

OPERATION: EAGLE EYE

A one-page milieu for espionage storytelling

COLOR CODE: PLACES PEOPLE THINGS

TELL A STORY of action and intrigue using the elements on this page.

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OPEN WITH ACTION and then have the PCs break a sweat again before the finale. Here are some ideas for scenes to use throughout the mission:

- PCs are discovered while tailing a vehicle in their sports car(s), and must flee from missile-armed drones through a city's industrial sector.
- Captured PCs must listen to plot-revealing monologue before being deposited in a weapons testing range and hunted down by killer drones.
- Athletic PCs climb aboard fleeing corporate jet, fight the crew, and use the jet's secret missiles to shoot down drone(s). Techie PCs support the action by hijacking control of remote-piloted drones in the same air space.

WRENSFIELD AIR BASE was decommissioned in the 1950s. It served as a domestic freight hub for the IPS delivery firm until that company went bankrupt. Then RaptorCorp bought the site for a song.

Security Stations (S1-4) are staffed by goons with sidearms and bad attitudes, who monitor cameras positioned throughout the air base (though notably absent from the warehouses). They also have Jeeps.

Corporate HQ (HQ) is for legitimate business only, though hidden files may hint at a top secret plan called the Merlin Project.

Hangars (H1-2) hold an array of drones, plus a Dasault Falcon corporate jet (secretly equipped with discreet air-to-air missiles). Power tools (arc welders, rivet guns) litter the area. Technicians working here know nothing of the Merlin Project, but are inclined to rough up nosy PCs anyway.

Warehouses (W1-3) are a dark maze of disused shelving, crates, forklifts, and suspended walkways—an optimal place for a deadly game of cat-and-mouse, or a hideout for pursued PCs.

ATC Tower (T) is eight stories tall and full of radar and communications terminals. It is staffed 24/7 and has a clear view for miles around. The controllers know nothing of the Merlin Project.

UAV Lab (L) is the tightly controlled drone research and fabrication building. Clever PCs or NPCs might improvise something useful from the half-functional weapon systems, propulsion units, and surveillance gear being worked on here. Part of this building might house a secret bioweapons lab.

Control Bunker (B) is a hidden underground Cold War era fallout shelter rewired for satellite-relayed command and control of all RaptorCorp drones. These tight spaces are packed with video screens and control panels for a fleet of drones, and are separated by thick blast doors.



JAYSON CORVUS is CEO of RaptorCorp and mastermind behind the Merlin Project. He is charming (in greasy, manipulative way) but entirely self-centred.

Corvus' concealed pistol fires explosive gyrojet ammo. If he can't reach his corporate jet, he'll try to use the still-functional jetpack (an early RaptorCorp patent) on display in his office to escape (he is a mastermind, after all).



RaptorCorp is a privately held aerospace research firm with several important defence contracts. Its primary business is development and operation of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for military, agricultural, search/rescue, and law enforcement applications. It was recently awarded a contract to provide UAV-based homeland security services.

INFILTRATING THE BASE

can be an abstract skill challenge or a series of involved scenes. Here are ideas:

- Impersonate a RaptorCorp customer, bypass a security door to reach unauthorized areas.
- Stow away on a cargo flight bringing spare UAV parts to Wrensfeld.
- Nighttime HALO paradrop from 10k feet.
- Cut the electric fence, avoid security cameras, locate air vent to bunker.

FINDING CLUES keeps the plot going. Here are ways PCs might find clues:

- Observe base activity remotely, noting unusual traffic patterns and activity.
- Question Fei Yen Xiao or surreptitiously steal data or codes from her computer.
- Inspect UAVs or research lab devices.
- Discover secret or encrypted files.

THE MERLIN PROJECT

is one of these heinous plots. Choose or roll:
 01-20: The Merlin is a fully autonomous law enforcement drone, dangerously overpowered and poorly programmed.
 21-60: The Merlin is a mundane agricultural drone, a fleet of which could deliver a weaponized aerosol of super bird flu over the largest 20 metro areas.
 61-80: The Merlin is a tiny, precision-strike drone capable of hovering in confined spaces. Corvus plans to use them to assassinate hundreds of political targets simultaneously, bringing the nation to its knees in one fell swoop.
 81-00: The Merlin is capable of super-high altitude flight. Corvus is using them to assemble a death-ray in low-Earth orbit.

SPY GADGETS

are always fun. Give some to PCs, some to bad guys, and sprinkle some around as 'treasure':
 01-20: Flechette gun hidden in wristwatch.
 21-40: Quiet, hummingbird-sized helicopter piloted via smartphone.
 41-60: High powered explosive disguised as chewing gum, with cuff link detonator (twist to set timer, then attach).
 61-80: Peelable tattoo dissolves in drink to become quick-acting sleep drug.
 81-00: Climbing harness sewn into suit jacket; grapple and line concealed in belt; shoes have retractable spikes in soles.

KAZIMIR SOKOLOV flew AN-225 jets for the Russian Air Force until a dishonorable discharge ended his career. He now serves as head of Corvus' personal security detail (that is, he's a murderous henchman). With both the physique and personality of a bull, he enjoys pounding people with nail-adorned brass knuckles, tossing them into whirring jet engines, or throwing them out of planes at 12,000 feet.

ROLEPLAYING SCENES

help the PCs figure out what's going on and allow for witty repartee. Some ideas:

- Negotiate with a hard-nosed cop for details about the murder of a CDC official who discovered the theft of several vials of super-potent bird flu.
- Score an invite to a gala at local zoo sponsored by RaptorCorp. After learning of Corvus' unhealthy obsession with birds, PCs become "accidentally" trapped in an aviary with agitated cassowaries!
- Carouse with Fei Yen Xiao at a scientific conference, until Corvus catches wind of it and whisks her away.

FEI YEN XIAO is a brilliant, beautiful scientist responsible for some of RaptorCorp's secret advances. Although headstrong, her loyalty might be swayed by a compelling argument from a debonair PC. Her scientific field is whatever is most pertinent to the Merlin Project, e.g. biochemistry, AI, space technology, etc.

TWEAK THE GENRE to fit your favourite game. Here are examples:

- 20's HORROR: The villain is a cultist. The drones are biplanes with tentacled monstrosities fused into the fuselage.
- MECHA/ANIME: The villain is head of the techno-yakuza. The drones can transform/combine into big robots.
- BUNNIES & BURROWS: The base is a bird colony. The villain is a vulture. The drones are hypnotized sparrowhawks.
- FANTASY: The villain is a gnome artificer. The drones are air-elemental-infused constructs.
- JANE AUSTIN: The base is a boarding school. The villain is an odious suitor. The drones are improprieties that threaten the PCs' moral conscience.
- POST-APOCALYPSE: The villain is a hawk mutant. The drones are reprogrammed warbots.
- SCI-FI: The base is on an asteroid. The drones are AI spacecraft.
- STEAMPUNK: The base is on a zeppelin. The villain is a mad scientist. The drones are steam-driven mini-blimps.
- SUPERHERO: The villain has bird-themed superpowers.
- WAR-TIME: The base is in occupied France. The villain is a Nazi scientist. The drones are a new type of V-rocket.
 - WEIRD WEST: The villain is a shaman. The drones are manifestations of the legendary Thunderbird.