

TERRA CONFLICTUS 2066

THE ATTENTION WAR



CULTURE · SIGNAL · CONTROL
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THE ATTENTION WAR

TERRA CONFLICTUS 2066

An Operator Tactics Supplement by Jesse Alexander

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"You want to know what a territory is afraid of, read its water ledger. You want to know what it wants, listen to what it plays when it thinks the feed is off." — Wavelength, Dead Channel Radio, unlogged broadcast

This is the third volume in an informal trilogy. *Faiths After the Upheaval* covers what people owe when the infrastructure fails. *Sports of Terra Conflictus* covers what people watch when they need the result to be real. This volume covers everything else people make, wear, play, sing, screen, and sell to each other to stay human under pressure — the music scenes, the broadcast landscape, the fashion economy, the celebrity machinery, the nightlife, and the games that aren't sports.

Three principles carry over from the companion volumes and one is new:

Culture is non-exclusive. The same person who prays with the Cupkeepers and bets the Raid Race also hums the Drought Hymn, wears a dead credential on a chain, and has an opinion about the third season of a serial she has only heard described. Nothing in this book locks anyone out of anything else in it.

Every scene grows from a material pressure. There is no music in this book that could exist in any other world. The Waterloo Sound exists because Flooded London's acoustics are broken. The cartel sound exists because the SCA never handed its culture to a curation engine. Drift composition exists because some ears are no longer standard. If an entry doesn't map to scarcity, infrastructure, faction control, the black market, environmental hazard, biological instability, or identity drift, it was cut.

The record keeper matters more than the record. Sports has The Spread. Faith has the Ash Archive. Pop culture has Wavelength, the Burn Archive, the bootleg cataloguers, and CONFLICT's back pages — and, as always, the unofficial record is more trusted than any official one.

The new principle: attention is a resource system. Water is metered. Power is rationed. Attention is the third metered resource of 2066, and this book treats it exactly the way the setting treats the other two: somebody upstream controls the flow, somebody downstream pays for it, and an entire parallel economy exists to route around both.

Companion references: the wiki's Culture chapter, the Splice Punk design guide, the in-world Brand Bible, CONFLICT magazine (departments cited throughout), and the Sports supplement for everything at the stadium end of entertainment.

THE ATTENTION WAR

THE THESIS

Every faction treats information control as strategic, which means every faction treats entertainment as a munition it hasn't classified yet. The NAF curates. The EO commissions. The PCU permits. The PRC registers. The SCA, alone among the blocs, mostly lets its culture happen — and as a direct result exports more of it than the other five combined.

Underneath the faction layer, the real cultural economy runs on three bands, and everyone in 2066 knows which band they are listening on at any given moment:

THE VERIFIED BAND

Sanctioned, licensed, carried on official feeds. NAF pod-pop, EO anthem cinema, faction dramas, the Gridfall Circuit, arena sport. The content is professional, the metadata is clean, and the audience discounts all of it by reflex, because everyone knows the first question the verified band asks is not "is this good" but "is this cleared."

THE GRAY BAND

Unlicensed but tolerated. The cartel sound moving north on pressed media. Serials passed hand to hand on data chips. The Spread. CONFLICT. Feed channels like Warranty Void that are too small to kill and too popular to admit watching. The gray band is where most culture people actually care about lives, and every authority maintains the official position that it is not listening — while staffing a desk that logs it.

THE DEAD BAND

Pirate, unrecorded, deniable. Dead Channel Radio on a frequency the registries list as carrier-empty. NULLCAST's rotating signals. The Mark Broadcast. The bootleg tape economy. Music performed in rooms with no power grid on the rider. The dead band's defining property is that participating in it is itself a statement — the content and the crime arrive together.

The bands leak into each other constantly, and the leakage is the culture. A dead-band tape gets cleaned up and sold gray. A gray-band artist gets an offer to go verified and their audience holds its breath to see if they take it. A verified drama quietly hires a dead-band writer because the cleared ones can't make anyone cry. The one-line version of this entire supplement: **the verified band has the money, the gray band has the audience, and the dead band has the credibility, and no act, garment, or broadcast holds all three for long.**

A SHORT CHRONOLOGY

2028–2041 — The Document Wars. Archives burn, and with them most of the recorded culture of the pre-Upheaval world. The scar this leaves is permanent: in 2066, owning an intact pre-Upheaval recording is wealth, claiming to remember the original is status, and faking either is an industry. Every bootleg economy in this book descends from the Document Wars.

2042–2050 — The quiet years. Culture goes local because distribution is dead. The regional scenes documented in Part II — the Waterloo Sound, the cartel sound, the Echo register — all form in this window, in isolation from each other, which is why they share nothing but scarcity.

2046 — The first Crackerjack. The GSOTC accidentally invents the modern mass audience. Four billion people learn to watch the same thing at the same time again.

2051 — The Dynamic Siege. The founding trauma of modern broadcasting (see Sports, Part III). The lesson every network internalizes: live means anything can happen, and anything happening is the product. The lesson every audience internalizes: the footage you are shown is a decision somebody made.

~2055 — **Dead Channel Radio's first logged broadcast.** Eleven years on air by 2066. The dead band gets its cathedral.

The First Display Season. The year the uniforms died at the GSOTC — operators start using tournament broadcasts to show a personal register to the whole world, and Splice Punk acquires its global stage. Fashion becomes broadcast content and never goes back.

2060 — The Traveler returns. A generation ship nobody remembered arrives in low orbit and every feed on Earth carries the same picture for three days. Largest unplanned shared audience since the Upheaval. Dead Air, its twelve-athlete league, will later become the strangest cult fandom on the planet.

2066 — Now. HALO is drifting on camera and four billion people are watching her count.

THE VERIFICATION ECONOMY

On the Feed — the constellation of platforms, networks, and channels that constitutes the NAF's (and increasingly everyone's) attention infrastructure — **verified** is a formal status: an official information-system credential that determines access, monetization, and reach. Verification is the velvet rope of 2066. It can be granted, revoked, inherited by a channel's buyer, and — this is the load-bearing fact — held by entities that are not people.

The economy runs on three axioms everyone under forty knows by heart:

- **Verified is not visible.** Status buys carriage, not audience. The Feed is full of verified channels nobody watches and unverified channels everybody watches.
- **Revocation is the real censorship.** Nobody bans content anymore; they de-verify the carrier and let the reach collapse. Frequency — the Center Point signal pirate — was a verified Feed journalist until the wrong question got the credential pulled. What survived was the journalism.
- **The audience is a prosthetic.** For the stateless, the voided, and the erased, a subscriber count is the closest thing to a passport. Ask Theo Ashe, who defected from a nine-mind Protectorate flight and rebuilt the lost chorus out of strangers: an audience the state cannot revoke.

CAMPAIGN USES

An operator crew that controls a verified channel controls a laundering apparatus for attention. A de-verification is a professional hit that leaves no body. A client who wants a channel's credential — not its content, its credential — is offering a job with a very strange shape.

01 /

MUSIC

The verified band has the money. The gray band has the audience. The dead band has the credibility.

MUSIC

Six scenes, one folk tradition, eleven labels, and a radio station that does not exist. Music in 2066 is regional in a way it hasn't been for a century and a half, because distribution died in the Document Wars and grew back wrong. What moves between regions moves as pressed media, memory, and rumor — which means every scene arrives everywhere else slightly mythologized, and every scene privately believes the others are the lucky ones.

1. THE WATERLOO SOUND

THE SOUND

Flooded London's music is the acoustic consequence of a city that drowned standing up. Sound bounces between towers and falls into the water, arriving from directions that bear no relation to the source — so the city's musicians stopped fighting the echo and hired it. Salvage-deck sets sample faction broadcast frequencies against pre-Upheaval pop fragments. The creak of wet cable under load is a rhythm section. A purge-override countdown is a bass event. Gene-forged performers with vocal synthesizers use perfect mimicry as an instrument, singing a chorus in the voice of the borough announcer, the tide siren, and your mother.

CULTURE

The scene lives on the Waterloo Interchange platforms and in the rope-bridge neighborhoods. ROPE BRIDGE SESSIONS stages live acoustic sets where amplification is impossible — the best sets happen at six in the morning, timed to the supply-basket drops, when every building on the eastern cable lowers its containers in a choreographed rattle the musicians play against. The scene's house act for this slot is **The Six AM Baskets**, who have never performed at any other hour and consider the request insulting. NULLCAST's evening block

The Tide Window is appointment listening across the elevated neighborhoods; STATION STATIC presses ambient recordings of the Interchange itself in packaging that reuses VEKTORA relay schematics without license, which VEKTORA has decided is cheaper to ignore than to litigate.

The scene's most contested artifact is **The Tower Sessions** — field recordings on data chips of the city with no music in them at all: wet cable, misdirected voices, water hum. Operators swear they're accurate. Residents say they're incomplete. Both keep buying them.

INSTITUTIONS

ACOUSTIC WEIRD (the label; its studio has deliberately bad acoustics, on the reasoning that a room that flatters you is lying), STATION STATIC, ROPE BRIDGE SESSIONS, DEAD CHANNEL PRESS (print wing of the same social scene), NULLCAST.

FAULT LINE

The sound is inseparable from the infrastructure, and the infrastructure is failing. Every year the tide takes another performance platform, and every year some engineer proposes stabilizing the acoustics of the Interchange — which the scene understands, correctly, as a proposal to demolish the instrument.

CAMPAIGN USES

A salvage-deck artist has sampled a faction frequency that carried something she shouldn't have; three parties want the master chip and only one of them wants it intact. A Rope Bridge Session at basket-drop hour is the best cover for a handoff in the city — sixty seconds where every camera in the district is pointed at the cables.

2. THE CARTEL SOUND

THE SOUND

The SCA is the only bloc that never handed its culture to a curation engine, and the cartel sound is what a living tradition sounds like after forty years of everyone else's dying ones. It is not one genre. It is a distribution posture: horn sections and hand percussion and border-waystation ballads and elevated-district dance

music, recorded live, pressed on physical media, moved north along the same routes as everything else the SCA moves north. The name was coined as an NAF slur — music that arrives by cartel logistics — and the scene kept it, on the standard 2066 principle that you keep the insult and make it pay rent.

The canonical fact, recorded in every survey of NAF listening habits and denied in all of them: **the cartel sound is what NAF pods actually play when the feed is off.**

CULTURE

The tradition's heart is the debt party — the SCA custom of settling an obligation with a night of music the debtor pays for, which means the size of the band announces the size of the debt. **The Widow Flores Orchestra**, thirty-nine pieces, plays only debt parties and is therefore the most feared invoice in the hemisphere. The scene's biggest export star is **Refugio "Cuco" Andrade**, a border-wystation balladeer whose songs are structured as customs declarations — everything named, everything counted, one item always missing — and whose NAF tour permits are denied annually in a ritual both sides enjoy.

The Amazonian Metroplex wing of the scene belongs to FLOOD CHANNEL — see the reconciliation note under Institutions — whose elevated-district tradition is rhythmically dense, built for high-ceiling open air, and contractually radical: FLOOD CHANNEL artists retain their own genomic data rights, a clause that exists because of what happened to everyone who didn't (see Part V).

INSTITUTIONS

FLOOD CHANNEL is both a record collective and a broadcast house, and this confuses outsiders because it would be two companies anywhere else. In the Metroplex it is one thing: a media cooperative whose music arm presses the elevated-district tradition and whose broadcast arm carries the March flagship feed. The same is true of CABLE MOUTH in Gorodskie Ekho (music collective, and broadcaster of Highside). In the gray band, a "label" is whoever owns the antenna and the press — the separation of those businesses is a verified-band luxury.

FAULT LINE

The cartel sound's routes are real routes. Every pressed-media shipment that crosses into NAF territory is also a proof-of-concept for whatever else fits in the crate, and both sides know it. The scene's nightmare is not suppression — it is adoption: the year the NAF stops seizing the records and starts licensing them is the year the routes stop being worth protecting.

CAMPAIGN USES

A crate of pressed media needs to cross three checkpoints, and the client cares which *copy* arrives, not which crate. The Widow Flores Orchestra has been booked for a debt party where the debtor intends not to be alive by the encore.

3. THE ECHO REGISTER

THE SOUND

Gorodskie Ekho's musicians play without amplification because the walls do the work and the grid can't be planned around. In the flooded undercroft near the second pumping station, groups "play the architecture" — sound returned off concrete and standing water, arrangements built around the room's own delay. People dance in their coats. The register is patient, low, and communal, music by and for people whose city communicates visually because the acoustics scramble everything else; a set is as much watched as heard, hands and cable-language and breath-fog carrying what the melody can't.

CULTURE

CABLE MOUTH is the scene's collective and its doctrine: contested-zone venues only, and a rider that requires no power grid — a band that needs electricity is a band that can be switched off. The scene's best-loved act is **Coats On**, named for the dress code of every venue in the city, whose sets end when the room's shared body heat fogs the last sightline and not before. Above the waterline, the EO's official culture is anthem cinema and parade-ground brass; the Echo register is what the same population does with the same lungs when nobody is conducting. In the Soak — the four million unregistered below the waterline — the register is close to a civic institution: an undercroft set is the only public assembly no faction has figured out how to license.

FAULT LINE

Half Lap braids and faction colors stop at the venue door by unspoken rule, and the rule is fraying. The season the mono-type relay culture and the undercroft scene finally collide — a pack team booked, a splice audience standing — is coming, and everyone knows which district it will happen in.

CAMPAIGN USES

An undercroft set is the Soak's parliament; getting a message to four million unregistered people means getting a song played. The EO wants a name for whoever writes Coats On's lyrics, which are memorized, never printed, and increasingly specific about pump-station maintenance schedules.

4. DRIFT COMPOSITION

THE SOUND

Some ears are no longer standard. Template drift produces frequency perception outside the baseline band, and gene-forged composers have been writing for those ears for a decade — music with layers a standard human physically cannot hear. GENOME CHOIR, the Samudra Sattva vocal collective, is the form's cathedral act: resonant implants, modified larynxes, lineage-specific auditory processing used as compositional material. Live shows require an auditory augment to hear all the layers. It's printed on the ticket. No refunds.

CULTURE

Drift composition is the only art form in 2066 whose full audience is defined biologically, and the scene has split over what that means. The **open-register school** scores every piece twice — the full mix and a baseline-audible reduction — on the principle that music that excludes is doing the factions' work for them.

The **full-band school** refuses the reduction on the opposite principle: baseline culture has everything else; this is ours. Both schools agree on the enemy: novelty acts that fake the layers for baseline audiences who want to feel like they're missing something. The scene's word for those acts is *tinnitus*.

The wiki's line remains the best one-sentence summary in print: gene-forged composers are building music for Drift-created frequency perceptions that standard humans cannot fully hear — and the operative word, both schools agree, is *fully*. Even a baseline listener gets the shape. What they don't get is the address.

FAULT LINE

Every full-band performance is, legally, an assembly of gene-forged communicating on a channel authorities cannot monitor without augmented informants. Three territories have already classified specific frequency bands as encryption. The composers' answer is on every flyer: *it's not a code, you're just not the recipient*.

CAMPAIGN USES

A GENOME CHOIR performance is the only place a message can be passed that no baseline surveillance can even record meaningfully. A full-band composer has been found dead, and the piece she was finishing describes — to the right ears — a door.

5. STATE POP

THE SOUND

What the verified band plays. Four traditions, four control philosophies:

NAF pod-pop is AI-curated composite music — engineered from engagement data, performed by no one, optimized per listener. It is genuinely, infuriatingly good, and its perfection is its tell: the total absence of a human mistake. "The tell" — any verifiable trace of non-AI authorship — is traded as a contraband luxury in NAF territory. A recording with a cracked note and a provable human throat behind it sells for more than the artist ever made. The scandal that defines the

form: a composite act whose engagement kept climbing until an auditor discovered the vendor had been quietly splicing in an unlicensed human session singer for three years. The vendor was fined for adulteration. The singer's identity has never been released, and finding her is the NAF gray band's holy grail.

EO anthem culture is oligarch-commissioned: crooners, orchestras, and cinema scores produced as propaganda and consumed as puzzle. The audience has learned to decode against the grain — to hear which patron paid, which rival is being warned, which disaster is being pre-excused. The beloved baritone **Pavel Nisht** has sung commissioned material for thirty years, and his gift, never stated, universally understood, is phrasing: he can place a stress so that the commissioned lyric and its opposite arrive together. The EO censors have cleared every song he has ever sung. The EO public has heard every one of them twice.

PCU permitted registers run through the Prophet's cultural office, which licenses forms rather than works: the qasida revival, the courtyard ensembles, the water-blessing repertoire. Inside the permitted forms, the oasis courtyard scene — led by singers like **Umm Sahar**, whose settings of the old desert poets draw crowds the sports circuits envy — is among the most vital on Earth, which produces the PCU's standing cultural paradox: the least free scene and the least cynical one.

PRC registration pop treats performers as registered cultural instruments — licensed, catalogued, tracked like any other identity. The music is polished and the paperwork is the art form's real content: which acts get renewed, which vanish from the catalogue, which "retire" at the height of their draw. Fans keep parallel discographies the way Square fans keep parallel title lineages, and for the same reason.

FAULT LINE

All four traditions share one: the state can make music, but it cannot make the thing the gray band has, and every state knows it. The verified band's permanent posture toward the gray band is a checkpoint guard humming a song he is supposed to confiscate.

CAMPAIGN USES

The human session singer inside the NAF composite is a person somebody could find. Pavel Nisht wants to defect — or wants someone to believe he does. A PCU cultural licence is the best cover documentation in the bloc, if someone could acquire a permitted form.

6. THE DEAD BAND

THE SOUND

Dead Channel Radio is the most trusted media institution on the planet, and it does not exist. A bootleg broadcast on an EO-spectrum frequency the registries list as carrier-empty, on air eleven years, hosted by **Wavelength** — unmet, unlocated, a voice reading music, rumor, and coded supply listings "like a woman reading weather." Five spectrum authorities each staff a desk logging a broadcast their parent bodies say does not occur. The GSOTC once issued a correction to something Wavelength said, and the whole world understood the correction as confirmation. You do not correct silence.

The station's calendar is the dead band's liturgical year: **Crackerjack Night** (match audio, and the crowd silence when Anvil walked open ground); the annual **Drought Hymn** broadcast on the anniversary of the Great Drought's worst month; **The Waterloo Session** (sixty unannounced minutes of Interchange market ambience at high tide); the memorial dive audio from the drowned Old City, three years running; and **The Mark Broadcast** — irregular, unannounced — in which Wavelength reads listener-submitted descriptions of marks and tags with no commentary, and operators across six territories go very quiet and take notes.

NULLCAST is the dead band's other pillar: pirate radio and streaming on rotating frequencies across Flooded London, Gorodskie Ekho, and Samudra Sattva — same idea, opposite temperament. Dead Channel Radio is a cathedral; NULLCAST is a party that moves before the police arrive. (NULLCAST also runs the Square's pay-per-view — the dead band, too, has a commercial wing it prefers not to discuss.)

THE NAME PROBLEM

"Dead channel" is the most contested trademark in 2066 culture: the radio station, the Enduro, the print collective, the color, the frequency slang — and DEADCHANNEL COMMS, the encrypted-gear brand that filed the trademark *after* a music collective was already using the name. The legal situation is unresolved, ongoing, and beloved: the collective's entire discography is now filings — each release titled with a docket number, each track a response to a motion. The scene's consensus is that the lawsuit is the best album either party ever made.

FAULT LINE

The dead band runs on the fiction that nobody official is listening, and everybody official is listening. The band's real protection is not secrecy but usefulness: every authority gets something from the broadcasts (market prices verified against three sources, mark intelligence, the mood of the Soak) that its own instruments cannot collect. The day Dead Channel Radio stops being useful to its enemies is the day the carrier-empty frequency goes empty for real.

CAMPAIGN USES

Getting an item read on the Mark Broadcast is how you tell every operator on Earth something at once, deniably. Somebody has started triangulating Wavelength — not to arrest her, to *hire* her — and three parties who need the station to stay mythical are competing to stop it quietly.

7. THE LABELS, THE LEGEND, AND THE HYMN

THE LABEL BOARD

The eleven institutions of record, one line each, for the table: **ACOUSTIC WEIRD** (Flooded London; unconventional acoustics as doctrine). **DEAD RELAY RECORDINGS** (Free Zone Dispatch; physical media only, sealed chips and analog runs, no streaming, catalogue of twenty-two artists, every one a deliberate bet against the Feed). **NULLCAST** (pirate carriage). **ROPE BRIDGE SESSIONS** (live series; acoustic by necessity). **STATION STATIC** (Interchange ambient). **GENOME CHOIR** (drift composition's flagship). **FACTION LOGO** (the post-punk band with the unlicensable name — the GSOTC surveilled them for eight months and concluded, in writing, that they were "aesthetically hostile but operationally irrelevant"; they printed it on shirts, and the shirt outsold the

records). **FLOOD CHANNEL** (Metroplex cooperative; music and broadcast arms). **CABLE MOUTH** (Ekho collective; music and broadcast arms). **OPEN REGISTER SOUND** (lo-fi field recordings from documentation spaces — waiting rooms, verification queues; the sound of the paperwork state, pressed and sold back to its subjects). **DEAD CHANNEL PRESS** (print, but the same scene).

THE GENE FORGED REUNION TOUR

The most famous band in 2066 never existed. The GENE FORGED REUNION TOUR shirt began as a bootleg joke on the Menagerie routes — a tour shirt for a reunion of a band nobody could name, because there was no band. The joke outran its authors. There are now bootlegs of the bootleg (collectors grade them by generation), a disputed "original venue list" on the back of the third printing, and — this is the part the scene treasures — three separate acts have claimed to *be* the Gene Forged, and been shouted down by fans of a band that has never played a note. Ozzy Okonkwo-Cruz sells knockoffs of the shirt from the family stall and once, memorably, debunked a "tour original" as fake at a swap meet, live on the Warranty Void channel, then bought it anyway. Every few months a rumor crosses the routes that the Reunion Tour has been *scheduled*. The scene's position is unanimous: attendance will be total, and anyone who actually performs will be run off the stage.

THE DROUGHT HYMN

A song nobody wrote and everybody knows. No official lyrics; the versions differ by territory; the melody is constant. It is sung at funerals, at water blessings, at the end of long shifts, and once a year on Dead Channel Radio, and its verses are the closest thing the post-Upheaval world has to a shared text that no faction issued. The Cupkeepers claim it. The Second Shore claims it. The truth, as far as anyone can establish, is that it came out of the Great Drought's refugee columns with the people who survived them, which means it belongs to the only institution in 2066 with universal membership: the ones who lived.

CAMPAIGN USES

A first-generation Gene Forged Reunion shirt is a status object worth more than most vehicles, and exactly the kind of thing a patron sends a crew to acquire at a swap meet that turns out to be somebody's trap. A territory's local verse of the Drought Hymn contains a place name that no longer appears on any map — and somebody has noticed that the song remembers what the archives lost.

02/

SCREENS

Live means anything can happen, and anything happening is the product.

SCREENS

What people watch, and what watching costs. The screen culture of 2066 is defined by one inheritance and one wound: the Document Wars burned the archive, so almost everything on a screen is new; and the 2051 Siege taught the audience that live footage is a decision somebody made. The result is a viewership that is passionately engaged and structurally suspicious — four billion people watching everything and believing exactly as much of it as they can verify.

1. THE FEED

The Feed is the constellation of streaming platforms, social networks, and content channels that constitutes the attention infrastructure — NAF-anchored, globally leaked. Feed access determines fame; Feed exclusion determines irrelevance. Its economy is covered in Part I; its culture is the channel.

A Feed channel in 2066 is a small sovereign territory: it has a population (subscribers), a border (verification status), an economy (merch, tips, sponsorship), and a foreign policy (what it will and won't film). The channel taxonomy every viewer knows: **work channels** (operators, crews, and tradespeople filming the job — the dominant form, because in 2066 the job is the drama), **register channels** (personal style broadcast as ongoing performance), **desk channels** (analysis, results, prices), and **found channels** (recovered, leaked, or ambient footage curated into meaning).

The form's masterwork is **WARRANTY VOID** — the found-footage channel run by a five-operator splice out of a Lost Angeles garage, covered in full in the wiki. What matters for this volume is what the channel proved: that the gray band could produce appointment viewing with no license, no network, and no faces the state could revoke, and that an audience will trust hand-lettered title cards over a verified chyron precisely *because* the state can't issue handwriting. Every garage crew on three continents now owns a camera because of them. The channel's other cultural bequest: **metadata never lies** — the emerging gray-band ethic that jokes belong in the cut and truth belongs in the timestamp, which is more journalistic integrity than the verified band has managed in twenty years.

The vlogger tier's breakout is **Lita Brightly** — baseline, Blue Springs — who built an audience by filming the Raid Race from *inside* the event, jumper's-eye, and accidentally invented participatory sports broadcasting. The Spread cites her footage. Monitor Central subpoenas it. She publishes anyway.

CAMPAIGN USES

A crew's channel is a second income and a standing operational vulnerability — every fan is a witness and every clip is discoverable. A client wants a job done *on camera*, framed as found footage, and the crew has to work out what the footage is really for.

2. THE BROADCAST INSTITUTIONS

IRONLINE BROADCAST — mass tactical engagement carried like sports: commentary, replays, form tables for the Eastern European front. Technically illegal everywhere. Available everywhere. The broadcast's origin is disputed (EO psy-ops, UKE psy-ops, a freelance desk playing both, all three at different times), and its audience does not care, because the coverage is *good* — the only place the Iron Line's dead are counted out loud. The desk's standing sign-off, adopted as an idiom across the blocs: "The front moved. The front will move back. Good night."

THE DEAD CHANNEL ENDURO — the twelve-hour unedited single-channel broadcast from a contested zone, location voted 48 hours out (see Sports). Included here because its cultural function outgrew its sporting one: the Enduro is the only mass broadcast with no edit, which makes it the annual audit of what unstaged reality looks like — and the annual reminder that anyone who can influence the vote gets 48 hours to stage it.

THE GRIDFALL CIRCUIT — the GSOTC entertainment division's esports league (see Sports, and Part VII). Carried at the Coliseum between mission rounds; the High Ground arcologies treat elite players as harmless celebrities until their match histories start predicting real deployments.

NULLCAST PPV — the Square's fight cards, and the dead band's paywall, an irony nobody in the scene enjoys having pointed out.

3. DRAMA AND THE SERIALS

MARTA OF THE CROSSING — the colossus. A border-waystation family serial, nine hundred episodes and counting, following three generations of one family running a crossing inn on a contested route. It is produced in SCA territory, syndicated on pressed media everywhere, and beloved with a depth no verified drama has touched — because its subject is the one universal experience of 2066: staying open while the flags change. Grigor Tam listens to it while he cooks. So, statistically, does everyone. The serial's writers have never missed the real world's beat: when checkpoint fees rose on the northern routes, Marta's fees rose the same season, and half the continent learned the new bribe etiquette from a radio drama.

THE DRIFT — the underground fiction serial: a gene-forged operator in Stage 3 drift, narrated from inside the surfacing instincts. Unknown author. Crosses faction lines on data chips and hand-copied text. It is the most important piece of fiction in the setting because of who reads it — drifting gene-forged pass it to each other as the only account that gets the *interior* right, and the standing question (is the author drifting, drifted, or a committee of both?) is the gray band's favorite literary argument. Three territories have banned it. The bans are widely understood as reviews.

TERRAFORM — the NAF's flagship drama, named for the remediation zones its engineer-heroes work (the title is the job, not the metaphor, which tells you everything about NAF drama). Technically sophisticated, dramatically inert, renewed forever. Its cultural function is real, though: TERRAFORM is what the verified band thinks the frontier is like, and gray-band comedians have built careers on the gap.

SKIN DEEP — the twelve-episode data-chip serial about a black-market gene clinician hiding her own drift. Banned in three territories, which tripled distribution. The rumor that the lead actress is an actual forged playing baseline-playing-forged is either the point or the marketing, and the show refuses to resolve it.

EO anthem cinema — commissioned epics, decoded against the grain (see Part II, State Pop). The form's ritual: opening night is for the patron; the second screening is for the audience to work out what the patron is afraid of.

4. THE TAPE ECONOMY

The Document Wars made recorded history scarce, and scarcity made a market. The bootleg tape economy trades in footage that is rare, suppressed, or — its most profitable category — *possibly fake*:

- **The Siege Tape** — the unreleased 2051 Crackerjack footage. Fourteen known fakes, some with valid signal decay. The truth about the fakes, from Sports, bears repeating here because it is the tape economy's whole thesis: a convincing fake can be more politically valuable than the truth, because its contents can be selected.
- **"Phoenix Never Left Neo-Toronto"** — the forty-minute bootleg docudrama whose last ten minutes are allegedly real Hellfire Harriers comms. Reeves has never commented, which the market prices as authentication.
- **The League Broadcast** — the mythical final transmission of the Prometheus League. Probably never existed. Sold weekly.
- **The Anvil Tapes** — intercepted EO operational recordings of the operator whose open-ground walk silenced a Crackerjack crowd. The EO's position is that there is no Anvil. Dead Channel Radio plays the crowd silence annually, which is the loudest possible disagreement.

CAMPAIGN USES

Tape authentication is a profession, a scam, and a mission profile: the client has a fragment, three experts, and two answers. A courier job's cargo is a master chip whose *copies* are already everywhere — the client is paying for the provenance, not the content, and someone else is paying to break the chain.

5. PRINT, COMICS, AND THE ZINE ECONOMY

The salvage-print world runs on DEAD CHANNEL PRESS, GRID PRESS, and a hundred hand-run presses like Marco Cruz's in Barricadia. The staples: **Faction Man** (the hand-drawn PMC barracks serial — different employer every issue, same punchline; barracks consensus holds that the anonymous artist has served under every flag drawn); **Tide Charts** (the Flooded London wet-entry squad comic whose issue 7, "The Pipe Fight," won an underground award that does not officially exist); **The Reject Pile** (the aberrant gene-forged zine — angry, funny, and the only publication in 2066 whose letters page is its best writing); the **Ghost Kit Journal** kit-documentation culture, read simultaneously as fashion

and intelligence; and the Crackerjack almanac and Gutter Bible at the reference end. CONFLICT and its siblings — The Spread, UNSTABLE SIGNALS, FIELD FICTION — sit at the professional end of the same physical-media economy, and the whole ecosystem shares one press-culture ethic: print is the band the Feed can't revoke.

03/

STYLE

In a world of genomic registration, the jacket is the only layer of identity you fully control.

STYLE

Fashion in 2066 is documentation. What you wear is where you've been, what you were issued, what you kept, and what you want read across a room. The design doctrine underneath all of it is the salvage stack — no uniform, no catalog, assembly as authorship — and the political fact underneath the doctrine is that in a world of genomic registration, the jacket is the only layer of identity you fully control.

1. THE SALVAGE STACK

The Splice Punk wardrobe doctrine, from the design canon: faction surplus stripped of faction identity; salvage civilian; gene-forged augmentation worn as aesthetic; dead credential decoration. You don't reject the gear — you strip it of the flag. The stack's grammar is legible to anyone who can read it: *kit archaeology* (reading an operator's history from accumulated modifications), the *dead stack* (expired IDs and clearance badges worn as jewelry), the *personal register* (a visual signature so developed it functions as identification — which is the point, and the risk: a register consistent enough to be yours is consistent enough to be filed, and surveillance files silhouettes it cannot name).

The idiom set is canon: *Strip the faction, keep the jacket. What's on your kit is who you are. The kit knows where you've been.*

2. THE HOUSES

The fashion board, from the Brand Bible, one line each: **GHOST KIT** (the flagship; stripped tactical wear, prior operational life worn as feature, never a consistent season). **ROPE KIDS** (Flooded London youth label; built for lateral motion and elevation culture). **DEAD STACK COLLECTIVE** (expired credentials as jewelry; the lookbook is a stolen Kavast unit archive, which Kavast knows). **MARK HAND STUDIO** (Samudra Sattva; bespoke augmentation-integrated, commission only, six-month wait). **FACTION SURPLUS** (exactly what it says; the styling is in the stripping). **BARE BUILD** (one off-grey; legible neutrality, and therefore instantly recognizable — the label's own joke). **CLADE DRIP** (cut to gene-forged origin category; wearing the wrong clade *reads*, and doing it deliberately is a statement with consequences). **OPEN KIT** (modular; a one-page brand

manual and a four-hundred-page community configuration archive). **SCAFFOLD STYLE** (what Splice Punk looks like at home). **SPLICEWEAR** (community-verified maker mark). **DEAD REGISTER** (the high end; expired registration codes printed inside the linings, luxury as classified information). **STATION WEAR** (the Interchange vendor aesthetic, emergent for a decade before someone registered it, which the vendors have not forgiven).

Above the board sits **MAISON VEY** — the bespoke gene-forged atelier on Atelier Row, eleven years teaching the arcology floors that the *absence* of a model number is the luxury. Three tiers: PRESENCE, ACTIVE, and SOLE EDITION — one commission a year, and the year's rumor is always the same rumor: who, and what for. Maison Vey dresses bodies the way the EO commissions them, and the house's unspoken product is the same as the oligarchs': a silhouette no one else can have.

And beneath everything, the counter-movement: **ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT** — four flagship stores, no logo, undyed long-staple cotton, nothing else. Plain fabric as maximal statement: *I have not been edited. My grandparents had water.* The gray band's verdict on OE oscillates weekly between "the most honest label alive" and "the most expensive way ever devised to say you didn't need anything," and both verdicts are correct, which is why it sells.

3. WHAT THEY'RE WEARING TO THE WAR

CONFLICT's fashion department is the trade's paper of record — four-item spreads, each with Manufacturer, Materials, Signal Value, Survivability, and a VERDICT — and its recent canon is a museum of 2066 style logic: **the Recovered Jacket** (salvage-tier; leaving the original owner's tag in the lining is the highest manners there are, and a good jacket carries three tag pockets); the **Baffle Hood**, Ghost Medal issue (photographs as a hole rather than a face); **CLARION smart frames** (the analyst's glasses with an inward-facing sensor — the surveillance economy's perfect object: it watches you watch); the **reconnaissance field optic that remembers nothing** (now the rarest thing in the bag, because forgetting became the premium feature); and the **Port Collar, cut high left** — the Ostrand Medical clinic garment copied by four houses, all of which

moved the closure to the right for drape, so that anyone who has actually been on a table spots the tourists across the room. That last item is the whole fashion system in one seam: the copy is better-looking, the original is *true*, and everyone dressed in 2066 is making that trade knowingly, in one direction or the other.

At the department's back sits EXPENSIVE TRASH, the verdict-only column, whose recent subjects — the 3,100-credit pre-Upheaval "never recovered" original ("a forgery of innocence"), the Own-Print Registry Locket, the Meridian Private Stability Retainer at fourteen thousand a year — map the exact altitude where object culture stops being salvage and starts being alibi.

4. FACTION DRESS

Every bloc dresses its power differently, and the streetwear of 2066 is built from their surplus: **Kavast** runs the red discipline — red is never decorative, only claim — so a single red thread on a stripped Kavast jacket is either an oversight or a provocation, and no one who wears one gets to claim oversight twice. **The Protectorate's** green-is-live/white-is-filed grammar made its surplus the most legible on the market: dead Protectorate kit is by definition filed, so wearing it white-tagged is wearing a closed case. **EO** style is commission culture — the oligarch body as portfolio, Maison Vey's clientele, the Peacock's iridescence as the reference point for an entire tier of display. **NAF** corporate clean reads as the absence of story, which is its own story. **PCU** dress runs modesty-engineering — heat-management silhouettes that satisfy both the cultural office and the desert, the only faction aesthetic driven by climate before politics. **SCA** style is the living wardrobe of the debt-party circuit: color as solvency. And the **Nordics** dress like the audit is tomorrow, because for the Nordics it always is.

5. DANGEROUS FASHION

Three garments can get you killed in 2066, and all three are popular. **Copied Burn Run marks** — station marks reproduced on clothing — are the most dangerous fashion in the setting: the marks are indistinguishable from live operational signage, and wearing one means broadcasting field information you cannot read to people who can. **Counterfeit medical seals** turn a jacket into a

fraudulent eligibility document at every venue that checks. And a **live-registry dead stack** — wearing a credential that turns out not to be expired — converts jewelry into impersonation the moment a reader pings it. The scene's rule of thumb, taught to every rope kid: *wear the dead, never the living*.

6. THE BODY AS THE GARMENT

The deepest layer of 2066 fashion is not cloth. *Wearing the build* — visible modification as deliberate display — and *owning the drift* — aberrant change as personal aesthetic — make the body itself the stack's bottom layer. The Crackerjack's display culture broadcasts personal registers to the full world every tournament; Maison Vey tailors *to* commissioned anatomy; CLADE DRIP cuts to lineage. And ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT sells the counter-position at flagship prices. The fashion question of the age, asked at every level from the arcology floors to the Barricadia swap meets, is the setting's identity question wearing a jacket: *how much of what you're looking at did they choose?*

CAMPAIGN USES

A dead stack that pings live. A Maison Vey SOLE EDITION commission that requires a tissue sample the client does not legally own. A crate of counterfeit Port Collars, cut high left — correct — which means the counterfeiter has been on a table, and somebody wants to know which one.

04/

THE MACHINERY OF FAME

*Fame in 2066 is a resource extraction industry. The
resource is a person.*

THE MACHINERY OF FAME

Fame in 2066 is a resource extraction industry. The resource is a person. This part covers the machinery — verification, ownership, image rights, the exchanges — and the seven most instructive famous people alive, plus the ones who stay famous by being dead.

HALO

The most-watched entertainer on Earth. Four billion people know her by one name, one silhouette, and one number: the count.

HALO is a motion performer — aerial work, dance, sustained impossible stillness — built by a boutique performance lineage that no longer exists, which makes her, legally, orphanware at planetary scale. For nine years her broadcasts were the Feed's crown: a body doing what bodies cannot, live, without commentary, because commentary would have been noise. Then the counting started. Drift is expressing — small, rhythmic, compulsive: she counts her own steps now, visibly, her lips moving in the wide shots, and the Feed did not look away. It leaned in.

Four billion watchers, and she is drifting on camera. The exchanges sell the count — prediction markets on her next stumble, her next skipped beat, the date her lease-holders announce "an extended rest." Her management (she has never been established to *have* management, as opposed to holders) releases nothing. CONFLICT has run her on two consecutive covers without landing an interview, which the magazine notes is itself the story: the most visible person alive is unreachable by anyone whose questions aren't priced.

The gray band's position on HALO has hardened into the era's bleakest media ethics seminar: everyone agrees someone should stop the broadcast, no one agrees who has the right to, and the broadcast has never had more viewers. Wick — see below — said the quiet version on a Sub-Level 2 stage: "They built her to be watched. Now watching is the only thing anyone does for her."

CAMPAIGN USES

Every party in the HALO economy hires crews: exchanges protecting the count, holders protecting the asset, fans planning a rescue she has never asked for, and — the persistent rumor — a survivor of her lineage's design team, trying to reach her with a maintenance protocol before the markets price it.

THE CASE FILES

Phoenix Reeves — the operator as institution. Nineteen years an asset, mostly for someone other than herself. CONFLICT has run a Reeves poster, a Reeves think piece, and a Reeves *fragrance*; the myth machine has begun writing her backward into the 2051 Siege, an event predating her callsign by fourteen years; and whether she is baseline or forged is the one question nobody asks in public, because — the market's own formulation — the price doesn't depend on the answer. Reeves is what fame does to competence: the work was real, the legend is licensed, and the person crosses the staging area every tournament, accent color unchanged, owning exactly one of the three.

Wick, "The Test Pattern" — Neo-Tokyo, Sub-Level 2. Entertainment-grade forged, built for a resort light show, subdermal panels meant to glow warm and even. The spec held six years; now the panels fire without her — strobing, dropping frames, reading like a screen losing signal. She calls it *cooking off*. The booker calls it her gift. Her set is the definitive statement of the entertainment-industry ethic this volume keeps circling: the industry built bodies for spectacle, discarded them when the spec drifted, and the discarded turned the malfunction into the act. The marquee is white letters on dead-channel blue, and the room is full every night.

Sefa, "Argent Nine" — the celebrity as amenity. Golden-eagle stock, 2049 Raptor Initiative, leased by the quarter to eleven Silicon Haven towers as a *silhouette* — billed to residents as AERIAL OVERWATCH, BILLED MONTHLY. Nobody is budgeted to read what she sees. Sefa is famous the way a fountain is famous: architecture that happens to be a person, and the template case for fame's ownership problem — her image is in eleven leases and her opinion is in none of them.

Wavelength — the anti-celebrity. Eleven years as the most trusted voice on Earth; unmet, unlocated, unmonetized. Wavelength's fame is the machinery's photographic negative: no image, no verification, no merchandise, total reach. The dead band's proof that the machine is optional — and the machine's standing obsession, because what it cannot verify it cannot own.

Razborki — the scene star. EDM DJ, Raid Race jockey, resident of the Tooth and Gear booth where the flicker-paint murals shift in time with his frequencies. Three-generations-old Jaguario livery, hand-painted Calavera skull on the fuel cell, a nectar habit that makes his reliability a die roll, and the affection of a city that has decided his flaws are load-bearing. Razborki is what fame looks like when it stays home.

Lita Brightly — the participant. See Part III. The first vlogger whose footage is cited by The Spread and subpoenaed by Monitor Central in the same week, and the template for the era's newest celebrity class: famous for being *inside*.

Frequency — the cautionary file. Verified Feed journalist; asked the wrong question; de-verified. Now a signal pirate in ghost kit with deliberately no dead stack — a register of invisibility built as carefully as HALO's visibility, by someone who learned the machinery from the inside and chose the negative.

THE DEAD WHO STAY FAMOUS

The machinery's last privilege: operators who die on camera become tactical reference points indefinitely — study material, callsign shorthand, Crackerjack Night audio. The Almanac keeps them; Dead Channel Radio plays them; CONFLICT's OBITUARIES FOR PEOPLE WHO AREN'T DEAD YET pre-writes them, a department whose standing joke (the obituary as career review) has twice been retracted for becoming true. And the Last Roster keeps the version of the ledger the broadcasters don't: the names the cameras were pointed away from.

THE OWNERSHIP PROBLEM

Underneath every file above is the same clause structure. Fame in 2066 is divisible and therefore invisible: holders own transport, image rights, medical debt, lease quarters, data models, or a percentage of future action, and almost never the person outright — because owning the person outright is illegal most places, and unnecessary everywhere. The entertainment industry's founding sin is the

load-bearing fact of the whole system: **the industry built people.** Commercial stock — the theme-park greeters, resort performers, and corporate spectacle lineages — was manufactured for entertainment, discarded by liquidation, and absorbed by the battlefield, and every entertainment contract signed in 2066 is drafted downstream of that precedent. FLOOD CHANNEL's genomic-rights clause, Cas's buyout papers, Wick's residency terms, HALO's holders: one story, five altitudes.

CAMPAIGN USES

Image rights are stealable cargo. A percentage of an athlete's future action is collateral on a loan the crew is hired to collect. A liquidation archive lists nine performance-lineage assets, scattered — and someone is buying the leases quietly, in order.

05/

NIGHTLIFE

A room, unlike a frequency, can enforce neutrality at the door.

NIGHTLIFE

Where the bands meet after dark. Nightlife in 2066 is the one cultural arena where verified, gray, and dead share rooms — because a room, unlike a frequency, can enforce neutrality at the door.

NECTAR

The signature intoxicant of the age. Served in glasses that glow faint UV-blue; a rail pour at the bottom of the menu and a top shelf that certain rooms will not print prices for. What is actually in it is the most successfully kept trade secret in consumer culture — BURNER's formula has been reverse-engineered in six cities; nobody has published nectar — and the mystery is understood by everyone in the trade to be the brand. What is *known*: it is addictive (Razborki's reliability is a die roll because of it); potency varies by city in ways the distributors call terroir and toxicologists call quality control failure; and the UV glow is not decorative — a pour that doesn't glow is a counterfeit, which makes the lighting rig of every nectar bar a verification instrument. The drink's cultural function is the neutral-ground toast: nectar is what you order when the table includes people whose factions are shooting at each other, because it belongs to none of them.

THE ROOMS

The Tooth and Gear — the flagship (see Sports and the wiki's Lost Angeles entry). Ground floor of the High Top Towers, Center Point: bass you feel in your teeth before the door, nectar under UV, flicker-paint murals shifting with Razborki's frequencies, The Line's price moves audible through the back-booth wall, and the third booth with no number — the settlement booth, bolted table, a light that cannot be turned off from inside. Neutral ground by convention, which in Lost Angeles is a stronger law than law.

The Tooth — the original Barricadia room. One exit, salvage teeth on the wall, and the crowd that was there before the club mattered. The relationship between the two rooms is the scene's class map in one address change.

The Waterloo Interchange — a market and a scene and a neutral ground simultaneously; Splice Punk's Ura-Harajuku. Platform protocol governs; the Register — an oral practice, not a document — remembers who is owed what; and twice a week when the tide allows, style is traded alongside salvage under the fifteen-year palimpsest of the Waterloo Wall.

Sub-Level 2 — Neo-Tokyo's below-the-water-table circuit: the room below the room below the street, freight lifts smelling of ozone and wet rope, Wick's marquee in white on dead-channel blue. The city's registered idol tier performs upstairs, on license; Sub-2 is where the decommissioned play the shows they were built for, on their own terms — the entertainment-grade underground, and the best room on Earth for watching the industry's discards outperform its catalog.

The undercroft, Gorodskie Ekho — the flooded room near the second pumping station where the architecture is the amplifier. Coats on. See Part II.

Viewing houses — the nightlife of everywhere else. Districts that cannot support a live venue support a feed wall: power by the minute, wagers taken, medical screenings hosted, private rooms rented to recruiters. During the Crackerjack, the most politically important building in the neighborhood; the rest of the year, the living room of the attention war.

The oasis courtyards — the PCU's permitted nightlife: courtyard ensembles, water-blessing repertoire, Umm Sahar's crowds. Alcohol-free, curfewed, licensed — and packed, because the music is that good and the heat breaks at night.

RITUALS OF THE NIGHT

Every room keeps its liturgy, and a visitor who learns it is announcing they intend to come back. The canon set: the platform protocol at the Interchange. The nectar glow-check, performed by the buyer, never the house — checking your own glass is prudence, checking the house's rig is an accusation. The Tooth and Gear's restraint-tap etiquette imported whole from Raid Race crews: two taps on a friend's shoulder leaving for a job, one tap on return means don't ask. The Sub-2 rule that you do not photograph a performer's build without the build's permission — the body is the act, and the act has rights the person may not. And last call at Coats On, which is not announced but *felt*: the room's breath-fog closing the final sightline, the band ending on the room's own delay.

CAMPAIGN USES

Neutral ground is a mechanism, not a mood — a job that requires violence at the Tooth and Gear is a job that requires making the violence look like it happened somewhere else. The settlement booth is bookable, in principle, by anyone; the waitlist is the most dangerous document in Center Point.

06/

GAMES AND PLAY

A game whose rules can't be standardized can't be owned.

GAMES AND PLAY

What people play when nothing is broadcast. The games of 2066 are the sports board's shadow: no leagues, no verification, and rules that mutate by district — which is the point. A game whose rules can't be standardized can't be owned.

GRIDFALL — the dominant competitive strategy game, and the one exception: standardized, broadcast, professionalized into the Gridfall Circuit. Doctrine rehearsal and talent-spotting that nobody calls recruitment, until match histories start predicting real deployments — at which point elite players discover which kind of famous they have been all along.

OPERATOR DRAFT — the tactical card game whose community errata, circulated through the Dead Letter Office courier network, are considered more authoritative than the rulebook. The publisher has tried four times to incorporate the errata; the community rejects each printing as non-canonical, including the printings that match. The game is now a case study in the setting's deepest cultural law: the unofficial record outranks the official one *because* it is unofficial.

CLADE WARS — the deep-simulation faction strategy game, played by the kind of people who annotate. Its player base maintains the most accurate public model of real faction logistics on Earth, entirely by accident, and at least two intelligence services maintain accounts.

OPEN FIELD — the anonymous-kit tabletop wargame: unmarked pieces, no faction names, every army a silhouette. Beloved in contested zones precisely because a confiscated set proves nothing. (Out on the routes it is understood, correctly, as the world playing itself with the serial numbers filed off.)

MARK THE GRID — territory marking as game; the training wheels of mark culture, and the reason every rope kid can read a wall by ten.

MAKALI BLUES — the card game named for the tragedy, rules different everywhere it's taught, and in every version rigged against whoever goes first. Nobody teaches it without telling you why.

Children's play is the sports supplement's closing image and belongs here too: Stack in every loading bay, March with one kid assigned to close their eyes, Highside imitated on stairwells, Dead Air in harness bays. Recruiters watch all of it — the attention war's earliest theater.

07/

POP CULTURE BY THEATER

*Every scene arrives everywhere else slightly
mythologized.*

POP CULTURE BY THEATER

The globe, scene by scene. One paragraph per theater: what plays, what's worn, where the night goes.

Lost Angeles / NAF Western Corridor — The capital of the gray band. Raid Race kinetics, flicker-paint as the district art form, FACTION LOGO playing rooms the GSOTC gave up surveilling, Warranty Void's garage economy, the Tooth and Gear as the scene's parliament. Style: garage patches over stripped NAF surplus; a Calavera skull is a neighborhood, not a brand.

Neo-Toronto / NAF East — The heritage machine: the Combat Museum, the Reeves industry, official memory with a gift shop. The gray band's counter-propaganda is the bootleg docudrama economy — "Phoenix Never Left" screened in basements four blocks from the museum that gets it wrong on purpose.

Arcadia — The NAF's clean-surface city listens to pod-pop in public and the cartel sound at home, and its contraband of choice is "the tell." Ground Truth country: the tidiest feeds on earth, and the widest gap between what plays and what's played.

Flooded London / UKE — The Waterloo Sound, the Interchange, ROPE KIDS, the Wall, the Traverse League's style-as-navigation. The world's densest scene per dry square meter; the tide is the promoter, the curfew, and the archivist.

Gorodskie Ekho / EO territory — The Echo register below, anthem culture above, Pavel Nisht on every licensed frequency and Coats On in every under-croft. Cable language on the anchor points; Half Lap braids at the funerals; the Soak's sets as the parliament of the unregistered.

The Eurasian Steppes / EO deep territory — Convoy culture: Ironline Broadcast in the cab, Marta of the Crossing on the long hauls, truck-stop viewing houses at the relay points. The Silent Motor Pool's Power-Down Vigils have made machine funerals a spectator custom the Order never intended.

Amazonian Metroplex / SCA — FLOOD CHANNEL's city: the elevated-district sound in high open air, green-hand mark culture on living surfaces the city digests on its own schedule, debt parties under the canopy. Root Mass on the March pitch; the Widow Flores Orchestra when solvency fails.

New Buenos Aires & the Patagonian corridor / SCA south — Marta of the Crossing's production home and the serial-drama industry around it; the cartel sound's pressing plants; the debt-party circuit's deepest bench of orchestras.

Andean Heights — Altitude scenes: airframe-shed dances where Teódula's mechanics host, thin-air brass whose arrangements only work above four thousand meters, and the SCA's best kit-archaeology market in the corridor towns.

The Saharan Oasis / PCU — Umm Sahar's courtyards, the qasida revival, Catchwater family crews doubling as the district's social calendar, the Bounty Declaration as civic theater. The GSOTC on the horizon runs the loudest broadcast on Earth out of the quietest media territory, and the contrast is the region's entire cultural politics.

Istanbul & the Bosphorus Compact — The hinge market: every band of every bloc trades here. The city's specialty is authentication — tape provenance, credential verification, fake Port Collars spotted at the door — and its nightlife runs on the fiction that the authenticators drink off duty.

Neo-Tokyo / PRC sphere — Registration pop upstairs, Sub-Level 2 downstairs, Shibuya Standard on the pitch, the parallel-discography fan culture keeping records the catalogue deletes. Wick's marquee is the district's honest flag: the entertainment industry's discards, headlining.

The Nordics Arcology — Function-dress, audit-calendar nightlife, and the hemisphere's best-preserved pre-Upheaval archive — which the Nordics lend, catalog, and never, ever screen publicly. White Noise country: the registry is the celebrity.

Java Scatter / New Batavia / Samudra Sattva — GENOME CHOIR's home water, MARK HAND STUDIO's commission list, NULLCAST's third mast, marks left on infrastructure that surfaces from the sand and disappears again. Impermanence is the aesthetic: SAND KEEPS THE MARK.

Kalemie & the Lakefire Corridor — Lakeside sound-system culture on the water-taxi routes; the Long Count's obituary column read aloud in viewing houses; BAFO contract hunters as the region's action heroes, which BAFO discourages and profits from.

The Antarctic Peninsula — Kit culture as display (credentials freeze and crack; modification accumulates instead), station-crew radio theater through the dark months, and Dead Water's economy of salvage-diver legend.

The High Ground & the UNSO Traveler — Dead Air's cult terrestrial audience shouting advice at events already decided; the mid-sphere memorial marks that predate the league; ship-cut hair and ration-queue equality as an accidental fashion export the arcologies briefly, embarrassingly, imitated.

The Lantern Line — The quietest scene on Earth by necessity: hand-cant song below, the Cold Count as the daily broadcast, and a music of pipes and hull-tap the surface will never chart. What the Line exports is absence — and the surface pays for recordings of it (see The Tower Sessions' imitators, all inferior).

The IPFZ & the contested margins — Culture as archaeology: the Archive Ruins' salvage-print finds, Herald rad-zone hymnody, and Filter Fish country's standing rule that anything recovered plays once, publicly, before anyone is allowed to sell it.

08/

CENSORSHIP, COUNTERFEIT, AND CONTROL

Exposure is advertising, and provenance is the only scarce good.

CENSORSHIP, COUNTERFEIT, AND CONTROL

THE CLASSIFICATION MACHINE

Nobody bans music; they classify it. Cultural classification flags — the NAF's term, everyone's practice — mark content for reduced carriage, and the art of the gray band is the evasion: Dead Channel Radio's playlist is famously *built* to evade cultural classification flags, which is why it sounds like nothing else — the sound of a category error, sustained for eleven years. The EO clears everything and lets the audience decode. The PCU licenses forms. The PRC licenses people. The NAF flags content. Four censorship architectures, one shared result: the most-listened-to material in every bloc is the material the architecture mislabeled.

THE COUNTERFEIT CONDITION

Issue 45 of CONFLICT stated the era's law: everything real has a fake, and the copy got better than the thing it copied. Applied to culture: fake Siege Tapes with valid signal decay, counterfeit "tell" recordings with fabricated human imperfections (the forgery of a flaw), bootleg Gene Forged shirts outnumbering an original that never existed, Port Collars cut on the wrong side, nectar that doesn't glow. The authentication economy this breeds — Istanbul's trade, the tape experts, the swap-meet debunkers — is now itself a cultural genre: Ozzy debunking a fake shirt live *is the content*, and the fake sells better afterward. The setting's deepest counterfeit rule, demonstrated weekly: **exposure is advertising, and provenance is the only scarce good.**

THE SUPPRESSION PARADOX

Banned in three territories, which tripled distribution — Skin Deep's line is the whole doctrine. Suppression is the gray band's marketing department, every censor knows it, and the equilibrium is stable because the alternative is worse: content that is *ignored* actually dies. The attention war's cruelest weapon was never the flag or the ban. It is the shrug.

THE 2066 SNAPSHOT

Where the culture stands as the season closes — the open stories, for reference and for use.

- **HALO's count is rising.** The exchanges have opened a market on the date of her last broadcast. Nobody who watches doubts it will be broadcast.
- **The Gene Forged Reunion Tour has been "confirmed" for the fourth time.** A venue on the Menagerie routes has reportedly taken a deposit. The scene is planning attendance and sabotage simultaneously.
- **The DEADCHANNEL trademark case enters its sixth docket-numbered release.** The collective's motion-response EP is, by consensus, their strongest work. The brand's lawyers have started timing filings for release windows, and no one can prove it.
- **Wavelength was nearly triangulated in the spring.** The attempt's failure was reported only on Dead Channel Radio, in the third person, without comment.
- **Maison Vey's SOLE EDITION for the year is unclaimed past the usual date.** Atelier Row's rumor: the commission was completed, and refused — by the atelier.
- **The Operator Draft publisher has announced it will stop printing rules entirely** and sell blank boxes at full price. Pre-orders are strong. The community is furious and buying.
- **TERRAFORM has been renewed. Again.** A gray-band parody, *TERRAFORMED*, has better numbers on the pressed-media circuit, and its anonymous lead writer's phrasing is — per three separate desks — suspiciously professional.
- **The Sub-2 rooms are negotiating, quietly, collectively,** for the first time: a decommissioned performers' association. The resort lineages' residual-rights holders have noticed. Four prior athletes' associations died with a body count; the performers know the history and are organizing anyway.

RUNNING POP CULTURE AT THE TABLE

THE SCENE IS NOT SET DRESSING

The mistake is playing culture as ambience — a band in the background of a bar scene. In TC2066, culture is infrastructure: a channel is a surveillance platform, a scene is a logistics network, a fashion object is a credential, a song is a memory the archives lost. Put the culture in the *engine* of the session, not the description.

FIVE WAYS CULTURE CREATES A MISSION

1. **The provenance job.** Authenticate, forge, or break the chain of custody on a cultural object — a tape, a shirt, a master chip. The object's contents matter less than its history, and the history has enemies.
2. **The carriage job.** Move culture across a border that classifies it: pressed media north, a banned serial east, a full-band composition past a territory that calls the frequency encryption.
3. **The de-verification.** Someone's credential — Feed verification, a cultural license, a venue's neutral-ground status — is the target. No body, no crime, total ruin.
4. **The broadcast window.** A live cultural moment (basket-drop set, Enduro window, Crackerjack night, the Mark Broadcast) creates sixty minutes where every camera and every ear is pointed somewhere predictable. Work in the shadow of the show — or discover the client scheduled the show to make the shadow.
5. **The person as property.** A performer's lease, image rights, or genomic residuals are in play. The crew is hired by the holders, against the holders, or — the good sessions — by the performer, who has read the contract and found the door.

QUICK CULTURAL NPCS

The scene elder who remembers when the room was honest. The verified vlogger whose access is the product. The authentication expert with one famous mistake. The label boss who owns the antenna and the press. The fan whose collection is evidence. The session musician who was, briefly, the tell. The booker who calls the malfunction a gift.

QUICK COMPLICATIONS

The venue is neutral ground and the target knows it. The footage of the job is already on a found channel. The counterfeit is better made than the original. The song contains a place name that isn't on maps anymore. The audience arrived early. Wavelength mentioned the crew — once, flatly, without comment — and everyone heard it.

QUICK STAKES

Reach (who hears about this), provenance (what can be proven), residency (who may enter the room again), and the count (what the exchanges will pay for what happens next).

DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR NEW TC2066 CULTURE

For extending this supplement — new scenes, acts, shows, houses, rooms — the checklist that produced everything above:

1. **Start with a material pressure.** A scene exists because of an acoustic, a shortage, a route, a curfew, or a body. If the pressure vanished and the scene would survive, the scene isn't from here.
2. **Give the form a physical constraint and obey it.** No amplification. Physical media only. One commission a year. Tickets that require an augment. The constraint is the aesthetic.
3. **Give it a record keeper — and make the unofficial record outrank the official one.** Every scene needs its Almanac, its Register, its errata network. The keeper is a character; the record is a MacGuffin.
4. **Decide who cannot participate.** By biology, by credential, by geography, by fee. The exclusion is the politics; the workaround is the story.
5. **Decide what the audience risks.** Attendance is exposure: to surveillance, to recruitment, to the count. Culture nobody risks anything for is verified-band culture, and you already know how the audience prices that.
6. **Leave one contradiction unresolved.** The trademark suit with no verdict. The band that doesn't exist. The question nobody asks about Reeves. A resolved scene is a dead scene; the argument is the engagement.

RELICS OF THE SCENE

Every scene in this book keeps objects the way the faiths keep relics and the circuits keep trophies — things whose value is provenance, not function. The board, for reference and for theft:

The Waterloo Wall reading key — fifteen years of continuous marking has a key, and nobody who has it admits it. The Wall itself can't be stolen. The key is paper, and paper moves.

A first-pressing Tower Sessions chip — the original run, before the imitators; collectors verify by a mastering flaw in the cable-creak track that every counterfeit corrects, which is how you spot the counterfeits.

The GSOTC correction memo — the only document in which an official body responded to Dead Channel Radio, and therefore the only official proof the station exists. Three "originals" circulate. The GSOTC will neither confirm nor destroy.

A third-printing Gene Forged Reunion shirt — the printing with the disputed venue list on the back. First printings are worth more; third printings are argued about more, which the scene values higher.

The FACTION LOGO surveillance finding — "aesthetically hostile but operationally irrelevant," in writing, on GSOTC letterhead. The band framed a copy for the merch table; the original's location is the scene's favorite unsolved question.

Razborki's first fuel-cell panel — the original hand-painted Calavera skull, replaced after a crash, current whereabouts disputed between two Barricadia garages, both of which display one.

A docket-one DEADCHANNEL pressing — the collective's first legal-filing release, from before anyone realized the lawsuit was the discography. The brand's own legal team is rumored to own the largest collection, which both parties deny with equal fury.

The Reeves fragrance, unopened — the CONFLICT-era bottle. Opened, it is a curiosity. Sealed, it is the fame machine in a box: a scent no one has smelled, licensed from a person no one asked.

An Operator Draft errata original — a hand-annotated sheet from the Dead Letter circuit's first correction wave, the founding documents of the community's authority. The publisher has offered to buy them. The offer is the insult.

HALO's early masters — recordings from the years before the counting, held by her defunct lineage's liquidation estate, tied up in the same shell-company probate as everything else about her. The gray band's position: whoever finally owns the masters owns the version of her the count hasn't touched — which is why every party in her economy is quietly bidding.

A pour that glows wrong — the nectar counterfeit as collector's object: bottles from the one documented batch whose glow was *almost* right, kept as cautionary trophies behind bars that will never serve them. The trade calls them dark pours. Bartenders show them to new staff the way medics show X-rays.

CLOSING FRAME

The blocs metered the water and rationed the power, and people paid, because they had to. Then the blocs came for the third resource — the eyes, the ears, the evenings — and found the territory already occupied: by a horn section that arrives with the freight, a frequency the registries list as empty, a jacket that tells the truth about where a body has been, a serial about an inn that stays open while the flags change, and a song nobody wrote that everybody knows.

The verified band has the money. The gray band has the audience. The dead band has the credibility. And the count is still climbing, four billion strong, every night — because the last thing people surrender is never the water.

It's the attention. And they have not surrendered it yet.

Build the model. The world already made room for it.

COLOPHON

Terra Conflictus 2066: The Attention War. Edition 1. Designed by Jesse Alexander. Published 2026.

Set in IBM Plex Sans (body), Archivo Narrow (display), IBM Plex Mono (codes), Newsreader (italic). All Open Font License. Printed on uncoated stock at A5 trim.

Voice and structure follow the Shadowdark discipline: declarative rules, action-verb definitions, flavor inside mechanics, second-person address throughout.

The Splice Punk x TDR aesthetic governs every visual decision. The surface game is the game everyone plays. The deep game is the game nobody understands until it's too late to stop playing it.

Part of the Operator Tactics supplement line. Compatible with the Operator Tactics core rulebook.

01 BRIEF

PG 1

THE STATE OWNS THE FEED.

NOBODY OWNS THE EVENING.

The **Attention War** is the pop culture sourcebook for Terra Conflictus 2066. Six music scenes, the screen and serial landscape, the fashion economy, the celebrity machinery, the nightlife, and the games that aren't sports — the whole globe, band by band.

The verified band has the money. The gray band has the audience. The dead band has the credibility. No act, garment, or broadcast holds all three for long.

Eight chapters. Every scene playable. What people refuse to surrender when everything else is metered.

02 SPECS

SUPPLEMENT

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02	RETURNING CUP	06	ASH ARCHIVE
03	LISTENING GEOMETRY	07	LAST ROSTER
04	ROOT ASSEMBLY	08	SECOND SHORE

ATTENTION IS AMMUNITION

CARRY WHAT YOU OWE

- FACTIONS
- NAF ● SCA ● E0 ● PCU ● PRC ● **VW** ● NRD

●

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