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CYBERPUNK®

THE BONIN HORSE



**A Cyberpunk 2020® Technothriller
by Eric Heisserer**

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PROLOGUE

Early Morning Swim

5:34 a.m. North Pacific Ocean.

The *Eel* slipped silently between the walls of the Bonin Trench. The sleek, 200-meter-long form of the Arasaka cargo submarine made not a noise as it travelled toward its destination: The Solomon Islands.

Captain Hyung Mitsumoto looked over his crew thoughtfully, watching them perform the routine tasks associated with trench navigation. He had a competent bridge crew; one which he could take to war and back again. Such cargo missions bored him, but he knew their importance when the time came to lash out at the enemy. *Preparation is everything if you know where to prepare*, his father had told him.

This morning's trip had been more laborious than normal. Recent trench-floor mining operations had altered the shape of the walls enough to warrant manual navigation. That meant occasionally rising to net depth and sitting in the mouth of the trench, while the navigator linked up with the Pacifica grid and downloaded the new contour maps into Arasaka's database in TokyoChiba.

Earlier, at the entrance to the Bonin Trench, Captain Mitsumoto had taken advantage of the extra time by ascending to periscope depth and gazing at the volcanoes of Iwo Jima. That was an hour before. Now he was restless, with no particular sights to view. He waited for his navigator to return to reality.

Abruptly, the navigator spoke up.

"Sir, there is...there appears to be a new LDL within the Pacifica grid, or possibly an interlinked system, south/southeast of our coordinates. This territory was just Wilderspace when I last linked up."

"So, what does that mean?"

"That could mean—signal! I've Net coordinates, off starboard. No parallel sonar echoes from that location."

"None? Give me visual."

The main monitor blipped on as the rest of the crew brought their eyes to it. There, in the middle of a dark blue haze, was a strange, ivory colored squid. By its graphic representation it looked to be approximately 40 meters in length. The tentacles were slowly propelling the great netform, guiding it mindlessly along the trench wall.

"What in Saburo's name— What is it?"

The navigator examined it for a moment, from the perspective of the Net.

"Probably a Virtual Reality program that lost its way. Either that or a rogue AI. Hard to tell with these creatures."

"Monitor it carefully. Destroy it if it gets too close."

"Yessir." The navigator completed his transmission to Arasaka and turned his attention to the squid. The datafortress began to accelerate as the *Eel* moved down into the trench.

"Steady her at one-third speed and dive," ordered the captain.

"One-third and diving," repeated the helmsman.

Strangely, the squid accelerated to match the sub's speed. Unsure of its intentions, the navigator was hesitant to report its new course. He waited a moment.

A moment was all it took.

Without warning, a tentacle lashed out and seized him. The squid moved in on the submarine with astonishing speed as the netrunner battled for his life. He could feel the work of a devilish Brainwipe program ferociously pounding to get inside his mind. Struggling to free himself, he activated his Killer pro-

gram: a chromed samauri wielding a chainsaw. A smaller, man-size squid instantly appeared and entangled the samauri with its bone-white tentacles. "Crack!" went the samauri as it disappeared in a misshapen form. As the small squid turned to approach him, he silently prayed that someone out there in Realspace was watching.

"Unplug him! Do it, now!" Mitsumoto leapt from his command throne and raced for the navigator. The sound of the captain's boots stomping over the metal mesh floor could be heard throughout the bridge, but were barely audible to the navigator trapped within the Net. Boom—boom—he heard in the distance, and lost all memory of his military career, including his transfer to the *Eel*. Boom—boom—boom—he heard again, and found himself surrounded by strange animated apparitions, including a huge aquatic creature. Boom—boom—approached the sounds, as he tried desperately to remember his own name.

Hyung reached his netrunner and yanked the interface cable just in time to watch him fall over the navigational console.

***"Wilderspace...
We like to call it
Wonderland,
because it's full
of surprises.
Most of them
are deadly. And
guess who has
to play Alice?"***

—Digit

The lights went out throughout the ship. The crew was immersed in darkness for a beat until the auxiliary lighting flickered to life. The subliminal murmur of the engines lowered in pitch and faded away. Hyung could feel the ship slowing. And most likely sinking.

Over the intercom, a familiar voice abruptly broke the silence.

"Captain! Engineer Lee here. What's going on up there?"

Before the captain could reply, another voice interrupted. It was the voice of the computer.

"Auxiliary power deactivated."

The sub was flooded in darkness once more.

"Life support systems deactivated."

There was an audible hiss as oxygen escaped the bridge.

A wave of panic hit the bridge crew. Men were shouting out their frustrations and groping about in the darkness. Captain Hyung's cybernetic eye immediately switched to low-lite vision. Too shocked to regain command, much less speak, he witnessed his comrades fumble around the dead controls. Voices layered atop one another—

"—can't get helm control—"

"—manual override! Hit the manual—"

"—body give me a damn light over here—"

"—breathe shallow everyone—"

Captain Mitsumoto's cybersight came to rest on the Beacon Release Switch, otherwise known as the dead man's call. He started to crawl his way to it, clinging on to the support rails and hyperventilating. Somewhere outside the sub he could hear a low rumble and a soft hum, followed by a bump that sent standing crewmembers to the floor.

We've touched down on a ledge, he realized.

As he continued on his journey to the switch, he found it harder and harder to breathe, and his ears were filled with the dying gasps of men around him. Enough to make a good captain go mad, he thought to himself.

As he attempted to pull himself up to reach the Beacon Release Switch, the computer's voice made another announcement.

"Warning: the seal on pressure hatch three has been broken. Flooding is imminent. Repeat: flooding is imminent."

Who would be trying to get out of the sub, Hyung asked himself as he gripped the lever and pulled down hard.

Maybe no one is trying to get out, he thought, as he listened to the tiny torpedo jettison and rocket towards the surface.

After that, the captain slid down the wall of the bridge and expelled his last breath.

Wake-up Call

5:56 a.m. Tokyo.

Chief of Security Shintaro Takayama walked in with the nurse to see Saburo Arasaka. He waited quietly as the nurse woke Saburo and gave him his morning medication with juice. After tending to Saburo she promptly exited the room, shutting the paper doors behind her. Saburo drank his juice peacefully without acknowledging Shintaro's presence for a long time. Finally, he spoke.

"What's gone wrong?"

"Why do you assume that something must be wrong for me to be here?"

"Because if you woke me up just to tell me I look nice, I'll have you shot." Saburo grinned slightly

at the comment, to let his security chief know he wasn't serious. The chief grinned traditionally in response.

"Although you do look fine this morning, I have grave news to share with you. At 5:47 this morning, we picked up a distress beacon from one of our transport submarines."

"Which one?"

"The *Eel*, sir."

"Is that the one carrying Project Five?"

"Yes sir."

"Aahhhhh, damn." Saburo's face wrinkled up in frustration. Shintaro stood by and watched him, aware that Saburo was concentrating.

"Any idea as to the nature of the distress?"

"No sir."

"No storms?"

"Storms would not affect a submarine, sir."

"Ah, yes, of course. Hmm. What about that problem with the trench maps? Could they have run into a wall during navigation?"

"Possible, sir, but unlikely. The beacon was received approximately eight minutes after their last net update; barely enough time to descend beneath the trench wall at cruising speed."

"I see. Well then, let's assume the worst. Let's assume that someone now has possession of the sub and Project Five along with it. What other submarines of ours are nearby?"

"The closest one is in drydock, off Hokkaido. It would take three hours to get her outfitted and prepared for—"

"Three hours! You mean we don't have anyone else in the water that could help?"

"No sir."

"Hmm. What about other submersibles in the area?"

"Sir?"

"I mean anyone's submersible, not just ours."

"Ah, one moment." Shintaro turned, bent down and activated the personal console next to Saburo's bed. After a minute of key clicking, the chief of security stood upright and announced his findings.

"One other submarine logged for duty nearby, at 20° north by 150° east. It's a patrol sub with the International Defense Alliance. The *Sentinel*, it says here."

"International Defense Alliance? Tell me about them."

"The IDA is a small pseudo-military organization that hires protection services out to governments and major corporations. I believe it was initially funded by NATO, until the project fell through. The business survived on its own through the cooperation of its members. The project managers sold off pieces of the business to captains and other executive employees of IDA. It has been independent ever since."

"And they are equipped with submarines?"

"Yes sir. They stick mostly to international waters, actually. They leave the 'dirtside' work to the many protection agencies available, including us."

"I see. And their stock is attainable?"

There was a pause, and then some more key clicking.

"Not all of it."

"Shintaro, if my watch is correct, it is 6:11 in the morning. That means the market has been open for eleven minutes. I want to own that company entirely by 6:15. Put it under Sato Commercial Shipping. How soon can you have a retrieval team ready to be dropped off at the *Sentinel*?"

"Ten minutes."

"Then don't waste your time standing here."

BEHIND THE SCENES

About the Squid

The squid creature that attacked the submarine's datafortress is actually a special kind of Demon program designed to carry netrunners instead of other programs—the Trojan Horse of the Net, essentially. It can hold up to four netrunners, along with any programs they might be carrying as well. Unlike other Demons, if the Squid is attacked and loses the fight, the netrunners within it are not killed off along with the Squid; they just get dumped out of the Net. The Squid is written to perform three functions:

1. React to steering and movement from the netrunner at the "helm."
2. Deploy any programs and/or netrunners from within.
3. Grapple and anchor itself to a net system, data fortress, or netrunner.

The strength of the Squid is the sum of its passengers' Interface skills divided by two. The netrunners operating within it suffer a penalty to their initiative equal to the number of passengers, i.e. if there are four netrunners within it, everyone operates at a -4 initiative. If a netrunner within the Squid launches a Demon of his own, the negatives to his initiative are cumulative.

One position within the Squid is helm, two are passengers, and the fourth is tentacle operator, or 'grappler.' The grappler can activate two programs written into the Squid's capabilities: Grapple and Glue. Grapple is just a different version of the Glue program, affecting data walls instead of netrunners.

Now, who was in the Squid, you say?

About the Terrorists

Nasty rumors about Arasaka expanding to near orbit were floating up to ESA. After an intelligence operative confirmed this information, ESA decided to take action. They organized a small terrorist group to

"capture" one of Arasaka's transport submarines, hoping to find more information (or physical evidence) about the progress of their expansion. After a few tricky (and extremely lethal) netruns into the Arasaka datafortresses, submarine routes and schedules were obtained, from which the *Eel* was picked as a prime target.

The terrorists are comprised of two teams. Team One is the Squid, a group of four netrunners operating from a suborbital within ESA's jurisdiction. Team Two is a group of twelve fully-equipped terrorists operating from a large cargo submersible called the *Oasis*, with a smaller, more maneuverable submersible to handle the pirating work, called the *Manta Ray*. A man by the name of Jason Powell is in charge of the group, and he operates with Team Two on the *Oasis*.

In order to disable the submarine from the Net, the terrorists set up a small datafortress within the *Oasis*. Then they equipped a surface vessel with another interlinked system and a trailing, underwater antenna. Team One hooked up with the surface vessel (which was already linked to the Pacifica grid) from the suborbital, and essentially "swam" the net-space to the corresponding coordinates. Thus, when the *Eel* stopped to transmit the new navigational data to Arasaka, its net icon "surfaced" in an already existing regional sub-grid. The squid attacked and infiltrated, using Hammer to crack the *Eel's* data wall, and other various programs to take control of the vessel.

The datafortress aboard the *Oasis* is used for emergencies, or when netrunning becomes difficult from the surface vessel. Team One has the option to disconnect, re-link with the surface ship, and zip down to the *Oasis*, if the need arises.

Back to the Story...

After seizing the *Eel*, the terrorists cleaned out its cargo holds and moved the contents to the storage

areas on the *Oasis*. No prisoners were taken, and the *Eel* was promptly sunk. Operations were hurried after the release of the distress beacon, and a lot of valuable information was left behind because of it.

When the last of the cargo was brought on board, Jason took inventory. There were six crates of assault rifles and submachine guns, a crate of armor-piercing ammunition, another crate full of security equipment, and two metal boxes, locked and sealed. There were no labels on the boxes, and they were cold to the touch. Jason looked over it carefully and said to his crew, "gentlemen, I think we've hit the jackpot."

Being a fairly smart terrorist, he didn't disturb the boxes after that. He needed more information about what he had before he even tried to open them. And that meant waiting for someone to come looking for the *Eel*.

Jason gathered his crew.

"That distress beacon will actually help us more than it will hinder us. If we have something of extreme importance, Arasaka will pull out all the stops just to get down here and investigate. And chances are, someone on board will know what we have. So that means we wait. We wait and see what arrives to find her. If more than one submersible arrives, we back off. But if only one shows, or if one gets here sooner than the others, we make our

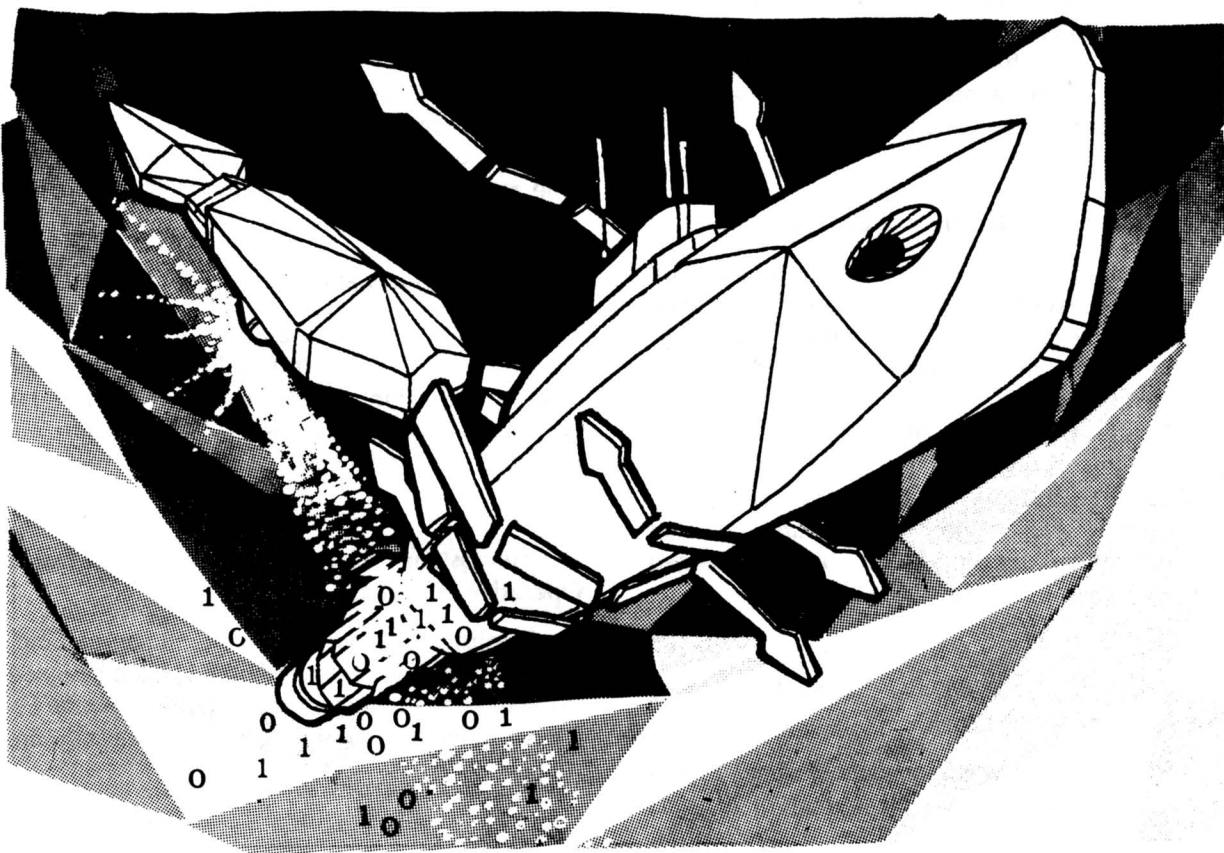
move and disable her. We take her just like we took the *Eel*, except this time, we don't kill everyone."

About Project 5: What Do the Terrorists Have?

Project 5 is a brand new type of chemical explosive that Arasaka has been researching. Still under development, Project 5 is temperature-sensitive and will ignite if placed in a room-temperature environment, causing a phenomenal 10d10 points of damage per kg within a 5m diameter, and dropping 2d10 for every meter beyond that. Because of its danger, the Honshu R&D Division of Arasaka decided to ship it off to the Solomon Islands where a larger, more suitable research environment existed. The Honshu boys were more than happy to get it off their hands.

They did not inform Captain Mitsumoto of this piece of cargo. The boxes were left unmarked, and the Shipping & Receiving Department at the Solomon Islands branch was the only group notified of its destination.

For obvious reasons, if Project 5 were placed in the wrong hands, it could spell disaster for Arasaka (not to mention the rest of the world). There is still a lot of refining to do, but Project 5 has the potential to outsell C6 and many other explosives on the market in 2020.



DROPPING THE PCs INTO THE FRAY

But First, the NPCs

Captain Thomas Crowe of the IDA *Sentinel*:

At 52, Crowe is one of the oldest captains in the Alliance. He's had a lot of valuable combat experience, and he keeps informed as best he can of governments and corporations who expand to submersible transportation. This is not only to know who else is in the water with him, but also to know where to send his resume if the IDA ever falls apart. He keeps a fairly casual command of his crew, often telling a story or cracking a joke. He's not much of a stickler when it comes to submarine regulations, but he does care for the safety and well-being of his crew. He's also not above manual labor when it comes to giving his engineer an extra pair of hands. Because of his casual attitude toward the pseudo-military regulations, it has taken him a long time to rise in rank, so he has hopped around from position to position, earning experience as a helmsman, engineer, weapons officer, and even a cook.

Ellen Murphy, Engineer of the *Sentinel*:

Murphy has been under Crowe's command for a while, and would assume Second in Command if anything were to happen to Capt. Crowe. Because of her long exposure to Crowe's commanding style, she has established a strong friendship with him. She is cynical in nature, and if given the opportunity will gripe about anything. She does this with the captain often, but in a much more friendly manner. At 35, she is Chief Engineer of the *Sentinel*, and after ducking several offers for promotion has remained under Captain Crowe for five years.

"Sidewire," a.k.a. David Lange, Netrunner/ Navigator of the *Sentinel*:

Sidewire is a new edition to the *Sentinel*, as well as the IDA. He is a cocky young man of 22 years

with a dangerous curiosity. One year fresh to the Net, he has yet to encounter a truly lethal program that could throw the first punch, which accounts for his arrogance. He spoils himself with Crowe's attitude toward IDA regulations, and occasionally oversteps his authority.

"Slick," a.k.a. Parker Matheson, Helmsman of the *Sentinel*:

Slick is also a newcomer to the *Sentinel*, but not to the IDA. He has worked with the Alliance for five years as a pilot for various cargo and attack subs. Recently, he was demoted from the *Exeter*, a patrol sub 50 meters larger than the *Sentinel*. She was the flag ship of the IDA, until one morning off the coast of Alaska. Due to an "unknown" computer error, Slick accidentally steered the *Exeter* into an iceberg, damaging the sub beyond repair. At 28, he feels his career is all but over, and continues to pilot submarines for the Alliance only because he has no other marketable skill. Slick keeps quiet most of the time, rarely talking to PCs or other NPCs.

Doc and the cook:

Two minor NPCs. If a PC fits for one of these positions, toss him in. If not, they can always be used as body shields! Obviously the *Sentinel* is operating with a skeleton crew of only six. This will make it easier for the GM to keep track of people.

"Tombstone," a.k.a. Ace Harley, Special Mission Operative, Arasaka:

Tombstone is your classic S.E.A.L. type. Cold, quiet, calculating, and ever-faithful. He is assigned to the mission for the purpose of obliterating the *Eel* if it has fallen into the wrong hands. He is also fire support.

John Smith, Mission Assurance, Arasaka:

Smith is in charge of the recovery team. He is to obtain the samples of Project 5 or make sure they are completely destroyed and useless to anyone. He is barely a step above Tombstone in regard to attitude, and speaks in orders or warnings. His Optishields™ implant makes him that much more ominous and distant.

"Patcher," a.k.a. Luke Simms, Arasaka:

Patcher is the Medtechie thrown into the mission in case there are Arasaka hostages or wounded to tend to. He is much more lively than the rest of the bunch, making puns and sarcastic commentary at the drop of a hat. The recovery team ignores him for the most part. When the action starts rolling, he can often panic quickly and duck from gunfire, yelling, "game over, man!" Not good if you're in need of first aid.

Eek and Meek, Arasaka Red Shirts:

These are two grunts for firepower purposes. If a PC fits the bill for this role, drop him in instead. These soldiers take orders from Tombstone.

Different Ways to Introduce PCs:

1. **Arasaka.** If anyone (especially a solo) has sold out to an unnamed corporation, make it Arasaka, and throw him onto the Rapid Deployment AV bound for the *Sentinel*. If anyone is currently working for Arasaka, all the better.
2. **IDA.** Add a small plot twist by hiring PCs as "security" for the *Sentinel*, due to a small number of subs (one or two) turning AWOL and pursuing piracy in lieu of protection services. This has led to a bad reputation for IDA on the international marketplace. Sales are plummeting and if another sub is "lost," IDA would most likely have to sell their business. (Little does IDA know, it will be purchased by Arasaka anyway!) PCs are there as Contract Assurance Operatives, keeping an eye on Captain Crowe and crew. This would lead to a palpable tension between the PCs and the *Sentinel* crew, as no one likes to be monitored for traitorous inclinations.
3. **IDA, again.** Maybe the PCs are looking to get somewhere across the waters. Maybe they get

assigned to a mission that leads them to the Far East. One of the PCs could have a contact (or receive one) in the Defense Alliance, and an agreement could be made to ship them quietly through international waters. A corporate could owe someone a big favor, and stow them away on board the *Sentinel*. This way the adventure would become one big detour from their original mission.

4. **Replacing NPCs with PCs.** This has both advantages and disadvantages. Obviously, if any PCs directly overlap with NPCs, it would be easier just to let the player characters assume the roles and go from there. But there may be certain skills, items, pieces of cyberware, or information that a particular NPC has which proves to be vital to the party or the adventure. If the PCs don't have what it takes, they'll have to improvise.
5. **Having PCs play NPCs as pre-generated characters.** This is for GMs who would like to run this module as a one-shot adventure, or as a tournament/convention game. It is also suggested that PCs play NPCs if there is a large group of players.
6. **Any combination of the suggestions above.**

Suggested Gear

It would be advisable, if possible, to have one or two characters equipped with an independent air supply or gills, since this is an underwater mission. Pain Editors are also helpful, in the unfortunate event that characters are dumped into the freezing waters of the Pacific. And they are freezing at that depth.

NetSurgeon General's Warning:

This adventure is very, very deadly for netranners. It is recommended that player character netranners are not used. If a player chooses to replace Sidewire as the *Sentinel's* netrunner, he does so at his own risk. This might complicate matters somewhat, and GMs may not want to handle operating a group in both Netspace and Realspace simultaneously. It detracts somewhat from the suspense of the unknown. Obviously, it's a judgement call on the GM's part. But remember, in the Net, no one can hear you scream.

Mission Briefing

Arasaka, 6:20 a.m.

"I've seen the black squad in action. I was working for fixer Big Pockets at the time. Pockets had arranged a meet with some unnamed Arasaka corp, hoping to worm his way into the trickle-down process. When the suit arrived, half a dozen cybersoldiers were with him .

To initiate the meeting, he pulled out a platinum Trauma Team card and cracked it, right there. He looked at us and said, 'if you're lucky, you'll have two minutes before the paramedics get here. You tell me who you're working for and I'll tell you how many limbs you'll need to replace.'"

The Recovery Team is gathered in a matter of minutes into a small but effective conference room at the Arasaka Main Tower in Tokyo. As they are seated, a large screen on one end of the room activates, illustrating the torso of an Asian businessman in a standard black and white suit. He waits until all of the team is seated and quiet, then he addresses them:

"Good morning, gentlemen. Early this morning a transport sub, the *Eel*, was in route to the Solomon Islands with a full cargo hold. Midway through the Bonin Trench, at approximately 22° north by 147° east, we received the distress beacon signal from her vessel. Cause of distress is unknown. Condition of captain and crew are unknown. It is assumed that the ship has either been destroyed or captured. Our priority, however, is not the crew, but the cargo. One part of the cargo, in fact. The *Eel* was transporting an experimental type of chemical explosive that, when exposed to temperatures above 10° Celsius, is highly combustible—equivalent to about 8 kilograms of C-6 per box. There are two boxes. Both are approximately two feet cubed in dimension, titanium, electrically colored blue, with the Arasaka logo on the lid. Each box has a pressure seal

to keep the explosives refrigerated, and a digital lock. You do not need to know the code, as you will not be handling the explosives. If it gets in the wrong hands, it could be devastating. Your mission has three objectives:

- "1. Locate and confirm the condition of the *Eel*.
- "2. Obtain or destroy the samples of the explosives.
- "3. Rescue and treat any surviving crewmembers.

"If the sub has been captured it is up to you to destroy all Arasaka properties. The codewords for the rescue phase will be Five One. Five Two will be known as the cleanse and burn phase. We trust you all to make reasonable decisions in regard to the lives of the crew.

"There is a complication which will hinder navigation in the trench. Recent trench-floor mining operations have unsettled the base of the walls, so any contour maps of the Bonin Trench will be outdated and unreliable.

"Mister Smith, you have command. Tombstone, you will be Second in Command. Oh, and there is one other complication. You will not be dispatched onto an Arasaka submarine. None of our vessels are near the area. Instead, you will be picked up by the *Sentinel*; a patrol sub with the International Defense Alliance. The IDA is a brand new subsidiary of Sato Commercial Shipping, and the captain and crew may object to your presence.

"They are expendable.

"That is all, gentlemen. An AV is waiting for you on the roof. Good luck."

The screen will black out immediately thereafter. Any players who didn't listen to all of the instructions, or didn't take notes, or have questions to ask, are out of luck. The characters will be rushed to the AV by personnel who know nothing of their mission.

International Defense Alliance, on board the Sentinel, 6:24 a.m.

Sidewire reports an incoming message via Netcom for all personnel. After the crew musters on the bridge, Crowe orders Sidewire to patch in.

An elderly, balding man appears on the main screen, sitting behind a large desk in what appears to be a larger office. There are family photos on the wall behind him, along with older photos of a man in uniform standing next to an aircraft carrier in dry-dock.

"Ah, Thomas, you old fish, how are you? Gained a few pounds, I see."

Captain Crowe grins. "Ah, Sigmund. Lost a little hair, I see."

"Yes, well, the wife says it looks handsome. I have some interesting news."

"Do tell, Sigmund. What words of wisdom does the great CEO have to bestow upon us lowly captains today?"

"You won't like it. We've been 'purchased.' Just after the stock market opened up over in Tokyo, our stock was snatched up faster than Silverhand tickets. I got the wake-up call at 6:18 this morning with the news."

"And the buyer?"

"Arasaka. Well, actually a subsidiary of the boys in black. Sato. I believe you know of them. Anyway, you just happened to be in the right place at the right time, my friend. I figured that the only reason they wanted us that bad was because something happened, and they lack the sub power to solve the problem. Well, of course I was right. In a little under twenty minutes, a team of Arasaka Special Operatives will be jumping out of an AV just north of your location. You are to surface, pick them up, and await further orders once they have pressurized. Now, I know this is like dippin' you in motor oil and letting

the cyberhounds loose, but let me tell you; I wouldn't piss these guys off. Especially since they're Special Ops. You cross these guys, you'll wind up with a tag on your toe, if you catch my drift. So be nice."

"I am still in charge of the sub, aren't I? I mean, I'm not going to have to take orders from some trigger-happy drugged-up black-clad cyberpsychotic who doesn't know the first thing about submarines, am I?"

"Now, now, Thomas, I can't call the shots here. A mister John Smith is in charge, and he can answer your questions when he gets there, okay?"

"John Smith? Give me a break! I'm not stepping down just to—"

"Good luck, gang. I'm pulling for you. HQ out."

And at that, the screen goes black.

"Well, Big Pockets obviously answered incorrectly, because everyone got caught in an automatic downpour. My real arm took two nines from a jack's SMG. Luckily, my pair of tens beat his nines. How'd I get out? I had a Meatwagon card, my friend. Don't leave the warehouse without it."

—Tiger Tanaka

NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

Clash of the Authorities

The first thing to do with the Arasaka team is make an HPNS check. There is a 5% chance that characters will develop High Pressure Nervous Syndrome due to rapid pressurization. The eventual effects of this will be similar to cyberpsychosis, causing the affected character to overreact to any emotional situation. This can be very entertaining (and potentially dangerous) if you have players who roleplay well. Make the rolls on your own, and take any affected individuals aside and inform them privately.

After the Arasaka operatives pressurize, they will unload their equipment in the cargo hold and gather on the bridge. Smith will give the coordinates of the beacon and issue a search for the *Eel* from there. The amount of information released to PCs outside the Recovery Team is completely up to PCs within the team. If no one is playing a character on the team, then it is up to the GM to give out information.

A handful of things that Crowe might say:

"Where are we going?"

"What are we looking for?"

"Why all the guns? We're equipped with torpedoes."

"What's he doing over there?"

"Who do you think you are?"

"When it comes to the safety of my crew, I'm in command, got it?"

Of course, if a PC is replacing Crowe it's up to the player. Obviously some information will have to be shared to conduct a proper search. It may not be the truth, but then, when has Arasaka ever been completely honest? Also: note that all IDA crewmembers have a Passcard to access their quarters and the bridge. An Arasaka team member may wish to take one from a crewmember (there are no

extras) for personal use, or the Passcard Security System may be manually disengaged (a Difficult Elect. Security Test) to allow full accessibility within the submarine by both parties. The crew of the *Sentinel* will presumably raise a stink over this regulation violation.

Combing the Trench

As the *Sentinel* descends into the trench and the players start searching for the *Eel*, the outdated contour maps begin to differ from the active sonar echoes (which are channelled through the navigations console). If the Arasaka team mentioned this problem, the new echoes won't be a surprise. But if they neglected to mention the mining troubles, the *Sentinel* could be on a direct course with an unidentified outcropping.

If **Sidewire is aware of the situation**, proceed with the search as normal. Sidewire will need to make a handful of Difficult Interface tests to transfer the new sonar echoes into manageable dimensions for the helmsman, Slick. Slick will then have to make Difficult Piloting tests in order to avoid contact with the walls. Every point over the Interface target number can be added to the helmsman's roll for piloting.

Example: Sidewire needs a 20 (Difficult) to process the information fast enough for the helm to react. He has an INT of 8, with an Interface of 7, and rolls a 6. The total is 21, which is one over the target number. Now, as Slick gets the information, he adds his REF of 10, his Pilot: submersible of 8, and 1 bonus point from Sidewire's roll. He rolls a 3, totalling 22. He made his target number (20; Difficult) with no problem.

Of course, this rule also applies when Sidewire really biffs it. If the first roll totals 18, then Slick must subtract two from his roll. And if Sidewire ever rolls a 1, and accidentally feeds Slick the wrong information, Slick must make an Impossible Piloting test to avoid a nasty collision. Time to burn that luck!

How Badly Did They Biff It?

- 01-25 Minor flooding. Roll once on Flooding Chart.
- 21-50 Mediocre flooding. Roll twice on Flooding Chart.
- 51-55 Periscope inoperable.
- 56-80 Engine Room malfunction. Engines lost. Repairs will take 2d10 minutes.
- 61-65 Sonar & Towed Array lost. Minor flooding (roll once on chart).
- 66-70 Radio communications lost. Minor flooding (roll once).
- 71-75 Helm control lost. Sub won't steer. Minor flooding (roll once).
- 76-80 Main power lost, mediocre flooding (roll twice). Auxillary will kick in.
- 81-85 Life support systems damaged, minor flooding. Repairs will take 1d10 minutes.
- 86-90 Auxillary power lost, mediocre flooding. Repairs will take 3d10 minutes.
- 91-95 Major flooding. Roll four times on chart. Flooding rate is halved.
- 96-00 Hull breach in ballistic missile silo; radiation and water flood silo main level. Rate is halved.

If Sidewire is unaware of the situation, then he will just download the Contour Map Archive: BNN TRNCH files into Slick's console and kick back. Shortly thereafter, proximity alerts will sound, and Slick will have to make a Very Difficult Piloting test to avoid a collision.

If the navigator is a PC, and unaware of the situation, the lucky individual will be handed two maps (provided): one for a section of the outdated trench walls, and one for the modified walls. The outdated map is entitled CM ARCHIVE and the new one is entitled ECHO MAP. Be casual and quiet about it when the maps are handed over to the navigator. Let that person make the realization that something is amiss. If they stay confused for too long, sound the proximity alerts and have the helmsman make a Very Difficult Piloting test.

HELPFUL TIP: It is a good idea to photocopy the ECHO MAP onto a transparency, so that it can be used as an overlay to the corresponding CM ARCHIVE map.

If all goes well after that, then refer to the paragraph discussing what to do when the navigator is aware of the situation. If not...

Crash Positions, Please!

In the frightening event that the *Sentinel* collides with a wall, shake your head solemnly and consult the handy-dandy collision chart (above).

If the players are careful enough, this chart will never be used.

If the bridge hasn't been flooded, characters can seal the rooms remotely. However, if the bridge has

Flooding Chart

1-4: Bottom Level 5-8: Third Level 9-10: Second Level

Level	No. of Turns Before Room Is Completely Flooded (if sealed)	No. of Turns Before Level is Completely Flooded
Bottom Level		
1: Forward Torpedo Bay	8	48
2-4: Crewman's Quarters (pick one)	4	48
5-8: Silo Compartment: Main Level	24	48
9: Engine Room	6	48
10: Aft Torpedo Bay	6	48
Third Level		
1: Mess Hall/Dining Room	6	48
2: Kitchen	4	48
3: Medical Bay	4	48
4: Showers	4	48
5: Captain's Quarters	4	48
6-9: Silo Compartment: Maint. Level	20*	48
10: Cargo Hold	6	48
Second Level		
1-3: Hatchway	2	8
4-10: Bridge	6	8

**Note: If the Maintenance Level of the Silo Compartment is breached, it will begin flooding the Main Level room first, as this is a two-level room. Once the Main Level has been completely flooded, refer to the number next to the Maintenance Level of the Silo Compartment for flooding rates.*

taken on water, the sealant console is inoperable (1d10 minutes to fix) and the players will have to "hoof it" to seal off any potentially dangerous floods. Sealing a door manually just takes a spin of the wheel and a yank of the hatch lever (1 turn).

If any characters manage to get caught in a sealed-off section that floods completely, they will have their BODY in minutes to attempt an escape before they drown. This is assuming that they lack gills or another form of life support. They can always try to manually open a sealed hatch. Sealed hatches require a Difficult Strength Feat test to open, and characters must make a COOL test every turn to be able to concentrate, or suffer a -4 to their roll.

If characters are rescued after drowning, the formula to find the target number for First Aid is as follows:

Very Difficult + (Number of Turns After Drowning)

Example: Slick is pulled out of a flooded hatchway 3 turns after drowning. The rescuers race to the next hatchway and seal off the flood before they get caught as well, losing 3 more turns. Immediately someone performs First Aid. His/her target number is 25 (Very Difficult) + 6 (No. of turns), which adds up to 31. An Impossible test.

Back to the Hunt

The party can search for the *Eel* all night, but they won't find it. What they will find (rather quickly), is the Squid.

Through the *Sentinel's* detection array, Sidewire has the capability to "see" things in the Net, similar to Net-Vision™ (*ChromeBook 2*, p. 24). Eventually, Sidewire will notice the Squid swimming through

Wilderspace nearby. It will pique his interests enough to go on-line and "surface" on the subgrid for a better look. He may mention the Squid to the crew, but, then again, he may think nothing of it. After all, he believes he can handle anything on two electrodes.




















Immediately the Squid will attack and flatline him. Shortly thereafter, it will attach itself to the *Sentinel's* system, its occupants will invade the remote modules, and the power will be cut. If it was being monitored, the crew will have a bit more of a warning before they start to lose control of the sub.

If the navigator is a PC (and here's where it gets bad), inform him/her that a virtual reality program of a squid is swimming around in Netspace. Once again, be casual, and mention that this type of program could have easily wandered off from some virtual water-verse. Precautions might be taken, but eventually the navigator must go online to do any kind of investigation. That's when the Squid will strike.

The primary objective of Team One is to gain control of the *Sentinel's* remotes before the system is taken offline and disappears. They will do whatever it takes.

As soon as Team One gains access to the remotes, the *Manta Ray* will make its move and sprint toward the *Sentinel*. Team One will gently set her down on an accessible ledge nearby, where the *Manta Ray* will connect with the pressure door and wait for Team One to unlock it. Meanwhile, inside the *Sentinel*...



	A	B	C	D	E
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

SENTINEL Data Fortress

No. of CPU: 3
 INT 9 + 10 Interface
 Data Walls: +5
 Non-AI; data fortress appears as a mini-sub, the same color as background wilderspace.

GRID KEY

- 2B: Terminals: navigation, captain, engineer
- 2C: Video monitors wired to cameras; main screen for teleconferencing
- 2D: Sonar and intercom system
- 3B: LDL to IDA's communication center
- 3D: Ship's log, navigational data
- 5B: Hull Breach Alarm; other alarms
- 6D: *Firestarter*
- 7B: Cameras, internal and external
- 8C: *Knockout*
- 9B: Captain's Log (confidential)
- 10B: Life support system manipulator (oxygen allocation, pressure control)
- 10C: Power allocation manipulator
- 10D: Hatches, bulkheads, and pressure doors

Anyone Got a Light?

Make a few announcements with a friendly computer voice:

"Main Power deactivated."

Throw everyone into darkness. Let them sweat for a second, then let auxiliary power kick in and illuminate the group in a yellow glow.

"Auxiliary Power deactivated."

Back to darkness. Time to see who can see without light. Crewmembers will be frantically attempting to regain control of the sub. Manual override is possible, but time consuming. Efforts can be thwarted easily by a computer voice stating the task is impossible, whether it is or not. Characters have a few rounds to decide on a course of action before the *Manta Ray* docks with the *Sentinel*, at which time everyone who makes an Average hearing awareness check will hear the clang of metal outside the

hull. If any crewmember of the *Sentinel* makes it, they can identify it as another submersible docking with their own sub. If not, then let the players draw their own conclusions. There will be a race for weapons, presumably.

Enter the Bad Guys, Stage Right

Team Two enters the sub, splits into three groups of four, and begins a methodical search for prisoners. Team One drops the life support level aboard the *Sentinel* to hinder their opponents' strength. Team Two is fully armed, armored, and fitted with oxygen masks. When the group encounters one or more PC, they will order them to drop any weapons and hold their hands high. If combat ensues, make an example of an NPC to illustrate both the firepower and the armor of the terrorists. If combat continues, have another group arrive to sway the odds a bit.

If you have PCs that are just downright stubborn, either have them make an INT check to realize they are outgunned and outnumbered, or kill them. It's the Cyberpunk way!

In the minute chance that the PCs kill off the terrorists, there is still much to be done. Team One would instantly flood accessible portions of the *Sentinel* and disconnect life support. The irregular floodings would cause the sub to tip over and descend toward the canyon floor at a tummy-wrenching velocity. The PCs would have to board the *Manta Ray*, detach themselves from the *Sentinel*, and pull out of the trench before they reached a dangerous depth. From there they would have to locate the *Oasis*, board it, and either retrieve the stolen goods or destroy them. At any rate, this course of action is highly improbable if the terrorists show a decent amount of teamwork.

"I witnessed a terrorist hit once. I was next door when the West Plaza Tower was sieged. One group entered from the roof while the other made a drive-by shooting along the top floor. It went downhill and downstairs from there."

—The Pedestrian

Once the firefight is over and the remaining passengers are rounded up, they will be searched for any concealed weapons and escorted into the *Manta Ray*. One of the terrorists (Jason Powell) will contact Team One and tell them to keep the *Sentinel* operational in case a second trip is necessary. Anyone who makes a Difficult awareness check (hearing) will overhear the transmission. A large amount of insulation along the walls and ceiling is easily noticeable. If anyone puts two and two together, they will realize that this is to dampen the *Manta Ray's* heat signature from satellite observation. The terrorists will keep the survivors at gunpoint until they reach the *Oasis*, where they will be escorted to a barred holding facility (labelled as #2 on floor-plan), and imprisoned in small groups. (Hint: this is a good time to put the PCs in one group, plus maybe an NPC or two, and

everyone else in another cell. That is, unless most of the NPCs didn't survive the initial encounter.)

A Better Look at the Terrorists

Jason Powell, Leader:

Jason originally worked as a Corporate Intelligence Operative for EBM. He transferred to

ESA in 2015 after a nasty lawsuit against the Intelligence division of EBM. Since his experience was invaluable, he was a hot item to ESA, and they covered his tracks out of the corporate scandal. He was placed in a similar career with ESA for a few years, until he was promoted to Special Projects Manager in 2018.

Jason is a tough man with few morals and little regard for life. His time as an intelligence operative for the megacorporations has destroyed any optimism he might have had in his childhood.

Smitty, Torture Tactician:

Smitty is Jason's information extraction operative. He will assist with any interrogation to influence the characters, and eventually force them to talk. Smitty is a muscular Asian man who has lost most of his nerve endings due to extended use of an experimental type of Pain Editor. Since he can't feel much, he enjoys watching other people feel. And scream. And bleed. A perfect right-hand man for Jason.

Brennon Collier, Second in Command:

Collier is probably the most sane of the bunch, keeping the rest of the goons in line. Aside from extensive military training, Collier has also had several years of psychology, which he uses to calm the borderline cyberpsychos with whom he is often assigned. Because of that, and the fact that his mind is not as tainted as the other terrorists, he is more apt to talk than shoot. The mission always has priority, but if unusual circumstances arise, he might assist the PCs to save lives.

The Wild Boys:

The rest of the group is mainly goons with guns. It's up to the GM to individually characterize these terrorists and give them life. All of them have extensive military and guerilla warfare training, and a few would most likely go over the edge just by chipping into a SegAtari Game Pack. It's always good to throw in a personality that the players can associate with, even if he's on the other side. It can lighten the game a bit.

Note to the GM: if you have a lot of players who decide to play their own characters, and you end up with fifteen or more characters total (including the NPCs), boost the number of terrorists up to eighteen or twenty. The terrorists should always outnumber the characters aboard the sub.

DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH

Doin' Time

All weapons will be confiscated from the characters. Cyberweapons, however, may have a chance of slipping by (unless they were used in combat). Make a Difficult awareness check for the terrorists, one per concealed weapon, to see if they go unnoticed. If a pop-up gun is identified, the gun will be unloaded manually (by three or four goons, so no one gets any smart ideas) and the character will be stripped of all ammunition. Other cyberweapons will be dealt with accordingly, using tactics and equipment similar to those with airport security teams. Two armed guards will be posted at the cell, facing the prisoners, standing next to the machine port that operates the barred door.

After getting dumped into the cell (Walls: SP 40, Bars: SP 60), Jason, with an escort of fully armed solos, will take one person at a time and move them to the interrogation chamber.

Keepin' Cool

It's Resist Torture/Drugs time! A great tactic the GM can do is to take players out, one at a time, and question them separately. Those who make their rolls (at Difficult—these are terrorists we're talking about here) can keep their cool. Those who fail their rolls will spill their guts, even if they don't know about Project 5! You'll know all about that jewelry store heist back in their childhood. Make the players wonder what the other characters have said (or not said, as the case may be) to Jason about Project 5. A sample of the things Jason would say to the PCs:

"Your friends have already briefed me on the subject, so I'm just curious as to what trivial information you might have to add."

"Tell me more."

"Smitty, bring me the salt."

"What was this about Project 5?"

"Enough about the jewelry store. Tell me about Arasaka, and their space development plans."

"That's it. Kill him."

Blood, Sweat, and Tears in the Cell

Now would be a perfect time for any characters with HPNS to make a COOL check at -4. If it's failed, chaos will reign within the 8' by 14' metal room. If the roll is made, other characters will notice a remarkable amount of shaking from the affected character. If the HPNS character has already been questioned, other players might start to wonder what kind of drugs are being fed to the characters! Any *Sentinel* crewmember who happens to be with the PCs in the cell may make an Average INT roll to determine the cause of the shaking (or the chaos, as the case may be).

Once everyone has been questioned, Jason will reappear to taunt them, and to inform them that he has decided to "test" the explosives by sinking the *Sentinel* with them. He won't fully realize or believe their sensitivity to temperature at the time. If he was not informed of the experiment at all, he will get impatient and order the boxes to be opened. Either way, he'll get a nasty surprise.

Whoops!

A large boom will carry through the halls, originating from the other side of the *Oasis*. The two posted guards will jump nervously, look down the hall toward the direction of the explosion, and then turn and run the other way, screaming. Characters will soon recognize the sound of flooding as water rushes down the hall in pursuit. Unfortunately, the icy water will also flood the cell. Time to think fast!

Characters have 2D10 rounds before the cell is completely flooded with water. (Reroll of the result is 2 or 3.) There are a few ways out of the situation:

"There's nothing worse than being trapped in a confining submersible with a claustrophobic cyberpsycho.

"Well, I suppose if there were two cyberpsychos..."

—Spirit

The MacGyver Plan. This is for really crafty characters who have the right skills to complement their ideas. Two prerequisites would be Weaponsmith and Resources. Necessary equipment: a pop-up gun (preferably shotgun), two low-impedance interface cables, a lipstick case, and a unilink or machine tech link. The character with the pop-up gun could use it to fire two low impedance cables (tied end-to-end) at the machine port and pray that he hits. The problem is he needs something to hold the interface end of the cable straight, so that when its fired it will connect with the port properly. To do this he needs an empty casing. If he managed to sneak a shotgun round into the cell, he could just

empty the round into the wall and hope to catch the shell before it gets carried away in the flood. The problem is, the shell would fit too snugly to sneak the cable through. He needs something just a little bit smaller. Any corporate in the area could make a Resources roll to recall that Luger Munitions bought out a portion of Revlon after benchmarking them to figure out how they made their lipstick cases so shiny. To reduce manufacturing costs, they developed the Virginia Slimliner lipstick cases, which match 12mm shells almost exactly. There is just enough room to feed the low-impedance wire through. The solo would need to make a Weaponsmith test (Difficult) to ensure an accurate shot. Finally, he'd need to fire the thing like a dart, and pray that it connects with the port outlet. From there, someone with the proper link could access the door remote and free them.

Another way would be to construct some sort of slingshot, weigh one end of the interface cables down with magnetic strips, and shoot it at the outlet. If a connection is made, the door can be opened. Where could you get magnetic strips? If a corp character is locked in the cell as well, he could make an INT check to remember that his business card holder uses small magnetic strips to hold his cards. There are a number of inventive ways to get the cable to the port.

The Brute Force Plan. This is for power punkers who have invested tons of money and humanity to get an outrageous strength. Now that the guards

have been swept away, the muscle men can attempt to bend the steel bars and escape. Time to roll that Difficult Strength Feat check! Bending the bars successfully would take 1D6 rounds. Failing takes 1 round. The test can always be taken again if the muscle fails to bend them the first time. Just keep track of the rounds, and remember to describe the level of the water every round.

The Quick and Dirty Plan. This is in case you rolled incredibly low for flooding and little time is available, or if your PCs don't match either of the types listed above. The explosion could have caused a power surge that deactivated the bars. It would take approximately 4 rounds, divided by the number of people helping, to lift the door successfully.

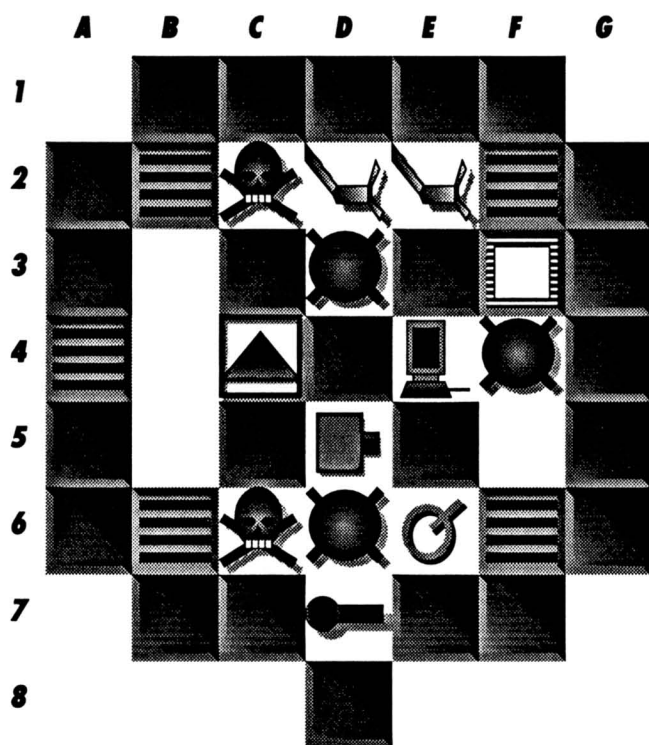
Runaway! Runaway!

Upon entering the hallway, characters are carried away by the flood. People who can't swim are in serious trouble. For every new chamber the PCs enter, they have 1D10 rounds before the emergency bulkheads start to close. It takes two rounds for the doors to close. The doors close with an initiative of fifteen (15). Time to check that MA! The flooding seawater will either add two (+2) to everyone's MA or subtract four (-4) from it, depending on the direction they are going. Regardless, all characters have to make a Difficult Reflex check to keep from losing their grip and getting washed away. Those who fail the first roll can always attempt subsequent rolls, at -3 per test. During that time, they will be carried 1D6+2 spaces with the water per round. Map out the relevant areas of the *Oasis*, with as few or as many spaces as you'd like, using the floorplan provided as a template, or start with the grid map of the cells (also provided).

It is up to the players to find a secure place aboard the *Oasis* that isn't completely flooded out. Even then, there's a chance of several things:

1. One or more terrorists are also in the same room.
2. The room has one or more smaller leaks, slowly flooding the area.
3. The room is short on oxygen—maybe ten or fifteen minutes.
4. The room is on fire due to the initial explosion.
5. One or more terrorists are carried by the flood to one of the sealed doors, and start banging and screaming to be let in.

OASIS Data Fortress



No. of CPU: 3
 INT 9 + 10 Interface
 Data Walls: +6
 Non-AI; data fortress resembles a giant shark

GRID KEY

- 2C: *Hellbolt*
- 2D: Main power distribution manipulator
- 2E: Auxiliary power distribution manipulator
- 3F: Mission Status Report, stolen Arasaka files
- 4C: ESA direct link
- 4E: Computer room terminals, hooked to cameras
- 5D: Security cameras in halls, interrogation room
- 6C: *Zombie*
- 6E: Internal alarms
- 7D: Sonar detection system; radio link-up with suits

The best place to dump the drenched survivors is Moonpool Two. This would give them direct access to the ocean. And they are going to need it. However, the back wetsuit room has a 75% chance of being flooded due to one or more terrorists attempting to gain access, but failing to suit up in time. Specifics on the condition of the surviving terrorists, the wetsuits, and other various chambers are left to the GM.

O₂, O₂, Who's got the O₂?

Sooner or later, the characters will need to escape the *Oasis*. Either they will run low on oxygen, or the room will slowly start to flood, or something will happen to get them moving. If they wind up in an area that has no oxygen tanks, then it will be time for people to raise their hands if they have an independent air supply or gills. A method of escape will need to be established. So where could they go?

1. **The Manta Ray?** Nope. It imploded and flooded after the explosion in Moonpool One.
2. **The *Eel*** Long gone. Resting somewhere on the bottom of the Bonin Trench.
3. **A Life Hutch from the *Oasis*?** Well, there's a good chance that the PCs don't know the *Oasis* has a Life Hutch to begin with, and

even if they find it, there is a good chance that it's either flooded or occupied. If they get there too late, it may be gone entirely.

4. **The *Sentinel*?** Bingo. The problem with the *Sentinel* is that the PCs don't know precisely where it's located. There are a few ways to establish its location, if the players think about it. Someone could dare to enter the data fortress of the *Oasis* via any number of ports, move out beyond it and locate the sub's system from there. That's a risky option, though, especially with no netranner. The easiest way to locate it would be with Tombstone's signal locator, tracking the small signal beacon that he left with his stuff aboard the *Sentinel*. If Tombstone didn't make it this far, and no other method of location is invented, then the trench will have to be searched. And that will take time they might not have.

Remember, the characters won't know for certain what options are and are not available. Time might be wasted swimming to the Manta Ray to see if it's operational. Keep track of the time, and remind the characters waiting that they are slowly running out of air. They could be flooded as well, which means people will need to make Endurance, Swimming, and COOL tests to keep afloat and alive.

Close Relations

If you notice, Tombstone has no gills, nor does he have an independent air supply. That means that someone with independent air (like Murphy) will have to share their oxygen with him as they swim toward the *Sentinel*. Time to pucker up! This could be a touchy situation—literally. Here are a few things that might be said to ease the tension of the moment and lighten up the game.

"Slip her the tongue, Ace!"

"Don't get too romantic on the way there!"

"Watch those hands, buddy."

"I don't think they briefed us on this."

If the group has to go searching for the submarine, two characters may still need to share oxygen. Someone may run out along the way, or they may need to bring a particular character with them to get the submarine operational (like Slick).

Problems with the Trip

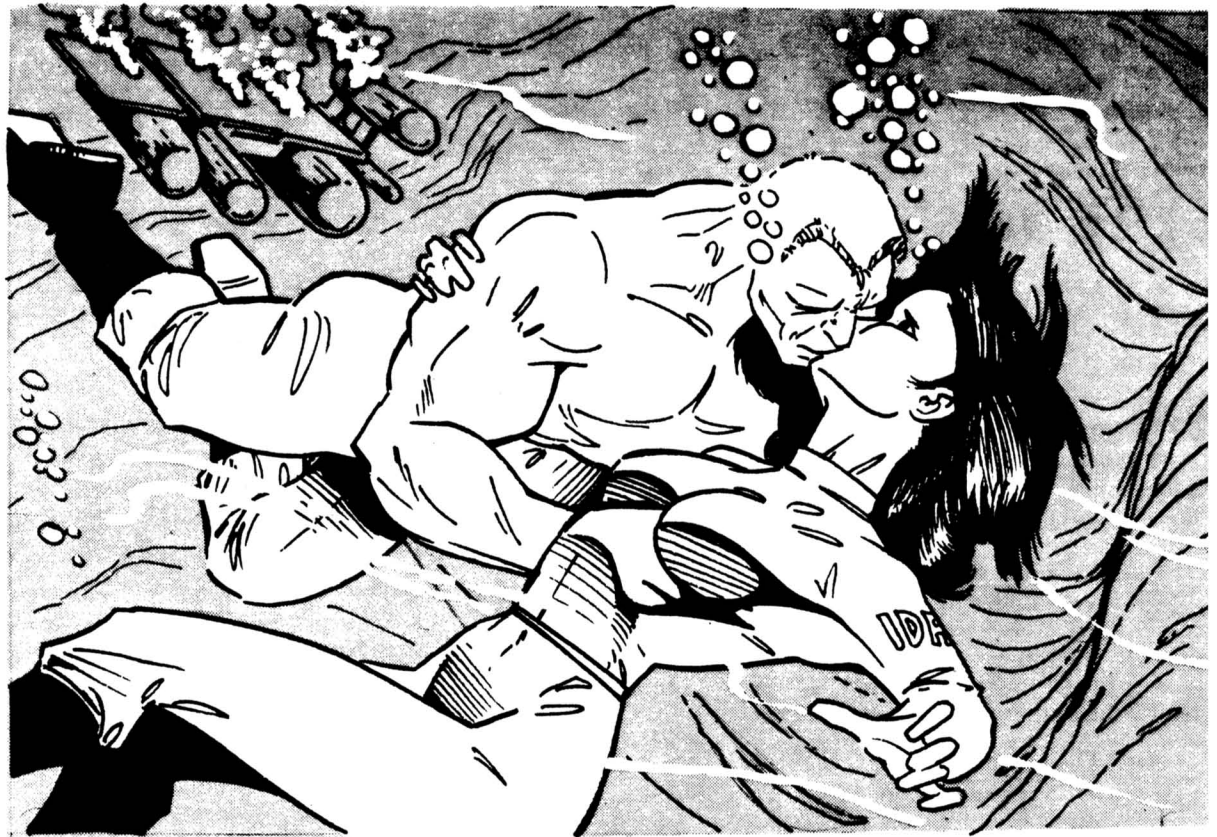
Several tests will have to be made for those who are venturing out into the freezing waters. Here are a few tests the GM might have players make:

1. **Swimming: Average.** 'Nuff said. They may need to make it two or three times, depending on the circumstances.

2. **COOL: Difficult.** This is to keep one's cool while swimming in ice-cold seawater. Failing this roll would cause the character to panic and attempt to turn back. Anyone with a Pain Editor gets a +3 advantage to this test.
3. **Endurance: Difficult.** This is to keep from developing hypothermia. Failing this roll would cause the character to hyperventilate, convulse, and most likely drown before reaching the *Sentinel*. This is bad.
4. **First Aid: Difficult.** In the event that someone develops hypothermia or is drastically affected by the water, another character could attempt First Aid to keep them alive and breathing. A swimming check is necessary for both characters afterward.

But What About External Oxygen Tanks?

If someone thinks to look for oxygen tanks stored outside the *Oasis*, they're in luck. There will be 1D6 operational air tanks outside, holding 30 minutes worth of air each. These tanks could perform a variety of tasks, including an obvious air source for characters, or a propellant for those travelling to the *Sentinel*.



INVISIBLE ENEMY

Back In the Sub

Once the group is rounded up and aboard the *Sentinel*, they will need to determine a course of action, assign the proper personnel, and get moving. Here is the problem: Team One kept the *Sentinel's* system linked up with their surface vessel, in case the order was given to sink her just like the *Eel*. Therefore, if the submarine starts moving, it will become a target for the Squid again. After the explosion aboard the *Oasis* was registered via satellite, the netranners of Team One were unable to gain access to its datafortress (due to flooding in the computer room). Team One was then given new orders from ESA Intelligence: make sure there are no survivors. If the Life Hutch was used to escape, whether by terrorists or player characters, those individuals would be safe from Team One temporarily, until they were retrieved by a vessel with Net capability. The Squid would attack the vessel at that time.

The *Sentinel* is still subject to control by Team One via the Squid. Shortly after the group departs from the wrecked *Oasis*, Team One takes control of the helm and veers the *Sentinel* into the trench, where it dives straight for the seabed. Of course, the sub will implode before reaching the bottom due to the extreme pressure. That is, unless the players wise up real fast. What could they do without killing themselves in the Net?

1. **EMP grenade, anyone?** Although this item is severely illegal, especially on a submarine, one of the PCs might have stashed one or two away. Although it would cut off power completely, it would certainly kick out the netranners on Team One. The techie could Jury Rig the controls to manually blow all tanks, and enough repairs (or damage) could be done while the Squid is locked out to operate the *Sentinel* completely manually. Sonar and many other electronics would be lost with this option, but the nasty old Squid wouldn't bother the nice little player characters again.

2. **Go to the source.** Being a military-grade submarine, the *Sentinel* is equipped with vertical-launch missiles that travel at phenomenal speeds. If the source of Team One's signals were obtained (through a Jury Rig roll and a Net monitor, perhaps), a missile could be manually launched to hit the surface vessel from which the netranners are linked. Boom! No more Squid. Power is restored to the user. The little happy face appears in the center of the monitor, and all systems are go. However...

ESA would declare war faster than you could say "obeying orders." The mission might be a success, but ultimately the IDA would get screwed. To prevent any of the blame from being shifted to Arasaka, IDA would be sold quickly and quietly to any hand that grabbed for it. This could make for future problems with the characters, if the GM so desires.

3. **Just pull the plug.** If a techie isn't in the house, then there's always the tried and true method: break the fraggin' thing. Eventually, if enough wires are pulled, and enough systems are taken off-line, the Squid will be rendered helpless. The PCs can do their best to get the manual override to work and blow the tanks, or they can attempt another method of escape.

Are your players still keeping their cool? Tense things up by activating a monitor during their descent into the Bonin Trench. Have a digital clock appear and begin to countdown. This represents the time they have before the sub sinks deep enough to implode from pressure. If they think to use a missile and destroy the surface vessel, time it very, very closely. If they just start yanking out the wiring, continue the countdown until they yank the last few wires. Make it close. Make them glad to be alive.

The Bad Guy That Wouldn't Quit

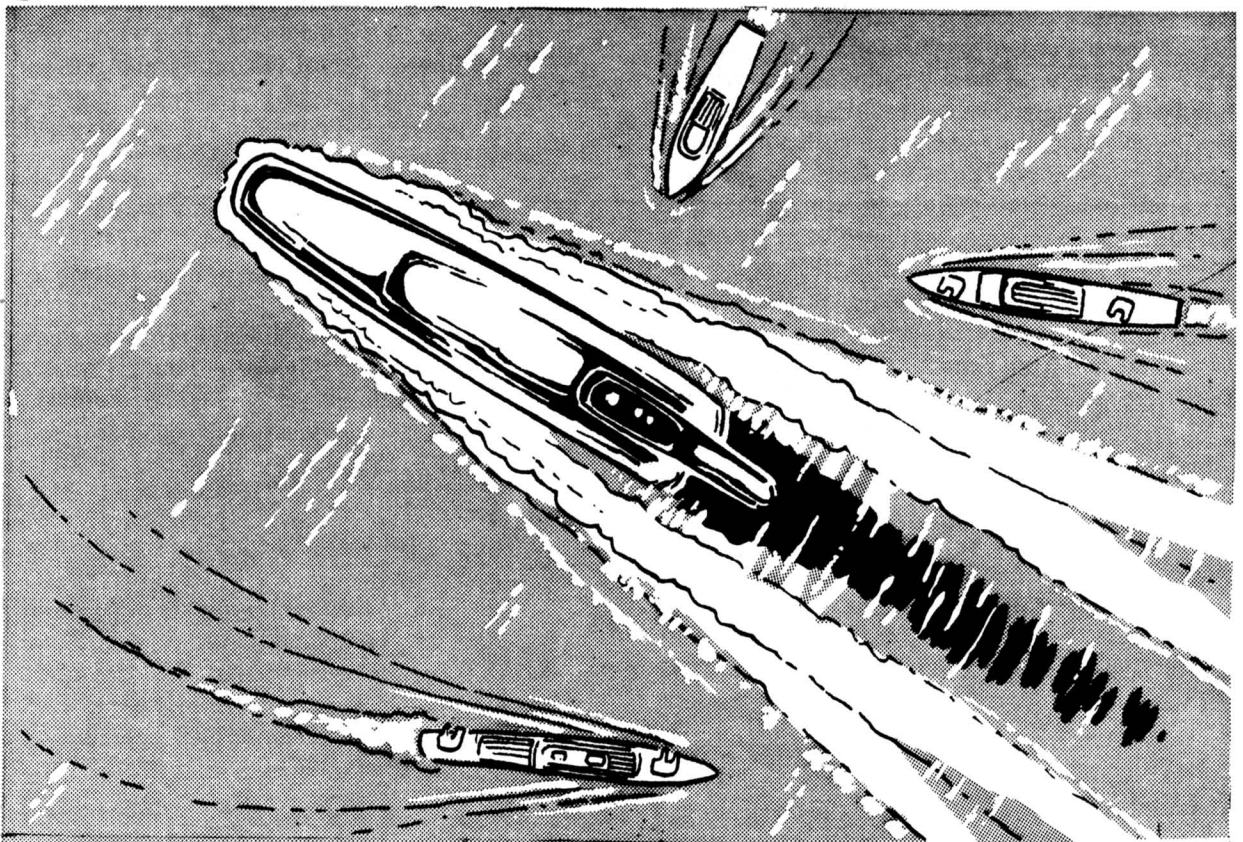
Still interested in dropping more trouble into their laps? If you notice, both Jason Powell and Brennon Collier have underwater breathing apparatuses of some sort. They may have attempted to reach the *Sentinel* as well when the *Oasis* imploded. In which case, things could be winding down at this point in the game when suddenly BLAM! — someone gets shot and it's initiative time. Or the player characters could stumble on to Jason and/or Brennon hiding out in the sub and rough them up a bit. Call it redemption for all those Resist Torture & Drugs rolls previously. If the terrorists are discovered or defeated and the characters keep them alive, Arasaka will be greatly appreciative, especially if an ESA surface vessel was vaporized.

Also, if both Brennon and Jason stow away on the *Sentinel*, and combat ensues between the two of them and the PCs, Brennon might think twice about resisting and kill Jason to save his own hide. If so, Brennon could use his superior intellect to tell the characters whatever story he liked...

"It's alright, gentlemen. He's dead. Don't shoot, I'm an Arasaka Sleeper."

"Calm down, I'm with British Intelligence! Gee, it's about time you showed up."

"I give, I give! I am unarmed..." (holding an EMP grenade)



EPILOGUE

Surviving the Mission

After the wounded *Sentinel* surfaces, a dozen small Arasaka surface ships surround the submarine to protect it from possible enemies. The end of the mission depends greatly upon the actions and decisions of the characters during the adventure. It is up to the GM to decide an appropriate completion point. Remember to keep a few things in mind when the characters reach the surface. First of all, if anyone is silly enough to open a hatch and look outside, the pressure change will kill them in a heartbeat, as well as anyone else in the chamber. Second of all, Arasaka may decide to kill everyone off after discovering that the explosives were not recovered. It depends on how ruthlessly Arasaka is run in your campaign. Thirdly, the group inside the sub may be totally 'blind' to their surroundings if they unplugged all of their sonar capabilities and the periscope was damaged at some point in time. If so, they won't know who is surrounding them until communications are established.

This is also a perfect time for internal security personnel and surviving Arasaka operatives to start asking themselves questions. Who did these people work for? What were they trying to

obtain, if it wasn't the explosives? Why was the *Sentinel* conveniently nearby? Maybe a character wasn't as poorly treated during the interrogation as the rest, for whatever reasons. That character could be suddenly under suspicion. Any tidbits of paranoia that could be inflicted among the players is recommended at this time. No one has anywhere to go. It will take a week before everyone is properly adjusted for outside pressurization. Who will wait it out? Who will get trigger happy? Let the game run a little longer to see if anything happens. If players think that something is going to happen, chances are that they will take the initiative and do something irrational on their own.

Go ahead and let them.

"There's something about being all alone down here that makes you start to wonder: what's happening on the surface? If a war were to break out while we were down here repairing a power coupling, how would we know?"

—Chevron Diver

CHARACTER INFO

Name: John Smith; Mission Assurance Operative, Arasaka **Role:** Corporate
Attributes: INT 9, REF 9/10, TECH 7, COOL 10, ATTR 8, LUCK 5, MA 8, BODY 7, EMP 7/4
Skills: Resources 8, Pers. Grooming 3, Wardrobe/Style 3, Swimming 3, Resist Torture/Drugs 4, Human Perception 5, Awareness 8, Gen. Knowledge 4, Handgun 6, Rifle 3, Stealth 7, SMG 3, Karate 4, Demolitions 3, Elect. Security 5, Photo/Film 3
Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Boosterware +1, Interface Plugs, Unilink, Chipware Socket, Digital Recorder, Skin Weave, Cyboptic: Right Eye-IE, LL, MV, Optishields
Gear: WSA Autopistol (chipped) with 3 clips, 2 Det Cards, Kevlar T-Shirt, IDA uniform (SP 15), Code Decryptor, Security Scanner, submarine SOP chip, *Eel* blueprints chip, 2 other chips, 1 frag grenade, nylon carrybag

Name: "Tombstone" a.k.a. Ace Harley; Special Ops, Arasaka **Role:** Solo
Attributes: INT 8, REF 9/12, TECH 7, COOL 10, ATTR 5, LUCK 5, MA 8, BODY 8/10, EMP 10/5
Skills: Combat Sense 6, Endurance 4, Strength Feat 2, Swimming 4, Interrogation 2, Intimidate 3, Awareness 6, Athletics 4, Handgun 8, Karate 5, Rifle 5, Stealth 4, SMG 5, Weaponsmith 5, Demolitions 3
Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Sandevistan Speedware, Smartgun Link, Interface Plugs, Pain Editor, Muscle/Bone Lace, Skin Weave, Cyboptics: Both-LL, AD, IR, TA, Cyberaudio-HT, LD
Gear: Cutting torch, 1 set low impedance cables, 20 ft. flash tape, stripwire binders, light armor jacket, IDA uniform (SP 15) tracer signal, Minami 10 (chipped) with 2 clips, Assault Shot 12 with extra load, 5kg C-6 with 2 timer detonators, nylon carrybag

Name: "Patcher" a.k.a. Luke Simms; Medical Officer, Arasaka **Role:** Medtechie
Attributes: INT 10, REF 8, TECH 9, COOL 5, ATTR 8, LUCK 7, MA 8, BODY 6, EMP 9/7
Skills: Medical Tech 8, Swimming 4, Human Perception 4, Awareness 6, Biology 4, Chemistry 4, Diagnose Illness 3, Athletics 3, Handgun 4, Pharmaceuticals 8, Electronics 5, First Aid 5
Cyberware: Biomonitor, Skinwatch, Neuralware Processor, Tactile Boost, Chipware Socket, Toxin Binders, Nanosurgeons, Enhanced Antibodies, Nasal Filters
Gear: WSA Autopistol with 2 clips, Med Kit, Airhypo, Light Armor Jacket, IDA uniform (SP 15, for the last time), Flak Pants, Flashtube, IR goggles, nylon carrybag

Name: Arasaka Red Shirts **Role:** Solos
Attributes: INT 8, REF 9/10, TECH 7, COOL 9, ATTR 6, LUCK 6, MA 10, BODY 8, EMP 7/4
Skills: Combat Sense 5, Awareness 5, Expert: Security Procedures 4, Expert: Special Ops Procedures 3, Resist Torture/Drugs 4, Athletics 3, Handgun 4, SMG 5, Rifle 4, Karate 4, Stealth 4, Elect. Security 3, First Aid 3
Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Smartgun Link, Interface Plugs, Boosterware +1, Skin Weave, Biomonitor, Nasal Filters, Cyboptics: Both-LL, TA, TH
Gear: Cutting torch, 1 set low impedance cables, IDA uniform, stripwire binders, H&K (chipped) with 3 clips, 2 flash grenades, nylon carrybag

Name: Thomas Crowe; Captain, IDA Sentinel **Role:** Submarine Captain
Attributes: INT 10, REF 7, TECH 8, COOL 9, ATTR 7, LUCK 4, MA 9, BODY 7, EMP 9/6
Skills: Authority 6, Pers. Grooming 2, Swimming 5, Interrogation 3, Oratory 3, Resist Torture/Drugs 3, Leadership 9, Social 2, Awareness/Notice 6, Expert: Submarine Strategy 4, Japanese 3, Athletics 3, Pilot: Submarine 3, Basic Tech 5
Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Unilink, Interface Plugs, Chipware Socket, Adrenal Booster, Toxin Binders, Cyberoptic: Left eye-TS, IE, Pain Editor
Gear: Logcompass, pocket computer, 3 chips, 1 set interface cables, IDA Passcard, IDA uniform, flashlight, Sternmeyer T35 with two clips AP ammunition

Name: "Slick" a.k.a. Parker Matheson; Helmsman, IDA Sentinel **Role:** Helmsman
Attributes: INT 8, REF 10, TECH 10, COOL 8, ATTR 7, LUCK 5, MA 7, BODY 7, EMP 8/5
Skills: Interface 4, Swimming 5, Awareness 8, Hide/Evade 5, Physics 5, Athletics 3, Handgun 4, Stealth 5, Electronics 6, Pilot: submersible 8, Marine Tech 4
Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Unilink, Interface Plugs, Subdermal Pocket, Independent Air Supply, Cyberaudio-AH, SE, WM, EH
Gear: IDA uniform, pocket TV, IDA Passcard, 1 set interface cables, Militech Avenger with 3 clips

Name: Ellen Murphy; Engineer, IDA Sentinel **Role:** Techie
Attributes: INT 10, REF 8, TECH 10, COOL 9, ATTR 8, LUCK 5, MA 6, BODY 6, EMP 8/6
Skills: Jury Rig 8, Endurance 2, Swimming 4, Awareness 5, Gen. Know 4, Athletics 2, Martial Arts: Choi Li Fut 8, Operate Hvy. Machinery 2, Rifle 3, Basic Tech 6, Electronics 5, Elect. Security 4, Marine Tech 8
Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Machine Link, Interface Plugs, Chipware Socket, Independent Air Supply, Cyberoptics: Both-IE, ME, LL, TH
Gear: IDA Jumpsuit (SP 12), Tech Toolkit, 5 glowsticks, 2 sets low impedance cables, IDA Passcard, laptop computer, handbag: mirror, brush, make-up kit, lipstick, pen, chewing gum, lighter

Name: "Sidewire" a.k.a. David Lange; Navigations Specialist, IDA Sentinel **Role:** Netrunner
Attributes: INT 8, REF 9, TECH 8, COOL 6, ATTR 9, LUCK 7, MA 8, BODY 7, EMP 8/7
Skills: Interface 7, Streetwise 3, Fast Talk 5, Accounting 2, Library Search 4, Programming 5, System Knowledge 3, Athletics 2, Dodge/Escape 3, Handgun 4, Rifle 3, Stealth 4, Cyberdeck Design 5, Pick Pocket 5
Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Cybermodem Link, Interface Plugs, Chipware Socket, Contraceptive Implant
Gear: IDA uniform, IDA Passcard, 1 set interface cables, Militech Avenger with 2 clips ammunition, Newsviewer, 5 chips, small bag of candy

Name: Team One; the four Netrunners **Role(s):** Netrunner
Attributes: INT 8, REF 10, TECH 8, COOL 8, ATTR 6, LUCK 7, MA 7, BODY 6, EMP 8/7
Skills: (Applicable) Interface 8, System Knowledge 7, Programming 5
Programs: Squid, Hammer, Worm, SeeYa, Speedtrap, Flatline, Invisibility, Killer VI, Brainwipe, Zombie, Firestarter, Glue, Grapple, JackAttack
Controllers: Viddy Master, Sound Machine, Genie, Crystal Ball, Hotwire, Phone Home
Demons: 2 Succubus Demons
Feel free to divide the programs, controllers, and demons among the netrunners as you see fit, but remember to assign them positions within the Squid. The netrunner at the "helm" must be running the Squid program, and may not activate any of his other programs while running it.

Name: Jason Powell; ESA Terrorist Leader **Role:** Solo

Attributes: INT 10, REF 10/11, TECH 7, COOL 10, ATTR 5, LUCK 5, MA 7, BODY 8/10, EMP 8/3
Skills: Combat Sense 8, Endurance 3, Swimming 4, Interrogation 8, Intimidate 4, Streetwise 3, Leadership 6, Awareness 7, Expert: Terrorist/Guerilla Warfare Strategies 3, Athletics 4, Handgun 5, Rifle 5, Stealth 5, SMG 5, Basic Tech 5

Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Smartgun Link, Interface Plugs, Biomonitor, Boosterware +1, Chipware Socket, Skin Weave, Muscle/Bone Lace, Gills (new), Sonar Implant (new)

Gear: Armalite 44 (chipped) with 3 clips AP ammo, Ronin Light Assault (chipped) with 4 clips AP ammo, Light Armor Jacket, Flak Pants, 3 flash tubes, 4 chips, Interface Cables

Name: Smitty; Torture Tactician, ESA Terrorist **Role:** Solo

Attributes: INT 6, REF 10, TECH 9, COOL 10, ATTR 5, LUCK 5, MA 9, BODY 14, EMP 6/2

Skills: Combat Sense 9, Endurance 6, Strength Feat 5, Intimidate 8, Awareness 7, Thai Kickboxing 6, Expert: Torture Techniques 5, Handgun 5, Rifle 5, Electronics 2

Cyberware: Neuralware Processor, Smartgun Link, Interface Plugs, Pain Editor 2, Skin Weave, Muscle/Bone Lace, Grafted Muscle, Subdermal Armor, Cyberoptics: Both-LL, TA, TH

Gear: Colt AMT 2000 (chipped) with 3 clips AP, Plaskuffs, salt, small electric generator, dentistry tool kit, first aid kit, Metalgear pants

Name: Brennon Collier; Second in Command of the ESA Terrorists **Role:** Solo

Attributes: INT 10, REF 8, TECH 8, COOL 8, ATTR 7, LUCK 6, MA 6, BODY 7, EMP 10/8

Skills: Combat Sense 5, Awareness 8, Aikido 7, Handgun 5, Athletics 5, Stealth 6, Rifle 4, Human Perception 5, Psychology 6, Education 4, Basic Tech 3, Elect. Security 6

Cyberware: Skin Weave, Biomonitor, Independent Air Supply, Enhanced Antibodies, Nanosurgeons

Gear: Cardlock Decryptor, Security Scanner, Metalgear Suit, Pocket Commo, Sternmeyer T35 w/2 clips AP, cutting torch, protective goggles, B & E tools

Name: The Wild Boys; ESA Terrorists **Roles:** Solos

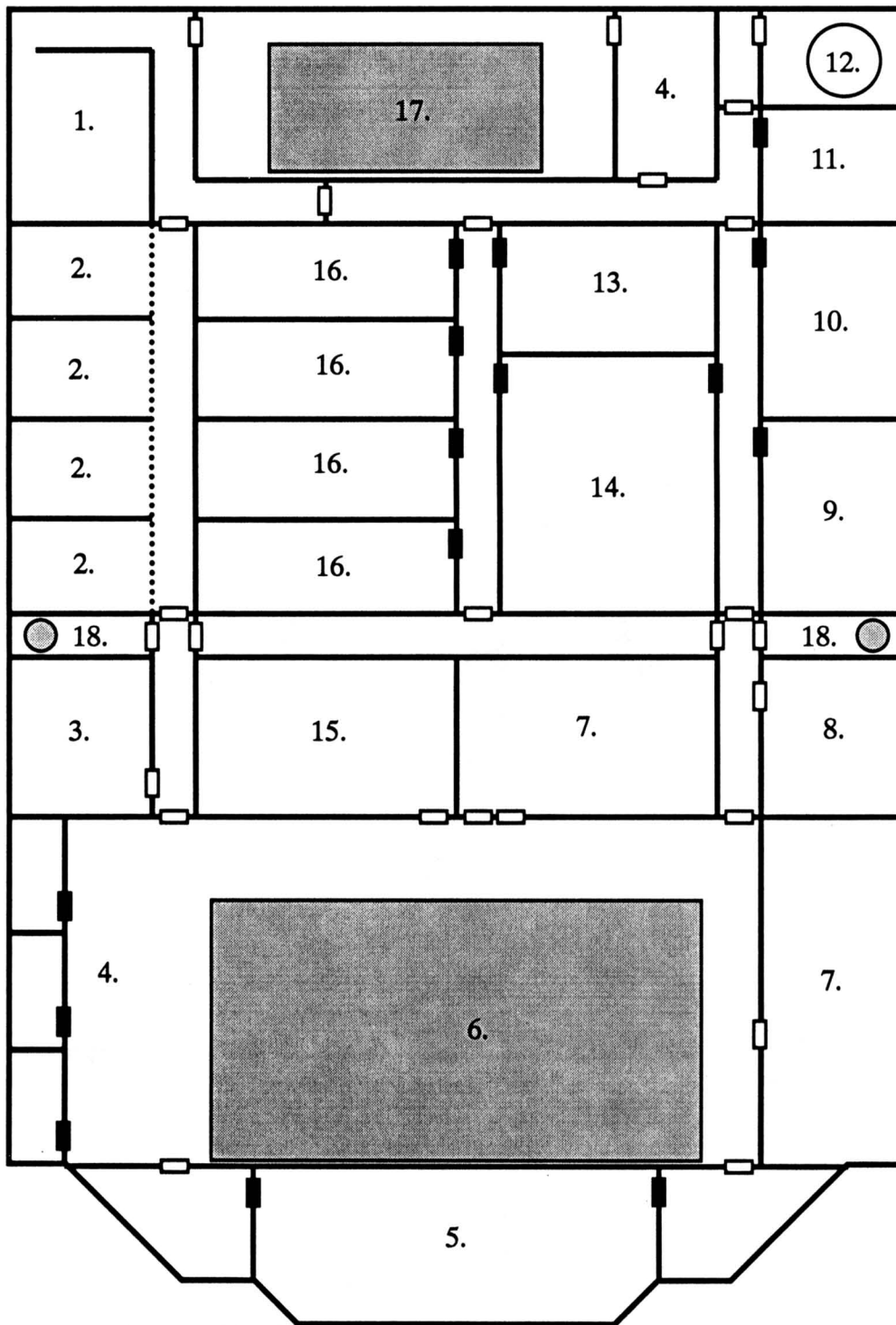
Attributes: INT 7, REF 10/11, TECH 8, COOL 9, ATTR 6, LUCK 5, MA 6, BODY 9, EMP 10/4

Skills: Combat Sense 6, Intimidate 3, Resist Torture/Drugs 4, Notice 6, Hide/Evade 4, Aikido 5, Handgun 5, Rifle 5, SMG 5, Stealth 4, Demolitions 3, Submersible Tech or Pilot 4, Electronics 3

Cyberware: Varies. Usually a Processor, +1 Boosterware, Pain Editor, Smartgun Link, Interface Plugs, Skin Weave, Cyberoptics: Both-TA, TE, LL, TH, Cyberaudio-AH, RL, SE, TBR, WB

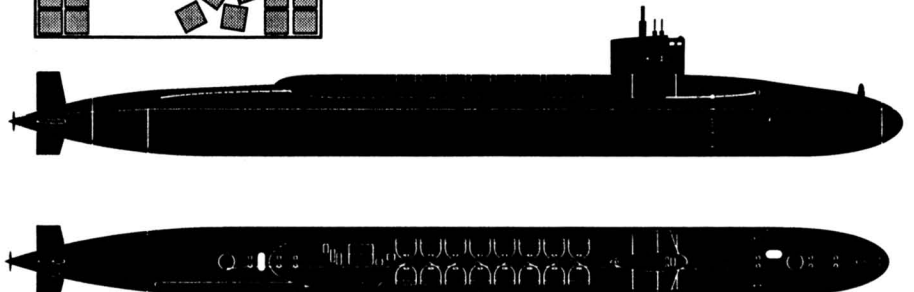
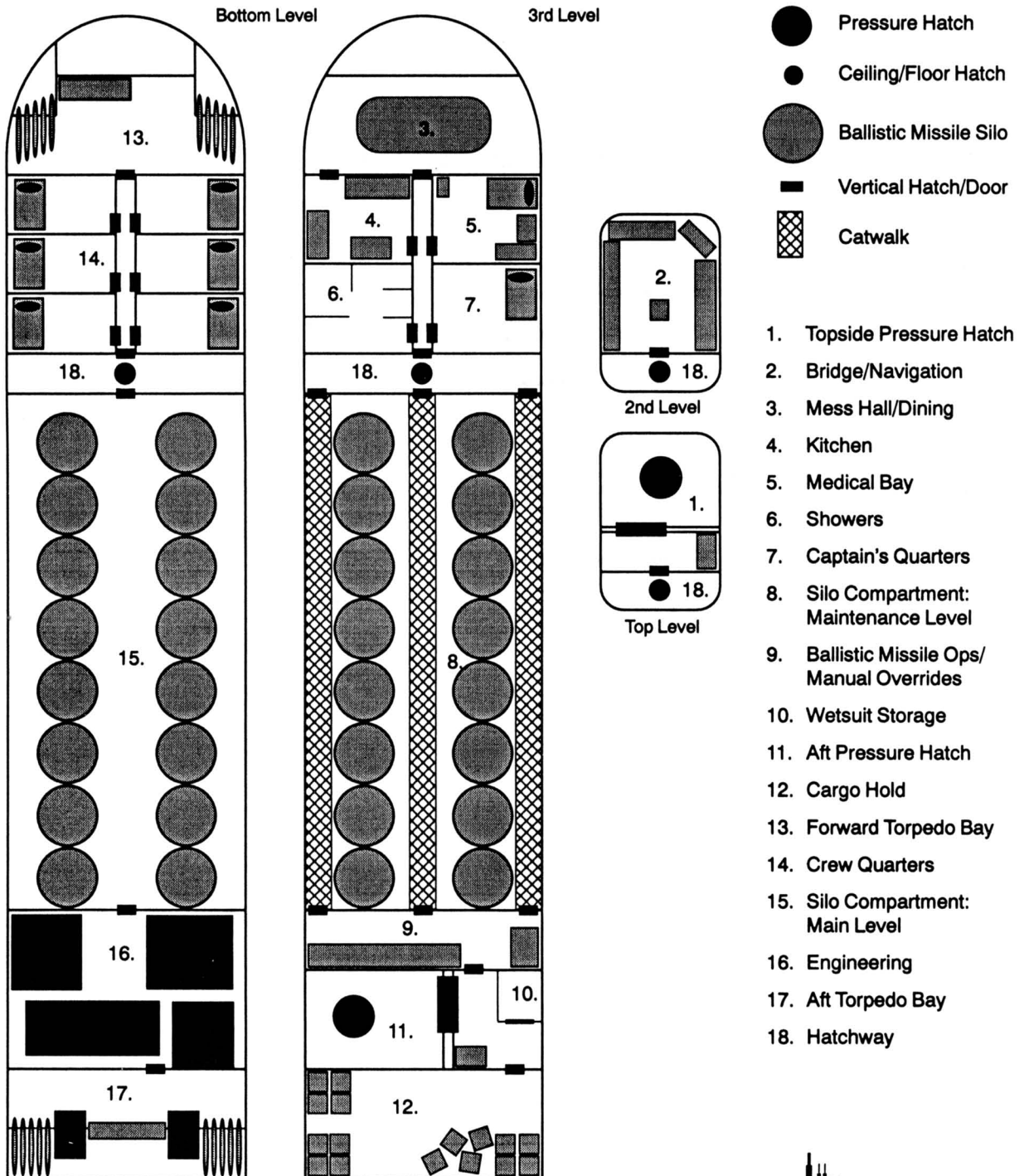
Gear: Ronin Light Assault (chipped) with 4 clips AP ammo, Colt AMT (chipped) with 3 clips AP ammo, Microwaver, Metalgear Suit, cutting torch, B & E tools

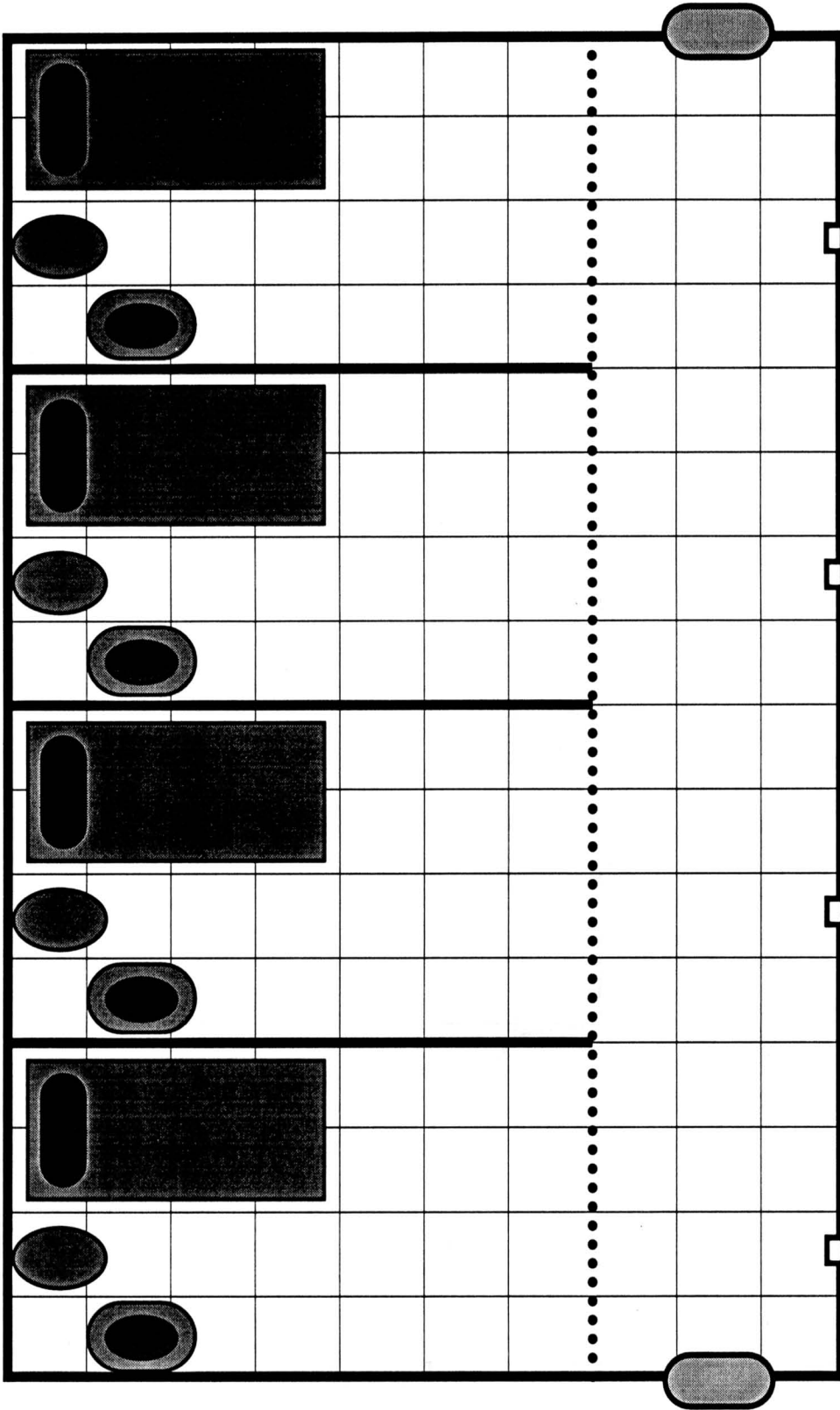
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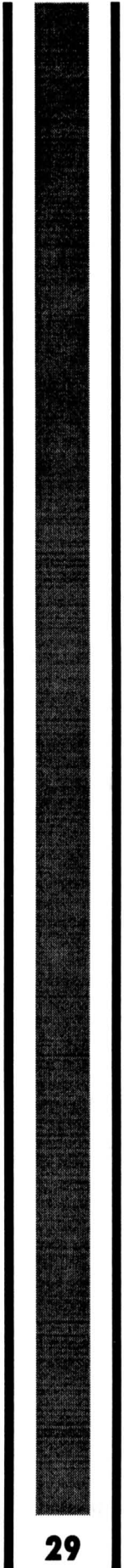
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|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|--|
| 1. Showers/Stalls | 7. Cargo Holds | 13. Captain's Room | ● — Moonhatch |
| 2. Holding Facilities | 8. Battery Room | 14. Kitchens/Dining | □ — Hydraulic Hatch/
Emer. Bulkhead |
| 3. Interrogation Room | 9. Medical Bay | 15. Engineering | ■ — Normal Door |
| 4. Wetsuit Closets | 10. Computer Room | 16. Crew Quarters | |
| 5. Operations Room | 11. Ammo Dump | 17. Moonpool Two | |
| 6. Moonpool One | 12. Life Hutch | 18. Moonhatches | |

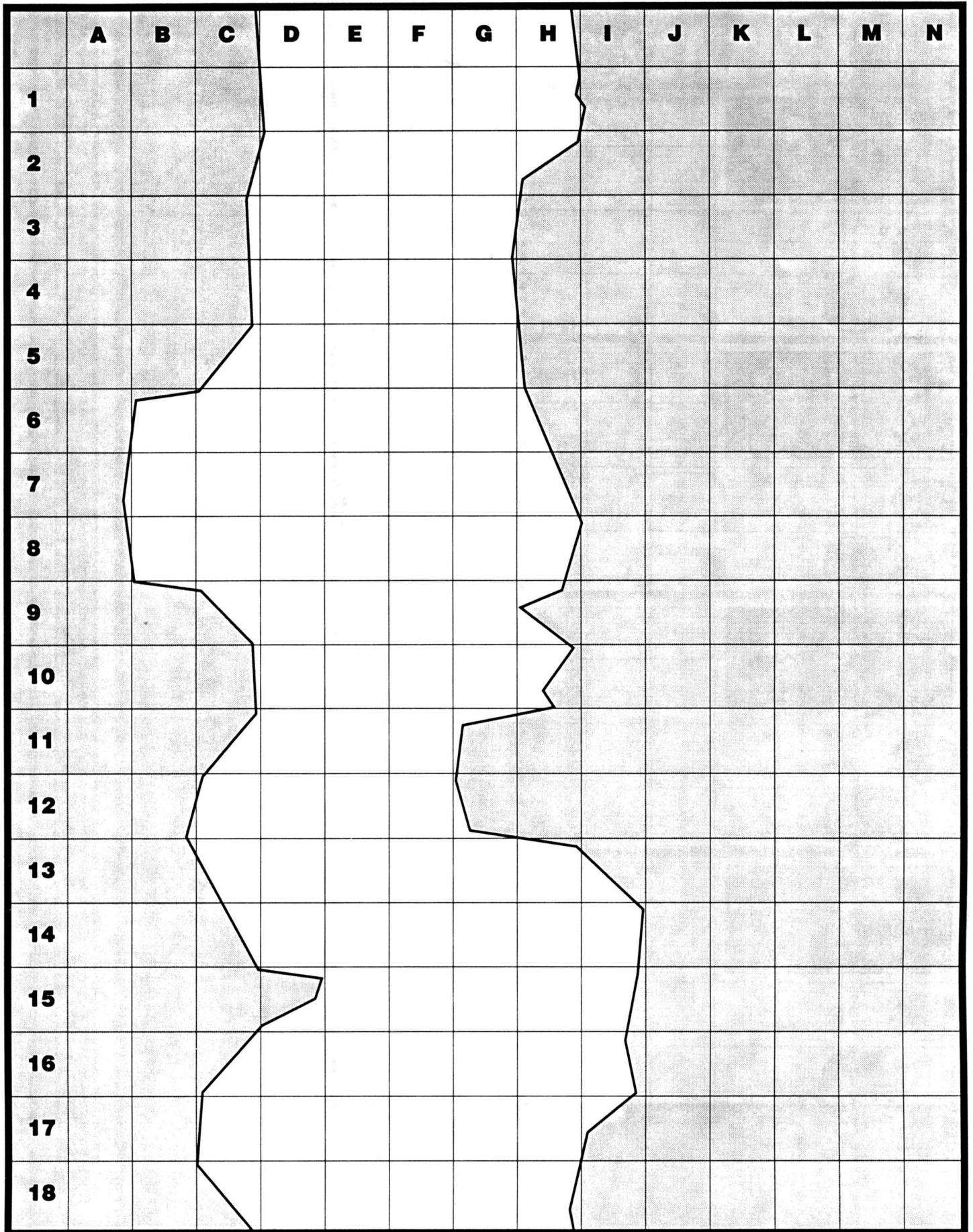
FLOORPLAN: SENTINEL





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From the cold depth of the Pacific Ocean rises

THE BONIN HORSE

Awakened at 5:56 a.m., Saburo Arasaka is very angry.

A submarine of his, the *Eel*, vanished at approximately 5:47 this morning. The submarine carrying Project 5.

By 6:15, Arasaka has bought out an entire company — International Defense Alliance — because it owns the *Sentinel*, the submersible closest to the *Eel's* last known location.

By 6:24 your cyberpunks are on the *Sentinel*, and already descending into the Bonin Trench.

They must recover Project 5. They don't know what's down there, waiting for them.

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"There's nothing worse than being trapped in a confining submersible with a claustrophobic cyberpsycho."

"Well, I suppose if there were two cyberpsychos..."

—Spirit

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