



# Death Song

*In 1725, Louis-Bertrand Castel invented the world's first "color organ." Each of the key on its keyboard, when struck, produced a colored light as well as a musical note.*

Death Song is an adventure for the Cyberpunk 2020<sup>a</sup> game that focuses on the media character. It is set in Night City, but could be set in any other major urban center.

While the media will be the one to direct most of the action (by conducting most of the interviews) other characters can also be incorporated. A techie could serve as the camera operator, a solo as a bodyguard or driver, and a netrunner as a researcher. This is the basic "news team" but others could also tag along. Since the story revolves around music, a rocker might be useful in breaking the ice during interviews. A fixer might help in locating people or goods. And a corporate accountant might tag along to make sure the news team follows protocol and stays within its expense budget.

## STORY BACKGROUND

In this "instant information" age of multi-media superstars, it's hard to find anyone who hasn't heard of rockergirl Janna Vox, lead singer for the Twisted Femmes. In 2016, Vox pioneered the use of the "wall of thought" direct-emotional interface synthesizer, which allowed musicians to lay down not only their words and music on digital chips, but also their visualizations and emotions. When these "sensaround" chips were plugged into a chipwear socket, the listener would not only hear Vox's voice and music, but would also feel the emotions she was experiencing when the track was laid down and would "see" the mental images that were running through her mind at the time.

Vox took this technology to new heights by taking it beyond the personal-playback mode and into the realm of live performance. Twisted Femmes concerts featured Vox and her three backup musicians projecting their thoughts via holo-imagers that had been scattered around the concert hall. While the words and music boomed out over gigantic speakers, the musicians' digitally-sampled emotions were projected in the form of a spectacular light show. Those with interface plugs could "slot in" to the performers' emotions directly via special banks of equipment located in the aisles.

The Twisted Femmes have developed a huge following, particularly among rebellious women in their teens and twenties. Their concerts are the focus of some controversy; at least one teenage suicide has been blamed on the "self-destructive emotions" that are alleged to have been subliminally projected at the concerts. One reactionary group, Parents Against Nihilism-Inducing Concerts (PANIC) claims that the Twisted Femmes' most recent hit, "Now I'm Dead," is a blatant call to suicide. The recording was said to contain the "last thoughts" of an actual suicide victim.

Vox, however, points out that anyone who listens closely to the song will recognize it for what it is: a warning on the dangers of drug overdose.

## REFEREE'S BACKGROUND

Vox used her music to crusade against drugs. She once was an addict, and just before her death seems to have returned to the habit.

The rockergirl's death was caused by a designer drug known on the streets as "Harmony." This new drug has been causing all of the other overdoses. It's being sold by the Death Merchants, a street gang that has secret connections to Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals, a local manufacturer of legal, "recreational" drugs. The corporation is using the gang to "field test" its new creation. (Getting federal approval to test a new drug normally takes years; doing so illegally lets a company know right away if they have a viable product.) The tests aren't going well – as evidenced by the overdoses – and it looks like the drug will never be profitable. Unfortunately, the corporation spent a lot of Eurodollars on its development. The company's president has decided to take what profit he can get by selling the remainder of the drug to the gang.

Vox did not merely overdose, but was deliberately murdered. A transcript of one of her incomplete songs explains why: she was about to blow the whistle on the Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals' connections with the gang. The information that she had returned to her drug habit was false; she had been "clean" for an entire year at the time of her death. But she still had her problems. Seems her previous drug habit had run up a mega-dollar debt. She was blackmailing Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals – but whether for her own gain or not is hard to say. Didn't matter in the end, though. Rather than paying the rockergirl off, it proved easier for the company to simply eliminate her.



### CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

During the course of this adventure, the player characters who make up the news team will encounter a number of individuals whom they may wish to interview. Usually it will be the media character asking the questions – although other members of the team may wish to take a crack at it, too. A single skill check will be made for the interview as a whole, to determine how forthcoming the interviewee is. The higher the roll generated, the more likely the interviewee will be to talk.

(Remember that a natural 1 on a die roll is an automatic failure; the interviewee clams up and refuses to talk, shoving a hand over the camera lens and sometimes taking a swing at the reporter, if pestered or provoked.)

A number of skills can be used to obtain information during an interview. The most professional of these is the Interview skill. But a character might alternatively use Persuasion & Fast Talk, Intimidate or Interrogate, Oratory, or even Seduction.

Depending upon the skill the character uses to try to draw information out of an interviewee, there will be either a bonus or penalty applied to the die roll. These modifiers are listed under each interviewee in the following format:

<u>Skill Used:</u>	<u>Bonus/Penalty:</u>
Interview.....	#
Persuasion & Fast Talk .....	#
Intimidate/Interrogate.....	#
Oratory .....	#
Seduction.....	#

While conducting an interview, a character may attempt any two interviewing techniques without penalty (in effect, getting two attempts at the same objective). Should the same character attempt a third technique, a -5 penalty is applied to the result. Each subsequent attempt results in an additional, cumulative, -5 penalty.

Each individual interviewed has information to impart to the reporter of varying degrees of usefulness. The higher the die roll resulting from the above skill check, the more information will be revealed.

In this adventure, sample answers are provided for each person interviewed, based on the results of the interviewer’s skill check. Unless the interview fails completely, the referee should start with the second lowest quote, then work up to the level of success the character achieved, gradually unfolding the answer in response to character’s questions.

### STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins as one member of the news team receives a hot tip from a contact. Janna Vox, lead singer of the Twisted Femmes, has been found dead in a hotel room in downtown Night City. The tip comes from a maid at the Coast Gateway Plaza, who calls at 2 p.m.

“Uh, hello? This is Fiona, down at the Coast Gateway Plaza. Remember you helped me by doing that story on union benefits, two years ago? Well I want to return the favor by giving you a story. Y’know that rockergirl, Janna Vox of the Twisted Femmes? Rosalie, one of the other maids here, just found the singer dead in her hotel room. Management has sealed the floor and called the police, but if you hurry you might be able to beat the cops down here and get the story before any of the other news stations do.” (In the background, a woman can be heard sobbing.)

Before rushing out to cover the story, the team’s media character must use the Persuasion & Fast Talk skill to convince their producer, Bernard Tan, that they have a worthwhile story. This should be an easy task (difficulty 10).

If the skill check succeeds, Tan will assign the team either a news van or chopper, depending upon how many members of the team are going to the story scene. If the skill check fails (or a natural die roll of 1 is rolled), the characters must make their way to the hotel on their own.

Tan is also responsible for setting the budget for the story. He gives the team an expense account of 500 Euro\$ for every point by which the skill check exceeds 10. (This figure is over and above the expense of operating the news van or chopper.) If the story turns out to be a hot one, the team can ask him for more money. Tan will agree to expenses of 1,000 Euro\$ for every point by which the Persuasion & Fask Talk skill check exceeds 15.

Tan asks for a two-minute story for the evening newscast. He schedules the story into the lead slot of the entertainment block, or 9:40 p.m.

Should the news team be able to prove that foul play or suspicious or unsavory circumstances were involved in the rockergirl’s death, the story length will be increased to three minutes and the piece will air second in the local news block, at 9:03 p.m.



### **AT THE HOTEL**

If the news team hurries to the scene (uses a chopper or AV-4 news van to reach the hotel), the characters arrive at the Coast Gateway Plaza in three minutes – before the police. If they travel more slowly (private vehicle) they reach the hotel in 20 minutes, just as the police are concluding their investigation. (Rival news teams may already be on site.)

In either case, the team will need to sneak, fast talk, bribe, or force their way past hotel and/or police security.

The Twisted Femmes' rooms are on the 8th floor of the 16-story Coast Gateway Plaza. Access to the floor is via either a bank of three elevators, or via a flight of stairs. To keep a lid on things until the police arrive, the hotel has posted three security guards on the 8th floor – one at the elevators, one at the stairs, and one at the entrance to Janna Vox's room. Nobody goes in or out without their say.

Additional hotel security is provided by a metal detector at the lobby entrance. Anyone carrying weapons will be asked to check them at the desk before entering the lobby or be briskly escorted out by two hotel security guards.

Sneaking in through the staff entrance at the rear of the hotel is one way to avoid the front-door security. To do this, the lock on the back door must be picked (difficulty 20).

Posing as a police officer is another way to sneak in – but the fake ID better be good and the cameras better be hidden!

When the cops arrive, uniformed police officers (officers 1-3) will take over from the three security guards on the 8th floor. Four plainclothes detectives (officers 4-7) will enter Janna's hotel room to begin the investigation.

#### **Hotel Security Guards**

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

BTM -3

#### *Cybernetics*

Guard 1: Cybereye with infrared sensor.

Guard 2: Big knucks (1d6+2 damage).

Guard 3: Adrenal booster (+1 to Ref for 1d6+2 turns, 3x day)

#### *Skills*

Authority 2 (9), Awareness/Notice 5 (11), Handgun 5 (12), Human Perception 3 (7), Athletics 5 (12), Education 2 (8), Brawling 8 (15), Melee 8 (15), Intimidation 4 (11), Streetwise 2 (9).

#### *Equipment*

Kevlar T-shirt (SP 10), pocket communicator, Militech electronics taser (WA -1, stun damage, 10 shots, ROF 1, Rel ST, 10-meter range).

#### **Police Officers**

INT 8	REF 7	TECH 5
COOL 5	ATTR 4	LUCK 3
MA 5	BODY 7	EMP 6

BTM -2

#### *Cybernetics*

Officer 1: Cowl skullcap (head SP 25).

Officer 2: Cyberlegs (2d6 kick damage) with microwave/EMP shielding

Officer 3: Smartgun link (+2 to Handgun).

Officer 4: Cybears with digital recorder link, built-in AV tape recorder.

Officer 5: Smartgun link (+2 to Handgun).

Officer 6: Muscle & bone lace (+2 to Body; BTM -3).

Officer 7 (Sergeant Alice Carey): Cybears with voice stress analyzer (+2 to Human Perception and Interrogation)

#### *Skills*

Authority 4-6 (9-11), Awareness/Notice 5 (13), Handgun 5 (12), Human Perception 6 (12), Athletics 3 (10), Education 3 (11), Brawling 6 (13), Melee 6 (13), Interrogation 6 (11), Streetwise 5 (10).

#### *Equipment*

Light armor jacket (SP 14), pocket communicator, Federated Arms X-9mm pistol (WA 0, 2d6+1 damage, 12 bullet clip, ROF 2, Rel ST, 50-meter range).



To sneak past the security, each member of the news team attempting to gain access to the 8th floor must make Stealth skill checks with a difficulty equal to 1d10+ the Awareness/Notice of the security guards (11) or the police officers (13). If spotted, the team must make Hide & Evade skill checks against a difficulty number generated in the same manner.

To fast talk their way in, a member of the team must make a Persuasion & Fast Talk skill check with a difficulty equal to 1d10+ the Education of the security guards (8) or police (11).

The team might try to pose as hotel cleaning staff, or as distraught relatives or friends of the dead woman. Using either of these ruses adds a +2 to any Persuasion & Fast Talk roll. (Fiona will supply two members of the team with cleaning staff uniforms if her contact on the team makes a Fast Talk & Persuasion roll with (difficulty 20). Otherwise the team must steal the uniforms.)

Bribes can also help a news team talk their way onto the 8th floor. Should a Persuasion & Fast Talk skill check fail, a bribe of 50 Euro\$ per point by which the check missed will be sufficient to get a guard to pretend not to have seen the news team. Cops are tougher to bribe; 200 Euro\$ per point by which the check missed is required.

To intimidate their way in, a member of the news team must make an Intimidate skill check with a difficulty equal to 1d10+ the Authority of the security guards (9) or police (9-11).

Having gained access to the 8th floor, the news team can begin filming and interviewing. (Other interviews may have to be conducted elsewhere in the hotel, or down at the police station.)

#### SUGGESTED SHOTS:

- Janna Vox’s dead body (preferably in the room where she died, or being loaded onto the ambulance).
- Interview with police.
- Interview with maid who found the body.
- Interview with band manager or other band members.
- Interview with any friends or family present. (The more emotionally overwrought, the better!)

#### Interviews at the hotel

The 8th floor of the Coast Gateway Plaza is where the news team will find the police who are conducting the investigation, the band’s manager (in the room across from Janna’s), and the three other band members (in rooms down the hall). The maid who found the body may also be here if the police are questioning her.

#### Sergeant Alice Carey Night City Police Dept.

Sergeant Carey’s primary concern is that her officers conduct a thorough investigation prior to news of the rockergirl’s death leaking out. When this happens, Carey knows that the hotel will be swamped with crazed Twisted Femmes fans.

Carey is a no-nonsense investigator who responds best to a businesslike interview. Attempts to intimidate her will get her back up. Attempts to bribe her will meet with icy silence.

Carey doesn’t think much of the Twisted Femmes style of music. But she had a grudging respect for the rockergirl’s recent anti-drug crusades – until now.

Interview.....	+3
Persuasion & Fast Talk .....	+1
Intimidate/Interrogate.....	-3
Oratory .....	+1
Seduction.....	-1

#### Skill check 1-9:

“Hey! This is a police investigation. This area is off limits to anyone but my officers. Who let these people in here?”

#### Skill check 10-14:

“Yeah, it’s Janna Vox. And yeah, she’s dead. No we don’t know the cause of death yet. Talk to me tomorrow, after the autopsy’s been done.”

#### Skill check 15-19:

“The dead woman is Janna Vox, lead singer for the Twisted Femmes. She was discovered by hotel staff at 1:50 p.m. The death looks suspicious, but there’s no way to know what killed her until the autopsy report comes in tomorrow.”



Skill check 20-24:

“Looks like the singer died of a drug overdose; a spent hypo was found under the bed and Vox’s arm had two red blotches on it. But we won’t be able to confirm that until the blood analysis report comes back this afternoon. Still, Vox is a known ex-junkie who appeared to have gone clean a year ago. But I guess her anti-drug crusade was just a sham.”

Skill check 25-29:

“According to the hotel staff, there was quite a party here last night. Hotel security called our members in at one point after they had trouble evicting a local gang member around 2 a.m. Seems he got violent when the partygoers wouldn’t let him play his music chips. He was a member of the Death Merchants – a nasty bunch. They’re known dealers. Vox probably purchased the drugs from him.”

Skill check 30+:

“Are we off the record? OK. It looks like Vox overdosed on that new drug that’s caused a number of deaths recently. It’s called ‘Harmony’ on the streets. I’d like to bust whoever’s selling it; it’s nasty stuff.”

If asked about the gang member: “The Death Merchant we turfed last night gave his name as ‘Slayer.’ We didn’t have anything on him – the little creep left quietly after getting a taste of our tasers, and the hotel didn’t want to press charges, so we released him. But now that there’s a death involved we’re going to be asking him some questions.”

**Morrison Sundowner  
Boyfriend of Janna Vox**

Morrison is the lead singer for a local “alternative” band, known as the Diesel Dogs. They play “motor rock” – music generated using digital samples of old-fashioned diesel engines. He dresses in synthetic leathers that are treated so that they have an “oily” sheen, and has light tattoos in the shape of interlocking gears on each arm.

Until Morrison started dating Janna, his band had only a local following. In recent weeks, thanks to their connection with the Twisted Femmes, the Diesel Dogs started to hit the big time.

Morrison has been dating Janna Vox for just six months. Theirs was a sometimes fiery, but always passionate relationship. When he left the hotel room at 6 a.m., Janna was still alive. He is distraught by her death, and will be especially sensitive to any questions about drugs; with Janna’s help, he recently kicked a longstanding addiction to the hallucinogen Blue Glass.

- Interview..... +1
- Persuasion & Fast Talk ..... +3
- Intimidate/Interrogate..... -2
- Oratory ..... +2
- Seduction..... -3

Skill check 1-9:

“Get outta my face, you ghouls! Why do you have to feed on other people’s misery?” (He follows this comment by shoving the camera operator across the room.)

Skill check 10-14:

“What do you want me to say? I loved her. The song she was writing, ‘Death is a Fun Time,’ was going to be a huge hit. But now she’s dead. Life sure sucks.”

Skill check 15-19:

“Janna was a full-throttle babe. But she’d been clean for the past year. Her dying like this just doesn’t make sense. I don’t care what the cops say. Janna wouldn’t have done this to herself.”

Skill check 20-24:

“I owe Janna my life. She helped me kick my habit by making me check into the New Vector clinic. She said if they could help her kick SynthCoke, they could help me beat Blue Glass. And she was right. You want proof she was clean, then go talk to the doctors at the clinic.”

Skill check 25-29:

“The cops say Janna Oded on Harmony, but there was no way she would have touched that shit. It’s killed dozens of people. Fused their brains into Jello. Janna was terrified of hypos and would have been the last person on earth to use one.”

Skill check 30+:

“Dr. Cristiano down at the clinic can tell you all about Harmony. She’s seen what the drug does to people. Hell, she’s treating the drummer of the Disco Daze for it right now.”



### **The Twisted Femmes**

The news team has a choice of interviewing either band manager Pati Chia, or band members Sadie Marquis, Lyn Phase, or Barbara “Barbarella” Fonda. All are dressed in similar clothing: chromed miniskirts, spike-heeled boots, and wild hair. The band members have jewelled interface plugs in each temple.

The Twisted Femmes are used to dealing with the media and will be able to brush off the usual questions, but are shaken by the death of their friend and will respond to pressure.

Each will provide the same information; the quotes below may be attributed to any of the four women. (Each time a different band member is interviewed, separate skill check rolls may be made. The quotes should be altered so that they sound slightly different.)

- Interview..... -1
- Persuasion & Fast Talk ..... -1
- Intimidate/Interrogate..... +2
- Oratory ..... +2
- Seduction..... +3

#### Skill check 1-9:

“You want to know how we feel about Janna’s death? Then come to our concert tomorrow night, you creep.”

#### Skill check 10-14:

“I don’t know; maybe Janna did give in and take a hit. She was under a lot of pressure lately. Money was tight.”

#### Skill check 15-19:

“Just because Janna was clean for the past year doesn’t mean that everything was rosy. Just yesterday, they repossessed her synthesizer – and was she ever pissed about it. All of the chips she’d been writing her new song on were still in it. But those pukers down at City Bank didn’t give a damn.”

#### Skill check 20-24:

“City Bank wasn’t the only loans company after Janna’s money. Back when she was still using, she borrowed heavily on the basis of the band’s future chip sales. But even though our last recording went chrome, the collections agencies were still breathing down her neck. The guy at the party last night was the worst. Always pestering Janna. No, I don’t know who he was. All I remember is that he was a Chinese guy, and had brand-new interface plugs in his fingertips. He must have just come out of a cyberclinic; the skin on his fingers was still pretty raw. I think his name was Phil something-or-other.”

#### Skill check 25-29:

“Y’know, now that I think about it, I don’t think that Phil guy was from a collections agency. I think he might have been a drug dealer. I saw Janna slipping him some cash last night at the party. It looked like a lot of money; more than she’s had in weeks. She must have pawned our LightLink amp to get that kind of cash.”

#### Skill check 30+:

“Whatever drugs this Phil guy had to offer, Janna was desperate for them. From what I overheard, she was practically begging. ‘Get them for me, Phil, no matter what it costs,’ she said. ‘If the company gets to it before I do, I’m a dead woman.’”

### **Rosalie Peres**

#### **Maid, Coast Gateway Plaza**

Rosalie is the maid who discovered Janna Vox’s body. She is so upset by the event that hotel manager Kurt Knipstrom has agreed to give her the rest of the day off, once she has spoken to police.

Rosalie is one of the first people the police question upon arriving at the scene. If the news team beats the police to the hotel, she is still in her maid’s uniform and is sitting on a chair in the lobby. She is wringing her hands and her face shows obvious signs of strain.

If the characters are slow in getting to the scene, or if they interview three or more people before getting around to interviewing Rosalie, the police have already questioned the maid and she has gone home. She lives 20 minutes away. Getting her address out of Mr. Knipstrom requires a Persuasion & Fast Talk & Persuasion skill check (difficulty 20). But Knipstrom can be bribed – at a cost of \$50 per point by which the roll misses the difficulty number.

Another way to get Rosalie’s address is to hack into the hotel computer’s employee records file. This requires an Interface skill check (difficulty 15).

Rosalie is a middle-aged woman who dresses in frumpy clothes and wears a holo-cross of Jesus on a chain around her neck. She speaks English, but with a strong Spanish accent. (Questioning her in Spanish results in a +2



bonus. If the interviewer is Catholic – or can convince Rosalie that he or she is of that faith – there is another +2 bonus.)

It is immediately obvious that Rosalie is terrified; the reaction is much stronger than one would expect as the result of simply having found a dead body. Trying to intimidate her will only frighten her further.

Interview..... +2  
 Persuasion & Fast Talk ..... +3  
 Intimidate/Interrogate..... -5  
 Oratory ..... -2  
 Seduction..... -1

Skill check 1-9:

“No hablo ingles!”

Skill check 10-14:

“When I open door to clean room, I find the gringa dead on the floor. Her lips all blue and her eyes roll back so that just the whites show. Horrible. I know then something bad has happen. I scream to Fiona to call the police.”

Skill check 15-19:

“Those rock girls, they mix with a bad crowd. My friend who work the night before say police had to be called to their party. Gang boys were there. Tough boys with silver guitars painted on their jackets.”

Skill check 20-24:

“I hear that the gang at the party was a bunch of drug dealers. I lost my son Luis to drugs three years ago. I hate those things. I feel sorry for the girl, even if she did bring it on herself. She shouldn’t have used drugs.”

Skill check 25-29:

“You promise to turn the camera off? OK, I tell you. Look for the gang boys called Death Sellers. They know what happen to Senorita Vox. They were there.”

Skill check 30+:

“There’s something I didn’t tell you before. Those gringos. Two of the silver-guitar gangers. I see them leave Senorita Vox’s room at 1 o’clock. One is woman with red hair; the other one she call ‘Slayer’ has scar on neck. He knows I see him, and puts his finger onto his lips, then lifts his jacket to show machinegun under it. I was afraid to tell the police this.” (She bursts into tears.) “He will kill me, I know it! But I must tell you, so Jesus will forgive me for not going into the room sooner, when I heard the thumping noises! That must have been when the senorita was killed.”

**Robin Mandel  
 Rockstyles Magazine**

Robin is a print reporter who works for Rockstyles, a glossy magazine describing the private lives of the rich and famous of rock ‘n’ roll. She arrives on the scene shortly after the news team does. Her credibility is 5.

Robin wears a Strobeskirt, spike heels, and sports several nose rings. She’s a compulsive gum chewer and is quick with a digital camera. She’s also an old friend of one member of the news team, whom she used to date, years ago.

Note: If the characters are doing well in their interviews, the referee should have Robin remain in the background with the half-dozen other news teams who swarm in at the same time that she does. If the characters are having trouble, however, she can be used to help them out.

Robin opens a conversation with her ex-lover, offering to swap information. “Got any dirt you’d like to share with the competition, cutie?”

For each worthwhile piece of information given to her, Robin offers one of the following pieces of information in return. Characters can successfully feed her misleading information or outright lies with a Persuasion & Fast Talk skill check (difficulty 25).

Attempts to intimidate Robin will cause her to walk off in a huff. She will, however, sell the following information at 1,000 Euro\$ a pop – but only if asked specifically for it.

- “Phil” is a fixer by the name of Phillip Chow. He’s a regular in the entertainment underground, helping broke band members to get temporary loans using their instruments as collateral, arranging the bargain-basement purchase of “five-finger discount” equipment, arranging meetings between recording companies and hungry young artists, and – some say – supplying cut-rate recreational drugs for parties. He lives on the city’s east side, above the Vagabond Pawn Shop, which he owns.



- Janna Vox was trying to duck several creditors. She lost a valuable piece of equipment only yesterday, when City Bank Collections repossessed one of her direct-emotional interface synthesizers after she defaulted on her loan payments to them.
- The silver guitar is the “tag” of the Death Merchants, a violent chromer gang into “splatter rock” music (a description of the gang is provided later in the adventure). The most likely place to find the gang will be at an upcoming concert of the Grim Rippers, to be held two days from now at the Waterfront Pier. “If you’re crazy enough to go to that concert, you’d better be wearing full body armor,” Robin advises. “The guitarist uses live ammo.”
- Janna Vox did indeed kick her drug habit one year ago. Doctors at the New Vector Detox & Rehab Clinic worked this transformation. News that Janna ODeed comes as a big surprise to Robin, who says the rockergirl was “clean and sober” when she interviewed her two days ago, upon the band’s arrival in Night City.

### **TRACKING DOWN THE LEADS**

The interviews conducted at the hotel have given the news team several leads.

#### **New Vector Detox & Rehab Clinic**

An easy library search (difficulty 10) will turn up the address of the New Vector Detox and Rehab Clinic. An average library search (difficulty 15) will provide the name of Dr. Charlene Cristiano, head of the clinic.

#### **Disco Daze**

A check with anyone in the music industry will turn up information on Disco Daze, a local retro band. Drummer Sonny Rorke collapsed on stage at a concert two days ago and was hauled away by Trauma Team. Nobody knows where he is now.

#### **Death Merchants**

If the news team knows either the name of the gang, or can describe the silver guitar on the back of its members’ jackets, a Streetwise skill check (difficulty 15) is sufficient to turn up basic information on the Death Merchants.

Unlike other “chromer” (rock ‘n’ roll-based) gangs, the Death Merchants are extremely violent. They live for their music – the throbbing rhythms of “splatter rock,” which blends wailing guitars with autofire weapons and the taped screams of people dying.

The “tag” of the death merchants is a guitar shooting bullets, spray painted in silver. Members typically dress in black and accessorize with ammo belts, worn crossed over the chest, and a single earring made from a bullet. Each of these bullets is engraved with the wearer’s name; the superstition is that it is the proverbial “bullet with your name on it” that will kill that individual. Gang members who wear their own bullets are said to be invulnerable – but workers at the city morgue know better.

#### **Drug Overdoses**

An easy Library Search (difficulty 10) of the station’s own file stories reveals that drug overdoses have been well above normal for at least two weeks. In the past week alone, twenty-six people have died. A handful were connected with the entertainment industry, but none were “big names,” and so the overdose stories never saw air time. Police interviewed in these stories would say only that yet another dangerous designer drug had hit the streets. None of them knew the name of it, or who was selling it.

The news team may decide to try to obtain a sample of the mystery drug, so they can film it for their newscast. To obtain a hypo of Harmony, they must make a Streetwise skill check (difficulty 25). A successful skill check means they are directed to a low-level member of the Death Merchants gang.

If the news team tries to search out someone who has used Harmony, they must make a separate Streetwise skill check (difficulty 20). If they locate a user before going to the New Vector Clinic, the person they find is Sonny Rorke, drummer for the Disco Daze. Sonny will have just been discharged from the clinic. (Adjust the quotes under Dr. Cristiano accordingly.)





## **COMPUTER SEARCHES**

The team's netrunner can be kept busy running a number of computer searches in an effort to obtain background information for the story.

### **City Bank**

The City Bank autoteller terminals can be accessed with an Interface roll (difficulty 20). They reveal that Janna Vox was 730,000 Euro\$ in debt to that institution.

Accessing the main computers of City Bank Collections requires a separate Interface roll (difficulty 25). The collections officer in charge of Vox's account is named Lai Wing. (Lai is the surname.) The Suzuki SensoMaster direct-interface synthesizer that was seized has a listed resale value of 800,000 Euro\$, and will be sold at an auction on Day 3 of the adventure.

### **Night City Police Department**

To access information on either the Janna Vox case or the Death Merchants gang, a netrunner can attempt to penetrate the Investigations Section data fortress of the Night City Police Department. This data fortress is represented by an icon of an old-fashioned magnifying glass; any of its three gates (strength 4) can be entered by passing through the lens of the glass. The fortress is extensively protected by a wide range of intrusion-countermeasure programs (IC), but by law, all of these must be non-lethal. (That doesn't mean they won't be lethal to a netrunner's cyberdeck.) Its data walls have a strength of 4.

Once inside, the netrunner must successfully access either Memory 6 (which contains the file on the Janna Vox investigation) or Memory 3 (which contains various background files on Night City-area street gangs).

The Janna Vox file indicates that police suspect that the street drug Harmony led to Janna Vox's overdose. (This will be confirmed by a blood analysis report filed at 5 p.m. on Day 1 of the adventure). An autopsy report will be filed at 11 a.m. on Day 2 of the adventure. The autopsy report confirms death by overdose, and notes heavy bruising on Vox's arms.

The second file can provide basic background information on the Death Merchants chromer gang. Their police rating is C2C.: gang members have above-average weapons skills (6 pts in weapon skill plus Ref 8); have access to automatic weapons; and normally wear light to heavy armor (SP 10-20). Estimated gang size is 40 members. Typical crimes include murder, assault, armed robbery and drug dealing. The gang's leader is named Rav Chandra, but goes by the gang name of Chopper. The gang's known hangouts include a nightclub called the Blood Pit.

'Slayer' gets only a minor mention in the file. He's a low-level member of the gang. His identifying marks include a vivid, self-inflicted scar that incscribes a circle around his neck.

On Day 2 of the adventure, the police question Slayer at 1 p.m. If the netrunner hacks into the police data fortress after this happens, the referee should have Sergeant Alice Carey make an Intimidation/Interrogate skill check, then should refer to the quotes listed for Slayer. Any information Carey obtains from Slayer is included in the Janna Vox investigation file, and can be accessed by the netrunner upon successfully penetrating the police data fortress.

### **Cyberwear Clinics**

If the news team is looking for Phil, one way to find him is to search the records of the city's cyberclinics to see any of them performed a neural-link fingertip implant operation within the past few days.

A System Knowledge skill check (difficulty 15) locates six likely clinics. The netrunner must make an Interface skill check (difficulty 15) to access the patient files at each clinic.

The referee should roll 1d6 to determine which of the six clinics Phil went to. This will determine which of the netrunner's Interface attempts must succeed. If the netrunner succeeds in accessing the computer at this clinic, the files provide the name and address of Phil Chow.

## **THE VAGABOND PAWN SHOP**

The Vagabond Pawn Shop, at 325 Main St., is open from noon to 9 p.m. daily. It's run by Johannes Klassen, who greets customers from behind a bulletproof-glass-enclosed counter, where smaller, expensive items are displayed.

Phillip Chow lives above the pawn shop (which he owns) and uses it as a contact point in his sometimes shady dealings. If the characters start asking about him, Johannes will hit a hidden button that activates a surveillance camera. If Phil likes the look of the characters (or the bribe they're offering), he'll come downstairs.



SUGGESTED SHOTS:

- Interview with Phil Chow
- Interior of the Vagabond Pawn Shop (focusing on anything that looks illegal or seamy)

**Phillip Chow**

Phil will prove a difficult interview. He’s already on the shady side of the law, and certainly doesn’t want to be in the spotlight. He will only agree to an interview if his face and voice are electronically disguised.

Interview.....	-2
Persuasion & Fast Talk .....	+2
Intimidate/Interrogate.....	+3
Oratory .....	-2
Seduction.....	-1

Skill check 1-9:

“Janna Vox is dead? Huh. That’s news to me. You wanna buy something from the shop or make a deal – or are you just here to waste my time?”

Skill check 10-14:

“Yeah, I partied with the Twisted Femmes that night. So did half of the entertainment industry. So what? No, she wasn’t on drugs. She was clean; she wouldn’t let anything stronger than liquor be served at her party. That’s why they threw that punk out. He was loaded – and his splatter rock music stank.”

Skill check 15-19:

“My only connection with Janna was through the shop. Even though her concerts were pulling in megas of cash, she was spending the money just as quickly, on equipment. She always had to have the latest tech, no matter how expensive. The stuff was like a drug to her. From time to time, she had to pawn a piece of equipment, to stay afloat.”

Skill check 20-24:

“All right, I’ll tell you the real reason why I was at the party that night. It certainly wasn’t because I was dealing drugs! Janna had lost her new direct-emotional interface synthesizer to City Bank Collections in a repo raid the day before. She wanted me to help her arrange to get it back – temporarily. I was supposed to bribe the collection agency to let Janna use it for two hours.”

Skill check 25-29:

“The reason Janna wanted access to her synthesizer is that it contained three recording chips she’d been laying her latest song down on. The piece was called ‘Death is a Fun Time.’ One chip contained the lyrics, one the emotions, and one the visuals. She wanted them back, so that her work wouldn’t be lost when the synth’ was sold. Guess the song was pretty important to her; she said she’d pay any price to get those chips back.”

Skill check 30+

“The guy in charge of collections at City Bank is named Lai. His first name is Wing. He’s the one Janna wanted me to bribe. He’s also the bank officer in charge of auctioning off seized goods. He said he’d give Janna temporary access to the synth’ for 3,000 Euro dollars. Kind of a stiff price. But Janna was willing to pay it, plus my 10 per cent. Guess the deal’s off, now.”

**CITY BANK COLLECTIONS**

The collections department of City Bank is located on the 4th floor of the City Bank building, in downtown Night City. Here, the news team will find Lai Wing, head collections officer.

Wing dresses in a stylish black Crinklesuit and black boots. He’s in his early 40s, and is a successful player in the corporate world. Still, he’s not above making a quick, tax-free dollar or two. He can’t let the team have the synthesizer itself, but if they want to permanently “borrow” the three recording chips inside it, he’s more than willing to make a deal. After all, the chips aren’t recorded on the repossession invoice, and if they go missing it’s no big deal.

Wing initially asks the price that he and Phil had agreed upon: 3,000 Euro\$. Alternatively, Wing will sell the chips singly, for 1,000 Euro\$ each. The news team can try and talk him down, but it will require a Persuasion & Fast Talk skill check (difficulty 20). The price drops 100 Euro\$ for each point by which the skill check exceeds this number, to a minimum of 100 Euro\$ per chip.

The synthesizer (along with other repossessed goods) is stored in a vault in the basement of the City Bank building. Breaking in to steal it is a job for an experienced burglar; the vault features electronic security plus three guards on duty at all times, and features locks coded to collections staff retinal patterns. The characters can try, but



all rolls are at a difficulty of 30!

Regardless of whether or not the news team is able to obtain the recording chips, Janna Vox's synthesizer goes up for auction at noon on Day 3 of the adventure. If Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals has already been implicated in the overdose deaths, the synth' will sell for the paltry price of 300,000 Euro\$. If Fun-Tyme's president is still trying to cover his tracks, however, the synthesizer will be sold for 800,000 Euro\$ to a "private collector" (actually a fixer hired to retrieve the recording chips inside it).

Each of the recording chips inside the synthesizer is about three centimeters wide. All are flat disks. One is gold, one silver, and one gloss black. They can only be played back on a Suzuki SensoMaster direct-interface synthesizer, which can be accessed by anyone with a standard interface plug.

#### **Gold Disk (Visuals)**

The words "Death is a Fun Tyme" appear in the air, dripping blood. A rapid sequence of tumbling pills, hypodermics spraying blood, screaming faces, and inhallant capsules follows. An image slowly forms, of a man in his 30s wearing a suit. (If the person viewing the disk has met Claude DuFault, they recognize him.) He is leaning across a table, scooping money into his arms. Then he stands and begins to play "air guitar." A silver guitar materializes in his hands, then turns into a submachine gun that shoots hypos. SEVERAL SECONDS OF STATIC. An image of Morrison Sundowner, naked, lying on a rumpled bed and crooking a finger at the viewer.

#### **Silver Disk (Lyrics)**

"Murder with a gun, with a needle it's the same. Soon the whole world is gonna know your name. Gotcha on the run. Drug-dealin' scum. This is not a test. Caught you suckin' on your thumb. Suckers! Push it on the street, where the sad people meet. Profit is your game, but I'm gettin' off this train. Harmony sounds sweet, but there's toxins in your meat. You're a merchant of death, there is poison on your breath. Now it's time to..." SEVERAL SECONDS OF STATIC. "Mmm."

#### **Black Disk (Emotions)**

Rage. Pain. The sting of a needle sliding into skin. Raw ache in the stomach and throat. Anger. Joy. Revenge. SEVERAL SECONDS OF STATIC. Happiness. Pleasure.

#### **NEW VECTOR CLINIC**

The New Vector Detox and Rehab Clinic, at 1309 Davie St., is run by Dr. Charlene Cristiano. If the news team phones ahead to make an appointment, clinic staff will usher them in politely. If they barge into the place, the interview with Dr. Cristiano suffers a -5 penalty.

#### **SUGGESTED SHOTS:**

- Interview with Dr. Cristiano.
- Shots of people suffering the after effects of drugs (can be used as background shot when discussing Harmony).
- Shots of interns at the clinic rushing past with an overdose victim.
- Shots of drug paraphernalia.

#### **Dr. Charlene Cristiano**

##### **Director, New Vector Clinic**

Originally from Trinidad, Dr. Cristiano trained as a general practitioner, then switched to a specialization in drug overdose treatment when the young intern she was dating ODeD on Stim. She has a second degree in clinical psychology.

Dr. Cristiano reacts best to a straightforward, no-nonsense interview. In the course of her work, she's heard every line there is, and won't put up with any bull or double talk.

If the team asks to interview Sonny Rorke, she will only allow them to do so with his permission. Any attempts to interview a patient or film inside the clinic without Dr. Cristiano's permission will result in the news team being immediately expelled from the premises. (If a conflict develops, use the stats for the Coast Gateway Plaza hotel security guards.)



Interview.....	+4
Persuasion & Fast Talk .....	-2
Intimidate/Interrogate.....	-1
Oratory .....	-2
Seduction.....	-1

Skill check 1-9:

“Security! Get these muckrakers out of here! They’re filming without authorization!”

Skill check 10-14:

“Yes, I can confirm that Janna Vox was a patient here one year ago, and that she has, to the best of my knowledge, not used drugs since then. But I can’t provide details of a patient’s file. That’s confidential information.”

Skill check 15-19:

“So you want to know about the new designer drug that’s causing all of the overdoses? You mean you’ll actually broadcast the interview this time? All right then. The drug’s known on the street as Harmony. It’s a powerful hallucinogen. And it’s deadly. More than half of the people who try it die.”

Skill check 20-24:

“The drug seems to be a very sophisticated one. I’m not a neurologist, but I can tell you what I’ve learned from my patients. They report “hearing” colors and “seeing” sounds. Judging by the sophisticated way this new drug taps directly into specific centers of the brain, it doesn’t sound like it was cooked up in someone’s basement lab.”

Skill check 25-29:

“We have a patient here by the name of Sonny Rorke. He’s a drummer with the Disco Daze. He’s one of the few people who have tried Harmony and lived to tell the tale. I’ll ask him if he’d like to speak to you, if you like.”

Skill check 30+:

“I don’t know if it’s any use to you, but I have the empty hypo that was found in Sonny’s pocket when he was brought in. We’ve run a chemical analysis on the miniscule amount of drug that remained inside; it’s a very complicated formula. Our chemists are baffled by it and can’t figure out which of the components is the lethal one. You can film the hypo, if you like.”

Dr. Christiano reaches into an unlocked drawer in her desk and pulls out a standard needleless hypo, a tiny chrome cylinder with compressed air at one end and a tiny hole at the other. The letters “Fu...ceuticals” are printed on its side; the missing letters have been deliberately removed. (If the team is left alone in her room and searches the desk, they find the hypo.)

**Checking the hypo**

If the characters figure out that the final word must be “pharmaceuticals,” an easy Library Search of drug companies (difficulty 10) reveals only one whose company name starts with Fu: Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals Inc. A slightly more detailed Library Search (difficulty 15) reveals the name of its president, Claude Dufault, and public relations officer, Eva Podgurski.

**Harmony**

Type: Hallucinogen	Strength +5
Difficulty: 13	Cost:200
Duration: 1d6+1 hours	

Harmony produces synesthesia, a condition in which the brain’s auditory and visual receptors are “cross-wired,” so that the user “sees” sounds and “hears” colors. The drug also creates euphoria, resulting in an increase of Cool by +3. Unfortunately, the drug has adverse side effects. After it wears off, the user suffers spacial disorientation that reduces Ref by -2 for a time period equal to the duration of the drug. There is also a second, very nasty side effect: death. Users overdose and die unless they can make a Death Save at -4.

**Sonny Rorke**

**Drummer, Disco Daze**

Sonny Rorke is in pretty sad shape. A couple of days ago, at the insistence of a friend, he tried the new street drug Harmony. It was a wild experience – but one that very nearly killed him. Before the drug had worn off, Sonny had to perform with his band at a concert. The combination of the drug with too many beers made Sonny’s heart give out.



Fortunately, Sonny came from a family that was wealthy enough to afford Trauma Team coverage for their wayward son. Once the team got his heart started again, Sonny was whisked off to the New Vector Detox and Rehab Clinic.

True to his retro music, Sonny dresses in outfits that were popular in the last millenium – the decade 1970, to be exact. He wears a floppy hat, flared pants, and a glitter jacket.

Sonny readily agrees to be interviewed. He’s eager for the opportunity to promote his band, the Disco Daze, and will constantly try to turn the conversation around to music.

Interview.....	+3
Persuasion & Fast Talk .....	+3
Intimidate/Interrogate.....	-3
Oratory .....	+2
Seduction.....	+4

Skill check 1-9:

“Hey, I thought you guys wanted to talk about Disco Daze. Forget it. I’m not talking to you!”

Skill check 10-14:

“Yeah, I tried Harmony. It was a pretty wild ride. Lots of colors, man, and crazy sounds. Did I tell you that Disco Daze has a concert coming up in two weeks? We’re playing at Sneaky Pete’s retro club.”

Skill check 15-19:

“It’s wild, man. You look at something and hear a bunch of weird sounds. You close your eyes and listen, and see flashing colors strobe against your eyelids. Crazy stuff. I wouldn’t try it again, though. Not after it shut down my ticker. I should have known better, y’know? Buying street shit from gang boys. Their stuff is cheap, but it’s always cut with something nasty. So did I tell you about Disco Daze’s latest hit? We’re doing a cover of that great dance classic, ‘Boogie Woogie Dancin’ Shoes.’ It’ll be great.”

Skill check 20-24:

“You want to know who’s selling Harmony? OK, I’ll tell you. It’s the Death Merchants. But don’t piss around with them, man. They’re tough customers. That splatter rock crap they listen to has the actual sounds of people being killed laid down on it as one of the tracks. Talk about sick puppies. Give me retro music any day. People who come out to a Disco Daze concert know how to party. Did I tell you about our next concert? I can get you guys a stage pass if you want to film it.”

Skill check 25-29:

“The Death Merchant I bought the stuff off of is named ‘Slayer.’ You’ll recognize him easy; he’s got this weird scar that goes all the way around his throat, like his head was cut off. You want to score some of that Harmony shit, talk to him. But watch your back when you do. So did I tell you about the concert we did in Seattle? We had 5,000 people packing the place. Just goes to show retro music still boogies.”

Skill check 30+:

“The Death Merchants may be selling Harmony, but they’re not the ones who are making it. I hear they’re fronting for a local pharmaceuticals company. Selling their rejected batches or something. No wonder the stuff’s killed so many people. I think I’ll stick to poppers from now on. That’s what was big in the ‘70s. That and disco music. Did I tell you about the next record we’re cutting? We’re going to sample some of John Travolta’s voice and mix it through the keyboards. Should be really wow.”

**THE DEATH MERCHANTS**

The news team can track down a member of the Death Merchants with a Streetwise skill check (difficulty 20). On a roll of 25 or better, they are able to track down Slayer himself. They are directed to the gang’s chief hangout, a nightclub known as the Blood Pit.

(Alternatively, the news team can attend the Grim Rippers concert on Day 3 of the adventure, where they will encounter the same gang members listed below.)

The Blood Pit features the ear-splitting “music” of splatter rock, which is composed of screaming guitars and digitally sampled tracks of blasting guns. Fights break out often here, and when they do, the Death Merchants step in as self-appointed bouncers, opening up indiscriminantly on the combattants with automatic weapons. By the time the police respond (with the equivalent of a SWAT team) the Death Merchants are long gone. Anybody who points the finger at them is found splattered against a wall the next day.

Nobody in their right mind enters the Blood Pit without a weapon. It’s a tough place – the 2020 equivalent of a biker bar. Anyone dressed in anything but the latest splatter rock fashions (bloodied and bullet-ripped clothing taken



from crime victims, heavy black boots, ammo belts) is openly scorned and will probably be roughed up. Any news team foolish enough to bring a camera in here will probably be shot on sight.

#### SUGGESTED SHOTS:

- Interview with one of the Blood Merchants in which the gang member admits they're selling the new drug and tells where they got it from. (Yeah, right!)
- Interior of Blood Pit.

About the only sensible way to get interior shots or the blood pit or to do an interview with a Death Merchants gang member is by posing as a splatter rock fan and using a hidden camera. But there's a stiff penalty for success. As soon as the "interview" airs, the Blood Merchants snuff out the gang member(s) who talked to the press. Then they go gunning for the news team! (The characters had better hope that their snooping didn't annoy the cops too much, or police protection is going to be thin.)

When the news team arrives at the Blood Pit, there will be approximately 50 patrons in the bar, including 1d6+2 members of the Death Merchants gang. One of them will be Slayer – but he will only admit who he is to a character who makes a Streetwise skill check (difficulty 20).

#### Death Merchant Gang Members

INT 4 REF 7 TECH 3  
 COOL 7-9 ATTR 4 LUCK 6  
 MA 7 BODY 8 EMP 2  
 BTM -3

#### Cybernetics

Slayer (4): Cybears with Wearman stereo, subdermal armor (torso SP 18).

Muscleman (5): Grafted muscle (Body 10, BTM -4), big knucks (1d6+2).

Psycho (7): Cyberarm (2d6 damage) with popup submachinegun (WA +1, 2d6+3 damage, 35 bullets to clip, ROF 32, ST).

Magnum (3): Chemskins, toxin binders (saves vs drugs or poison +4).

Wiregirl (6): Neural processor, smartgun link (+2 to firearms attacks), cybears with level damper and wide band radio scanner (set to monitor police frequencies).

Rattler (1): None.

Red Rosie (3): Techhair (strokes red), skullcap exoarmor (head SP 25).

"D.M." aka Dead Meat (4): Mr. Studd sexual implant, neural processor, smartgun link (+2 to firearms attacks).

#### Skills

The ranks of each of the members in the gang are listed in brackets after their names, above. This ranking system is described fully on pages 19-20 of the sourcebook Solo of Fortune. Generally, a rank of 1-2 is initiate level, 3-4 is a low-level punk, 5-6 is a respected gang member, 7-8 is a lieutenant, and 9-0 is a gang leader.

Leadership 3-5 (5-7), Awareness/Notice 4 (8), Brawling 5 (12), Dodge & Escape 5 (12), Handgun 6 (13), Submachinegun 7 (13), Stealth 3 (10), Endurance 4 (12), Intimidate 5-7 (12-16), Streetwise 5-7 (12-16).

#### Equipment

Light armor jacket (SP 14), heavy leather pants (SP4), Budgetarms Auto 3 pistol (WA -1, 3d6 damage, 8 bullet clip, ROF 2, UR), H&K MPK-11 heavy submachinegun (WA 0, 4d6+1 damage, 30 bullet clip, ROF 20, ST).

The drug of choice used by members of the Death Merchants is 'Dorph. This combat drug and painkiller comes in the form of a speckled red tablet, costs 250 Euro\$, and adds +2 to all stun and shock saves for 1d6+1 turns. (Users lose 1 point of Ref permanently on a roll of 1 on 1d10.) Each member of the gang carries 1d6 "tabs" of 'Dorph, and pops them if wounded in combat.

Each of the gang members is also carrying 1d6 doses of Harmony in primed, single-dose hypos. These sell for 200 Euro\$ each. Arranging to purchase one requires a Streetwise skill check (difficulty 20). An introduction from a splatter rock fan makes things a little easier (difficulty 15).



### Slayer

Slayer is immediately identifiable by the painful looking scar that completely encircles his neck. He's got spiky blonde hair, wears typical splatter rock fashions, and has an earring made from a bullet with his name inscribed upon it.

Slayer will flat-out refuse to be interviewed. No amount of coercion is going to convince him to talk to a news team. The only thing he understands is a threat – and only if it's backed up by a serious promise of imminent death. The other thing he understands is cash – but it's going to cost 200,000 Euro\$ (enough to get him out of the country) to get him to talk “on the record.” The price drops to 150,000 Euro\$ if the news team agrees to electronically alter his voice and features.

If the interviewers present themselves as a news team, the following bonuses and penalties apply:

Interview.....	-15
Persuasion & Fast Talk .....	-10
Intimidate/Interrogate.....	+3
Oratory .....	-10
Seduction.....	-10

If the interviewers successfully disguise themselves as splatter rock fans (appropriate clothing and a Streetwise roll of 15 or better is required) the following bonuses and penalties apply:

Interview.....	-2
Persuasion & Fast Talk .....	+3
Intimidate/Interrogate.....	+2
Oratory .....	+2
Seduction.....	+4

#### Skill check 1-9:

“You wanna fight? OK, let's rock!” (Pulls out his submachinegun and fires off a burst in the air.) “You got three seconds to run, sucker, or I cut you in half!”

#### Skill check 10-14:

“Yeah, I'm selling Harmony. It's 200 Euros a hit. You wanna buy some? No, I don't make the stuff. What do I look like, a chemist? You wanna deal – or would you rather take a bullet in the arm instead of a hypo?”

#### Skill check 15-19:

“Harmony is sweet stuff – if you're pumped enough to handle it. Dunno where it comes from. We get it pre-packaged, already in the hypos. The company name is always lasered off. Why are you so interested in Harmony, anyway? You a cop?” (Pulls out his submachinegun and rests it across his knee.) “We don't like cops.”

#### Skill check 20-24:

“We get the stuff from this guy called Rickett. ‘Rick the prick’ we call him, ‘cause he's such a jerk. And no, he won't sell any to you. He's strictly a middleman; we control the action on the streets. You want to argue with that, take it up with my gun. It does my talking for me.”

#### Skill check 25-29:

“Rickett's involved with the pharmaceuticals company that makes the stuff. He must make good money; he drives a rockin' car. But he don't know how to dress. Typical corporate jerk, in a suit and tie. If Chopper didn't think he was so bitchin', I'd splatter the prick, just to see him bleed.”

#### Skill check 30+:

“All right, all right! I'll give you Rickett's address. Dunno why you want to see him, though. There's none of the stuff at his place, so if you're thinking of doing a boost, forget it. As I said before, he's just the middleman.”

The above quotes can also be used for any of the other Death Merchants gang members.

If the news team questions Slayer about Janna Vox's death, he will immediately become suspicious and stop talking. The interviewer had better do some fast talking, or Slayer will take steps to ensure that the character doesn't go talk to the police, next.

Slayer deliberately murdered Vox by injecting her with two doses of Harmony (the first one didn't kill her) while a second gang member (Red Rosie) held her arms (hence the bruises mentioned by the autopsy report). But he's not about to admit this to strangers.

Forcing Slayer (or Red Rosie) to talk will involve an Intimidation skill check (difficulty 25). If force is used



(rather than just threatened), there is a bonus of +10. Otherwise, Slayer just sneers if the roll fails.

If Slayer does talk, the most he will say is, “That stuckup bitch had it comin’ to her. She was writing a song that was going to take us down. She knew too much.” If asked specifically who ordered the killing, he will provide the name Rickett, adding, “He’s some suit that works for a drug company. No, I don’t know which one.”

### **THE “MIDDLEMAN”**

If the news team was successful in their interviews with the Death Merchants, they have obtained the name “Rickett.”

An easy Library Search (difficulty 10) turns up five Ricketts in the automated telephone directory: Brian, Larry, Lyle, Sean, and William. If the news team interviews them one after another, they will eventually locate the right man (Lyle). Each visit to a Rickett residence takes 20-30 minutes. Someone is home on a roll of 1-7 on 1d10. Otherwise, the news team must wait another 20-30 minutes before that Mr. Rickett comes home. If it’s the wrong Rickett, the referee should use the quote for a failed interview, below.

If the news team knows that Rickett works for a pharmaceuticals company, their netrunner can search through the corporate registration files of Night City businesses, looking for the employee records of local pharmaceutical manufacturers. On an Interface skill check (difficulty 15) the netrunner finds the name Lyle Rickett, Director of Product Research, in the roster of Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals Inc. His address is also listed.

### **SUGGESTED SHOTS:**

- Interview with Lyle Rickett.

### **Lyle Rickett**

#### **Director of Product Research**

#### **Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals**

Lyle is a middle-management executive in the Night City-based firm Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals Inc., a producer of “recreational” drugs. When a new product is developed, it’s his job as head of Product Research to secure the necessary federal permits for human-subject research to begin, and to conduct tests of the product under proper clinical conditions.

Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals spent a lot of time and money developing its latest hallucinogen, a drug known only as RH23 (Recreational Hallucinogen #23). This is the drug that’s known on the streets as “Harmony.” The company couldn’t afford to wait the year or so it normally takes for the permits to be approved and clinical research to be done. They had to know now if RH23 was a viable product. Company president Claude Dufault put pressure on Lyle to do his “market research” as fast as possible – by any means possible. If he failed, he would be fired.

Lyle came up with a plan that satisfied his boss. He would allow a small amount of the drug (500 doses) to find its way into the hands of dealers on the street, then sit back and watch the results. If the drug proved too dangerous in these “field tests,” it could be quietly set aside, and the expense of full clinical trials could be avoided.

Lyle contacted a fixer, who put him in touch with a member of the Death Merchants. In return for the profits made from street sales of Harmony, the gang would do the “field testing” of the drug. Essentially, this boiled down to selling it to unsuspecting customers, then reporting back to Rickett on any side effects they observed.

From the start, Rickett didn’t like the arrangement. He was terrified of the gang members, and didn’t trust their reports; half of the time they sold the drug and then just walked away without doing any observations of the subject. The rest of the time they were too blasted on their own drug of choice to serve as reliable observers.

In the end, it didn’t matter. The police reports on overdose deaths told the story: RH23 was a killer drug – in every sense of the word.

Horrified by the results, Lyle told his boss that the field tests must stop. Dufault agreed – but insisted that research and production losses be recouped. His suggestion: sell the remaining 5,000 doses of RH23 to the Death Merchants at the cut rate of 100 Euro\$ per dose, and the company could wash its hands of the stuff. Lyle is sickened by the thought that more deaths will result if the sale goes through. He’s been stalling, trying to think of a way out.

In the meantime, he received an additional order from his boss. It seemed that a rockergirl by the name of Janna Vox had found out about the connection between Harmony and Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals, and was about to blow the whistle on the company. Dufault told Lyle to use his gang contacts to “keep her quiet.” Lyle relayed this message to Slayer, and was sickened when he learned of her death the next day. He’s convinced she was murdered and is terrified that he will be implicated in her death.

If the news team searches for Lyle at Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals, they will be told he is off sick for the day. Stressed out by what has happened, Lyle has taken to his bed. When the news team arrives on his doorstep, he comes to the door in pajamas and slippers.





Interview..... -3  
 Persuasion & Fast Talk ..... +5  
 Intimidate/Interrogate..... +5  
 Oratory ..... +3  
 Seduction..... -3

Skill check 1-9:

“You’ve got the wrong house! Yes, my name’s Rickett, but I don’t know anything about it!” (Slams door.)

Skill check 10-14:

“If you want to know more, I suggest you talk to Eva Podgurski, our public relations officer. She should be able to clear things up for you. Any comments involving Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals should be made by her.”

Skill check 15-19:

“Yes, Harmony is one of our products. We call it RH23. It’s a drug still under development; we haven’t even begun our clinical tests yet. How it got into the hands of gang members, I can’t say. Maybe a batch was stolen.” (A quick check with police will expose this as a lie; no thefts have been reported by Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals.)

Skill check 20-24:

“You’re right. It’s time I talked. I don’t want to see any more innocent kids die. RH23 is bad news. It’s a killer. I don’t want any more of it get out on the street. Yes, I was the middle man; I made RH23 available to the Death Merchants. But I was only acting under instructions. My orders came straight from the upper management of Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals. I was told that field tests had to be done, and that I’d be fired if I didn’t carry them out.”

Skill check 25-29:

“It was our president, Claude Dufault, who ordered RH23 “field tested” on the streets. Using the Death Merchants to do it was all his idea. And even now that we know the drug is lethal, he wants to keep selling it. The remaining 5,000 hypos were supposed to be delivered to the gang this morning. But I refused. I know how deadly that stuff is, and don’t want to see more it on the streets.”

Skill check 30+:

“You want to stop the drug from being sold on the streets? Then here’s what you do. Go down to the offices of Fun-Tyme and break into the boardroom. The hypos are stored there. Call the police before you go, and when you find the hypos, film them – and keep on filming – until the police arrive. That’s the only way I can see to end this thing.”

**FUN-TYME PHARMACEUTICALS**

Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals has two separate addresses in the Night City area. The first is that of its lab, located in the Industrial Park. Here, a staff of 20 drug designers manufactures the “recreational” drugs sold by the company.

The building is heavily guarded by a private security firm. The chemists who work there won’t be able to do much more than confirm that a drug that sounds like Harmony was developed by Fun-Tyme. It’s called RH23 (“Recreational Hallucinogen #23). As far as they know, RH23 is still on the warehouse shelves, waiting for its clinical trials to begin.

The management offices of Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals occupy the 5th floor of the Yokohara Building in downtown Night City. The staff includes five secretarial staff and six executives (Product Research Director Lyle Rickett, Public Relations Director Eva Podgurski, Sales Director Clint Murray, Marketing Director Carla Eichler, Accounting Director Anne Lanz, Vice-President Ginger Hobson, and president Claude Dufault).

The secretarial staff work in a common area up front. Visitors arriving by elevator must pass through this area to get to any of the offices, and will be asked their business by the receptionist. They will then be asked to wait in a lobby area filled with display shelves that are lined with “samples” of Fun-Tyme products (pills, single-dose hypos, tablets, etc.). A sign beside each display reads: “These are empty capsules and hypos. They do not contain any active substances.”

A short hallway connects the secretarial area with the large office of president Claude Dufault, and the boardroom beside it. Each of the company directors has a small office, three on either side of this hallway. The boardroom is locked, but can be Picked (difficulty 20); the blinds on its window that opens out into the hallway are drawn shut.

Office hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., although on a roll of 1-2 on 1d10, 1d3 of the directors will decide to stay late, and will be in the office until 6 p.m.

The seven-story Yokohara Building is protected by light security, since it contains only offices. Basically the guards are there to make sure burglars don’t steal the computers. One guard remains in the main-floor lobby, screening visitors to the building (any “street trash” is ejected) and monitoring the hallways via closed-circuit



television. (There is one camera per floor.) Two more guards patrol the building. (Use the stats of the Coast Gateway Plaza security staff.)

### **Computer Searches**

The data fortress of Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals is shaped like a pill capsule. Entry through one of the data gates (strength 3) is through one of three round “windows” on the capsule. The data walls are strength 2.

Fun-Tyme has none of the legal constraints that the police do; their insurgency-countermeasures (IC) programs include those that affect the netrunner directly – on a physical level.

Memory 8 contains information on the development of RH23 and its subsequent “field tests.” Memory 4 contains the text of a blackmail letter, sent by Janna Vox to Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals. The text of each file is provided below:

**>FOLDER: New Products**

**>SUB-FOLDER: Hallucinogens**

**>FILE NAME: “Harmony”**

Field tests of Recreational Hallucinogen 23, known on the street as “Harmony,” continue. Initial results are disappointing. Toxic reactions noted in more than half of all subjects. Field observers are proving unreliable. (The date on the file corresponds to three days before the adventure begins.)

**>FOLDER: New Products**

**>SUB-FOLDER: Hallucinogens**

**>FILE NAME: Memo to C.D.**

Claude: I must strongly urge the immediate halt of all field tests of RH23, and the destruction of remaining doses. This drug is dangerous. It’s killing people. It’s only a matter of time before the police will be involved. I would like to buy back the outstanding hypos from our field observers at the going rate of 200 Euro\$ per dose. Do I have your authorization? Lyle. (The date on the file corresponds to Day 1 of the adventure.)

**>FOLDER: Correspondence**

**>FILE NAME: Vox**

I’m onto you creeps, and your dirty little secret. I know about your connections with the Death Merchants, and the shit you’re pumping out onto the streets. You bloodsucking corporates are killing people, and it’s got to stop. Otherwise, I’m going to release a song that will leave you twisting in the wind. Don’t think you can stop me; even if you kill me, anyone listening to the song chips will know the story.

Here’s what you have to do to ensure my silence. First, turn over all existing doses of the drug to a reputable laboratory for destruction. Second, make a donation of 1 million Euro\$ to the New Vector Detox & Rehab Clinic by the end of this week. Otherwise, my next platinum single will put you behind bars. Janna.

### **Interviews at Fun-Tyme**

#### **SUGGESTED SHOTS:**

- Interview with Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals president Claude Dufault.
- Interview with Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals director of public relations Eva Podgurski.
- Interior shots of Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals office. (These will later be combined with generic, file footage of drugs being manufactured.)

The secretarial staff know nothing about drug trials, gang connections or “Harmony.” They’re just data-pushers. One of them might, however, be coerced via a Seduction skill check (difficulty 15) to provide an important clue. For the past few days, the boardroom has been locked. The secretaries have been sternly warned by Claude Dufault not to go in there. If they need anything from inside the room, they have to ask the company president to unlock the door – and then he insists that they wait outside while he fetches what they need.

The directors and vice-president of Fun-Tyme have no knowledge of “Harmony,” although if it is described to them they will recognize it as being similar to one of their new drugs, RH23. They will be tight-lipped and evasive about RH23, however, fearful that rival companies might steal their idea.

As soon as the news team arrives at Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals, they will be directed to Eva Podgurski, who as public relations director handles all questions from the media. No matter what technique is used to interview Eva, she will provide no information – because she has no knowledge of what is happening. She will give these answers:



Harmony: “We have no product by that name, either currently on the market or under development.”

Death Merchants: “We have absolutely no involvement with street-level drug dealing. This is a legitimate pharmaceuticals business. All of our products are legal – and safe.”

Janna Vox: “Yes, I’m familiar with her. She’s the rockergirl who believes that all drugs should be prohibited – not just the illegal ones. But I can assure you that Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals products, when used according to instruction, are perfectly safe.”

If the news team gets belligerent or tries to barge into the boardroom or other offices, Eva calls building security. If the news team starts making accusations, Eva will tell them to wait in her office. “I think you’d better speak to our president, Mr. Claude Dufault. I’ll see if he’s available to meet with you.”

Only company president Claude Dufault knows the whole story. It was he who ordered Lyle Rickett to use the Death Merchants to “field test” the drugs, and to sell off remaining supplies of the RH23. He didn’t even tell his vice-president of the scheme; he knew she’d disapprove.

**Claude Dufault  
President, Fun-Tyme  
Pharmaceuticals**

Claude is young for a company president. Just 36 years old, he dresses in expensive suits and snakeskin shoes. He has a receding hairline, but appears fit and healthy. His drug of choice is Brain Boost, a Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals product that increases Int +1 and acts as a mild stimulant. It comes in chocolate-flavored “chewtabs”; if his guests are at all polite, Claude offers them each a free sample.

Made nervous by his product research director’s obvious reluctance to get rid of the surplus hypos of RH23 (which are locked in a storeroom just a few meters away), Claude will have been chewing BrainFood all day. He’s succumbed to a side effect of the drug: after two or three doses, the bonuses to intelligence reach a plateau. But the drug continues to act as a stimulant, deluding the user into believing that everyone else is pathetically stupid. The mistakes that Claude makes below are as a result of this delusion.

- Interview..... -1
- Persuasion & Fast Talk ..... +4
- Intimidate/Interrogate..... +2
- Oratory ..... +4
- Seduction..... -2

Note: If the police are called in, the news team will get some spectacular footage of Claude Dufault being hauled off for questioning (and possibly of 5,000 hypos of Harmony being found, if the police are told where to look). Their interview time with Claude, however, will be cut drastically short. Claude will only be able to give a few brief answers as he is hauled away. Most of his answers will be, “No comment,” or “I’m not making any comments until I’ve spoken to my lawyer.”

Skill check 1-9:  
“No comment.”

Skill check 10-14:  
“This drug doesn’t sound even remotely like something a reputable firm like Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals would develop. I think you’ve been fed false information by one of our competitors.”

Skill check 15-19:  
“It came to my attention yesterday that a batch of our untested, unfinished product got out on the streets. I ordered all remaining samples of it destroyed two days ago.”

Skill check 20-24:  
If the interviewer has mentioned a gang, but not specifically mentioned the Death Merchants: “You said gang involvement? I’ve never heard of the Death Merchants.”

If the interviewer has mentioned a death, but not specifically mentioned Janna Vox: “An overdose death? Yes, it was a pity about Janna Vox. The Twisted Femmes were one of my daughter’s favorite rock groups.”

If the interviewer has mentioned a drug, but not specifically mentioned the street name Harmony: “You say drugs were involved? They couldn’t have been our product. Our product lists don’t include anything by the name of Harmony.”



#### Skill check 25-29:

“Lyle Rickett, our director of product research, was solely responsible. He acted entirely on his own initiative. He stole those samples of RH23 from our warehouse. Check with the police; I’m sure you’ll find he has a criminal record. Fun-Tyme may have developed the product, but we certainly weren’t the ones who put it on the streets. Lyle Rickett did.”

#### Skill check 30+:

“I tried to tell Lyle that the product wasn’t safe, that it had to go through the proper tests. But he insisted we could cut costs and speed things up by testing it on the streets. It was all his idea. He even came up with the street name for it: Harmony. I tried to stop him, but couldn’t. Go check out his house – he’s got 5,000 hypos of the stuff in his garage.” (This is a bald lie, but if the characters have not yet interviewed Lyle Rickett and take more than two hours to get to check this story out, Claude will have personally moved the hypos from his company store room to Lyle’s garage.)

#### **“IT’S A WRAP”**

Having tracked down as many leads and done as many interviews as they can, the news team must edit the story and get it on the air. If they have revealed the death of Janna Vox to have been a murder, and/or uncovered the story of Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals’ illegal sales of an untested drug through gang members, the station’s ratings soar that night. The news team members are instant media heroes.

The next day, it’s business as usual. Back to the entertainment beat, and the same old time-worn stories of celebrity weddings, rock concerts, and musicians getting arrested for driving under the influence.

But the Janna Vox story sure was a rush while it lasted, wasn’t it?

#### **TIMELINE**

Unless the characters’ actions alter the sequence given below, the following events occur.

Two weeks prior to adventure: The first doses of Harmony begin to hit the streets.

Two days prior to adventure: Sonny Rorke, drummer for the Disco Daze, collapses at a concert. Rorke later checks in to the New Vector Detox & Rehab Clinic.

One day prior to adventure: City Bank Collections repossesses Janna Vox’s direct-emotional interface synthesizer. Night City Police called to Coast Gateway Plaza to aid in eviction of Death Merchants gang member by the name of Slayer.

Day 1:

1:50 p.m.: Janna Vox, lead singer of the Twisted Femmes, found dead in her room at the Coast Gateway Plaza.

5 p.m.: Police release blood analysis report on Janna Vox. Overdose by street drug Harmony confirmed.

Day 2:

11 a.m.: Police release autopsy report on Janna Vox. Death by overdose confirmed. Heavy bruising noted on arms.

7 p.m.: Twisted Femmes concert goes on as scheduled, but without lead singer Janna Vox. Sixteen grief-stricken fans commit suicide. (If the news team doesn’t think to cover the event, they see this story on a rival station’s newscast.)

Day 3:

11:30 p.m.: Grim Rippers concert takes place at the Waterfront Place Tavern. Two fans killed by automatic weapons fire; police charge the guitarist of the Grim Rippers with second-degree murder.

Day 4:

noon: Synthesizer repossessed from the late Janna Vox is sold at auction by City Bank Collections. It sells for 800,000 Euro\$ to a “private collector” (actually a fixer hired by Fun-Tyme Pharmaceuticals president Claude DuFault to retrieve the recording chips inside it).

#### **CYYY TV**

CYYY Television was originally a college television station that made its first broadcast in 1994. Formed by journalism students at the B.C. Institute of Technology, it devoted itself to investigative journalism. Its motto: “We’re the only station that bothers to answer the three most important questions in any news story: ‘Why? Why? and Why?’”

CYYY TV quickly gained a loyal following, not only among students but among the population at large. Within two years, the station had moved from the campus to an office in Vancouver, and had a branch office in Bellingham, staffed by students from Western Washington University.



But money was still tight. The second-hand broadcasting equipment broke down regularly, the cameras used by the young journalists were unsophisticated, off-the-shelf video cams, and the station had to rely upon unpaid, volunteer labor.

In a time of journalistic “pablum” when other stations were airing the official corporate and government line (or “lie” as the case may be), CYYY TV stood out as the one station that wasn’t afraid to stick its foot in the door and chase down the real story. Funded solely by its listeners, refusing any form of advertising, it soldiered on, keeping just one step ahead of its creditors.

(Some of its competitors accused CYYY TV of using campus hackers to electronically juggle the station’s accounts at the bank to keep it in the black, but no charges were ever laid.)

By 1999, however, CYYY TV faced mounting financial problems. Despite the fact that the station was at the peak of its critical success, it was clear that the only thing that would settle its overwhelming debt problem was outside investment.

Unfortunately, the only corporation that showed any interest in purchasing the nearly bankrupt CYYY TV was a Hong Kong entertainment corporation named Golden Happiness. The corporation specialized in producing made-for-TV martial arts movies of dubious quality. Many of its products contained gratuitous sex (as well as violence). After suffering increasing censorship at the hands of the communists (who took over Hong Kong in 1997), the corporation was desperate for a North American haven. Purchasing CYYY TV proved to be an economical solution. As soon as the contract had been signed and faxed, the corporation moved its head office to the Vancouver offices of CYYY TV.

In the years since 1999, CYYY TV has fallen into step with other North American stations. Its original 24-hour live news format has been diluted with a variety of canned “infotainment” and “advertorial” programs. The news now occupies just two one-hour time slots: noon and 9 p.m.

CYYY TV remains a popular station, however, due to one special option it provides: viewers have a choice of watching the same program in either English or Cantonese at the touch of a key pad.

At the station, a sophisticated computer graphics system seamlessly “dubs” the appropriate language onto the speaker, subtly altering his or her facial features to give the appearance that the words are actually being spoken in that language. The voice heard is that of the actual speaker; it is digitally sampled and then a translation program forms words in the appropriate language using fragments of the voice.

The computerized dubbing system, developed by Golden Happiness Corp., is known as the TRANSLATION LOGIC SYSTEM, or “translog.”

Today, in the year 2020, Golden Happiness Corp. has an entire television network, with broadcasting stations in Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Hong Kong, and Shanghai (each operating under different call letters). The company plans to open additional stations in several other cities along the Pacific Rim.

Although much of what is broadcast by Vancouver’s CYYY station is “canned” material, sent from elsewhere via satellite, its two one-hour newscasts are generated within this city, using a balance of local stories (put together by station staff) and international satellite-feed stories (purchased from broadcast news services around the globe).

## **NEWS TEAM**

### **Pat Curtis**

Media

(If male, Patrick; if female, Patti)

*“I like to give the public what they want to see. If that means sending a robotic camera into the bedrooms of the rich and famous, then so be it.”*

Pat has been in the news business for 25 years. Now aged 45, Pat is a seasoned reporter who usually remains in the station, anchoring the entertainment section of the noon newscast. Only stories involving the biggest names in the entertainment business will draw Pat out on the streets.

Pat dresses in a corporate-style suit, has neat greying hair, and takes pride in wearing expensive, custom-fit shoes. Anglo-American by birth, Pat has learned a smattering of Cantonese since joining CYYY TV.

Pat’s luxury sedan and spacious apartment attest to the salary commanded by an experienced anchor. Pat’s personal CredChip contains 5,000 Euro\$.

Pat is a very perceptive individual, is an expert at reading human emotion, and has excellent interviewing skills. Pat’s stories may border upon tabloid-style muckraking, but the station has defeated every libel lawsuit brought against it thus far.

Years ago, when Pat was a junior reporter covering a smuggling story, a run-in with a nomad family resulted in



the loss of Pat’s right hand. (It is rumored that this retaliatory act on the part of the nomad smugglers was what caused Pat to switch from investigative, “hard news” reporting to the safer, softer field of entertainment news.) Pat had the hand replaced, and over the years has upgraded it. Now the hand is covered with realskin, and features a palm-mounted Watchman miniature TV, a light pen in the index finger for jotting notes on a computer notebook, a mini-flashlight in the thumb, and a little finger capable of firing two blasts of mace.

**Stats**

INT 8	REF 6	TECH 4
COOL 5	ATTR 5	LUCK 4
MA 5	BODY 5	EMP 8

**Cybernetics**

Cyber hand with Watchman TV, light pen, mini-light, and mace sprayer. The hand does 1d6 crushing damage, and can take up to 6 points of structural damage before it is useless, and up to 10 points of structural damage before it is destroyed.

**Skills**

Credibility +7, Oratory +4, Streetwise +2, Human Perception + 8, Interview +8, Leadership +4, Social +5, Persuasion & Fast Talk + 5, Awareness/Notice +5, Composition +3, Education & General Knowledge + 5, Language: Cantonese + 2, Library Search +4, Photography & Film +2.

**Possessions**

Corporate-style suit, expensive shoes, heavy leather trenchcoat (SP 4 to torso, arms and upper legs), Datatel vidphone, Mead electronic notebook, Techtronics tattletale voice stress analyzer, travel kit, Datatel image wallet, CYYY TV pocket communicator, Ford-Mazda Luxus 14 luxury sedan.

**“Jazz” Jones**

Media

(If male, Jasper; if female, Jasmine)

*“There’s a new wave of journalists on the horizon – kids with the integrity and the guts to tell the real story. One day, the fossils who control this network are going to have to get out of our way.”*

Jazz has only a high school education, but makes up for the lack of a formal journalism degree with street savy and a gut instinct for a story. Drawn to CYYY TV by the station’s early history, Jazz dreams of returning the station to what many consider to be its glory days. Currently one of the most junior reporters at the Vancouver station, Jazz will risk anything to get a scoop.

Jazz dresses in jeans and T-shirts, clothes typical of the students of the 1990s. But there is nothing retro about Jazz’s affectations – light tattoos on Jazz’s cheeks and “tech hair” that glitters with colorful electric sparks are straight out of the current fashion trends.

African-Canadian by birth, Jazz chose to have one eye and ear replaced with cybernetic options that would aid in the profession of journalism. Using a built-in scanner, Jazz is constantly monitoring the police and Trauma Team broadcasts. When the time comes to close in on the story, Jazz will be ready, protected by a kevlar T-shirt and armed with a Kendachi monoknife that is concealed in one boot. And if Jazz’s video cam fails, there’s always the micro video camera, hidden in one cybereye, as a backup.

Jazz’s salary at CYYY TV isn’t nearly enough to cover these expensive cybernetics, or the Kundalini Shiva motorcycle Jazz drives. It’s rumored that some sort of small-time crime, perhaps low-level drug dealing, may be the source of this wealth. (Certainly Jazz is a popular figure at the dance clubs.) But although Jazz often goes out clubbing until the early hours of the morning, Jazz is always clean and sober at work.

**Stats**

INT 6	REF 6	TECH 6
COOL 8	ATTR 6	LUCK 1
MA 6	BODY 5	EMP 6 (4)



### Cybernetics

Light tattoo, tech hair, contraceptive implant. Cybereye with image enhancement, microvideo, and color shift. Cybears with level damper and wide band radio scanner.

### Skills

Credibility +2, Streetwise +8, Human Perception +5, Interview +4, Seduction +5, Social +1, Persuasion & Fast Talk + 7, Awareness/Notice +6, Composition +7, Education & General Knowledge +2, Shadow/Track +1, System Knowledge +2, Dance +1, Melee +2, Motorcycle +2, Photography & Film +2.

### Possessions

Jeans, T-shirts, cowboy boots, kevlar T-shirt, wrist watch, Kundalini Roadworks Shiva motorcycle, CYYY TV pocket communicator. Nylon carrybag containing video camera, 6 video tapes, and Zetatech E-book microcomputer with a lie detector package. 100 Euro\$ cash.

### Kam Cheung

Corporate

(If male, Kam; if female, Kami)

*“Sure, I realize that you have to spend money to get the story. But a story that comes in under-budget is worth more to Golden Happiness than an expensive flash-in-the-pan ‘scoop’ that the public are going to forget about tomorrow, anyway.”*

Kam is an accountant at CYYY TV, and as such is the “beancounter” and money controller for the news team. If the journalists need money to pay off (bribe) a witness or the technical support staff need money for new equipment or repairs, it has to be cleared through Kam.

Born in Vancouver to Chinese parents, Kam speaks both English and Cantonese fluently. A highly intelligent individual, Kam studied at the University of B.C. and graduated at the early age of 21 after completing BA and MA degrees in accounting in just five years.

Aged 30, Kam is a stylish dresser, and accessorizes every outfit with a silver pin that projects a miniature holographic image of the Golden Happiness corporate logo (a dragon curled around a golden egg). Kam smokes mint-flavored “designer” cigarettes (white with a green spiral design) and is constantly consulting head office via cellular phone.

Kam’s goal is, of course, to climb the corporate ladder of Golden Happiness Corp. This means helping the news team to bring in hot new stories while at the same time keeping costs as low as possible. After recently being chastized by management for going over-budget on a less-than-spectacular story, Kam now is extremely tight-fisted, keeping strict account of every dollar spent. Kam insists upon tagging along with the news team, doing on-site auditing of all expenses.

Kam had a neural processor implanted to aid in obtaining market and business information via dataterm link. Kam also has a vehicle link, used when wheeling around Vancouver in the expensive Toyota Avante sports car which is the source of Kam’s large monthly loans payments. (The glove compartment is stuffed with parking and speeding tickets, which Kam deliberately ignores – a habit that is going to get Kam in trouble, one day.)

Kam’s personal CredChip contains 1,500 Euro\$. Kam also carries a Golden Happiness corporate CredChip, used for paying the expenses of the news team. (For the amount of Euro\$ this chip contains, see the Starting the Adventure section.)

### Stats

INT 8	REF 5	TECH 5
COOL 5	ATTR 7	LUCK 5
MA 4	BODY 6	EMP 5 (4)

### Cybernetics

Neural processor with vehicle link, dataterm link, and chipware socket complete with daytimer chip.



### **Skills**

Resources +5, Personal Grooming +4, Wardrobe & Style +4, Interrogation + 2, Intimidate +2, Human Perception +4, Leadership +1, Social +5, Persuasion & Fast Talk +5, Accounting +4, Awareness/Notice +4, Education & General Knowledge +3, Library Search +4, Stock Market +2, Driving +2, Handgun +2.

### **Possessions**

Corporate suit, corporate logo pin, kevlar jacket (styled as suit jacket), image wallet, Datatel treasurer wrist watch, WorldSat newsviewer, mint-flavored cigarettes, cellular phone, Toyota Avante sports car, Militech Arms Avenger pistol, 2 clips of ammunition.

#### **“Santa” Santana**

Techie

(If male, Dominico; if female, Maria)

*“Technology is the answer, man, but only if it’s kept pure. Electrodes and living tissue are a deadly mix.”*

Santana is a 25-year-old, self-taught technician with a flair for electronics, particularly video and audio equipment. The nickname “Santa” came about as a result of another, equally strong talent for disabling electronic locks and allowing the news team to get at the “presents” inside.

Santana acts as the camera operator for the news team, using a head-mounted video-cam to tape the medias as they report the news. Santana often winds up doing last-minute, on-site editing of stories that are being taped uncomfortably close to deadline, but is always cool under pressure.

Although the equipment Santana carries is always neatly stowed, Santana takes less care with personal grooming, wearing a sloppy, faded track suit and worn-out running shoes.

Santana grew up in Guatemala, and speaks Mayan, Spanish and heavily-accented English. Santana remains bitter about the loss of a sister who had joined the American forces in the Central American Conflict. The military claims she died of self-inflicted combat drug overdose, but Santana suspects that it was cyberpsychosis that tipped her over the edge. As a result, Santana adamantly refuses any and all cybernetics – despite the fact that the last two fingers on Santana’s left hand are missing. (Santana was tinkering with a homemade bomb as a youth; the explosion of the detonator left visible scars on both hands.)

Santana is fascinated by technological “toys.” For personal protection, Santana carries an unusual weapon – the Malorian Arms “sliver” gun, which fires ceramic shards with almost complete silence. Growing up in a war zone also gave Santana a knowledge of basic first aid.

### **Stats**

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

### **Cybernetics**

None.

### **Skills**

Jury Rig +7, Awareness/Notice +5, Education & General Knowledge +1, Teaching +2, Brawling +2, Driving +3, Handgun +2, Basic Tech +4, CyberTech +2, Electronics +4, Electronic Security +4, First Aid +2, Forgery +2, Photography & Film +6, Pick Lock +5.

### **Possessions**

Track suit, runners, heavy leather jacket, Cybercam EX-1 head-mounted video camera, portable electropack power supply, CYYY TV mastoid-mounted communicator, first aid kit, Honda Metrocar city car, Malorian arms sliver gun, spare power cell for gun. Nylon carrybag containing techscanner, electronics kit. Nylon carrybag containing Omega phone tap, security scanner, advanced alarm removal kit. 300 Euro\$ cash.





### **“Ninja” Parker**

Solo

(If male, Eugene; if female, Genie)

*“Golden Happiness Corp. gave me a new lease on life. A steady job and a good judo workout beats a bad fix, any day of the week.”*

“Gene” is a veteran of the Central American Conflict, which claimed one arm and one eye (now replaced by cybernetics). Tall, lithe and 32 years old, Gene serves as a bodyguard for the news team whenever the reporter is interviewing a dangerous witness, or on those rare occasions when the team reports from one of the city’s “battle zones.”

Gene grew up in Vancouver and speaks only English. Gene has close-cropped hair and typically dresses in a tight-fitting black jumpsuit and hightop runners. A military tattoo on Gene’s “meat” arm is a reminder of the army squadron Gene once served with; only Gene and two others survived.

Gene came home from the Central American Conflict in 2010 addicted to the combat drug Black Lace. Gene spent several years on the city’s “skid road” section, at first hiring out to disreputable clientele, and later resorting to strong-arming other junkies for the cash needed for the next fix.

Two years ago, half-dead from drugs, Gene checked into a detox clinic. It turned Gene’s life around. Gene now puts the energy that used to go into finding the next fix into judo training, and is well on the way to becoming a master.

Gene is intensely loyal to Golden Happiness Corp., which has provided a respectable livelihood. When not on a bodyguarding assignment, Gene has received bit parts in several of Golden Happiness Corporation’s martial arts movies. When the team goes out in a news ‘copter, Gene doubles as the pilot.

### **Stats**

INT 6	REF 8	TECH 3
COOL 7	ATTR 3	LUCK 3
MA 7	BODY 8	EMP 5 (3)

### **Cybernetics**

Neural processor, speedware, smartgun link, nanosurgeons. Cyberarm (right arm) with armor, flashbulb in palm. Cybereye with anti-dazzle, low lite.

### **Skills**

Combat Sense +4, Resist Torture/Drugs +2, Awareness/Notice +4, Hide/Evade +1, Athletics +6, Dodge & Escape +2, Handgun +4, Martial Art: Judo +6, Melee +4, Pilot: Gyro +2, Rifle +2, Stealth +5, Submachinegun +3, First Aid +5, Pharmaceuticals +2, Weaponsmith +2.

### **Possessions**

Black jumpsuit, runners, flack vest, flack pants, wrist watch, CYYY TV mastoid-mounted communicator, binoglasses, flashlight, nylon carrybag containing medical kit, dermal stapler, spray skin. Federated Arms X-9 pistol with two clips of ammunition. Setsuko-Arasaka PMS submachinegun with two clips of ammunition. Honda Metrocar city car. 200 Euro\$ cash.

### **“Milo” Milovanovic**

Netrunner

(If male, Mihajlo; if female, Marlena)

*“Beauty is in the byte of the programmer. In the right hands, the computer is the finest ‘paintbrush’ there is.”*

Despite the Yugoslavian surname, “Milo” speaks only English. Born to parents who fled Bosnia in the mid-1990s, Milo embraced North American culture, and now at age 26 is a computer netrunner who is anything but a nerd.

Milo always wears the latest fashion trend, and has hair that is colored with bright stripes. A talented video



artist, Milo never leaves home without wearing a Nu-Tek Wearman jacket that displays video images of Milo's latest computer graphics.

Milo was hired at CYYY TV to do an upgrade on the station's TRANSLATION LOGIC computer system. But Milo also works with the news team from time to time, entering the net to ferret out the pieces of information that can make or break a story.

Milo's computer of choice is the Zetatech D2-3000 "Armdeck" – an ultrathin computer that wraps around the user's forearm. Milo has filled its memory with programs that are useful in securing the information the news team needs.

Milo loves the thrill of running the net and the challenge of upgrading "translog's" visual translation system, but dreams of one day becoming a full-time freelance computer graphics artist. Milo is always tinkering with new logos and graphics for the stories the news team shoots.

### **Stats**

INT 7	REF 7	TECH 6
COOL 6	ATTR 5	LUCK 3
MA 5	BODY 5	EMP 6 (5)

### **Cybernetics**

Neural processor with computer/ cybermodem link, dataterm link, chipwear socket. Cybereye with image enhancement, Kiroshi video imager. Skin watch.

### **Skills**

Interface +6, Awareness/Notice +6, Chemistry +2, Composition +5, Education & General Knowledge +4, Language: Cantonese +4, Programming +5, System Knowledge +5, Stealth +2, Basic Tech +3, Cyberdeck Design +3, Cybertech +1, Electronics +3, Photography & Film +3, Pick Pocket +3.

### **Possessions**

High-fashion shirt, heavy leather pants, leather shoes, Nu-tek video jacket, CYYY TV pocket communicator, digital (still) camera, Honda Metrocar city car, Militech taser. Zetatech D2-3000 Armdeck mini-computer with flip switch and cellular options. Programs: worm, wizard's book, stealth, reflector, databaser, re-rezz, crystal ball, phone home. 200 Euro\$ cash.