

## SHADOW ACTIVITY

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

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

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

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

**Extractions** are frequently arranged by corporations who wish to steal valuable personnel from other corporations. Top research scientists, skilled financial agents, and other suits with valuable knowledge are hot commodities and are suitably protected. The “victims” in many extractions are willing targets—employees who have decided to defect to another corp. Some corporations consider certain personnel so valuable that they would rather see them dead than working for a rival; attempts to extract these people may fall afoul of deadly contingency plans.

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

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

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

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

**Wetwork** is assassination, pure and simple. Many runners refuse to take these jobs and view dirtying their hands for money in this way as vile. The world of 2070 contains many factions, each with multitudes of enemies who they may find most convenient and cost effective to simply remove. Corporations or underworld figures sometimes place bounties on certain individuals; collecting on these can be profitable, if risky.

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