ground for the New Simian Army. You can't get hyper-intelligent apes by exposing ordinary monkeys to radioactivity, but you can produce mutants, and mutants are the next best thing.

While Las Vegas doesn't have a permanent New Simian Army base, it does see a lot of transient ape and would-be mutant visitors: lost souls who hope they can mutate just a little. The Nevada Test Site runs monthly tours, which are way too safe for the kind of radical uncontrolled body modification those tourists have in mind. (You also need to have a government certified US identification card to take a tour, which doesn't work for everyone.) Hypothetically, though, you could maybe sneak off from the tour and get a little more exposure?

Spoiler: nope, but that doesn't stop ambitious idiots from trying. Cue the fight scene.

Matters will no doubt improve once the feds get their act together and open the Yucca Mountain nuclear waste repository. It's been



a contentious project for more than a decade; when the country's most dangerous nuclear waste is finally collected all in one place, well, it'll be a great day for mutant-kind and the best of the primates.

In the Las Vegas of the Secret Wars, that day is next month and shipments are due to pass Las Vegas on U.S. Route 95 any week now. Bili Joe and his human sidekick Bear are set up to ambush one of those shipments, and they're pretty sure they're better armed than the Army convoy. Given that they have Scroungotech on their side, they might even be right.

Las Vegas

The "permanent" New Simian Army presence in Las Vegas boils down to one mad scientist tasked with keeping an eye on useful developments in the UNLV science departments. This isn't really a reasonable task for one person. Even though UNLV doesn't have terribly noticeable science programs, there are still a lot of them. Doctor Delacruz does his best anyhow.

Besides Doctor Delacruz and his lab, any New Simian Army members in Las Vegas are probably just passing through. This means they'll be short on resources, but it also means they will care even less about collateral damage than one might expect.

Also, the average Las Vegas tourist is exactly the kind of normie that New Simian Army types love to hate. Blowing up their precious casinos is a great way to teach them a lesson. All any monkey needs is one little excuse to break cover.

People

Bili Joe (he/him)

Bili Joe's simian ancestry goes back to the Congo, not that he's ever been there, but he's darned proud of it. He was trained in combat by Orango Tank himself. He's on long-term assignment in the Contemporary Juncture with no fixed location, but right now he's in Las Vegas itching to steal some nuclear waste.



He wears redneck gear: a plaid flannel shirt with cut off arms, jeans, and a belt with a King of the Road belt buckle. Laugh at your peril. He loves this stuff. His big thick-framed sunglasses are permanently fastened to his skull, because otherwise the wires come loose.

The worst thing you can do around Bili Joe is threaten The Bear. He legitimately loves that guy, even though he'd never put it that way.

Roleplaying:

- Adopted the folkways of the American South as filtered through Hollywood
- Ridiculously protective of his pet human, The Bear
- Absent-mindedly grabs onto anything that can support him and dangles

Bili Joe (Boss)			
Scroungotech	Def	Tou	Speed
15	14	7	7

Weapon: Chest-mounted machine gun (13/1/1), bite (10).

Resistances: Strength 10

Skills: Driving 12, Fix-It 14, Intimidation 14

Skull-Mounted Targeting Sunglasses: Add +3 Initiative if Wound Points are less than 20.

Furious Wrath: If the foe's last attack missed, its current one gains +1 Attack and +3 Damage. Not cumulative.

The Bear (he/him)

The Bear is a scrawny white guy in his mid-thirties who has been failing to grow a beard since high school. He's always been looking for something to believe in. Bili Joe believes in mayhem and is happy to indulge The Bear by calling him whatever the hell he wants.

Before he hooked up with Bili Joe, he was a trucker. Solitude was the next best thing to companionship. He knows the roads of America about as well as anyone, and he knows how to drive real well.



More than anything else, The Bear hates people who ignore him in a fight. Even if they're focusing fire on the terrifying cyborg gorilla thing next to him, he's likely to take that as a personal insult.

Roleplaying:

- Hums tuneless classic rock under his breath when he's not talking
- Edges to the front of any group of people
- Tends to talk about places in terms of the Interstate Highway System

The Bear (Featured Foe)			
Guns	Def	Tou	Speed
13	13	6	8

Weapon: Mossberg Special Purpose (13/5/4)

Skills: Driving 15, Gambling 12, Info (United States Highways) 14

Ram-Alama-Bam: When driving, if the foe rams a vehicle, gain +2 Frame. Also, +4 Damage Value when the foe hits a pedestrian.

The Holy Mountain

The Bear drives an eighteen-wheeler that he's souped up at every opportunity. It's not a tank but it has steel plates lining the inside of the trailer and the cab; it's no sports car but the stock suspension has been improved by adding little tiny Scroungotech shock absorbers in key locations.

There's a vehicular Helix Destroyer mounted in the front of the trailer. You have to eject a bunch of the trailer before it can rotate freely, so using it isn't even remotely subtle. Once it comes into play it has a Damage Value of 16 against individual targets and a whopping 30 Damage Value against other vehicles. It takes five shots to recharge, though.

Accel.	Handling	Squeal	Frame	Crunch
5	7	9	10	12



Doctor Delacruz (he/him, Supporting Player)

Doctor Joe Delacruz isn't an unreasonable person; he just wants to be able to conduct appropriate research into dangerous physics. If he'd studied at the right university or had the right family, he probably could have gotten permission to make tiny holes in the fabric of quantum reality. However, as a graduate of a second-tier state school, he was unable to convince anyone that he knew what he was talking about.

That made him the right flavor of scientist to go mad. Jane Pucefire is one of Furious George's best Contemporary Juncture recruiters. Doctor Delacruz didn't have much of a chance in the face of her wickedly memetically tuned arguments.

He didn't actually need the New Simian Army's help to get an assistant professorship at UNLV, but he thinks he did. If the right person could make him see how much his students like him for his mind, he might yet be freed from Furious George's cult.

Roleplaying:

- Carries a notepad with him everywhere; often cuts himself off in the middle of a sentence to jot down a note
- Sneers at people who express any lack of curiosity about anything
- Backs down when challenged by authority figures

Dr. Delacruz (Supporting Player)	
Toughness	Speed
4	4

Skills: Fix-It 10, Info: Quantum Physics 15

