

NEW YORK CITY

FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

WHEN TO GO

Any time's a good time to visit Manhattan. Just pack your long coat, a coupla pairs of boxers, and an aspirator with fresh filters and you're set. They used to have something they called seasons way back when. Ask some of the olders; they remember. Now, it's pretty much just warm, and even hotter in summer.

Problem is that ole Manhattan is caught in a nasty atmospheric bind. Nasty air from New Jersey. Nasty air from bits of Pennsylvania. Nasty air from all those wonderful off-shore garbage facilities. (Burn it, pack it, dump it. Pollute the air and water in one shot. Great stuff.)

Most of the year there's enough cold air blowing down from Canada (thanks guys) to keep the nasty air where it's supposed to be. In the summer, however, it all shifts around and dumps itself right on old NY. The air gets

so foul that if they didn't clean it periodically everything would probably rot in a month. How do they clean it? Every night, between 0330 and 0430, the corps seed the cloud-cover. Can we say nasty rain?

O.K., so one month is an exaggeration. Besides, none of Midtown would rot. Ever. They built it that way, with lots of environmental coating and insulation. What about the rest of the place? Don't ask.

GETTING IN

Are you a resident? Non-resident worker? Resident-worker? Non-resident non-worker? Legal or illegal? Long-term or short-term? Rich or poor? Lots of questions. Plenty o' answers.

The first thing to know about getting in is that Manhattan has got this thing for passes. The three basic types are: Resident, Work, and Temporary. Resident passes are white; solid white for full-time residents, white with a green stripe for part-time residents. Work passes are blue and also come in two types: those with a white stripe indicate that you live and work in NY, and those with a red stripe indicate that you live, but don't work, in the city. Temporary passes are red and are issued on a monthly basis. Occasionally, you might see a black pass. Those guys are permanent guests.

More later about passes, but for now the main thing to remember is that you can't get into the city without one. Most of the access points will issue you a red temp pass almost without a thought. Almost.

There are several access routes into the Manhattan-NYC area. The ones that spill directly into Manhattan are the New Jersey PATH bus routes, the Edward I. Koch Bridge from Long Island City, the Ronald Reagan Bridge (don't ask) from Jersey, and the overland access-ways like the Northern Access connecting the island with New York State, and indirectly back to Jersey through the George Washington Bridge, a short hop up the Hudson River.

There are a couple of PATH lines from Jersey. Most are local, connecting parts of New Jersey and beyond with the NE-Rail network. There is also a direct connection with Newark Airport. All the PATH lines enter Manhattan through Terminal. More on that hell later. Only the unwashed masses use the PATH systems. Nary a white pass to be seen. Costs for riding the PATH system depend on where you get on and where you get off. Short trips are a minimum of 5¥, while long trips across Jersey can cost you as much as 15¥. The direct line from Newark costs 5¥.



The Eddy Koch Bridge is primarily a pedestrian bridge serviced by a small mini-tram that carries peds from the Jersey side to the Koch Customs building. If you've got a vehicle pass (comes with the white card, don't ya know), then you can drive across.

The Ronny Reagan Bridge is really just a copy of the Eddy Koch Bridge, but connects Manhattan with Queens County, more specifically Long Island City. Like the Koch Bridge, it's got a mini-tram connecting both sides and depositing travelers at the Reagan Customs building. Both bridges cost 2¥ for a foot-traveler.

There's another bridge, the old Brooklyn Bridge, that's still standing, but I wouldn't recommend it to anyone but the truly bent. It's a cool place to hang out if you enjoy life on the twisted path: just make sure you're ready for it and that your DocWagon™ account is clean. (Don't expect them to come there for you, though.)

Access by air brings you into either Newark Airport in Jersey or Kennedy International in Queens. Newark is for the masses and handles connections with most of the rest of continental North America. It's also become a rail hub for most of the northeast. Newark also picked up a lot of traffic (like it didn't have enough already) when UCAS seized LaGuardia Airport and turned it into an Air National Guard station.

Kennedy International on the south shore of Long Island is the major UCAS gateway to Europe, and don't let those jokers down DeeCee way tell you otherwise. With three extra-long runways for the various suborbital carriers, Kennedy is the hub of international travel. Airport security is so tight that trying to bypass it would be like trying to sneak a fish through a cat farm. If you gotta bring in something by plane, Newark's the place to do it. If it's split up between a couple of bags and whatever permit you've got seems fairly legal-like, you might not get hassled. Don't even think about taking something through Kennedy unless you've spent some bucks on one of those locked transport cases and your permit is so clean it squeaks.

Kennedy runs a rapid-transit line into Manhattan, via the Reagan, for those on the low-end of the white card spectrum. It also has full tilt- and rotor-craft service to and from the various Midtown aeropads. The rail line will cost you about 10¥ and the air transport about 75¥.

Oh, by the way, those who are wired have another whole set of problems. Without the right permit, forget Kennedy. It's good old Newark that's sometimes lax, and so a couple of tens to the customs boys and girls might get you through. If you do come through Kennedy and you ain't got a Manhattan CBP-107 permit, but do have somebody else's, even a Corp covering your butt, they'll probably slap a real stylish restraint-cuff on you and let you through. You'll notice there's a DocWagon™ station right outside the main terminal for those jokers who figure they can hot-rig the cuffs and pop them once they're clear.

Getting cyberware into Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and what's left of the Bronx is easy. Just take it with you. For Manhattan, the best bet is either down

through the Northern Access or through Terminal. The scanners and detectors at those places are ancient enough to pass over any 'ware less than ten years old. In Terminal especially, you can always get an "instant permit" by slipping one of the customs agents the appropriate "fee." Just don't be stingy. You wouldn't want to insult him.

Yes, you can get to Manhattan by water, but only if you're in one of those monstrous city-liners or on a registered private boat. If not, the Port Authority may just mistake you for a smuggler. Whoops.

The same holds for direct entry by air. If you are a scheduled or registered tilt- or rotor-craft, fine. If not, be warned that the Port Authority keeps a couple of dirigibles aloft at all times, packed with enough radar and detection gear to monitor the eastern seaboard. Which is probably what they're doing.

WHAT IT COSTS

It all depends. To stay/eat/live in Midtown or Times Square costs plenty. Those content to make their homes in any of the lesser neighborhoods pay a lot less.

A hotel that looks safe enough to sleep in is probably more than you can afford. For a ritzy one in Midtown, figure to pay 400¥ to 500¥ a night for a single, nearly 2,000¥ for a suite. One a little less elegant (sorry, no bathroom mints, but maybe a pay-per-view simsense) would probably run you 50¥ tops for a double, per person. They fill up fast, but a couple of sports clubs also have closet space renting for about 12¥ a night. If you're really down on your luck, there are a couple of funeral homes, er, sorry, condensed living accommodation facilities (coffins, chummers), in Terminal and Downtown that go for about 5¥ a night. Don't expect room service, 'cause there ain't no rooms!

At chow time, stay away from the corp or tourist spots, most of which are in either Midtown or Times Square. Figure to drop at least 200¥ for you and a "date" in those areas. Anywhere else—which is where the real New Yorkers eat—will be much cheaper. Figure between 15¥ and 40¥ for a fair to good meal, and higher for better. A pretzel in Midtown will cost you 6¥. Downtown it'll cost you 2¥. Eat with the real people.

Entertainment has a similar swing. If your style is to frolic with the rich and corpy, then expect to pay through an inconvenient orifice. Spend the money in Downtown or Times Square and you'll have a good time. Spend the same amount in Neon City or Soho and not only will you attract a lot of close, personal friends, but you'll have three times the fun. Guaranteed. That is, until those close, personal friends find out you've run out of that money...

If your entertainment interests run to the, um, more exotic, shall we say, then I would recommend connecting with a live cabbie (yes, there are still a few) and have him take you to some of the more interesting places in Soho or Southside. If you've got the bucks, maybe even one of the more custom delights way uptown in East Riverside. Whatever you have to pay, trust me, it's worth it.

The overall cost of living in Manhattan shows a wide

spread, too. A Luxury lifestyle requires about 200,000¥ a month, High about 25,000¥, and Middle about 8,000¥, while Low only needs 850¥ and Squatter about 50¥. Street is still street, though perhaps a tad more physically taxing. Hospitalization is going to run you from 400¥ to 750¥ for basic care, and 1,200¥ to 2,000¥ for intensive care.

GETTING AROUND

If you're in Manhattan, chances are you ain't got a car. Maybe a bike, if you're lucky, but if the cops catch you, they'll probably nail you. Ever since the "Rebirth," vehicles have been banned from Manhattan Island, unless of course you've got a white card or the right connections. This means that those who can afford it have a car, or two, and those who can't are hoofing it. Bikes fall under the category of vehicle and so, technically, are illegal without that permit. But whether or not the cops will bother you depends on what neighborhood you're in and how fast you're moving at the time.

If you think this puts a damper on the nation's newest favorite pastime, go-ganging, you're wrong. The average pedestrian is probably a little safer in Manhattan than most sprawls these days, but only 'cause the go-heads spend so much time knocking heads with the cops that they leave the common folk alone. Usually.

Transportation around Manhattan and the adjoining areas can get complicated. In the country, outside the city, it's mostly bus and rail for those who can't afford real wheels. If you can find a bus shelter or subway station that still has a readable system map, then getting around is no problem. If you've got the guts, just hop on and see what happens. Great fun.

There's a rail connection across the Ronny Reagan that links up to most of the Queens and Brooklyn bus systems, but that deposits you at the Customs Center, too.

Can't call the Long Island Railroad the Iron Snail anymore, because they finally went mag-lev about ten years ago. If you got the bucks, catch a hotliner from the Midtown terminal that'll get you out to the Hamptons almost faster than you can ask around about which clubs are mainline that weekend. A straight run out to the Hamptons costs about 70¥. A shorter hop to the Mineola Transport Hub, adjacent to Roosevelt Field, the world's largest enclosed shopping mall, costs about 15¥. Anyone visiting NY should make it to the Field. It's a real wizzer, with probably more turned-up noses per square meter than anywhere else on earth. And it's popular even though the place gets hit by a terror-run at least once a month. I guess this is the closest to a real thrill that a lot of people ever get.

On Manhattan itself, you can get around above ground or below on public transportation. One of the above-ground means is the MTA bus system, which is easy to use because most run either north-south or east-west. A single fare is 2¥. A monthly pass runs about 30¥.

Also above-ground is the New El, which runs north-



south along both shores and then heads east-west. This elevated mag-lev system serves mostly Midtown and adjoining areas. It's clean, efficient, and mega-boring. Too much white. A circuit fare costs 3¥, but you can get a monthly pass for 40¥. The cops patrol the system heavily, unlike the buses or the subway.

As for below-ground transport, there's the subway. Much of it caved in during the earthquake, but portions were rebuilt to handle the migration of workers to and from the city each day. The subways primarily service the less-prestigious sections of town. A one-way fare to anywhere on the system is 1.5¥.

Much of the old subway system remains unused and unmaintained, however. For those in the know, this is the Underground, the mainline to everywhere.

Even the parts of the lower Manhattan subway that connect with Brooklyn run through customs check-points. Before crossing the river, all commuters must swap trains and submit to a general weapons and contraband search. The guards are lax enough that you can probably bluff your way through.

The final alternative is one of the licensed cabs that work the streets (mostly north of 32nd Street). The fares are steep, 2¥ a block, but a ride tends to be fairly safe and quick.

ADJOINING AREAS

THE COUNTIES

Since 2027, only Manhattan legally has been New York City. In *Manhattan Inc. v. The State of New York*, the city forced the boroughs of Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx, all formerly part of NYC, to separate from it. In effect, the suit let Manhattan secede from the rest of NYC, keeping the name and all the prestige. Sort of like my ex-wife.

Realizing that they would be unable to stand alone, the boroughs tried to stick together at first. Typical of their attempt was their inability to agree on a better name than "Quad Counties." Eventually, each went its separate way, all becoming counties of New York State, municipal entities unto themselves again, in 2029.

Many who work in Manhattan live in the counties. Since before the turn of the century, NYC has imposed a moderate "commuter tax" on all non-resident workers. It's been part of city policy not to provide scarce in-city housing for those workers, thereby forcing the tax upon them.

Travel in the counties is relatively sane, with the check-points occurring only when you try to enter Manhattan.

Brooklyn and Queens still walk the line between suburb and sprawl. I'd say they're more sprawl than suburb, but I already have enough enemies. Brooklyn

does have the Brooklyn Naval Yards, now reclaimed by the UCAS as a base for much of the country's non-carrier North and Mid-Atlantic fleet. The Coast Guard also bases out of there these days.

Staten Island ranges from dirt poor to filthy rich, sometimes within the space of a few blocks. The place is so hilly, however, that usually neither side of the tracks can see the other. For years, Staten Island wanted out of NYC, and has done a surprisingly good job of running things since they got their wish. Of course, the additional income from the Staten Island Carrier Base, home port of the *Wolverine* Light Carrier Battlegroup, probably doesn't hurt any.

Westchester County, north of Manhattan, was never part of old NYC. Suitville, UCAS, is an incredibly boring place. The only spots of interest are some of the corporate enclaves around Poughkeepsie and White Plains.

The best thing that can be said about the Bronx, which is mostly commercial and residential poor and lower-middle class, is the Villiers Arcology Project. The Arcology, which is under construction on the southernmost tip of the Bronx, adjacent to Harlem River, over the area they used to call Mott Haven, may someday actually be finished. Maybe. It's been under construction for a few more years than the fabled Seattle-Renraku structure, but isn't anywhere near as complete. Plagued by design flaws, accidents, and outright terrorism, the Arcology seems cursed.





NASSAU COUNTY

Designer living. Chauffeured rotorcraft. Gag. So-stylish-it-makes-you-sick. Nassau's got its cool places, though. Roosevelt Field, the Great Neck almost-arcology, Nassau Coliseum (live skateball), my friend Widow's place in Hempstead, the Inwood Combat Zone (which, being a rocket's flight from Kennedy, makes for great fun), and so on.

You'll find just as wide a swing in background and economics as in Manhattan, but the Nassau PR people work much harder at keeping a it secret. I suspect the whole South Shore is just waiting for a repeat of the '38 riots.

NEW JERSEY

Need I say more? Actually, except for the urban hells like Newark, Jersey is a decent blend of city and suburb. That is, if you can stomach even the slightest bit of suburb. The monstrous corporate enclaves along Interstate 1 and down the coast have done much to boost the area's economy. To date, they haven't fallen into the socio-economic spiral associated with most corporate-linked communities. Time will tell. (Read: We're working on it!)

If people can get hurt playing it, then the Meadowlands Sports Sprawl features it. Knock yourself out.

Early last year, the North Jersey ABM system misfired and blew a Euroflot spaceplane to dust as it arced over toward Kennedy. Great fireworks.

CONNECTICUT

Not really much I can tell ya, having only been there once myself. But it's pure suburban death zone. Zombies everywhere. Maybe even more gray suits per square block than Tokyo. (Nah.) The corporate zones, most of them in places like Hartford, Danbury, and Meriden, are full of wage slaves and *sararimen*, all worshipping at the feet of their respective corporate gods.

Of additional interest is the sub base at New London. This is one of the few the UCAS has left and they guard it like royalty.

HISTORY

THE LEVELING

Today, most people would agree that Manhattan's history starts with the quake of 2005. Sure, some old-timers remember how it was before, but what's the point? It's like worrying about world history before 2011. It just doesn't matter.

There'd been talk in NYC about the possibility of a quake since the late 1950s. No one really believed it, even though a couple of faultlines run around and across Manhattan. The major fault runs down the Hudson River to the west of the city, but a couple of smaller ones actually cut through Manhattan Island itself.

At 7:20 A.M. on August 12, 2005, a major earthquake hit Manhattan. The scientists say it was only 5.8 on the Richter, but it seemed higher. Of course, NYC had

none of the earthquake protection of cities more prone to them, which made the physical damage greater. Some 200,000 people died, and close to a million were injured. Most experts agree that death and casualty rates that low were miraculous.

The city was in ruins, having taken most of the major damage. Because the outer burroughs suffered less, they were used for evacuation and treatment. It was a freak of nature that the only Manhattan building of any size that didn't collapse was the Empire State Building. Sure it was damaged, but a little re-strengthening was all it needed.

What does a city do when something like this happens?

Nail up a "Condemned" sign and leave it be?
Pave it over and try again?

THE PRICE

After the disaster, the facts of life were hard. No way could the federal government (then still the U.S.A.) afford to rebuild New York. The *Shiawase* decision of 2001 had already eroded much of the tax base, and the billions in aid to the Middle East following the Israel/Libya "shotgun war" had put a huge dent in the national bank account. Facing an already staggering national debt, a legacy of the "faith healing" economic policies of the 80s and 90s, the government announced it could offer no more than basic disaster aid to NYC.

Well, it takes business to know business, and the next move was the corps'. NY had become an economic hub for very definite geographical reasons and the corps saw this as their chance to rebuild that center in their own image. A consortium of aspiring multinationals volunteered to pitch in and help rebuild the city. The catch? Deregulation.

Now, realize that back then the ole U.S.A. still hadn't fallen to ruin. The *Shiawase* decision was still young, and no one had really taken that long, hard look down the tracks to see what was coming. By agreeing to help rebuild the NY infrastructure and pump billions into the local economy in the process, the consortium, or Manhattan Inc. as it was sometimes known, would be helping to maintain the stability of the region, and therefore, the county. What they would ultimately be doing, however, is breaking the back of government.

In exchange for the billions in corporate aid, Congress passed legislation deregulating most industries, restructured the corporate tax base and regulations, shifted the balance of fees, tariffs, and duties, and generally gave the corps a free ride. It's true they planned to impose some temporal limitations. Once NY and the local/national economy were again on firmer ground, Congress would revoke the privileges granted the corps. They miscalculated seriously, however. To name a few:

- The Awakening (Hey, who coulda guessed?)
- The Treaty of Denver (Ooops, lost most of the West...)
- The CAS and CFS secession (Ooops, lost most of everything else...)

•Corporate intrusion in government (Here lies the real blame...)

By the time NY was back on its feet, and the Northeast with it, the corps were running the show. The economy of the country (now the UCAS) was drek and the corps were the only thing holding it together. They rebuilt New York, and bought themselves a country.

CURRENT SITUATION

GOVERNMENT

The government of the City of New York uses the trappings of old New York City but little of the reality. At the top of the bureaucratic totem pole is the Mayor of New York, currently one Andrew T. Small. (Small, a vacillating Democrat with one finger in the air to test the political winds and another up his butt, is a veteran of the corporate machine. A former Marketing VP for Tres Chic Cosmetics, Small knows as little about city government as he does about personal hygiene.)

Below the Mayor, downwind as they say, and ignoring all the various Mayoral Assistants, is the City Council. In the old days, each of the five boroughs elected representatives to the City Council, which had the Job of trying to bully the Mayor into doing what they wanted. Nowadays, each of the Precincts (an apt term) of NY elects (hah) representatives to the City Council, which has the job of publicly supporting the Mayor on as many trideo programs as they can manage a day.

In NY it's the Corporate Advisory Board who calls the shots, though its ostensible role is as advisor to the Mayor on city business matters. Since everything is business these days in NY, they generate paperwork that he signs. Every member of Manhattan Inc. has a seat on the Advisory Board, which meets once every two to three weeks to lunch, blather, and advise. A simple majority is required before an advisement paper can be forwarded to the Mayor.

Currently, the membership of the Manhattan Inc. Consortium is roughly as follows. (I say roughly because they keep the exact membership quiet.) In a moment, I'll tell you why:

- Ares Macrotechnology
- Aztechnology
- Eastern Financial
- Fuchi Industrial Electronics
- US (International Information Systems)
- The Kesai & Wilhelm Group
- Netlink Telecommunications
- Prometheus Engineering
- Saeder-Krupp Heavy Industries
- Sony Dataworks
- Trans-Orbital
- UCAS Data Systems
- Villiers International

The consortium can only have, and must have, 13 members to exist. However, the members of the consortium can remove one of its members by a unanimous vote. This was alleged to have happened about six years ago when Mitsuhamma got bounced and UCAS Data Systems was installed in their place. You can bet your best pair of mirrorshades that the Yaks were none too happy about that.

The consortium likes to keep its membership quiet for defensive reasons: anybody connected with them is fair game in NY. In some circles, anti-megacorp terrorism is almost a sport.

The most powerful members of the consortium are undoubtedly the big three—Ares Macrotech, Fuchi, and Aztechnology—though Saeder-Krupp has been trying to muscle up with its latest series of acquisitions. Of them all, Ares is probably in the strongest position because of its place in the NY law-enforcement triad. More on that later.

Just because Ares seems to be in the best position doesn't mean it's king of the hill. Because of the one-corp, one-vote structure, Ares often is out-voted in the consortium meetings. You can also bet your best pair of mirrorshades the megacorps wish they hadn't written that in, because now all the smaller members can block any efforts to get the provision changed.





PASSES

In the UCAS, if you don't have a SIN, you're nobody, as far as the government is concerned. In NY, if you don't have a pass, you're less than nobody. You're an *Illegal*.

Earlier I mentioned the different types of passes and their functions. More info follows.

Resident Passes

Resident passes are white and come in two variations—solid white for full-time residents and green-striped for part-time residents. The difference? Paperwork.

Both are reserved nearly exclusively for the social elite. If you call NY home, and therefore dump most of your taxes there, you get a solid white pass. If you have residences other than NY, you get a white pass with a green stripe.

What does this mean?

Unlimited access to even the most restricted of shopping centers. Special deals at various financial institutions. Unlimited vehicle access to the island of Manhattan. Automatic subscription to either DocWagon or MediVac services. And so on.

It also means preferential treatment by some of the police forces, depending on who they are and who the corporate sponsor is. Oh, did I mention that? All white passes are corporate-sponsored. The only way to get one is if a corp backs your application. Just another perk in old NY.

The white residence pass is reviewed once every five years or if an officiating body (read corp) requests it.

Work Passes

Work passes are for wage slaves. They're blue and have a white stripe for residents of NY who work within its borders, or a red stripe for those who live in NY but work in one of the Counties, or god forbid, Jersey.

The blue pass doesn't entitle even NY residents to own in-city transportation, so they have to walk it or take mass transit.

The blue work passes are reviewed yearly or at the request of an officiating or law enforcement body. (Did you notice that the law enforcement agencies can't request a review of a white pass?)

Temporary Passes

For those who work in New York, but don't live there (which is 75 percent of the workforce), there is a red temporary access pass. You're barely anybody, but you've got a card.

If it's a solid red, you get reviewed every six months, at nearly anybody's request.

If it's red with a gray stripe, it's basically a "guest" card. You get reviewed once a month, hell, high-water, or Ghost Dance, and you better have a damn good reason why you haven't applied for an upgrade. Corps, if they like, can get "special guests" a gray "special guest" card. If it's solid gray, it's the equivalent of a white card as far as perks are concerned, but it gets reviewed every six months (or so) and the bearer is the responsibility of the sponsoring corp. If the gray card has a red stripe, it's a monthly pass and the rough equivalent of a blue pass.

RESTRICTED PASSES

The fun ones. Restricted passes, shiny black suckers, are issued to felons. That's right, if you are convicted of a crime, you get to carry a black pass.

If it has a white stripe, you are a resident criminal.

If it has a blue stripe, you are a working-class criminal.

If it has a red stripe, you are a temporary criminal. (Yes, laugh! I swear they have such a thing.)

And, presumably, if a corp sponsors it, you can get a black pass with a gray stripe for their "special criminal guests." They should be issuing a lot more of those than they do.

Anyone who commits any crime above a misdemeanor, or five misdemeanors within a five-year period, gets a black card. That's his or her ID for the next five years. If he or she has been a good boy or girl during those five years, the city gives him or her the old card back. Ain't they sweet?

What does a black card get you? Hassle city. You are *persona non grata* as far as anyone above drek-level is concerned. Everything you do is scrutinized. Some places won't let you near the door. Life is hell.

You can get away with a lot, with or without a pass, if no one scrutinizes you. If you're driving a van down Broadway and you're being real legal-like, odds are no one will bother to ask for your papers. After all, no cop wants to stop, and thereby insult, someone important.

Like the book says, if you look the part and act the part, you may as well be the part as far as everybody else is concerned. Oh, and if you're going to try a fake white pass, lose the mohawk, the mirror shades, the flak jacket, and the Uzi. Just a suggestion, chummer.

PASSES, PASSES, WHO'S GOT THE PASSES?

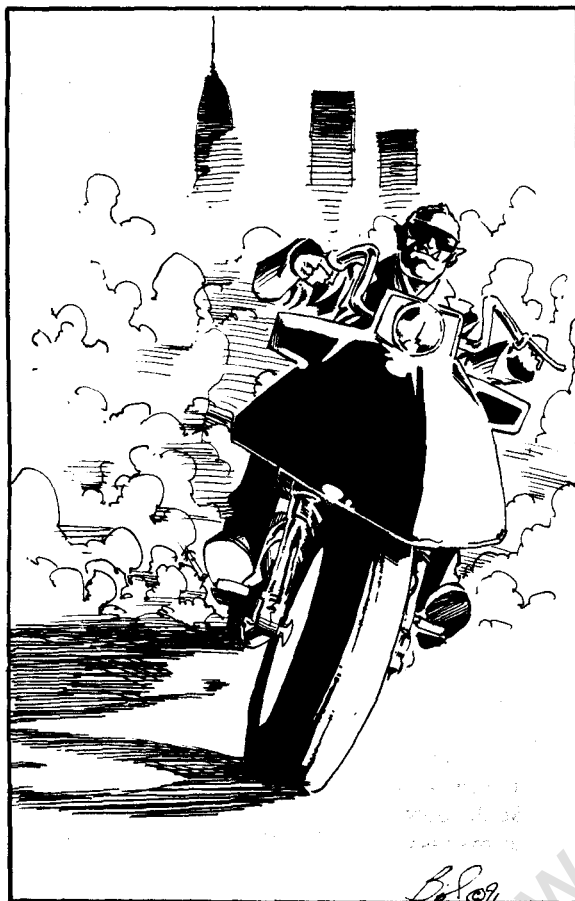
The problem of passes in NY is compounded because the pass acts as a credstick as well as bearer of all ID information. Most of the card checkers in the city are connected to BIDVS (Bearer-Identity Verification System), run by UCAS Data Systems (which, no doubt, explains their inclusion in the consortium a few years back).

The pass card, as I said above, acts as a credstick. White passes are either Platinum or Gold equivalents, blue or red are either Silver or Standard, and gray runs the range from Standard to Platinum, depending on the wishes of the sponsoring corp. Blacks are always Standard. A colored dot on the card indicates the credstick equivalency rating.

NY pass cards are harder to forge and easier to spot than standard credsticks because of the improved encoding and the limited database the BIDVS needs to access. Forgeries cost five times the regular shadow-market value for a particular rating, double the cost for a blue pass, and double it again for a white pass.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Let's face it, law enforcement in New York is wacky. Three security companies hold the contracts: Knight-Errant (hence Ares' clout in the consortium), Winter



Systems, and the NYPD Inc. (taken over by the union and incorporated a few years after the big quake). NY has been divided into Zones, also known as Precincts, each of which is patrolled and under the jurisdiction of two of the three members of the law triad.

The plan was to reduce corruption by having each of the corps looking over the other's shoulder. You know, the spirit of competition. The problem was that the consortium built into the triad system the provision that the consortium could remove a member from the triad at the request of one of the other members. Now, this can't happen unless the requesting triad member has sufficient evidence of blatant wrongdoing, as Knight-Errant had of Warren Security back in 2041. Seems Warren had been systematically butchering squatter-residents of various buildings owned by Warren Habitats, their parent company.

The result of all this is lots of cross-agency suspicion, bad blood, paranoia, competition, investigation sabotage, evidence suppression, and generally even more corruption than normal, but of a different nature, of course.

Within the Precinct, the multi-corporation structure works like this. Within each department, a cop and his partner are members of the same corp, other partner-teams are of the same or another corporation. An effort is made to keep the number of enforcement teams balanced. Overseeing the department is an executive officer appointed by a tri-corporate, precinct-based advisory board.

With all this, the politics in one Precinct house rivals that of the whole UCAS.

There's also an added twist: the Port Authority. Controlled, amazingly, by New York State, the Port Authority's primary role is controlling New York Harbor and the surrounding waterways. They also have airspace jurisdiction over the entire Manhattan Island, which means all of New York City. If that weren't enough to drive the corps nuts, the PA controls the Terminal precinct, Grand Central Station, and the bridge and road accessways to the city. If something gets you into or out of Manhattan, the Port Authority covers it. As you can imagine, this make for fun jurisdictional problems.

CRIME

Ah, crime. Well, officially, there's barely any, so all of this is theoretical, you understand.

The standard big three are present; the Mafia, the Yaks, and the Seoulpa Rings, in that order. The Mafia controls trucking and construction, leaving the petty street drek to the other two syndicates. The Yaks handle the illegal gambling, prostitution, and BTL peddling for the city. That leaves the Seoulpa Rings anything else they can get their hands on.

They compete with the Yaks for control of the black market, though not very successfully. Sometimes a Ring will give you a better deal for single items, but if you need it in bulk, the Yaks are your guys. Just don't tell them you also deal with the Rings. The Yaks are already mad enough at the way the Seoulpa have been undercutting their street-level BTL sales.

Almost every precinct has its own Yak clan controlling the area, and depending on the size of the area, one or more Rings. The Mafia work city-wide.

And the shadowrunners? As in most urban areas, NY's shadow underground operates as one big network. Many runners work in set groups, very much like Seoulpa Rings (and sometimes operating as one), that overlap with other groups, informally exchanging members based on who needs what where and when. The city has only a handful of real runner groups, no matter what fictions you hear about dozens on every street corner and coming out of holes in the wall. I can count all the *real* runners I know on all my fingers and toes (plus one for the big toe I lost last week). You can't fire your gun and not hit a wannabee or poser, though.

STREET LIFE

If you had to pick one word, a socially acceptable one, to define New York these days, dynamic would have to be it. NY has always been the town that never sleeps and it has never been truer. Walk the streets at four in the morning (in certain areas at least) and you'll probably see more people than you would on most Saturday afternoons. Now, these people might not be anyone you'd want to call chummer, but that's beside the point.

Some people complain of the city's distinct odor, which can only be the collective scent of the single



organism that is New York. Every member, from the highest white card to the lowest black card, is part of that organism. They are the very fiber of Manhattan's being, which moves and breathes, lives and dies with them.

The energy level of a city so many millions strong is real and palpable. Apathy may attack the denizens of various other sprawls around the globe, but apathy won't get you far on these mean streets. In Manhattan, the human animal does not survive long by being sluggish, unaware, or naive.

The night itself in New York is wired. Walk the streets, catch the breeze when it comes, and let your body's clock warn you that soon the nightly acid rain will fall. Catch the eye of a fellow pedestrian and give him a nod and tight smile. Share the energy. All it takes is the edge.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Working south, they are:

INWOOD, WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, AND NEWTOWN

	Security Rating
Inwood	
NYPD Inc. and Winter Systems	C-B
Washington Heights	
Knight-Errant and Winter Systems	B
Newtown	
NYPD Inc. and Knight-Errant	B-A

Of these primarily residential neighborhoods, only Newtown shows signs of corporate presence. Residential buildings are usually less than eight stories, though some as high as twelve stories do exist, especially in the higher-rent areas along the Hudson. Most residents barely consider these areas part of Manhattan, so far removed do they seem.

Newtown is named for the fact that nearly 80 percent of the buildings were rebuilt or refurbished following the earthquake. This occurred more out of a desire to wipe the slate clean than out of structural necessity. The consortium apparently decided that New York was better off forgetting the crime-ridden neighborhood of Harlem that once occupied this area. What they forgot was the cultural and historical wealth of those streets. With the consortium making such decisions, it's a wonder the city survived at all. (Some genius, however, had the sense to maintain the historic Apollo Theater on 125th Street between 7th and 8th.)

This area offers few places of real interest, beyond a few neighborhood slam palaces and a shadow bar or two (strictly small-time). The one major exception is The Cloisters. Set on a hilltop near the northernmost tip of Manhattan Island, the Cloisters is a series of authentic and representational medieval buildings that formerly housed the Metropolitan Museum of Art's medieval collection. These days, much of the collection remains, but the ownership has changed.

An order of Hermetic mages working under the name The Children of the New Crusade acquired the Cloisters from the financially foundering Met in 2036. (Sounds like a policlub, but then, all those mage groups sound that way to me). The order, apparently incorporated, took control, keeping much of it open to the public while maintaining the rest as living and working quarters. The only other thing I know about the Children of the New Crusade is that it's best not to mess with them. The other bit of news are the repeated sightings of what seems to be a young Eastern dracoform at the site, apparently under the care of the order.

Newtown also has Columbia University, at Broadway and I 16th, along the precinct border with Riverside. Much of the grounds are very old (it having been founded as King's College in 1754) and somehow survived the quake. Before that, part of the area was the Bloomingdale Insane Asylum (which now sits south a bit and across the park), and some say shades of its former inhabitants appear on the darkest, quietest nights. Today the university is noted for primarily its Liberal Arts, Pre-Business Law, and Mystic Studies/Parapsychology Departments.

RIVERSIDE AND EAST RIVERSIDE

	Security Rating
Riverside	
NYPD Inc. and Winter Systems	A-AA
East Riverside	
NYPD Inc. and Knight-Errant	B-A

These two are also primarily residential areas, with some corporate structure overflow from Midtown. Many middle-management corp-types live in East Riverside, so much of the available entertainment is appropriate to that style of life. Across the river is Randall's Island, the location of the city's minimum and moderate-security prisons.

MIDTOWN (AA-AAA)

Winter Systems and Knight-Errant

The glory that is Manhattan. Bright and shining skyscrapers and even taller skyrakers command the area, ringing Central Park. An especially good view is from one of the giant towers at either end or from the northern end of the Central Park reservoir.

All the buildings in Midtown are gigantic, and are either new or were erected within the last half-century. There are probably more square meters of glass, chrome, and stonework here than in any other similar-sized area in the world. Many years back, one of the Middle Eastern madmen called New York "Satan's Seat of Judgement." Well, I can't vouch for that one way or the other, but someone sure didn't skimp on the upholstery.

The corporate heart of NY, Midtown is where most of New York's corporate buildings and complexes are located. At the north edge of Central Park, is the US Tower (Lenox and West 115th) and Sony Dataworks (Fifth and East 106th). Heading south on either side, one finds Netlink



(East 96th and Park), UCAS Data Systems (Park and West 99th), Villiers International (East 86th and Park), and Saeder-Krupp (Third and East 72nd).

At the end of the park are Ares Macrotech (West 63rd and Eighth Avenue), Aztechnology (Fifth and East 52nd), Eastern Financial (Lexington and East 60th), Kesai & Wilhelm (West 61st and Columbus Avenue), and Trans-Orbital (East 55th and Sixth).

Also scattered throughout the area are the offices of Renraku, Mitsuhama, and most of the other multinational and domestic giants.

Midtown is so clean it squeaks. Winter Systems and Knight-Errant ride the area hard, keeping the street-drek away and the taxpayers safe. At any time of day or night, at least one aircraft, whether law-enforcement or otherwise is in the area, probably heading to one of the many rooftop VTOL-pads.

Also located here is Lincoln Center (Columbus and West 63rd), the haute-cultural institute that attracts herds of limousines almost every night. The Metropolitan Opera is in Lincoln Center, but these days, it alternates with the Japanese-backed Kobo Playhouse.

At the southeast corner of the park (Fifth and East 60th) is the Manhattan Club, a ritzy and members-only club. If a person is one of the powers-that-be in NY, you can bet he or she's a member here.

WESTSIDE AND UPPER EASTSIDE

	Security Rating
Westside	
NYPD Inc. and Winter Systems	AA (AAA)
Upper Eastside	
NYPD Inc. and Knight-Errant	A-B

Both Westside and Upper Eastside are primarily residential, with a few towers overflowing from Midtown. Westside is definitely corptown, while Upper Eastside begins to look more residential. The homes along Riverside Drive and overlooking the river are among the most expensive pieces of residential property in the city.

The southernmost section of Westside, at the site of the old 16th Street Conrail Terminal, is the massive spire of Prometheus Engineering. An architectural impossibility, the 100-story building mimics a DNA spiral twisting in on itself. Hundred-stories or no, remarkably few wage slaves work above the 40th floor. Those employees who do are most likely to be those who also reside in one of the building's many living-quarters floors. They're also likely to be the most tight-lipped about what goes on there. Prometheus does R&D in everything from macrotechnology, nanotechnology, and telemechanics to cybernetics and bionetics.

The most notable site on the Upper Eastside is Grade Mansion (East 86th and the river), the long-standing residence of the Mayor of New York. It's easily recognizable by the barricades and platoons of armed guards all around.

CENTRAL PARK EAST AND WEST

	Security Rating
Central Park East	
NYPD Inc. and Knight-Errant	AAA
Central Park West	
NYPD Inc. and Winter Systems	AAA

Here is where anybody who is anybody in New York lives. When the city was being redesigned, the planners set aside these two great strips on both sides of the park for residential buildings. The strips run from 86th to 60th Street and are a city-block wide. The views are tremendous. Bet on it.

No big surprise that cops are everywhere.

LOWER WESTSIDE AND EASTSIDE

	Security Rating
Lower Westside	
NYPD Inc. and Winter Systems	C
Eastside	
NYPD Inc. and Knight-Errant	A-B

Now we're starting to get down to my part of town. The Lower Westside descends quickly from the splendors of Midtown and Westside, ending in near-squalor against the walls of Terminal. It's primarily a lower-middle-class/poor residential, wage-slave zone. A few street gangs roam the area, the most powerful being the Blood Monkeys, who expanded their turf into Downtown and Southside. The river-edge portion of the Lower Westside also contains some port and cargo-handling facilities.

The Eastside is the Land of Lower Managers, and nervous ones at that. Ya see, across the river from Eastside is Roosevelt Island, now more commonly known as Penitentiary Island, where the city maintains moderate-, maximum-, and ultra-maximum security prisons. Even with help from Warren Security, they can't prevent at least three riots and a dozen attempted prison breaks every year. No one knows how many make it off the island and live to reach the shore, but I can tell you for a fact that some do.

TIMES SQUARE AND NEON CITY

	Security Rating
Times Square	
NYPD Inc. and Knight-Errant	AAA
Neon City	
NYPD Inc. and Winter Systems	AA-A

Times Square is where those who have the nuyen go for a dose of high culture. That is, when they're not absorbing the Modern Kabuki at Lincoln Center. Most of Manhattan's old theater district got crammed into this area during the rebuilding. It now has about half a dozen full-size theaters and maybe double that number in smaller venues. The turn-over in shows is rapid-fire as this season's giant flop goes down in flames and another rises in its

place. Of course, one show makes it to blockbuster status every season. This year it's *Bloody Buzz-Bombs*, a musical, simsense-augmented version of the story of London during the World War II blitz.

Neon City is where the elite go to pretend they're slumming. Designed to look like an authentic red-light district where decadent pleasures of the flesh, intellect, and spirit lurk behind every door, it's one of the few zones in NY where the rich and everyone else rub shoulders and occasionally butt heads. The area is patrolled fairly heavily, but the cops stay back as long as everyone seems to be having fun and the fun isn't getting too illegal.

A series of interconnected, mall-like structures, the buildings of Neon City are linked by glass-enclosed crosswalks that rise high above the traffic. There are many open-air spaces, some dozens of floors above the street, where fun-folk can meet and look down on the city.

Neon City is also a focal point for heavy criminal activity. You name the scam or the scrag and someone's bound to be at it in Neon City, but only if you know where to look and who to ask. Remember, this is a heavily patrolled area, obvious as well as undercover, so don't jander down the street with too many of your intentions hanging out. Playing the part is always at least half of the show.

TERMINAL (Security Rating C-E, occasional bursts of Z)

Knight-Errant and Winter Systems

The name says it all, for Terminal is a kind of huge drainage ditch for the rest of the city. Most of the cheap transportation coming into New York City unloads here, either at the Port Authority Transit Terminal (mostly buses) or Penn Station (PATH and/or Conrail or LIRR trains connecting to the seedier outlying Connecticut or Long Island areas.)

Except for choke points at 42nd and 10th, 7th and 42nd, 7th and 38th, and 7th and 34th, Terminal is sealed off from the rest of the city. Security posts keep a constant eye on the flow of street drek, and the guards will card anybody who looks even remotely suspicious. During some of the wage-slave shift changes, the wait to get through can be as long as half an hour.

Anybody with the money and status to avoid the place uses Grand Central Station (on the border of Neon City and Eastside) or any of the intermediary stations. The Terminal is for the rest of the huddled masses.

Terminal is also where you'll find most of the city's cheapest crash-houses and coffin hotels. The residents of these are a good 75 percent pushers, pimps, or black marketeers. No blue- or white-pass holders on these blocks, chummers. The passes around here are blood red (with some shiny black ones thrown in for spice.) Winter and Knight try to maintain some semblance of order in the zone, but it's a losing battle. You could almost set your watch by the nightly street brawls.



The Zone is nearly void of vehicles; the only ones permitted are delivery trucks during certain times of the day. Occasionally, a go-gang will barrel in through one of the choke points, raising a brief bit of hell, then scrambling before the heavy security comes down. As a show of force, one of the enforcement agencies flies a combat chopper low overhead every hour or so.

DOWNTOWN (Security Rating B-A)

NYPD Inc. and Knight-Errant

Downtown is pretty much what New York was a century ago, before the arrival of the multinational megacorps and the 300-story skyrakers. The zone starts at the old Empire State Building, the only edifice of more than 20 stories to survive the quake undamaged. The building is currently privately owned, but nobody knows by who. Most of the floors are leased out as office space, with the exception of the top 30 floors, which are either empty, quake-damaged, or used by the mysterious owner, depending on who you talk to. The only thing for certain is that those top floors are protected (according to my magician friends) by a powerful ward that no one has ever been known to penetrate. I've even heard that a couple of megacorps gave it a try with no success.

The skyscrapers and smaller buildings of Downtown are filled with a mix of businesses and residences, but not much industrial space because of the high rent.

Downtown does have a gang problem. Few are local, rolling in from other areas. On occasion, you'll spot the Ancients here, drifting over from the elven areas of Southside or The Pit. The Blood Monkeys cruise through, too, often clashing with the Ancients or a local street gang called The Wrathchilides.

SOUTHSIDE AND STUYVESANT

Security Rating

Southside

NYPD Inc. and Winter Systems **B**

Stuyvesant

Knight-Errant and Winter Systems **AAA**

Southside is similar to Downtown, a mix of businesses and residences, but tending slightly toward the business side. The buildings tend to be lower, with few skyscrapers, and the region along the river contains most of Manhattan Island's port and cargo-handling facilities.

A heavy elven community exists in the northern area of Southside, very near Terminal. This section is a little more depressed than the rest of the area and usually only gets C-Rating enforcement.

