

CABIN FEVER



CYBERPUNK

A Cyberpunk® 2.0.2.0. Adventure
by **Eric Heisserer**

CABIN FEVER

**A CYBERPUNK® ADVENTURE
BY ERIC HEISSERER**



ATLAS GAMES

CHARTING NEW REALMS OF IMAGINATION™

P.O. BOX 406 • NORTHFIELD, MN 55057
AMERICA ONLINE: AtlasGames • INTERNET: ATLASGAMES@AOL.COM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

& INDEX OF TABLES, CHARTS, & NOTES

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--|-----------|
| BEFORE YOU START | 3 | Icebreakers and Other Fillers | 27 |
| INTRODUCTION | 4 | INITIAL WARNING | 28 |
| Ariel, the Boat Driver (NPC)..... | 5 | Prop Suggestion #2 (GM Note)..... | 28 |
| Prop Suggestion #1 (GM Note)..... | 6 | THANK GOD FOR THE NEWS ...31 | |
| ONE FOGGY NIGHT | 9 | "BACK TO YOU, BOB" | 35 |
| Ariel's Boat (Illustration)..... | 11 | LAST CALL FOR ALCOHOL | 39 |
| Swimming Matrix (Chart)..... | 13 | Mr. Jones and His Solos (NPCs)..... | 40 |
| ALMOST PARADISE | 15 | Petrochem Solo(s) (NPCs)..... | 41 |
| Meet the Locals (NPCs)..... | 15-17 | THE FINAL HURRAH | 42 |
| HF Cloud Leakage (Chart)..... | 20 | References/Other Sources..... | 42 |
| THE WAITING GAME | 22 | | |
| Prerecorded Message (GM Note)..... | 22 | | |
| Call Attempts (Tables)..... | 24 | | |

CREDITS

Designer: Eric Heisserer

Editors: John Nephew, Robin Jenkins

Coordinator: Robin Jenkins

Editor for R. Talsorian Games: Derek Quintanar

Cover Art: C. Brent Ferguson

Cover Design: Robin Jenkins

Interior Art: Greg Houston

Cartography: Eric Heisserer, John Marshall

Layout & Interior Design: Eric Heisserer

Playtesters: Gale "I Survived Again" Childers, Sam "What Cloud?" Johnson,
Patrick "Mr. Decker" Walsh

Special Thanks: Jason, for recognizing me on the spot in Norman

CHARTING NEW REALMS OF IMAGINATION, the Atlas Games, logo, OVER THE EDGE, OTE, and Al Amarja are trademarks of John Nephew. CYBERPUNK is a registered trademark of R. Talsorian Games, Inc., used under license.

This is a work of fiction. Any resemblance between characters, situations and events depicted herein and actual persons, situations or events, without satiric intent, is strictly coincidental.

Copyrights©1994. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this work by any means without written permission from the publisher, except small excerpts for the purpose of reviews, is expressly prohibited.

BEFORE YOU START

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR ABOUT CABIN FEVER

This adventure is designed to be a locked-room scenario, meaning that it will eventually confine the player characters in a small, inescapable place, and force them to resolve issues with the resources at hand. It is also a wonderful environment to promote roleplaying and long scenes of conversation. Because of that, you will find commentary from NPCs in this adventure a major contribution to the game. This is also a very deadly adventure for the PCs. One mistake could cost a PC's life. My plea to GMs is this: don't make this module any harder than it already is. Your objective is not to kill off the characters before they reach the last page, but to mediate the situation, present the obstacles, and make certain that all people are treated equally on a technical level. The deadly environment prevalent throughout most of this module exists to promote deduction, restraint, and crisis management. Players who jump to conclusions and pull their guns will later realize their own mistakes. Encourage your party to think about the consequences of their actions before committing to them. Use this adventure as a tool for building a conscience among *Cyberpunk* characters and maybe, just maybe, it will make your roleplaying sessions a richer and more intense experience.



Eric Heisserer

A KEY TO SYMBOLS USED IN THIS MODULE

For quick reference use, icons have been placed in the upper outside corners of the pages throughout this scenario. These symbols denote information or charts on the same page, and serve as 'attention-getters' for the CM during play. Below is a description of each icon.

CLOCKFACE: Time is a crucial element in this adventure. To keep track of the time more easily, the clockface icon, accompanied by the exact time, is shown at the top of most pages.



TV MONITOR: When the group is trapped in a tiny all-night bar, their only source of information is the news. This icon marks the pages that deal with Net 54 and its reports to the public.



SWIMMER: There will come a time when it's sink or swim for the PCs. This icon provides for a quick location of the Swimming Matrix, which plots movement in the water.



CLOUD LEAKAGE: All it takes is a few misfired shots through windows or walls to allow the HF cloud to invade the small bar. Keep the chart on this page handy for just such an occasion.



CELLULAR PHONE: In case your player characters try to call for help, a few tables defining successful connections are located on this page. The phone icon tags it for you.



CARDS, ANYONE: With a team of nervous PCs couped up in a small space, things can get downright dangerous. These cards mark the page that lists a few activities to pass the time.





INTRODUCTION: JUST DOIN' BUSINESS

Streetdealer Silver Shark was up to his usual mischief at a local harbor joint when his cellular phone rang. This happened a lot in his line of work. He was used to it; even enjoyed it—especially when he was trying to pick up a date for the evening, as he was currently. Most Fixers found business calls a "necessary evil" during the day's events, but Shark felt it made him look important. And of course, he was an important man.

"Just a minute, sweetheart," he said to his new friend—what was her name? Cynthia?—as he pulled the phone from his jacket and answered his call.

"Shark." It was a deep, throaty voice. Definitely masculine. Most likely synthesized or masked.

"That's me. Who is this?"

"A Petrochem cargo ship, *Arabia's Wish*, is due in dock at the Stallion Slough Shipyard at midnight tonight. I want a sample of its cargo. One crate will suffice. I want it as soon as you receive it. I will call you at two in the morning to give you delivery instructions. The price for this job is 10,000 euro. Half up-front, half upon delivery. It is not open to negotiations. Give me an account number and bank name and I will wire you the first installment immediately."

"Uh, yeah, sure. Sounds great. Just a minute." Shark scrambled for his little black book and read off a series of numbers.

"Good. This must be done quietly and professionally. Any media coverage will negate your final installment. Do you understand?"

"Of course, of course. Nothing but the best for this job. Absolutely."

"Goodbye, Shark." And at that, the man's voice was replaced by a dial tone.

It was time for Shark to get to work.

ABOUT SILVER SHARK

Judd Silverton, alias "Silver Shark," operates as a Fixer/streetdealer along the East Marina, just northeast of the McCartney Stadium. He normally works as a "travel agent" to individuals interested in leaving Night City quietly and via boat, but he also dabbles in the smuggling arena, and occasionally fences a hot item or two that a friendly pirate wants off his hands. Big jobs usually pass him by, handed to corporate contacts or special field personnel operating out of the bay area. Once in a while, for whatever reasons, an especially risky or important mission is dealt to him. Usually the corporation or group is interested in "keeping their hands clean," and operates anonymously for Shark's protection as well as their own. The Petrochem deal seems to be like one of those jobs. Shark gets more excited about the "risky" missions, because it gives him a chance to build a better reputation in the bay area.

Shark operates from an all-night dive bar along the east side named Paradise Lost. It's part of a larger warehouse entitled "Pier Three Paradise," which houses two other establishments (see *Night City Sourcebook*, p.86). He is a regular at this bar, and has managed to buy a few friends in the neighborhood, including the bouncer to Paradise Lost.

GATHERING THE GROUP

This adventure calls for a team of four to five characters, any of which can be Solos, Nomads, Techies, or (if Shark doesn't find out) Medias.

If your players already function as a cohesive team of characters, Shark calls on them to meet about the Petrochem job he was just handed. He is be brief and evasive over the phone, preferring to discuss things face-to-face. He won't meet outside of the bay area, and prefers to deal exclusively from Paradise Lost. Give Shark enough time before the meet to "run some errands" and get a little more information on Petrochem's *Arabia's Wish*.

If your players don't know each other, or a new PC is being introduced, or if the regular "campaign" team is in different places, here are a few ideas on how to gather them in Paradise Lost and connect them with Silver Shark.

- *Shark already has an appointment to see one or more PCs about another, smaller job. When the characters arrive, he tells them the job has been postponed due to a new job of higher priority and pay. He brings them in on the Petrochem deal from there.*



- *Shark has been informed that one or more PCs are local experts on the activities of Petrochem. This information may be true or false, depending on the background of the characters. Regardless, Shark doesn't discuss anything over the phone. Once the player characters arrive, he figures out a way to bring them in on the job.*
- *A player character just happens to be in the neighborhood, having a drink at Paradise Lost, when he/she hears Silver Shark bragging about his latest business venture. If the PC is in need of a few extra euro (aren't they always?), he/she could inquire about employment opportunities with Shark. Bingo. Hired on the spot.*

You may know of several easier ways to gather the group, but those are just a few suggestions if it becomes necessary to bring in someone quickly.

A FEW ERRANDS TO RUN

After Shark lines up his team, he makes a few calls in order to present a better package deal to the PCs. First he calls a local boat driver and arranges for the use of a quiet but speedy motor boat, as well as the driver's services later that night. Then he calls the Stallion Slough Shipyard Main Station to confirm the arrival time of *Arabia's Wish*. Then he calls Bitstorm, his Netrunner contact, to track down blueprints for the cargo ship, as well as a ship manifest or any information on her passage and crew. The afternoon is rapidly consumed by the various phone calls and errands associated with the task at hand. When Shark finally meets with the team, he has several things to present to them:

1. **A general floorplan of the cargo ship (the map is provided at the back of this adventure: feel free to photocopy them and use as handouts).**
2. **A boat and driver (the driver will be there with the team for the briefing).**
3. **A little euro (200eb) to get people committed.**

Shark presents the mission in a professional manner, carrying an unspoken certainty that all possible pitfalls have been considered and avoided. He answers questions to the best of his ability. He has the interests of the player characters in mind. He gives troubleshooting suggestions in the remote possibility that something goes wrong. He wants the team to be confident about the success of the mission.

ABOUT THE BOAT DRIVER

Ariel is the woman's name, and she's been hauling people around the bay area for nearly four years. She has no qualms with passengers, but she does not deliver cargo or packages of any sort. "I'm not a delivery service," she usually claims. Shark has known her for a little over a year, but their relationship has been strictly business (much to the despair of Shark). She is an attractive woman in her late twenties, brunette hair, slim and tall (5'9"), with no obvious cyberware. Her reputation alone keeps her employed: "I get you there in one piece."

Ariel, the Boat Driver

INT 9, REF 8, TECH 9, COOL 7, ATTR 8, LUCK 4, MA 8, BODY 7, EMP 10/8

Skills: Athletics 6, Awareness 8, Basic Tech 7, Boat Tech 5, Electronics 7, Expert: Marine Biology 4, jury Rig 7, Pilot (Motorboat) 8, Streetwise 5

Cyberware; Chipware Socket, Enhanced Antibodies, Interface Plugs, Nanosurgeons, Nasal Filter, Neural Processor, Vehicle Link

Gear: IR Goggles, Light Armor jumpsuit (SP 8), flare gun w/ 3 flares, purse

BACK TO THE BRIEFING

Once he is assured of total privacy at his corner table in Paradise Lost, he gives the pitch to the team. It goes something like this:

"Good evening, gang. As I mentioned on the phone, I've got some work for you. This morning I received an anonymous call from an individual who needs something very particular. He needs a sample of what is in the cargo holds on a boat that's due in the docks later tonight. One crate is all he needs. The pay for the job is handsome, and I am authorized to pay you 50% now if you take it. The important part of this job is obtaining the cargo. I don't know the size or weight of an individual crate, so it may be particularly heavy or large. Which is why I'm looking to hire you as a team, rather than an individual operative. Are you interested, or am I wasting my breath?"

This is one of those moments in any prewritten adventure when the players either cooperate and agree to the mission or



4:00 PM

decide to "give the GM trouble" by declining the job. Nothing can make a session more frustrating than a rebellious player determined to veer as far from the direction of the scenario as possible. If there are one or more rebels in the party, my only suggestion is to let them exercise their freedom and wander from the plot of the story (the further the better), but pay them little attention once the mission is underway. They are no longer involved in the party's activities: therefore, their actions serve as little more than distractions. If players start to rebel, it may be wise to encourage a healthy amount of peer pressure, so that everyone will be working together. Usually problems like these go unspoken, but I've voiced my awareness of the dilemma and a possible solution in hope that the adventure may run more smoothly.

PROP SUGGESTION FOR GM:

Get some play money from a toy store and a handful of plain #10 envelopes from home or office. Write the handles of each of the characters on the envelopes and place the play money (in the proper denominations) into them. When each character commits to the assignment, hand him or her the envelope with his or her name on it. Not only is this a fun way of making the deal more interactive, it also encourages the other characters to join the assignment. After all, everyone loves money!

After doling out envelopes with the first installment to each character, Shark continues:

"Good. I'm glad you've agreed. Let's get down to business.

"The name of the ship is *Arabia's Wish*, and it's a Petrochem cargo ship due in to the east side shipyards tonight at midnight. She's docking in here rather than the main yard further south because the cargo ship is a late 20th century model, and these shipyards are the only ones along the Night City bay with the proper equipment to unload her."

"Outdated equipment is more like it," interrupts Ariel.

"True. Oh, by the way, this is Ariel—your boat driver. I'll get to you in a minute, sweetheart. Anyway, I did some homework on *Arabia's Wish*, and I've got a copy of the floorplans of this girl. They were hard to get, since the stuff was recycled data from the 1990s. Most of the plans for boats of that age aren't even accessible on computer. Hard copy is all that's available. Regardless, I got the plans. You can inspect them at your leisure after the meeting.

"I also did some investigating in regards to the crew. I'm sure it'd be helpful to know who's on the cargo ship, or at least how many. Anyway, I couldn't get an employee roster, but I did manage to pull some strings and get a look at the vessel from a bird's-eye view. It looks like there are four roving armed guards that patrol topside, and possibly five or six individuals in the bridge. I didn't catch sight of anyone else. I didn't see any obvious chromeheads, so I doubt you'll have to pack anything heavy for this trip. I'm thinking there may be 15 or 20 people total. Also, the patrols may change between now and then, so don't expect exactly four topside tonight. But be prepared for at least that many.

"Remember: the job is to get on board, enter the enormous cargo hold, retrieve a crate one way or another, and leave—without being noticed. I can't stress secrecy enough. This mission must be done cleanly and quietly, or else the rest of the payment becomes null and void. And that's not by my decision. If you need to take someone down, use a silencer on your firearm or use other means by which the target will fall noiselessly. Okay? Alright.

"On to other things. I've checked the weather for tonight and they're expecting the dew point to reach the temperature in the bay area. That means the harbor sector, even the bridge, will be covered with fog. The visibility problems, coupled with the fact that the shipyards get the heaviest traffic at night, will force the Petrochem cargo ship to wait for entrance into the yards. I estimate that will put her just south/southeast of the bridge. She'll be a sitting duck. That's where Ariel comes in."

"I get it," says Ariel. "You want me to scoot up next to *Arabia's Wish*, drop these people off, and just hang out while they're snooping around in its hull."

"Yes. Then you will bring them back to the docks, along with the crate, and we'll all meet here at Paradise Lost for the final exchange of evidence and euro. You have a quiet boat but a sturdy one, which is why I picked you for this job."



"I thought you picked me so you could flirt with me during business hours."

"That, too."

"I'm not a courier, Shark."

"I know, but this is different. It's people, too."

"That doesn't make things any different," replies Ariel with a snarl.

"Oh come on, it's just one box. And these guys will be handling it, not you."

"Well...as long as I just drop them off and pick them up again, okay. But if you start having me run all over this bay trying to dump the crate—"

"It's not like that, sweetie. My client wants this package desperately. But you do bring up a good point. If the cargo hold is empty, or its contents are deemed too dangerous to move upon inspection, I want you (the team) to bring me evidence of the fact. If she's empty, give me photos or video of the hollow hull. If she's carrying wild Tasmanian Devils or

something, show me one of their toothy grins. I don't want my client backing down from the other half of this deal just because we come back empty-handed. Plus, this will give him proof that you were there. In fact, you may want to get footage of the cargo hold anyway, just to be safe.

"Boarding the cargo ship when she's just sitting within a stone's throw of the harbor will be perfect. If we tried to board her after she docked, there would be a greater chance of visibility—not only with the crew but with the night shift dock workers and other witnesses nearby. This way you've got the natural camouflage of the fog. Your target is immobile and isolated. Plus, you're just a handful of meters from the harbor just outside this bar. Hell, if it were a clear night, I could see you guys from the front door of this place. So if anything goes down, you don't have far to run. But I doubt that will happen. Everything should go smoothly. There's a good chance that I'll hand you a few other jobs after this one, assuming that you'd be interested in working with me more.





"Here are the floorplans. You'll probably want to meet up with Ariel in the shipyards at 11:30 or so tonight. I'll let you work that out. After the job is done, bring the crate to me here at this bar, and we'll finish the deal. Any questions?"

As mentioned before, Shark answers questions to the best of his ability. It should be obvious that he wants to ensure the safety of the PCs. Even though this is a prewritten adventure, and players are probably looking for loopholes, try to keep paranoia to a minimum. And make sure that you mention Shark's interest in hiring the party for future jobs/missions, because that leads most players into believing that this mission is just the first part in many within this module.

LET'S GO SHOPPING!

After Shark hands over the floorplans, the meeting adjourns and the PCs may make whatever plans and tactics they feel necessary. They may also need to purchase a variety of items; silencers, carrybags, video cameras, etc. The time is approximately 5 P.M. The PCs are conveniently close to the New Harbor Mallplex for quick shopping, or for black market items, they should have enough time to travel to the proper neighborhoods and meet with their own contacts. Presumably, the team pours over the layout of the boat and their method of retrieval. Regardless, Silver Shark disappears for a while, no longer necessary to the mission. He leaves a number for the PCs to contact him if an emergency arises, but as all Fixers say: "I've got other business to attend to."

THE REAL STORY: CORPORATE CAT FIGHT

DuPree Chemical has been struggling to prevent a takeover in the industrial chemicals marketplace. Although its sales growth has slumped 8.7 points below industry standards, DuPree has discovered a market niche by providing propane and ethalane to businesses that still utilize twentieth-century bottling processes. Thus, it is a prime target for a corporate takeover. The company in the best position to do

this is Petrochem, and they've known about it for quite some time. Threats by the CEO of DuPree stating that any takeover attempt would result in a scorched earth incident have had little effect. Rumors on Wall Street say that Petrochem plans to make a tender offer for DuPree stock.

DuPree is cornered and forced to make desperate decisions. They spread the word to the wise men of the streets that they need something to throw in Petrochem's face. One dark and starless night, a DuPree representative and a crafty Fixer meet and the confidential files about *Arabia's Wish* are traded for a large sum of euro. *Arabia's Wish* is actually carrying hydrogen fluoride, an extremely hazardous chemical that acts as an irritant gas when exposed to oxygen. It is normally used in the production of laundry detergent. When oxidized, hydrogen fluoride becomes hydrofluoric acid, a dangerous mist. The Petrochem cargo ship is arriving in Night City to "ground" the containers of fluoride by hauling them further inland and burying them outside city limits. The shipment isn't registered on the harbormaster's log, which makes the whole fiasco completely illegal. *Arabia's Wish* is just the cure for DuPree's problems.

Unfortunately, DuPree didn't use the information intelligently. They put a man named Ian Cornell in charge of the operation. Instead of turning the shipment into a huge media exposé, Cornell hired a freelance saboteur to rig the ship with explosives so that the entire boat blows shortly after it enters the docks. Cornell is aware that this will create a lethal environment for most of Night City. He decides that the media attention from a massive body count is more effective than the media attention from a scandalous breach of environmental and international law.

Ian wants to make certain that DuPree can't clearly be identified as the saboteur to this monumental disaster, so he calls a local Fixer, has him hire a small team to board the ship just before it explodes. Days after the event, when the sunken wreck is surfaced and a forensics team examines the remains of the crew, they discover the impostors aboard the ship and the whole incident will look like a terrorist attack.

Or so he thinks.

ONE FOGGY NIGHT...◆◆◆

PREPARING FOR THE MISSION

There are a number of avenues the players could pursue during the few hours before the mission. In spite of a good pitch by Fixer Silver Shark, characters could still demand to obtain information on their own to make sure that Shark's story fits the picture. The easiest way to obtain this type of information is through a hired Netrunner. If the party knows a Netrunner or has one as part of the team, then he or she can make a simple Interface test to quickly obtain needed information. A sample of the questions players might ask:

- Does this cargo ship really belong to Petrochem?
- Is it due in dock at approximately midnight?
- Is it called *Arabia's Wish*?
- Can we find some sort of manifest or inventory list of cargo aboard the ship?
- Can we find an employee list for it?
- Where did *Arabia's Wish* leave dock, and how long ago did it leave?
- Who is supposed to be receiving the shipment?

HIRE A RUNNER OF THE 'FACE

If the party knows or has a Netrunner personally, have them roll an Interface test. If they hire an outside Netrunner, roll an Interface test on your own to determine the outcome of his or her netrun. But be certain to charge them! No runner skates the Net for free. It comes out of someone's pocket, always. The results are as follows:

- If the total is less than 15, the Netrunner ends up clueless.
- If the total is 15-19, the netrunner finds the scheduling information in the dock's database and confirms the name of the ship (it really is *Arabia's Wish*), the arrival time (it really is midnight), and its origin (Port Elizabeth, South Africa). That's as far as he/she gets.
- If the total is 20-24, the Netrunner acquires all the information mentioned above, but also gains access to the

ship's manifest. There is no listed cargo aboard *Arabia's Wish*, but a rough floorplan of the cargo holds can be obtained. It is stated in the shipyard's log that she arrives in Night City to pick up cargo, not deliver it. The ship is an old 20th century tanker that has been renovated to be used as a cargo ship. It is still under renovation, as noted in the floorplans. Petrochem is attempting to fit a modular storage system inside its hull so it will be compatible with current methods of shipping. Only a few walls have been constructed. No employee list can be found, which tells the Netrunner that someone is trying to keep this operation quiet. The basic floorplan of the ship's cargo holds will match the floorplans supplied by Silver Shark. Nothing Shark has said up to this point has differed from the Netrunner's findings.

- If the total is 25 or above, the netrunner discovers all of the previous information plus a few other bits of data. He/she finds the name of a Petrochem executive who has been ordered to personally assure the arrival of *Arabia's Wish*. His name is Simon Carmichael. There is no cargo in Night City waiting to be picked up by the ship. She is obviously dropping something off, and Simon is supposed to oversee this transaction. The Netrunner gets this data from a nice talk with an easy-going employee at the harbormaster's office. Given the chance, they admit to having a "strange" discussion with this man over the phone, as he was concerned about the arrival time of the cargo ship. Apparently, Mr. Carmichael wanted to hasten the ship's arrival by a few hours so "he could get to bed at a decent hour." (Note: this information can be acquired by anyone who physically asks around at the harbormaster's office as well.) A quick scan of Petrochem's massive employee roster shows no Simon Carmichael. He is either operating under an alias, or Petrochem keeps him tucked away for such purposes. That's as far as the lead goes.

Research on the driver of the boat, Ariel, only results in stories of excellent service. Her record is clean, and the party isn't paying for her services—Shark is. If the party decides to "drop her out of the picture" and hire their own



11:30 PM

boat and driver, no problem. Hopefully, they aren't that paranoid. But if they are, there are a number of people willing to take them to the boat and back, mainly pirates and Rockerboys with sleek speedboats. Just remind them that it comes out of their pocket, and that Ariel raises a fit with Shark about getting shut out halfway into the mission.

Research on Silver Shark doesn't turn up much. He's normally a small-time Fixer who appeals to the "entrepreneurs" of the waterways, so people don't say much. But, as always, euro talks. Determined PCs can drudge up satisfied customers who say he always gives good deals. "He's a man who knows his euro and his trade." They also catch a rumor about some of his previous business. "He was in on that Arasaka/Orbital Air business that was busted up last summer."

ARRIVING AT THE DOCK

For once the weatherman was right. The whole bay area is covered with a thick fog. The Del Coronado bridge can't even be seen from the boardwalk just outside Paradise Lost.

Upon arrival at the harbor rendezvous point, Ariel has her boat clean and ready. It is a small but spacious speedboat with a silent propulsion system and a large tarp that covers the back seats of the boat. Ariel is dressed in a tight-fitting black jumpsuit and black face paint. She carries no weapons.

"If it comes to a shoot-out, my throttle arm is my best weapon. If I hear firing, and I don't see any of you at the rails of that ship, you'll have to swim back, got it? Because you all could get shot to hell and I wouldn't know it until the guards started to wonder how you got on board and looked over the side at me. So let's make this quiet."

If party members start to doubt Ariel's loyalty and begin to hypothesize that she could abandon them while they were on the ship, discourage the thought immediately. Ariel is a faithful driver. Here's a few things she might say:

"I don't back down from a deal. And I certainly don't desert my passengers. That results in a bad reputation and a short life."

"Hey, I'd like to keep my figure. That means it doesn't get punctured. I get you in, I get you out. I don't shoot back, got it?"

"No unnecessary weight, gang. Leave room for the crate."

"You can hide under this tarp until I pull up along side her. I'll let you know when that happens, ok?"

The party boards Ariel's boat, and shortly before midnight they quietly leave dock. Ariel steers her speeder out of the harbor and sneaks through the misty night. She glides in closer toward the target point, searching desperately for some sign of *Arabia's Wish*, when at last she identifies its huge dark body in the still waters. The fog makes most of the details invisible. Those with enhanced vision of some variety are able to see the cargo ship more clearly. Ariel kills her engine and slides up next to the cargo ship's port side, silently alerting the team. Presumably, the team prepares to board her. Present the layout of the small speedboat (if you haven't already) and have players designate their exact location/marching order when the boat slips up next to *Arabia's Wish*.

WITNESSING THE CATASTROPHE

Just as the players reach for the metal rung ladder against the ship, the explosives detonate and *Arabia's Wish* lights up the sky with a sick orange plume of smoke and fire. Because the characters are at water level, initial survivability chances are higher. Some characters may still be under the tarp or behind cover, but most of the party (including Ariel) should be standing up and facing the cargo ship.

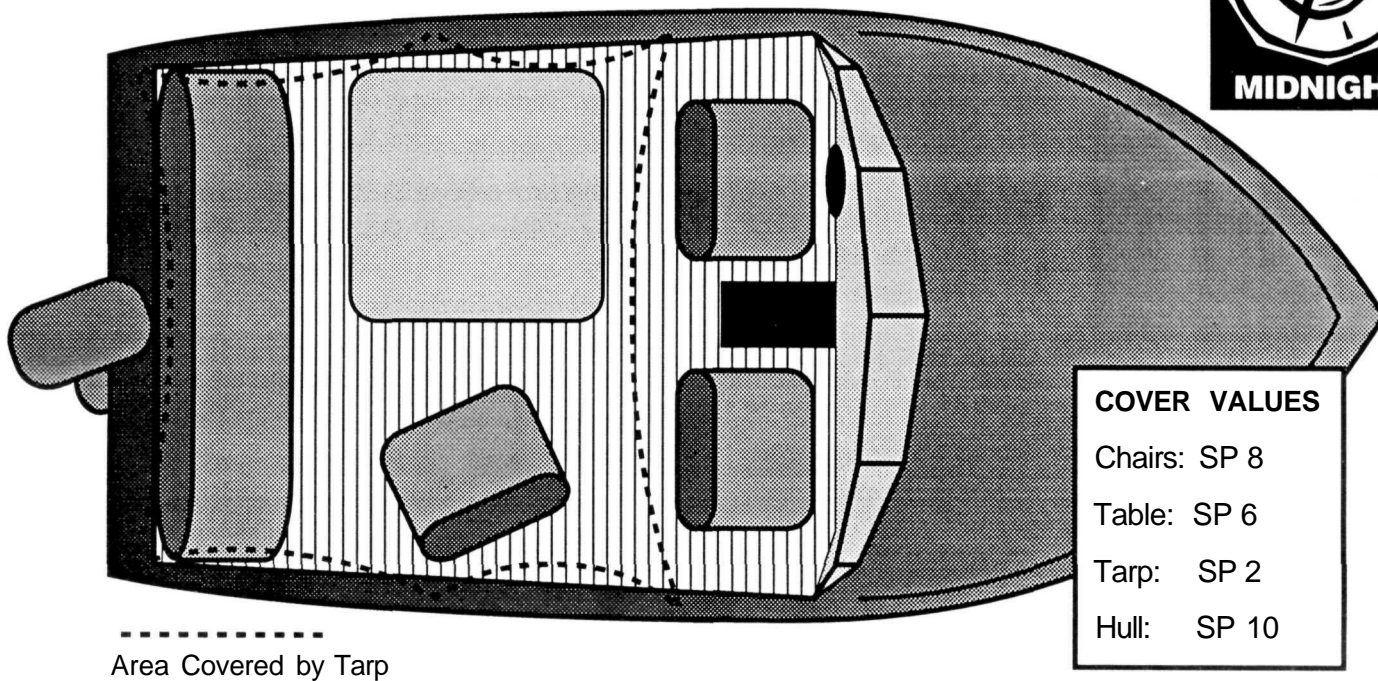
Characters behind cover/underneath the tarp for the initial blast have a 20% chance of catching shrapnel, and a 10% chance of catching fire.

Characters in the open have a 70% chance of getting caught by shrapnel, and a 50% chance of being exposed to flame.

The boat gets hit with shrapnel (roll 1d6 to determine number of times), but is too low to the water to be affected by the fiery effects of the explosion.

After determining everyone's condition, roll for the appropriate consequences:

- **Shrapnel:** Roll 1 d6 to determine the number of pieces that impacted each player. Then roll for the body location of each piece. Shrapnel from the hull or interior of *Arabia's Wish* does 2d6 damage, and is considered armor-piercing. If characters are behind cover when hit, determine which body locations are exposed and which are behind the cover of the boat. Hits to locations protected by the boat will go against the armor of the boat instead of the character.



Area Covered by Tarp

ARIEL'S BOAT: SMALL BUT SILENT (REDRAW ON HEX MAP FOR FIGURE PLACEMENT)

Example: Joe Solo was crouched behind a seat when the blast hit him, and he was hit by shrapnel. The CM rolls 1d6 to find out how many pieces hit him. The result is 3. He then rolls a 4, 6, and 9 for locations. The CM decides that Joe's head and torso were protected by the seat, but his arms and legs were exposed. Two of the three locations are hits: the 6 and the 9. Fortunately, Joe is armored with Skinweave, so this won't hurt too much.

- **Fire:** Those characters exposed to flame from the blast suffer 2d6 damage the first round and 1d6 each following round until the fire is extinguished. Roll for a body location. The cover effects under shrapnel apply here as well. Refer to the detailed layout of the boat for specific cover locations and SP values.

A thunderous clap accompanies the bright explosion as a huge tentacle of smoke worms its way toward the stars. Characters can notice immediately that the color of the smoke is an odd color. This does not bode well for the team. If Ariel survives the explosion, she attempts to veer the speeder away from *Arabia's Wish* and "gun it" for the nearest dockable location: the boardwalk just outside Paradise Lost.

The boat, however, has engine problems due to shrapnel damage, so the trip takes longer than expected. If Ariel doesn't survive the explosion, characters are either going to attempt to pilot the vessel themselves or jump into the water and swim for the harbor. Characters with cyberlimbs most likely vote for the former option, as they easily sink if dropped in the water. In any case, the trip to the nearest "solid surface" occupies valuable time for the characters. The Movement Allowance (MA) stat for swimmers becomes a vital statistic, as well as the Swimming skill, if the speedboat is abandoned.

WHAT'S THAT SMELL?

As the sound of the explosions dies down, the party hears a plethora of different sounds: hot liquids mingling with water, screeches and screams of metal being torn in huge sheets, gas escaping into the open air. Characters who observe the sinking of the cargo ship witness the following:

"As the burning ship descends beneath the waterline, the flames recede dramatically. A large, gaping hole in the side of the hull reveals several cylinders being tipped over as the ship takes on water. Lids break, cylinders crack, and an



12:01 AM

eerie, dark liquid spills into the seawater by the gallons. No sooner is the liquid exposed to air than it produces a pale white mist that consumes the ship in a matter of seconds. The cloud expands and spreads in all directions at a frightening speed, hiding all within it even more than the thick fog that hangs in the night air. In the background, behind the menacing cloud, the hiss of liquids can still be heard."

Characters should be boating/paddling for their life by now. Those paranoid party members who were thoughtful enough to carry enviro-scanners with them or submit to a biomonitor cyber enhancement receive early warning signs about the toxin and its effects. Pass notes to the characters with this active equipment and inform them of the situation with an abnormal reading that increases rapidly:

**"UNKNOWN ACIDIC SUBSTANCE IN O₂ ATMOSPHERE
50PPM / 90PPM / 212PPM / 472PPM..."**

If the PCs jet away on the boat, their only obvious source of shelter is the harbor. If their desired destination is somewhere else (the bridge, perhaps), you might want to point out that the growing cloud of toxic fumes will halt advances toward certain locations (like the Del Coronado Bridge, and eventually the bay further north and west). Also, the boat may take a round or two to get started, since its engine has been damaged by the explosion. If you don't feel like using the boat as a method of escape just inform the party that it won't start. As a CM, your main objective is to make the cloud a menacing and present danger to the team; not one they can easily escape.

If the party decides to abandon the boat and swim for shore, the boardwalk (again) is their only hope. All other establishments along the bay, including Weird Stuff (a local techie hangout with *serious* defenses) butt up against the ocean or are locked up tight, as this is "after hours." No walkways. No means of climbing up to the surface. Because of the humidity and the fog, the sides of the buildings are very slick (most of them have aluminum siding). Characters should recognize the easy access via the boardwalk without much difficulty. And, they might have a few things to say to their fixer, who said he'd be wailing inside Paradise Lost...

EVERY SQUARE COUNTS

Once the party commits to one form of travel or another, place the HARBOR MAP where everyone can see it and

mark their location. The original site of the cargo ship and the speedboat are marked on the map. If your team has taken another approach to boarding the vessel, and the boat is in another location, treat the spaces that the boat occupies as water hexes.

- If the boat is being used, it has a movement rate of 5 per round (damaged). Divide its movement by two for the first turn as the boat picks up speed, rounding up. The boat moves on the initiative of the driver. Also, remember that a boat doesn't stop on a dime. When the driver brakes to drop off its occupants, the boat makes a dramatic drop in speed, but continues for two hexes before coming to a dead drift.
- If the party is swimming to shore, calculate their movement rate in the following way:

Characters who have the skill Swimming take their RUN and divide it by four. This is the number of spaces they may swim in a combat round.

Characters who have the skill Athletics may swim at their RUN divided by four, but they must make an Average Athletics check every round to do so. If not, they move at their MA divided by three, rounding up.

Characters who don't have Swimming or Athletics move in the water at their MA divided by three, per round.

Subtract one space per round for each cyberarm that a character has, and two spaces per round for each cyberleg. If the result is a negative number, that number represents the spaces he/she sinks each round without buoyancy (like a life vest). A life vest slows down a swimmer one space per round, but it keeps him or her afloat!

Example: Joe Solo can't swim, and he never took Phys. Ed. in school. His MA is 8. He moves in the water at a stunning 3 spaces per combat round. His friend Bob Solo does have Swimming, and his RUN is 24. Normally he swims at 6 spaces per round, but he recently came in need of a cyberarm, which slows him down to 5 spaces per round.

At the end of the second round, fill in the spaces containing the cargo ship. This represents the gas cloud. At the end of the third round, the cloud consumes two more spaces in all directions. For each following round, the cloud expands at a dangerous four spaces per round, at an initiative of 16.

Consult the Swimming Matrix on page 13 for fast reference during play.



Once characters reach the boardwalk just outside Paradise Lost, it takes 4 MA at the normal rate to climb to the surface and stand on a square inside the boardwalk. When Joe Solo reaches the dock, he can hoist himself up to the planking on his next turn (4 points) and move 4 more spaces to the front door of Paradise Lost, for a total of 8, his normal MA.

Why be so picky about the number of spaces? Visually drawing a line to represent the ominous cloud generally makes things more horrific and intense. Players are able to visualize the size of the cloud, its speed, and their proximity to it. Characters who come dangerously close to being consumed by the cloud may notice dead fish surfacing around them. Characters who received wounds due to shrapnel feel just wonderful swimming in all that salt water. Don't forget to mention that fact to them. If the wounds are deep enough (a Serious wound, let's say) you might want to request a Resist Torture/Drugs test or suffer a loss to swimming spaces.

SCAMPERING LIKE COCKROACHES

When the team members start to haul themselves up to the dock, they aren't necessarily concerned about finding shelter in the bar. They may be much more anxious to escape the cloud on foot by running down the alleys shown on the map and getting away in a vehicle (any vehicle, not just their own). If that option is seriously considered by your players, discourage these routes with the arrival of the friendly Harbor Patrol in a combat AV, hovering over the pier and spotlighting the alleys below. Obviously an explosion of that intensity will draw a crowd. These patrolmen just happened to be in the right place at the right time, and they suspect that it was another hit by the Rastaboomers gang or some other pirating faction that likes to cripple ships from shore and then raid them shortly after they've sunk to the ocean floor. Characters notice patrolmen leaning out the sides of the AV in full armor, looking down the alleys, and holding heavy assault rifles in their laps. If this still doesn't persuade them to find solace in the bar, have the patrolmen fire off a few warning shots at an NPC witness caught in the alleyway. Get the point across: no exit.

Also, reaching the dock with turns to spare doesn't mean the characters can relax—no, no. The bar has to be sealed as best as possible from the incoming toxins. It is wise to make this suggestion to survivors who reach the boardwalk first, in case the party begins to develop an inflated

paranoia about the capabilities of the cloud. It would be good to mention to certain party members that a cloud of its density could be sealed out by stuffing towels and rags around the door frame, as well as any other holes large enough to stick a finger through. Microscopic breaches in building structures or tiny leaks to the outside shouldn't permit a toxin of this size and weight into the establishment. This information could be known by someone with a military background, someone who has worked with Biotechnica on several occasions, or possibly another source.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CLOUD

By now your players should be very interested in the movement and effects of the approaching cloud. You undoubtedly get some questions: is it spreading in all directions—even up? How high does it plume, and does it stay there? Is the cloud taller than the roofs of the buildings along the pier (which are two-story buildings, at most)? Is the chemical toxin reacting with the water as well? Is it heavier or lighter than the water?

To address these questions: yes, it is spreading in all directions. The cloud has risen approximately 40 feet into the air, well above the rooflines of the buildings, and thins out to mingle with the pre-existing fog. That means it's harder to track, unless you happen to be the lucky PC with the

SWIMMING MATRIX

| TYPE | SPACES / ROUND |
|----------------|--|
| SWIMMERS | (RUN ÷ 4) |
| ATHLETES | Average Athletics test (15) If Yes, then (RUN + 4) If No, then DEFAULT |
| DEFAULT | (MA + 3) |
| CYBERARMS/LEGS | -1 / -2 |
| LIFE VEST | -1 |
| CLOUD | Round 2 (end): all of ship Round 3 (end): 2 in all directions Following Rounds (16 INIT): 4 in all directions |



12:02 AM

Enviroscanner. (You knew they had to be good for something!) In regards to the water: Bay area pollution makes the chemical spill just as hard to see

underwater as it is aboveground, but the spill seems to spread around the sinking tanker like a dark well of ink. It could be heavier than water, but it's too hard to tell at the moment. Does the character risk it and stay under water until his oxygen supply runs out or he starts to dissolve?

DAMAGE FROM THE CLOUD

Hydrofluoric Acid: The gaseous chemical toxin that spilled out of *Arabia's Wish* produces an effect similar to a nerve agent. If a character is exposed to the toxin, whether by breath or by skin exposure, he/she immediately takes *1d6 damage PER ROUND*. Body Type Modifiers do not apply in this instance. Skinweave delays affects of the toxin for two rounds, because it takes longer for the gas to work its way into the victim's pores. The only combatant to the toxin

is Toxin Binders, which subtract one point of damage from the result each round. The character makes the appropriate STUN and DEATH saves as damage accumulates. All attributes are reduced by half.

The affected character feels dizzy and nauseated during the first few rounds as the toxin takes effect. Vision blurs as the optical membrane is eaten away (in cases of "real" eyes). The character feels burning sensations from exposed portions of his body as the calcium in his bones is digested by the acid. Once the toxin has done enough damage to place the character in a "mortal wound" status, the character starts vomiting repeatedly. At a rate of 1d6 per round, death is soon to follow. Exposed characters receive this damage until they are dead or shower themselves in distilled water thoroughly (3-4 hours). Even then, probability of death is fairly high. There is no specific treatment or cure for the aerosol acid produced by HF, except for a flushing of the system with water. The cloud has a concentration of hydrofluoric acid at approximately 5,000 ppm (parts per million). That's officially nasty, ladies and gentlemen.



ALMOST PARADISE

SECURING PARADISE LOST: 12:03 AM

The explosion of the cargo ship outside has quickly drawn people to the windows, eager to see what disaster occurred. Characters entering the bar immediately notice groups of onlookers gathered tightly around the bay window. Some of them who noticed the party swimming/boating to the dock start to ask questions about the incident. As soon as the first NPC asks a question, others soon follow, presenting the party with dozens of questions during a time best used for sealing. A sample of the questions NPCs ask:

"What's going on? What happened?"

"What was that? A boat?"

"What the hell is that strange white cloud cumin' this way? More fog?"

"Who are you guys?"

"Was that an explosion?"

"Is one of you responsible for this?"

"Frack, I hope no one was on that when it blew. Did you see it?"

"Why do you want towels?"

As the cloud races to the back door of Paradise Lost, characters most likely race to stuff the door frames with towels, rags, articles of clothing, or whatever they can find. No one has time to stop and answer questions. When the inhabitants of the bar begin to see why the characters are working so fervently, they cooperate.

It takes 3 Movement Points to seal the bottom or top ridge of an outer door. It takes 5 Movement Points to seal the sides. The side door is the only door that needs to be sealed on the sides as well as the top and bottom. The other exterior doors are safe if sealed only on the bottom. The bay window is airtight, so it doesn't present a danger. In any case, it takes 4 Movement Points to seal each side of the window. No other entrances exist. It's a good idea to display the map of Paradise Lost at this time, so characters can count their movement within it as they race to seal the cracks. Keep the outdoor map on display as well,

and remember to advance the cloud four spaces every round, on 16.

If the door frames are not properly sealed when the cloud passes over the bar, the fumes creep into the space containing the opening and affect anyone within that space. If the door is sealed immediately thereafter, then the fumes dissipate to a non-toxic proportion. But if the fumes scare everyone off, they spread at a rate of one space in all directions every other round, at the end of each round. HINT: IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO MAKE SURE THAT THE DOORS ARE PROPERLY SEALED IN TIME, WHETHER BY PLAYER CHARACTERS OR NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS. Otherwise, this could be a very short scenario.

After the immediate threat has been resolved and the other doors have been sealed, the party finally has the opportunity to take a good look at the bar and who is in it. They are already familiar with the general layout (assuming they met Shark here earlier instead of demanding to meet elsewhere), so the occupants are most likely of greater interest.

MEET THE LOCALS

Sean "Mack" MacCready, Bartender

INT 8, RET 10, TECH 7, COOL 8, ATTR 6, LUCK 4, MA 6, BODY 7, EMP 8/7

Skills: Awareness 8, Boxing 5, Expert: Flatfilms 4, Handgun 4, Human Perception 6, Perform 7, Mix 8, Pers. Grooming 4, Social 8, Streetwise 4

Cyberware: Cyberaudio—EH, LD, SE

Gear: Arasaka Assault Shotgun w/20 slugs ammo, Colt AMT w/AP ammo, monoknife

Mack has tended bar at Paradise Lost for nearly 10 years, and is a well respected employee of the establishment. Many of the regulars know him and trust him like an old friend, as he has listened to hundreds of war stories from weary pirates and veteran smugglers. The man knows his place as a bartender and conversationalist, never overstepping his bounds to betray the clientele. It is this behavior that has earned him many friends in the bay area.

Edward "Eddie" Vintelli, Bouncer

INT 6, REF 10/12, TECH 8, COOL 9, ATTR 4, LUCK 5, MA 6, BODY 9/11, EMP 8/5

Skills: Athletics 6, Awareness 7, Combat Sense 7, Gamble 5, Handgun 7, Intimidate 8, Streetwise 5, Strength Feat 3, Thai Kickboxing 8

Cyberware: Boosterware +2, Interface Plugs, Muscle/Bone Lace, Neural Processor, Skinweave (SP 6), Smartgun Link

Gear: Federated Arms 454 Super Chief w/API rounds (3 reloads), not much else

Eddie has been employed with Paradise Lost for the past two years, after a nasty disagreement between two pirate factions that raised insurance premiums through the roof. Eddie's processor may work faster than Eddie's brain, but he is quick on the draw and large enough to quiet down most troublemakers who've had a little too much to drink. Eddie makes a little more money on the side by assuring Shark's safety when he's doing business in Paradise Lost.

Creg Findler, United Express Courier

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

Skills: Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Basic Tech 4, Dodge & Escape 4, Driving 8, Endurance 6, Forgery 14, Gyro Tech 3, Manuever 6, Pilot (Vectored Thrust) 6, Shadow/Track 5, Social 2

Cyberware: Contraceptive Implant, Neural Processor, Skinweave (SP 6), Vehicle Link

Gear: Image wallet with UE Identification, volt pistol

Greg spends his paycheck at Paradise Lost, hoping to get lucky with Cherry Moon. He works down the street at United Express, and frequents the bar mainly due to his physical attraction to Cherry. He is one of the few customers that Mack doesn't like, for obvious reasons. And because Mack doesn't like him, neither does Eddie. He doesn't get out of control, and his cheap come-ons with Cherry always lead to dead-ends, but he rubs people the wrong way. It's a combination of his voice, his body language, and his constant cynical and sarcastic remarks at everything brought up in conversation.

Charlotte "Cherry Moon" Stavers, Waitress

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

Skills: Awareness 7, Charasmatic Leadership 5, Drawing 4, Human Perception 5, Mathematics 4, Motorcycle 5, Perform 6, Personal Grooming 3, Social 8, Teaching 3, Wardrobe 5

Cyberware: Contraceptive Implant, Cyberaudio with EH, LD, and Recorder, Enhanced Antibodies, Nanosurgeons,

Gear: Hand-held microvid/TV, purse w/cache of prescription drugs & makeup

Cherry Moon is the most recent addition to Paradise Lost, as the bar has a high turnover rate of waitresses. Many hostesses have been hired because of their looks; Cherry is no exception to this rule. The proprietor, an obese man in his forties named Barnaby Williams, rarely spends his time at the all-night bar. As a result, he is more interested in receiving certain "favors" from the female help than good customer service experience. Though Cherry stomachs the encounters with Barnaby to maintain employment, she is an excellent hostess (with a Perform of 6) and brings in the most customers on a regular basis. It's the first time in the history of Paradise Lost when a waitress has been more of a personality than Mack, the bartender. And Mack seems to be falling for her.

Bob, the Drunk

Bob is your standard loser who permanently occupies a seat at the bar. Most nights, Eddie has to kick him out at closing. Bob rarely says much, but when he does it usually babbles about corporations ruining the world, and that one day the world will be destroyed by Arasaka, Infocomp, or whatever company Bob happens to hear about. When Bob learns of the incident with the cargo ship and the danger of the fog, he rants and raves about the evil wicked Petrochem (assuming he knows it's Petrochem) and its plot to annihilate the world. Bob is nothing more than an annoyance and a source for over-dramatization.

"Razorhead," Jim Casey, Solo

INT 8, REF 10/12, TECH 6, COOL 9, ATTR 3, LUCK 5, MA 7, BODY 10/12, EMP 7/1

Skills: Awareness 6, Brawling 6, Combat Sense 8, Handgun 8, Intimidate 6, Motorcycle 4, Rifle 5, Stealth 4, SMG 6, Strength Feat 5

Cyberware: Cowl, Cyberoptics, Both—LL, AD, TAI UV, IE, Cyberaudio—EH, LD, HR, Boosterware +2, Faceplate; Grafted Muscle, Interface Plugs, Neural Processor, Pain Editor, Smartgun Link, Subdermal Armor

Gear: two Armalite 44 autopistols: one with flechette rounds, the other with AP, three reloads of each for the pistols

Casey is bad news. Casey is a bully with money in his pocket. He's entered (and been kicked out of) dozens of military organizations within the past five years, and recently was discharged from Militech after "accidentally" shooting his supervisor in the head. Twelve times. His racist, bigoted attitude has launched him into more fights than he can remember. He loves to hurt people, and he's been that way ever since he elected to armor his skull with the Cowl and Faceplate options. His unemployment has brought him to the waterfront, looking for work he loves most: murder. With an Empathy of only one, Razorhead is a loose cannon. All it takes to set him off is being cornered.

Simon Carmichael, Shipping/Receiving Director, Petrochem

INT 10, REF 7, TECH 8, COOL 10, ATTR 8, LUCK 5, MA 8, BODY 7, EMP 7/4

Skills: Awareness/Notice 8, Dodge/Escape 5, Driving 5, Electronics 4, General Knowledge 4, Handgun 4, Interrogation 4, Library Search 3, Persuasion 8, Resources 7, Social 5

Cyberware: Cyberoptic Left Eye—TS+, LL, AD, IE, DataTerm Link, Interface Plugs, Motion Detector, Neural Processor, Skinwatch

Gear: Cellular phone, Image wallet w/false identification business cards to match false ID, microwave, 500eb cash

Simon was waiting for the cargo ship to sail in to harbor at midnight in Paradise Lost. He had ordered a drink or two and was content just to waste some time before Arabia's Wish finally made it in to port. Then the bar was rattled by an explosion outside, and Simon went white. He was one of the people to run to the window and look outside at the rolling cloud making its way to the boardwalk. He knows what made that type of cloud. He knows how lethal exposure can be. He also knows that Arabia's Wish will never sail in to port now. But he doesn't know what happened, and his job, even his life, could be on the line. Especially if the spill isn't controlled quickly.

Silver Shark, Fixer

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

Skills: Awareness/Notice 6, Expert: Item Appraisal 4, Forgery 4, Handgun 5, Motorcycle 5, Persuasion 6, Pickpocket 5, SMG 4, Stealth 5, Streetdeal 7, Streetwise 8

Cyberware: Contraceptive Implant, Cyberaudio—EH, LD, WN, DataTerm link, Interface Plugs, Nasal Filters, Neural Processor, SkinWeave (SP 8)

Gear: Malorian Arms Sub-Flechette Gun w/4 30-round magazines, taser wallet, cellular phone, image wallet, 480eb cash.

Remember Shark? He was waiting at Paradise tost when the explosion occurred. He is the NPC most concerned about the incident, and the one with the most knowledge of it. Of course, he's also probably the first one the party approaches to demand some answers. . .but he won't know. And he wasn't responsible for the explosion, though he may not get the opportunity to say so if guns are drawn.



THE NATIVES ARE RESTLESS!

By now the party has secured the bar, examined its occupants, and assessed the situation. Several things could occur simultaneously at this point:

- The party moves to Shark's table and demands answers.
- The party moves to Shark's table and attempts to kill him immediately.
- The party moves to Shark's table and explains what just happened.
- Characters explain the situation to the entire bar or employees of the bar.
- Someone asks for a phone/makes a phone call to authorities, friends, etc.
- The characters discuss things among themselves.

For the most part, the party takes one of two postures: *passive* (we need all the help we can get at this point) or *aggressive* (kill the bastard that set us up!). If the party remains passive and doesn't threaten any of the patrons (especially Shark), the NPCs are curious, suspicious, and eager to know what happened. If the party takes an aggressive stance, things could change dramatically in moments. Everyone is anxious to know answers to their questions, but as soon as it becomes obvious that Shark knows the party and there is a relation between them and the explosion, the bar quiets down to overhear their conversation.

THE PASSIVE APPROACH

Like everyone else in the bar, Shark is eager to know what happened. If one or more characters are wounded, he tells Cherry to retrieve a first aid kit. If they are wet, he requests more towels. The questions he asks are short and to the point, as such:

"Do you know how the boat exploded?"

"Did anyone get on board before it happened?"

"Did you see any other vessels leaving the area?"

"Where's Ariel?" (If Ariel didn't make it)

"Did you get any pictures or video footage of the explosion up close?"

"Do you have any idea what spilled out of it?"

As the party discusses with him further, he becomes more and more concerned about the cloud and the danger it presents to the bay area. Once he gets sufficient information, he waves to Mack and has him call 911 to inform them of the incident. "I imagine someone already has, but let's make sure." Next, he calls the number left by the voice who hired him to extract a sample from the boat. The number is disconnected. He relates this information to the party, and curses under his breath. At this point, he stands and publicly shares his knowledge of the threat with the entire bar, and stresses the importance of keeping the bar sealed. He states that he is open to any suggestions for survival, as a Petrochem cleanup crew probably won't arrive to extract them for at least a few hours. He also stresses the importance of maintaining a relaxed posture, since no one can leave the bar without risking the safety of the people within.

If none of the characters were directly exposed to the cloud, then no one knows for certain how deadly it really is. Just by looking at it, people may assume it is lethal, but none of the party knows what happens to people exposed. This could be an argument made by any NPC who desperately wants to get out (like Greg), or it could be a suspense-builder for a later occasion. They aren't going anywhere, right?

OTHER HAPPENINGS DURING A PASSIVE APPROACH

Simon twitches and fidgets nervously as he tries to think of what to do. The first and strongest impression he gets is obvious: don't let anyone know you're with Petrochem! After realizing that he cannot make the proper decisions under stress, he pulls out his cellular phone and calls his supervisor at home. He talks in low, murmured conversation and relays the details of the incident. He mentions that the terrorists are in the bar with him, talking with some Fixer. He can't remember the name of the bar he's in, due to his panicked state. He describes the cloud and the conditions outside the bar. During the conversation, he watches to make sure that others aren't eavesdropping, and he tries to keep his end of the dialogue to a minimum. His supervisor, a woman named Elizabeth Schell, quickly "wakes up" to the drama of the situation and makes the phone call as short as possible. She tells him she will handle it from here, and that she'll call him back as soon as she can.



Mack: He has a good chance (50%) of hearing Simon's conversation, possibly even some of Elizabeth's comments. But, as Mack reflects on the weight of his knowledge, he realizes that it's best to keep quiet and see what happens next. He can always share it later if the need arises.

Bob: He starts ranting about the cloud being the apocalypse, or some plot by "one of those dern chemical companies" to kill off Night City, etc. He's inebriated, so most of his commentary is loud, obnoxious, distracting, and unintelligible.

Greg: Greg panics. He starts to wonder what's happening to people caught outside, and starts to spook Eddie with questions and theories, like this:

"Oh man, look at how thick it is out there! That's not just the fog, man. If that came from a tanker, do you know what it could do to your skin? I've heard that there is a gas that makes you bleed from every pore of your body! Even your eyes! And do you know how it kills you? You drown in your own blood, that's right. Your lungs fill up with it and, and, and just burst! Oh jeez, I hope no one is outside right now. Oh man. Eddie—look how dark it is! Can you believe it? I don't

believe it, man. If this gets in here, even just a little bit, it will kill us all! Oh jeez."

Eddie: He starts to get nervous. He constantly looks back at either Mack or Cherry for support. Mack stays quiet, reflecting something. Cherry is more interested in what the PCs have to tell, so her attention is in their direction.

Cherry: Cherry is worried. Trapped in a bar with a bunch of guys? Not her idea of fun. But what's really bothering her is one particular patron who has been drinking at the bar for most of the night: Jim Casey. He looks vicious. And she doesn't want to be near him when he goes off. She starts to think of how she could disarm him if she had to. It's going to be a long night, she mumbles.

Jim: He doesn't care what the weather is like: he wants another drink. Or maybe he'll talk to that Fixer over there and ask about employment opportunities. Maybe the Fixer is disappointed with the team. Maybe he'd like them eliminated. Maybe later.





REMEMBER: YOU HAVE THE WHEEL

If, as a GM, you have other ideas about how to characterize the NPCs within the bar, feel free to pursue them on your own. The actions and thoughts mentioned here are merely suggestions to keep the game interesting, but the situation remains the same: everyone is trapped. Either they get along or they don't. In this small environment, you can create a palpable tension from many sources, all hinging on the fact that the cloud kills (or looks like it could kill, if no one has died from it yet). The main sources to build tension within the bar are Simon Carmichael and his connection with Petrochem, "Razorhead" the cyberpsycho, and things happening just outside the bar.

At this point, let the NPCs introduce conversation starters with the survivors to generate character development and conversation. A list of 10 conversation starters, as well as some icebreakers and time fillers, are located on page 27. Use these questions as power boosts for the roleplaying session and see if you can nudge them into a bit of acting.

This may be the first time for some players to look back at their lifepath and reflect upon their former relationships. Try to make these moments last, and talk about the reality of death, to increase its dramatic value.

Hopefully, the players realize the danger in promoting violence inside the bar. If a large caliber bullet penetrates the exterior walls of Paradise Lost,

the cloud begins to slip inside through the hole. With just one or two bulletholes, it takes at least eight rounds to fill that wall space completely with gas. If a wall sustains many bulletholes in a concentrated area, however, it spells disaster for the people inside. But, in case they enter the bar and immediately open fire at someone, read on.

THE AGGRESSIVE APPROACH

Time to roll initiative! At this time of night, considering the circumstances, if one person draws a weapon—*everyone will!* It's a case of C.Y.B.: Cover Your Butt. As soon as the first shot is fired at Shark, Eddie immediately intercedes by firing back at the party. He is the bouncer for the bar, but he is also Shark's bodyguard when Shark is on the premises.

Gunfire excites Casey, so he draws his two Armalites and get into the action by shooting at the nearest target. He doesn't calm down. *If Casey joins in the combat, he won't quit until he is dead or there are no more targets.* Welcome to cyberpsychosis, ladies and gentlemen.

SQUEEZE, DON'T JERK—AND DON'T MISS!

For combat purposes it is very important to get precise positions, locations, and stances that people acquire within the bar because you will need to trace the trajectory of *every bullet* that misses its target. If it comes in contact with an exterior wall, have the player roll damage for it and see if it moves clean through the wall. If so, mark the spot on the map (players will wonder why you're doing so and begin to put it together themselves) and continue with play. If enough rounds go by and the firefight continues, characters may become increasingly aware that the bulletholes are drawing in toxic mist from outside. And it is very difficult to patch these holes without exposing someone to the toxin, unless they get creative. Bulletholes created from shotguns and assault rifles show more immediate results as they leave much larger holes than say, a hold-out pistol. Also, characters using flechette rounds or similar types of ammunition make a large enough hole in the wall that the gas

HF CLOUD LEAKAGE REFERENCE CHART

| CALIBER | LEAK AMOUNT (# OF SHOTS) | LEAKAGE |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 9mm & smaller | 6-8 per hex | 1 adjacent hex every 5 rounds |
| 10mm to 14mm | 3 per hex | same as above |
| Shotgun | 1 per hex (shot); 2 per hex (slug) | 1 adjacent hex every 4 rounds |
| AR (5.56/7.62) | 4 per hex | 1 adj. hex every 4 rounds |
| Special/Other | GM Discretion | GM Discretion |

A brief exposure to the toxin (perhaps 2 or 3 rounds) causes irritation to the eyes and flesh and corrodes the lungs if breathed, but is not lethal at this time. If the leak is not sealed in time, and the toxin spreads to cover an area larger than 1 hex, characters begin to feel the powerful effects.



leaks through, just as with the abovementioned shotguns and assault rifles. Bullets of a smaller caliber cannot create a large enough hole with a single shot, but if a tight group of them penetrate the wall, it produces the same effect. Small leaks from bulletholes spread more slowly: one space into the bar on the round after the hole is made; then one neighboring space two rounds later; then another neighboring space two rounds after that, and continuing until all open spaces around the hole are filled with gas. Then it spreads into another space, and continues this way until the hole is patched or the gas fills the bar.

In either approach, the most powerful weapon is the phone. If someone uses a phone within the first few minutes upon arrival, they can call any number of people, including radio and television media, police authorities, friends, their mother—anyone. As a GM, you must be prepared for these possibilities (a few of these are discussed further under Other Options, starting with "Contacting a Media Network"). Police tend to drag their feet, afraid to interfere until they know who is responsible and how to deal with it. Friends aren't be able to help by physically arriving at the scene unless they have an ample supply of ABC suits or environ-

mentally-safe suits. And those don't grow on trees. In fact, it is next to impossible to get any. Those who do have access to that type of gear are most likely occupied with their own intentions (looting, corporate espionage, public assistance, heroism, etc.) or otherwise unavailable. The player characters can certainly call and complain for a while, but no one is willing to rescue them until they know more about the cloud and what it does. So where does that leave the party? Trapped in a small bar, waiting for the news to tell them what they already know.

MORE PROBLEMS: 12:08–12:12 AM

HF has also been used as an aqueous solution to frost and etch glass. And at 5,000 ppm in mist form, it will do just that. All of the windows of Paradise Lost slowly become frosty as the chemical etches the glass. After a period of a few minutes, it is virtually impossible to see outside. It seems as if the temperature outdoors dropped rapidly and caused the windows to frost over. Eventually (after a period of 6-8 hours) it eats through the glass entirely, exposing the bar to the nasty atmosphere outside, if conditions remain the same.

THE WAITING GAME

As Public Relations Director for the Night City branch of Petrochem, Elizabeth Schell knows the curse of a bad reputation. What you do isn't nearly as important as how others perceive you. This spill could easily become the single disaster that destroys Petrochem. Ramifications will be felt for years to come. Everything depends on actions taken within the next few hours. Survivability is crucial, especially when the inevitable Quest for the Scapegoat begins.

Elizabeth begins to take action. She must maintain a strong corporate stance. Ensure a positive outcome. Eliminate bad leaks. Here's what she does:

- **Hello operator:** Elizabeth contacts the Night City Area Office of InterNet, states the situation, and suggests that all outgoing calls by phones with the bay area (555) prefix should be blocked until further evaluation of the crisis. She supports this by stating that InterNet will soon be flooded with hundreds upon hundreds of calls from that area by people witnessing the cloud, feeling the effects of the cloud, or even dying on the phone. As the situation has yet to be evaluated, InterNet will not be able to assist these people. Not even the police will be able to help, so the 911 emergency code from that area should be blocked and rerouted, says Elizabeth. Also, people will be calling out to anyone and everyone and sharing the crisis, which could quickly generate panic, violence, hostility, and eventually escalate to "mob" proportions. The authorities and the cleanup crews will have enough on their hands without hordes of crazy people generating riots.

The night shift at InterNet isn't prepared for this type of crisis, so Elizabeth gets transferred from one representative to another until she reaches someone with authority (most likely waking them up in the process). She uses this to her advantage by sounding impatient, desperate, and angry. The InterNet manager, unprepared and unaware of the magnitude of the situation, concedes to her demands with one exception: people calling in will receive a pre-recorded message stating that the situation is currently being controlled, and that help is on the way. What about cellular phones? InterNet can monitor them as well, and agrees to transfer all outgoing calls to the recording. However, cellular lines are harder to track, because they don't work off a land

line or specified trunk; thus, it will be harder to "catch" all cellular calls from that area. There is a chance that cellular calls get through. Elizabeth states that she is unconcerned about a small number of cellular calls, and more interested in the large number of distress calls from non-cellular phones in that area.

InterNet finally agrees to monitor/transfer all calls to the prerecorded message. But only for two hours. After that, all outgoing calls can be made normally. And if InterNet receives different orders from city, state, or federal authorities, they obey them. Elizabeth agrees to these conditions.

Elizabeth's main concern is never the amount of calls coming in to InterNet for transfers. She's primarily interested in eliminating the chance of someone contacting a local media and feeding them damaging information about the effects of the spill or the original incident with the Petrochem cargo ship.

The call block/transfer begins at 12:14 AM, and the message is as follows:

"We're sorry, but your call cannot be connected as dialed. Please remain calm. The situation is under control, and authorities will reach you shortly. If you are inside a building, do not attempt to exit. Deactivate all ventilation systems and seal all entrances, if you are in need of medical assistance, please hang a white piece of material in a street-side window. Help is on its way. Thank you. This message will repeat..."

- **This just in:** Elizabeth attempts to get a hold of her press release contact at Network 54, a man named Bill Stratford, and in a stroke of luck she reaches him at the station. He answers the extension.

"Hullo, this is Bill."

"Bill! Oh, thank God you're there. This is Elizabeth Schell."



"Liz! Hey, you're up late on a weeknight. What's buzzing?"

"I'm desperate, Bill. I need your help. Listen carefully: a group of terrorists attacked one of our cargo ships outside Night City Bay just 15 minutes ago. They apparently used some sort of chemical agent like nerve gas or tear gas, I don't know. Anyway, the bottom line is that they rigged the ship with explosives and detonated her shortly after midnight. My sources have informed me that the explosives must have been chemically based as well, because they reacted to our cargo of plastics compounds. The result is a large, growing cloud of toxic chemicals. These terrorists knew what they were doing, alright."

"Whoa, whoa, whoa—you mean to tell me that this, this 'toxic' cloud is lethal?"

"Extremely."

"And it's growing?"

"Every minute. It was a big haul, Bill."

"It's happening right now?"

"Right here in Night City."

"Holy smokes! So what do you want me to do?"

"Here's where I really need your help. This is a crisis situation, and as we both know, crisis situations draw media attention within mere minutes. There is no way to avoid that, I know. Coverage is inevitable. But I also know the power of a strong voice, and Net 54 is a siren when it comes to delivering the news. A sabotage of this magnitude is a very touchy situation, and a lot of lives are on the line because of it. Many people will be looking to Petrochem for answers and reasons. If the public doesn't get the truth as soon as possible, Petrochem could be fingered for carrying toxic cargo. The terrorists could get away scott free. I want you, Network 54, to present the situation as I've described it. Cover the story as an attack rather than an accident. Broadcast the message that we have been subjected to an extremely lethal act of terrorism that will affect all of Night City if we don't get cooperation in controlling it. In return, I'll authorize a media team, with the proper safety equipment, to enter the exposed areas with our cleanup crew as soon as we get operational. You will get exclusive footage of the crisis at ground zero. I'm offering this to you, Bill. Take it."

"I have another question first: these terrorists—who are they? And where are they now? Did they survive the initial explosion and the cloud? And how do you know so much about it?"

"I will give you more information about the terrorists as I receive it. But I do know that they are alive, holding out in an establishment in the bay area. One of my employees witnessed the act. He was at the docks, waiting to supervise its arrival. One of our quality control managers, you know. He gave me the call."

"God, this is big. Do you know what this could do to the bay area?"

"It's already doing it Bill. Are you with me?"

"One more question, Liz. The cargo aboard your ship—are you telling me the truth? Was it just a lot of harmless chemical compounds?"

"Yes. Absolutely. Not a drop of dangerous stuff. The terrorists must have mingled an irritant in with it. I assure you, we're clean on this one."

"Okay. You've got a deal. I'll get a story on the late-night broadcast right now. Let me know when your cleanup crew is ready to go in. Heck, let me know if you get any new information."

"You got it, Bill. Thanks again."

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE BAR

If the players confront Shark in a passive, nonviolent way, he requests Mack to dial 911 and inform the authorities (as mentioned earlier). Mack gets a busy signal. He tries again and gets a busy signal. On the third time, he is greeted by an emergency representative, but she doesn't know how to handle his call. She tells him that help is on its way (a blatant lie) and to stay put. That is all he gets from the conversation.

If no one else uses a phone in the next few minutes, then the call transfer mode set up by InterNet engages, disallowing any calls to get connected. Only cellular calls have a chance (20%) of getting connected to someone other than the pre-recorded message. Once a successful connection is made, the caller has a little less than a minute to converse before the trace catches it and disconnects the call on both ends. After each successful connection the chances from that phone are reduced by 5%.



12:11 AM

If a call fails the first time, characters normally abandon the idea and try something else. On occasion, however, a party member perseveres and keeps trying until he gets a different result (especially if he hears you rolling dice behind the screen). But he might not realize that he has a limited amount of time to talk before he gets forcibly dumped into the message (which he's probably sick of by now). After his fourth successful connection, he no longer has a chance to call again. InterNet has a definite lock on his number and prevents that from happening. Remember: this is only with cellular phones. "Ground" phones don't stand a chance of getting through.

CALL ATTEMPTS PER PHONE

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| First Success: 20% | Second Success: 15% |
| Third Success: 10% | Fourth Success: 5% |

Yes, mastoid comms and other radio communications systems still operate normally. Most radios and headsets have a limited operable radius. And as the cloud spreads, it begins to outstretch those radii. Also, who are the PCs trying to reach with a radio or comms unit? The police band is scrambled to prevent eavesdropping and intervention, so the best they can do is to reach a nearby cab unit or trucker heading into town on the bridge. Some PCs may have a better use for mastoid comms, or they may know other groups and individuals who keep their ears to the radio waves. Then comes the question: "What do you want me to do?"

IMPORTANT NOTE

The team may learn more about their environment and the rescue operations (to occur later) by monitoring the comm channels and listening in on conversations. When Petrochem arrives and communicates with Elizabeth about the plans, eavesdroppers who happen to be on the right channel can overhear the transaction. Therefore, the radio-transmitted conversations that occur in this adventure are written not only for the GM's benefit but for the players' as well.

OTHER OPTIONS

Do you have a Netrunner PC? This might be the only way to get information to the outside world. Problem is, if it's a cellular transmission (it would have to be: other cybermodems won't work on disconnected land lines) it gets traced like a cellular phone call. The chances of a successful Netrun are higher simply because it's a high baud rate endeavor, but instead of getting transferred to a recording, the Netrunner simply gets "dumped" back into realspace due to translation problems. The same goes for an attempt to enter the Net: failures just mean he or she can't "link up" properly due to a disturbance. The chances of a successful link with the Net are listed below.

LINK ATTEMPTS PER MODEM

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| First Success: 50% | Second Success: 40% |
| Third Success: 25% | Fourth Success: 10% |

Deal with the Netrun as you would any normal run in Night City. The Netrunner can leave messages, make runs on buildings, etc. But keep track of time. Sooner or later, InterNet traces the signal to his or her location in the Bay area and disconnects him/her. If your Netrunner PC starts to snoop in places you don't like, disconnect them immediately if you wish.

Chances to reach someone outside the affected area are slim, any way you go about it. Unless characters are quick with the speed dial, they most likely miss the window of opportunity to make a call, or their cellular phone fails to work. However, if someone realizes the severity of the situation soon enough, or if someone succeeds to make a cellular call, it could have an important impact on the rest of the evening. There are a number of organizations or teams that could provide their assistance, if properly approached. Here are a handful of institutions player characters might try to reach:

- *Media Network (Net 54, DMS, WorldSat, 20/20, etc.)*
- *Quick Response Teams (Militech, Trauma Team, etc.)*
- *Petrochem*
- *Friends/Relatives*
- *Other Chemical Companies*

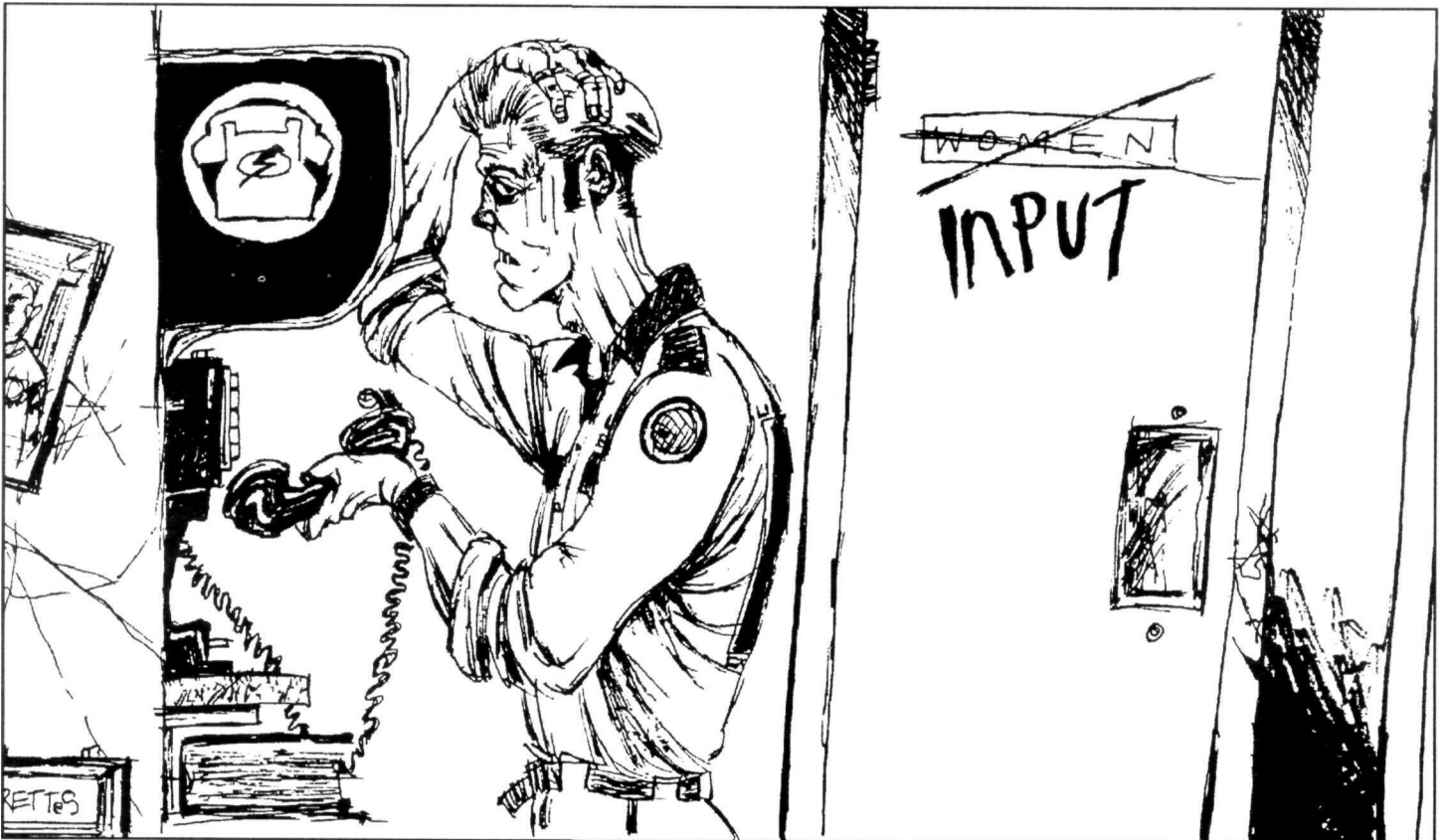


CONTACTING A MEDIA NETWORK

If a network is contacted (any network) and someone at the station is informed of the situation, immediate action is taken: the person on the line places the character on hold; he relates the information to his late-night action reporters; the action-reporters scramble to get the first available AV pilot to take them up for an aerial shot of the scene; anchorpersons jump into an investigation of the company behind the spill; Netrunners delve into records and inventories to look for anything juicy; and so on. After the fuse is lit, the contact person re-establishes the conversation with the character and attempts to get as much information as possible. "Where are you calling from? How many people are with you? What is your name? Did you witness the explosion/spill first-hand? Who do you think is responsible? Do you think anyone was on the ship when she blew? How dangerous is this cloud you describe? How large is the cloud? Does anyone have a video camera with remote access capabilities? Can I call you back?" Once the contact has been given enough information he requests a phone

number to keep in touch with the characters, and promptly disconnects to pursue his leads. The media contact won't get another chance to talk to them. Shortly thereafter, Network 54 launches their "cloud crisis report" which is bigger, brighter, and grittier than the other networks because they have the money and the head start. Net 54's graphics are fancier, too.

What if Network 54 is contacted? And what if a character has a friend at Net 54? Things go in much the same way as described above—Net 54 is a big media center, after all. However, Bill Stratford eventually catches wind of the leak, and he has enough power to pull strings and halt any "unnecessary" investigations. Any of the characters' friends in Network 54 risk losing their jobs to help them, as Bill calls the shots. This is not unheard of, especially if a character has a sibling in the network that hero worships him/her, but it is dangerous. InterNet still doesn't allow calls in or out of the area, no matter how convincing the media sounds. It simply gets operators in too much trouble.





CONTACTING A QUICK RESPONSE TEAM

It is highly likely that characters call professionals to extract them from their precarious position. Two of the big boys are Militech and Trauma Team, though your PCs may utilize a smaller organization regularly. Regardless, the toxic cloud is a unique enemy in that it acts as a nerve agent. That means chemical suits. Oxygen tanks. Environmentally sealed AVs. Plastic tunnel annexes to attach to doorways. In other words, it's a hassle, and it takes time to prepare. Trauma Team may not openly decline to rescue characters (especially account holders), but they are unable to act in the normal "quick response" timeframe that they usually do. And that gives Petrochem all the more time to get ready for them.

CONTACTING PETROCHEM

Unless the PCs have a friend or contact with Petrochem and know his/her number, they are unable to reach a human operator at Petrochem. The main number is linked to a pre-recorded message after hours that states the business hours of Petrochem and a brief listing of its departments.

If (in the smallest chance) PCs actually know someone in Petrochem, and they are able to contact him/her with information about the explosion, hooray for the PCs. The question is, now what? Unless their contact is extremely high on the

corporate ladder (i.e., vice-president of exports) there is little they can do. Making waves during a sensitive crisis as such can bring an early "retirement" for employees. Few people are willing to snoop around within their own firm at the benefit of another party. This makes for a wasted call on the part of the PCs.

CONTACTING FRIENDS/RELATIVES

What are the PCs going to say? "Help, I'm trapped in a dive bar with strangers and the neighborhood is covered in a thick, toxic cloud. Could you pick me up?"

Not a chance. Friends and amiable relatives of the PCs could be more than happy to help, but they can't think on their own in this case. The player characters are going to have to give specific instructions for tasks if they want to utilize people on the outside. As a GM, you shouldn't have to do the thinking for them. PCs should supply ample information for the NPCs to carry out the task. Remember: At this point, no one outside the 555 prefix area is aware of the situation. And NPCs aren't mindreaders.

CONTACTING OTHER CHEMICAL COMPANIES

Just like Petrochem, other chemical companies are closed at this hour. PCs will receive a prerecorded message stating normal business hours.

HF solutions (hydrofluoric acid) in contact with skin result in marked tissue destruction; undissociated HF readily penetrates skin and deep tissue where the corrosive fluoride ion can cause necrosis of soft tissues and decalcification of bone; the destruction produced is excruciatingly painful. Tendinitis and tenosynovitis may result. Fluoride ion also attacks enzymes and cell membranes. The process of tissue destruction and neutralization of the hydrofluoric acid is prolonged for days, unlike other acids that are rapidly neutralized.

REALITY CHECK

Q: Is HF really as nasty as it sounds?

A: Most definitely.

By now you're wondering how something can cause 1d6 damage per round consistently until a victim is dead. Then again, maybe you're not. Regardless, this excerpt was taken from *Chemical Hazards of the Workplace, 2nd Edition*, by Nick H. Proctor, Ph.D., James P. Hughes, M.D., and Michael L. Fischman, M.D., M.P.H. Other related sources are mentioned at the end of this adventure.



ICEBREAKERS AND OTHER FILLERS

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

Once communication has been cut off or completed, characters have little to do but wait for a response. The TV in the bar is set to Network 54 and the volume is turned down. It is currently rerunning the 10:00 news in highlight format. No formal coverage or announcements of the crisis has interrupted the program. The bar is silent. Everyone is looking at everyone else, tensely. Screams, cries, and other sounds of disaster can be heard in the distance (a few blocks away, maybe) as the cloud continues to spread. Nothing can be done about it.

To break the uneasy silence, characters may strike up conversation with someone else in the bar. As a GM, feel free to roleplay the NPCs as you like, adding spice to an otherwise dull and trite character. You may wish to keep the moment tense, and have the inhabitants suspicious and paranoid (some of them probably already are), or you may want to lighten things up by having Mack break out a deck of cards and offer a friendly game of five-card stud! As stated before, you have the wheel. Make it fun, make it intriguing, or make it frightening...whatever you like. Here are some approaches to help fill in the gaps.

CARDS, ANYONE?

Mack: He pulls out a deck of playing cards and offers it to anyone interested. As the bartender, he must remain at the bar, but others (like PCs, Greg, Shark, etc.) are free to take the deck and start a game.

BOARD UP THE WINDOWS

Eddie: He suggests that everyone assist in boarding up the windows and sealing the entrances further to ensure a secure room. This provides busy work for characters to keep their minds off the horrible and strange sounds outside.

TAKE INVENTORY

Even this early in the night, people may be concerned about provisions. The bar is thoroughly examined (under Eddie's supervision) to get an accurate list of food, water, utensils, and other items that could be helpful. A partial inventory list is provided with the map of the bar. Please feel free to make any additions or alterations to the list if necessary.

SWAPPING STORIES

Silver Shark: Shark gets curious about the player characters, suspicious that one of them is a corporate spy. He decides to see if the team members have a history to them. "So what's your story?" he starts, prodding the PCs to share a story about one of their previous jobs, their childhood, or whatever comes to mind. If someone doesn't like to talk about themselves, Shark drags a trustworthy PC to his side and whisper "watch that one—he (she) is keeping a secret, and it could get us all killed." Improvise when the moment necessitates it.

SITTING BACK

Most of these suggestions are given in case the player characters are at a loss for actions. This may not be the case if your PCs have a few ideas of their own. You may want to wait and see what they do to break the silence. Whatever scenario you decide, it eventually gets to be 12:30 AM, when Network 54 makes its first public announcement about the cloud. Unless something particularly nasty occurs, characters should be present to witness the report on the bar's TV.

10 CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR CORNERED CHARACTERS

1. What motivated you to take this job?
2. Would you do a job for free?
3. Do you have anyone you trust?
4. Will you trust your teammates after this mission?
5. If you had to trust someone in this room to save your life, who would it be?
6. Do you carry any photos of friends or family with you? If not, why not?
7. Do you often rely on violence to solve your problems?
8. How did you get started in this business?
9. Have you ever killed someone?
10. Do you think you'll be missed when you die? If not, why?

INITIAL WARNING

NETWORK 54 NEWS: 12:30 AM

Immediately after the 10:00 highlights end, the screen shifts to a loud blue background with the words "Special Report" running across the top of it repeatedly. In the center of the screen, in large type, are the words "Front Line News." A voice cuts in:

"This is Net 54's Front Line Report. We interrupt our normally scheduled program to bring you this special report live and on-the-scene. Now here's Nancy Camella."

The screen cuts to a shot of Nancy at the studio, holding hard copy at the newscounter.

"Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Just moments ago, in the Night City bay between the Del Coronado Bridge and the North Marina Harbor, a tanker belonging to Petrochem Corporation ignited in a fiery cloud as it was subject to an unwarranted attack. Little is known of the saboteurs at this time, though some suspect corporate terrorism. The danger of this explosion is not the perpetrators, but the possibly lethal gaseous chemicals that have formed as a result of the explosion. A cloud of this chemical mixture is currently spreading over the marina district at an alarming rate. Residents of the

PROP SUGGESTION FOR GM:

To enhance the news presentation and get the message across with a greater impact, get two pieces of construction paper; one red and one black. They don't have to be very big; normal page size or 9 x 12 would be fine. When Bob switches to Infrared, hold up the red square in front of your face. Speak from behind it when Bob delivers the line about the lens frosting as well. Then, when Bob is cut off abruptly, switch to the black square and hold it up until Nancy starts to speak. The black square can be reused for future news reports if it delivers the proper effect with the players.

bay area and surrounding neighborhoods are urged to stay indoors, seal doors and windows with towels, and deactivate air conditioning systems until further information is acquired about the nature of this spill and the resulting cloud. Exposure could result in illness or possibly even death. For a better look at this cloud, here is Bob Collier. Bob?"

The scene switches to a man dressed in a suit and trenchcoat inside an AV next to a glass porthole. The *thrum* of jet engines can be heard in the background. Outside the porthole, part of the Del Coronado Bridge can be seen through the dense fog that blankets the bay area.

"Nancy, I'm circling above the bay area right now at about 500 feet to get a better look at this cloud, and I must tell you, it's hard to distinguish through the dense fog that covers most of the city right now. It may be that the fog has had a strange effect on the chemical spill and diluted it or negated it. I can't see much but rooftops from here. Wait! If you'll notice below, the fog covering most of the marina district on this side of the bridge has a slightly paler aura to it. Can you make this out? Steve! Drop us closer!"

The paleness does seem to be growing and spreading, yes, maybe as far as Harborview Street and Bridge Avenue right now. It looks like it's travelling steadily south, it's very hard to tell what is fog and what is chemical at this point. It could be as far south as Commercial. I...don't know how much further it will spread at this point. But we will keep circling until we find some evidence of its effect. Harbor Police are on their way, as you can see there, and AV traffic is starting to get heavy, but other than that...

"Wait a minute. My window is fogging up. It's getting harder to see outside." The anchorperson speaks to the pilot.

"Steve! This window is fogging up! Can I link up to the external cameras and go to Infrared?" Steve yells back something inaudible to the audience. "Okay!" replies Bob.

"Alright. All of the windows are fogging up, and my driver is having an increasingly hard time piloting, but we'll go to Infrared, and maybe we'll get—"

The screen switches to a red-tinged blur. Nothing is visible through the Infrared filter.

"Christ! It must've frosted the lens as well! Uh, my driver is informing me that we need to return to the station and—"



The screen leaps to pure static and television snow. There is no further response.

The screen switches back to Nancy in the studio.

"It...seems that we have lost contact with Bob. But we have been in contact with a representative of Petrochem off and on for the past few minutes. Apparently, the terrorists used some sort of chemical irritant with the explosives that, when mixed with the harmless compounds carried by the tanker, produced a toxin that is now spreading throughout the bay area. Because Petrochem has yet to get a response team to the site to analyze the cloud, they are at a loss as to how to prevent its growth if it hasn't already dissipated. However, we at Network 54 will be bringing you updates live and on-the-scene, as we will accompany the Petrochem Disaster Response Teams into this cloud.

I have just been informed that the teams are already in route to the area and will have the cloud contained shortly. So please, do not panic. If you are in the bay area or surrounding districts, please remain calm. Stay indoors if possible and seal any obvious means of ventilation. For all intents and purposes, treat this as a Level 5 Smog Alert. If you are in an AV or other flight vehicle, please leave the area immediately. Heavy air traffic in the Marina and neighboring districts will prevent the Disaster Response Teams from reaching the cloud before it spreads further. Stay tuned to this station for more news as it happens."

The screen switches back to the Front Line News title screen and then goes to commercial.

A CAPTURED AUDIENCE, 12:45 AM

The inhabitants of Paradise Lost most likely meet the 12:30 report with mixed reviews. Some may be happy that the public has been warned and that help is on its way, while others (like Simon and Shark) may be concerned about the honesty of the reporting. Any character with some sense can put it together: Net 54 had a lot of information about the crisis very quickly, and they did mention a source in Petrochem, which means that Petrochem is really running the show here. References to "terrorists" and "saboteurs" may have the PCs nervous, especially since most of the people in the bar are already suspicious of them. No new reporting will happen for another 15 minutes, as Net 54 obtains more footage and prepares to enter the area with the Petrochem Disaster Response Teams. The channel just runs previews, PSAs, adblips, and highlights of other 54 shows during the interim.

Characters may continue their previous actions before the news release interrupted them, or they may seek other actions after listening to the report. Here's a scenario describing a possible situation inside the bar.

EDDIE: Everything's gonna be fine. Teams are on their way.

GREG: How do you know? How do you know they really are coming?

EDDIE: Because the newslady just told us, you idiot!

GREG: But who do you think told her that? Someone from Petrochem! Heck, they could tell Network 54 anything right now and the newscasters would say it, you know why? Because they are the only ones who get to go straight into the cloud with the response teams! They get the really juicy stuff! So, as long as they want the exclusive on this puppy, Petrochem gets to hold the strings, you see?

EDDIE: But, Petrochem has to get here soon or else this cloud will spread even further and kill even more people!

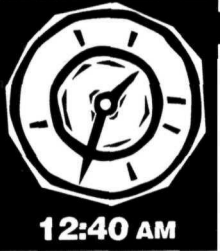
GREG: Do you think they care? They just want to make sure they aren't fingered for this disaster. That's why they fed the network the story about the sabotage! They heed scapegoats!

BOB: (rambling in a drunken manner) Ssscaygoess, thas right! They need usss!

EDDIE: Well, what can we do about it? We're trapped here until help arrives! The phones don't work, the windows are frosted so we can't see outside, the air conditioning is shut off so can't get fresh air...we're trapped!

SIMON: I say we stay here, keep calm, play some cards, and pass the time until the rescue teams arrive. I'm willing to bet that if Petrochem doesn't do something about the spill quickly, another chemical company will take action and dispense a large-scale rescue operation just to be the hero and Petrochem the villain. Someone will rescue us, I just know it.

At this point in time, PCs might offer suggestions about the current situation, but because it's been less than an hour since they entered and sealed the bar, the easiest option is to wait it out. Shark is quick to point that out.



OTHER ACTIONS...

Is Casey Still Alive?

After the news report it becomes increasingly obvious that Casey must

be rendered unconscious or possibly even killed—quickly. He starts breathing heavy and pulls out a very heavy autopistol and chambers a round. Setting it on the table in front of him (amid all the empty beer mugs), he scans the room, looking for a fight. He says nothing, but the rage of cyberpsychosis can be seen behind his electronic eyes.

Mack Makes His Move

Mack writes a little note to Shark on a napkin, out of anyone's sight, and hands it to Cherry Moon to deliver. Shark receives it stealthily (Very Difficult Awareness check for anyone who's watching) and reads it:

The name of the Corp at the bar is Simon.
I heard him on the phone earlier.

Shark doesn't understand it, as he never acquired the information about the Petrochem representative. But, he might ask one of the party members about it and if they were fortunate enough to discover the information about Simon before the mission, they know exactly who he is and how valuable he is to them in the future. If Simon is still suspicious of the PCs, or if the PCs have been hostile toward him, he doesn't share the note from Mack.

Cherry Moon Makes Her Move

Noting that Jim "Razorhead" Casey is leaning toward violent and destructive tendencies, Cherry opens her purse and drops some heavy-duty sedatives into his beer. As she approaches him to hand him the beer with the dissolved drugs, Cherry hopes that no one loses their cool and make a move on him before they get a chance to take effect. It takes a little over a minute (20 rounds) to take effect. Mack, behind the bar, is the only one to see her unless others are at the bar next to her when she gets the refills. If combat with Jim ensues shortly after he consumes the beer, keep track of the time. The sedatives may be the party's only salvation.

Sweating With Simon

After several attempts to reach Elizabeth via phone, Simon gives up and realizes he's been left to fend for himself. Liz has control of the media, and, therefore, control of his life. She could paint any picture she wanted, and since Net 54 has already told the story of a "terrorist attack," chances are she's going to finger the group in the bar along with Shark. He just has to keep his cool and maintain total secrecy about

his employment with Petrochem. He has no identification on him that links him to Petrochem, so that's not a problem. But he looks like a corp, so he needs to invent a company for which he works in case people get suspicious. Suspicion can get him killed.

KNOCK KNOCK: 12:57 AM

The harbor outside has been deathly quiet for the past several minutes. But now, from the silence, a new sound arises. The mechanical *whir and thud* of a malfunctioned cyberleg. The raspy, guttural sound of someone breathing with liquid in his or her lungs. The sound builds and builds until it reaches the back door. The doorknob turns repeatedly as the stranger tries to enter the bar. Failing that, he pounds and pounds on the door and tries to scream:

"Open the door! Open the fracking door! Let me in!
I need help! Open the door!"

This continues for a few minutes until he finally gasps and dies at the other side of the door, or until someone tries to speak with him and let him in. This poor cybered fellow managed to last much longer in the gaseous acid due to Toxin Binders and a lot of bioware. The acid is still eating his insides, just more slowly. Half-crazed, he says anything to get in away from the cloud (not that it helps). For instance:

EDDIE: (at the door) Is the cloud still out there?

STRANGER: No no! It's gone! It's all gone! Now (cough cough) let me in!

The cloud is by no means gone, of course. But if someone opens that door, the door space will flood with the hydrofluoric acid gas. The person who opened the door is immediately affected: roll 1d6 for damage. *If no one shoves him out of the way and shuts the door in the same round, the cloud will spread.* As stated before, the gas spreads one space in all open directions, every other round, at the end of the round. Characters in any neighboring spaces feel lingering side-effects of the cloud in the form of an irritating "burning" sensation on exposed skin. Though the PCs aren't lethally infected by the cloud, it raises a panic among the people in the bar, as no one knows the true nature of the cloud. Hopefully, the PCs are wise enough to keep the door shut.

The stranger pleads with the inhabitants of the bar until he finally dies in a convulsing heap on the other side of the door at 1:02 AM—two minutes into the 1:00 report on Net 54. The towel sealing the bottom frame of the back door begins to turn a deep red as the blood of the dead stranger creeps through the crack.

THANK GOD FOR THE NEWS

NET 54 UPDATE: 1:00 AM

The "Front Line News" title screen appears and the audience is launched into another broadcast as the screen jumps to Nancy Camella.

"Good morning. Just over an hour ago, the Petrochem tanker, *Arabia's Wish*, was headed for port in Del Coronado Bay here in Night City. But at approximately midnight, as the ship was waiting for the traffic in the bay to clear, a group of chemical saboteurs boarded it and detonated its cargo. The result was a dangerous toxic cloud that is slowly spreading into Night City through the Marina district and creeping frighteningly close to the heart of the downtown sector. Boats due to arrive in the bay area have been rerouted, and merchants already in the bay have been warned to evacuate. Drivers of both ground and air vehicles have been issued a general alert notifying them of the situation and instructing them to the proper routes out of the affected area. Residents in the 555 area code have been instructed to remain indoors and seal all possible routes of ventilation, including air conditioning units. Neighboring area codes are now being affected. If you are in any of these districts and have been trying to reach the authorities, please remain calm. Due to the amount of incoming calls to InterNet, a prerecorded message has been set that give explicit instructions to callers. Authorities have managed to maintain what is best called a mobile barricade, of sorts, to attempt to contain the chaos. But local police and government officials are ill equipped for this type of disaster, which is why the Petrochem Disaster Recovery Teams have mobilized and are now attempting to contain the toxin. We'll go to you live and on-the-scene in a moment, but first a few tips about the toxin, symptoms to look for if exposed, and possible prevention methods.

"According to Petrochem, the toxic mist produced from the sabotage is known as hydrofluoric acid, a version of hydrogen fluoride, or HF. Normally, HF is used to produce laundry detergent, silicon chips for semiconductors, and gasoline. In mist form, HF is very lethal. Exposure is through either inhalation or skin contact. Hydrofluoric acid is a clear, colorless and extremely corrosive mist that attacks skin and other soft tissues, enzymes, cell membranes, and also decalcifies bone. It is extremely lethal, and direct exposure will

most likely result in instantaneous death. If you feel you may have been exposed to HF, (*hold up Tips Sheet*) these are the known symptoms:

"Burns along exposed portions of skin. Bleeding sores. Blurred vision or blindness. A hacking cough. Breathing problems. Severe irritation to the nose or throat.

"If you or anyone you know has exhibited these symptoms and you are outside the current affected area, please proceed to the nearest hospital. Emergency personnel will be able to assist you, and you will need to answer some questions pertaining to your exposure. If you are near the affected area please, do not panic. Measures are being taken to secure the toxin and neutralize it even as we speak. Any resistance or aggressive action taken against the Night City Police, the Petrochem Disaster Recovery Teams, or any personnel assisting them will only delay the eventual neutralization of the toxin. These individuals will be suppressed if they interfere further. Now, to Jack Sterling live at the west barricade on Bear Street with the Disaster Response Team."

The screen switches to a foggy streetscape with silhouettes of tall buildings in the background. Immediately, shouting voices can be heard, with a cacophony of gunfire. Jack is in an environmentally sealed yellow suit and is holding an older, 20th century model microphone.

"It has been only one hour since the initial explosion aboard *Arabia's Wish* and already four square miles of the marina area are at the mercy of a very lethal chemical cloud. (*Hold up Map Icon*) I'm here waiting to escort the Response Team into the affected neighborhood as we will be giving you live footage of the rescue operation. Things have been pretty hectic around here at the borderline. As you can probably hear and see behind me and to my right, the public is in a state of chaos. This is much like a riot, and it's all the police can do to keep them from the Petrochem vans that hold the neutralizing solution. People here are in utter hysterics: if someone thinks someone else is showing symptoms of HF exposure, their first reaction is to shoot them before it spreads. Even though it spreads through the air more than anything else."

From the station Nancy asks a question: "Jack, how are they going to neutralize the toxin?"



1:02 AM



"Well, Nancy, that's a very good question and I imagine it's on everyone's mind at this moment. What they've been trying to do for the past few minutes is to coat the wind-screens of their AVs with a special agent that will keep it from etching and frosting over. Then they plan to strafe the outer perimeter with an aerosol form of calcium glucomate. This should contain the HF cloud fairly easily. After that, they plan to spiral in deeper into the affected neighborhoods and release calcium glucomate much like the crop dusters did back in the 20th century. At the same time, a team of rescuers from each of the major streets will move in using ground transportation and go door-to-door to treat anyone affected with the toxin and evacuate the others. The ground trucks will also be spraying the glucomate, but from hoses, like a fire truck."

"What does this neutralizing agent look like? What will it do to the environment?"

"The glucomate spray is really a fine gel that foams or expands somewhat after oxidization. It's also sticky. In spray form, as Petrochem has it here, it is too fine to determine much of a color, but I suspect we'll see something when it's applied to an entire neighborhood. I don't know if it will damage the environment any more than the environment is already damaged, but I am concerned about another issue concerning the glucomate. Nancy, as you must realize, the cloud has spread over an area of about four square miles. Now, that's a lot of ground to cover. Or air, as the case may be. And it is obvious that Petrochem lacks sufficient glucomate to—"

The screen goes completely black for three seconds. Then the station camera is activated, and Nancy faces the audience, concerned and puzzled. She is holding a headset communicator to her head, pressing on the earpiece with her hand.

"Jack? Jack? Apparently, we are having technical difficulties on location, but hopefully we'll be able to return to Jack later this evening. Later on, we'll be talking with the Mayor via telephone about his hasty declaration of Imminent Peril, a Petrochem executive about the terrorist act and who could be behind it, and a better look at some of the effects of HF. Stayed tuned to Net 54, your channel for the complete report on the Chemical Crisis. We'll return at 1:30 with more news."

Back to commercials.



AT HOME WITH THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF DUPREE

Awakened by a call from his personal secretary, William Brenner, VP of Operations at DuPree is informed of the situation in Night City with the Petrochem tanker and the resultant chemical crisis. He knows instantly what has happened. He calls Mr. Cornell.

"This is Cornell."

"You've gone way too far this time, Cornell."

"What? Who is this?"

"Bill Brenner. You know me. I'm the one who got you the job. Look, when I told you to take care of the takeover incident, I didn't tell you to slaughter dozens of innocents in the process. Do you realize what you released into the atmosphere?"

"Get real, Bill. You're not going to bring a big boy like Petrochem down unless you pull out all the stops and hand the media a real juicy disaster. No one is going to pay attention to a major firm in 'possession' of potentially dangerous waste. But they are going to scream and shout if it rolls up to their front door. I made the most of the opportunity and I think it's panning out quite nicely, so get off your moralistic horse. That attitude wouldn't get you out of a janitorial position."

"Oh, but you're forgetting that I'm the Vice-president of this firm, and I can chew you up into little pieces just by making a phone call."

"Spare me the threats, Billy boy. Detonating a chemical hazard within city limits was a cake walk for me. You think it's going to be any harder for me to kill a wimpy executive with a guilty conscience? Look, I've got it covered. I went to the trouble to hire a fixer named Shark. He works—or worked, rather—in the bay area. I had him put a team together to board *Arabia's Wish* at midnight. Made it sound like an inside job, because I told him not to contact anyone else in Petrochem about it. Paid him handsomely. When they discover the bodies, they won't look any further."

"If the media even considers us as a possible suspect, you're going down," says Brenner nervously.

"I'll be sure to mention your name, Bill. Now get some sleep." At that, Cornell hangs up.

Unable to sleep, Brenner turns on the holovid and waits for the next news update from Net 54 about the crisis, thoughts spinning in his head.

WHAT'S ELIZABETH UP TO NOW?

The morning has just started for Elizabeth. After pouring herself another cup of coffee, she picks up the phone and makes another series of calls. Her first call is to the Net 54 station to confirm her interview time. Her next call is to the main AV with the Disaster Response Team to check on the situation with Jack Sterling and the containment procedure.

"Not good," states a Petrochem DRT member. "We're having trouble getting the calcium to stick everywhere. It's this humidity. It's making everything slippery. Plus, the fog mingles with the HF cloud so you really can't track it visually. We're having to use NXS Chemsensors to find it. The good news is that the wind factor is practically zero. And the better news is that a warm front from the southeast is due to hit in a couple of hours, and it should push the cloud out to the waterfront, where it will eventually dissipate."

"What about our friendly voice for Net 54?"

"Well, we told him to keep quiet about the glucomate problem, but he tried to pull one on us. We yanked the cord on him as quick as we could."

"He still got air time," Elizabeth says flatly.

"I know, I know. You want us to go to Plan B?"

"Did you get a big enough sample of his voice?"

"Definitely. And I talked with Tony about running camera and he said it would be no problem."

"Alright, do it. But bring them into the cloud, so no one will notice."

"Gotcha."

BACK TO PARADISE: 1:20 AM

Just minutes after the "Net 54 Update" is over, something moves to the side door of the establishment and tries to open it. It takes a Difficult Awareness check (visual) to notice the handle turning quietly. But after the unknown visitor reaches the conclusion that the door is locked, the visitor shakes the door in its frame violently. The door still does not budge. Characters in the bar (especially Greg and Eddie) begin to get very nervous. If anyone calls out to the thing on the other side, they get no response. Any towels that were placed along the sides of this door fall to the floor during



the angered attempt at entry. No fumes, mist, or clouds pour in after it—the door remains sealed. After a few moments of this, the thing stops.

Silence. Characters notice a strange, inhuman form move past the white window (completely frosted and etched) to another building next door. Silence again. Then a frantic rattling, as if it were trying another door. Then, suddenly a loud *crack!* and some quick shuffling, followed by human screams and gunfire. Then silence. The unknown figure doesn't return to Paradise Lost again.

This scene is just to raise the tension level within the bar. You will have two basic types of tension from this situation.

1. Fear and panic from people who think that some mutated, mean, ugly, and extremely dangerous monster is outside and trying to get in.
2. Fear and panic from people who think that the first group is going to panic too much and shoot through the door or otherwise breach the safety of the bar's walls.

You may have people pulling guns on other people, telling them to "get away from the door" or to "put the guns down." With imminent death all around them, everyone is nervous about everyone else ruining their security.

The thing outside should remain unknown for the interests of suspense. If someone opens the door or shoots at it, you may make it anything you like, as long as it's grotesque and horrifying. It could be a strange exotic conversion that reacted strangely to the toxin (like the Dragon or Mantis conversion), or it could be a full-body conversion going door-to-door, looting and murdering as it goes. However, even full conversion borgs die from exposure after a few hours. The main problem isn't the frightening thing outside; it is the cloud that comes in with it.

WHAT DO WE DO NOW? 1:34 AM

Part of the purpose of this scenario is to put characters in a position where they must sit and wait for help in order to do anything significant. Let the minutes tick by. If your team is actively involved in the game, the quiet moments serve as tension builders. If players start to look bored or uninterested, try to bring them back into the reality of their situation by passing them a note that says something like this:

You begin to notice mild burns developing on your arms.

Your face feels uncomfortably warm.

You feel nauseated.

The character may not have a lethal dose of HF poisoning, but even the slightest exposure to the toxin (20-30 ppm) results in burns and irritation. If other characters notice that the person's face is slightly burned, the bar could be thrown into a panic thinking that the cloud had invaded silently, when in reality it had not. Also, if you happen to have a trigger-happy survivalist, he or she might attempt to kill the character exhibiting symptoms of mild exposure just out of paranoia. But you already know the consequences of a fire fight in the bar. This is a good way to get timid or distracted PCs back into the tension of the situation, but it is also a good way to get them killed—not by the HF exposure, but by the team. Welcome to *Cyberpunk*, choomba.

If you still have trouble with players who are uncomfortable roleplaying in a confined environment with little to do, invent your own distractions and tension builders. But try to keep the PCs in conversation, rather than in action. Scenes last longer that way, and the group is somewhat forced to roleplay with each other (which is always a healthy thing for a roleplaying game).

WHAT'S ON THE TV ON OTHER CHANNELS?

If PCs are interested in news coverage from another network, they find that most of the other networks are "behind the eight ball" in regards to response time, and much of the reporting is hand-me-down information previously covered by Net 54. Some networks are of course reporting scenes live from the streets or taking aerial shots overhead, but none of them are able to get close enough to the Petrochem Response Teams to see exactly what they are doing. Net 54 has the exclusive on that end. One station is running live footage round-the-clock from an AV overhead, occasionally chased off by Petrochem security AVs or NCPD aerial patrol units.

"BACK TO YOU, BOB"

REFEREE OPTION

If no one in the bar knows that Simon is the corporate with them, you can have his photo appear during this part of the interview so that everyone watching is able to identify him. If you elect to use this option, it probably stirs things up immediately, and consequently the PCs miss out on the rest of this interview. It is important that someone hears about the reward for Simon, or else he may be shot on the spot. If everybody gets trigger-happy and pulls guns on Simon, let Shark be the restraining character to try and talk some sense into the party. Hopefully the PCs have the wisdom to wait and hear his side of the story (or at least the rest of the interview) before making any decisions. But don't feel the need to overprotect Simon, however. If a player character shoots and kills him, the deed is done and the team has to cope with it.

"Where is he now?" Nancy pursues.

"We had him trapped in a building just before the explosion. He may still be in there. If he is, and there are people with him, Petrochem is offering a reward of 10,000 eurodollars for his return."

"Miss Schell, this is not *Night City's Most Wanted*. May we continue?"

"Of course. As I was saying, Simon operates through a detailed network of 'freelance' operatives, which rotates regularly, making it harder to identify his team. And he held a fairly powerful position in the corporate ladder at Petrochem, which made it difficult at first."

"So you're telling me that Petrochem doesn't have control over the accessibility of their confidential information, so much that one person within the corporation can get access to the shipment of a large amount of chemicals to Night City, acquire the necessary reactants to make those chemicals

The "Front Line News" title screen pops up for only a second as the scene switches to two women sitting across from each other. Nancy, on the left, speaks up. "Good morning ladies and gentlemen. We're back with more detail about the recent chemical disaster here in Night City with the Petrochem tanker *Arabia's Wish*. Here with me is Petrochem's Public Relations Executive, Ms. Elizabeth Schell. Hopefully she'll shed some light on how this disaster occurred, who was responsible, and what to do about it now.

"Elizabeth: it was originally understood that this accident was really a result of a terrorist attack. Is this still what Petrochem believes?"

"Oh, most certainly, Nancy. Shortly before midnight, a team of terrorists boarded the ship, set a chemical explosive in her hull, and escaped via speedboat to the docks nearby."

"How do you know this?" asks Nancy.

"Because their contact was one of our men," Schell says.

"You mean this was an inside job?"

"Unfortunately, yes. Corporate Intelligence had been monitoring him for quite some time, under suspicion of trade secret sharing and espionage. We just couldn't catch him in the act. One of our operatives witnessed the meet with him tonight and contacted our office. But by then it was too late."

"Why doesn't Petrochem have the capabilities to deal with emergencies like this quickly and effectively? It seems to me that if Petrochem knew of this person and tracked him to the bay area before the incident, they could stop anything disastrous before it happened." Nancy waits for a reply.

"Normally, yes, but Simon is a slippery individual," says Elizabeth.

"Simon?"

"Simon Carmichael is the saboteur. I don't think its a breach in confidentiality to state his name now that he is a confirmed corporate traitor."



lethal, and hire a team to sabotage it right outside this city. Am I understanding you correctly?"

"Not so, Nancy. I didn't say he operated alone. There was definitely assistance from another group, possibly another chemical company that would have intimate knowledge of chemical compounds. Simon was conveniently available to release certain information about Petrochem's operations, but not nearly enough to do the damage that he did. It's just not possible."

"Do you have any idea who would conspire with Mr. Carmichael?"

"Not at this time," Elizabeth states flatly.

"Surely your intelligence operatives could have identified other operatives from competitors," parries Nancy.

"Not if they were hired freelancers."

"Elizabeth, it sounds like Petrochem desperately needs to revamp its intelligence division."

"Most assuredly, Nancy."

"Back to the incident. You said that *Arabia's Wish* was carrying harmless chemicals, and that the terrorists brought aboard another chemical to create the hazardous compound that threatens Night City this minute. Explain this further."

"I don't know all the details about the chemicals yet, but our Disaster Response Teams can gather that information and discover how it happened," finishes Elizabeth.

"The resultant cloud has been identified as hydrofluoric acid, according to your teams, and hydrofluoric acid is just hydrogen fluoride when it's exposed to air. So could it have been that you were carrying HF aboard *Arabia's Wish* and the terrorists simply detonated the ship?"

"Are you suggesting that Petrochem transported a highly toxic chemical into city limits without authority?" Elizabeth frowns at her interviewer.

"I'm asking you—if you weren't transporting HF, then what was it you were transporting that magically turns into hydrogen fluoride when mixed with something? Because my sources indicate that it is not a chemical compound."

"And I told you, I don't know. The teams—"

"—will gather the information, of course. The Petrochem teams. Elizabeth, we did a little research to try to get a manifest of the chemicals transported on *Arabia's Wish*, but as it

turns out Petrochem has the manifest listed as classified information. Now why would that be?" Nancy allows a small grin of triumph.

"We wouldn't want anyone with a fluent knowledge in chemistry and a little curiosity to be able to do what has happened, that's why. Nancy, I'd really love to continue this interview, but I have a lot to tend to as PR Manager and I'm afraid I have to get back to work."

"Yes, of course," Nancy says with an obvious fake smile. "Thank you for your time. I'm sure you have a lot to handle." She turns to the camera. "After these messages we'll give you an update on the neighborhood cleanup in progress, so stay tuned. I'm Nancy Camella and you're watching Network 54: your source for the latest news on the Chemical Crisis."

The screen switches to the Net 54 masthead and goes to commercial. Time to check the reactions at the bar.

SIMON SAYS "HOLY SMOKES I'VE BEEN FRAMED": 2:17 AM

Thanks to Mack's note earlier, Shark knows who Simon really is. And if Shark shared this note with the party, everyone else knows who he is, too. Simon is suddenly in a very uncomfortable position. If the PCs don't decide to eliminate him on the spot, Shark has an intense conversation with him, after asking the PCs to pull out their weapons and keep them trained on Simon. If Shark gets the chance to talk with Simon before some PC gets too trigger-happy, this is how it goes:

SHARK: So, you're the one who made the call to me.

SIMON: What? No! What call? I don't know what you mean!

SHARK: Which means that you set us up, didn't you?

SIMON: No, no! Honestly, I don't know anything about any call!

SHARK: Do you realize what a bad rep I would get if the team I hired were to get wasted like that? I'd be finished!

SIMON: It wasn't me! It wasn't me, alright? I don't know who it was but, look—Elizabeth sent me down here to make sure that the shipment arrive intact! I had no idea the thing would blow! I'm not even a spy! She just made me a scapegoat, the little witch!



MACK: I hate to say this, gang, but I think he's telling the truth. When you all came bursting in here after the explosion, good ole Simon here got on his cellular and made a call to Liz. He was very nervous. I don't think he'd be so nervous if he knew the tanker was supposed to blow.

SHARK: Good point. Then why did Elizabeth set you up, Simon?

SIMON: I've been trying to figure it out...

The conversation continues like this until the group reaches some conclusion about the whole mess. One thing is most likely to remain obvious: Simon is now important to the survival of the PCs. Everybody who was watching the interview believes that Simon is either a scapegoat for Petrochem's problems or he is truly a corporate spy. Every major chemical corporation will want to get their hands on him, for either reason. If he's just been used as a scapegoat, then Simon is more than willing to stab Petrochem in the back by telling all he knows to a competitor. If he is a spy (which he isn't, but the PCs don't know that), then he needs the help of a major corporation to hide him away for a while until things cool down. Of course, the PCs may be more interested in "cashing in" on the reward money mentioned in the interview, but if they know that Simon was set up by Elizabeth, do they truly believe they will be able to just hand Simon over to Petrochem? Was the reward a set up as well, to get the inhabitants of the bar all riled up? Who knows?

Further discussion about the situation most likely continues until something else happens. Right now, Simon is most interested in survival, so he says just about anything to the PCs to calm them down. Other NPCs in the bar have different opinions about the situation. Bob the drunk (if he's still conscious) demands that someone shoot Simon in the head because he's the son of the devil. The waitress Cherry Moon is very interested in the 10,000eb she could get from turning Simon in. Mack is very suspicious about the whole deal, and he's still unsure who the real good guys are. Eddie has had too much of this whole incident, and sits quietly at a table with his head in his arms. Greg the United Express employee is still panicked because he can't see out the windows to tell if the cloud is gone, or if the thing that was out there earlier is gone.

THE RACE IS ON!

Brenner knows what happened. He could tell exactly what Elizabeth was doing: tagging an outlet for the blame of the incident. That means Simon, if he's out there somewhere, is now very interested in talking about Petrochem. He's probably furious right now, if he witnessed the interview. If DuPree could get Simon out of there quickly and quietly, Brenner could have something positive come from this whole crisis. Simon could testify that Petrochem was actually carrying HF on board when it blew, for "unknown" reasons. He would tell the public anything in return for his protection.

Brenner makes a few phone calls, and within minutes a special team lifts off in a special, unlabelled AV bound for the heart of the chemical spill. The crew knows exactly where to go, since Brenner's quick research on Fixer Silver Shark stated that he operated out of a bar called Paradise Lost. If Ian Cornell hadn't told him the Fixer's name, the crew would've had to search the entire neighborhood. But he has the name. And soon he'll have Simon on his side.

A WOMAN SCORNE: 2:20 AM

The interview was far from what Miss Schell had anticipated. She had slipped, and Nancy—the coniving, blood-thirsty hound—had pounced on her. On national television. Elizabeth stomps up to Bill Stratford and screams at him about the interview. Bill apologizes again and again about Nancy's behavior, but states that it was beyond his control. Furious, she races out of the station to place a call.

A member of the Disaster Response Team answers. "This is team four."

"This is Schell. What's the status."

"Not too good. Only two city blocks, and its been 43 minutes."

"Survivors?"

"Oh, yeah. But they're completely paranoid. We've received a lot of fire from trapped civilians, even after announcing our arrival."

"How long until you reach the epicenter?"

"Could be another hour-and-a-half, maybe two hours."

"Which team now has the Net 54 linkup?"



2:24 AM

"Team two. They took the south quadrant. They're making a show."

"Good. This is what I want you to do. Go directly to the epicenter. Forget about rescuing survivors at this point. Your team is authorized to shoot any and all civilians in your way. When you get there, start a search pattern to cover the buildings in the area. Break into them. Terminate all survivors at the epicenter with extreme prejudice, until you have terminated Mr. Carmichael. Then resume your standard evacuation process in the west quadrant."

"Miss Schell, we're not professional hitmen here, we're just—"

"I don't care. In a few minutes the place is going to be swarming with AVs. None of them can get to Simon, do you understand?"

"...Yes ma'am. Team four out."

Eavesdropper Note: Any PC monitoring or scanning the radio channels has a good chance of overhearing this conversation.



LAST CALL FOR ALCOHOL

THINGS THAT MAKE YOU GO "HEY!": 2:25 AM

As the group gets even more restless about the situation outside, the news continues to show live footage of a Petrochem Disaster Response Team entering buildings, saving innocent civilians, spraying neighborhoods, and checking the density of hydrofluoric acid in the air. The camera spotlights the chemical scanner and shows that HF density is completely negated, but the viewers never get to see a chem scanner readout before the team sprays glucomate everywhere. Spokesman Jack Sterling narrates the scenes, but oddly enough he never steps in front of the camera to speak directly to the audience. Some of the scenery looks strangely out of place, and if any viewer cares to make a Difficult Awareness Check followed by an Average Intelligence Check, he or she will realize that the scenes are not accurate. Neighborhoods are being sprayed and tested for HF density, yes, but not in the Marina District. If further attention is paid, the smart viewer will recognize some building interiors from previous rescue scenes, as if the Response Team were breaking in to the same building from different sides. It's all just a show for the viewers—one that makes Petrochem the hero.

RESCUE! BUT, BY WHOM: 2:36 AM

The familiar hiss of a vectored-thrust vehicle is heard over the television as an AV lands just outside the bar, followed by a loud, hollow *thump*. Seconds afterward, a strange *zap!* echoes throughout Paradise Lost followed by a low, reverberating hum. Then a loudspeaker announces to the bar:

"Attention, inhabitants of Paradise Lost. We are about to enter the premises through the harbor door. We are here to rescue you. Do not attempt hostile actions against any member of the rescue team. If you do, the operation will immediately be called off and the bar will be eliminated from the air. A team member will open the harbor door shortly. Do not panic: the HF toxin around the door has been neutralized."

The unlabelled AV from DuPree waits a moment as its crewmembers analyze the bar's interior with remote sensors and compare readings with sensory data in the AV's database. Within seconds, the crewmembers establish a match and

know that one of the occupants of Paradise Lost is Simon Carmichael.

A man in a gray jumpsuit with a slung FN-RAL steps through the door. Behind him, in the brief moment the PCs see the outside, a blue laser stasis field surrounds the door frame, continuing to the side door of the AV, creating in effect a "laser tunnel" from the door of the AV to the door of the bar. The pale mist creeps all around the laser field but cannot penetrate it. The man closes the door behind him.

There are no identifying logos or insignias on the man's uniform. He quickly states that his name is Mr. Jones and that his firm is interested in Simon and anyone who works with him.

TECH NOTES: The cheesy blue laser field

Does it sound far-fetched? Maybe. However, the United States is currently looking at a number of alternative ways to dispose of its stockpile of hazardous chemical weapons. One such method, as described in an article from the July 1993 issue of *Popular Science*, is called "plasma arc pyrolysis," a possible method of chemical weaponry destruction. Plasma arc pyrolysis uses a thermal plasma field to atomize chemicals and recombines the elements into hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and hydrochloric acid in separate containment facilities. The plasma field is created by passing an electric current through a low-pressure airstream, an effect not wholly unlike that of a laser. Maybe by the year 2020 cleansing and disposal of hazardous chemicals will be this easy, since it will be even easier to create them.

If Simon is already dead, the party has to make a very believable argument to Mr. Jones as to why they should be rescued, because Jones notifies them immediately that his firm was interested only in the information Simon would have.

If Simon is alive and awake, things take another direction.

The negotiations following the arrival of Mr. Jones are very important. Mr. Jones does not reveal the name of his company, but he does guarantee that he is not from Petrochem and that he has no plans to return Simon to Petrochem in the



future. The people in the bar may or may not believe it, but Jones reasons that Petrochem would terminate the party immediately after discovering

Simon's presence, noting that they already knew he was inside through the use of sensitive scanning equipment.

It is up to Simon to state just who works with him and who does not at this point. PCs get the sense that anyone who isn't declared as an "associate" of Simon's will be terminated to guarantee that no one talks about the rescue to authorities because anyone left behind would be able to identify everyone else. Here are the stats for Mr. Jones and the rest of the DuPree team.

Mr. Jones and His Solos

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

Skills: Athletics 5, Awareness 8, Combat Sense 6, Elect. Security 3, Expert: Corporate Retrieval Ops 4, Handgun 4, interrogation 3, Intimidation 3, Rifle 6, SMG 4, Stealth 5

Cyberware: Cyberoptics; both—IE, TS, IR, UV, Interface Plugs, Nanosurgeons, Neuralware Processor, Skinweave (SP 8), Smartgun Link, Toxin Binders

Gear: FN-RAL assault rifle with 3 extra magazines (standard ammo), light metalgear jumpsuit (SP 10)

ATTENTION REFEREE

This is their only method of escape. If the PCs take a wrong turn during roleplay of this scene, the entire party could easily be killed. Time to roll that Fast Talk skill! Get Shark and the other NPCs involved in the negotiations. If Simon was treated very poorly during his stay with the party, he might tell Mr. Jones that no one in the bar works with him, and that they all need to be eliminated. PCs must think fast! As soon as the first shot is fired at Jones, the AV disengages the laser field and flies off, returning on a strafing run to riddle the bar with heavy suppressive fire from its chain gun. *Adios muchachos.* The PCs must realize this and think of another way to get the job done without harming Mr. Jones. But how?

- **Boom.** One shot to Simon's head and he's a goner. Enraged, Mr. Jones will reach for his assault rifle and demand

an answer. What to say? Maybe something like "when it was just the bunch of us, Simon was a groveling slug. We were going to kill him, but he started spouting all this confidential information about Petrochem. So we listened. Sure enough, he started talking and talking, and we couldn't shut him up. So now we all know some very interesting things about Petrochem, and you don't need Simon anymore because we're all willing to talk." Sure, it's a weak stab, but PCs are talking about their life here.

- "Hey, we may not work for this slime, but you need us as well! We taped the entire incident, and we'll trade you footage for freedom!" They may or may not have this footage, but it's a good ploy.

You get the general idea. Assuming that someone is quick enough to find a way to get rescued, the lucky personnel are ushered through the harbor door, through the laser stasis field ("Keep your arms at your sides at all times and do not touch the lasers!"), and into the AV where four other armored men in jumpsuits are waiting for them, also holding assault rifles, but not in a threatening manner. The survivors are pushed to the back of the AV as others enter.

"FINALLY, I GET TO SHOOT AT SOMEBODY!"

Simon (if he's still alive) is the first character loaded into the AV. As the second character moves into the laser tunnel, a shot is fired at them, and it's time for Initiative! You may want to draw the dock portion of the harbor map on a hex mat for a better visual effect, but here are the specifics:

The laser stasis field that forms a boxy tunnel from the AV door to the door of Paradise Lost is exactly 2 hexes long and 1 hex wide. A Petrochem Response Team solo in a chemsuit is lying prone at the left corner of the bar in the alleyway, laying down a suppressive fire zone in the 2 hexes of the laser tunnel. The bit Petrochem logo can be seen on his headpiece. Other Petrochem solos are on their way, but won't be there for several rounds (at your discretion). He is using an AKR-16 assault rifle, and he has plenty of extra clips. When one magazine is emptied, the solo takes an extra action (at a -3) to reload his rifle. The bullets flying through the laser field pass too quickly for any HF fumes to "piggyback" through the hole, but if a character falls outside the field, he/she is subjected to the toxin. No fumes enter the field even if someone passes through it, as it "wraps" around obstacles for a proper seal.



Petrochem Solo(s) in Chemsuit

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

Applicable Skills: Combat Sense 7, Rifle 7

Cyberware: Cyberoptics; both—IE, LL, Interface Plugs, Neuralware Processor, Skinweave (SP 8), Smartgun Link, Toxin Binders

Gear: Chemsuit (SP 6), AKR-16 assault rifle, 10 extra magazines, standard ammo

Jones starts screaming, "Run through it! Go! Go! Go!" because he knows that when there's one Petrochem assailant, there are more in the area. He doesn't want anyone caught in the crossfire. He also knows that the laser field keeping the toxin away uses a lot of battery power, including the one that operates the chain gun on the AV. The team is helpless until the AV is airborne. People need to start running in order of Initiative through the stasis field and make those Athletics tests: one per hex. If they fail, roll 1d6 to see how many times they are hit. For each hit, the character must make a Body Check (their Body or less) to be certain that the recoil of impact did not send them spinning out of the hex and through the laser field. Any bullets that hit the character in the torso area need no check, as the recoil won't be as nasty as a limb or head shot. Suddenly, the damage from the bullets doesn't seem nearly as lethal as the possibility of toxic poisoning. You already know the details about HF and its effects.

Example: Joe Solo moves first, so he runs through the laser tunnel right after Simon. The bullets fly around him. He rolls his first Athletics check and gets a 19. He only needed a 15 due to the rate of fire and area of effect, so the first hex is cleared. As he runs through the next hex, he rolls again, but this time he only gets a 14. The GM rolls 1d6 to determine how many bullets hit him: 3. Then he rolls for location: 2, 5, and 8. The chest shot does damage but doesn't knock him off balance. The next shot to the arm doesn't penetrate Joe's armor, but he must roll to see if it spins him out of the hex. Joe's Body is 9, and he rolls a 7. No problem. The last bullet hits his leg and does little damage, but he has to roll against his Body again to remain in the laser tunnel. This time he rolls a 10. Oops. Maybe if Joe Solo begs and pleads with the GM to let him use all his luck and change the number, the GM

would be merciful. If not, Joe Solo is swept off his feet by the force of impact and trips out of the field. Suddenly his flesh feels like it's on fire.

Sure, there are ways to eliminate the Petrochem Solo—like going prone and peeking out the door of the bar to fire back—but Jones repeats that the team doesn't have time for a firefight, so unless someone gets a lucky shot and rids the team of the Solo, they have very little choice but to move. To stress the point, you may want to have a few more Petrochem Solos arrive on the scene and get into position. Sure, it just takes a couple of shots that penetrate their chemsuits to do the trick, but what looks better—being in the bar or in the AV? Also, Petrochem starts shooting at the windows, letting the cloud roll into the bar. That gets people running if nothing else does.

Jones is the last man in the AV, yelling at the pilot to punch it. If Jones doesn't make it across the field (Athletics 5) then someone has to inform the pilot that everyone is aboard before he dusts off.

Also, if someone falls out of the stasis field and is exposed to the cloud (skin, eyes, etc.), they are affected by it, but it has dissipated enough to lose its immediate lethality. If the exposed character gets out of the cloud and into the AV within a few rounds (let's say 5), and is treated with calcium glucomate by one of the DuPree boys, he or she survives with burns and scars to show for his/her trouble.

THE FINAL HURRAH

ESCAPE: 2:49 AM

As the AV dusts off and evades the oncoming squad of Petrochem troops, it veers hard right and rockets over the ocean, swinging under the Del Coronado bridge, then rising out of the fog, away from the city. There are no identifying marks on the interior of the AV to connect it with a corporation. Jones tells the pilot to opaque the side and rear windows, so the passengers can't see where they are going. The PCs are finally out of that little dive bar for good. But what is going to happen now? Where are they going? Mr. Jones doesn't answer any questions, stating flatly that "you're being taken to a representative from our firm. If you know all you say you know then there won't be any trouble. After that, you'll be set free, or you may wish to accept protection from our firm until this crisis is handled." If the PCs have something substantial to share with "the firm" (DuPree, of course) then, they are relatively safe. If not, they may start to think about taking over the AV or something hostile like that. From this point, you have freedom as GM to steer the scenario in your own direction. There are a few obvious options:

- **Smooth and By The Numbers.** The PCs are led to an abandoned warehouse where they are interviewed at length with "the Representative" of the unknown firm. After several hours of Q&A, the PCs are set free or offered a new identity, compliments of the firm. Either way, no one gets killed.

- **Bail Out!** The PCs initiate combat in the AV on the way to the location, hoping that someone on their side has a good piloting skill. This is a potentially bad maneuver, for obvious reasons. You don't start a gunfight on a plane. If this alternative is chosen, the fight is short and sweet.

- **Hand It Over and Bug Out.** If the PCs promised hard copy or video/digital footage of the initial explosion, they might want to trade it in immediately in return for their release. If you're a nice GM, Mr. Jones might go along with that, especially if the footage the PCs hold is the only reason they were rescued. If you're feeling nasty, Jones might accept this offer, drop them off as soon as they reach shore, then call the police, strafe them with the AV, or notify his boss, who may hire hitmen to eliminate the PCs later.

HERE COMES THE RAIN, DO-BE-DO-WAH: 3:58 AM

A storm front from the southeast churns over Night City, releasing 2.5 inches of steady rainfall along the coast. Strong tropical winds from the south erase the early morning fog and mist and the town is drenched in rain. It is a cleansing rain in many ways. The HF cloud dissipates in the wind and the rain to nothing, as if it were never there. But it leaves city blocks blind with frosted windows. It takes NCPD and the Harbor Police hours to implement an effective cleanup program, but by eight that morning, the dreary massess of the working class are on the streets again, clogging up the sidewalks and avenues as if nothing had happened the night before.

Are there still traces of it? Small pockets here and there? Maybe. Is it still potentially lethal? Yes. Does it stop anyone from working? Not in Night City.

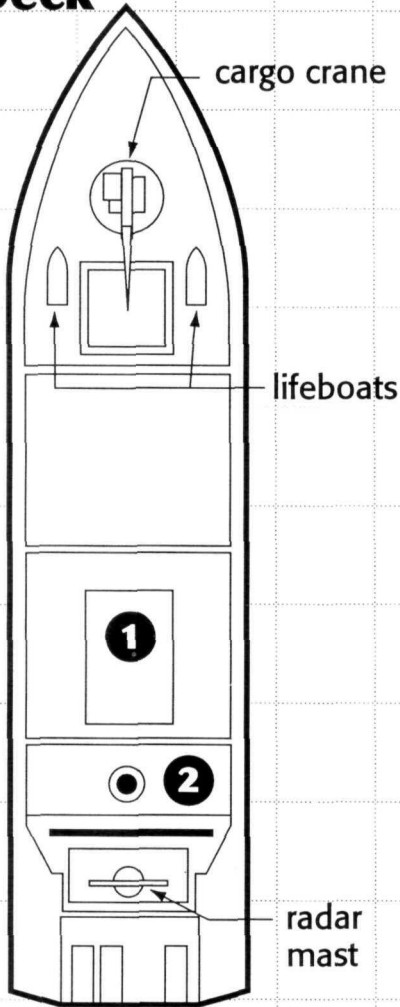
As this is a large-scale catastrophe, and the PCs were right in the middle of it, you could easily present the PCs with recurring problems associated with the incident: media interviews, corporate hits, revenge plots, etc. *Cabin Fever* is designed to provide the GM with such multiple ongoing post-module scenarios to enhance pre-existing campaigns or start new ones. Have fun with it.

Hydrogen Fluoride, or HF, is a real chemical in use by major corporations to produce items like laundry detergent and microchips. Because of its lethal properties, it is on the EPA Extremely Hazardous Substances List and Community Right-To-Know List. Welcome to the '90s.

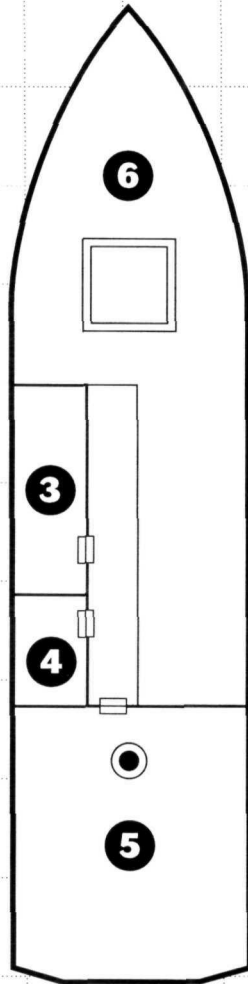
REFERENCES/OTHER SOURCES

1. Mayer L, Ceulich J: "Hydrogen fluoride (HF) inhalation and burns," *Arch Environ Health* 7:445-447, 1963.
2. Edelman P: "Hydrofluoric acid burns, State of the Art Reviews: Occupational Medicine—The Microelectronics Industry," 1:89-103, 1986.
3. *Criteria for a Recommended Standard Occupational Exposure to Hydrogen Fluoride*, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, DHEW (NIOSH) No. 76-143, pp/106-115, Washington, DC, US Gov't. Printing, 1976.
4. Largent EJ: *Fluorosis-The Health Aspects of Fluorine Compounds*, pp 34-39, 43-48, Columbus, Ohio State University Press, 1961.

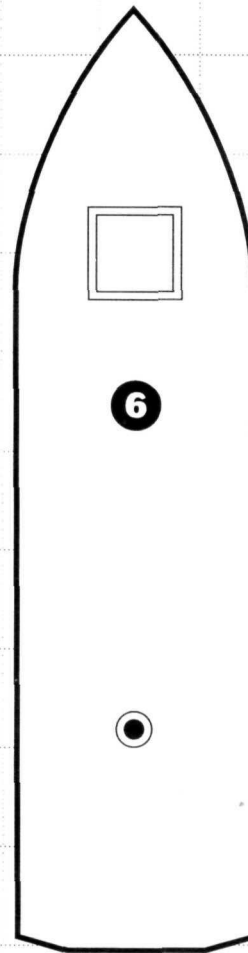
Deck



Level 1






Level 2&3



FEET

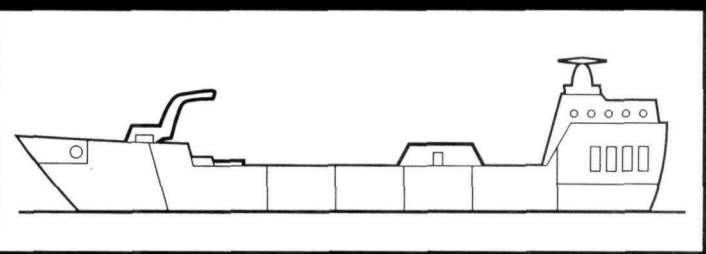


KEY

-  door
-  hatch
-  elevator
- 1** crew quarters
- 2** bridge
- 3** offices
- 4** communications
- 5** engine room
- 6** main hold



ELEVATION VIEW

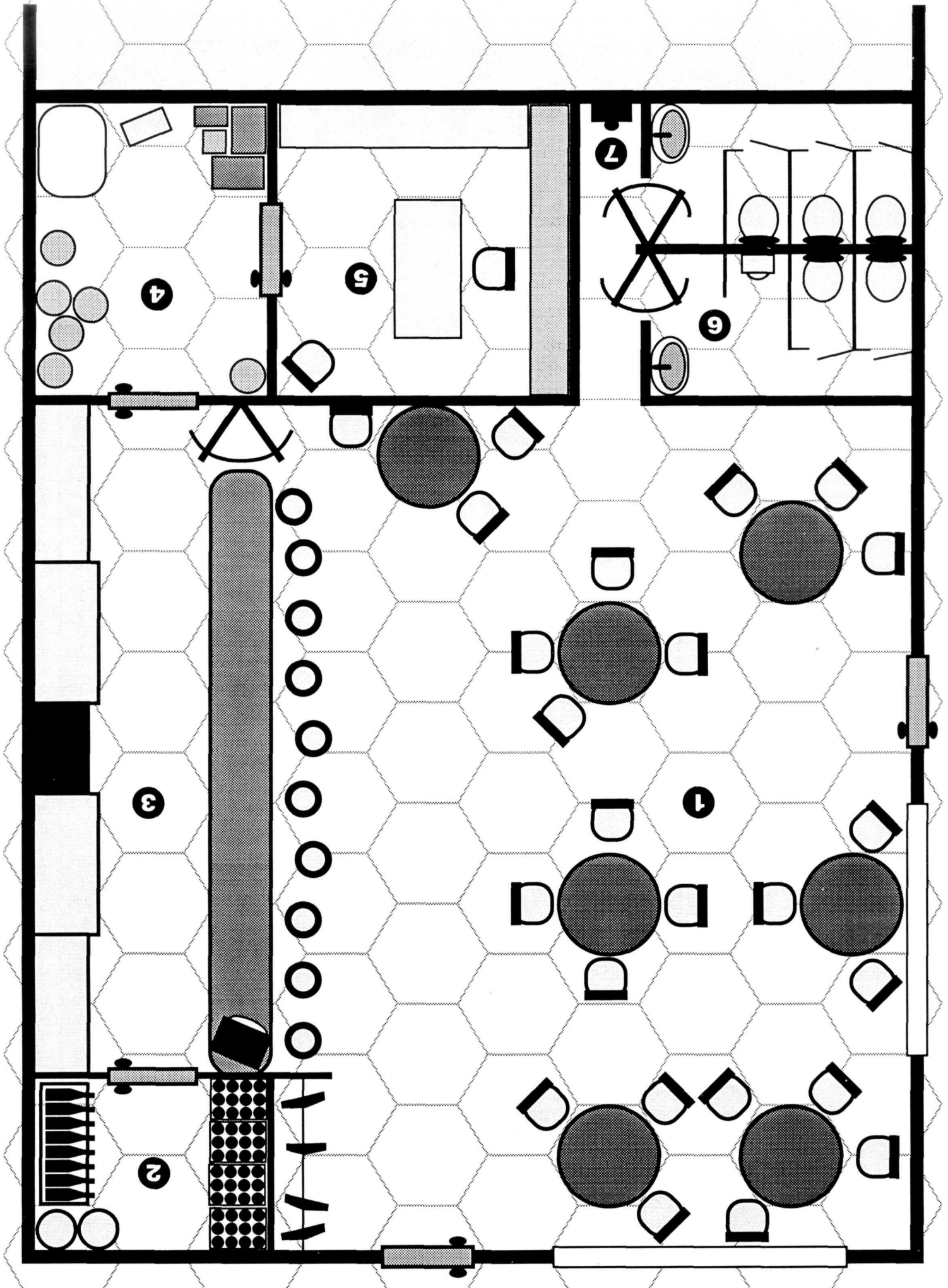


ARABIA'S WISH



POWER 

MODE 



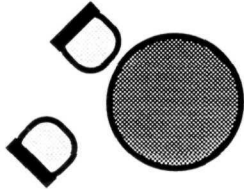
KEY: PARADISE LOST



WINDOW: SP 2



DOORS: SP 10



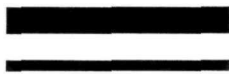
TABLE, CHAIRS: SP 4, SP 3



TELEVISION



STOOLS: SP 2



ALL EXTERIOR WALLS: SP 15

ALL INTERIOR WALLS: SP 12

GENERAL INVENTORY

1. **Open Seating Area:** The floor is wood paneling with concrete reinforcements. Coat rack with hangars are near the back door. Tables and chairs placed randomly around the room.
2. **Wine Storage:** Crates of wine, synthetic wine, and champagne bottles.
3. **Bar:** All hard and mixing liquor is kept underneath and behind the bar area. Other items stored here: ashtrays, bags of peanuts, ice (in the icemaker), limes and other fruits (in the refrigerator), coffee filters and instant packs, matchbooks, mixing straws, napkins, wash rages, towels, and lots of drinking glasses. Large items against right wall: icemaker, refrigerator, microwave, draft beer tap, soda tap, and coffeemaker.
4. **Storage:** A larger refrigerator in the lower right corner stores frozen sandwich meals. Other items in storage: soda and beer canisters for tap, carbonation canisters, surplus inventory for bar, and a few extra folding chairs. A caulking gun may also be found here.
5. **Office:** This is a pseudo-office for the boss, Barnaby Williams. As Mr. Williams runs the bar from a home office, very little is kept here, and then only in hard copy format. The larger pieces of furniture include a desk, filing cabinets, bookshelves, and worn-out padded chairs. Other items: tax forms, timesheets, memos, cigarettes, business cards, pens, manilla folders, cheap paperbacks, old promotional material, slutty calendars, and press sheets.
6. **Restrooms:** commodes, sinks, soap, paper towels, wall mirrors, grime, etc. What you'd expect in a restroom.
7. **InterNet Pay Phone.**

Harbor Map

ARABIA'S WISH

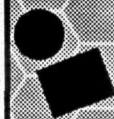


WEIRD
STUFF
(closed)

BOARDWALK

JOE'S DINER
(closed)

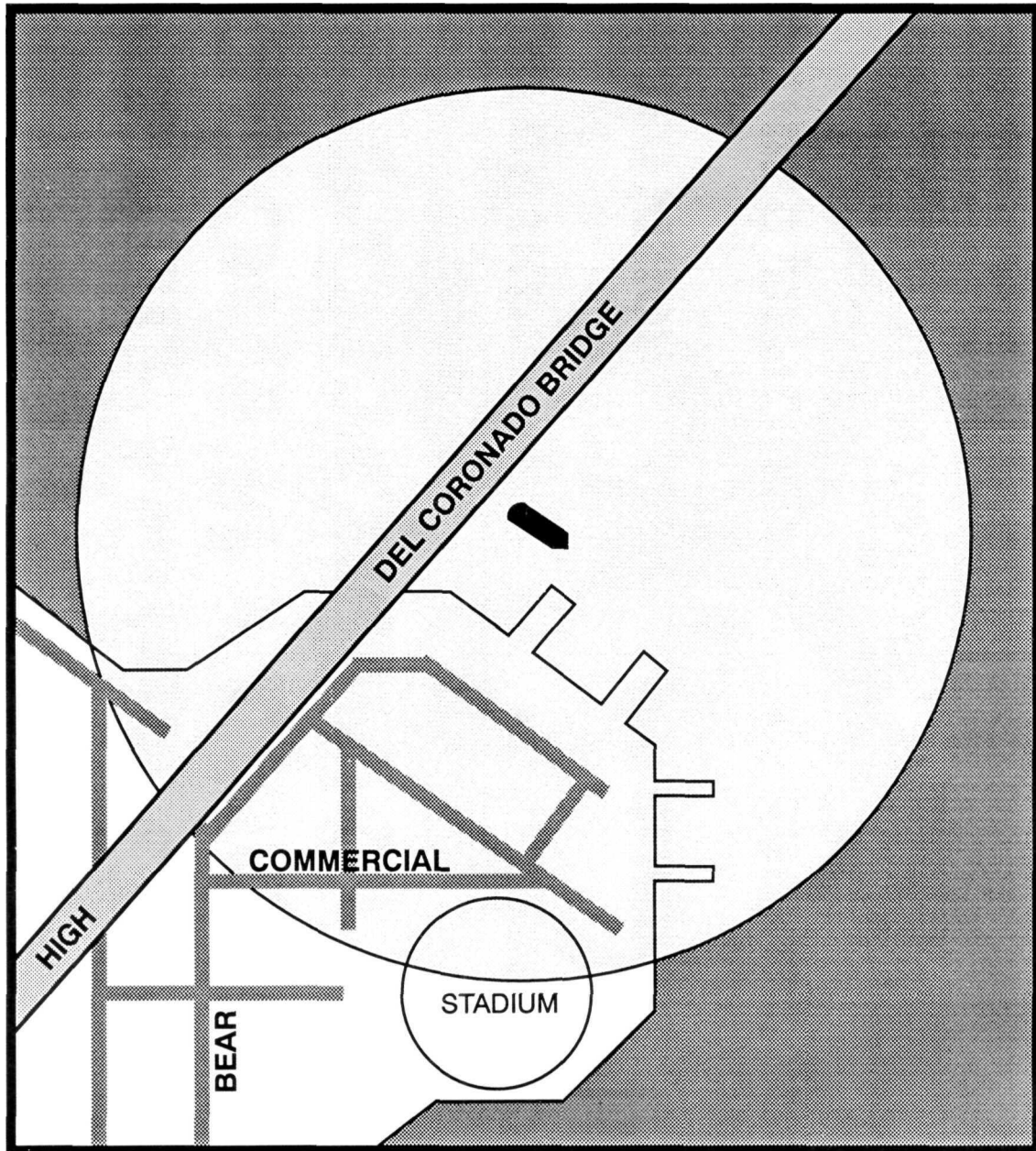
PARADISE LOST



SYMPTOMS OF HYDROGEN FLUORIDE POISONING:

- **BURNS ON SKIN**
- **BLURRED VISION**
- **BREATHING DIFFICULTY**
- **SEVERE IRRITATION TO NOSE, THROAT, AND EYES**
- **BLEEDING SORES**
- **BLINDNESS**
- **HACKING COUGH**

TOXIC TERRORISM: DAMAGE REPORT



**SPILL DIAMETER:
APPROXIMATELY 4 SQUARE MILES
RATE OF GROWTH: UNKNOWN**

CLOUDS • OF • UNCERTAINTY

Net 54

SPECIAL REPORT

"We interrupt our normally scheduled program to bring you this special Front Line Report. Here now is Nancy Camella."

"Good evening. I'm Nancy Camella. Just moments ago, in the Night City Bay between the Del Coronado Bridge and the North Marina Harbor, a tanker belonging to Petrochem Corporation ignited in a fiery cloud as it was subject to an unwarranted attack. Little is known of the saboteurs at this time, though some suspect corporate terrorism. The danger of this explosion, however, is not the

perpetrators, but the possibly lethal gaseous chemicals that have formed as a result of the explosion. A cloud of this chemical mixture — hydrogen fluoride, or HF for short — is currently spreading over the marina district at an alarming rate.

Residents of the bay area and surrounding neighborhoods are urged to stay indoors, seal doors and windows with towels, and deactivate air conditioning systems until further information is acquired about the nature of this spill and the resulting cloud. Exposure could result in illness or possibly even death. For a better look at this cloud, here is Bob Collier. Bob?"

*"Gas! Gas! Quick, boys! — An ecstasy of
fumbling,
Fitting clumsy helmets just in time;
But someone still was yelling out and
stumbling,
And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime...
Dim, through the misty panes and thick
green light,
As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.
In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,
He plunges at me, guttering, choking,
drowning."*

*"Dulce Et Decorum Est"
Wilfred Owen*

REALITY CHECK

Q: Is HF really as nasty as it sounds?

A: You can bet your life on it!

"HF solutions (hydrofluoric acid) in contact with skin result in marked tissue destruction; undissociated HF readily penetrates skin and deep tissue where the corrosive fluoride ion can cause necrosis of soft tissues and decalcification of bone; the destruction...is excruciatingly painful."

*Chemical Hazards of the Workplace, Second Edition
Nick H. Proctor, James P. Hughes, & Michael L. Fishman*

CABIN FEVER



FACT & FICTION ARE SOMETIMES THE SAME

R. TALSORIAN
GAMES, INC.

Cyberpunk is a registered trademark of R. Talsorian Games, Inc., used under license. Copyright ©1994 John A. Nephew. All Rights Reserved.

AG5065

\$8.95 (US)