

## SENATE ACCOUNTING OFFICE (SAO)

**Reports to:** Office of the Vice Commander  
(in their role as President of the Senate)

**Agency Head:** Eustacia Wibble,  
Comptroller General of the Jovian Republic

The SAO's role is to ensure the fiscal accountability of the Jovian government by auditing disbursement of public funds and investigating any suspicion of irregularity or malfeasance. While not an intelligence agency itself, I include SAO here in part because its investigations often cross paths with the activities of the intel community, and in part because its investigative powers make SAO inspectors valuable Firewall recruits.

### HISTORY

The SAO is the direct descendant of the old United States government's Government Accountability Office (GAO). The primary difference between it and its predecessor is that while the GAO made its findings freely available to the public, the SAO reports only to the Jovian Senate.

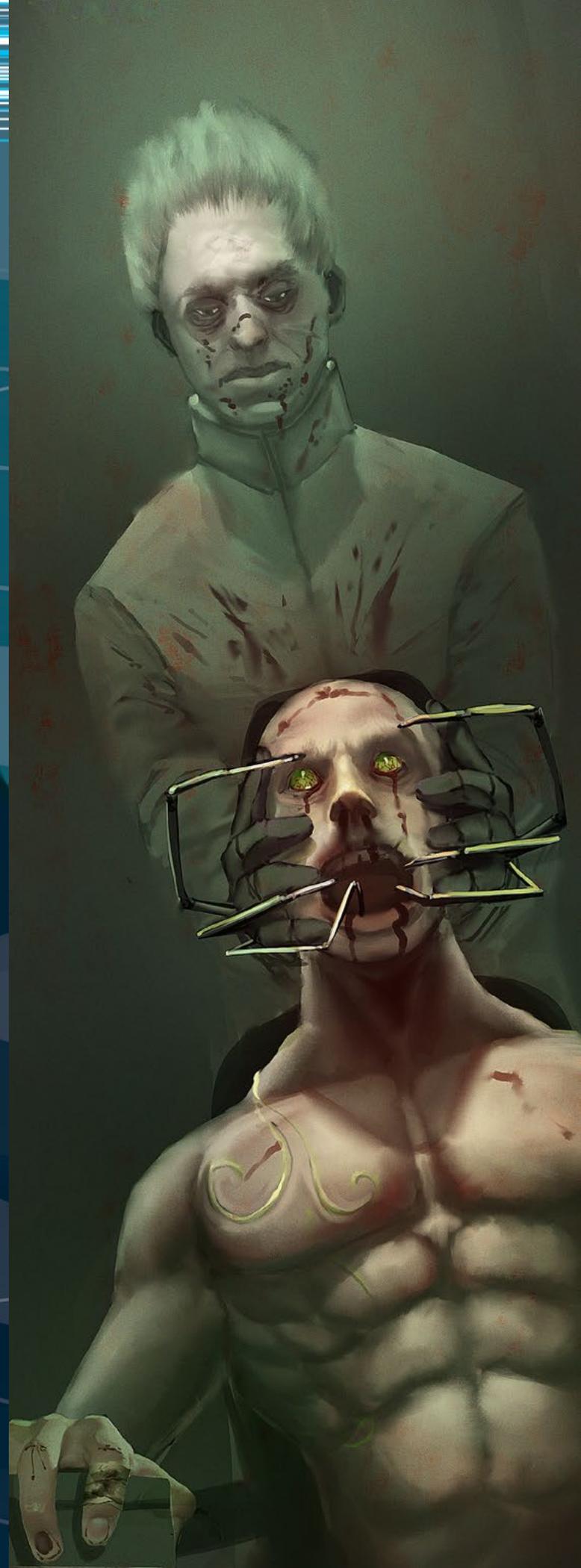
Our Senate is widely accounted a rubber-stamp legislature, a toothless assortment of windbags that blow where the lobbyists and the Security Council would have them blow. This is true from the standpoint of an outsider or an average Jovian. But there's an intricate dance that goes on in the halls of power, one that our betters never invite us to see. Given restrictions on resleeving and life extension, even Security Council members' numbers will eventually come up. When they do, the masters of this dance—senior senators, governors, politically minded military officers, and lobbyists—all play a role in the transition of power. In the meantime, the dance goes on, and the Senate Accounting Office is one of their chief tools for gaining advantage.

SAO Inspectors have a surprising level of access to classified government information. The secrets of intelligence agencies and their operations may be a closed book, but their ledgers aren't, and from these a great deal of information can be inferred.

Several recent SAO investigations have targeted CBEAT and JSFI. This is another front in the bureaucratic war over whose contractors to favor. SAO smells malfeasance in the water, but what else might they find if they follow the money? It makes for an opportunity from Firewall's standpoint, as sentinels undercover in the Senate Accounting Office currently have unprecedented levels of justification for snooping on both CBEAT and Space Force Intelligence.

### ORGANIZATION

As a civilian organization, job titles in SAO follow standard lines for a governmental accounting agency. Most of SAO is an undifferentiated mass of bean counters from Firewall's standpoint, with the exception of the Division of Investigations. Investigations is organized somewhat like the detective branches of a police department. Several chief inspectors report to Comptroller General Wibble, with about a dozen senior inspectors under them, and about a hundred regular inspectors doing the grunt work. Inspectors do the field work for SAO's army of comptrollers, associate comptrollers, assistant comptrollers, CPAs, lawyers, and clerks, of whom there are probably several thousand.



## PEOPLE

**Comptroller General Eustacia Wibble** is an iron abacus in a velvet glove. Formerly a high-ranking auditor in the old US Government Accountability Office, Wibble happened to be in Jovian space overseeing an audit of security contractor operations when the Fall hit. She impressed Monica Contreras with her ability to provide an accurate picture of available funds and raw materials during the ensuing chaos and has had the Commander in Chief's ear ever since. Those who wonder why the Republic doesn't implode under the weight of corruption need look no further for an answer; it's because Eustacia Wibble is watching.

**Managing Associate General Counsel Marek Baumann**, of SAO's legal arm, is a Firewall asset. Quietly Extropian in his politics, Baumann believes that the Republic is steering the wrong course. Baumann's position is that of legal point person in assessing whether SAO has cause to act on a given matter. From there, he can steer Firewall assets toward suspicious activity in the intel community.

## LIBERTY CITY LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SUITES

SAO occupies a large but spare suite of offices in Liberty City. As with the Castle, the number of human staff working here is bloated by the usual standards. The Jovian prohibition on AIs and infomorphs means that a sizable staff of accountants, analysts, and admins is needed to perform the SAO's work. The Investigations branch has its own corridor with cubicles and individual offices, but this area is no more or less high-tech than the rest of the place.

## INTERACTIONS WITH FIREWALL

Like CDBI, SAO has crossed paths with Firewall operations without realizing what they were dealing with. Every so often, an audit trail dead ends at an operation or initiative involving the Eye. The few people in JSFI and SCI who know of Firewall aren't about to clue in a bunch of legislative branch bean counters.

## OLIGARCHS

Posted by:

Dread Locke, Firewall Sentinel <[Info](#) [Msg](#) [Rep](#)>

The term "oligarchs" is a useful label for a diverse collection of individuals. Of course, it's a mistake to treat them as a uniform group. They all have their own individual, unique interests, and they pursue them with the vast resources, enhanced intelligence, long-term strategic planning, and dedicated, ruthless cunning for which they are infamous.

Every society that doesn't correct for equality and opportunity has its royalty, and transhumanity is no different. There's no denying that the oligarchs have a head start on the rest of us. They had the wealth and privilege to get in on the ground floor when humanity first started augmenting our capabilities and extending lifespans, and again when we started installing cortical stacks, resleeving, and buying customized bods. Most of them have hypercorp connections (if you could call being CEO or chairperson—or having one in your pocket—a connection). Some of them are royalty in the true sense of the word—they're descendants of actual kings and queens or other nobility from Earth. Some were just

## A WORD OF CAUTION

Posted by: Cacophonous, Firewall Router

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Any sentinels interacting with oligarchs should take special care. The foresight and cunning exhibited by oligarchs makes them formidable opponents—and treacherous allies. It should be expected that they have contingencies in place for almost all conceivable scenarios. Though a few them can be considered philanthropic or invested in transhumanity's future, most are likely classified as intensely self-interested. When dealing with someone who is always a step or five ahead of you, spontaneity and unpredictability are your best allies. Likewise, they are unlikely to engage in any relationship which does not reap them long-term benefits, so keep in mind that they may simply be using us as means towards a larger goal. That said, their resources are vast, so take advantage of them when offered.

One other thing: the psychological effects of advanced longevity are still unknown. Most oligarchs

are not willing to submit to psychological evaluations, and those that do have not opted to make their data widely available to researchers. The boredom and ennui that characterize many oligarchs may have a biological component. The human mind did not evolve to live for hundreds of years, and the challenges that extended, collected memories pose—especially considering the "perfect" recall that cortical stacks allow—are a new and unexpected obstacle. While so-called Methuselah syndrome is not yet a recognized psychological affliction, it seems likely that the impact of perfect recall and memories that compile for decades beyond what the human mind evolved to handle does have an effect on the long-lived. Expression often seems to mimic certain symptoms of depression and anxiety, but may also manifest as lethargy, paranoia, recklessness, and other dissociative behaviors. In short: the mental states of long-lived oligarchs should be considered significantly different from transhuman norms and, as such, unpredictable. ■

FIREWALL

OTHER GROUPS

GAME INFORMATION