

Faction 4 Characters, NPCs, and Organization

FACTION 4

Kurt Andross, Leader of Faction 4

The leader of Faction 4, Kurt Andross is a former CIA operative with a bitter past and soul that strives for honor in a world that respects only brutality.

HISTORY

Kurt Andross grew up in Colorado, the son and grandson of U. S. Marines. His family ran a very successful real estate development company, but never let their wealth distract them from what they considered truly important: courage, honor, and integrity.

These virtues were put to the test when Andross was only 12. His family discovered that one of their employees had been defrauding their customers for millions of dollars. They could have covered it up and carried on business as usual, but instead exposed the fraud, paid back what they could of the ill-gotten money, and took responsibility for their company's actions.

As a result, the company was ruined. Kurt's family was sued, first by their customers, and then by the government, until they had no choice but to sell the company to a competitor in order to pay off their debts. Still, the family stood by their convictions, and never regretted their decision to do the right thing.

Kurt's parents had little left to give, but gave it all to send their only son to college. While at the university, Andross got degrees in business and engineering while active in the Marine Corps' ROTC program. Some may have considered him an overachiever, but he was determined to prove himself worthy of his family's sacrifice. A month before Andross graduated, his father died of cancer. Though no one said so, Andross believed his father could have live had he spent his money on treatment instead of university courses for his son.

After graduation, Andross went straight into the Marines. It was everything he dreamed it would be. He flourished in the world of discipline and danger, and quickly rose through the ranks. He proudly served in a dozen countries over the next ten years, earning commendations from his superiors and respect from his subordinates. He probably would have remained in the Corps for life if he hadn't met Maria during his last in South America.

Maria caught Kurt's eye with her beauty, and his heart with her fiery spirit. She was passionate and fierce, quick to anger and even quicker to laugh. They were married within a year of meeting. The happy couple moved back to the United States to settle down and raise a family in southern California.

Two years passed. Andross got a job in real estate, started making a good life for his new family, and tried to ignore the news and rumors of wars escalating around the world. They were no longer his problem, he told himself. He was wrong.

Maria was downtown, shopping for a new pair of shoes to wear to her friend's wedding, when the car bomb exploded. Maria, her unborn child, and three dozen other civilians were killed, and hundreds were wounded. Andross was devastated.

No one took responsibility for the bomb. No one was arrested. Andross couldn't sleep, couldn't eat, couldn't do anything but obsess on that horrible morning and bringing down the monsters who pushed the button. He went to the Marines and asked for their help in avenging his wife. They were sympathetic, but since the attack happened on U.S. soil without a direct link to another country, there was nothing they could do.

That's when the CIA recruiter appeared.

The agency could help track down Maria's killers, he said, if Andross would come work for them. It would be similar to his work for the Marines – field work, dangerous, in enemy territory – but covert, and armed with the best intelligence and technology available. Andross agreed, and began a ten-year career with the CIA.

Andross was never as comfortable in the CIA as he had been in the Marines. His assignments ranged from undercover work to assassinations to leading assault teams, but none of it was as satisfying as it had been. Still, he was very good, and collected dozens of commendations he could never show anyone.

The agency kept its part of the bargain, and did its best to find the perpetrators of the car bombing. The attack was planned, they learned, by a terrorist group calling itself the Black Wave – but by the time they tracked down the group, it had already imploded, and most of its former members were dead. One survivor confessed that the Black Wave hadn't planned the attack itself, but had been given the plans by another, and paid to carry them out.

Six years ago, Kurt Andross walked away from the CIA.

He had thought was maintaining a covert smuggling ring as part of an undercover effort to catch terrorists, but discovered the ring's true purpose was to launder the agency's ill-gotten cash and line the pockets of the top administrators. His faith shaken, he had to wonder how many of his previous operations had also been lies. Andross quit the agency in disgust.

Andross knew that civilian life was not an option. His hands were too stained with blood, and any contentment he might find outside a warzone would be but a bitter echo of the short, happy time he had with Maria. So he went freelance. He now considers himself a ronin samurai – a warrior who serves many masters in exchange for money, but still retains his honor. He knows he does not always fight on the side of "right," but contents himself with the knowledge that he is fighting battles of his own choosing.

After a year of working as an independent operator, Andross was approached by Meros, who offered him better resources and juicier contracts if he would work for them. Andross accepted.

GOALS

Andross is still committed to finding and destroying those responsible for killing his family. He has followed up on more leads since leaving the CIA, but the trail always seems to end at the Black Wave. If he can find out who hired them, he may have his vengeance, and find his peace.

The CIA is still bitter about how the CIA played him for a fool, and will take every opportunity to ruin their operations where he finds them. This doesn't mean shooting agents on sight, or seeking out CIA ops to ruin, but if he comes across them in the course of his work, he will likely mess them up.

After being burned by the CIA, Andross seeks independence. He has allied himself with Meros for the time being, but knows this is not a permanent situation. He wants to accumulate enough people and resources of his own to run a truly independent mercenary operation.

PERSONALITY

Andross is serious and business-like but not grim or brooding. He is very aware of how his attitude affects his troops around him, so he is careful to maintain a positive (though realistic) outlook around others. In private, he is afflicted with dark moods and grim depression. He has a wry, dark sense of humor so dry, people aren't sure he's even joking... until he smiles.

Anne Bergstrom, The Tech

Bergstrom technically works for Meros, but her loyalties have shifted toward Andross and his Faction 4 team. She was originally assigned to work with F4 as their “technical advisor” and Meros liason. She fit in very well with the team, so that when her assignment was up, both she and Andross requested that she stay on board. Recognizing the value of having one of their own inside F4, Meros agreed.

HISTORY

Anne Bergstrom is the daughter of two brilliant Swedish scientists. Her parents were physicists and engineers who taught at a prestigious university and worked as consultants for governments and corporations around the globe. Her father had a secret life as well – a life of compulsive gambling. He secretly depleted his family’s assets to pay for his gambling. When that wasn’t enough, he turned to the European Syndicate, a wide network of organized crime.

The Syndicate was more than happy to loan Bergstrom the money, but when he couldn’t pay it back, they decided to make an example of him. They sent an assassin to take him out, but fate intervened, and while the scientist escaped harm, his wife was killed. Anne was 16 when she watched her mother die.

Anne and her father spent the next two years on the run across Scandinavia and northern Europe, scraping by on odd jobs and the charity of others, always just one step ahead of Syndicate. Bergstrom continued his daughter’s education as best he could. She was brilliant, and he could see that she would someday surpass both her parents in scientific achievement.

After hiding out in the sewers of Amsterdam for a month, Anne decided she had had enough. Slipping away from her father one night, she secretly contacted the Syndicate. To pay off her father’s debt, she offered the Syndicate her technical services. The Syndicate accepted, and Anne spent the next few weeks helping them hack into international law enforcement databases in order to alter and delete certain records.

The Bergstroms were free – but broke. They settled down in France, and Anne’s father tried to get his academic career going again, but his reputation was ruined. No school, no government agency, no corporation would touch him. He ended up repairing office computers out of the back room of their apartment. Anne had all but given up any thoughts of university when the Syndicate contacted her. They wanted her help in creating a device that could bypass security and surveillance systems – and were willing to compensate her quite well for her services. Anne accepted.

It was the first of many jobs Anne did for the Syndicate. Her freelance tech jobs paid for university, her doctorate, and her job search until she landed a position as a tenured researcher at a Danish university. Anne loved her job at the university, but it seemed so sedate after all she’d done and been through. After hours, she started toying with new weapon and gear designs. When she needed a little extra cash, she sold the devices to the highest bidders. But when her gear was used in a high-profile robbery in which several bystanders were killed, the authorities came knocking, and Anne was on the run again.

Anne Bergstrom turned to the Syndicate for protection. They agreed to keep her safe from the law in exchange for her technical services. Four years ago, in an exchange that Bergstrom still doesn’t quite understand, Meros bought out her contract from the Syndicate, and she started working for Meros instead.

Bergstrom doesn’t mind her new employers, who keep her busy with challenging projects and provide for all her wants and needs. They even trained her in field work, so she can perform work outside the lab. Her current assignment is to serve as “technical advisor” to Andross’ Faction 4 mercenary team, which she finds to be quite exciting.

GOALS

Anne's mother was working on a cheap, renewable energy source before she was killed. Though Anne doesn't have a lot of time to work on non-essential projects, she has been slowly chipping away at her mother's old work, and dreams of someday bringing it to completion.

Anne doesn't know where her father is. She suspects he got into gambling trouble again and is either dead or hiding out somewhere. She wants to see him again, to bring him into safety, and to keep him out of trouble.

After living on the fringes of the law most of her life, Anne has seen what money and power can bring. She longs for the day when she has enough of both that she no longer needs the protection of Meros, the Syndicate, or anyone else. She wants to be her own operation, and be truly free.

PERSONALITY

Anne is soft-spoken and clinical, but gets very excited, loud, and animated when talking about things that excite her – namely cool new gadgets. She appreciates anyone who appreciates cool stuff.

While working on a project, Anne can go hours or even days without saying a word. She doesn't ignore those around her so much as she simply doesn't see or hear them. She is in her own world.

Anne makes it a point to know the names of everyone around her, and something about them, then use that information for small talk. It's clinical, but a good way to make friends.

Damien Coyle, The Thief

A sneak-thief and a thrill-seeker, Coyle is always up for the most dangerous jobs. He prides himself on having never been caught, but his curiosity may yet be the death of him. He owes Andross his life.

HISTORY

Coyle was the son of an ultra-wealthy businessman who ran with a crowd of like-minded bored rich brats. They did all kinds of stupid stunts: stealing boats, racing down freeways in the middle of the night, breaking into each other's mansions in the middle of night. He was always the one going further, taking more risks, and not knowing when to quit. All that changed one night in New York City.

Coyle and his friends had dared each other to climb the Brooklyn Bridge. They sneaked past the security, broke the locks, and started climbing. Coyle was climbing higher and faster than all his friends. Carl Hodges, one of his friends, tried to catch up with him. Carl slipped. Carl fell. Carl died.

That was the end of an era for young Coyle. His friends lost their lust for danger, but he found that his became even more pronounced. He courted death at every turn – fast cars, fistfights, extreme sports around the world – and even turned to drugs to keep him going. He lost his friends. They couldn't keep up with him, and they didn't approve of his non-stop lifestyle.

When Coyle's rich parents died, he spent his inheritance to finance his drugs and thrill-seeking. The assets that had taken his parents a lifetime to gather were spent in less than two years. Coyle briefly toyed with the idea of getting a job to pay for his lifestyle, but decided to turn to crime instead.

Crime was a new awakening for Coyle. Here was an adrenaline rush unlike any he'd ever experienced before. He entered himself into a rehab program – not so he could kick the drugs and give up a life of crime, but so he could be a better criminal, and not have worry about side effects, or getting his next fix.

In crime he found a fantastic adrenaline rush, better than even the drugs. He got into rehab - not so we wouldn't have to be a crook, but so he could be a better crook.

Coyle became a master thief, a high-rise ninja who could disable security in his sleep and pull off a museum job just for fun. While robbing a senator's penthouse apartment, he stumbled across evidence of a vast conspiracy, and the shadow war being fought between the various nations. Intrigued, he started poking around further until he came to the attention of Meros. The leaders of Meros wanted to kill him, but Andross convinced them to let him recruit Coyle instead. Since then, Coyle is thrilled to be part of this exciting new life, and is always digging for deeper truths. This is sure to get him in trouble some day.

GOALS

Since he was a boy, Coyle has always wanted to go where no one has gone before. He must always go further, higher, faster, deeper than anyone around him. He is constantly looking for a challenge, and feels compelled to overcome any challenge he sees.

Coyle's family once owned a priceless, ancient Greek statue called "The Golden Horse," which had been in the family for six generations. He sold it to a black market dealer when he was 22, and spent the money on drugs. Now that he's older and just a little sentimental, he wants to steal back the Golden Horse, so he can pass it on to the next generation.

Though he would never admit it even to himself, Coyle's deathwish is totally real. He wants to die at the pinnacle of his career, to go out with a bang before he starts to get old or slow or sloppy. He secretly feels responsible for his friend Carl's death, and that his own triumphant death will serve as both punishment and a celebration of Carl's life.

PERSONALITY

Coyle is absolutely manic. He goes for three days without sleep, sleeps for two days, and goes again. He is always in motion. He still uses drugs sometimes, but only non-addictive, Meros-approved stimulants.

Coyle loves to laugh. He's always telling jokes and making comments that, while often inappropriate, are still really funny.

Coyle doesn't mind following orders (not really), but sees himself as a maverick, so pretends to have a problem with authority. He'll still do everything you say, but you have to ask nicely, threaten, or tell him not to do it.

Patrick Ellis, The Soldier

The seasoned veteran of a hundred secret wars, Ellis has been everywhere and done everything. He has no real friends or family, and all he knows is war. War is his life. It is his true calling.

HISTORY

A lifetime ago, in small Eurasian country that no longer exists, a brutal civil war was raging, and the self-style rebels needed recruits. They stopped in a small mountain village and took a 12 year-old boy who would later grow up to be the soldier called Ellis. They gave him a gun. They made him a killer. And the boy, who had never known a different life, was comfortable in his bloody new role.

When the rebels came to power a few years later, Ellis saw his beloved leaders turn into the same corrupt administrators they had fought to overthrow. Stung by their betrayal, he joined an armed coup that tried to topple the new breed of oppressors. The coup failed. Ellis barely escaped with his life.

Ellis fled to a nearby country just as war-torn as his own. He lived there for years, fighting for first one warlord and then another. He was loyal to no one but himself, and didn't care whose side he was fighting on, so long as the money was good.

When the United States secretly got involved in the local warlord fighting, Ellis switched to the side the U.S. was backing. Just as he expected, that side won, and his warlord assumed shaky control of the region. The U.S. "military advisors" were impressed with Ellis and sent him to a covert officer school. Here he learned military strategy, leadership theory, and advanced techniques in explosives and torture. When he graduated, Ellis was sent back and used his new training against those who opposed the ruling warlord.

Years passed. Wars came and went. Rulers rose and fell. And still Ellis kept fighting. He traveled the world and saw it all through the sights of his rifle. Jaded and mercenary, he worked for any country, warlord, or corporation that could afford his services.

While working a covert operation in Africa with the CIA, Ellis met Kurt Andross. He was impressed with this earnest young soldier, for he fought with honor. Ellis had seen few honorable men in his time, and most of them were fools long-dead. Andross was no fool, he saw, and tempered his honor with the realities of war. This led to tough decisions, but Andross was willing to make them, stand by them, and defend them if necessary.

Ellis was actually saddened when the Africa operation ended and he had to part ways with Andross. And he was secretly thrilled with Andross contacted him a few years later and asked if he wanted to join a new mercenary group. Ellis is loyal to Andross and his team, but remains suspicious of Meros itself.

GOALS

If asked, Ellis will say he wants nothing more than a good meal, a good woman, and a good night's sleep – and a fat paycheck to pay for it all. It's mostly true. He's been a soldier all his life. War is all he knows, and it's hard for him to see any goals beyond fighting.

But Ellis does have one secret desire: to be like Andross, an honorable soldier. Though he would brutalize anyone for even suggesting it, he really admires Andross, and aspires to be like him. But a lifetime of cruelty, betrayal, and casual disregard for human life is hard to walk away from. Dying with honor is easy. Living with honor is hard.

PERSONALITY

Ellis is generally quiet. If he's on a mission, he's silently thinking about everything he has to do. If he's off-duty, he's uncomfortable around non-combatants, so keeps his mouth shut. He will occasionally offer hard-

won tactical advice to those on his team: “Keep the trigger greased on the TK-500, or they stick in this heat,” or “Hungarian troops always make camp with the latrine to the south.”

When Ellis is relaxed and comfortable (usually a few drinks after a mission), he can be talked into sharing his stories from wars and times gone by. Sometimes funny, sometimes heart-breaking, but always entertaining, these stories are the only way Ellis really connects to those around him.

Connor, The Engineer

Connor is always fiddling with the equipment and jury-rigging it to do stuff it was never intended to do. He's a mad inventor who knows how to fix and break mechanical and electronic equipment.

Davis, The Strategist

A retired military man, Davis grew restless and offered his services to those who could benefit from his years of training and experience. No arm-chair general, Davis likes to go into the field to see his plans in action.

Esad, The Demolitionist

Esad loves explosives. She started out in construction, where she learned to blow up buildings for profit, then moved into organized crime, where the profit was much higher. When the government started getting too close, she left the country and fell in with a band of mercenaries who needed a bomb expert. That job led to another, and now she's working for F4.

Francisco, The Bodyguard

While in South America on a mission, Andross freed Francisco from prison and saved his life. Since then Francisco had dedicated his life to serving Andross, either as a bodyguard or as his personal agent on important missions.

Gonzalez, The Berserker

Gonzalez is not suitable for every mission. If there is stealth or subtlety involved, it's best to leave him home. But if you need someone to kick down the door, run in with a gun blazing in one hand, a bloody knife in the other, and a grenade in his teeth, Gonzalez is your man.

Horowitz, The Negotiator

Horowitz got his start working for the U.N. as a field mediator. He was very good at his job, but finally gave it up after his tenth time watching his hard-won peace break down when the people who had agreed to it were replaced from within their own ranks. Burnt-out and cynical, he realized there was more profit in war than peace, and joined up with F4 as a con man, recruiter, and spokesman.

Ingersol, The Assassin

According to her file, Ingersol was once one of the top-paid bodyguards in the world. One of her clients was killed on her watch, and she vanished for two years. When she came back on the scene, she was no longer a bodyguard, but a killer for hire. Cool, smooth, and professional, she has used her experience and training as a bodyguard to help her in her role as an assassin.

Jasperson, The Artist

He paints, he writes, he sings – and he kills. Jasperson is a manic well-spring of creativity. He might also be a psychopath. He's full of crazy ideas about the mission, and some of them might actually work. Not always the best choice for every mission, but ideal for those situations with limited intel, where you need someone who can think on his feet.

Kostov, The Machine

Kostov knows no fear. He is a great soldier with a fantastic tactical mind, but it is his utter fearlessness that makes him so terrifying in combat. He cannot be pinned down by cover fire, and will never freeze in the face of danger. Rumor has it that his brain was chemically altered in a secret Russian laboratory, which is why he is as he is. Kostov will neither confirm nor deny the story.

Lassiter, The Medic

She was a doctor once, but lost her license when she was caught saving the lives of those who were fighting against the government. Broken and bitter, she joined the rebels and took up arms against the government. When the rebels were wiped out, she fled the country and wandered until she found F4.

Mizuki, The Dealer

Whether you need weapons, food, or a place to hide out, Mizuki knows a guy. Mizuki is well-connected around the world, and has contacts in almost every nation. While he can't call them all on the phone, he can meet them if he's in the area, and can usually get some equipment or information out of them for the right price.

Nikolas, The Commander

Nikolas was the leader of a small guerilla group before being recruited into F4. He is a strong leader, and a great tactician, but his troops do not love him, for he is cruel and commands through fear.

Ottoman, The Defector

After years of fighting on the losing side of a bloody civil war, Ottoman switched sides and found he liked winning a lot more. His is known for his language skills; he can speak two dozen languages fluently.

Pernoski, The Pilot

Pernoski hails from Poland, but grew up watching American Westerns, and idolizes cowboys. He often wears cowboys hats and boots, and affects a John Wayne-style swagger when he can. He's also a brilliant pilot, which is good, because he's also a terrible thrill-seeker. He taught himself how to fly when he was a teenager growing up near an airfield.

Quinn, The Gunner

Quinn was born big, and only got bigger with age. By the time he was 18, he stood almost seven feet tall and carried 350 pounds of muscle. His older brother was equally built, and joined the military. Quinn went into professional sports. But when his brother was killed in duty, he enlisted to take his place. After his tours, he signed with Meros because the pay was better. He is a heavy weapons expert who can fire two-handed weapons one-handed, and with two hands can fire weapons that should be mounted.

Rath, The Spy

According to rumor, Rath was a master spy who worked for both the CIA and the KGB during the cold war, effortlessly switching sides time and again as it suited his needs. He had his face surgically altered to be as bland as possible, so he can pass unnoticed through most regions of the world, and can adopt any disguise quite easily.

NPCs and ENEMIES

Meros

Nathaniel Steiner

He gives the team their missions. He never tells them why they're doing the mission, or the client, or the context of the mission, so the player has to learn it by discovery over the course of the mission. He's a little power-mad.

Malcom Tieg

Tieg is an older gentleman who served in British intelligence for many years before signing on with Meros. He's been married and divorced three times, but has no children. As he's getting on in age, he is considering his legacy. Who will mourn his passing? Who will know he has been here? Most of his work has been secret. And so he serves as mentor to the new recruits that Meros picks up. He's full of wisdom and educational stories from his past adventures – though he'll only share these things with those who ask.

Sandra Collins

The head of Meros' operational technical division, Collins is a middle-aged, no-nonsense scientist who literally lives in her lab. Like many a genius before her, Collins has little time for social graces. She is blunt in her speech, and doesn't care what other people think. She does have a life outside of science; she loves music, and takes exactly 90 minutes a day to relax and practice her violin.

Enemies

Amelia LaBlanc

The deadly and beautiful Amelia comes from a long line of high-class thieves and assassins. She revels in her role as the classic femme fatale, gleefully seducing her marks before robbing and/or killing them. Amelia has worked for virtually everyone at one time or another, and rarely sticks with one client for more than a mission or two. She gets bored, she says, and needs variety to keep herself interested. Amelia often works alone, but will sometimes lead a small unit of her client's troops if the operation requires it. She is occasionally accompanied by some man she has conned into joining her cause – who will usually end up dead before the mission is over.

Dr. Milton Carver

A sadistic sociopath, Dr. Carver is dedicated to furthering his research into human biology, cybernetics, and genetic manipulation. Carver considers his test subjects to be utterly disposable, and thinks nothing of the suffering to which he subjects them. Carver has worked for dozens of governments, corporations, and mercenary outfits over the years. He has no loyalty to any one cause, and will work with anyone willing to supply him with materials and guinea pigs for his experiments.

Cameron Norris

Norris is Carver's loyal assistant. He lacks his mentor's icy detachment from humanity, but is willing to ignore his screaming conscience for one reason: he benefits from every breakthrough Carver makes. His body is 80 percent vat-grown, re-constituted, or cybernetically-enhanced.

Omar Farrad

The spoiled, obscenely rich heir to an oil fortune, Farrad has decided to go into the world-conquering business. He is spending his money recruit soldiers to his cause, portraying himself as some sort of messiah promising to carve out a new homeland for those who follow him. While some of his followers are true believers, most are just mercenaries looking for a quick buck. Farrad pays very well, and has some of fanciest new equipment for his troops, but has no real military or political experience.

Ace Qualler

According to the assassin Qualler, he is more than just a master of disguise; he actually changes his face using only the mental techniques he learned while studying the killing arts with an ancient cult of Thugees in India. His typical practice is to adopt the face of someone trusted by his target, get in close to the target, then remove the target quickly and quietly.

Lloyd Donovan

Though he surrounds himself with security, Donovan lives in constant fear. A billionaire industrialist, Donovan runs several global corporations with ties to terrorists, mercenary teams, and secret government cabals. He would like to retire, but knows he's in too deep; he knows too much for his associates to let him live. So he continues to expand his corporate empire, forever building his network of violence and corruption. He knows that if he stops, his enemies will destroy him. Donovan maintains a dozen luxurious bunkers around the world. He is rarely seen outside of his bunkers, and no one knows which bunker he is visiting at any given time.

Victor Kray

Though his network of spies and assassins stretches across the globe to do his bidding, no one has seen Victory Kray for two years. The brilliant, paranoid old computer genius locked himself into his laboratory compound two years ago to work on a top secret project, and hasn't emerged since. He conveys his orders through voice and data transmission. The truth is, Kray died two years ago, but downloaded his personality into a massive computer mainframe.

Wendell Lamour

A self-styled adventurer, Lamour is equally at home raiding ancient tombs as he is breaking into modern office buildings. In either case, his tactics are the same: bring in a platoon of heavily-armed goons, blow away any resistance, then tear the place apart until you find what you're looking for. Lamour is wealthy enough to finance his own operations, but likes to work freelance for the challenge that outsiders present him.

Veronica Booth

Booth used to be with an elite European special-ops unit until her team's boat was strike by lightning while on the ocean. She was the only survivor. This was the first of a string of strange coincidences and bad luck that continues to plague Booth. She is a mercenary, but rarely works for the same client twice. For while she usually gets the job done, there is so much collateral damage and random bad luck around her, her ops tend to be quite difficult to cover up afterwards.

Enemy Groups

WolfPack

A world-wide network of mercenaries, the Wolf Pack is known for being discreet, effective, and extremely expensive. Clients typically hire a single “pack” of 4-10 highly-trained operatives for a single mission. Long-term assignments (such as “protect the secret lab indefinitely”) are rare, since the packs are so expensive. If the assignment requires more troops (i.e., cannon fodder), the pack often hires local thugs to fill its ranks.

Organization: As the name would suggest, the Wolf Pack is divided into hundred of cells called “packs.” Each pack has a leader (or “alpha”) who is the only member in contact with their superiors. Not even the alphas know who their superiors are; they simply receive their orders through anonymous contacts. Potential clients can contact the Wolf Pack through a number of mercenary brokers around the world. Secrecy and discretion are of utmost importance to the Pack, and they have never been infiltrated.

Equipment and Tactics: Packs are assembled based on the needs of the current mission. Once assembled, the pack trains as a team in one of the company’s secret facilities in Utah, Russia, Chile, or the Philippines. Each member is an expert in his field, armed with the most specialized equipment, and trained to coordinate his attacks with the other members of his team. If all the pack members survive a mission, they are likely to be assigned as a team to their next mission. It is a mark of distinction to have the same pack together for several missions.

Leadership: The true leaders of the Wolf Pack are a secret cabal of former military and intelligence directors from around the world. Many of them maintain “normal” lives outside the Pack, and are respected and even beloved in their national communities – which is why they go to such extreme lengths to keep the Pack and its members wrapped in secrecy.

Children of Khali

About 20 years ago, a twisted new religion appeared amongst the poverty-stricken streets of southern Asia. A perversion of an ancient belief, the worship of Khali encouraged death and destruction for its members, their enemies... and everyone else in the world. Only through death, the prophets cried, can there be renewal. For just as the seed must die so that the plant may grow, so too must this world perish so that the next world (a much better place, of course), may take root.

Reincarnation is central to the beliefs of the Children of Khali. Those who they kill (including themselves) are born anew into a better body, a better life, and a better world. To them, death is a gift. It has been given to them by Khali, and it is their blessed duty to pass it along to the rest of the world.

This strange religion may have died out with its members, or quietly lived on unnoticed in the third-world slums where it was born, but for an enterprising local warlord. He realized these zealots could serve as suicide troops, and offered them a role in his army. Some of the Children accepted, and their role as global harbingers of death was born.

Today, the sect boasts several thousand members around the world. It flourishes amongst the destitute, the desperate, and those without hope. And where ever the Children are found, some of them are willing to sell their gift of death – and others are willing to give it away.

Organization: The Children are organized into loose local churches, each beneath the guidance of a priest or priestess who speaks the words of Khali. While a church is still small, its members meet in secret. But once it achieves several dozen fanatical, armed members, its members hold public meetings, as if challenging anyone to stop them. Brokers and mercenary recruiters who want to hire Children of Khali work with priests and priestesses to find the most suitable zealots. While their missions are usually of the suicide type, canny

employers offer to pay the zealots' families – who are usually desperately poor – for any network the Children perform.

Equipment and Tactics: Rarely armed with anything more modern than a cold war-era rifle, the Children of Khali are nevertheless deadly in combat. They are utterly fearless, and extremely savage in melee combat. While they have no high-tech weapons or devices, they make up for this handicap with hand-held blades and large numbers of fighters. They are also known to use suicide bombs. There are rumors that the mystics of Khali have developed psychic powers, but these stories are largely ignored as foolishness.

Leadership: The Children of Khali have little formal leadership structure. The head of each church answers to a regional priest, who passes down official doctrine – and opportunities for mercenary work. The regional priests receive their doctrine from the Ascended Heirs of Khali, an order of ancient mystics who spend their lives meditating on death in the shadowy underworld of India.

New Dawn

The New Dawn is a violent, radical activist group with the agenda of destroying the current governments of the world and replacing them with a glorious, egalitarian utopia. Their plan for doing this includes blowing up government buildings, killing political leaders, taking hostages, inciting random violence, and committing other crimes to pay for their weapons and equipment. While they are labeled as terrorists by their enemies, the Dawn members know they are revolutionaries!

Organization: The New Dawn draws its members from the young, angry, and disenfranchised. Many are educated, passionate, and dedicated to their revolution, but few are trained for serious warfare. The group has no real structure. Its members flock around local, charismatic leaders, creating regional “chapters” who are largely independent of each other. Furthermore, each leader has his own ideas of what kind of utopia they are fighting for, so the different chapters may have conflicting goals and sometimes even fight against each other.

Equipment and Tactics: Few members of the New Dawn are professional soldiers. Most are students and other young people caught up in a whirlwind of righteous anger and the joy of violence. As such, they are quick to fight, but just as quick to scatter when faced with a serious military threat. New Dawn members are smart. If given enough time, they can acquire specialized equipment and make elaborate plans. Most of the time, though, they just try to make up for in numbers what they lack in discipline, training, or actual firepower.

Leadership: The closest thing the New Dawn has to central leadership is Revolutionary News Feed. The RNF is an online network that promotes revolutionary ideals and influences the movement's agenda, targets, and tactics. Access to the RNF is limited, however, to those who have proven themselves true revolutionaries through leadership and acts of violence.

European Syndicate

Organized crime has never been more organized than it is in the twenty-first century. The criminals at the top of the ladder are the members of the European Syndicate, multi-billionaires who oversee a vast empire of blackmail, fraud, and every vice known to man. The days of old-fashioned “mob wars” are long over. Today, if the Syndicate wants an enemy eliminated, it's just as likely to freeze his bank accounts, ruin his credit rating, and erase him from the government rolls as it is to send an assassin to rub him out.

Members of the Syndicate are the James Bond villains of the world. They wear expensive suits, smoke fine cigars, and plot their next billion-dollar move in the penthouse of a hi-tech office building. While the bulk of their strength is, unsurprisingly, in Europe, they have made strong inroads into Asia, and are working on North America and Africa.

Organization: The Syndicate is extremely hierarchical. There are 14 levels of management, starting with the “associates” (thugs) at the bottom, and the board of directors at the top. The most common way to get promoted is to replace the member above you, so competition is fierce.

Equipment and Tactics: The Syndicate is smooth and subtle. When they need to make an overt move against an enemy, they will likely send a single, highly-trained assassin, or a small team of commandos. A poisoned meal or silenced bullet are much more common than a crude car bomb.

Leadership: The Syndicate is led by a board of directors, who meet twice a year in Paris. Each board member is responsible for a region of Europe, and his region is expected to produce a certain amount of profit each quarter. If a region’s profit is slipping, its director must correct the problem – or risk being replaced.