PARANOIA

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

PARANOIA
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ALICE THROUGH THE MIRRORSHADES

A crossover adventure with R. Talsorian Games' *CYBERPUNK* roleplaying game!

VULTURE WARRIORS

of DIMENSION X

WEST END GAMES
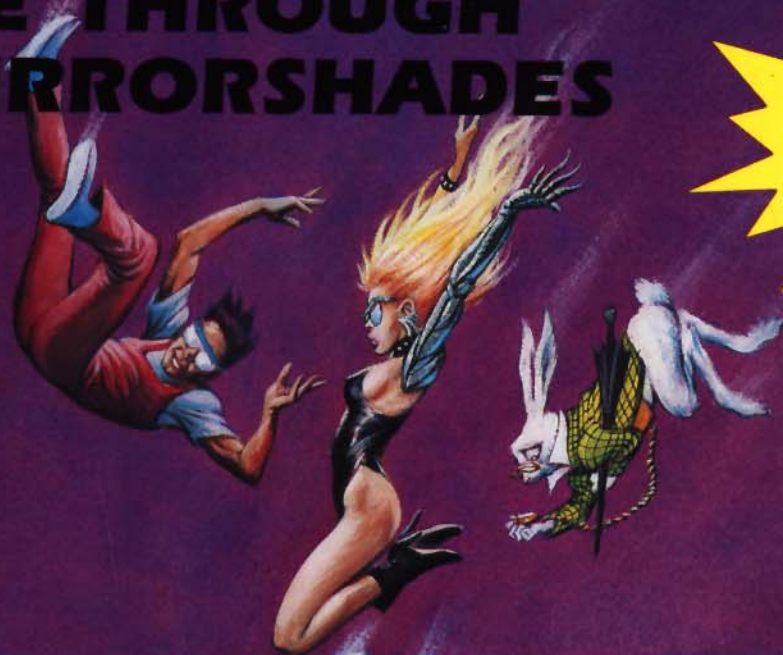
PARANOIA®

Alice Through the Mirrorshades

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Special thanks from the Author to

The Computer
Temporal Transfer Theory

This product is also suitable for use with
CYBERPUNK

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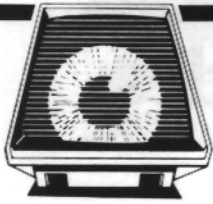

A Stupid Poem at the Start of the Book
(another feeble attempt at *Paranoia* culture)

All through the golden afternoon
(Or so 'twas said they thought),
Some guys whose oars, beyond all doubt,
Were in the water not:
Three game designers made pretense
Twisted wand'rings to plot.

Ah, Cruel Three! In such an hour,
Obsessed with chrome and leather,
To beg a story line too weak
To hold the tiniest feather!
Yet what can simple taste prevail
Against three pens together?

Imperious President Flashes forth
His edict "to create it!"
Droll Frelance makes his tiny brain
With bad taste saturate it
While Editor adjusts the tale -
How oft he doth berate it!

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Introduction: What's Going On Here?

Fear and Ignorance

We're not going to tell you.

What's that? You're Ultraviolet clearance? Oh, yes *sir*, sir, we'd just *love* to explain it to your most noble self, sir, except … what the heck.

DEATH TO THE COMPUTER! DOWN WITH SECURITY REGULATIONS! FREEDOM TO THE PEOPLE!

Ahem.

This is yet another of the fabulously mind-mangling line of *Paranoia* adventures, brought to you by those selfless yet cruel High Programmers at West End Games. But before you read on, be warned: this adventure is more than a collection of bad jokes and foul puns. It's more than a brutal 40 pages of cheap tricks to whimsically vaporize characters, more than a convoluted web of obscurity to frustrate your players, and much much more than a simple excursion into the world of gibbering *Paranoia* …

For this adventure is part one of …

—> VULTURE WARRIORS <—
—> OF DIMENSION X <—

A *Paranoia* Campaign?

That's right, O loyal and merciless gamemaster! This adventure is the start of a grand *Paranoia* epic, an ongoing mission to explore strange new twists of the imagination, a spacey operatic tale sweeping across two centuries and The Computer only KNOWS how many dead Troubleshooters. And this, *Alice Through the Mirrorshades*, is the first of several installments of a certifiably insane serial adventure, which surpasses even Michener novels for sweeping scenery, foreshadowing, tasteless stereotyping, and countless plot twistings.

Did You Say, "Two Centuries?"

Yep. But only one of the centuries happens in this book. You're just gonna have to wait for Part Two to find out where and when the next batch of stuff occurs. This time we're serious. We're keeping it secret.

Setting the Stage

This adventure begins in the Alpha Complex the PCs all know and hate, just like always, except for one annoying little bit of trivia. Just one little problem.

The Computer is dead.

How did this come about, you ask?

Those of you who purchased *The Iceman Returneth* already know; *The Iceman Returneth* is unofficially part zero of *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X*. Sort of like a pilot film. For those of you traitorous skinflints who didn't buy it, here's a basic summary:

The PCs die repeatedly and make The Computer crash.

Oh, sorry, uh —

The typically hapless Troubleshooters get ordered to dispose of some trash, thereby sadly failing in their duty to keep a reactor from overloading.

Running back to the glowing scene of the crime, they discover a cryogenic capsule containing none other than a High Programmer from the Past. Amazingly, the plasma fireball has thawed him out perfectly. He's not burnt in the slightest. Well, maybe he's a little half-baked …

After a trial for sabotage, the Troubleshooters are sentenced to capital punishment by vidshow, but the High Programmer from the Past helps them escape (via supersonic transbot) to Des Moines. Blithely unaware of the complete lack of culture in the town, the Team recovers the High Programmer's very old punch cards, getting them hopelessly muddled in the cliche confusion.

Returning to Alpha Complex, they infiltrate CPU sector where they try to help the High Programmer from the Past reboot Our Friend. They fail. Miserably.

So The Computer's down. Isn't that special? Alpha Complex is a changed place.

How changed? We've thought of that, too. It is just for this occasion that we released the *Crash Course Manual*, which is a 96-page excursion into complete chaos based on the now-valid assumption that The Big C goes down for the last time.

What's Dimension X?

This adventure, as well as others of the series, occurs in Dimension X, named for the ancient mathematical definition, "x equals the Unknown."

Unknown? You bet! During this adven-

ture (and the rest of the series) the feckless Troubleshooters will be the screaming passengers of the infamous Transdimensional Collapsatron, which will hurtle them with all the finesse of a gorilla handling luggage hither and yon through time to somewhen completely alien to the characters. Well, not *completely* alien; all the strangers pointing weapons at them are sure to make the characters feel more at home, if not completely comfortable.

In game terms, these alternate times are no less than (gasp!) other popular science fantasy roleplaying systems! This adventure welds *Paranoia* with R. Talsorian Games' noted *Cyberpunk* system. Boy, this is starting to sound like a professional wrestling match. In this corner …

So About This Book …

Bound within these covers you'll find EVERYTHING necessary to run this adventure (aside from copies of *Paranoia* and *Cyberpunk*, players, dice, chairs, a table, and a few other miscellany). The first thing you should do (after tearing off the cellophane, which you, in all probability, have already done) is to brutally rip out the pullout pages in the center of the book. Ooooh, what's that? You don't want to

---

Paranoid of *Paranoia*?

Just as an aside-bar, we'd like to point out that if you're a frustrated GM whose players are far too smart to allow themselves the unendurable agony of playing in a game of *Paranoia*, possession of this adventure gives you an ace in the whole. Just go out and buy *Cyberpunk* and sucker in your cultured players with a few innocent sessions of wanton violence and hatred. Get them enthused. Help them build nifty characters. Give them a few breaks.

Then, when your surprise will be total, run this adventure. Yes, indeed, we have provided for that. Players can be cyberpunks, leaving the Trouble-shooters as NPCs. The workings of this will be detailed in sidebars like this one. Of course, you'll have to sacrifice such things as the mission briefing, but then you'll get to watch your players sweat as it slowly dawns on them what sort of nightmare they've gotten into.

Cyberpunking

When in the persona of an NPC in the *Cyberpunk* world, two salient points need your continued attention for the proper suspension of disbelief. First is physical attitude and body language.

Get a pair of mirrorshades, and pop them on whenever speaking as a cyberpunk. And strut. Sneer. Put your feet on the table. Spike your hair. Act like John Travolta, but abrasive instead of sappy. Turn the collar up on your shirt, or get some spiked wristbands. Look the part and act the part.

Second, and perhaps more important, is slang. Every cyberpunk talks like a Silicon Valley Girl trying to sound like an air traffic controller. Every other word they utter is some cliche, slang, or TLA (Three-Letter Acronym). Other popular slang words are simple contractions (conts for short). The *Cyberpunk Handbook* lists some totally rad slang, plus here's some more.

To the max (a lot)
—boy / —girl / —jock / —sister /
flatlined (dead)
downtimed (injured)
headfirst (quickly)
in your face (##%@!)

damage the paper you spent good money on? Don't be a wimp! C'mon, that's what those pages are *designed* for! Or have you forgotten the *Cyberpunk* axiom: **The Future Is Disposable.**

The Adventure Book

The adventure is written assuming you'll run it as a *Paranoia* adventure; however, sidebars at various points throughout the text will detail the *Cyberpunk* universe, explain relations between mechanics, or describe how to run things from a *Cyberpunk* standpoint. Even if you're going to just use *Paranoia* rules, you should read these sidebars, as they will include background and explanations that will not be in the main text. And, as this is indeed a bridging scenario, it will be written in the hard-driving style of cyberpunk prose. With incomplete sentences. And streetslang. To the max.

The Player Characters

Six Troubleshooters and six Cyberpunks are included in the pullouts. Your players should run one group, and the other should be NPCs. I suppose that you could let a player take over an NPC if all his clones die, or maybe you'll deliberately blend players between the groups. What a horrifying thought.

The Pullout Pages

This includes hypercool gizmos like equipment lists, maps, and assorted other paraphernalia.

Getting Cyberpunk ... or Vice Versa

Some of you may already have player characters that you want to use in this adventure, from either of the two systems. To cover that eventuality, as well as the more enticing possibilities of playing *Paranoia* with *Cyberpunk* mechanics and other such insanity, here's how to get from one system to the other.

Paranoid Cyberpunks

In order to change a cyberpunk over to the *Paranoia* system, make the following conversions. If the cyberpunk protests, beat the crud out of him. Ain't no hotshot character gonna push YOU around ...

First you must translate the PCs statistics. Take each stat, double it and subtract one. Stats correspond thusly:

Paranoia	Cyberpunk
strength	body
endurance	body
agility	move allw
dexterity	reflexes
moxie	intelligence
chutzpah	cool
mech. apt.	tech. ability
power	luck

Next, double all skills.

Paranoid Cyberpunks and Punk Troubleshooters.

Punk Troubleshooters

If you want to make a Troubleshooter into a cyberpunk, the first thing you'll have to do is get him a new hair stylist and wardrobe.

A *Paranoia* PC's stat values are cut in half, rounding fractions up (minimum value of two). The only unusual stat is endurance. This is translated to body type, regardless of the character's body stat. Plus, if you have a character that's really into melee weapons, let him translate his agility to reflexes.

Cyberpolitan

Once you've got the basics of Cybermastering down pat, you can start practicing being a REAL cyberpunk. This means you've got to be multilingual, or act least be able to fake it convincingly. All good cyberpunks talk in a potpourri of languages, although the extra linguistics seem to usually be mere chrome — flash, but no substance, as is typical for cyberpunks. In other words, you've got to learn to say banal and useless things in foreign dialects.

You got to berate the coffee in Navaho, sing Samantha Fox in Swahili, tell poor jokes in Outer Mongolian, and say really pompous things in fluent Texan. To be really *really* cyberpunk, you must demonstrate proficiency in swearing in over 40 languages (this shows you got some kinda class). So here's some international expressions of various kinds for you to study instead of your linear algebra homework.

yes/no: da/nyet, oui/non, ja/nein, hai/ie, si/no

Hello (greeting your next victim): bon soir, hola, guten tag, zhdrastiye, konichiwa

Goodbye (said to bleeding acquaintances): adios, auf wiedersehen, do svedoniya, joi ging

Money (a basic cyberpunk concept): dinero, geld, quatloons

Buddy: muchacho, mein schmerz, pung yao, tovarich

How are you?: Wie gehts? Que tal? Ni hao ma?

Good grief!: Oy vay! Hai chihuahua! Ach du lieber!

Garbage: caca, sheist, merde

Free the Howells!: Pulu si bagoomba!

Sneezes from around the world: Achtung! Au jus! Tai chi!

Of course, the ideal is to speak in as many languages as possible in a single sentence. How's this for a greeting:

Konichiwa, mon tovarich! Was pasa?

Attractiveness? Compared to cyberpunks, Troubleshooters are small, sexless, emaciated wimps with skin the color and complexion of soggy Wonder bread. They look like squishy nocturnal pre-adolescent salamanders in comparison to even withdrawn cyberpunks like Netrunners. And they have no style whatsoever. Give the Troubleshooters a two. Maybe a three. Or maybe a one.

On the other hand, the average Troubleshooter has been in more gunfights than the typical cyberpunk has seen on TV. All Troubleshooters have a Combat Effectiveness Modifier of zero (0). If you've got a really aggressive player, maybe you should give him a positive CEM.

A Troubleshooter's empathy stat depends on what Secret Society he's joined. The more pro-Computer or technology the society is, the lower the PC's empathy. Conversely, the more the PC's society seeks naturalism (no matter how twisted their idea of it may be), the higher the PC's empathy. Here are some guidelines:

Emp.	Secret Society
1	Corpore Metal, First Church
3	Pro Tech, Computer Phreaks
5	Illuminati, Anti-Mutant
7	Death Leopard, Mystics
9	Sierra Club, Franknstn Dest.

Next, halve all skill numbers.

Armor and Weapons

Don't expect any fancy math formulas to convert these back and forth. Just use common sense. Lord knows your players never do. For example, *Paranoia*'s automatic slugthrowers are about like modern M-16s, in *Cyberpunk* terminology. Thus an M-16 damages on column 9, and a laser pistol (column 8) would do about 5D6 damage in *Cyberpunk*.

Setting the Tone

Cyberpunk roleplaying requires a sound track, such as good, hard punk rock or heavy metal, to really set the mood. Nothing in *Paranoia* roleplaying is ever remotely that tasteful (which really says something about *Paranoia* culture).

For this session, dig out the worst. Grab your Dr. Demento stuff. And some disco trash. Spike Jones. The Devo E-Z Listening Disk. Flipper. Get some sitcom theme songs.

And play them all at 45 rpm.

About This Adventure

"Paranoia is important in a Cyberpunk run."

- Welcome to Night City, page 6

Background

After The Computer crashed, the High Programmers found themselves with nothing to program. Unemployed.

Worse yet, it was quickly discovered that there was a certain social stigma (read: "bounty") attached to having been one of The Computer's chosen elite; the more an Ultraviolet had abused his position, the higher the stigma. And we're not talking simple things like Fizz-Whizz in the showerheads, here.

Fearing the appearance of a low clearance mob offering free chainsaw haircuts, a group of High Programmers wracked their brains (before someone else did) for a way out of their predicament. The conversation went something like this:

HP #1: So that's it. We've tried everything.

HP #2: Yep. Our gruel is cooked. We're all going to die.

HP #3: And our clearance is useless now.

HP #4: Worse yet, we'll never be able to order pizza again.

HP #2: We're all going to die.

HP #4: (sigh) If only we could have stopped the Crash before it happened.

HP #2: We're all going to die.

HP #1: Wait!! What was that you just said?

HP #4: About stopping the Crash before it happened?

HP #1: No, you mentioned pizza! We could use the Transdimensional Collapsatron to order out for pizza from last year!

The Plan

They finally agreed that the best solution was to send some Troubleshooters back through time to assassinate Clem "Alice" Unger, the pre-Oops High Programmer (from *The Iceman Returneth*) who caused this whole mess to begin with. The decision to trust Troubleshooters with this sensitive task clearly shows how desperate these people were for hot pizza.

The High Programmers conducted a search of the surviving library records, which showed that Alice (as he then referred to himself) lived during The Age of Peace, from about 2079 to about 2097. They were unable to trace any information about his childhood.

After Alice's graduation in 2095, there were only sporadic traces of his whereabouts until early 2097, when a good photo of him appeared in a magazine. Thus the High Programmers chose this as the time to attempt the assassination, as it was correctly surmised Alice entered cryogenic suspension shortly afterwards. The asteroid had such a profound impact on everyone's life ...

The High Programmers then got hold of the Transdimensional Collapsatron, which

was first encountered in *Orcbusters* (in *The Computer Always Shoots Twice*). Acquiring the device is an adventure in itself (written by none other than Yours Truly), and is outlined on page 81 of the *Crash Course Manual*.

Dramatis Personae

Clem Unger, aka "Alice": Clem, aka Alice, aka That Jerkface who crashed The Computer, is the High Programmer from the Past first encountered in *The Iceman Returneth*. He is the one who tried to reboot The Computer, causing Its crash. He is also one of the original Computer programmers. He is a very skilled hacker, and likes to spend his free time reading fantasy books. His favorite author is Lewis Carroll, and thus Clem chose "Alice" as his Netrunning nickname. Small, yet wimpy, Clem looks like a stereotypical nightmare computer nerd.

Cindy-U-BAK-5 and the High Programmers: Cindy-U is the mouthpiece of the High Programmers' Self-preservation Council (HiPSiC). She is autocratic and sometimes severe, always demanding perfection from her employees. Yet of all the High Programmers who survived the Crash, she is the most reasonable and fair. She realizes that her future depends on the Troubleshooters, and if they succeed, they will indeed find themselves amply rewarded.

The Transdimensional Collapsatron: The TC is that science fiction staple, a simple, innocent self-aware time-space-alternate-universe teleportation device. So much of

Afraid of Crashing?

If you just want to ram your players through this adventure without worrying about crashes, you can do that, too.

Having The Computer crash is not essential to this adventure, but it does add a lot more emotion and continuity. If you just want to use this adventure as a start or even a stand-alone, it's no problem.

The PCs can be sent on their missions by some High Programmers who have been branded as traitors, and these guys want to change the past to save their own skins. In this event, their assigned victim has been tracked down as the High Programmer from the Past (HPP) responsible for whatever subsystems have targeted the High Programmers in the present for termination. Killing the HPP removes the subsystems and saves the traitors, and significantly swells the PCs' credit lines.

You'll have to alter a few of the read-alouds, but the changes you'll need to make will be obvious.

its brain has been used for hyperdimensional mathematical algorithms that there's no room left for a complex personality. The TC is always spunky, chipper, and full of good cheer. It hates for people to get upset, and will often bend or fabricate truth to avoid antagonizing someone.

The NPCs (Non-Player Cyberpunks): There are six *Cyberpunk* NPCs provided in this package, so that the players will not be at a total loss for guides, advisors, etc. Each is equipped with an obnoxious personality, so as to better annoy the players. But if, by some fluke, one of the NPCs becomes either popular or useful, draw on one of the cornerstone philosophies of *Cyberpunk* gamemastering:

Why not just go ahead and waste 'em?

Schroedinger's Troubleshooters

Being a short treatise on time travel and other niceties.

Design Limitations

The Transdimensional Collapsatron can transport any thing to any time in any dimension. The only catch is that once the Transdimensional Collapsatron does so, the turbulence of the passage disrupts the fabric of space-time so badly that it cannot recalculate the hypermechanical equations to do so again to a temporally similar era. Too much spatio-temporal eddying.

In other words, the Transdimensional Collapsatron can send anyone anywhere, anywhen, but it can't do so twice. That's why it's so important the PCs succeed: they won't get a second chance. Ever.

If You've Got the Time, We've Got the Fear

Unknown to everyone (except the High Programmers) the Transdimensional Collapsatron monitors everyone on the team constantly. It knows where they are, what they say, and how healthy they are. It does not know what they're thinking, nor does it necessarily give the High Programmers complete or even completely truthful reports.

Rebooting Troubleshooters

You know, clone replacements. Yes, clones do get replaced in this adventure. But there is (as always) a catch.

See, when the High Programmers discovered the Transdimensional Collapsatron's tendency to create spatio-temporal eddies whenever it passed, they realized that the only way they'd be able to send replacement clones with any speed would be to have the Collapsatron stay in constant contact with each Team member

and have clone replacements be verbatim swapped with the dead Troubleshooter's body.

For security reasons (like having a clone suddenly appear in different clothes might be a bad thing if someone were working under cover), no clothing or equipment would be transported; only organic matter. Thus, for example, the replacement clone might find himself lying on the pavement right behind a steamroller while the High Programmers back in Alpha Complex receive a very flat casualty. Please note that if a Troubleshooter gets fatally killed on top of a tall building, it is universally considered very cruel to teleport in the replacement when the late Troubleshooter is falling past the fortieth floor. No one should ever do things like that. At least that's what my players said after I did it.

Oh, yeah, one last thing. This design limitation prevents the players from calling in extra clones for added firepower. The Transdimensional Collapsatron has hold of six space-time traces, one for each Troubleshooter, and swaps out clones to each trace. It's sort of like having six fishing lines that sink away out of sight into the turbulent sea.

Foreshadowing

Here's an overview of what's to come:

Episode One: The Troubleshooter Anthology: The Troubleshooters are assembled for their mission, allowed to start hating each other, and sent into the past.

Episode Two: The Past Is Disposable: The Troubleshooters play dodge ball with Dodges, Fords, and Mitsubishis, meet six unlikely *Cyberpunk* NPCs, and learn to deal with basic problems like How to Enter a Bar Without Getting Shot.

Episode Three: Desperately Seeking Alice: The PCs hunt for clues as to Alice's whereabouts, travel across the country to the armpit of America, and break into his former residence.

Episode Four: Go Ask Alice: They then head to his place of employment. They are offered a job. A hose job. He's gone, but they get a device that belongs to him.

Episode Five: A Run in Their Stalkings: The PCs jump brainfirst into the Net. They go crazy trying to cope with a program based on Alice in Wonderland.

Episode Six: Ice Scream Clones: They have a snowball fight in a cryogenics warehouse, trash the place, and damage The Computer's embryonic self. They still don't kill Alice.

Epilogue: Das Ist Alice: Time to pack up and head for home. No? What do you mean, "continued next week?"
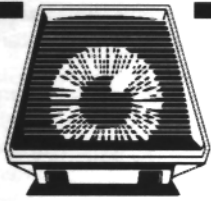
Episode One: The Troubleshooter Anthology

"Cyberpunk is important in a *Paranoia* run."
- Alice Through the Mirrorshades, page 6

Episode Summary

The players get assembled, meet each other, and get transported to the Days of Past Future (from their perspective).

A Little More Background

Once the High Programmers reached their concensus, there remained only the task of assembling a team of Troubleshooters willing and able to achieve the impossible. This posed a bit of a problem, since any team 'willing' to go back in time would obviously be too stupid or unstable to be 'able' to complete the mission. Likewise, any capable Troubleshooters wouldn't be caught dead in a time machine, at least not since The Computer bought the dome.

After some more debate, it was decided to keep the Team in the dark about the actual nature of the mission until they had arrived in the past. This of course negated the requirement that the Troubleshooters be 'willing,' and the job of recruiting able-bodied suckers became much easier.

The High Programmers searched the surviving library records, consulted the grapevine, and selected a set of Troubleshooters with widely varying (read: severely antagonistic) experiences, beliefs, personalities, etc., believing that this variety would help the Team cope with the unknown hazards (read: certain death) awaiting them in the murky past.

Encounter One: No Mission Alert

Each Troubleshooter had to be summoned individually, there being no more Computer or complex-wide PA system. Couriers of various types (keyed to each Troubleshooter's psychological profile) were sent to visit each PC.

Read the following boldface paragraphs for each of your players in whatever order you like. This creates a *converging story plot*, a very useful device in cyberpunk

Team Spirits

To plagiarize — er, quote from *Cyberpunk,*

"A Team is a group of people who are already thrown together by Fate in some way which forces them to cooperate. They don't have to like each other ... (but the) group stays together or it dies."

Don't you just love the way those guys think? Especially the part about dying! So yes, the PCs don't have gobs of reasons to kill each other, no secret missions and all that stuff. Instead, they're given clashing personalities — nails-on-the-chalkboard here. If they roleplay, they'll want to kill each other worse than ever.

"That's the *Cyberpunk* way."

literature used to bring together thoroughly implausible situations. And go ahead and read everything to the whole group; deathless humor like this should be shared.

First make sure everyone has read his or her background, then read out loud to everyone:

Each of you has been living your own lives since Your Friend and Mine did the friendliest thing you can remember: die. Yep. Since the Crash, life has been, well, pretty wretched, but at least it's a wretchedness born of self-determination, or something like that.

You're all scattered hither and thither about the complex, killing time (and the occasional mutant) in one of the incredible multitude of clubs which have sprung up everywhere, in proportions brazenly

Even Less Mission Briefing

For those of you planning on using *Cyberpunk* PCs (pregenerated or otherwise), go check out the sidebars in Episode Two. But go ahead and read this stuff; it'll give you ideas for the *Paranoia* NPCs.

defying any reasonable social structure. None of you know about the others' existence. Proof positive that ignorance is bliss.

For Walt-R-JON-1:
Walt-R, you're sitting in a bar called the Vodka'Da. To you, the clump of insensate dancers overcrowding the floor is just a little too thick to join. Besides, you're hunting, and W/ee-ZL is the name of your bot.

Hunting? Yeah, for work. Your drink is eating a hole in your empty stomach. And tugging at the back of your brain is this nagging unease that needs a name ... W/ee-ZL, that's its name.

Then a business acquaintance of yours walks in, the blood of innocent people dripping from his hands, as usual. Abe-R-AZO-4: dressed in oversized boots, flared pants, sash, vest, waistcoat, puffy shirt, and babushka, he looks almost tolerable when he doesn't have his mouth open to show off his glowing neon teeth.

"Tovarich!" he says, giving you a hug and a sloppy kiss, "Am I having a job for you! Is worth plenty rubles!"

You smile slightly. Somewhere in the back of you mind, a steel guitar plays. No, it's that pesky W/ee-ZL again. It's twanging your hair.

For Rude-Y-RKR-3:
Your immortal soul has already expended two bodies, both while eating. It was probably the unnatural colorings added to the food vat slime, so now you have this fear of dyeing.

You're whiling away the hours at the SpaceTime Donut Shoppe, slugging back some alcohol and ramming down some chips, waiting for someone to ask you to dance.

You get a note from a friend / agent of yours, "Numb" Ralph-R-ZZZ, asking you to meet him in the disco. Good old Ralph-R. A teeny bopper, but he always has his eyes on the numbers — for a cut, of course.

There he is. He's waving to you — over there in the corner, his surfboard hairdo silhouetted by the white light. "I know some stuzzy rich guy looking for workers," he says, "and you're one of the natural selections."

For William-G-BSN-2:

You're sitting blandly in a bleak little hole-in-the-wall listening to everyone else talk about artificial intelligence, bot brains, turbohacking, and a bunch of other technical stuff. One group in the corner is starting a splinter society called the NewRomantics. Maybe you'll join. It'd be different being a NewRomancer.

But this man walks in, casually shredding the doorman. He's small, and very oriental. He wears a hideously ugly tourist shirt and baggy shorts. He appears to have a monofilament wire attached to his camera instead of a strap.

He walks up to you and bows politely. "Please come with me."

"How 'bout you close your eyes while I count to five and decide?" you ask cagily.

"If you refuse," he says with a smile, "I'll cut you before you can count zero."

For Broost-R-LNG-1:

Allow you to introduce yourself. You call yourself Broost-R *sir* when you're being formal. You think you're the toughest punk to ever reach sixteen. Pity your reputation isn't as big as your ego, or you might have found some higher-paying work.

You're sitting in a cheap bar talking to yourself about yourself (very favorably, I might add), and whether you should take that bit part in the new slasher flick, Frida-Y-THE-13. You're not sure you like the phrase '*bit* part.'

Then your agent calls you on the vid phone. "Kid, baby, have I found the job for you!"

"Violence? Excitement? Combat? Money? Bloodshed?" you stammer eagerly.

"Nah. Better than that. Fame, kid. Prime time on all the pirate stations." He's got you now.

For Greg-B-EAR-3:

You love your life in R&D. In recent weeks you have risen far above the lesser intelligences who surround you. All those simpletons are now realizing your obviously superior intellect.

You've been trying to develop intelligent, self-aware jail cells for the incarceration of heretics and saboteurs. You're taking a much needed breather at the front gate when Cardinal Rich-I-LEU approaches.

"There has been much concern amongst our brethren that your research is a little … unorthodox," he says venomously. "It is said you would bring hell upon the prisoners."

"You're just jealous!" you snap. "You and your feeble minds, you realize you're outclassed! And you're WRONG about my cells! It's a brilliant idea! Just think of it, we —"

"Brother Greg-B has thrice denied the wisdom of the Cardinal," says Rich-I-LEU, and suddenly you find yourself excommunicated, without food, money, or shelter.

"Greg-B-EAR, just who I was looking for," says a passer-by. "Need a shot in the arm? I've got a job for you."

For Shirl-Y-JON-2:

You've just finished your last gig. The

band's broken up for good. I mean really broken up. The drummer broke his arms when that table broke his fall, the bassist broke his back when he broke the window by flying through it, the keyboard player's got a broken heart because she broke a nail when she broke rhythm during the last breakdance song … seems like everyone broke something when the fight broke out. And no money. Yep. You're broke. Your face is breaking out. And your stolen shoes hurt — get this — because they, of all things, are NOT broken in.

Maybe it's time to break away.

And this guy happens by, dressed in what looks like a big snarl of loose thread. He leaves a trail of hypodermics and empty pill bottles wherever he goes. His skin looks like he swan-dived into an artist's palate. He has no hair. He must've worked for Power Services. He smiles at you, and signals for you to follow him.

From that point on, everything starts to break your way.

▌Encounter Two: Flash in the Cam

Who knows these days what your clones may be up to before they actually show up at the mission site? Allow plenty of time for personal activity, and when the crew of motleys is assembled, read this:

A short while later, you each find yourself in a dank white room in a wretched portion of the complex. At one end of the room is a large desk with a computer console, and the video screens on the walls show nothing but static. A large security cam with coaxial laser dangles, powerless, from the ceiling.

Gathered in the room with you are five of the weirdest, seediest, down-right least appealing people you've ever met (the other PCs). Sneers fly back and forth across the room.

Then a High Programmer walks in the room in soiled white robes. She's flanked by several others of various clearances. They all carry impressive weapons. Vampire bots quietly but effectively seal all the exits. The High Programmer looks you all over before she sits behind the desk.

Suddenly the screens all flicker to life, displaying the message "TRAITOR ALERT!!" The big cam swings around to face you. "There you are, friend Troubleshooters!" says The Computer pleasantly. "You have ten seconds to explain your treason. What are you doing here?" The laser cannon starts warming up.

Let the PCs panic and such, then have The Computer start sputtering down: "Very good, citizen. Report for summary hot fun consumption. That is incorrect. The correct
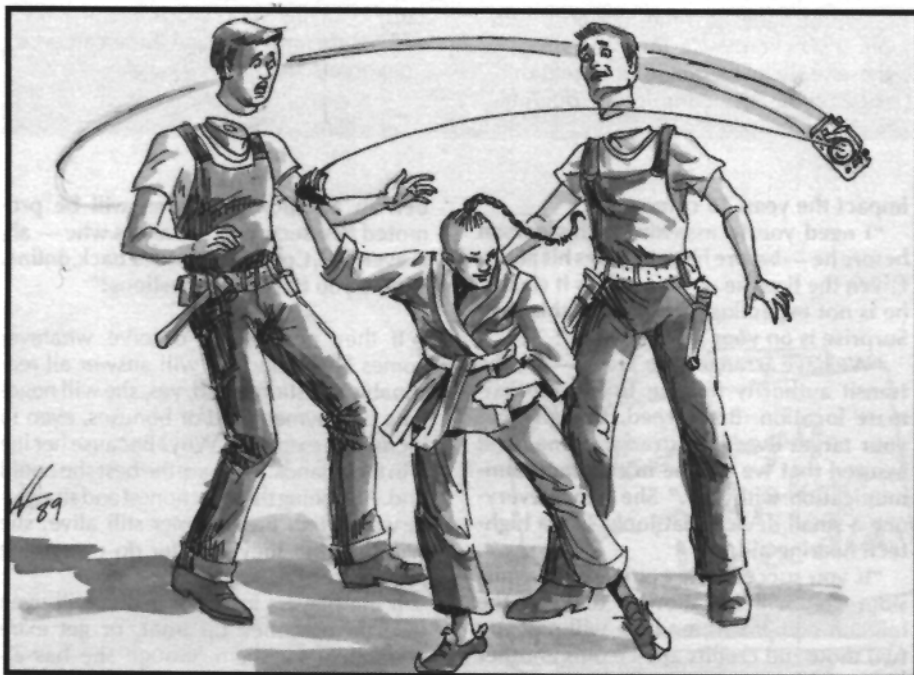
Failure to accept a mission is still dangerous.

Not Me!

What's that? Someone doesn't want to go? Ooh, that's not good. The Computer doesn't like disobedient Trou — oh, yeah, no Computer. Well fine. If there's no Big C, then there's street gangs. Muggers. Assassins. Random violence, courtesy Death Leopard. Turn the player's role-playing cyberpunk novel into a short story. To wit:

"Yessir, stubborn player. Your clone gets mugged. You lose your gun and all your money. But *at least* you're still alive. (exaggerated look of innocence) Nooo, this has absolutely nothing to do with the fact that you won't accept the mission. Trust me, I'm a gamemaster. It's my job to be impartial. You just live in a tough city. Gonna take the mission now? No? (roll and ignore dice) Gosh, look if there isn't another mob of Death Leopards headed your way …"

spelling of 'treason' is M — d — k." Then all the screens read "TILT."

Remember, The Computer really is dead, though occasional energy flares or capacitor dumps can cause brief flashbacks like this one. So the High Programmer waits patiently, and perhaps has some fun talking back to The Computer. When all is calm, she waves a hand and says:

"Probably another life-support system shut down and dumped its capacitor onto the mainframe. Happens all the time. Just ignore it."

Encounter Three: Do This Yesterday

Continue right along:

"Well. Greetings, Troubleshooters. I am Cindy-U-BAK-5, and it was I who selected you for this mission.

"Needless to say, politics have become quite complicated since the Crash. One person in particular has — ah, is planning to cause the complete destruction of life as we know it. Although he's not much of a leader, his life's work strongly — ah, will

Do We Know Alice?

Some of the players might know the man in the picture as Clem Unger, but *don't tell them* unless they are playing a PC who survived *The Iceman Returneth*. If they are playing *Iceman* survivors, then they know Alice's real name. In other words, they know more than the High Programmers. This is a very rare situation, and must be savored while it lasts.

Mission Equipment Explained
Auditrons

As far as the PCs can tell, these are six small beads with a loop of plastic attached. A small tag accompanying one reads "place in ear." Once ensconced, the auditrons act as highly effective earphones.

What the PCs don't know is that the full name of these items is *Transdimensional Auditrons*. These are the method by which the Collapsatron communicates with the Troubleshooters while they are in the past.

The Gloves

These are actually aerials for the transdimensional auditrons (the earpiece communicators). They are hermetically sealed black gloves with antenna wires running along the backs of the fingers with a ground wire running along the thumb. Whenever you feel like it, have the Transdimensional Collapsatron try to talk, but come in all full of static and hard to hear. Then the PCs will have to put on the gloves, stick their thumbs in their ears, and waggle their fingers until the reception improves. Note that these positions must be maintained to keep talking, even if they're in a firefight or meeting the President.

Oh, and feel free to ask your players to demonstrate. Verbal descriptions are so hard to follow, sometimes.

Covert Eyewear

"It's cool to bump into things?"
"You don't move, you just hang around"
- Calvin and Hobbes

Mirrorshades are the foremost item on any cyberpunk's inventory. Sadly, these replicas are made from real mirrors. They are completely opaque,

though they reflect like crazy. Looks totally cool. Any complaints about visibility to the Collapsatron will be met with, "Just give your eyes some more time to adjust."

The Pill Bottles

Each of the three bottles is filled with a different type of pill. One set is red, one yellow, and one blue.

The red pills are concentrated radioactive isotopes. These have been provided to help PCs get 'rad.' The PC takes one roll for damage on column seven, but after that increase his attractiveness due to that funky glow.

The blue pills are Hypothermia pills. Use these if your PCs have trouble being 'cool.' The PC rolls on column five for damage, but the pills provide three levels of protection from F attacks.

The yellow pills are industrial strength muscle relaxants. They help PCs 'get slack.' Subtract three columns from melee attacks made *by* the PC, and two columns from melee attacks made *on* the PC.

Bondage Equipment

This has also been provided, though no one in Alpha Complex knows what the stuff is *really* used for; because of that they thought nothing of including such common cyberpunk era accouterments as velvet manacles, full masks, chastity belts, and assorted other paraphernalia.

A Box Labeled "Ammo"

Unfortunately for the PCs, this actually contains 4000 snapshots of Alice. About the only damage these can do is papercuts (1I).

impact the years to come.

"I need you to assassinate this person before he — before he completes his plans. Given the time he — ah, well, as it stands, he is not expecting an action of this sort. Surprise is on your side.

"We have arranged the Trans — ah, the transit authority for you to his approximate location. Be warned, though, that your target lives in a strange dome. Rest assured that we will be in constant communication with you." She hands everyone a small device that looks like a high-tech hearing aid.

"If you successfully complete this mission, you will be allowed to keep the mission equipment, and we will pay you two thousand credits apiece plus another thousand to whoever the Team votes was the most influential and successful member. In addition, everyone will be promoted two security clearances whe — ah, if ever The Computer comes back online.

"Do you have any questions?"

If they don't, they deserve whatever comes after. Cindy-U will answer all reasonable questions. And, yes, she will negotiate on payment and/or bonuses, even to incredible extremes. Why? Because her life is in their hands. They are the best she could find. And being the most honest and straightforward High Programmer still alive, she *will* pay, but they'd better do everything *just right*.

If the players insist on it, she will even give them money up front, or get extra equipment for them, though she has already been generous in that regard (see Mission Equipment sidebar). Whenever the players are through, she says:

"Here is your target's picture. He is known only as 'Alice.' Now please be so kind as to step into the vehicle, and we will send you back — over to him."

Give your players playing aid version 1.1 (PAV) as the PCs enter the vehicle.

The vehicle looks like a standard autocar. It looks like one for the simple fact that it is one. But under the hood, you ain't gonna find no 800 horsebot engine; you'll find instead an inductor array designed to focus the effect of the Transdimensional Collapsatron to include only the vehicle and its occupants.

In the back seat of the car is a box labeled "Mission Equipment." The contents are discussed in a sidebar around here somewhere. Give your players PAV 1.2 whenever they look at the box.

■ Encounter Four: Leave the Driving to Us

When everyone's piled in the car, whoever jumped into the front seat can see a small screen on the dash that reads "Autopilot Engaged. Course Preset. Push Start to Begin." The start button is where the ignition switch is on most cars. When someone gets the gumption to push it, a sign on the dashboard flashes "Place Auditrons in Ears." When at least one PC has complied, read:

There's no sound. No lurch. No smoke or overloads. No noise except this rather high-pitched keening. Finally the autocar starts vibrating, however much that may reassure you. Looking out, you can readily see that the autocar is not moving at all. Then suddenly there's a sickening sensation as the autocar abruptly drops through the floor at mach 2. Previously eaten meals, however, remain stationary.

Looking outside, you see Cindy-U walking away from the car ... backwards. You see yourselves at the briefing, then being ushered out ... walking backwards. Then the surrounding universe dissolves to a vertigo-inducing slate grey. The falling sensation subsides as your ears pop.

Those of you who have your hearing aids on can hear a cheery voice coming over the tinny speaker. "Hi guys," it says. "I'm the Transdimensional Collapsatron, and Cindy-U-BAK-5 asked me to finish your mission briefing for her.

"You are now heading backwards through time at approximately one hundred negative years per minute. I hope you realize how difficult this makes it for me to talk to you. But don't worry — your mission has not been changed. You are still assigned to kill Alice, who I assure you will have very a serious impact on the years to come.

"The transdimensional auditrons, you know, the ear pieces, will allow me to speak with you. They also monitor your vital signs, and can allow you to speak with me. If you have something to say to me, drum out this code (tap out an inane little rhythm) on your stomach a few times, and I'll tune in.

"You will presently stop in the year 2097 AD, which is just a little bit before the start of Alpha Complex. In other words, it's the Year of Our Computer minus 1. Security clearances are not valid yet. In fact, lots of things are different, so if you gotta break a rule, don't sweat it.

"This is an era that has become somewhat of a myth in our time. This is the era that the Romantics study, the era the Sierra Club longs for. Rumors say that the Old Reckoning was a time of plenty. Personally, I believe it, because even the contemporary name for this period was beautiful."

Suddenly another lurch, and you find yourselves on an elevated street. It's dark, and foul-smelling drops of water shower on the pavement and drum on the car. Sirens and other noises rend the air. Glaring billboards assault your eyes. A flybot of some sort cruises by, searchlights and loudspeakers shredding the night. Lying at the side of the road you see a corpse. Someone's rifling its pockets.

"Welcome," says the Transdimensional Collapsatron in its cheery voice, "to the Age of Peace."

These people have more plugs than I ever did.
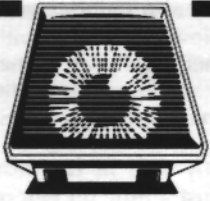
Episode Two: The Past is Disposable

Death in the Fast Lane

The PCs are tossed negligently into the past. They must abandon their vehicle immediately. They shoot some trouble, dodge traffic, and meet their NPC guides in the hostile world of *Cyberpunk*. And, if your gamemastering is up to par, they'll be ready to lynch you at the drop of a hat. So watch your back. Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

Hello on Wheels

The PCs are in an autocar, right? The High Programmers want this mission to be covert, right? And where's a more natural place for a car to be than on a road? Say, an eight-lane overpass on the American Autobahn? And we all know Troubleshooters live life in the fast lane …

Encounter One: Road Rash Behavior

Describe to the players where the PCs find themselves — sitting in their autocar, watching someone loot an unidentifiable corpse. Nothing else in the autocar but the equipment and the acrid smell of Hot Fun.

Sitting in the middle of a wide road, with tall buildings all around. And a looter, who coincidentally happens to be a very hungry person. Of course, hunger doesn't prevent him from talking with the PCs:

PC: Hey, you! With the friend!
Looter: He's mine! I popped him, I get to scarf him!
PC: (Holds up picture) Have you seen this man?
Looter: (noticing PCs' reflec armor) Well crash my brain! Savvy those threads! What sort of posers are you? Trix kids?
PC: Look, just tell us where we can find —
Looter: Need some I/O? I got a sister —
PC: WE WANT TO FIND THIS MAN!
Looter: (leers) I copy. I got a brother —
PC: That's it! Talk or die, Commie scum!
(gets out)

Uh-oh, is someone leaving the safe confines of the autocar? That's bad. Exiting a car in the middle of the freeway is not healthy. But then, neither is sitting in a stalled car in the middle of the freeway. But whenever someone first opens a door, ZZOOOOOMMM! HONK! WHAM! A Suzuki Samurai zips by at about 200 kph, neatly ripping the door clean off its hinges.

Is the Suzuki Important?

Well, yes. See, inside the Suzuki were a group of top-level covert agents from Samurai Security Corporation ("Satisfaction guaranteed … with our lives.") who were en route to rendezvous with some hirelings in The Combat Zone.

Samurai Security (SSC) of course uses only the Suzuki Samurai to drive around — image, you know. That's why so many SSC workers end up guaranteeing their work. Seriously, when they say, "I'm going for a spin," they mean it. So these SSC agents spin out, wipe out, and blow up like they were in a '76 Pinto. Ashes to crashes.

I can hear you thinking to yourself, So why the big deal about a couple of SSC peons? Well, go read the sidebar on page 13.

The Samurai goes into a tumbling spin and explodes about a mile down the road.

Quickly ask who does what, because the Samurai is followed almost immediately by a motorcyclist who, since it's raining, loses control of his bike. Anyone looking back sees the following:

Looking back in horror, you see another light approaching rapidly, with a doppler-shifted horn squealing nasally in mechanical terror. Quick, what do you do?

Hope they duck, because a hapless cyclist is about to soar through the cabin of the car, leaving his bike mangled on the back bumper. Anyone in the center of the car who doesn't duck gets hit on column 2 of the collision chart, possibly getting carried with the biker through the front windshield. Well, partway through; the safety glass keeps anyone from flying all the way out.

Now comes the most devastatingly dense high-speed traffic ever to plague a freeway. Your players are going to be scrambling back and forth trying to evade the cars and trucks while trying to get themselves and

Welcome to the Age of Peace.

their gear to the safety of the shoulder. More on that in a minute.

Throw everything at your players. Have a Cadillac clip the fender of the autocar, sending it spinning down the road, spilling Troubleshooters right and left. Bring on Mack trucks which have locked up their brakes and skid inexorably forward. Maybe a PC gets bumped and ends up in the vehicle's driver's seat. A Trauma Team AV-4 ambulance shows up for the cyclist whenever people start shooting. A cop car pulls up to write the PCs a citation for driving without a licence plate or inspection sticker, blocking traffic, manslaughter, failing to travel the minimum speed, and probably resisting arrest. A truck full of methanol jackknifes.

And don't just be concerned with the PCs' lives. No, they have equipment, too. A whole box of mission equipment that gets strewn across the road when their autocar gets hit. The Looter starts loading his pockets. Someone barely make a dodge or get bumped? Maybe they drop their lasers! After all, it's raining, so things are slippery.

Encounter Two: Fall from Grace

And when the frantic Troubleshooters finally get their gear and their quivering bodies out of traffic and leap nimbly over the railing and onto the shoulder ... well, there's no shoulder. This is an elevated expressway. It's elevated because it's passing right through the middle of The Combat Zone.

The Combat Zone is probably the last place the Troubleshooters want to go. Sadly, they have little control of their destination because they are now in freefall. Of course, some canny player may deduce that his teammates have all, shall we say, taken a dive. Such a player might elect to stay on the freeway. That's when you send the truck with the placard OVERSIZE LOAD.

So the PCs fall, jump, or drop off the freeway some fifteen meters before they land. Have everyone make an easy roll against their power — if they make it, or if they had time to make a calculated jump, they land on something relatively soft, say a shop awning, the top of a convertible, a rubbish pile, or a pedestrian. Subtract five from the damage roll.

Feel free to break any equipment you want to. But don't break the communicators or the lasers; they'll need 'em. Desperately.

Encounter Three: No-Clone's Land

The players are now irrevocably in The Combat Zone. For those of you who don't own a copy of *Cyberpunk* (shame shame), The Combat Zone is such a bad place to be that it merits Capital Letters. It's sort of like

Start-start-a-re-start

Oh, by the way, if the Team driver tries to escape this whole scene by pushing the Start Button in the autocar and time-teleporting out of trouble, then the Transdimensional Collapsatron automatically sends the Team back again to their preprogrammed destination (that's what the Start button does) and everyone is caught in a closed loop in time. Send in a new batch of clones. In a new autocar. And this time the traffic is immediate.

Harlem in New York City, Houston's Fifth Ward, Los Angeles' East Side, or (get this) The Combat Zone in Boston. (Them Yankees are so unoriginal!)

The Combat Zone is where the lawbreakers go (i.e., it's very crowded). It's where the drug dealers hang out; where those trying to escape hide. Police do NOT go into The Combat Zone if they value their pension.

Life in The Combat Zone is a minute-to-minute struggle for survival. Everyone carries some sort of weapon, because savage gunfights are the norm. 'Friend' is what you call your next victim. Anything can be had in The Combat Zone — for a price.

Holographic marquees and billboards slash the dark drizzly sky. Architechtural nightmares rise purposefully from the

Game Stuff
Highway from Hell

Map: Pull out the Mirrorshades Map (PAV 2.1). Notice that there are several lanes for your Troubleshooters to die in. Notice that there are many cut-out counters to roll down the road over — or rather, 'at' them. Notice the siderail is clearly and happily marked to afford the greatest assurance of safety. For more on jumping over the railing read Encounter Two.

There are a lot of vehicles on the road. Have several approaching at all times, preferably at least one in every lane. They can zoom along at speeds up to 10 squares per turn. They can change lanes to avoid (or strike) characters. PCs can dodge, duck under, or jump over cars.

Each type of vehicle has stats listed below, as well as the difficulty PCs might have in dodging (leaping to the side of the vehicle), ducking (diving underneath), and jumping (over the top of) them. Dodging rolls against agility, ducking requires chutzpah, and jumping uses strength.

The PCs can move two squares per turn, but must stop for one complete turn if they want to pick up a dropped item, shoot at an obnoxious driver, or perform any similar action. Well, if they

make a dexterity roll, maybe they can grab something on the run ...

Motorcycles: Impact (4I)_____10
Crush Equipment (9I)_____5
Armor: Really Nifty Glaze Job (0)
Avoid Wrecking after
            Manslaughter_____2
Dodge: easy **Duck:** difficult **Jump:** normal

Cars: Impact (10I)_____15
Crush Equipment (12I)_____9
Armor: Glossy Bodywork (L3I6)
Avoid Wrecking after
            Manslaughter_____11
Dodge: normal **Duck:** tough **Jump:** normal

Trucks: Impact (12I)_____17
Crush Equipment (17I)_____14
Armor: Juggernaut Steel Chassis
    (P4I8)
Avoid Wrecking after
            Manslaughter_____19
Dodge: easy **Duck:** normal **Jump:** difficult

The Looter: scavenger extraordinaire
Weapon: Mac-10 (12P)_____13

Armor: Leather (I2)
Agil: 16 Str: 16 Dex: 16 Chz: 16
Tactics: Keep the traffic rolling down the road. Always have a vehicle in almost every lane. When a PC misses a roll, don't necessarily make him get hit; other results can be even more entertaining. Make him leap out of the way in the wrong direction. Make him slip and fall. Have the car careen down the road with the unfortunate hanging on to the radio antenna. Then the players are forced to further endanger themselves to rectify the situation!

Also, please remember this is *Paranoia*, not *That Other Car Wargame*™. Break the rules at least as often as you break PCs.

P.S. Ordinarily, *Cyberpunk* PCs start play in the next encounter, but if you're hit-and-running this or a similar situation with *Cyberpunk* rules, just have each type of vehicle do a certain number of dice of damage, say 2D6 for cycles, 3D6 for sports cars, and 5D6 for trucks. Maybe a bit more. Throw in a few skill conversions, and voila! Instant roadburgers!

Starting with Cyberpunk PCs

If you would rather run the adventure with *Cyberpunk* PCs, you'll obviously not be able to use the mission briefing to start things off.

Instead, just have the players get contacted by a fixer or something, offering a contract from a major security firm (like Arasaka) offering beaucoups of bucks to help locate and eliminate a certain Netrunner.

While the PCs are waiting at the appointed rendezvous, describe to them all the noise they hear up on the expressway. Police and Trauma Team copters arrive. Gunshots fly. Maybe some blood-spattered cars jump the rail and come careening down, exploding in midair and showering the streets with burning gasohol. Then (hopefully right after someone says 'they'd better get here soon'), the Troubleshooters jump off the expressway.

When gaming in this manner, the Troubleshooters (thought to be Arasaka operatives), speak with a slight accent and always act very cool, efficient, and fearless. Have them come across as people who have *real* power. Actually, they act this way because there's no Computer breathing down the back of their neck.

If asked about the uproar on the overpass, they say, "Just a little dis-traction. Nothing we couldn't handle." The flames of the burning cars light up the night. There. That ought to put the fear of God into your players.

cracked pavement to stab into the polluted stratosphere. Crowds. Cars.

And lots of noises pierce the night. Gunshots echo from alleys, counterpointed by the screams of the injured and the sirens of the paramedics and police. Turbo engines rev, sending rubber or steel tires spinning across the asphalt and maybe a few pedestrians. Music blares in glorious surround sound from passing ghetto blasters.

Now if someone would just paint it up like a rainbow, the Troubleshooters would feel right at home. Well, actually, things are a lot less restrained than the PCs might be used to. Anybody can do anything they want, wear anything they want, say anything they want. Sure, you might get beat up for it, but there's still no Digital Dictator.

Dress will probably be the first thing the PCs will notice about the natives themselves. Leather, gloss plastic, and spikes are the rule of the day. The neon jumpsuits favored by your run-of-the-mill Alpha Citizen will stand out like — well, neon down here, as will the tasteless cut of the clothes.

Grooming is next on the list. Although many post-crash citizens may rebel against

Pedestrians have the right of way.

regulation haircuts by letting their hair grow all the way past their ears, to cyberpunks they're light years behind. In the Combat Zone, everyone sports mohawks. Spikes. Whorls. Electric hair. Bald folks wear plexiglas skull inlays to show off their cybernetic brainwork. Tattoos to the max. Brushed chrome and phosphorescent jewelry.

And cyberware. Everyone looks like they belong to Corpore Metal. Treason City.

And in all this wierd ambience, the PCs have gotta find a place to stay.

Encounter Four: If I knew You Were Comin' I'd a-Made You Fry

Once the Troubleshooters have gathered their wits and their equipment, read the following:

Water droplets continue to drizzle on your face and gear. From up on the roadway above you, you hear a familiar voice yell, "If any of them are flatlined, I saw them first! They're mine!"
Strangely dressed people stand in scattered groups all around you, most of them staring quite openly. What do you do?

In The Combat Zone, anyone who dresses so … shall we say, 'boldly' is either very crazy or very powerful. That's why everyone is staring. Give the players a few minutes to quail and/or alienate the locals, such as:

PC: Jeez, look at all those mutant traitors!

Cyberpunk: (to friend) Mutant-trader? Query, bro, some kind of slave dealer?
Cyberpunk's Friend: Probability 90+. Download those glitz threads — they gottum wampum.
Cyberpunk: (walks toward Team) Yo! Decoboy! I got a sister who —
PC: Back off, Commie!
Cyberpunk's Friend: Commie? We be anarchists. (sneers) These decoboys are FBI. I say we gut-shoot 'em.

— or —

PC: Eep! Surrounded by Corpore Metallics! Er, ah — ROBOTS RULE! I WISH I WAS A ROBOT!
Cyberpunk: You're misfiled, robojock. The Robots' turf ends at 42nd street. This here's Sadistic Sadie territory.
Another Cyberpunk: C'mon, gangsisters! We got us some robodweebs! I say we gut-shoot 'em.

Are they in trouble? Are they stupified? Then read:

You notice a tall woman sauntering toward you, with several other scruffy characters (non-player type) in tow. She's dressed in black, except for a pink-and-purple polka-dot shirt. She swaggers up and stares at you through her reflective glasses.
Her companions stare at the assembled crowd through a variety of gunsights and laserscopes. The crowd dissipates.

"It's about time you vultures showed up," she says. "Let's boot up a bar and you can download who you want us to help you find."

She turns and strides toward a brightly lit neon facade, her compatriots in tow. Are you going to follow, or are you going to wait until the crowd comes back?

Vultures? No, they're Troubleshooters! Actually, Millie (the woman who's speaking) always calls Corporate types vultures or maggots or something.

Just a coincidence.*

So anyway, these folks will provide aid and guidance for the Troubleshooters. Why? Garbled communications, misunderstandings, you know: the usual *Paranoia* fare. For a more detailed explanation, read the sidebar.

The Obligatory Dance Club Scene

This wouldn't be a true cyberpunk bridge if it didn't include a trashy dive with a nifty name and gobs of liquor bottles to shoot up. I mean really, this is street culture here!

Some Lyrics

Every Cyberpunk author, deep down inside, really wants to be a rock star. That's why they all write some lyrics in each book, which in turn explain painfully obviously why they're authors and not songwriters. Here's some examples. Feel free to sing them at the top of your lungs while your players are trying to talk:

Jocko Repo

They tell us that / We lost our soul
'Cause we don't keep / Our bodies whole
I think that all / Such talk is droll
Are we not men? We are repo!
Are we not men? R-E-P-O!

Chip It

Load that clip / Give the cops the slip
Grab your armor jack / Shoot 'em in the back
When your brain is not that fast
You must chip it
You're never gonna last
Unless you chip it
You're gonna have a blast
When you chip it
I said chip it / Chip your brain
Rev it up / Go insane
Think faster / Fix your head
Pay to improve it / Or else you're dead
So chip it / Chip it good!

There. Now you know why I'll never be a rock star either. Sigh.

The Sidebar on Page 13

Ah, now things begin to fall in place. The group of cyberpunks we meet here are supposed to meet the Samurai Security Corporation's dogs. Tragically, them guys are now well-done hot dogs on the expressway. But that's okay, the PCs are here in their stead. The PCs need more help anyway.

Well, Samurai Security had hired these street kids as guides to help them find someone who was a 'security breach.' This suspect is a Netrunner who lives in The Combat Zone.

Since the hit squad hit the guardrail, this Netrunner has gotten off scott free. Whereas he would have died in the next week, he instead will continue to live, survive the planetoid striking the Earth, and be a major detrimental factor in the development of The Computer in the early years of Alpha Complex.

Encounter Five: Barroom

Sounds like an explosion, doesn't it?
As the players follow Millie into the bar, continue the readaloud:

You follow Millie and the others into the bar, which, you note, is called the Cave Inn. It's located in a bunker-like basement.

The denizens of the Combat Zone.

* Sure it is. — Ed.

Cyber-chic

Cyberpunk View from the Edge, page 2: "If you're going to blow it, make sure you look like you planned it that way."

When portraying the *Cyberpunks*, remember that style and attitude are everything to them. They're always cool and serious. Deadpan. It's socially acceptable to get chainsawed to shreds, as long as you bleed with style and class — just like you planned it that way.

Chandeliers and ceiling fans mix the funny-smelling smoke. Strobes and lasers flare from the walls.

There's a group of people on a low stage to your left. A sign above them identifies them as The Ex-Authors. They've got wires dangling between them and their equipment, and are making a lot of noise, which, as you seem to recall, is called 'music.'

Millie leads you all to a table, and ushers you to sit. With twelve of you, it's rather crowded, but there are no other open tables. Most of the other people in the bar seem to be taking bets on how much destruction something called 'the asteroid' will cause.

Now's a good time to have a rather long discussion between the PCs and the *Cyberpunk* NPCs. First, it's as good a time as any to introduce the NPCs in character. Second, you can develop the miscommunication between the PCs and NPCs. Third, and perhaps most important, you can illustrate how deep over their heads the Troubleshooters are.

They got no food. No shelter. No clues. No nothing, except lasers and a few clones.

On the other hand, by the end of the conversation, the NPCs should believe the PCs are a strike team of elite "Troubleshooters" from Samurai Security Corporation, operating under guidance from SSC's AI (The Computer) or CEOs (High Programmers). Everything the players say will be misinterpreted in this light. Even talking into thin air (to the Transdimensional Collapsatron) will be interpreted as pertaining to advanced SSC cybernetics.

Then, when introductions are at a close and it's time to get the sphere rolling again, move 'em out. (Optional encounter here include drunk patrons, a free-for-all bar fight (with prizes) and wet T-shirt contests.)

Outside, the rain has picked up a bit. And have Kontract or one of the other NPCs pipe up with,

"Escusé moi, bitte, but from what I viddied in there, you're not going to 86 your amigo with what little equipment you have. How about a side trip to PLC, neh? Get you geared up real bueno!"

A visit to PLC.

Encounter Six: Haywired

What's this? Another implausible coincidence? Sure, why not?

PLC is indeed the low-budget way to get outfitted, especially in a cyberpunk world. PLC stands for Preowned Legal Cybernetics; they're a second-hand store. They're a second-rate second-hand store. They sell junk.

Cyberjunk.

Why did Kontract offer to bring the Troubleshooters here? Well, he's a Fixer (that's 'middleman' to you and me), and it didn't take him long to figure out the PCs were a couple chips short of a full board.

Given below-average clients, Kontract is trying to figure out just how much he can

Alpha Complex Economics

The players are strutting around Night City with a bunch of gizmos from the future. Of course, everyone thinks these guys are extremely dense Ara-saka goons (probably some big Corp's nephews), so their gear is looked on as "state-of-the-art." Alpha Complexers instead use the term "experimental."

Anyway, the cyberpunks (especially Kontract) will try to talk the players out of their high-tech gear. Useful pitches to use are the "I'll wear your reflec and act as decoy" and the "that laser will attract too much attention for espionage work" routines.

They'll try to trade or rip off the PCs. If you succeed, then great! If you fail, keep needling the players to sell their popguns. Eventually they'll relent just for a little peace and quiet.

press his advantage with SSC. He knows that if he can get the PCs to go to PLC for their cybernetics, he can pretty well get them to take all the risks during the whole adventure. Plus the owner of PLC will give him a kickback for the extra business. (Notice how some things remain constant, even after hundreds of years?)

As the group enters PLC, Kontract immediately goes over to the front desk and arranges for everything to be purchased on SSC company credit. No sweat there. SSC has got a credit line a mile wide. If a PC asks how his equipment will be paid for, a clerk informs them that their automated accounting program will charge SSC for their gear. Not in so many words, though. He'll say something like "Oh, I don't know … I'm sure the computer will take care of everything."

Let the PCs really deck themselves out. Anything they want. And by the way, despite the name, this store sells lots of illegal stuff, too. After all, this is The Combat Zone. PLC regularly gets covert shipments of illegal arms — and legs.

Play up the nifty stuff all this cybergear can do: lift cars, hear conversations far away, put crosshairs in your field of vision, leap small buildings with a single bound … you know the drill.

Plus they really look cool. Chrome. Gloss black. Counterfeit designer labels.

Of course, the players are never told the exact limitations or capabilities of their equipment. Maybe someone's fingers ratchet like a lawn chair; they can't extend back out until they have clenched fully into a fist. This can be a bother if you use the hand to open a doorknob, 'cuz either the

Clone Collapse

Transdimensionally collapsing replacement clones for cyborg PCs giving you a bit of a problem?

Remember that for the sake of unobtrusiveness, the Transdimensional Collapsatron has been programmed to swap out only the deceased clone's body; the clone's gear, weapons, and in fact all inanimate objects remain unmolested. In other words, the TC swaps out organic matter for organic matter.

Thus, when a replacement clone is zapped in for a late Troubleshooter with a cyberarm, the replacement clone's arm, having nothing organic to replace, remains in Alpha Complex, finding itself suddenly attached to a stiff. This gives the hapless arm a few seconds of life to make some gesture appropriate to its displeasure.

Meanwhile, the replacement clone is, quite unawares, suddenly possessed of cybernetics. Imagine the Six Million Dollar Man forgetting his bionic strength, then swatting at a mosquito. Eccch.

knob or the arm has got to be removed. Or maybe there's a drill located in the index finger (don't pick your nose) or a small explosive in the big toe on a cyberleg (don't tap dance).

Then, fully equipped with the latest in used cybernetic gear, the Troubleshooters can be walking human tanks — without warranties.

Ever know anything without a warranty to last more than a few hours? Same goes.

A PC intending to shake someone's hand might instead find himself lending a hand. A cyberoptic eye might try to look into the back of its owner's skull. Cyberaudio ears might start squealing with feedback or picking up radio transmissions. A cyberleg might develop a knee-jerk reflex. Or maybe nothing near that serious. Just a little squeak. Maybe a loose washer, or a little dribbling oil. "Don't worry;" (clatter) "it's probably nothing. Nothing at all."

Or, if your players are balking at cyborging, have the Transdimensional Collapsatron suggest that NOT cyborging would blow their cover in this era, and they'd fail their mission. Or just knock 'em out and have it done.

After all that, it's time to start looking after a few other essentials. First is money.

The easiest way to get money in Cyberpunk is to roll a few street people. Another option is to get a cash advance against the SSC account. This is what Kontract will suggest if the players don't get any better ideas.

Encounter Seven: The Bare Necessities

Food

"Here comes a taste of the City. In your face."
— Welcome to Night City, p. 31

Most Alpha Complexers are used to not having to chew their food. Alpha Complex food seems to slither down of its own accord, but it's so bland that no one really minds. In light of this, steak bars are definitely out for dining. In fact, most food would be considered too textured or tasty to the average Alpha Complexer. Besides, that stuff used to be *living* ...

But perhaps your PCs are daring. Let them sample the local cuisine. Then give them indigestion, cramps, richter scale borborygmy, and extreme irregularity. Have them belch uncontrollably.

Eventually they'll find a McDougall's and everything will be all right.

Shelter

Given the level of preservation (let alone development) in Alpha Complex Housing, there's really only one thing the Troubleshooters won't feel comfortable about in whatever shelter they find in Night City: all the organic life.

The cyberpunks believe the Troubleshooters are used to living in beautiful sanitized corporate condos, so they'll tease the PCs about their not-quite-human roommates. This works better than expected, due to the PCs extremely limited knowledge of zoology. Your *players*, on the other hand, will never be sure if you're pulling their leg, or just being a really weird GM:

GM: A two-inch long, six-legged brown thing scuttles across the floor.

PC: Ugh! What's that?

NPC: Just a roach. There's kind of a lot of them, but they're not very well organized. I mean, you'll never catch them reading Proust or anything.

GM: A mangy, orange-haired mutant with fangs appears at the window and howls.

PC: Reading wha? AAAUGH! What's *that*?

NPC: Oh, that's a tomcat. We let him hang around because he eats the roaches that get bigger than four inches.

GM: You hear a scrabbling noise upstairs.

PC: Eeep! What's that noise up there?

NPC: Oh, just a herd of rhinos. They look a lot smaller in real life. The floor's plenty strong enough to hold.

By now, the players are probably all staring at your cherubic countenance, trying to read your mischievous expression. Surely, you're just pulling their leg.

Then, in the middle of the night, have a rhino crash through the ceiling and crush someone. That'll show 'em!

Clothing

NPC: Now let's get you some new clothes.

PCs: (in unison) Why?

NPC: (long pause, waves hand in resignation) Nevermind.

Actually, the Troubleshooters are probably too fashion-unconscious to worry about clothing. All their lives they've lived with neon-colored jumpsuits and tasteless tailoring. I think their aesthetic sense has long been atrophied.

So the players probably won't bother changing their clothes. They'll persist in wearing their ugly accoutrements. And pretty soon, so will some of the cyberpunks they pass on the streets, who consider the style to be so tasteless as to be avant garde. Then it becomes a full-blown fad, until, when the asteroid strikes Planet Earth (Day 1 of The Computer), everyone is wearing them.

Just a little bit of tailor trivia there.

Now on to the next Episode.
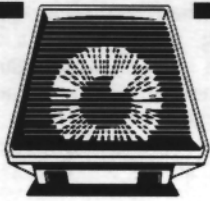
Episode Three: Desperately Seeking Alice

Epidose Summary

The Players begin searching for their quarry. They find a tenuous lead, and manage to locate his residence and place of work. Geez, sounds pretty easy, doesn't it?

Background and Explanoria

Remember why the High Programmers chose to send the Troubleshooters back to this particular time? Forgotten why the PCs have Alice's picture?

A little earlier this year (May 2097), Clem Unger, alias 'Alice,' managed to make a significant breakthrough in heuristic programming for the complex Alpha computers put out by JCN (Jumbo Computer Network, his company). This acheivement put him in the news, and his photo was splashed all over the place. Hence the PCs' photo.

He still lingers in the news as his heuristic routines are continually upgraded and his research team continues to improve the programs.

Thus, in this brief window, when panic over the asteroid impinges on security, the players will have a chance to assassinate Alice, yet will not do it so early as to imperil the developing programming of The Computer. Pretty spiffy, huh? Those High Programmers aren't as stupid as they look — er, will look, are they — er, will they be?

Encounter One: No News Is Bad News

At first the PCs are on their own. They can try whatever they want. They can try all sorts of things, but they won't succeed. The phone book doesn't list nicknames. Even if the PCs know Clem's full name from *The*

The Library

The library is a ponderous structure thankfully outside The Combat Zone. Getting there might be quite a task in itself, as most taxis inside The Combat Zone (where the PCs start) are deadlier than most of the locals (remember the movie *Heavy Metal*?).

Iceman Returneth, he's not listed, for the simple fact that he doesn't live in this town. No one recognizes the photo. The police will get suspicious of any inquiries and give

Game Stuff
Harryin' the Librarian

Map: Yeah, it's the small one, depicting the current periodicals room in the library, a cramped, cube-like little affair packed floor to ceiling with neat but poorly sorted magazines (see PAV 3.1).

Now get three decks of cards, each sorted in order. Stack the three decks (numbered 1 - 3, bottom to top). Place the cards randomly in twenty packets in the six by six grid (the map is obviously too small for the cards — just use that as a reference for the players). The cards represent various issues of the following magazines:

Deck 1 Clubs: *Popular Cybernetics*
Deck 1 Diamonds: *Better Homes and Minefields*
Deck 1 Hearts: *Playborg*
Deck 1 Spades: *Revolutionary Communist Worker*
Deck 2 Clubs: *Solo of Fortune*
Deck 2 Diamonds: *Cyberpsychology Today*
Deck 2 Hearts: *Business Hourly*
Deck 2 Spades: *Netrunning for Children*
Deck 3 Clubs: *Assassin's Home Journal*
Deck 3 D'monds: *Mother City News*
Deck 3 Hearts: *Pharmacologist's Almanac*
Deck 3 Spades: *Advances in Blackmail*

The specific issue the Troubleshooters need is in the stack represented by the Deck 2 seven of hearts.

Agility rolls are required to move without slipping and toppling magazines (divide agility by the number of squares moved in the round). Dex rolls are needed for shifting magazines without spilling them (divide dex by stacks — cards — shifted). Strength rolls are necessary for removing fellow PCs from 'zineslides caused by previously failed agility and dex rolls.

the Team all sorts of grief. If they try politely asking the FBI, it'll give you a chance to reuse the debriefing from the *People's Glorious Revolutionary Adventure*.

Marian: Authoritarian vegetarian librarian
Weapon: Machinegun (P12)
_____ 3 shots @ 6
Armor: None

The Robot: Completely unintelligent automaton
Weapon: Cattle Prod (stun 1 — 10)
_____12
Armor: Steel shell (I4P2L1)
Tactics: The Robot will completely ignore the PCs and continue to sort things. Each round, roll a D20 for which stacks it picks up (it will take the top ten cards only), and 2D6 to determine the cell the stacks are moved to (for instance, a roll of 1,2 is the second cell over from the left on the top).

This means that occasionally it will dump a big HEAVY stack of magazines on a PC sitting on the area intended for same. The robot also throws big wads of rot to the front door for disposal (whenever it delivers a stack to an already occupied cell, take the bottom card of that stack and ditch it. If the seven of hearts goes ... too bad. The PCs have blown it).

If the PCs topple a high stack, the robot will go over and prod the offending vandal, but will not move any magazines that round.

And whenever the PCs think they've figured out which stack the key issue of *Business Hourly* is in, the robot moves it and stacks more stuff on it.

Marian will not intervene unless the PCs destroy a magazine, damage the bot, or make a lot of noise. In these cases, she'll just let fly on full-auto, probably perforating the issue they need with big holes.

And every few minutes, a couple hundred more magazines fall through a trapdoor in the ceiling. (Any character in a trap door area has to make an agility roll to avoid being buried.)

PC#1: Walt-R-JON-2

Secret Society: Romantics
Secret Society Rank: 3

Mutant Power(s):
Hypersenses

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: None

Loyalties:

Freelance Troubleshooter

Assassin

Background: You thought being a Vulturecraft pilot would give you the machismo and warrior-sadistic pipe dream you'd sought for all your life. It frustrated you that all you did was fly unimportant memos, orders, and other mail back and forth at controlled speeds through controlled airspace.

But even that was denied you when you were transferred to the Troubleshooters. Talk about a bunch of cowards! So you joined the Romantics, hoping their back-to-basics sensibilities might lead you to your dream. It was better than Armed Forces training; they at least taught you how to swagger, how to spit tobacco, and many other ways to behave like that pinnacle of violence incarnate, the pseudo-mythical Texan. But it wasn't enough. They were still too wimpy for your ideals.

You did research on your own, once stealing a copy of True Grit from the Romantics' library. Then came the Crash. Hoo-wee, what fun! It was like one big wild bar fight! Since then, you've had nothing to do with any of your old acquaintances; instead you became a hired gun, or, as you refer to yourself, a "gunslinger." And an innocuous scrubot named "W/ee-ZL" sort of follows you around. You pretend it's a secret weapon. Now all you need is a really macho ten-gallon hat.

Goal in Life: Learn more about the Good Ol' Days. Find a big hat. Be violent. Get in bar fights. Challenge people to quick-draws. Kill wimps. Don't eat quiche.

Description: Standing 1.8 meters (6' 3") in height, you are rather sizable considering the standard of malnutrition in this era. For some reason that even you can't remember, you once decided to superglue chips and buttons and things to your skull. Your hair is cut short to better display this fetish, except for a 'pony' tail which expresses itself down your spine.

You dress in various cowboy chic; some of it is liberated from BLACK GULCH (tm), the rest is much higher quality. You really want to find a ten-gallon hat, which is difficult in an all-metric world. You make a habit of speaking in a thick Texan drawl ("Howdy, y'all!").

PC#2: Broost-R-LNG-1

Secret Society: None
Secret Society Rank: 0

Mutant Power(s):
Regeneration

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: None

Loyalties:

Self, self, self, not necessarily in that order.

Junior Troubleshooters

Background: The Crash came on your sixteenth annocycle day. You were supposed to be promoted from Junior Citizen to full citizenship. Then you could be a Troubleshooter, just like you always wanted.

Always wanted to be a Troubleshooter, and shoot and zap and punch and knee the Commie mutant swine. But when The Big C went down, you didn't get your new papers. Didn't stop you, though. You went right on out and killed a Commie and took his jumpsuit and declared yourself Red clearance. And now, since you never got your papers, you refer to yourself as "The Unofficial Kid," and pretend you're the best and baddest Troubleshooter in existence, a fantasy reinforced by the fact that you actually have a pair of mirrorshades.

You also have an annoying habit of speaking about yourself in the third person ("Broost-R baby really did a good thing that time!"), a habit made all the more annoying by your tendency to talk about yourself constantly. Since the Crash, you've eked out a living in gladiatorial combat.

Goal in Life: Kill enough people (bystanders and teammates included) so that everyone looks on you as the best. Never give an inch to anyone. Nuke the Commies. Maybe get some babes.

Description: Short and stocky, you wear riot armor stolen from Internal Security. Like all teenagers, you have little concept of personal hygiene, and as a result, your skin looks tanned and your short hair is spiked with accumulated grease. You strut and sneer and are violent and in all ways act like an egocentric teeny-bopper.

PC#3: William-G-BSN-3

Secret Society: FCCCP
Secret Society Rank: 1

Mutant Power(s):
Machine Empathy

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: None

Loyalties:

Who cares, anymore?

Background: For years you labored in CPU, faithfully serving The Computer with the other disciples of the First Church. Then you were promoted to the Troubleshooters, a tribulation placed upon you no doubt to test your faith in God.

You remained a model citizen, and your faith and devotion to The Computer never wavered, not even when your first two clones were martyred by the Commie heathen. Sure, maybe you weren't cleared for programming, but you were just trying to help.

Your life remained centered on The Computer. The Computer was the reason for your existence. Then came the Rapture. The Computer left this mortal coil. So did all the saints, precious few though there were (in fact, you know of none so far). You figured you'd also disappear during the Rapture. But no, here you are, stuck with the rest of the slime in this sprawling city of darkness.

Night Sector, you call it now. How good did you have to be to be saved, anyway? This whole situation has burned you out; nowadays you don't do much but kill time and wait for the end.

Goal in Life: Well, it may be blasphemous to say so, but wouldn't it be nice to get revenge on The Computer for hosing such a loyal and faithful servant as yourself?

Description: Although all your life you seem to have been surrounded by colorful and unusual people, you have always been preternaturally bland. Not too tall, kind of thin, mediocre hair, and now that there are no more dress codes, you've proven yourself an untalented dresser. Before the Rapture, you at least had enthusiasm and devotion. Now you're bland and depressed. A boring burnout.

PC#1:
Name Then: John-R-WLT-2
Name Now: Walt-R-JON-2

Former Service Group:
Armed Forces

Security Clearance:
Private: Red
Public: Red

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (18)
Damage _____ +1
Carry _____ 55 kg

Endurance (19)
Macho _____ 2

Agility (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Unarmed _____ 8
Spit _____ 15

Chutzpah (13) Skill Base _____ 3
Bribery _____ 6
Intimidation _____ 10

Dexterity (8) Skill Base _____ 2
Projectile Weapons _____ 8
Laser Weapons _____ 10
Vehicle Aimed Weapons _____ 12

Mechanical (8) Skill Base _____ 2
Vehicle Op. & Maint. _____ 15

Moxie (6) Skill Base _____ 1
Old Reckoning Cultures _____ 9

Power (10)

Personal Equipment
Crusty clothes
Naugahyde vest and chaps
Kevlar undershirt
Two slugthrowers, 1 reload each
Red Laser
Heavy boots (+ 1 damage roll in melee combat)
Spurs which jingle jangle jingle
Chewing tobacco (actually fiberglass insulation)
Canteen full of hard liquor

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
Slugthrowers	8	P	9	40	yes		40
Red Laser	10	L	8	50	no		

Armor	Rating
Naugahyde and Kevlar	I2P3

PC#2:
Name Then: Ferd-NAN-1
Name Now: Broost-R-LNG-1

Former Service Group:
None

Security Clearance:
Private: Infrared
Public: Red

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (19)
Damage _____ +2
Carry _____ 60 kg

Endurance (17)
Macho _____ 1

Agility (14) Skill Base _____ 3
Unarmed _____ 10
Nunchuks _____ 13
Grenad _____ 6

Chutzpah (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Con _____ 10
Interrogation _____ 12
Oratory _____ 7

Dexterity (6) Skill Base _____ 1
Laser Weapons _____ 5

Mechanical (13) Skill Base _____ 3

Moxie (9) Skill Base _____ 2
Biochemical Therapy _____ 10
Stealth _____ 8
Electrical Engineering _____ 6
Video Production _____ 17

Power (7)

Personal Equipment
Nunchaku
Hand mirror
Mirrorshades (scratched lenses)
Red IntSec armor
Make-up for close-ups
Toothbrush and tooth polish
Pet rat (dead)
Smal tinny tape player (Mozart cassette)
Indelible marker
Two grenades

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
Nunchaku	13	I	10	—	no		200
Red Laser	5	L	8	50	no		

Armor	Rating
IntSec Red	L4I2P1

PC#3:
Name Then: Rob-R-HLN-3
Name Now: William-G-BSN-3

Former Service Group:
CPU

Security Clearance:
Private: Red
Public: Green

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (8)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (10)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (7) Skill Base _____ 2
Unarmed _____ 7
Neurowhip _____ 12

Chutzpah (9) Skill Base _____ 2
Bootlicking _____ 11
Fast Talk _____ 12
Spurious Logic _____ 16

Dexterity (16) Skill Base _____ 4
Laser Weapons _____ 14

Mechanical (18) Skill Base _____ 5

Moxie (18) Skill Base _____ 5
Security _____ 8
Programming _____ 10
Data Search _____ 17
Data Analysis _____ 16

Personal Equipment
Bland clothes
An old print of Mary, Mother of God (the Mona Lisa)
Some bland rations
Anti-depressants and other drugs
Green mylar reflec
Laser pistol with three Green barrels
Neurowhip

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
Neurowhip	12	E	10	—	no		120
Green Laser	14	L	8	50	no		

Armor	Rating
Green mylar reflec	L4P3AP1

PAV 2.2   Cutout Section

Looter		

Wide Load

PAV 1.1

PAV 2.1   *Highway from Hell*
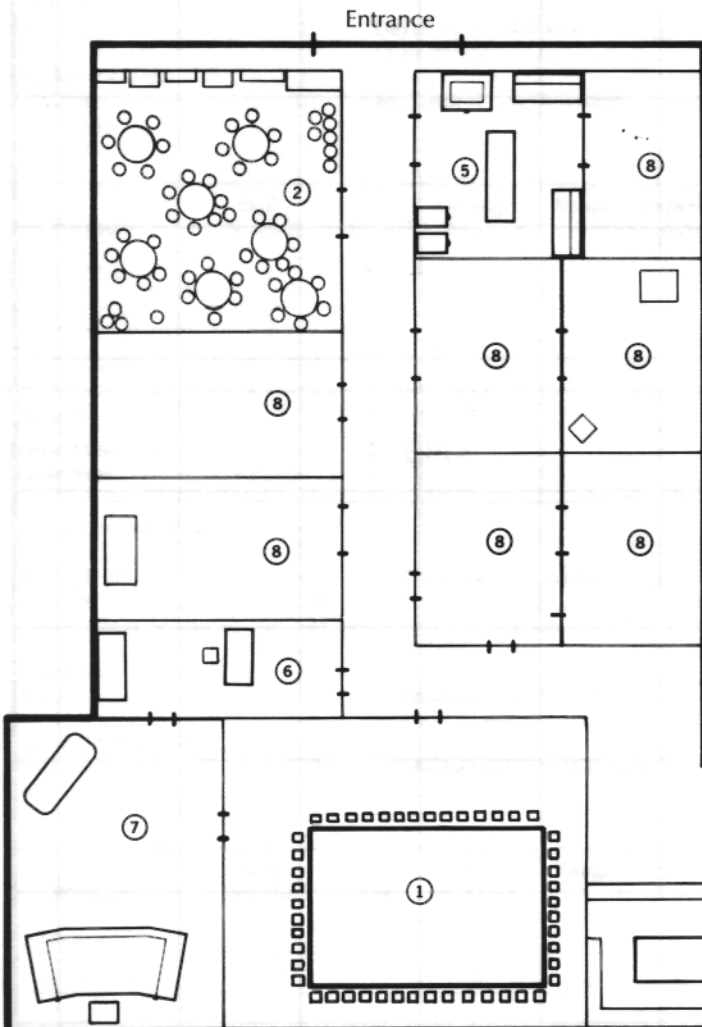
Side rail

Looter starts here

Troubleshooters start here

PAV 1.2 Mission Equipment

6 Auditrons
6 Pair gloves (with wires)
6 Sets covert eyewear
3 Bottles Pills (Red, Yellow and Blue)
1 Duffel bag
1 "Troubleshooter Trade Pack"
6 Laser barrels (one each, appropriate clearance)
6 Old Reckoning Sidearms (to be returned)
6 Digital Chronographs
1 Box labelled "Ammo"

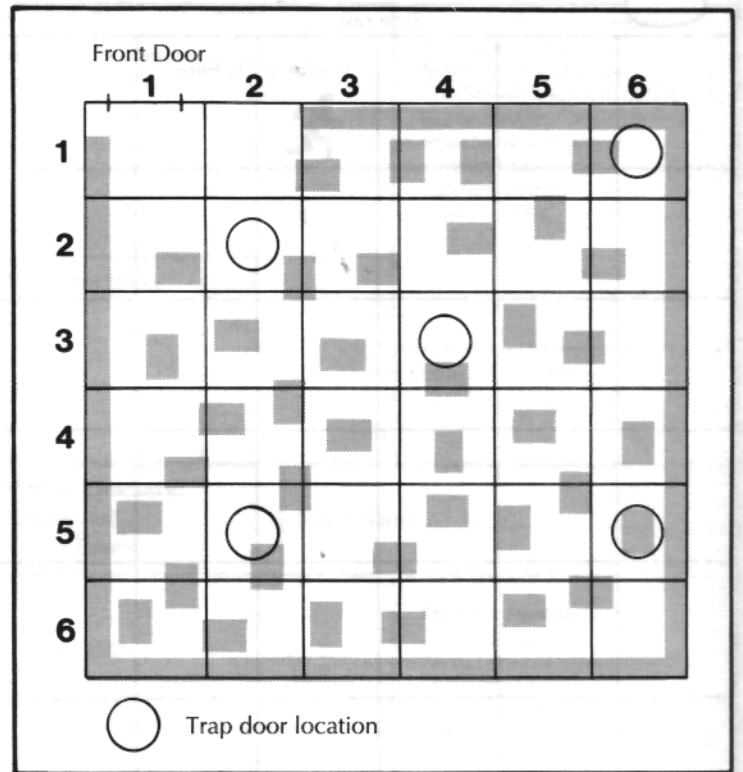## "Back of cutouts"

(Or a perfect place to spend 3.5 seconds.)

PAV 4.1   The JCN Offices

Entrance

PAV 3.1   The Library

Front Door

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

◯ Trap door location

NPC #1: Millie Megabucks (Millime-G-ABX)

Type: Solo

Str: 12 **End:** 15
Agi: 15 **Dex:** 10
Mox: 11 **Chu:** 18
Apt: 7 **Pow:** 10
Unarmed 13
Fast Talk 12
Psychescan 15
Survival 19

Cybernetics: Ninja Toes: retractable switchblades in the feet (10l). Cyberfocals: inlaid punk glasses with roving red light.

Background: You are one of the incredible number of rootless streetchildren in Night City, and one of the few who, by ruthlessness and cunning, has carved out your own niche in the Street with your bare hands. Well, really you used your toes more than your hands. You are extremely attractive yet unlikeable as possible. You spend hours in front of the mirror working on your perm and your sneer.

Description: Medium-sized but extremely lithe, Millie dresses mostly in black to accent her pale complexion. Her shaggy hair is as dark and glossy as her leather pants, jacket, and (open-toed) sandals. She wears a pink-and-purple polka-dot shirt. Her glasses are there just to look nifty. She has this delusion they make her more terri-fying.

Equipment:
Gloss leather suit (l1L2)
Sharpening kit for her toes
WD-40
Hand mirror
Smurfs lunchbox to carry everything in

NPC #2: Joe Silverfinger (Josilv-R-FGR)

Type: Rockerboy

Str: 12 **End:** 16
Agi: 15 **Dex:** 10
Mox: 4 **Chu:** 15
Apt: 7 **Pow:** 10
Unarmed 14
Primitive Melee Weapons 10
Play Guitar 5 (18)
Oratory 16
Survival 17

Cybernetics: Cybernetic hand w/ JudoJab™ killer finger (9l). Laryngeal megaphone and voxbox

Background: Joe Silverfinger earned his nickname from his hand, which is polished chrome. His hand is his main means of expression (both musically and otherwise, for without his hand and its chip for Playing Guitar, he would be a musical zero. He hates it when people discover his talent lies in a chip in his wrist). Joe's music is typical angry punk, amounting to "destroy everything (as long as you don't destroy me & my music)."

Description: Overdressed as per the norm in the music biz, Joe's most attractive aspect is his hand. The rest is nothing but stagey strutting arrogance. His hair is a big hypercombed snarl. He often pretentiously modulates his voice with his cybernetic vocal cords, much to everyone's annoyance.

Equipment:
Axe guitar (10l)
Walkman w/ cassette of his own music
Small amp and speaker
One bimbo groupie

NPC #3: Janeiro (Jan-Y-ROW)

Type: Nomad

Str: 19 **End:** 18
Agi: 12 **Dex:** 9
Mox: 2 **Chu:** 10
Apt: 12 **Pow:** 10
Unarmed 14
Intimidation 17
Projectile Weapons 8 (19)

Cybernetics: Cyberleg. Interface plugs for smartgun

Background: Janeiro grew up as the youngest but biggest child of a nomad family. They had her outfitted with a smartgun port, and hired her out for their own profit. One day Janeiro forgot to go home. Since then she has managed to eke out a living as a hired gun, and has even managed to save enough to buy herself a cyberleg. Unfortunately, she forgets that her cyberleg is a lot stronger than her meat leg.

Description: Frankenstein's monster with breasts.

Equipment:
Smartgun with lots of ammo
Body armor (P3l2)
Teddy bear with the head pulled off

NPC #4: Nort (Noe-R-TTT)

Type: Netrunner

Str: 6 **End:** 9
Agi: 10 **Dex:** 14
Mox: 18 **Chu:** 9
Apt: 17 **Pow:** 10
Unarmed 6 Dodge 15
Bootlicking 12 Con 16
Projectile Weapons 7
Survival 14

Cybernetics: I/O plugs for running the Net. Boosted Reflexes

Background: Nort is one of Night City's ubiquitous cybernetic hackers. He is small, weak, and pallid from having spent so much time in front of a vidscreen instead of going out and getting shot at. Nort seems to have trouble getting women, so he's built this fantasy world in which he's patterned himself after last century's pilots. When combat erupts, Nort dodges until things get really desperate.

Description: Nort affects the manner and dress of a very chivalric World War I pilot — he refers to himself as a Cyberspace Flying Ace. He's got the scarf, funny hat, goggles, cracked leather jacket, and a backpack that looks kind of like a parachute. He's had a little Errol Flynn moustache tattooed on his upper lip.

Equipment:
Backpack that hangs low on the butt
Portable cyberdeck
Change of clothes
Bottle of red wine
Checkered tablecloth
Small pistol (6P)
Leather flight jacket (l1)

NPC #5: Howie Sir (How-Y-SIR)

Type: Corporate

Str: 6 **End:** 8
Agi: 10 **Dex:** 12
Mox: 20 **Chu:** 18
Apt: 8 **Pow:** 10
Unarmed 5
Motivation 17
Spurious Logic 13
Projectile Weapons 10
High Finance 19

Cybernetics: Accounting and stock chips. Photographic memory. RAM chips

Background: Howie is one of that new breed of Corporates: the Preadolescent Urban Professional, oft called the puppie. But a puppy he ain't; he reached his position by ruthlessly blackmailing Young Urban Professionals. Everyone calls him Howie Sir. How'd he end up here? Some sly yuppie told him he couldn't be on a street strike team. Away Howie went. Now everyone's hoping he dies before he wises up.

Description: Short, snotty, and loudmouthed, Howie always dresses in tailor-made business suits, in the latest power fashion. His hair is always immaculate, and his shoes are always spiffy shined. He has a nice raincoat, but he seems to have lost his company credit card (the yuppie hid it). This makes him touchy whenever the subject of money comes up.

Equipment:
Bulletproof vest (P4AP2)
Nice clothes
Small submachinegun (12P)

NPC 6: Kontract (Kont-R-ACT)

Type: Fixer

Str: 10 **End:** 10
Agi: 14 **Dex:** 7
Mox: 16 **Chu:** 19
Apt: 11 **Pow:** 10
Unarmed 8
Forgery 17 Bribery 19
Field Weapons 14
Survival 17

Cybernetics: Bazooka bellygun (recoilless, 13AP). Cyberaudio ears

Background: Never had anything to offer, yourself. So you made your living connecting those who did. Always taking your finder's fee. Now that you're fairly well established, you prefer to be called Konnie; makes you seem less money-grubbing. And you bought yourself a bazooka bellygun; a recoilless rifle that goes straight through your chubby middle. If someone hassles you, you just open up your trenchcoat and give him a flash. Love those explosions.

Description: Kontract looks just like any greasy, squeaky convict or private eye. He's got a baggy trenchcoat, rotting tennis shoes, lumpy hat worn jauntily over his balding pate, and bad breath. But he knows where to sniff out money. Like this job for SSC …

Equipment:
Little black book
Brass knuckles (9l)
Pack of cigarettes
Chewing gum
Lighter
Can of snuff
Forgery paper and pens

To Salt Lake City

Convention Center

Information

L.A.

ADAMS

HOOVER

Mount Mary's College

Los Angeles Trade Tech College

St. Vincent's Church

St. Johns Church

FIGUEROA

JEFFERSON

University of Southern California

VERMONT

Orbital Air (Corporate Section)

Orbital Air (Public Section)

Nothingness (Meg)

Area Code Wall

YOU CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE

To Los Angeles

To San Francisco

Access Area

Long-distance Interchange

PAV 5.1 WonderNet

Ma Belle

Cool Cat Inn

Odd Room

START HERE

Downloading Area

PC#4:
Name Then: Gertrude-I-RKR-2
Name Now: Rude-Y-RKR-2

Former Service Group: Technical Services

Security Clearance:
Private: Indigo
Public: Yellow

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (6)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (16)
Macho _____ 1

Agility (7) Skill Base _____ 2
Unarmed _____ 4
Primitive Melee Weapons _____ 7

Chutzpah (16) Skill Base _____ 4
Bribery _____ 11
Motivation _____ 12
Psychescan _____ 13

Dexterity (11) Skill Base _____ 3
Laser Weapons _____ 6

Mechanical (9) Skill Base _____ 2
Robot Repair and Maint. _____ 16

Moxie (14) Skill Base _____ 3
Demolition _____ 13

Power (9)

Personal Equipment
A bag of chips (Cruncheetyme Algae)
Clam digger
Happiness cloak
Parasol
One bottle of fermented scotch tape (a favorite vice)
Case of Mr. Frost-Y instant ice cream
A bunch of explosives
Laser Pistol with one Yellow barrel

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
							50
Clam Digger	7	I	9	—	no		
Yellow Laser	6	L	8	50	no		

Armor **Rating**
Happiness Cloak L2 (All colors)

PC#5:
Name Then: Agnes -B-MIL-3
Name Now: Shirl-Y-JON-3

Former Service Group: Power Services

Security Clearance:
Private: Blue
Public: Yellow

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (8)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (10)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (15) Skill Base _____ 4
Unarmed _____ 9
Primitive Melee _____ 12
Play Guitharp _____ 5

Chutzpah (17) Skill Base _____ 4
Con _____ 9
Forgery _____ 12
Oratory _____ 8

Dexterity (14) Skill Base _____ 3
Laser Weapons _____ 7
Energy Weapons _____ 11

Mechanical (7) Skill Base _____ 2

Moxie (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Biochemical Therapy _____ 16

Power (9)

Personal Equipment
Untuned guitharp
Vial of happy pills
One Blue laser barrel (no gun)
Energy Pistol
Spool of wire
Yellow reflec
Leather jacket
A bunch of safety pins

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
							300
Energy Pistol	11	E	8	50	yes		
Blue Laser	7	L	8	50	no		

Armor **Rating**
Leather & L4I1
Yellow Reflec

PC#6:
Name Then: Inna-U-EAR-3
Name Now: Greg-B-EAR-3

Former Service Group: Head of R& D, EAR Sector

Security Clearance:
Private: Ultraviolet
Public: Blue

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (8)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (9)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (11) Skill Base _____ 3
Unarmed _____ 6

Chutzpah (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Intimidation _____ 7
Fast Talk _____ 8

Dexterity (10) Skill Base _____ 2
Laser Weapons _____ 8
Projectile Weapons _____ 8

Mechanical (9) Skill Base _____ 2

Moxie (18) Skill Base _____ 5
Medical _____ 12
Biosciences _____ 19
Engineering (all sorts) _____ 14

Power (16)

Personal Equipment
Conductor's baton
Shabby lab jacket
Ice gun
Laser pistol
One Ultraviolet Barrel with one shot left

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experimental?	Damage Status	Credits
							10
Ice Gun	8	P	8	50	yes		
Ultraviolet Laser	8	L	8	50	no		

Armor **Rating**
Lab Coat I1P1

PC#4: Rude-Y-RKR-2

Secret Society: Sierra Club
Secret Society Rank: 7

Mutant Power(s):
Deep Probe

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: None

Loyalties:

Sierra Club

The SoftWhere (see below)

Food Vat Workers (they supply you with Algae Chips)

Background: Boy, were you relieved when The Computer died! You got to do everything you wanted; shorten your name from Gertrude, eat to excess, stop working in that horrible bot factory, and hang out with your fellow Sierra Clubbers (what few remained after the Secret Society Wars).

Actually, you were a second-rate member until you met "Corncobb" Anne-R-SON. She was a giver, definitely not one of those people who always says, "gimmie gimmie gimmie!" Like you, Corncobb believed in the basic immortality of the human soul, but she took it one step further.

She (and her disciples) explained to you how The Computer, and in fact all machines, cause immortal humans to die. Hard angles, sharp noises, harsh lighting, all manner of roughness work counter to the softness of humans. They believe there is a place far, far away (or was it long, long ago?) where humans live forever — a place of subtle chiffon — the SoftWhere. They have outlined a program to help all humans achieve the SoftWhere, whether they like it or not. Joining them was the best thing that happened to you since The Big C crashed.

Goal in Life: Find the SoftWhere, and convince others to join you. At the very least, get everyone to reject machines.

Description: Your obesity is all the more noticable due to your habit of walking around in various states of undress. You do wear your "happiness cloak," though, a ragged cape sewn of scraps of reflec of all colors.

You have long, white hair, and are typically drunk. You often repeat yourself, sort of like a closed loop. Thanks to your metaphysical beliefs, you are easily misunderstood ("If we could *enter* the SoftWhere, we'd live forever"), and many think you're a Corpore Metallic.

PC#5: Shirl-Y-JON-3

Secret Society: Death Leopard
Secret Society Rank: 4

Mutant Power(s):
Electroshock

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: None

Loyalties:

Death Leopard

The band (*Rockin' SHarp*)

Music

Background: You never liked working in Power Services. You never liked being a Troubleshooter. You never liked The Computer. Too much boredom. Too much backstabbing. Not enough parties. Real parties, with loud music, booze 'til you barf, and a good free-for-all to get your face punched out. No wonder you joined Death Leopard.

Now that The Computer's gone, you've been earning a living playing in sleazy clubs with your band, *Rockin' SHarp*. Sure, you've lost two roadies trying to perfect an electric harp, but you've got good sound. And the fans are great! They pass out on the dance floor and throw chairs around the room and even spit at you if you're doing a good gig.

But eventually it all started to seem kind of boring in its own predictable way. Same brawls, same blood, same music, same hangovers. And the band is breaking up. Maybe it's time for a change. Break some new ground for the gang. Do something really radical.

Goal in Life: Do something *really* radical.

Description: You wear as little as possible, and what you do wear is fashionably ratty. You like leather and rags and chains, and you'd be attractive if you hadn't shaved your head and splattered yourself with indelible neon ink.

You habitually carry your 'guitharp,' a cross between a harp and a guitar, which you play constantly. Not that you're any good …

PC#6: Greg-B-EAR-3

Secret Society: Eugenecists
Secret Society Rank: 10

Mutant Power(s):
Polymorphism
Precognition
Energy Field

Sleeper? No

Troubleshooter Team: None

Loyalties:

R & D Priests

EAR Sector

Self

Background: You never had much respect for other people. That, combined with your biochemical research, combined with your connection with the Eugenecists, placed you in a position of power as one of The Computer's High Programmers. While in that lofty position, you indulged your taste for music.

You left it all behind you when the Crash occurred. To avoid persecution, you changed your name and became a full-time R&D researcher. Priest, they call you now, but your job is still to search for Truth. You've also managed to enhance your own mutant abilities to a great degree via the Eugenecists.

At R&D, you have focused your considerable attention on (among other things) biological experiments, trying to develop, among other things, a corpuscular orchestra. You could say you're rather infected with your work.

Goal in Life: To prove to those in R&D that you are every bit as good as you think you are, so you can work unmolested in the R&D labs and change the world. Getting The Computer back isn't even that important.

Description: You look exactly like Jeff Goldblum in *The Fly*. That ought to scare the pants off your fellow players. As you are such a mentally oriented person, simple physical things often escape you. Things like buttoning your jacket up straight. Combing your hair. Dodging gunfire.

When you're not otherwise occupied, you tend to wave your baton.

If asked, the High Programmers suggest (via the Transdimensional Collapsatron) that the PCs go to the library and look up the June 8, 1600 hrs issue of *Business Hourly*

Encounter Two: Sssh!

When the players get to the good part of town and enter the library, read this aloud:

'The Library,' whatever that archaic name might mean, is a ponderous structure made of a thick and solid material quite unlike the glossy stuff used to construct all the other buildings in this area or the flimsy material used back in Alpha Complex.

Inside the front doors, you find yourself in a small, thickly armored foyer. A window to your right is labeled "GUN CHECK ROOM."

Make the players give up most of their weapons and armor before they enter (the library has been plagued by vandals lately). If they give up all their equipment, well, that's their problem. Meanwhile, the cyberpunks wait outside.

Inside the library, the PCs can easily find the periodicals room. This room is stuffed with all the glossy slicks that have been published in the last two weeks. They're made of such cheap material that most are already starting to rot. Everything that was published before the start of June is already so out-of-date that it has been disposed of in the local toxic waste landfill and golf-course.

There's also this librarian living (sort of) in the library. She's a disciplinarian as well as a libertarian, and as an octogenarian she doesn't like for people to trash one of the last vestiges of her Arcadian good old days.

And, of course, given the volume of garbage that comes and goes through this room, there's a prototype robot in here to sort the stuff and scoop out the rotted ones at the bottom.

If asked, the librarian will be happy to help the PCs locate *Business Hourly*, to wit:

In response to your query, the aged woman behind the desk gestures with her machinegun to a small door on the far wall. A sign over the door reads 'Current Periodicals.'

Inside the room are stacks and stacks of glossy magazines, neatly arranged. Looks sort of like a miniature Alpha Complex sky-line, even down to the subtle shifting and swaying of the buildings.

A small bot crawls among the stacks of magazines, carefully rearranging them in some incomprehensible order.

Encounter Three: Read Me

Okay, they've suffered enough for now.

Don't worry; more to come. But now we've got to let them make some progress. So let them return to The Combat Zone and, if they've got the key issue, read:

Back in the marginal safety of The Combat Zone, you reunite with your aides, and settle down to read the *Business Hourly* article.

The magazine is already rotting, and the pervasive acid rain is doing it no good. The tattered page with the article has a few bullet holes in it. Fortunately, the most interesting section is mostly intact.

" ... efforts of Clem Unger and his programming team. Mr. Unger, or 'Alice,' as he is known to his Netrunning comrades, was unavailable at his Honesdale, PA residence. When called at his office, his secretary said Unger has no worries about his safety during the upcoming asteroid strike and plans on continuing his heuristic programming."

Another article deals with the pending impact of the rogue planetoid, and its projected impact on world business. The picture is not very bright.

Choices, choices

If the PCs run right off to Honesdale, pick up the adventure at Encounter Seven.

If they try to find out where JCN's offices are, they can do so with another trip to the library if nothing else. There, they find that JCN has major branch offices in all 50 states, sometimes several in one state. There are Pennsylvania offices in Dallas, PA, Pittsburgh, PA, and Philadelphia, PA. Jaunting off to either of the latter two means improv on your part — you can use Encounter One in Episode Four as a guideline, but Clem is simply not there. Truly brilliant PCs will go to Dallas (which is near Honesdale), in which case you can skip to Encounter One in Episode Four; since so few PCs are truly brilliant, this should be a rare case.

Most likely of all is that your PCs feel they don't have enough information. This is quite wise of them. To reward their wisdom, run the following encounter.

Encounter Four: Diving for Cover

When the PCs run out of ways to find Clem "Alice" Unger's office address (especially if they really blew it in the library and got no info at all), have everyone make a roll against their moxie. Whoever makes it notices Alice's picture on the front page of the *Night City Screamsheet*, the local paper. Read:

The picture is small, but recognizably Alice. Unfortunately, the paper is inside a vending machine, and is folded in such a way that you can get no information from the accompanying story. What do you do?

Nope. Sorry, none of the cyberpunks have got any coinage to put in the machine. In fact, they're all broke. Why do you think they took this job with Samurai Security, anyway? As I see it, the players have three choices:

They can panhandle. This is not very likely to succeed, as no one in The Combat Zone has any money, and no one outside the Zone will give any to some poorly-dressed street urchins. Besides, I do believe panhandling is against city ordinance, so some vigilante is probably going to shoot the perpetrators, if the police don't get 'em first.

They can attempt to break into the vending machine. This is a daring choice, as vending machines in The Combat Zone are well protected (see also "fully armed") against theft. Drum up some outrageous stats (see also "overkill") for the machine, its weapons, and its automated fire control system and go after it.

They can steal some money. NOW they're thinking cyberpunk. Stealing is fast, effective, exciting, and much less likely to garner police interference than, say, double-parking. Hey come on, Night City police are smart guys. Would YOU intercede if two (or more) felons were having a 9mm discussion?

Encounter Five: Read All About It

The vending machine apparently leaked, and let the papers get sogged up by the ubiquitous rain. Scanning the moistened article, the players can glean the following:

" ... offices located in Dallas. Unger, who prefers to be called 'Alice' instead of Clem, has worked with JCN ever since his graduation. Unger was curiously not at his residence, and a barrier prevented this reporter from entering his office for a personal interview, but Unger's secretary said his productivity has not been hampered by approach of the asteroid ..."

Also point out that another article catches the eyes of the *Cyberpunk* NPCs. It states that the EuroSpace Agency has tried and failed to destroy the rogue planetoid. It's gonna hit in only about four days, you know ....

This Segment Is Over

So why are you bothering to read this? Everyone else is already in the next encounter. I keep tellin' ya, things move fast around here.

Will the Real Dallas Please Stand Up?

Did you notice that neither article mentioned that JCN was located in Dallas, Pennsylvania, and not Dallas, Texas?

If anyone tries to jump the gun and head to Dallas, Texas, they'll probably not live to regret it. If they truck over to Dallas (see Encounter Six for some travel tips), they can check the phone directory. They can ask policemen. They can take last-minute-guided-tours-while-it's-still-intact. They can beat up little kids. They can do anything they want. They find a giant JCN corporation office, and even an Unger listed in the office directory. Clementine Unger. No relation.

Meanwhile, as we all know, the Age of Peace is a dangerous time. There are muggers in abundance. And crooked corporate officials. And gangs.

Wasted time, wasted clones.

Encounter Six: Planes, Trains, and Cybermobiles

Now that the PCs have at least a tenuous grip on Alice's location, they can begin pursuit. This means going to Honesdale, Pennsylvania, which is a good 2500 miles distant (a little less from Texas). How to get there?

First, they've got to get some more money. They can either flip burgers for minimum wage until the asteroid hits, or they can do something fun.

Once they have the dough, they can either buy round-trip tickets ("Airport '77"), Amtrak passes (any Wild West flick), or buy or even steal a Maserati ("Mad Max"). Or they can go on a stratospheric hop with Orbital Air ("Alien") to get there real quick. No matter which way they go, there's sure to be a way to slow them down ("Raid on Entebbe," "The Hitcher," "The Texas Chainsaw Massacre") en route.

Now's also your chance to horrify them with what the USA is like in the year 2097. Have them pass through all the great American tourist showpieces.

Mount Saint Helens: Oops! Bad idea! There it goes again! All that subsurface injection of hazardous waste has overpressured it, and it's blowing up again, spewing toxic lava everywhere and reawakening Cyber-zilla.

Mount Rushmore: President Barbarino has been added, the first US President to wear mirrorshades and listen to the Sex Pistols. The entire mountain has been painted and graffitoed. $4.95 to add your own personal touch.

The Mississippi Delta Mudflat: Despite all the silt that's been accumulating, the Mighty Mo rolls ever on. Fifty miles wide and three inches deep, it's treacherous crossing. Beware the delta pirates in their airboats.

Encounter Seven: Honesdale Hose

If the Troubleshooters go to Honesdale, they don't really have a hard time finding Clem 'Alice' Unger's address. It's listed in the phone book, and it's right in the middle of the seediest slums in the polluted little burg. Natch.

By the by, if your players are infinitely clever, their characters may skip Honesdale completely and go to Dallas. Bravi*! Go to Episode Four. Otherwise, read:

Quiet, please.

You move through the tiny hamlet, choking on the noxious fumes belching from the gargantuan WEG Corporation factory and shoe shop in the city center. The town might be pretty, but for the thick layer of soot and pervasive smell of sweat socks.

Alice's apartment is on the fourth floor of a ramshackle building that openly defies the law of gravity. The building was apparently built using non-Euclidean geometry. Judging by the number of people in the area, it's a crowded place.

From what you can tell, Alice's apartment in unoccupied.

For once, their observations are correct. This is due mainly to the fact that Alice has moved away to prepare for California cryogenesis. If the Team goes knocking on Alice's door, every other door in the hallway opens up, and various hausfraus and junkies and prostitutes and grubby children stare openly at the PCs until they get uncomfortable and leave.

The players now have two choices; they can break in, or they can stake the place out. If they break in, skip to Encounter Nine, below. Personally, I prefer the stakeout; it's classier.

Encounter Eight: Stakeout

The landlord across the street will charge the Troubleshooters a paltry fortune to use the condemned apartment directly across from Alice's place. The floorboards are cracked, broken, or missing, as is most of the exterior wall. Piping and wiring dangle into the room.

Of course, there's lots to do all night. People enter and leave Alice's building constantly. Every passing cyberpunk tries to rob, scam, assassinate, or evangelize the Troubleshooters, as they are obviously not locals. And at about two in the morning, the municipal work crew finally arrives to demolish the building the Troubleshooters are in.

While their world crumbles about them, a light finally flicks on in Alice's apartment.

Encounter Nine: I'll Huff and I'll Puff

Now that the PCs know someone's home, they can try an assassination. Unfortunately, the person inside is the landlord of the building, who, after having drunk gobs of beer, has finally entered Alice's apartment to prep it for the next tenant. (If the PCs broke in without a stakeout, the landlord arrives in the middle of it.)

This is a bad neighborhood, and the landlord carries protection. He's also been playtesting role-playing games for most of the evening, so if the PCs break in after seeing the light go on, whether through the door (strength roll or sprain your knee) or

Religion and the Rogue Planetoid

Actually, there are a lot of people who cope with the crisis religiously, in one form or another. Some think the rogue planetoid is another catastrophe a la Noah's flood, which is doubly believable since no one has seen a rainbow in over twenty years due to the smog. Others think it's a test of mankind's Zen outlook.

The reactions of these people are likewise varied. Some folks think it's simply Judgement Day, and so blithely go about their business and try to act holy. Others await the rapture, and the sooner the better. Still others think the rapture came and went but nobody qualified.

Actually, everyone's wrong. The planetoid was fired from a gargantuan Schmegegi interstellar turbomagnetic mass accelerator rifle as part of their centuries-long plan to Get Our Women. Don't believe me? Well, the *real* reason for the planetoid will be revealed later on in the **Vulture Warriors of Dimension X** series. Not now. Sorry. I saw what happened to my loose-lipped co-worker in *More Songs About Food Vats,* so I'm not tellin'.

the window (which pulls out of its sill and plummets to the street, column 2 of the falls chart), they are greeted by a shotgun blast.

If instead they knock, (or have broken in earlier and are now trying to hide in the closet) the landlord (a 60's throwback) opens the door. Read the players the following description:

> **The door swings partway open to reveal a face that looks like it's been carved out of wax. The nose is very big and is a distinctly different color than the rest of the face, and a mat of long straggly hair obscures his features. He seems to be trying to hide the fact that he has a gun.**
> **"May I help you?" he croaks. His voice sounds very strange.**

As he knows absolutely nothing of Alice (other than he was always on time with rent), the landlord truthfully answers any questions the PCs have. Given the circumstances, the players'll think he's lying through his teeth. Hopefully, they'll come to the conclusion that the landlord is Alice in disguise.

Gosh, that'd be pretty boring if that was all there was to it, don't you think? Relax, folks, because there's a strike team hired by

Game Stuff
The Leaning Tenement of Honesdale

Map: None given. It's a cramped boarding house. Divide the room you're playing in into eight rooms and three corridors with pieces of masking tape or something.

The Landlord: Drunken hack-n-slasher

Weapon: Shotgun (15P) _____ 6
Armor: Drunken Stupor (All2)

The San Francisco .45ers: Corporate ninja
Weapon: Shuriken (5I) _____ 10
Katana (10I) _____ 15
Armor: Bushido (All1)

The Tenants: Indentured game designers and shoe salesmen
Weapon: Big Guns (12P) _____ 4
Baseball Bats (9I) _____ 7
Armor: Leather (I2P1)

Tactics: The landlord shoots at anyone in the room. The ninja attack the PCs and anyone else close. The tenants attack everyone.

a bunch of jealous programmers working for various EuroCorp competitors, and they've been staking out Alice's place just like the PCs have. So, whenever it looks like everything will be peacably resolved (or whenever the bullets start flying), have the opposition crash the party.

And, if *that's* not exciting enough for you, any one of the tenants might have a personal vendetta to settle ballistically with the landlord. Throw in as many as you like. Make it a block party!

Encounter Ten: Well Excuuse Me

After the gunfight is over and the landlord lies dead in the hall, a check of ID or attempt to remove his masklike face will prove conclusively that this is indeed the wrong guy. Don't feel bad, though, he really was quite a schlep.

Then the players have got a few minutes (before the police and ambulance arrive) to talk to the not-so-innocent bystanders to figure out what happened to Alice. This may involve some simple intimidation, the summary execution of a little old lady with a frying pan, and maybe some bribery, but they can find out from some of the tenants

The Cyberpunks in Combat

Having six NPC guides with six Troubleshooters makes quite a gang, doesn't it? Are you worried that the extended twelve-man team will be an unstoppable cybernetic war machine?

A few words might be in order to make sure this doesn't happen.

First, in combat, have the cyber-punks be incredible cowards. Why? They're getting paid megabucks by SSC for the purpose (so they believe) of helping these moronic corporate flunkies — the Troubleshooters. They most certainly want to preserve their semi-mechanical hides to enjoy the fruits of their labors.

Second, remember that cyberpunks don't get clones. Once they're dead, that's all we wrote ... so blow one of them away right off the bat just to prove your point.

Third, all of the cyberpunks are violent and obnoxious. If you still think the group's too large, have two (or more) of them get into an argument. Somebody will expire in short order.

Fourth, cyberpunks can run out of ammo, trip and fall, or get an important call on the cellular phone — any time you need them to.

In summary, have the *Cyberpunk* NPCs loiter, dawdle, avoid confrontations, and die quickly. If the players want to keep their guides, they'll have to pull their own weight, or more so.

that Alice worked for JCN down in Dallas, PA. No matter how many people the Troubleshooters shoot, that's all they know.

Encounter Eleven: On the Metro

Do your PCs need a little more abuse? Are there still more than three *Cyberpunk* NPCs? Are you more sadistic than the average bear? Do you just have this thing for subways?

If your answer to any of these questions is yes, then you might want to have a few subway encounters on the way to Dallas.

First your players walk down the street and into a Subway Sandwich Shop. ('Scuse me.)

Uh-oh. No subway tokens? No attendant to sell them? Anyone want to jump the turnstile?

Then on the subway itself, some yokels from the Fightin' Texas Aggie Liberation Front hijack the tram and order the conductor to fly it to the North Pole.

Then maybe they make it to Dallas, and the next episode.

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*This is the plural of the single male applause "Bravo." This is sexist, but educational, so we hope you'll forgive the sexism.
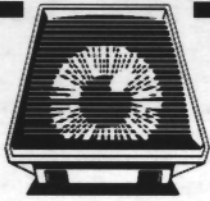
Episode Four: Go Ask Alice

Summary

The players go to the JCN office. They meet JCN's avant garde computer personality program. After a brief runaround, they find Alice's office. Although he is not there, they find a tool that will help them locate him. This is called 'being strung along.'

What's New at JCN

Jumbo Computer Network has been top dog ever since Heuristic Artificial Logician Corporation's latest model glitched on a Jupiter probe mission. Like their late competitors, JCN designs megabrains to handle infinitely complex control systems; things that can, for example, run all the public works for major metropoli.

HALCorp went under because their systems had a few obvious glitches. JCN's glitches are much more subtle. A few imperfections in their personality simulators. Probably nothing that would have any noticable effect, unless there were some major sort of disaster.

Like an asteroid hitting the Earth.

Yes, JCN designed the computer systems that even now are networking the cities of the world beneath their geodesic domes:

"ALPHA CITY: the Future Has a Silver Lining."

Prototypo

Dallas, PA is an old-fashioned town; so old-fashioned that it doesn't even have a geodesic dome to prevent all the colonial mansions from being eaten away by the acid rain. The town looks like a pot-holed net of narrow streets enmeshing squared-off piles of rotten lumber, with a small dome rising amid the wreckage in the center of the town.

Property values here are negligible, as the stench emanating from Honesdale overpowers even the overpopulation of the Age of Peace as far as land prices are concerned. That's why JCN chose this desolate spot to erect an office-building sized example of their future metropolitan vision;

the vision of new beauty rising from the rubble; the vision which in recent years has brought in billions of dollars in revenue: the so-called Alpha Cities. Each, of course, run by one of their complex Alpha computers.

Since JCN has made major league megabucks building giant domed cities across the planet, one might expect that they'd begin to feel a little paranoid about the other industrial giants. The Age of Peace is a turbo-powered business world, and when some measly U.S. Company suddenly begins to rival the ominous EuroCorps, that company had better start fearing hostile takeovers — with stocks and bombs.

Yes, JCN has a very tight security system. Fortunately for the players, things aren't as tight as they should be — there's so many people trying to tend to last minute business before the planetoid strikes that some things just sort of slip through the cracks. Things like Troubleshooters.

Encounter One: Getting In — To Trouble

Read the following as the PCs approach the JCN dome:

The rain is getting heavier, and the smell and color are getting stronger. As you walk the potholed street, you see a glistening dome rising from the midst of the geometric wreckage. As you approach you see two guards flanking an entrance. Over the door-way hangs a sign that reads "JCN SECTOR HEADQUARTERS."

Every so often a group of people runs into or out of the dome. Some are wearing very bright clothes under their raincoats. The guards eye you as you approach, as does a camera over the door. What do you do?

Entering the JCN Sector HQ is not as formidable a task as it may seem. Actually, it ought to be rather easy. All the characters have to do is properly identify themselves and walk on in.

What?!?

Well, JCN actually has 'troubleshooters,' software and hardware experts whom they send out to correct bugs and solve networking problems and such. So identifying themselves as a 'Troubleshooter Team' is actually a smart thing to do. Second, (although the PCs don't know it yet) the neon

jumpsuits they're probably still wearing are the latest fad, even in a boondocks place like Dallas, PA, where the nearest 'culture' is the aforementioned stinky hamlet to the northeast. Lastly, in this time of panic and chaos, anyone who acts like they know what they're doing is left alone to complete their task, so being brazen is also a plus.

Of course, if the players seem hesitant or confused, the guards are likely to ask for papers, ID badges, or what have you. They might ask what their security clearance is. I'm sorry, 'Red' is an invalid answer. The correct response would be 'Wombat.'

Encounter Two: Just Biz

Check it out, dude. We even have a map for you, showing the important stuff inside the JCN Sector HQ: PAV 4.1. The PCs can go anywhere they want in the place. Not to say it'll be easy …

1: The Board Room

This is a bad place to enter; you could get board to death in here. FRED 209 (a very big bot) stands guard here while all the organic types plan out how they'll duck and cover against the planetoid. Incidentally, as a direct result of its experience during the Big Oops, this robot will end up founding Corpore Metal.

If the players blunder in the door, FRED 209 whirls with startling speed and bellows:

"YOU HAVE EXCEEDED YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE! YOU HAVE TWENTY SECONDS TO CLEAR THE PREMISES!"

I think the song and dance is pretty clear, except that if FRED 209 ever reaches zero on his countdown, he says, "I AM NOW AUTHORIZED TO TERMINATE YOUR

A Rare Opportunity

Once the players realize just who this Computer system is, remind them that now's their chance to talk back to The Computer's embryonic self. They can even spit and swear at it. Personally, I wouldn't recommend it, because the memory of such an affront, no matter how deeply buried in the silicon subconscious, is bound to turn up eventually, say about two or three hundred years from now …

EMPLOYMENT!" before he opens fire.

If the PCs somehow survive, or just move fast, they can get all sorts of incomprehensible documentation in here, as well as kill a lot of execs.

2: The Break Room

Lots of people here, eating and drinking. Enterprising PCs can start quite a food fight. The cyberpunks will break into the vending machines, all of which are filled with junk food that Alpha Complexers would find quite palatable (gag).

3: The Lab

This room is densely packed with glassware, chemicals, electronics, etc. If the PCs make a few engineering rolls, they can put together a new device. Or maybe they *find* one, just lying there …

Feel free to have a Mr. Wizard-style tech bumbling around.

4: The CPU

This is where the computer resides. Not much else of interest, except a box labeled "IN CASE OF FIRE" with an axe in it …

5: Security Room

This is a small, cluttered room, where JCN's security guards hang out and goof off. Reuse the guards from the front door.

Inside, the PCs can find a map of the building, plus they can check the monitors of all the security cams in the building for wandering FREDs.

6: The Sex Kitten's Office

I'm afraid we're not allowed to print the sort of stuff that might go on in here. Has everyone been keeping up with their hormone suppressants?

7: The President's Office

Think Ultraviolet. Nothing in here at all, except the President. He sits behind his huge (but empty) desk playing tiddlywinks. He has a wet bar, and he might make a good hostage, but there is absolutely nothing of intellectual worth in the room.

8: Other Offices

Mostly vacated in light of the impending Big Oops.

9: Clem's Office

See below:

■ Encounter Three: Clem Unger's Office

Clem's secretary Bruno (short for Brunhilde) is her absolute normal unflustered
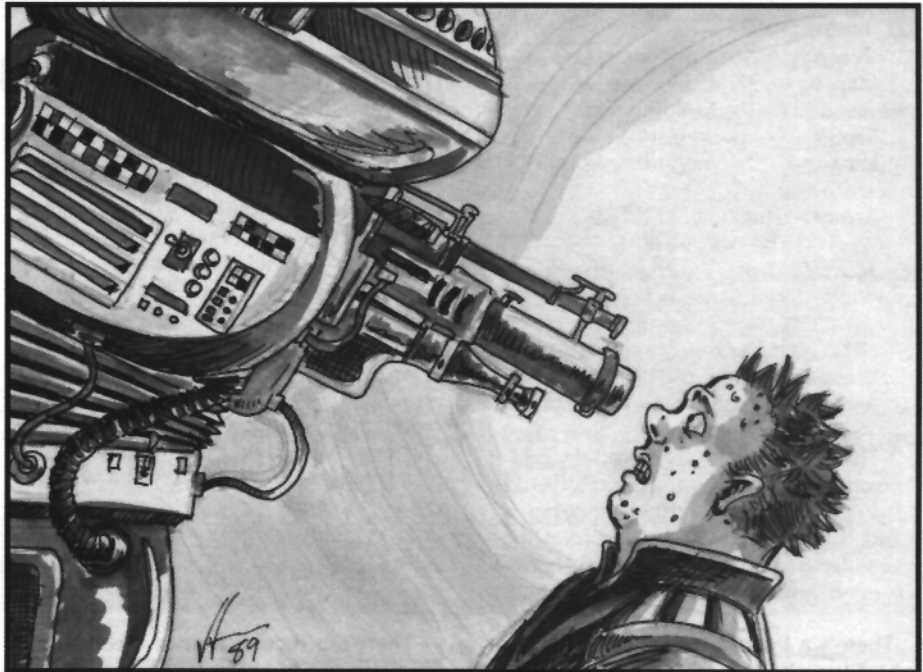
■ Game Stuff
Illogic Gates

Map: None given. It's a front door to a building.

Some Guards: Some guards

Weapon: Riot SMGs (P6 plus stun)_____15

Armor: Riot gear (I3P2F2)

Tactics: Do everything possible to make the players squirm until they blow their cover.

You have exceeded your security clearance!

self, in spite of the chaos around her. See, she was hired expressly for her ability to stall visitors indefinitely. The Troubleshooters will probably have to kill her to get into the office, although some sinister manipulations might also succeed. But probably not:

PC: We're here to see Clem-U.

Bruno: Do you have an appointment with Mr. Unger?

PCs: (in unison) No. Yes!

Bruno: We can fit you in at 4:37 August 5th.

PCs: But that's after the planetoid hits!

Bruno: Yes, I'm sorry for that inconvenience. Mr. Unger could have seen you on August 3rd, but this situation has imposed considerable hardships on his time.

PCs: But this is urgent! (draws laser) Ah, see, we had orders from, ah, Smith-U, to give Clem-U these ah, prototype laser signalling devices, for, ah, further testing.

FRED 209: (approaching from down the hall) PLEASE LOWER YOUR WEAPON! YOU HAVE TWENTY SECONDS TO COMPLY!

Bruno will never tell the PCs that Alice is not in, because that fact is considered Top Secret, as is his current location. She'll just say things like "he's not seeing anyone right now." She'll ask the PCs to take a seat in the waiting area, and will serve them coffee, tea, or something. (Feeling mean? I hear Mickey Finns are popular in The Age of Peace.) Then she sits back and reads the style section, which the PCs might note has

a story on "Night City's Neon Jumpsuits: Trouble-free Fashion."

The Troubleshooters will just have to wait. And wait. Bruno reads and types. People come and go to Alice's office, Bruno admitting them with a simple (but obnoxious) nod. Make sure the players notice this. Stress this point. Figure out an obnoxious way to nod and do it a lot. It's a bona fide Major Episode Hint.

The clock starts ticking around to closing time. Have the Transdimensional Collapsatron ask for a progress report. Your players are gonna have to do *something* …

Since most players (and cyberpunks) seem to favor persuading bystanders with lethal force, there's yet another game stuff box nearby.

■ Encounter Four: Alice Oops

Only when the players burst through the door and liberally hose down the entire office with large-bore weapons-fire will they find that Alice is indeed not in. It is in fact immediately apparent that he has not been in for a day or two. This should assuage any feelings of guilt the players might have for brutally cudgeling a little old lying secretary.

On the other hand, their effort has not been totally wasted. There are still some items in Alice's office. True, everything of *importance* has been taken out of Alice's office and computer files (like the complete program for the Alpha computer system), but there are a few scraps and obsolete notes that might nonetheless be of interest to the time-traveling Troubleshooter.

Game Stuff
No Appointment Necessary

Map: None given. Just use the appropriate area on the building map.

Bruno: Deceptionist receptionist.

Weapon: .44 magnum w/ glaser slugs(15P) _____ 7

Armor: Gloss leather (L1I2)
           The desk (All2)

Some Guards: Some guards. Reuse the front door guards as needed.

FRED 209: This time it can be stopped

Weapons: Miniguns (18P) _____18

Armor: Combat chassis (All4)

The Force Field: In a *Cyberpunk* world, no one would have just a plain little old lady secretary to defend their office hours and coffee breaks. No way, José. Alice installed a force field in front of his door to deter unwanted visitors (the PCs might even remember this from the newspaper article).

The force field is keyed to a cybernetic switch installed in Bruno's skull; when she nods her head, it throws the switch which deactivates the force field for a few seconds. Pretty nifty, huh?

If the force field takes damage equal to three kill results in a single round, it temporarily goes down.

Tactics: Bruno hides behind the desk, occasionally taking pot shots at someone. Have security guards show up as necessary, and a FRED 209 or two if things really need heating up. And be sure to remind the players that with all the shooting and shouting, Alice is sure to be taking cover, if not making good his escape.

There's a list of "Things To Do," all of which have been marked off. One entry in the list is "pack essentials for cryo."

There's a JCN envelope marked "Unger, Clem / Relocation Orders / Top Secret." It's empty.

There's a receipt from a travel-agency voucher showing Clem Unger bought a sub-orbital shuttle trip (first class) to Orbital Air's California spaceport. The flight left twenty minutes ago.

There's the latest holographic Playboy centerfold hung on the back of his office door. Yeah, I know it doesn't help the situation, but it's still 'of interest to the time-traveling Troubleshooter.'

There's a JCN brochure (small thrice-folded affair) which details JCN's beginnings in WWIII California, where they helped rebuild and reprogram SAC/NORAD. The brochure goes on to explain the continued improvements in the system which have culminated in the current complex Alpha computer system for Alpha Cities. Aha! The true beginnings of The Computer! Hmm … could be important!

And finally, there's a small VCR-like device on his desk. It's labeled "property of Clem Unger." If there are any surviving *Cyberpunk* NPCs, one will immediately grab the object, exclaiming "Aha! His cyberdeck!" Think this might be the clue that helps the luckless Troubleshooters find their quarry?

Sure hope so, because about the time they look it over, everyone hears three or four basso voices approaching, bellowing something about trespassing in a private office. Let's see, with four FREDs allowing twenty seconds grace time apiece, the Troubleshooters should have another minute or so to make good their escape, right? Better make that spurious logic roll if you want to make it to the next episode ….
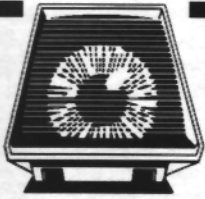
Episode Five: A Run in Their Stalkings

"Avast, ye scurvy Corporate swabs! Prepare to be boarded!" — Oliver Wendell Jones

Overview

In this chapter, the players finally track down Alice. The hunt occurs in that most generic yet inhospitable cyberpunk environment, the direct computer interface known as The Net. Don't know what The Net is? Better go grab that copy of *Cyberpunk*, cheapskate! But to tide you over,

A Brief Explanation of 'The Net' for Cheapskates Who Won't Buy *Cyberpunk*

In the Age of Peace, the entire world uses computers for data processing, information retrieval, and playing Zork XLVIII. Piracy is also common.

The Net is a vast web of telecommunications hardware and software that interconnects all the computers in the world. Everything has access to everything else; sort of like a silicon orgy.

In order for humans to be able to "run the Net," it was necessary to develop simulated sensory interfaces — the so-called cyberdecks. These decks translate things like data streams and programs into more readily indentifiable and understandable sensory input according to the interface program being run. For example, a data base storing recipes might actually look like a cookbook.

Other programs can interact with the human mind in the Net (for example, the extremely popular pornodecks), up to and even including *killing* Netrunners who have violated corporate systems. These lethal programs are often referred to as 'black programs.'

So basically, the Net is a consensual hallucination present in the mind of the user, structured according to the rules of the mediating program, and while it is not a direct representation of events, it is nonetheless correlatable.

So you've got six players, a cyberdeck for a gamemaster, a program for the rules, and the PCs are gonna die at every turn. Playing *Paranoia* while playing *Paranoia*. Awesome!

we've given you a sidebar with a brief explanation.

The Team will be using Alice's own cybernetic interface deck (cyberdeck) with his very own pipe-dream hand-programmed fantasy-gratification interface program. Let's see here ... *Cyberpunk View From the Edge*, page 29 ...

"It's often dangerous to use another man's interface carelessly — one man's normalcy may be your nightmare."

Oh, I love it so.

Ready or Net, Here They Come

Once the beleaguered time travellers have gotten themselves out of the JCN building, it's time to continue looking for the elusive Alice. Continuing to poke around in the flesh will take a long time indeed, certainly more time than remains before Day One of The Computer. Thus Nort (or, if he's been fragged, one of the other NPCs) suggests going back to his pad in Night City to get near where Alice is, and then using Alice's Very Own Cyberdeck to track down his secret location.

Electric Avenue

Some words about Alice's deck and interface program might now be in order.

Alice is a very skilled Netrunner. The device Nort is now holding in his lap is a multiple interface deck which Alice affectionately dubbed "the Six-Shooter." Alice designed the deck to accept multiple Netrunners so he could work with the rest of his programming team. Most of the other team members are now very slightly insane (see *Cyberpunk* quote above).

The deck is remarkable because, in addition to its capacity, it does not require cybernetic I/O plugs to be operated. Simple probes attached to the user's temples are sufficient — the deck reads the user's thoughts by resistivity assimilation. And it never ever malfunctions. Not like the last model he tested, which charbroiled a Weefle-runner named Wilson. Nope, this one's perfectly safe.

As mentioned in *Cyberpunk* (and also in the sidebar above), a cyberdeck needs an interface program, by which it translates information into sensory input.

There are several commercially available interface programs, all using well-worn cliches. DiscoRunner and Silicon Val are particularly tasteless examples of this type.

Alice instead chose to program his own interface, which he has named WonderNet. It is heavily patterned after Lewis Carroll's *Alice* books, and therefore relies heavily on fractals and random number generators.

If you haven't read the *Alice* books (which you really should, you uncultured yuppie), then gamemaster WonderNet as you would a dream.

Things change, without warning and without logic. Scenes shift, items change into other items, events backtrack or completely change context. So be really silly. Don't worry about consistency.

But give at least a casual nod to fairness.

Encounter One: Net Now

Drag them back across the continent in much the same brutal manner in which you let them travel to the East Coast. Then, once sequestered in the home of one of the *Cyberpunk* NPCs, read:

Nort's flat is a small, cramped affair thoroughly filled with precarious piles of high-tech junk. He ushers everyone in, and clears a few places to sit.

While he gives the players the following lecture, the other cyberpunks place electrode patches on the Troubleshooters' temples and bring them each a glass of Gatorade (and maybe some illicit brownies, if you're feeling malicious).

"This handy little device will be a big help in tracking down your quarry. I can give you a start, but after that you're on your own.

"Your man took a suborbital shuttle to Orbital Air's local facility, which is pretty easy to find. Just head out to the LADA interchange, then go long distance to Los Angeles.

"Once in Los Angeles, it should be a cinch to locate Orbital Air. Maybe you'll see Alice on one of the cameras, or maybe he left a trail you can follow. I don't know what JCN's security procedures are.

"If you get stuck, just come on back, and maybe we can help you out.

Spuriouser and Spuriouser

Yes, there are things on the shelves that the PCs are falling past. All sorts of neat stuff.

Remember, though, that all of this is simply interpretive, and that it has been interpreted through the eyes of a programmer *mucho loco. Ach, himmel!*

What is actually happening is the PCs are being networked with the cyberdeck, and are being shown a listing of the programs that Alice has stored in the deck's considerable ROM. In other words, the items are programs that Alice's programming team has made up for use in the Net.

Unfortunately, the PCs have no idea what the programs actually do. Describe glimpses of various items as the PCs fall. They will have to make a difficult dexterity roll to grab the item they want, but any attempt will get hold of something. If they blow the roll, choose your favorite.

A Bottle Labeled "DRINK ME"
A Cake Labeled "EAT ME"
A Jar of Marmalade Labeled "WHIP ME 'TIL I SCREAM"
A Deck of Cards
A Pepper Mill
A Rattle
A Red Paintbrush
A Stick of Chalk

The Bottle tastes exactly like Bouncy Bubble Beverage. When drunk, it gives the user the charm and sex appeal so often pictured in advertising, or at least the cybernetic equivalent of same. In other words, all programs and data bits encountered will consider the user to be friendly, have the proper password, or whatever.

If shaken vigorously and thrown, the soda can explodes and makes everything sticky — reverse effects, everyone's hostile. This item has *no effect* on other Netrunners.

The Cake can be swallowed with ease, despite its size. Remember, this is a constructed reality. If anyone tries to break the cake into smaller bytes (a difficult task), it explodes, filling the area with waist-high mud (random data)

which the PCs track wherever they go, making it laughably easy to follow them from then on.

The cake is an advanced data search subroutine, and if swallowed gives the brave one perceptual knowledge of everything in adjacent areas of the net. Of course, sometimes the PC might forget exactly where *he* is …

The Marmalade is an evasion and escape subprogram. When activated (whipped into a froth 'til it screams), it assaults the assigned target, giving it a thorough scrub job. Foam spills on the floor, and a veritable cloud of bubbles surrounds the hapless victim. The effect this has depends on the victim.

If used against a tracking program, the marmalade destroys the trace the program uses to track its target. The program sits there dumbfounded, try-ing to rub the bubbles out of its eyes, and the PCs can make a 'clean get-away.'

If used on another Netrunner, it wipes out the trace connecting his consciousness with his body. Urg. And cyberpunks don't have clones. Let the victim try to find his way back, though; he's got a few minutes before his body croaks for good.

The marmalade erases data, and makes other non-combatant programs practically invisible, buried as they are beneath the thick suds. By the way, if anyone enters or touches the suds (which represent the marmalade program's area of effect) they also get attacked.

The Cards are cheap, easy-to-use combat programs. When activated, they sprout little legs and arms and wield a variety of weapons.

They usually can't make an enemy program crash in one round, but they make up for their weakness with their versatility; they can be used against anything. Data walls, black programs, fellow Netrunners … you name it, the card will harm it. After the combat is over, any activated cards cease to exist. There are a limited number of cards available. 52 is usually a good number.

The Pepper Mill is a lethal attack program. When thrown at someone or something, they dissolve — into a cloud of pepper motes.

Problems can occur when the user misses his target or drops the item. Also, there is a one in ten chance that when someone is pepperized, the Pepper program will retain the directives of its latest victim and starts acting according to the victim's programming or desires.

The Rattle is essentially an alarm program. When shaken, it summons every counterintrusion and anti-piracy program within miles. All the king's horses and all the king's men, along with a giant crow flying overhead, stampede into the area. I hope everyone runs; all the NPC programs and Netrunners do.

The Red Paintbrush is a universal glitch hunter and data repair program. It heals.

Just smear the stuff on any bugs, errors, glitches, or other injuries, and it repairs the damage. Kinda goops up the patient and makes him smell a little funny, but who's gonna know?

If somebody tries to smear it on someone or something that's perfectly healthy, the Paintbrush program gets confused. Since it can find no obvious damage, it concludes that the whole structure must need repair, and it will improvise, depending on what exactly it's supposed to fix.

The Chalk is an elaborate copy program. When uncovered, the tip leaves a dark line wherever it moves — through the air, on a wall, whatever. The user can create a copy of any program (or in fact anything at all) by tracing the subject or drawing it freehand in the air.

I suppose if he was real fast he could draw gaping wounds on attacking programs and the like. If someone walks through a line in the air, it adheres to them, effectively drawing a division across their body. Just like mono-filament wire. Yuuuck.

And I bet you thought I couldn't figure out a rationale for giving the Troubleshooters any experimental de-vices in the Net!

"You dweebs look a little confused — I suppose you only ever dealt with the computer one at a time. Boy are you in for some excitement! *This* **little jewel is a way to directly patch the computer to all six of your brains at once! Everybody hooked up? Here we go!"**

He slaps a red button, and

Encounter Two: Nort's Home System

The PCs are now inside the Net. We suggest you start them off fairly normal, then get more dreamlike as things go along. By the way, if you want to send a cyberpunk in there with them (or if you're running with *Cyperpunk* PCs), no changes are neces-

sary. They may be a little more familiar with the Net, but not with this version of it. Keep reading:

Static fills your vision. You feel sort of like your innards have been all smushed up and shoved into your ears. Your toes explode like firecrackers. Then suddenly the static fades.

You're falling. Everyone make a chutzpah roll to avoid screaming. Down, down, down. Faster and faster.

Alice loves the sensation of falling. He made this part reeeeal long. It's kind of a pun on *down*-loading.

Well, maybe not. You seem to have reached — you know, *terminal* velocity. But it's slower than you would have thought. Those of you who aren't screaming can see that you're falling through what would appear to be a very inconveniently arranged PLC warehouse. It's very untidy, totally disorganized, and worst of all, it's about two meters by two meters in area, but infinitely high, more or less. There are item-filled shelves tacked to each wall, which, when bumped, send you tumbling back and forth across the pit, and occasionally precipitate a group ricochet.

Eventually, after everyone has done pretty much all they want to do in the fall, it's spring time. They all land on a big whoopie cushion and spring back up in the air a bit. A few short bounces later and they're back on *softwarra firma*.

■ Encounter Three: Chester Minute, Bub

As important as Alice is, it did not take long for someone at JCN to figure out his cyberdeck was in danger of being swiped by the Troubleshooters. This 'someone' is a Netrunner who's in charge of computer security at JCN. He's a tough dude.

He's so tough that while the players were running amok in JCN, he interfaced with Alice's deck as it lay on the desk and managed to slave his cybermodem trace to the deck's ROM, thereby effectively trapping himself in the deck when the players unplugged it. (Of course, if someone unplugged *his* deck, he'd be freed and the trace would be lost forever.)

Anyway, now that the deck has been plugged back in, he's again free to act. This man's Netrunning codename is Worcestershire.

He's Scottish. He thinks he's a cool cat. So read:

You have a very nice spring after that long fall. After bouncing a few times on a flatulent cushion, you find yourselves in a small chamber measuring about three meters square. Above you, the supply shaft rises to sickening heights.

Around you, there are six doors, one each in each of the five walls. Yes, the geometry is a little unusual here.

And sitting upsidedown on a high shelf you see a small fuzzy creature with an

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■ Game Stuff
Frontline Wombat

Map: None given. It's a three meter square with five walls and six doors. You think *we* could draw that?
Worcestershire: Seemingly friendly wombat
Weapon: Unarmed wombat
     (11I) _____19
Armor: Write Protection (All8)
Skills: Rabbit messenger (15)
     Disappear (17)
     Track PCs (18)

---

annoyingly self-assured smile. It stares at you unblinkingly, grinning with its pointed teeth.

So what do you do?

Worcestershire will be more than happy to talk to the Netrunning Troubleshooters. He'll chat amiably in an outrageous Scottish brogue, all the while asking them questions to figure out who they are and what they're up to. When playing the role of Worcestershire, talk and act very sociable and friendly, but always wear a malevolent grin. Think Jack Nicholson playing an insane Montgomery Scott.

Worcestershire will also be very free with advice (all of which will be wrong), and will not attack the players. He feels that he can do the most good for JCN by figuring out who the PCs are, what they're doing,

---

etc., then telling JCN so they can send a strike team to waste the bunch.

Once he has heard enough, he sends the data to JCN using a messenger program. Then he sort of hangs around, usually invisibly. When you reach that point in the conversation, the characters see this:

The grinning fuzzy beast takes a moment to yawn, its mouth opening up to incredible proportions, but still smiling.

A white rabbit hops out, and glances at its pocket chronometer. "Oh dear, oh dear," it says, "how late it's getting! By my ears and whiskers, I'm late!" It goes running round the room several times before disappearing though one of the doors.

This scene repeats itself every time Worcestershire learns something interesting.

And while you're at it, you ought to dig out PAV 5.1. It'll help you keep track of the players' progress — or lack thereof.

■ Encounter Four: Burning Down the House

The first place our neophyte Netrunners must go is into the local phone lines. Unfortunately, none of the doorways in this small chamber are labeled. This would not ordinarily pose a problem, but Nort has patched his cybermodem line into every electronic device on the house, so whichever door the PCs exit by, they inadvertantly blunder into the various 'rooms' housing the control systems for Nort's electronics, etc. And, since time in the Net is measured in nano-

Worcestershire Wombat learns something interesting.

Ma Belle.

seconds, by the time Nort notices what the Troubleshooters have done to his devices, the Net run will already be over.

So the PCs wander off, first down a passage to all the kitchen appliances, then to a room where they activate every video and phonographic system in the house, then they overload the light fixtures, and jet all the water lines in reverse. Finally they end up at a small, unpromising doorway which leads to the main phone lines.

Encounter Five: A Small Problem

The reason the door looks unpromising is because it is only about a third of a meter (fifteen inches) or so in height.

Here's where things start getting really weird. The PCs have to shrink themselves to get through the door. And no, there are no bottles of Incredible Shrinking Fluid laying around waiting to be consumed. The players must think of their own way to shrink.

How?

Remember that Alice programmed this deck to be as dreamlike as possible. He wanted to make Netrunning *really* fun. So, to shrink, the players should do something silly, dreamlike, or really off-beat. They can pat each other on the head until they've all been mashed down to the proper height. Someone could insult the others to 'cut them down to size.' Maybe everyone could exhale *real hard* to get rid of extra air. They

could grab hold of the doorframe and stretch it. As long as the solution is creative enough, it works. . .

Encounter Six: Phone Home

Opening the door, the players can see that on the other side of the door is a teeming metropolis — the phone lines look like sidewalks of various widths, and people, animals, and shapes of every description play as ragtag a game of croquet as has ever been seen. Most seem to be generally headed in the direction of a central plaza which dominates the area. The central plaza represents the long distance interchanges.

In the plaza sits Ma Bell (or at least her Net representaion), a figure with the face of a clock and a large bell for a skirt and lots of curls made out of phone cords. A clapper sways back and forth, occasionally ringing the bell and interrupting her speech. There's a long queue of people and programs waiting to access the long distance lines. A town crier blares "We are sorry. All our circuits are busy. Please *BOONNGGG!* and you will be processed in the order received. There's a good Netrunner."

The players might opt to either cut in line or perhaps sneak into the long distance circuits. Otherwise they'll just have to role-play waiting in a long line.

Cutting will not have much chance of success against another program or chunk

Netrunning Monsters

There are basically four types of things the PCs will encounter : Netrunners, programs, data, and hardware.

Netrunners appear as various humanoid and semi-humanoid forms; winged elves (pixel-pixies), centaurs, the Queen of Hearts, Richard Nixon, etc. Even Worcestershire Wombat, probably the least humanoid-appearing of the bunch, has humanoid hands and stance (if the PCs ever see him stand).

Programs usually appear as animals or animated objects. The chess set is an example of this; other appearances for other programs are flamingos, the Michelin man, or a walking bottle of beer. Note that the distinction between self-aware programs and human Netrunners gets very fuzzy (Worcestershire Wombat's courier program is an example).

Data appears as various obviously non-sentient objects: tennis balls, walking filing cabinets, stacks of books, polyhedral dice ... these do not interact with Netrunners.

Hardware, stuff like computer systems, billboards, hard drives, etc., appear as various architectural and landscaping improbabilities. Mushroom skyscrapers, moebius strips, etc.

On the other hand, since the PCs are adventuring in WonderNet, any of this could change at the drop of a hat.

of data; they're too stupid to do anything but raise an alarm, which will at the very least force the PCs to the back of the queue. On the other hand, it should be pretty easy to browbeat/bribe/cajole another Netrunner out of a place in line.

PC: Here, hold this item with my name on it, will you please?

NPC: Oh, sure (takes item).

PC: Help! Pirate! He stole my program and cut in line! Help!

NPC: What? Hey, shut up, will you?

Security Program: Hold it right there, brigand!

NPC: *Gulp!* Heh, I was just playing around ... (runs away)

PC: Thank you, officer.

Encounter Seven: Think King

If the players cut in or waited their turn, they received a pass for the long distance access lines and are permitted to pass through a doorway behind Ma Bell.

Sneaking past the lines involves skulking past Ma Bell and through the doorway behind her. It's a risky operation, although it does save on bills. Why risky? Because the PCs won't have a pass (unless they

mugged someone), and in the frame directly behind Ma Bell is a regiment of chesspieces led by the red king, who demands to see the Troubleshooters' pass.

Problem: the red king talks backwards. This makes things tough even for PCs who *do* have a pass.

"Setam, dekcehc eb yam yeht taht sessap ruoy yalpsid! Tlah!"
Then:
"Yalp ro ssap? Evom ruoy s'ti! Ecnahc tsal ruoy si siht!"
And:
"Ruof pohsib s'neeuq ot nwap! Ti rof deksa uoy! Evank, ti eb os!"

If they can defeat or somehow bypass the guards, the PCs can go through the passage behind them to the long distance lines.

Encounter Eight: Disoriented Express

The long distance access looks like a small park with long lines of stepping stones receding into the distance. A beast with heads on both ends tugs back and forth against itself, while the heads, as they move a little forward, loudly shout, "TO SAN FRANCISCO" and "TO LOS ANGELES," respectively. All the players have to do is step on a stone facing the appropriate direction (to LA) and off they go.

Dignity is hard to maintain when suddenly you're accelerated to what seems like 3000 kph. Don't get me wrong; there's no inertia in the Net, but the PCs' perceptions might make them involuntarily fall on their butts in surprise. Other Netrunners laugh, and say things like "Weefles wobble but they don't fall down!" and "Get a weefle iron!"

Game Stuff
Chess Passing Through

Map: None given. Dig out a chessboard.
Chesspieces: Sixteen regimented programs.
Weapon: Unarmed (10I)_____11
Armor: None.
Tactics: The PCs get to move and shoot first, then the chessmen move. Players may only shoot at a piece if they have a clear field of fire.

Every round all the chesspieces may move according to the standard rules of chess. If they enter the same square as a PC they may attack. Every piece ceases moving if the king gets killed.

Oh, and one more thing: all the pawns have mirrors for heads. When a PC looks at a pawn, he sees a reflection of his own face. That ought to get 'em thinkin'!

What's a Weefle?

'Weefle' is the streetslang used to describe preadolescent Netrunners. Where'd the name came from ?It came from *Cyberpunk*. It is also used if a Netrunner is obviously a neophyte, as is the case with the PCs.

Encounter Nine: Area Code

Zooming at the speed of light down a transline towards Los Angeles, the PCs suddenly approach the division between area codes. This appears like … well, just read:

You've regained your balance and some semblance of your dignity. You're zooming along this express lane at speeds which defy the imagination, marveling at the colorful panorama flashing by on all sides. Everyone give me a moxie roll.

Whoever missed the roll is too busy gawking at the sheer volume of organic chaos on all sides. The rest of you see that you are rapidly approaching a huge wall, made out of gargantuan masonry. You're about to impact — what do you do?

This wall is a simple gate between area codes on the phone net. Calls (or Netruns) which cross the wall get tagged for higher charges. Calls which try to circumnavigate the gate (i.e., avoid a higher bill by going around) get nailed by GTE's black countermeasures programs.

So take note of who panics and who doesn't. If a player believes the wall is real, that person gets stuck on this side of it. Why? The telephone company detected a hesitation to increase their bill by exiting the area code, and so aborted their progress. Those who chose to just ride on through (as well as those who missed the moxie roll) just zoom on. But if anyone jumps off the expressline, they impact the wall with a potato-chip-commercial crunch, as the telephone company's deadly security programs eliminate another hacker trying to dodge accruing long distance fees. What else would you suspect from someone who jumped off the main, legal phone line?

Turbocharge replacement clones to catch up with everyone who's gone through. How many clones do you think it'll take?

Encounter Ten: The Metroplex Area

Once everyone is alive and well and zooming along past the barrier, read:

You're zooming along beneath giant croquet hoops, rapidly approaching another huge conglomeration of houses, organic whizgidgets, and other miscel-

lania. Suddenly you all stop and a giant hedgehog says:
(hold your nose shut)
"LA!" then curls up and turns into a comfy chair.

Pause for three seconds — anyone who hasn't already jumped off gets whisked away to Salt Lake City. They can easily jump from their line to the one headed back to LA, although they run the risk of impacting an oncoming signal and dopplering themselves to death. Or they could just wait for the next stop.

Unfortunately, Salt Lake City has very tight security against Netrunners, and PCs who pass through there will be stripped of their programs (items) by a jelly roll carrying a halberd.

Encounter Eleven: Finding Orbital Air

Finding Orbital Air's California facility is no big deal, for they have a very visible logo and they're very big in the Los Angeles area. However, to make things easier on newcomers, the local phone company has installed an information booth right in front of the long distance station. Everyone going into Los Angeles passes right by it. It looks like a handcart the size of a house being pushed by an old man who walks on his hands. There is a very big sign on it saying "Information and Crumpets."

The players can easily step in, to find themselves in a tidy hut with shelves filled with little white boxes. Every box has a label, and whenever a PC looks at a box, the label changes every second or so (scrolling through the list of options). Patience and intelligent inquiries will get a box containing accurate directions from a very helpful Metro Area Belle, who will in turn log the charge to Nort's bill. As the fee for information is outlandish, this would ordinarily make Nort furious, but fortunately for him he'll be killed by the rogue planetoid before the bill arrives.

They can also buy some crumpets which eventually turn into sparrows and fly off. The information, by the way, is to "Take a good look at the Orbital Air logo you'll see in the sky, and go directly away from it." The harder the PCs try to get away from Orbital Air, the closer they get.

Orbital Air

Orbital Air is divided into two sections: the Corporate Section and the Public Section. The Corporate Section is an impenetrable fortress of malevolent red ruthlessly dominating this section of the Net. If your flawless oratory fails to convince the Team of the futility of entering this area, have a passing Netrunner carelessly stumble and

Other Monkey Wrenches

Need something else to spice up the Net? No problem. There's all sorts of things you can do to torment your players.

Worcestershire Wombat can liven up any encounter. Be sure to have him appear with unnerving frequency and startling abruptness. All with the Nicholson grin.

Have Them Start Floating up into the air. Just a little bit. They lose traction — nothing to grab hold of.

Just a little bit of annoyance here. They can swim (slowly) or push each other around like billiards balls. Then have gravity return. Suddenly.

Have Everything Change appearance, shifting rapidly to something entirely different. After all, Alice's interface program will not allow the scene to remain unchanged for more than a few minutes. That random number generator really earns its keep.

This is especially painful to the players when they are looking for or chasing or otherwise intent on a particular item. Not only do the surroundings change, but the item also changes. And maybe one of the PCs changes appearance, too.

GM: Your eyes get queasy for a second, then everything straightens out again. It looks like you're inside some-

one's refrigerator, and suddenly there's a fire-breathing duck in the middle of the Team.

Players: AAAIIEE! Shoot it! (BLAM! BLAM!BLAM!)

One Player: Wait! *I'm* in the middle!

GM: You *were* in the middle. You should have ... ducked.

The Video Whiz Kids are another such catastrophe. We've all seen them; insubordinate fat little pop-bottle-glassed punks who smell funny and even though they're barely tall enough to see the screen they always score 1,000,000,000,000 video game while dribbling hot dog grease down the front of their shirt.

If you cross these kids with the super-hackers who run rampant in *Cyberpunk*, what do you get?

Eight-foot tall pop-bottle-glassed armored video warriors who run around the Net blasting everything in sight trying to run up a decent score. Super-human warmongers with awesome powers of destruction. Sounds a lot like typical Vultures, now, doesn't it?

So whenever things are running a little slow, just have the number 34,892,760 appear, floating in the air. Two minutes and four clones later, the number (now 35,096,325) fades from view. .

Infinite Loops are yet another cruel way to torment your players. At some point or other you've been using some program where one small typo in a GO TO statement ruined all the work (or play) you'd done up to then.

So just wait until something great happens to the players, and have that particular incident start a closed loop. The guilty PC repeats the action over and over, while the others stand around getting bored or maybe a little seasick at the spectacle.

F'rinstance, suppose one of the Video Whiz Kids challenges a PC to a western-style gunfight. They draw and fire, and you (as the Whiz Kid) roll a twenty, and the stupid player rolls a one!

Well, the Whiz Kid's shot goes wide, but the Troubleshooter's laser blasts the Whiz Kid dead center, slamming him into a wall. He bounces off, coincidentally right back to where he stood. The player has by this time lowered his gun arm, so suddenly they find themselves back at the draw. If the player fires again, he must of course roll a one (and you a twenty) so the Whiz Kid bounces against the wall ... and back. Repeat this as often as you like. Eventually, to free himself, the player will have to deliberately miss ...

For another use of loops, check out

touch the red walls. They come alive and rip him to shreds, devouring him as his scream echoes into the nothingness.

Opposite this titanic obelisk of corporate death is a small dingy white structure — the Public Section. Players are usually all too happy to demonstrate the better side of valor and go here first.

The Public Section is the low security part of Orbital Air which handles flight reservations and travel iterneraries (this is what the Troubleshooters are looking for), gives information to callers, handles in-flight meals, and other such junk. It's a clapboard fortress of paranoid insecurity, and one of the ways they've secured their computer system is to place two Netrunners on guard at the outside line. So, as the players approach the mainframe, they'll find two identical faceless minions barring their way.

Encounter Twelve: Entering Orbital Air

"Barring" is of course a relative term, for these two guards have been on duty all night and have fallen asleep, which is hardly surprising, considering their meager pay. The players can either awaken the guards

and try to enter Orbital Air's Public Section legally, or they can sneak past unobtrusively.

If the players awaken the guards, they will respond very inhospitably, in order to cover for their slovenliness.

PC: Excuse me ...

Guard: ... snfx ... mm? AAAUGH!

PC: May we —

Guard: (quickly recovering) Aha! Caught you! Brigand! Er, I mean, Pirate!

PC: Sorry to wake you, but —

Guard: Thought you could just sneak in, eh? We're too alert for you!

PC: But —

Guard: We knew you were criminals!

Orbital Air Raid

The PCs are about to go into Orbital Air's mainframe, in an attempt to steal information on Clem's secret location. This is data, and all data in the Net is represented as objects. The Age of Peace is a data-based world, so all data is protected in some manner or other. Fortunately, Orbital Air is kind of sloppy guarding data that's not of direct interest to them.

We feigned sleep so we could catch you in the act!

PC: Hey, we just —

Guard: You should know better than to mess with Orbital Air!

Barring some truly scintillating oration, the players now have to roughhouse their way in.

If instead the PCs instead choose to sneak past, an alarm goes off just when they are fully inside the Public Section's mainframe. The guards storm in after them, weapons a-blazing.

And, to top it all off, the mainframe automatically cuts off its outside line when the players enter. The cyberdeck portrays this as the sudden dropping of a portcullis.

Encounter Thirteen: A-Maze-ing

The mainframe is, incidentally, a piece of junk. It's real trash. Efficiency is terrible, and there's a lot of bad sectors; sectors where data or subroutines get ... lost. You may ask, why would a megaCorp like Orbital Air have a lousy mainframe? Get serious.

Orbital Air is a soulless multi-trillion Euro-Dollar corporation. Do you honestly think they're gonna spend more than a

Game Stuff
Oyster Cloister

Map: None given. It's a dead-end passage. Accent the 'dead.'
Oysters: Boisterous guards.
Weapons: Pseudopod (10I) ___10
          Clambaker (10F) ___ 6
Armor: Halfshell (All6 except against being eaten)
Tactics: Swarm. Yell a lot.

dime on a computer that only handles such tripe as the travel itineraries of heads-of-state? Read this to the players when they enter the mainframe 'building:'

You find yourself in a twisting maze of hedges and rose trees, which go every which way, seemingly at random. Without landmarks of any sort, you quickly find yourself lost. The sounds of the pursuing Netrunners echo through the park.

Wandering aimlessly through the maze you notice that there are areas in here that ... don't exist. They're not black, not gaps, they just simply don't exist. You can't see them, you can't see through them, nothing. Like good taste in *Paranoia* adventures, it simply Isn't There.

Start leading them randomly through the maze. Have them make a few choices, roll a few moxie rolls, and make it seem like you're looking at the map. Place a few signs that say, "Important data this way." Then have them get spotted by a few anti-intruder programs, which look like walking oysters wearing nightcaps. The oysters pursue, and when the players take the next turn they find themselves in a passage that dead ends against one of the zones of Nix.

The players have two choices: they can stand and fight or they can jump into the Nothing. An infinite supply of oysters will attend to the first, for it is the second that we want them to do. Perhaps in a fit of adventuresomeness they did it without being chased ... that's just fine.

Encounter Fourteen: What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Bad Sector Like This?

When they jump into the bad sectors (the zone of Nothing) the Troubleshooters immediately lose all sense of environment. There is no basis for comparison. Everything is one united static sensation. Each PC has to make a tough roll against his/her moxie (normal difficulty if the PC prepared himself and chose to jump into the Nothing as opposed to being herded in) for each sense, so one player might be able to see, but not hear, etc.

Inside the bad sector is a bunch of stuff. Files are scattered about. Geometric shapes (data) and listless animals (dismembered programs) float everywhere. And there's one blind female Netrunner who begs the Troubleshooters for help.

This is Meg, a high-school girl trying to earn some college money by working for Orbital Air. No one told her about the bad sectors, and she's been lost here for two days, having failed all her moxie rolls except for hearing. Her body, patched into a cyberdeck at her work station, has accrued quite a bit of overtime, although her bosses might have a word or two to say about productivity.

She knows her way around Orbital Air and knows where to find travel itenerary data, and will lead them to the storage bank if they will but free her from this bad sector.

This is not necessarily an easy task, as the Troubleshooters must rely on whatever senses they may have to orienteer themselves back to a working part of the mainframe.

Touch is handy for finding such an area, for it will feel rough and, well, real. Sight is no big help, since the medium of Nothingness appears to go on forever, although it is useful for locating objects and fellow PCs. Programs (items) generally will not work well in this area, and if they don't operate, chances are they'll be permanently adhered to that portion of Nothingness; a total loss.

Once they find their way out of the bad sector, getting to the next point on their journey is pretty easy. Meg knows some shortcuts.

Encounter Fifteen: You Stole the Tarts

Meg leads the Team through the hedge maze and down a rabbit hole into a strange little room. The room has no walls and no ceiling — just six floors, all at right angles. Tables and chairs cover each floor, and each table is filled with tea, biscuits, dirty china, kettles, silverware, etc.

A meter-tall tophat (with little legs sticking out from inside its considerable interior) strides over to Meg and starts talking to her, asking questions about security authorizations, etc. Meg replies quite amiably and casually starts passing cups of tea to all the PCs. Anyone who makes an easy moxie roll realizes that Meg is stalling for time.

If the players are dense and don't know what to do, Meg gets impatient and dumps a cup over a random PC's head (see below for what happens to that one). The Hat gets suspicious at this action, and confiscates all programs (items) born by the other Troubleshooters.

Or does anyone take a sip of tea on his own? If so, the cup slips down over his head

and engulfs his body (without growing in size). The PC disappears ... into a data storage subdirectory. Here he can search for the proper data. PCs who swandive into a cup of tea similarly disappear into the data storage subdirectory. If the players figure this out on their own, the Hat doesn't have time for any confiscations.

The subdirectories look like small pantries filled with all sorts of items: biscuits, donuts, waffle irons, dead fish, raspberry tarts, and a jar of honey. Sampling a biscuit (or whatever) gives the PC momentary knowledge of what data is loaded in that file. Thus the PCs should all now be biting into donuts, waffle irons, and dead fish, trying to find the file with Alice's itinerary.

Meanwhile, they stumble across files containing plans for fusion reactors, ski catalogs, National Geographic specials, the formula for Coke Classic, and a study on the true shelf life of Twinkies. The only danger is in dipping into the honeyjar: that PC should have known better than to invoke an item from another children's story, and disappears (is knocked right out of the Net). There's no way he'll catch back up, so he's out of the rest of the run (don't allow him to give any advice, neither).

Finally someone will find the right data: the plate of raspberry tarts. Once the tarts are stolen, alarms once again go off, and oysters can be heard stampeding ever closer. Meg leads the Team out of the room and back into hiding.

When the PCs have time to sit down and 'digest' the information contained in the tarts, they learn that Alice has transferred to a private charter en route to a super-secret JCN facility in San Francisco, with the cover name of the Cool Cat Inn. Then they can head back to the long-distance lines to track down their prey.

Entering JCN Once Again

If the players continue in the Net, they finally arrive at the Cool Cat Inn computer system, which runs JCN's San Francisco cryo facility. This is where their quarry is hidden. Believe it or not, the information the players have is correct. And complete. Alice is here. He's hard at work in his office. Unsuspecting. The Troubleshooters, though, are stuck in the Net.

If they break out of the Net at this point and head for the real Cool Cat, skip to Episode Six.

Encounter Sixteen: There's No Place Like Home

Getting to the JCN database is simple, even for Troubleshooters. Once inside the JCN database, the players will no doubt be disturbed by the ambience. See, this here is the heart of JCN's complex Alpha Com-

puter program, and San Francisco was their prototype system.

Even Alice has to bow to corporate authority to have this computer system appear like the City of the Future in his cyberdeck. Tell the players (try not to laugh):

You pass through the doorway and dash into the hallway beyond. A few staggering steps, and you stop, looking about.
You're home.
Green clearance hallway.
Scrubot working the corridor.
A brightly lit plaza ahead.
Confession booths to either side.

Don't even ask what they do. Just watch their reactions. They are inside the original Alpha Computer, which for all the world looks just like … blech … home.

After they have stopped panicking and generally appear like they are about to do something constructive, have a nearby speaker boom out the melodious megaphonic message:

"May I be of some assistance, Citizen?"

Ooh, Friend Computer is online, trying to assist whoever is standing forlornly in the entrance gate to the computer system. It's an automatic response, designed to aid visiting Netrunners, both employees of JCN and outsiders. Probably your players won't take it too calmly.

Actually, whatever story they give will wash with the computer.

Why? Well, security regulations require that every entering Netrunner be subjected to a source check, and when the computer traces the Troubleshooters' deck, it discovers that they are using Alice's six-shooter. Ergo, they must be friends or employees. In all the chaos, word has not yet come out west that the six-shooter has been stolen.

So the players are passed, and are allowed to roam as they please. The computer informs them that further assistance, should it be needed, may be obtained from any of the black booths, which it refers to as 'concession booths.'

As the players wander about, they pass a bulletin board. Notes are tacked up there, and regularly appear and disappear. One note gives the address of the Cool Cat Inn, just to make sure the players get that info. Another is a notice for Alice (among other employees) to report for cryo ASAP.

■ Encounter Seventeen: Alice Out of Wonderland

Finally, on one of the video screens, the players find what they've been looking for.

Alice. He's sitting at his desk in the real world, hopelessly beyond their reach. Read:

Suddenly, on one of the video screens, you find Alice! There's no mistaking it; he looks exactly like he does in the photograph you were given.
He's sitting at a desk, holding a wire near his left temple. The desk is covered with various papers, disks, etc., and has a monitor, keyboard, and other hardware.
Quick, what do you do?

'Quick,' they do nothing. There is no way they can harm Alice. They're in the Net, and, unlike what the PCs are used to, there aren't any cameras with coaxial lasers to fry him with.

Alice appears to not be moving. But, if they look closely, the players can see that he is very slowly dropping his hand toward a red button. He has just plugged his cyberdeck into his temple. 'Quick' they now have their last chance to end the Netrun. If they don't, Alice turns on his cyberdeck:

BAMF! Suddenly, out of nowhere, Alice appears right next to you. He gapes at you, then out of thin air there appears next to him a disembodied big grin.
Followed by the rest of Worcestershire Wombat. "I fearr these lads an' lassies arre up to noo good, m'lord Alice." he says.

Here's their big chance to attack. Go ahead. Let them. It's only the Net, and they can't hurt Alice. But let 'em try, just so Alice can laugh it all off.

They can ask questions, too, which Alice will tend to answer just out of sheer cussedness. He's always been lax about security regs, and loves to talk about his work.

But, whenever you figure he's gotten tired of entertaining his guests, read this:

Alice laughs as he looks at you.
"You're nothing but a pack of cads," he says, "Who cares for you? If any of you can actually harm me , I'll give him sixpence!"

Allow a brief moment for heated replies.

"Stuff and nonsense!" he cries. He picks up a hand mirror and throws it at you — it grows to incredible size and hits —
**Doesn't hit. Passes right around you and Alice laughs and the looking glass world dissolves and it's no longer Alice, but Nort. And he's not laughing; he's yelling at you.**
"What have you done?!?" he shrieks. And then he screams something about interfacing with appliances and controlling climate … or something to that effect. It's really hard to understand what he saying because the stereo is on full blast, and the refrigerator has exploded and the sink is spraying water everywhere and it's really hot and stuffy.
**Everyone else in the place ducks as the woofers shatter the windows with harmonic vibrations.**
Your chronographs tell you that the entire run has taken under two minutes.

The abrupt kick out of Cyberspace disorients the best of Netrunners. Your PCs are in especially bad shape. Treat them all as 'wounded' for the rest of the adventure, then go to Episode Six.
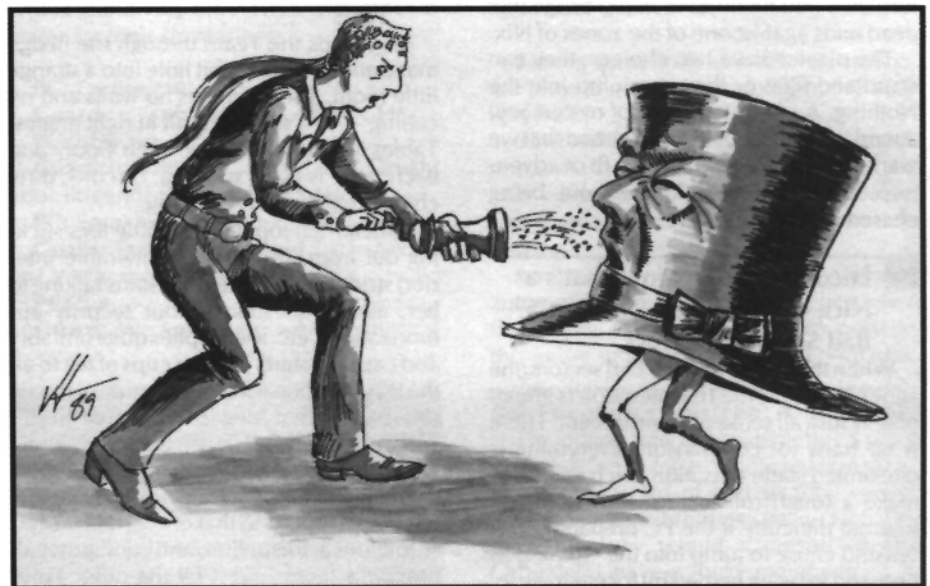
A climactic battle in the Net!
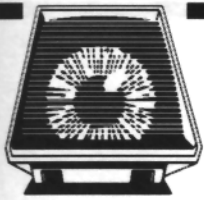
Episode Six: Ice Scream Clones

Summary

The players zoom over to assassinate Alice. They cause damage, but Alice has been moved, so they don't succeed in killing anyone they were supposed to kill.

Chill Out

Now your players have to go half way across California to get to JCN's cryogenics bolthole. Frustrate your players by way-laying them with all sorts of adverse happenings; make them think they'll miss the DEADline.

Encounter One: The Crack of Dome

San Francisco is one of the many cities in North America with a full dome. It is, in fact, a glistening jewel, faultlessly clean. Point this out to the players as they approach the city: how clean it looks, how it

Pruning the Pack

Are any of the *Cyberpunk* NPCs still left? Yes? What are you, some kind of wimp?

You should only have one or at most two cyberpunks survive Dallas and Honesdale. Then have one get arrested for previous felony warrants, leaving the players with whoever is weakest in combat for this episode's assault on the cryogenics facility.

Once at the cryo facility, have the last of the Mohawkins get seriously injured — so bad he or she can barely walk. Then, after the PCs predictably fail to assassinate Clem, he can trail the team like a hurt puppy and inflict them with all sorts of guilt for abandoning him, penniless, out of ammo, and injured, in the face of the biggest catastrophe to hit the United States since the debut of *Paranoia*.

As the PCs give their report, a single tear trickles down his cheek. And as they travel through time to their next destination, he salutes them — with his only uninjured finger.

glistens with the water as the sky overhead starts clearing.

Yes, due to some perverse meteorological freak, the endless rain breaks for a few hours, just to give the human race a sneak preview of the asteroid.

And once the players get inside the 'Frisco dome, they also notice that Night City's fad for neon jumpsuits has spread like wildfire in this city.

With the address they have, they can find the JCN cryo station pretty easily. It's right near the big JCN office skyscraper.

Encounter Two: Cool People

The interior of the Cryogenics place is a mess. There was not enough time for JCN to do an adequate job of setting it up; technicians are scrambling back and forth trying to jury-rig power systems and repair recalcitrant units — they don't want to be left out of the cold …

The interior of the cryo building is a huge open area with a claustrophobically low ceiling. A sign indicates that the area is for "Junior Executives and Senior Staff." Power cables and tubes of liquid nitrogen slither across the floor. Compressors are scattered about the room, as are cryocapsules of every shape and size, from the Bio-technica Eternium series to the Jarvik do-it-yourself kits.

JCN has paid some security guards hazard pay to stay unfrozen until the last possible moment, in order to deter desperate people from breaking in and using JCN cryocapsules. Or, say, Troubleshooters who want to assassinate JCN personnel. You know, the usual riff-raff.

Probably things will degenerate into a fire-and-ice-fight. Use the power cables. Rupture the liquid nitrogen. Puncture super-cooled water for a frozen explosion. Have semi-frozen 'icemen' stagger around like zombies. Detonate high pressure cryocapsules. Come on, trash the place.

Jeez, with all the important people the Troubleshooters are inadvertantly killing, JCN's never going to be able to repair the Alpha computer after the Impact …

Whenever you've had enough fun trashing the place, or all the guards buy it, tell the players they can see a sign over a doorway

Game Stuff

The Cooler

20 Guards: A bunch of last-ditch riot squad guys hired by JCN to protect low-level personnel.

Weapons: Slugthrowers (8P) ____ 6

Various slugthrower types; they all look different but they all act pretty much the same as far as the PCs are concerned.

Armor: Light flak vests (P2)

Tactics: Challenge the PCs to *immediately* show their ID; open fire *immediately* when the PCs don't have any. Run around. Get frozen. Scream and yell and fire automatic weapons.

on the far side of the main room, reading "EXECUTIVE STAFF." The interior of this room is crammed with high-class cryo-capsules. If they are still being fired upon, some of the players will undoubtably take cover behind the nearest capsule. The capsule gets riddled with small calibre slugs. Probably the occupant does, too. There's a nameplate on the capsule, saying simply, "W.D." Make sure to point this out to the players, for posterity's sake.

The frantic Troubleshooters can't find Alice's capsule anywhere. More guards arrive, and start closing in. Then someone finds a computer-printed note. It reads:

Memo:
To: JCN Personnel
From: Cryo Board
Due to unprecedented assassination attempts by our competitors on several key personnel, JCN is hiring additional security personnel for your safety. In addition, personnel suspected of being targets will be placed in individual hermetically sealed tamperproof shelters in secret locations, which nothing short of the overload on a fusion reactor could penetrate. Each cryo-station's supervisor will post a list of transferred personnel. Good luck, and stay cool.

A few computer-printed names are appended. And scrawled in pencil on the very bottom of the memo is the name: Clem "Alice" Unger.
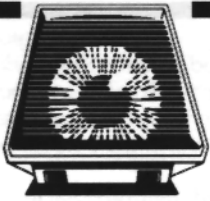
Epilogue: Das Ist Alice

Summary

If only they'd known what they were getting into, the Troubleshooters probably wouldn't have volunteered.

They've been double-crossed, ineptly cyborged, shot at, and generally tooled over seven ways from Oneday. And they've failed their mission.

Do you think the High Programmers are just gonna let them come on home?

Encounter One: Dome, Death, Destruction

When the Troubleshooters finally admit the inevitable and leave the cryo facility, read this:

You've managed to make it back out of the building. Fires are burning out of control, but there's no firemen responding. It seems they've abandoned the city to its fate and sought shelter, for now the rogue planetoid (whatever it is) is quite visible in the night sky. It looks reassuringly like a dome back home. It's glowing a comfortable shade of red over the deserted streets.

There's a frail old man warming himself over a small fire of thin books with black covers. He seems to have a lot of those books. What little white hair he has stands out against his black and wrinkled skin. When he sees you, his eyes bug out and he staggers to his feet.

"You!" he sputters. "It's all your fault! This era — the asteroid — you caused it! I'm broke, and my wife left me for someone with good taste, and all because I let them do that stupid cross-over!"

You're starting to get a little worried, because you've never seen anyone foam at the mouth before. But then, thankfully, he keels over from a coronary. I guess he never made enough money to buy himself a new heart.

Encounter Two: Any Time Now, Mr. Scott …

Allow (in fact, force) the players to give a full and complete report on everything they've done. The Collapsatron will ques-

Who Is This Shriveled Prune?

The old man is none other than Mike Puddleforge.

'Who?' you ask?

Yeah, well, so does everyone.

Puddleforge is … well, was … a game designer. He was given cursory notice for a second-rate science fiction game he wrote back in the late eighties and early nineties. The game, *Cyborg Anarchist*, tried to fuse prostheses and politics. And lots of violence, of course.

Amazingly, Puddleforge is a very powerful psychic. Unknown to everyone, including himself, he had the ability to both see into and alter the future.

Then he was sweettalked ("crassly bribed") into allowing his game to be bastardized with another second-rate sci-fi game. Not knowing his own psychic prowess, he blames his creations for his current tragic state of affairs. And right in front of the Troubleshooters' eyes, he croaks after having to burn his games to stay warm.

Serves him right. He shoulda stuck to writing about elves and fairies.

tion them on everything, then the players can hear it repeating the details to the High Programmers.

The rogue asteroid gets bigger and redder while the players await further instructions. Reassure your players that it's very comforting indeed.

Finally the Collapsatron comes back and gives the players an update on their mission. Tragically, the asteroid strikes the Earth right as the briefing is finished.

When they realize their Team has been thoroughly killed, the quick-thinking High Programmers instruct the Collapsatron to retroactively transport the PCs to their next destination — you know, make 'em leave a few minutes early. That this involves cutting off the tail end of their briefing is a necessary sacrifice.

So what your PCs hear is this:

"Okay, folks, here's the scoop," says the Collapsatron cheerfully. "Your bosses are dissatisfied with what you've done. Since you have — er, had — that data on the original Alpha Complex computer, they've decided ('will decide,' to you) to send you a little further back in time, in hopes that you can remedy things there. Or 'then,' right?"

Everything starts getting bright red. The 'rogue planetoid' is really getting big.

The Collapsatron continues: "Oh, yeah, one thing they said to me, they said, 'Collapsatron, this is really important. Tell the Troublesh —"

Cut. The universe melts around you.

Alice Well That Ends Well

That's the end of the first part of *Vulture Warriors of Dimension X*. So now we've thoroughly trashed this period of time for the Troubleshoters. Now we know a little more about how Alpha Complex Became That Way. Since there's nothing left here, we've got to send the Troubleshooters a little further back in time. Where? (Surely you mean "when?")

Well, we're sending them all the way back to Twilightcycle 2000, where (when) they can hopefully rectify the mess they've made of Alpha Complex.

"Wait!" I can hear some of you cry, "I ran this adventure with *Cyberpunk* PCs! What do I do now?" Very astute, all of you.

Your PCs can manage to get frozen (or find adequate cover) before the planetoid hits. They awake just after the impact, when the cryogenics' power fails.

JCN's Alpha Complex computer system has suffered some damage, and its personality simulators are over-stressed, pushed beyond design limitations. Riots and panic in the streets, with Alpha Complex's automated peacekeeping gear trying to restore order. Cyberpunks of various gangs and corporations are trying to do as much damage to their opposition as they can during this brief period of lawlessness, but are forced to go covert as Alpha Complex regains control.

So there you are. Day One of The Computer. But this time, to pull another quote from the *Cyberpunk* rules —

Play For Keeps.

ALICE THROUGH THE MIRRORSHADES

by Edward Bolme

Help us, Troubleshooters ...
You're Our Only Hope!

The Computer has crashed ... and that puts a lot of High Programmers out of work. Rather than stand for the ignominy of the welfare lines (not to mention to avoid a chainsaw haircut at the hands of disgruntled Infrareds), the High Programmers conceive a desperate plan: retroactively prevent the crash by traveling back in time to execute the man responsible. The success of the plan hinges on a squad of six crack Troubleshooters — the Vulture Warriors of Dimension X.

Which only goes to show how desperate the High Programmers really are.

Welcome to Dimension X

Cyberpunk™ Players — Alert!
Yes, you too can join in the *Paranoia* experience, simply by running this adventure. As the first in the *Vulture Warriors* series, this adventure is compatible with both *Paranoia* and the *Cyberpunk* roleplaying rules from R. Talsorian Games, Inc. (don't worry, we got permission up front). So you can run *Paranoia* player characters and *Cyberpunk* non-player characters, or vice versa — or you can mix 'n' match, we don't care.

Just as long as there are no survivors ...

This adventure contains:
- A full-length 40-page adventure through space and time — to the Age of Peace in pre-Alpha San Francisco.
- Handouts, props, ridiculous player activities, and a lot of nifty Cyber-stuff.
- A full set of *Paranoia* player-characters, AND a full set of *Cyberpunk* characters — two for the price of one!
- The most insane *Paranoia* encounters ever published!

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