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ASCENDANT

CAPITAL CITY CASEFILES

High Summer

By Mark Charters with Alexander Macris

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A heatwave has been scorching America's East Coast and cities up and down the coast have seen mass protests and riots. None has fared as badly as Capital City, Delaware where rising tempers, rising temperatures, and rising crime rates have made life hellish all summer long.

Now things are about to get a lot worse. This morning, five police officers making a routine drug bust died at the hands of ascended criminals. The CCPD has called on every superhero in the city to hunt down the perpetrators and bring them to justice. But while the heroes investigate the shady side of Capital City, the perpetrators have other plans, plans that will bring the city to its knees...

Capital City Casefiles is a series of scenarios for *Ascendant*, the superpowered role-playing game of infinite possibilities. Each Casefile offers a single Issue of exciting play for a group of metropolitan metahumans with Power Levels ranging from 18 to 22 and a collective challenge rating of between 100 and 150 points. These scenarios can be played in any order and are designed to be easy to run with any type of heroes, be they super-powered police, costumed crimefighters, or underground antiheroes.

The Casefiles are set in Capital City, Delaware, a fictional city first introduced in the *Ascendant* rulebook and detailed in the *Capital City Gazetteer and Map Set* (available separately from Autarch). But don't worry – if you're not interested in playing in Capital City, you can easily adapt the scenarios to your city of choice. Capital City can be Chicago, Detroit, or New York. It can be your hometown with a fresh coat of graffiti and a layer of rust and grime.

In this Casefile you get:

- ★ 20-page ready-to-run scenario suitable for introductory play
- ★ 6 new NPC antagonists and 1 NPC ally
- ★ 3 full-color maps (urban crime scene, wrecked townhouse, and quayside warehouse)
- ★ 2 printable player handouts

Launch your campaign and start your heroes on their ascent to greatness with *Capital City Casefile #1: High Summer*.



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Capital City Casefile™ #1: High Summer

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CAPITAL CITY CASEFILES #1: HIGH SUMMER

Located on the west shore of the Delaware Bay, approximately 22 miles southeast of Dover, Capital City is the largest and most populous city in Delaware. The city's founders, real estate developer Arthur Richville and financier Chase Livery, hoped it would be "a testament to the power of American capitalism." From the art deco skyscrapers, with their dirigible docking stations and decorated cornices, to the streamlined trains that streak across the city's elevated monorail, to the mighty Statue of Fortune that overlooks the Bay, Capital City was built to be the city of tomorrow – but tomorrow never came. True, more than 60% of the country's Fortune 500 companies maintain an office here, and the city's elite Richville neighborhood hosts some of America's most luxurious mansions. But Capital City is also a city of poverty, crime, and decay, where endless rows of rusted factories and abandoned buildings are the legacy of lost hope, broken promises, and shattered American dreams.

From "Fortune Favors the Old: The History of Capital City" by Eddie Exswiss and Mason Cortez

Welcome to "High Summer," the first Issue in the Capital City Casefiles Series. In this Issue, players must bring justice to the cartel gunmen and rogue ascendants who left both policemen and innocent civilians dead – and stop a plot to bring the city to its knees.

ABOUT CAPITAL CITY CASEFILES

Capital City Casefiles is a series of scenarios for **Ascendant**, the superpowered role-playing game of infinite possibilities. The *Casefiles* are set in Capital City, Delaware, a fictional city first introduced in the **Ascendant** rulebook and detailed in the *Capital City Gazetteer and Map Set* (available separately from Autarch). Even before the rise of ascendants, Capital City had been devastated by crime, poverty, and deindustrialization. Now it is a city under siege, beleaguered by Exodus terrorists, El Cartel criminals, and more. But don't worry – if you're not interested in playing in Capital City, you can easily adapt the scenarios to your city of choice. Capital City can be Chicago, Detroit, or New York. It can be your hometown with a fresh coat of graffiti and a layer of rust and grime.

Each *Casefile* offers a single Issue of exciting play for a group of metropolitan metahumans with Power Levels ranging from 18 to 22 and a collective challenge rating of between 100 and 150 points. These scenarios are designed to be easy to run with any type of heroes, be they super-powered police, costumed crimefighters, or underground antiheroes.

To run an **Ascendant** series like *Capital City Casefiles*, we recommend that your heroes work as operatives for an Organization that calls on them to perform various crimefighting activities. An Organization allows you to assign Missions to the heroes at the start of each Issue; provide a headquarters where the heroes plan, rest, and re-equip; offer back-up if the heroes ask for help; justify the addition of new heroes if one of the player characters dies or otherwise leaves the campaign; and enforce limits on the behavior of the heroes so that the Series doesn't become impossible to manage. In short, an Organization is what makes a Series easy to run!

Capital City has two organizations that are perfect for heroes of Power Level 18 to 22:

- ★ **Dreadnaught Security, Inc.:** Dreadnaught is a private police company that offers a 24/7 on-call team of ascendant security operatives to high value clients across the United States. Dreadnaught has received a \$10M contract from Capital City's government to protect its cruise ship terminal as well as to supplement the municipal police department's SWAT team. At present there are 12 operatives in the city. Dreadnaught has been openly lobbying the Mayor to privatize the entire police, so it has assigned some of its best ascendants to Capital City. It's also begun to work with "freelance" heroes across the city, deputizing them as needed to deal with crises that come up.
- ★ **The Unseen Court:** The Unseen Court is a group of street level heroes and crime fighters that emerged from Capital City's homeless and transient population. Little is known about the organization, as its members are skilled at hiding in plain sight and protected by a large network of informers and supporters. Neither police, criminal, nor journalistic efforts to investigate the group have succeeded. What is known is that the Unseen Court is notoriously short on cash, with all of the organization's funds being diverted into charitable purposes to help the city's most needy.

That said, don't feel limited to just using Dreadnaught or the Unseen Court. You could also run these scenarios using other Organizations of your own design by replacing or supplementing the role that the "canon" Organizations play in the game world. And if your players want to be independent heroes, that's OK, too. The sidebar on the next page offers an easy way you can get them involved!

This Casefile plays best when at least one hero has 9 or more SPs of INS, Super-Perception, Super-Intelligence, or Investigation. Without a "lead investigator," the players will likely have less time to solve the case before time runs out. If the heroes co-operate with the CCPD, that will make it much easier to gain access to e.g. the CCPD's fingerprint and face photo databases. Since several officers were killed, the police will be willing to work with even unsavory heroes if they can bring the killers to justice.

At the request of Dreadnaught, Capital City has created a dedicated communications network for ascendants legally empowered to act in the role of a private police force within the metropolitan area. Called the Ascendant Rapid Response Communications Network (ARRCNet™), the private channel runs on an encrypted smartphone app separate from the police radio network. The ARRCNet is intended to help route ascendants to where they are most needed, and is sparingly used. It has five color-coded levels of emergency:

- ★ **Green:** Green alerts are most commonly used for natural and environmental hazards like flooding, gas leaks, or large fires, but they can also be used when dealing with ascendants who, though hostile, have yet to take any offensive actions.
- ★ **Yellow:** Yellow alerts are used when there are hostile ascendants taking aggressive actions against the city, but which have been contained – so far – by the police or other authorities.
- ★ **Red:** Red alerts are used when there are hostile ascendants taking aggressive actions against the city, and the police are unable to contain them.
- ★ **Blue:** Blue alerts for when an area needs to be evacuated of all civilians, but when the ascendants are not expected to help further.
- ★ **Black:** The newly-instituted black alert is for a threat on the scale of a major, sustained attack by terrorists from Exodus and their ilk. Created after the Battle of Washington, it has never been used.

Every member of Dreadnaught operating in Capital City has access to the ARRCNet, as do the various freelancers it deputizes from time to time. In addition, a number of members of the Unseen Court have managed to install the app, as have some unaffiliated vigilantes and crimefighters prowling the streets. Ascendants describe ARRCNet as “a cross between the BatSignal and... well, Signal.”

THE SET UP

A notable heatwave has been scorching America’s East Coast all summer long. Cities up and down the coast have seen mass protests and riots, and none has fared as badly as Capital City, Delaware. With tempers and temperature flaring and crime out of control, Capital City Hall is paralyzed by division. Lawmakers calling to defund the Capital City Police Department in the name of racial justice have been fiercely opposed by those calling for more funding to battle ascendant supremacism.

Where the citizens of Capital City see crisis, the superhuman terrorists of Exodus smell opportunity. Exodus scientists have developed Compound R, a psychoactive powder that induces a murderous rage in those who swallow or smoke it. In partnership with El Cartel de Los Carteles, Exodus plans to distribute cannabis contaminated with Compound R throughout Capital City. If their plan succeeds, the contaminated cannabis will provoke a “Day of Rage” that, in combination with the summer’s civil unrest, will bring the city to its knees. More importantly, the casualties and calamities are likely to spark some new ascendants for Exodus to recruit, and new opportunities for El Cartel to profit.

Exodus and El Cartel have been careful in their preparations, but chance has a way of ruining even the best-laid plans. In the early hours of August 16th, Capital City Police launched what they thought was a routine bust of a stash house in South Slaughter. Unbeknownst to the cops, the stash house held the first package of ready-to-market contaminated cannabis and was guarded by elite Cartel ascendants. While El Cartel would normally not fight cops, this time they chose violence. The battle left 5 police officers and 2 innocent civilians dead, plus 8 officers and 3 innocent civilians wounded. The police were forced to flee the scene, utterly confused as to what had just happened.

The heroes are initially tasked with locating and hunting down the Cartel members responsible for the dead police officers. When the scenario begins, the CCPD has no idea that Compound R exists or that Exodus is involved, and neither do the heroes. During the course of their investigation, the heroes might discover the involvement of the Exodus terrorists and be able to stop their plot to feed contaminated cannabis into the city’s drug distribution networks. If the heroes fail, Capital City is in for one hell of a summer!

THE TIMELINE

The following timeline is intended to assist you in preparing to run the Issue. It represents what would happen if the heroes *didn't* act. The actions of the heroes can and hopefully will cause events to deviate from this timeline!

- ★ **August 16 - 8:03AM:** A routine drug bust by CCPD turns into a bloody battle when the police encounter a dozen Cartel gunmen and a pair of ascendants. After sustaining heavy casualties, the panicked police flee the scene and the criminals escape.
- ★ **August 16 - 9:15AM:** Captain Alex Marshal places a Yellow ARRCNet alert call for ascendants to assist in the investigation.
- ★ The scenario begins when the heroes arrive at the crime scene sometime after 9:15AM.
- ★ **August 16 - 1:10PM:** Exodus visits the El Cartel warehouse in Slaughter Beach. The Cartel leadership explains that they will still distribute Exodus's cannabis, but the plan needs to be delayed by 72 hours.
- ★ **August 17 - 1:15AM:** Forensics begins examining contaminated cannabis recovered by Captain Marshal's detectives.
- ★ **August 19 - 3:00AM:** Distribution of Compound R cannabis begins all across Capital City. Disaster ensues!
- ★ **August 19 - 1:15PM:** Forensics discovers that the cannabis recovered at the stash house was contaminated... too late.

THE SCENE AT SOUTH SLAUGHTER

Give the heroes the Capital City Times handout as well as the following introduction:

It's 9:15AM on August 16th and the sun has already begun to bake the pavement of Capital City. It's looking to be another record-breaking day of heat in a summer that's already the hottest on record. ARRCNet is hot, too, with a Yellow Alert: *Ascendant operatives are needed at an active crime scene at 412 Benson Avenue in South Slaughter to assist in the investigation of a drug-related slaying of 5 police officers by rogue superhumans.* Over.

If the heroes work for Dreadnaught, they can be assumed to begin at the Capital City Police Headquarters in Downtown, which is 4 miles (12 SPs) from Benson Avenue. If the heroes belong to the Unseen Court, they are likely at Fortune Park South in Broadkill, about 6.5 miles (13 SPs) from Benson Avenue. Either way, it shouldn't take them long to get to there. When they arrive, here's the scene:

Benson Avenue is a residential street running between I-495 and Bayshore Parkway through the poor and neglected district of South Slaughter. Run-down brick houses line either side of the badly-maintained roadway, its black asphalt soft and tarry in the heat. The sidewalks are cracked and strewn with litter everywhere, the bricks are marred by graffiti, and the streetlights are broken. The whole area gives off a palpable feeling of despair and decay made worse by the humid heat.

The crime scene lies roughly an eighth-mile (7 SPs) southwest of Bayshore Parkway. It has been marked off with yellow police tape. Three CCPD police cruisers and a SWAT APC are parked on each side of the police tape (north and south). At the center of the crime scene stands a Wrecked brownstone home. A half-dozen Destroyed cars and motorcycles and a pair of Destroyed police cruisers have been towed to the side of the road. They are burned, broken shells. A Wrecked CCPD Armored Transport Truck lies flipped on its back in the road thirty yards (4 SPs) to the southwest of the brownstone home, yet to be towed away.

A large crowd of uniformed officers, detectives, and forensic investigators are at work in and around the building and vehicles.



The CCPD has secured the crime scene with a dozen **Honest Beat Cops** (CR 1), six **Trigger-Happy SWAT Troopers** (CR 1.5), four **Thoughtful Detectives** (CR 1.5), and a pair of **Morbid Coroners** (CR 1). Managing the chaotic scene is **Captain Alex Marshal** (CR 4), head of the Special Crimes Division, on hand to supervise the investigation. Marshal is a veteran detective who hates what police work has become in the age of ascendants. He will work with and support the heroes, but is not happy about it. When the heroes arrive, Marshal will flag them over and brief them:

"I'm Captain Marshal. Welcome to my crime scene. I assume you got the call on ARRCNet? They called it a Yellow Alert but as far as I'm concerned it's Red as can be. It's ugly. We've got 5 cops and 2 civilians dead, plus 8 officers and 3 more civvies wounded. The boys from Vice were making a routine drug bust last night and things went bad. The surviving officers say that a pair of rogue ascendants came out of the building and attacked during the drug bust. Those freaks – sorry – tore our boys to pieces. The bystanders were all taken out by gunfire from the Cartel thugs, but of course the natives are blaming us. CCPD dispatched a SWAT team to the area when things got hot, but by the time they arrived, the ascendants and the gunmen were long gone. With this many blue lives lost, the Commissioner wants every asset in the city on the case. You think you can help?"

If the heroes respond in the affirmative, Marshal will ask if they want to start sweeping the battlefield on Benson Avenue, review the police incident report, investigate the cartel hideout, or question local residents. Each of these avenues of investigation is handled separately below.

If the heroes seem uncertain how to proceed or ask for assistance in the investigation, Marshal and his four detectives can join a Team Action. Their assistance will only be useful if the heroes are weak at investigative tasks. Since the four Thoughtful Detectives have 6 SPs of Investigation each and Marshal has 7 SPs of Investigation, collectively they can investigate with 9 SPs.

REVIEWING THE POLICE INCIDENT REPORT

If the heroes ask for the police incident report, Marshal will fiddle with his smartphone for a few minutes and then explain “The incident report isn’t finished so I forwarded what I’ve got so far.” Provide the heroes with the Capital City Police Department Internal Memo handout.

After reading the memo, the heroes can interview Lt. George Williams and his surviving team members if desired. Williams and two other Narcotics detectives are at William H. Forwood Memorial Hospital (12 SP away) standing vigil for their critically-wounded comrades. They are Friendly Witnesses with the attributes of Thoughtful Detectives. If interviewed, they can provide (via first-hand account) the Green, Yellow, Orange, and Red clues available from investigating Benson Avenue.

INVESTIGATING BENSON AVENUE

The battleground at Benson Avenue is a forensic site with a Complexity of 19 SPs. Investigation can discover the following clues:

GREEN CLUES

- ★ There are very few signs of fighting to the northeast of the Cartel hideout the CCPD attempted to raid. The most intense fighting took place immediately around the hideout, where there are several pools of dried blood and dozens of shell casings and bullets. The fighting tailed off to the southwest as the police fled from the scene. (If the heroes swab the blood for DNA, see the follow up below.)
- ★ The micro SD cards that contain dash cam footage were removed from the three wrecked police vehicles on the scene. At least some of the perpetrators were clearly career criminals who knew enough to remove evidence.

YELLOW CLUES

- ★ There are boot prints in the asphalt outside the front door of the brownstone near the bloodstains. The depth of the boot prints suggests extreme force consistent with an ascendant jumping a large distance or otherwise putting a large amount of pressure on the ground.
- ★ Based on the gouges and dents on the CCPD Armored Transport truck, its sides were punched repeatedly by a bare-fisted man-sized ascendant, and its driver’s cabin was torn apart by the same individual using his bare hands. (*Microscopic Vision 15/Ultra-Sensitive Touch 18*: DNA from the attacker can be detected in the dents and gouges by visual/tactile examination.) If the heroes swab the gouges and dents for DNA, see the follow up.

ORANGE CLUES

- ★ The distribution of shell casings and bullet impacts on the surrounding walls supports the CCPD’s position that none of the injured or killed civilians were hit by CCPD weapons. The CCPD was firing towards the brownstone hideout; the Cartel were the ones firing into the neighborhood.
- ★ There is a patent print of a tire tread in one of the blood pools in front of the Cartel hideout. The vehicle was stationary when the print formed as the blood flowed around the tire, rather than vice versa.

RED CLUES

- ★ The tread pattern of the patent print in front of the Cartel Hideout matches that of the CCPD Armored Transport Truck. Since that truck is now toppled over 30 yards (4 SPs) away, someone must have picked it up and thrown it. A character would need at least 10 MIG (including Hero Points) just to pick up the vehicle; to throw it 30 yards (4 SPs) would require 14 MIG (again, including Hero Points).



FOLLOW UP: BLOOD, GOUGES AND DENTS

DNA samples can be uploaded to CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) to look for matches. The police commissioner will use 10 CPs of Authority to expedite for a 16 SP (2.5 day) turnaround. Characters can Request a Favor for faster access or use Technology Control to hack the database (see **Ascendant** p. 88).

- ★ The DNA found in the blood samples matches that of the police officers wounded and killed in the line of duty. It is unremarkable.
- ★ The DNA found in the gouges and dents matches that of a 19-year-old Hispanic man named Juan Hernandez. (See Follow-Up: Juan Hernandez in the next section for details.)

INVESTIGATING THE CARTEL HIDEOUT

When the heroes decide to investigate the hideout, Marshal will walk them inside, sharing the following information:

El Cartel de Los Carteles was using this three-story brownstone townhouse as a distribution hub for their local drug dealing network. Based on the intelligence the CCPD acquired prior to the raid, the Cartel always had at least four guards equipped with small arms on duty. Other than the front door, the only entrance is to the backyard, which had been converted into a garden for growing cannabis. In the confusion of the fight the garden was destroyed, probably by the two ascendants. The house itself is Wrecked: Little more than the exterior shell remains, and most of the interior has been utterly destroyed.

The Cartel hideout has a Width of 13ft (1 SP), a Length of 33ft (3 SP), and a Height of 34ft (3 SP). Its total Area of 6 SPs and 11 SPs of Clutter gives it a Forensic Site Complexity of 17 SPs. (Each floor individually has a Complexity of 15.) Heroes who investigate the Cartel hideout may uncover some or all of the following clues using INS/Investigation.

Heroes with 6 SPs of Ultra-Sensitive Scent passively detect the traces of cannabis (Pungency 8 SPs) in the cellar when they enter the hideout. With 11 SPs, they passively detect the Compound R (Pungency 5 SPs). They won't recognize Compound R as such – it's a new smell, reminiscent of turmeric but distinctly artificial.

GREEN CLUES

- ★ **Cellar:** A few bags of cannabis, about 10lbs (-1 SP) total, are scattered about the cellar amidst broken slabs of wood. (If searching basement with *Ultra-Sensitive Scent 10* or opens and sniffs bag with *Ultra-Sensitive Scent 1*: The cannabis is contaminated by a chemical with a strange turmeric-like scent.)
- ★ **Cellar:** Based on the wear-and-tear on the furniture and the expiration dates on various litter found scattered across a card table, couch, and game console, the cellar seems to have been used on a daily basis by a group of men for many weeks.
- ★ **First Floor:** Scorch marks on the rubble and remaining walls indicate a high-temperature event occurred in the living room.
- ★ **Second Floor:** The remains of a large map of the city lies on the floor of what was once the dining room, near an overturned table. It used to be hung on the east wall. The map is badly damaged, and the pins which once marked locations on it are now lying scattered around it.
- ★ **Third Floor:** The third floor is less damaged than the earlier floors. There are scorch marks on its floorboards, suggesting that the damage was dealt from below, perhaps accidentally or haphazardly.

YELLOW CLUES

- ★ **Cellar:** The broken slabs of wood in the cellar are the remains of a large pallet that could have held hundreds of pounds of packages.
- ★ **First Floor:** A broken chunk of refrigerator in the kitchen has several burnt post-it notes stuck to it, each carrying a phone number with a Slaughter Beach area code. There is only one post-it note with an intact and legible phone number, (555) 421-4224.
- ★ **Second Floor:** The pin holes in the map are clustered around locations in Slaughter Beach and South Slaughter that are heavily trafficked by El Cartel's drug pushers.
- ★ **Third Floor:** The third floor was occupied by two long-term residents. Judging by the toiletries in the bathroom, the clothes in the closet, and the scattered Spanish-language men's magazines, both were Hispanic men in their 20s.

ORANGE CLUES

- ★ **Cellar:** The remains of a torn sticker on a box in the cellar indicates that it was transported by Poseidon Pacific Direct Lines (PPDL), a shipping company that carries freight from locations in the South Pacific.
- ★ **First Floor:** The thermal event inside the living room was not a conventional fire, as more evidence would have been destroyed.
- ★ **Second Floor:** A wall-mounted electronic combination safe is hidden in the east wall of the dining room. It survived the fight intact. (*X-Ray Vision 4*: The safe contains a passport, a handgun, and a bundle of cash.)

RED CLUES

- ★ **First Floor:** The thermal event was a continuous blast with a heat flux of at least 5,000 kilowatts per square meter, approximating a high-intensity wildfire (10 SPs).
- ★ **Third Floor:** A credit card is hidden beneath an overturned table in the upper bedroom. The card is under the name of "Juan Hernandez" and has a visible trace of cocaine (-19 SPs) along one edge.

Remember that when investigating forensic sites and interrogating witnesses for Clues that you can improve a character's color result by one anytime the player asks exactly the right questions. For instance, a player who asks "are the pin holes in the map clustered around El Cartel-controlled neighborhoods" could get that Yellow Clue even if his character only rolled a Green result.

FOLLOW UP: THE CONTAMINATED CANNABIS

If any of the heroes have Biochemical Analysis, they can conduct a Multiplex Chemical Analysis on the cannabis (DV 21). A Green or better result will reveal the presence of an unknown contaminant on the cannabis in the cellar, but not in the (“personal use”) cocaine elsewhere. A Molecular Composition Analysis on the unknown contaminant (DV 25) can then be conducted. A Green result reveals that the contaminant induces a psychotic rage (Wildly Angry emotional state) while a Yellow result reveals the effects last for up to 10 Days (Duration 18 SPs). See *Ascendant* p. 102 for more details on Biochemical Analysis.

If none of the heroes have Biochemical Analysis, they can send the cannabis to the CCPD’s Forensic Laboratory. If the heroes know the cannabis is contaminated, research begins within the hour (10 SPs). If the cannabis is sent for routine review, the forensic scientists will begin work after 8 hours (13 SPs).

Once it starts, the forensic team applies 10 SPs of Methodical Biochemical Analysis and works around-the-clock. After (26 – 10) = 16 SPs of Time (2.5 days) they will automatically earn a Yellow result (as above). When this occurs, the heroes will receive the following report:

CCPD has completed its analysis of the contaminated cannabis. The contaminants have such a complex chemical structure they were likely created by an ascended intelligence. The compound appears to be uniquely effective at inducing a psychotic rage in those who inhale it. Since extreme emotion is one of the leading triggers of ascension, this drug may help induce ascension, too. Worse, animal testing tentatively suggests that those under effect of the chemicals recognize fellow users as friendly, and will prefer to direct their rage at others. If this cannabis were to be widely distributed, then Capital City could very well be wiped off the map by uncontrollable riots fueled by waves of newly-ascended, possibly drug-addled superhumans.

If the heroes don’t think to send the cannabis for review at all, Captain Marshal’s team will eventually do so, and work will begin in 16 hours (14 SPs), e.g. at 1:15AM on August 17th. Unfortunately, the analysis won’t be completed until 1:15PM on August 19th, *after* the contaminated cannabis has already been distributed around the city.

FOLLOW UP: THE SAFE

The safe has Height -2, Weight 0, TOU 6, Security 5, Durability 80, Bombproofing 4, and Bludgeoning Lacerating Penetrating Concussive Cryogenic Thermal Resistance 4. Its Break DV is 7. The code for the safe is 17-19-23-29.

The safe contains a US passport for a Mr. Juan Hernandez, a Light Handgun with 9mm hollow-point ammunition, and \$2,000 in cash. The passport shows a round-trip to the island nation of Tuvalu from June 10 to July 12 of this year.

FOLLOW UP: TORN SHIPPING STICKER / PASSPORT

If any of the heroes have 20 CP of Criminal Connections or related Contacts, they will know that contraband from the embargoed Ascendant Republic of Nauru is often smuggled under the pretext of shipment from the nearby island nation of Tuvalu using Poseidon Pacific Direct Lines. They also know that ascendants traveling to Nauru often legally travel to Tuvalu before embarking for Nauru by other means.

FOLLOW UP: THE PHONE NUMBER

If the heroes call the phone number, it simply rings; no one picks up and no voicemail triggers. A hero with Network Technology Control can locate the phone as an Extended Challenge Action against a DV of 7. A hero with the Authority perk can contact a Support Specialist from the Capital City Police Department to locate the phone through the phone company in 15 minutes (8 SPs of Time). (Heroes without Authority can request a favor from Captain Marshal to do this for them; Marshal is Friendly, and a Green result suffices to secure the favor.) The mobile phone is presently located in a warehouse on the corner of Delmar Avenue and Bay Street in Slaughter Beach. Its location has been stable for three weeks. The warehouse is registered to Emery & Co, a bankrupt fruit distribution company.

FOLLOW UP: JUAN HERNANDEZ

If the heroes have the CCPD run a background check on Juan Hernandez, they will get an answer in 15 minutes (8 SPs). Hernandez is a 19-year-old resident of South Slaughter. He had a clean record up until last March, when he was arrested twice on drug charges. Both cases were dropped for lack of evidence to prosecute. His mugshot shows a scrawny young man with an acne-scarred face bearing a fresh Cartel tattoo on his sternum. His last known address is that of his mother, Mrs. Maria Hernandez, who lives just a few houses up the road at 311 Benson Avenue. He has no mobile phone account. His social media accounts were thoroughly scrubbed in May.

INTERROGATING WITNESSES

The heroes may decide to question the residents of Benson Avenue for clues. Most of the residents of Benson Avenue are Hispanic, and many are recent immigrants (legal and illegal). However, the northeast end of the street still has a large black population from when the entire district was majority-black in the mid-20th Century, when South Slaughter's factories and dockyards were still busy. It takes 5 minutes (6 SPs) going door to door to solicit each Witness. Roll or pick a result from the Random Benson Avenue Resident table.

Roll (1d10)	Random Benson Avenue Resident
1	Julia Balderas, age 68, 5'2", 126lbs, grey hair, brown eyes, retired homemaker, grandson killed by Cartel in drive-by
2	Mateo Villanueva, age 23, 6'1", 163lbs, blonde hair, brown eyes, make-up artist, sometime drug mule for boyfriend
3	Patricia Granado, age 34, 5'2", 149lbs, black hair, brown eyes, bail bondswoman, often bails out petty gangsters
4	Samuel Sancho, age 53, 5'9", 176lbs, black hair, green eyes, nursing assistant, niece was trafficked by El Cartel
5	Dugan Delgado, age 59, 6'1", 173lbs, black hair, brown eyes, unemployed ex-factory foreman, son is a drug dealer
6	Amara Castellanos, age 36, 5'8", 197lbs, brown hair, hazel eyes, graphic designer, cat was tortured by a Cartel thug
7	Ayesha Jacquez, age 25, 5'4", 147lbs, black hair, brown eyes, line cook, brother shot by El Cartel
8	Ronnie Turner, age 26, 6'2", 205lbs, black hair, brown eyes, ex-linebacker turned strip club bouncer, on Cartel payroll
9	Donna Flores, age 56, 5'7", 152lbs, brown hair, green eyes, disabled ex-waitress in chronic pain, opioid addict
10	Floyd Harvey, age 35, 5'8", 211lbs, black hair, brown eyes, bank teller, has survived two robberies at work

Unfortunately, all of the locals are terrified of El Cartel de Los Carteles; many of them have worked for it, or have family members who have worked for it; and even those who are both brave and innocent often have other reasons to dislike the authorities. Some are illegal immigrants, and unwilling to have anything to do with law enforcement in case they get deported. Others simply blame the authorities for not doing more about the poverty and crime that plagues them. The residents count as Avoidant Witnesses with 3 SPs of RES and 5 SPs of Stoicism. Unless compelled (which makes them Hostile) they will not speak to heroes for more than 1 minute (4 SPs). For purposes of Empathy or Emotion Adjustment, they are Extremely Fearful. Each Witness will reveal one or more Clues -- choose one Clue per Witness for each Color Result achieved in questioning.

GREEN CLUES

- ★ "There were a lot of Cartel gunmen. Like a dozen, maybe more, senior. Way more than typical for a stash house."
- ★ "When they bounced they were heading for Slaughter Beach."
- ★ "The ascendants? They were definitely Cartel. Insiders, not outsiders. No funny costumes or nuthin'."

YELLOW CLUES

- ★ “The hideout had a big shipment of something arrive a day ago. It was late at night on the 15th, yah. They had beefed up the security heavy. It must have been a hot package.”
- ★ “You want me to name names? Si amigo, puedo nombrar nombres.... Well, one name. Juan Hernandez. He is a local. Very tough, very strong.”
- ★ “After the police left, I saw the two ascendants go back inside for a minute. When they came back out, the big one, he had a sack of something. Cash? Drugs? Dunno. It was a big bag though.”

ORANGE CLUES

- ★ “Maybe you should talk to Mrs. Maria Hernandez. Maybe she knows something. One of the sicario, he is family.”
- ★ “Fresco, fresco. Here’s the phone number for one of the Cartel members. Maybe you can track his phone with it? But don’t tell anyone I gave you this or I am dead.”

FOLLOW UP: THE PHONE NUMBER

Following up the gang member’s phone number follows the same procedure as noted earlier. The mobile phone linked to the number is presently located in an abandoned warehouse registered to Emery & Co. at the corner of Delmar Avenue and Bay Street in Slaughter Beach. The number has moved around frequently, however. The locations correspond to the pinholes found on the map in the Cartel hideout (see above).

FOLLOW UP: MARIA HERNANDEZ

40-year-old Maria Hernandez is a native of El Salvador who entered the United States illegally in 2001. She was widowed in 2009 and now lives alone. She works as a housekeeper in West End. Her son, Juan Hernandez, was born in Capital City. Mrs. Hernandez counts as an Avoidant Witness with 3 SPs of RES and 5 SPs of Stoicism.

GREEN CLUE

- ★ “Yes, my son lives in that house. No, I have not heard from him since your raid that got so many people killed. Maybe he is dead. I hear the cops shot a lot of people. Juan was a good boy. All he ever wanted to do was to help pay the bills at home. He just fell in with a bad crowd and started using. The drugs are the problem. Not my son. Why do you not stop the drugs?”

YELLOW CLUE

- ★ “Si, yes, I saw the ascendants in the battle. One of them, he was shooting fire from his hands. The other, he was big, like a bodybuilder on the steroids.”

ORANGE CLUE

- ★ “The big one, God forgive him, that was my Juan. He has suffered *la ascensión*! I barely know him now.”

RED CLUE

- ★ “I am the one who called the tip to the police department. The Cartel, they destroy lives. They destroy my son. This has to end.”
Sobs

THE WAR AT THE WAREHOUSE

After investigating the hideout, questioning the neighbors, and pursuing the leads discovered there, the heroes should have enough clues to point them in the direction of the Emery & Co. warehouse. Emery & Co. used to import tinned fruit from South America into the warehouse, but by the 1980s containerized shipping had centralized distribution at the Broadkill Marine Terminal. Emery & Co closed in 1988 and the building saw only intermittent use thereafter. Last year, it was taken over by El Cartel de Los Carteles to use as one of their central depots in Capital City.

APPROACHING THE WAREHOUSE

When the heroes approach the warehouse, it seems quite unremarkable:

The Emery & Co warehouse sits at the corner of Delmar Avenue and Bay Street, on a quay right up near the sea wall. It is 150ft (5 SPs) long, 90ft (4 SPs) wide, and 20ft (2 SPs) tall, constructed of corrugated steel and cracked concrete. The warehouse lot is empty of cars or trucks, with just tufts of grass growing from old asphalt. The rusty loading doors are spraypainted with obnoxious graffiti, as are the office doors on Delmar Avenue. All of the windows are blacked out and no light is visible within.

If the heroes investigate the warehouse exterior for Clues, it counts as a forensic site with a Complexity of 15 SPs. There is one Green Clue available:

- ★ Lines of grass tufts in the asphalt are crushed in front of each of the Bay Street loading doors, suggesting cars or trucks have rolled over them periodically. (*Ultra-Sensitive Scent 13*: The vehicles were carrying cannabis.)

If the heroes want to eavesdrop, calculate their Hearing Clarity against a Sound Loudness of 1 SP, an Ambient Loudness of 0 SPs, and Sound Absorption of 3 SPs, with Effective Range based on their distance from the center of the warehouse. With 4 or more SPs of Hearing Clarity, they learn all of the info below; scale it down for 3 SPs or less.

Based on the number of voices and footsteps, there are at least 30 men inside the warehouse. Many of them can be heard performing some kind of manual labor that involves picking up heavy, squishy packages wrapped in squeaky plastic and carrying them to another part of the warehouse, where they are tossed into smaller piles. At least some of the men are carrying firearms, as they can be heard clicking the safeties on and off nervously. Many of the men are having low-key conversations in Spanish. [*Fluent in Spanish*: The conversations revolve around everyday matters of drug dealers, such as which strip club gives the best value, who has the biggest UHD television, and so on. Occasionally, someone mentions someone called “the Broker” and “the one o’clock meeting.”]

With 3 SPs of Ultra-Sensitive Scent, heroes can detect cannabis inside the warehouse. With 8 SPs, they can detect the turmeric smell of an unknown chemical odorant (Compound R). Depending on their other Powers (X-Ray Vision, Scrying, Incorporeality, etc.), the heroes might be able to see or sneak inside the warehouse without alerting the Cartel. If so, reveal the following information:



To roof

There are 32 Hispanic men inside the warehouse. All of them are armed with submachineguns. Most of them are working to cut, bag, and load plastic-wrapped packages of drugs from a large pile in the middle of the warehouse into four vans parked near the loading doors. Four men are on lookout by the loading doors, with submachineguns in hand, one of them nervously fiddling with the safety on his firearm. Another two gunmen are walking along a railed catwalk that encircles the warehouse. There are a number of cots and mattresses on the catwalk, with blankets and pillows scattered here and there, suggesting folks are hunkering down here. The catwalk terminates in a mezzanine office level with four doors. A pair of ascendants are overseeing the work from near the south entrance. The first is a freakishly-proportioned strongman who carries the head of a scrawny acne-scarred teenager atop a grotesquely-muscled body. [His face matches that of Juan Hernandez.] The second ascendant has a shaved head with a black goatee. His hands are severely burned and occasionally smoke with flame. He keeps checking the time on a slightly-scorched mobile phone, as if waiting for someone.

The two ascendants are **Juan Hernandez** and **Carlos Chávez**. The other 30 men are **Sadistic Thugs** armed with Submachineguns.

STAKING OUT THE WAREHOUSE

If the heroes are on hand at 1:10PM, they witness the representative from Exodus arriving (see The Timeline, p. 6), when a well-groomed man in a business suit (**The Broker**) suddenly teleports in. The man in the suit begins loudly berating the two El Cartel ascendants in British English (1 SP of Loudness). Despite being unarmed in a Cartel warehouse he seems utterly unafraid. 4 SPs of Hearing Clarity is enough to make out the conversation in full.

Man in Suit/British English voice: My friends are very unhappy with this morning's events. You were supposed to be trialing our product in South Slaughter. Now I hear it has fallen into the hands of the CCPD?

Burned Man/American voice: Only a few kilos, senior. We--

Man in Suit/British English voice: Only a few kilos? Only? Need I remind you of the extraordinary cost of the product? Of the difficulty we had in diverting it from South America? Of the work that went into processing it? Of smuggling it from Nauru? No? Then perhaps I should remind you how much we've *paid you to not screw up*?

Burned Man/American voice: Tranquilo, tranquilo. Some shirtbird dropped a dime on us and we lost some product to the police. It sucks. But that's how the game goes some days. What matters is that we got most of the product out... and the rest is safe right here.

Man in Suit/British English voice: But I'm not paying you to hide my product in your warehouse. I'm paying you to push it to the street.

Burned Man/American voice: Si, si, of course, senior. We will step on it.

Man in Suit/British English voice: You'd better. When will the product go on sale?

Burned Man/American voice: Well, the police, right now they are sweeping every street in every neighborhood. Our people are being harassed on every corner. We've got slingers getting cuffed for carrying a half-gram and a burner. The mopes are laying low. Nobody can move anything right now. We need at least... at least a week before we can push your product.

Man in Suit/British English voice: You can have 72 hours.

Burned Man/American voice: We can do ninety-six h--

Man in Suit/British English voice: 72 hours. Adieu.

If the conversation ends, the Broker will depart using Teleportation. (Because of the Broker's 11 SPs of Mind Screen, even characters with Cosmic Awareness won't be able to track where he teleported.) If the heroes interrupt the conversation before he exits, then it's time to roll initiative!

ASSAULTING THE WAREHOUSE

The warehouse can be entered via any of the following:

- ★ 10 blacked-out windows entering onto the catwalk or mezzanine office. The windows are easily broken (Break DV 2 or Durability 15) but the loud noise will attract attention. They do not open.
- ★ 10 pedestrian doors entering onto the ground floor and 1 rooftop door leading to stairs onto the catwalk. The doors are locked from the inside (Security DV 5). If bashed open (Break DV 5 or Durability 40) it will alert the guards.
- ★ 8 large garage doors entering from the parking lot or quay onto the ground floor. These doors are not locked, but if slid open make a loud racket. They can be bashed down by a strong character (Break DV 6 or Durability 60).
- ★ The corrugated steel and concrete walls can be smashed open (Break DV 8 or Durability 120) for access into the first or second floor.

If and when the heroes assault the warehouse, they will face the **30 Sadistic Thugs** (CR 1 each) and the two ascendants, **Juan Hernandez** (CR 30) and **Carlos Chávez** (CR 30). The two ascendants will immediately attack the heroes, continuing to fight until Unconscious or Slain. The two Thugs on the catwalk will open fire. The four Thugs at the loading doors will use their Automatic Actions to open the doors, then use their Challenge Actions to attack the heroes. Eight other Thugs will use their Panels to head to the parked vans, open the doors, and get into the cars (driver and passenger seats), heading off on the next Page. The remaining Thugs will draw their Submachineguns for a shoot-out.

The Broker (CR 60), if present, will attempt to escape via Teleportation when fighting starts. He doesn't count towards the fight's Challenge Rating. If the Broker escapes, or wasn't present, he will attempt to organize a counterattack by Exodus operatives in Capital City. It'll be their last-ditch effort to salvage the plan, or at least the Compound R. See Stopping the Counterattack (q.v.).

If the heroes win the fight, they earn 1 Character Point and immediately recover 5 Hero Points.



The scenario assumes that four PL 20 heroes (CR 120) confront Hernandez, Chávez, and the Thugs (CR 90 total). However, your group might have more or less heroes of greater or lesser power. If your group is too small or weak to handle the fight, you can reduce the number of Hero Points available to Hernandez and Chávez, to represent them having used them fighting the CCPD earlier. You could also let them call in help from an ascendant like Airborne or Shadowmancer or from CCPD SWAT. If your group is so big or powerful that the fight will be easy, you can increase the CR by 30 by replacing 10 of the Sadistic Thugs with Methodical Assassins (CR 4 each) or by equipping the six Thugs on guard with Man-Portable Anti-Tank Rocket Launchers. Do both to increase the CR by 60!

INVESTIGATING THE WAREHOUSE INTERIOR

After the battle, the heroes have some time to investigate the warehouse interior for Clues. It counts as a forensic site with a Complexity of 19 SPs. To represent the effects of debris and rubble, increase the Complexity by 1 SP for each area of effect attack that occurred during the battle. Investigation can discover the following clues:

GREEN CLUES

- ★ Approximately 2 tons (7 SPs) of cannabis in bulk packages is piled up in the center of the warehouse. (*Ultra-Sensitive Scent 2*: The cannabis is contaminated with 5 SPs of odorant with a strange turmeric-like scent.)
- ★ Approximately 200lbs (3 SPs) of cannabis, packaged in baggies for streetcorner sale, has been loaded into each sedan parked in the warehouse. (If *Ultra-Sensitive Scent 10* or opens and sniffs bag with *Ultra-Sensitive Scent 1*: The cannabis is contaminated by an odorant with a strange turmeric-like scent.)
- ★ The volume of cigarette butts, empty beverage cans, and fast food packages near the mattresses and cots on the catwalk and mezzanine suggests a dozen people or more have camped out here on a regular basis for many weeks.
- ★ A large map of the entire city is hung from the wall in the warehouse office. There are a number of pins stuck into the map that mark various locations. There is one pin marking the Benson Avenue stash house and one pin marking the Emery & Co warehouse. There are seven other pins, four marking some locations in South Slaughter, two marking some locations in Slaughter Beach, and one marking a location in West End.

YELLOW CLUES

- ★ A cache of 30 Smartphones is hidden inside a closet in the warehouse storeroom. Each one bears a sticker with a callsign or nickname in Spanish. All of the Smartphones have been turned off and had their batteries removed.
- ★ On the city map, the pin marking the Emery & Co warehouse is green. The pin marking the Benson Avenue stash house is red. The pins marking the South Slaughter, Slaughter Beach, and West End locations are all yellow.

ORANGE CLUES

- ★ A wall-mounted electronic combination safe is hidden in the wall of the warehouse office. (*X-Ray Vision 4*: The safe contains a large stack of cash and some papers.)
- ★ On the city map, all of the locations marked with yellow pins are in neighborhoods where El Cartel de Los Carteles sells a high volume of drugs. It's likely that these are stash houses where the drugs were to be taken for distribution.

FOLLOW UP: THE CANNABIS

The cannabis in the cars is contaminated with Compound R. It can be analyzed as discussed earlier (q.v.).

FOLLOW UP: THE SMARTPHONES

The Smartphones belong to the members of El Cartel. Though not directly useful to the heroes, the information contained on them is valuable evidence for the CCPD in their ongoing war on drugs in Capital City.

FOLLOW UP: THE SAFE

The safe has Height -2, Weight 0, TOU 6, Security 5, Durability 80, Bombproofing 4, and Bludgeoning Lacerating Penetrating Concussive Cryogenic Thermal Resistance 4. Its Break DV is 7. The code for the safe is 42-21-32-90. Inside are \$50,000 in cash and a handwritten list of two dozen nicknames and neighborhood, such as "Big Todd – Newport & Bayshore" and "Iced Mac – 18 Milford". Any character with Criminal Connections can identify them as slingers who push drugs on various street corners in Capital City.

INTERROGATING THE CARTEL MEMBERS

If any Cartel members are captured and interrogated, they may reveal the following information.

GREEN CLUES

- ★ “This joint is our cut house. Here we take in product from the docks, we cut it, package it, and then we ship it out to stash houses around the city. From there it gets pushed to the street.”
- ★ “There’s a gringo asshole, ‘The Broker,’ who is a total bigot. He refuses to work with anyone who is not ascendant. His friends, whoever they are, must have lots of money to make it worth the Cartel’s time.”

YELLOW CLUES

- ★ “The yellow pins on the map? Those are the drug distribution points we are planning for this package of product.”
- ★ “Two days ago, The Broker brought a man to the warehouse. He was a creepy dude. I asked him his name and he just stared at me with these big violet eyes. It was like staring into hell, hombre. Into hell.”

ORANGE CLUES

- ★ “The Broker is a representative of Exodus, the ascendant terrorist group. They are paying us to distribute a special batch of dope throughout Capital City. Why? I don’t know why. Maybe they just want everyone to have the munchies. Fattening us up for slaughter?”
- ★ “No, I would never smoke that dope myself. There’s something wrong with it. It doesn’t... smell.... right.”

RED CLUES

- ★ “There’s a list in the safe of all the dealers we picked to distribute this product. They’re our most reliable slingers.”
- ★ “The dope is mixed with something called ‘Compound R.’ That’s what The Broker called it once. Anyone who gets high on it goes loco, man. It’s like ‘roid rage but the steroids are on steroids.”

STOPPING THE COUNTER-ATTACK

If he isn’t caught during the assault on the warehouse, The Broker will organize a counterattack by Exodus terrorists on the warehouse. The counterattack will begin 15 minutes (8 SPs) after the heroes assault the warehouse. The Broker will Power Stunt a Third-Party Area Teleport to deliver **Starquake** (CR 60), **Noisy Karen** (CR 30), and **Mindmelt** (CR 15) straight into the warehouse. (If the heroes have already exited the warehouse, he will teleport them to the heroes’ next known location.)

The villains’ primary goal is to re-capture the Compound R. If they can’t re-capture it, they’ll settle for killing the heroes. Starquake and Mindmelt are zealots who will gladly give their lives for the Exodus cause, and if hard-pressed they will cause maximum collateral damage to Capital City before dying. Noisy Karen is less fanatical; if facing defeat, she will try to cause sufficient collateral damage to distract the heroes so she can flee.

This battle pits three Exodus terrorists (CR 105) against the heroes. If your group is too small or weak to handle the fight, you can have them attacked by just one or two of the terrorists. If your group is so big or powerful that the fight won’t be interesting, you can have The Broker join the battle, add some additional Exodus terrorists (use the Super Soldier template from Ascendant p. 481), or add some villains of your own creation.

If the heroes win the fight, they earn 1 Character Point and immediately recover 5 Hero Points.

THE END OF HIGH SUMMER

The Casefile ends when the heroes have dealt with El Cartel and Exodus and decided what to do with the contaminated cannabis.

PURSUING THE CARTEL MEMBERS

If any of the Cartel thugs made off with packages of contaminated cannabis, they will head to the stash houses marked with Yellow pins on the warehouse map to hand off the drugs to the pushers listed in the safe's roster. It's up to the heroes to decide whether they want to pursue the fleeing Cartel thugs personally or hand over what they've learned to CCPD. As long as the heroes provide CCPD with the stash house map and/or the dealer list, the police will be able to handle things from there. However, if Cartel members escape and the heroes neither pursue nor brief the cops, then some contaminated cannabis hits the streets. This affects the heroes' Mission Resolution Award.

INTERROGATING EXODUS

If any members of Exodus are captured, Captain Anderson of the Star-Spangled Squadron will contact Dreadnaught and/or CCPD to demand they be handed over to the Federal government. The heroes will have just 16 hours (14 SPs) to interrogate the Exodus prisoners prior to hand off. You can use this as an opportunity to allow the heroes to discover any plot threads they missed already, or to offer up hooks for new adventures.

MISSION RESOLUTION REWARD

Award Character Points as follows:

- ★ Heroes brought El Cartel to justice and captured/destroyed all of the contaminated cannabis: 3 CP
- ★ Heroes brought El Cartel to justice and captured/ destroyed most of the contaminated cannabis: 2 CP
- ★ Heroes brought El Cartel to justice or captured/destroyed most of the contaminated cannabis: 1 CP
- ★ Heroes neither brought El Cartel to justice nor captured/destroyed most of the contaminated cannabis: 0 CP

If the heroes caused or permitted Exodus to destroy property or kill civilians during their battle, reduce their Mission Resolution Award by 1 CP, to a minimum of 0.

POINTS OF FAILURE

There are several methods by which the players can fail to complete the objectives of this Casefile, and although care has been taken to provide multiple avenues for the players to progress to the next stage, you might wish to consider what will happen if players fail in their goals.

THE SCENE AT SOUTH SLAUGHTER

If the heroes fail to find any Clues leading them to the Emery & Co. warehouse, they will certainly fail the Mission. If you are feeling kind, you can have Captain Alex Marshal direct them to the next step, but should reduce their Mission Resolution Award by 1 CP. Otherwise, their failure means Capital City is heading for disaster.

THE WAR AT THE WAREHOUSE

If the heroes don't visit the warehouse promptly, they will lose the chance to eavesdrop on The Broker. That may leave them confused as to what's going on, but there are enough other Clues available so they can still complete their Mission.

If the heroes start a fight at the warehouse and don't win, El Cartel will evacuate it within 4 hours (12 SP). The warehouse will be emptied of all the contaminated cannabis and all of its Clues. (They may opt to leave booby-trapped objects behind, however.) This outcome is likely the most difficult to adjudicate, as they may not even understand what's going on yet and may just be focusing on bringing the rogue ascendants to justice. You will have to respond to whatever schemes your players devise at this point. They might attempt to capture El Cartel gangsters to interrogate, deploy Power Stunts to miraculously track the drugs, and so on.

If Exodus's counter-attack succeeds, and the heroes don't know the plot, they might just shrug and "let them have them." On the other hand, if they've figured out the plot, they would be justified in calling for help from CCPD, the National Guard, or even the Star-Spangled Squadron to re-capture the dangerous drugs.

CAPITAL CITY'S CANNABIS CRISIS

If the villains aren't stopped, then at 3AM on August 19th, stash houses around the city will start distributing contaminated cocaine. The result will be disaster. All over Capital City, people will go into berserk rages. Some will no doubt ascend from the stress and horror. The city will descend -- into total chaos, that is. The resulting calamities may spur yet more ascensions. Coupled with the civil unrest already afoot, the CCPD will be overwhelmed. Capital City may well descend into lawless anarchy while the world watches in morbid fascination and horror as it consumes itself. Eventually martial law will be declared and reinforcements sent in, but with so many enraged ascendants on the loose, even the Star-Spangled Squadron might struggle to put an end to the chaos...

OBJECT CATALOG

This section presents any new Objects introduced in this Casefile. All other objects referenced can be found in the **Ascendant** rulebook.

COMPOUND R

Type: Pharmaceutical Object

Cost: 18 SPs (\$2,500) / 101 CP

Attributes: Height -8, Weight -20, Toughness 0, Durability 1, Duration 16.

Effects: Triggered Emotional State (Wildly Angry; source of anger is "unaffected characters"; triggered after 10 SPs Time), Tireless.

Notes: Compound R must be mixed with a psychoactive compound and then swallowed, smoked, inhaled, or injected to take effect. It immediately makes the user Tireless. 10 SPs after the user swallows or smokes Compound R, he is attacked by a Duration vs. MIG Attack. On a Green result, he becomes Wildly Angry for 13 SPs (8 hours). On a Yellow result, he becomes Wildly Angry for 14 SPs (16 hours). On an Orange result, for 15 SPs (32 hours); and on a Red result for 16 SPs (2.5 days). The user considers anyone who isn't using Compound R to be the source of his anger; he will not be angry at other users.

CHARACTER INDEX

This section presents any new NPCs introduced in this Casefile. All other characters referenced can be found in the *Ascendant* rulebook.

CAPTAIN ALEX MARSHAL (CCPD DETECTIVE)

Character Points: 400 **Power Limit:** 14 **Hero Points:** 4

Attributes: MIG 3, AGI 4, VAL 3, RES 4, INS 4, CHA 4, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 4, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 3, Income 3, Reputation 4, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 30, Determination 40.

Skills: Alertness 6, Avocation (Baseball) 6, Combat Posture 5, Intimidation 6, Interrogation 6, Investigation 7, Marksmanship (Firearms) 7, Martial Arts 5, Parkour 5, Persuasion 6, Piloting (Ground) 5, Profession (CCPD) 6, Science (Forensics) 5, Smack Talk 6, Stealth 5, Stoicism 6.

Perks: Authority (CCPD Detective, 5 CP), Criminal Connections (Confidential Informants, 10 CP), Connections (FBI, 20 CP), Leadership, Multilingual (Spanish), Multitask, Protector, Watchful, Wealthy (10 CP).

Drawbacks: Code of Honor (CCPD Code of Conduct, 2 CP), Dependent (Loyal Wife, 1 CP), Duty (CCPD Detective, 5 CP).

Equipment: Binoculars, Bulletproof Vest, Handcuffs, Heavy Handgun, Polarized Sunglasses, Smartphone, Tactical Flashlight, Walkie-Talkie.

Notes: Captain Alex Marshal is a stocky black man with a close-cropped haircut and strong chin. Marshal pines for the old days, when felons couldn't flee from crime scenes at Mach 1. Sadly, as head of the Special Crimes Division, he has to work with ascendants on a daily basis. That would be bad enough, but he is also saddled with two of the most difficult detectives in Capital City, Rial Porcher and Louis Hernandez. It's been a long week for Captain Marshal, and it's only Wednesday.

CARLOS CHÁVEZ (ROGUE ASCENDANT)

Character Points: 640 **Power Limit:** 20 **Hero Points:** 16

Attributes: MIG 5, AGI 5, VAL 5, RES 7, INS 3, CHA 3, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 2, Initiative 5, Income 4, Reputation 5, Notoriety 5, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 320, Determination 120.

Powers: Super-Stamina 10, Short Range (-2) Continuous Rapid-Fire Thermal Blast 10, Physical Invulnerability 12, Thermal Resistance 12, Combat Sense 7, Predatory Ultra-Sensitive Scent 7, Contrail Flight (Flames) 7.

Skills: Avocation (Motorcycles) 8, Combat Engineering 5, Marksmanship 11, Stealth 9.

Perks: Criminal Connections (10 CP), Combat Maneuvers (Super-Power Ranged, Ultra-Power Ranged, Mega-Power Ranged), Ferocious, Wealthy (2 CP).

Drawbacks: Disturbing Appearance (burned smoking hands, 1 CP), Duty (El Cartel de Los Carteles, 5 CP), Hunted (CCPD, FBI, 5 CP), Notorious (5 CP).

Equipment: Heavy Handgun, Smartphone.

Notes: A pyromaniac with two prior convictions for arson, Carlos Chávez ascended last year after inhaling toxic gases from a chemical fire he set. Carlos has a shaved head and black goatee. His hands are blackened with burn scars and subtly smolder and smoke.

JUAN HERNANDEZ (ROGUE ASCENDANT)

Character Points: 640 **Power Limit:** 20 **Hero Points:** 16

Attributes: MIG 13, AGI 7, VAL 7, RES 7, INS 3, CHA 4, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 10, Initiative 20, Income 3, Reputation 4, Notoriety 6, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 960, Determination 120.

Powers: Invulnerability 13, Lightning Reflexes 13.

Skills: Alertness 5, Avocation (drug use) 6, Intimidation 6, Smack Talk 7, Sport (soccer) 8.

Perks: Combat Maneuvers (Super-Fast Melee, Super-Power Melee), Criminal Connections (20 CP), Grappling Expertise, Multilingual 1 (English), Protector, Tireless, Wealthy (1 CP).

Drawbacks: Compulsion (cocaine Addict, 2 CP), Compulsion (smoking, 1 CP), Disturbing Appearance (grotesque physique, 1 CP), Duty (El Cartel de Los Carteles, 5 CP), Hunted (CCPD, FBI, 10 CP), Notorious 6.

Equipment: Smartphone, Submachinegun.

Notes: Juan Hernandez was once a good boy – but he has become an evil man. A rage-and-cocaine-fueled ascension and Exodus “training” have eradicated the sweet-natured teenager his grandmother remembers. Juan's boyish, acne-scarred face has been left unchanged by his ascension, but his body has become a caricature of a steroid-enhanced bodybuilder's, with large veins on bulky muscles connected by taut thick tendons.

STARQUAKE (EXODUS CELL LEADER)

Character Points: 720 **Power Limit:** 22 **Hero Points:** 20

Attributes: MIG 4, AGI 6, VAL 5, RES 9, INS 5, CHA 5, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 1, Initiative 5, Income 6, Reputation 5, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 320, Determination 240.

Powers: Flawed Forcefield 11 (Annihilating, Cosmic), Gravity Control 11, Super-Stamina 10

Skills: Avocation (Capital City) 7, Avocation (Exodus) 7, Marksmanship (Firearms) 8, Persuasion 7, Power Aptitude (INS, Gravity Control) 11.

Perks: Criminal Connections (20), Multilingual 3 (French, German, Italian, Spanish), Multitask, Principled (Code of Honor), Tireless, Wealthy (5 CP).

Drawbacks: Code of Honor (Exodus Zealot, 2 CP), Duty (Exodus cell, 5 CP), Hunted (US Government, 5 CP), Vulnerable State (192 Determination Lost: Loses Forcefield, Gravity Control, Power Aptitude).

Equipment: Smartphone.

Notes: Starquake is an Exodus zealot of long standing, having been one of the captives freed by Maximum Leader during Manticore's breakout from Gitmo. A tall, fit-looking blonde man, in battle he disguises his appearance in a black leather flight suit and chrome helmet. Starquake is desperate to prove his power to Maximum Leader and rise in the ranks of Exodus.



NOISY KAREN (EXODUS ASCENDANT)

Character Points: 640 **Power Limit:** 20 **Hero Points:** 16

Attributes: MIG 2, AGI 3, VAL 3, RES 5, INS 5, CHA 2, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 4, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 3, Income 5, Reputation 2, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 3, Health 320, Determination 160.

Powers: Combat Sense 10, Differentiating Explosive Sound Control 10, Filtered Hearing 3, Super-Fortitude 8, Super-Stamina 10, Ultra-Sensitive Hearing 3

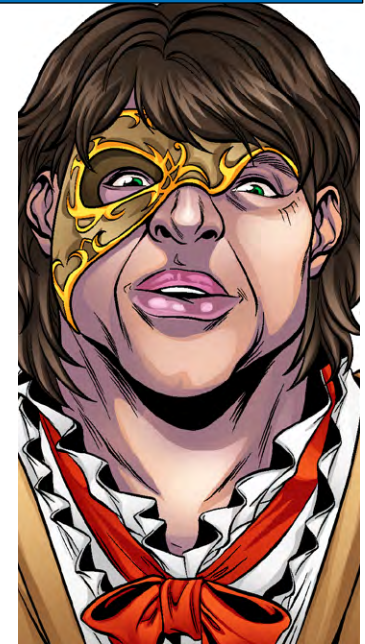
Skills: Avocation (opera) 7, Piloting (Ground) 6, Power Aptitude (INS, Sound Control) 10, Smack Talk 7.

Perks: Multilingual 4 (French, Italian, Russian, Spanish), Wealthy (5 CP).

Drawbacks: Code of Honor (Exodus terrorist, 2 CP), Compulsion (nagging, 2 CP), Duty (Exodus cell, 5 CP), Hunted (US Government, 5 CP), Vulnerable State (80 Determination Lost: Loses Sound Control).

Equipment: Smartphone.

Notes: Noisy Karen always loved the sound of her own voice. She hoped to be an opera star, but her lucky break never came. At 40, she developed throat cancer that threatened to silence her forever; experimental gene therapy triggered her ascension. Exodus offers her the opportunity to prove what she's long known: she's better than other people. Noisy Karen appears as an overweight white woman in her early 40s with short, dyed hair wearing an opera masque to hide her face and a flowy dress that hides her curves.



MINDMELT (EXODUS ASCENDANT)

Character Points: 560 **Power Limit:** 18 **Hero Points:** 12

Attributes: MIG 3, AGI 5, VAL 5, RES 9, INS 5, CHA 5, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 10, Income 4, Reputation 5, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 240, Determination 240.

Powers: Super-Stamina 9, Physical Invulnerability 9, Neural Mind Blast 9, Lightning Reflexes 5, Ultra-Sensitive Vision 4.

Skills: Avocation (Nietzschean Philosophy) 8, Power Aptitude (INS, Mind Blast) 9.

Perks: Multilingual 2 (French, Spanish), Tireless, Wealthy (5 CP).

Drawbacks: Code of Honor (Exodus Zealot, 2 CP), Compulsion (Creepy Vibes, 1 CP), Disturbing Appearance (Violet irises, 1 CP), Duty (Exodus cell, 5 CP), Hunted (US Government, 5 CP).

Equipment: Assault Rifle, Smartphone.

Notes: Mindmelt is a zealot of Maximum Leader's Nietzschean philosophy. He triggered his own ascension by radical adherence to the Church of Ascension's protocols. He is convinced that his current abilities are merely a fraction of his true power and believes that loyalty to Exodus's cause will be rewarded with training at the hands of the master himself. Mindmelt appears as a gaunt man in a white tracksuit with a hood. He wears amber-tinted John Lennon-style glasses over perpetually bloodshot, unblinking violet eyes.



THE BROKER (EXODUS ASCENDANT)

Character Points: 720 **Power Limit:** 22 **Hero Points:** 20

Attributes: MIG 3, AGI 5, VAL 3, RES 9, INS 5, CHA 6, Weight 3, Height 0, Running Speed 5, Jumping Speed 0, Initiative 8, Income 6, Reputation 6, Notoriety 8, Passive Spotting 8, Passive Listening 0, Health 480, Determination 240.

Powers: Deflection 11, Forcefield 11, Iron Will 13, Lightning Reflexes 5, Mind Screen 11, Self-Only Slow Teleportation 4, Short Range (-1) Annihilating Blast 11, Super-Intelligence 6, Super-Stamina 11.

Skills: Avocation (Capital City Underworld) 11, Avocation (Exodus cells in Capital City) 11, Marksmanship 11, Persuasion 10.

Perks: Multilingual 16 (Mandarin, Spanish, 14 others), Multitask, Principled (Code of Honor), Sacrificer, Tireless, Watchful, Wealthy (5 CP).

Drawbacks: Code of Honor (Exodus Zealot, 2 CP), Compulsion (Cuban Cigars, 2 CP), Duty (Exodus, 5 CP), Hunted (US Law Enforcement, 5 CP), Notorious (8 CP), Vulnerable State (120 Determination lost or Moderately Depressed: Loses Forcefield, Deflection, Teleportation, Blast, Multitask, Watchful, 117 CP).

Equipment: Smartphone.

Notes: The Broker appears as a well-groomed 40-something British man in a tailored business suit. His powers are the product of a secret UK-based program about which little is known. He joined Exodus after being liberated from a containment camp in Nauru when Maximum Leader took over the island. His power set makes him very useful as an administrator and courier for the terrorist group.

When "doing business," the Broker keeps his Forcefield activated and uses his two Automatic Actions to ready Sacrificer and maintain Deflection. He avoids combat, always Teleporting away at the first opportunity. His Powers make him difficult to detect and capture!

If you are running a Series set in Capital City, the Broker can be a recurring villain, able to act as a middle-man between Exodus and various other organizations or groups. If you're just running the Casefile as a one-off, you can have the Broker stick around if you want to create a more difficult challenge for your players. Just be sure to reward them appropriately when they manage to take him down!



South Slaughter Strife! 7 dead, 15 wounded as ascendants massacre police narcotics squad!

EDDIE EXSWISS | AUGUST 16th | 9:15 AM

b

A routine drug bust turned Benson Avenue into a warzone as officers from the CCPD's Narcotics Division clashed with members of El Cartel de Los Carteles and illegal ascendants. 5 officers were killed and 8 wounded during the running battle, which lasted for fifteen minutes as the police were forced to flee the scene, harassed at every step by the cartel's super-criminal allies.



Benson Avenue runs through one of the most deprived districts of Capital City, and has long suffered from neglect at the hands of the city government. We can only imagine the terror its largely immigrant population must be going through as they encounter violence worse than any they fled when they came seeking the American Dream in Capital City.

AA

CCPD spokesperson Agatha Harris spoke this morning at a press conference. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the brave men and women who risk their lives every day to maintain law and order in Capital City, and to the innocent lives endangered by the criminal organizations they confront. We urge anyone and everyone who might be able to help us track down these killers to come forward, before they put yet more lives at risk."

Judith Siegel, a spokesman for the anti-ascendant organization American Citizens Against Vigilantism, told reporters that "the government's failure to pass the Ascendant Registration Act is directly responsible for this tragedy. None of us are safe unless and until these humans of mass destruction are regulated."

Capital City Police Department Internal Memo



From: Lt George Williams, CCPD Narcotics Division

To: Director, Special Crimes Division

Subject: Re: 08/16 Benson Avenue Incident

Alex,

I'm going to visit the boys in ICU before I type the full report of the incident, but here's a brief rundown.

We got an anonymous tip on the location of a stash house on Benson last week. Yesterday we got the warrant and this morning we made a no-knock entry. The perps on the first floor were typical crew and got on the ground fast. We'd just started cuffing them when a couple of heavies came at us from the second floor. We opened up, found out both the bastards were immune to small-arms fire, and fell back to the street. They pursued us while the rest of the Cartel crew armed up and followed. It was ugly. One of the heavies was strong enough to hurl our cruisers at us. The other straight-up hurled fire. We're lucky anybody made it out alive.

If I remember anything else you'll be the first to know. Ellie says they're gonna have a whip-round for the families of the fallen tomorrow. Hope to see you there.

All the best,

George