

SHADOWRUN[®]

A HORIZON ADVENTURE

A FISTFUL OF CREDSTICKS





FAME, FORTUNE, AND FELONIES

Nothing's as simple as it seems—any runner knows that. So what seems like a simple job guarding some precious cargo on the set of a trideo shoot is bound to get complicated. And it does—but are you ready to travel the full length the long, twisted road ahead?

A Fistful of Credsticks begins a new series of adventures centered on the machinations of the Horizon Corporation. Runners will learn more about the dark side of Horizon, leading to future developments that could change the shape of the entire corporation. Runners that see this adventure to the finish will encounter trideo makers, music celebrities, showbiz leeches, some gang members bent on fame, and a very peculiar corporate experiment.

A Fistful of Credsticks is for use with *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*.

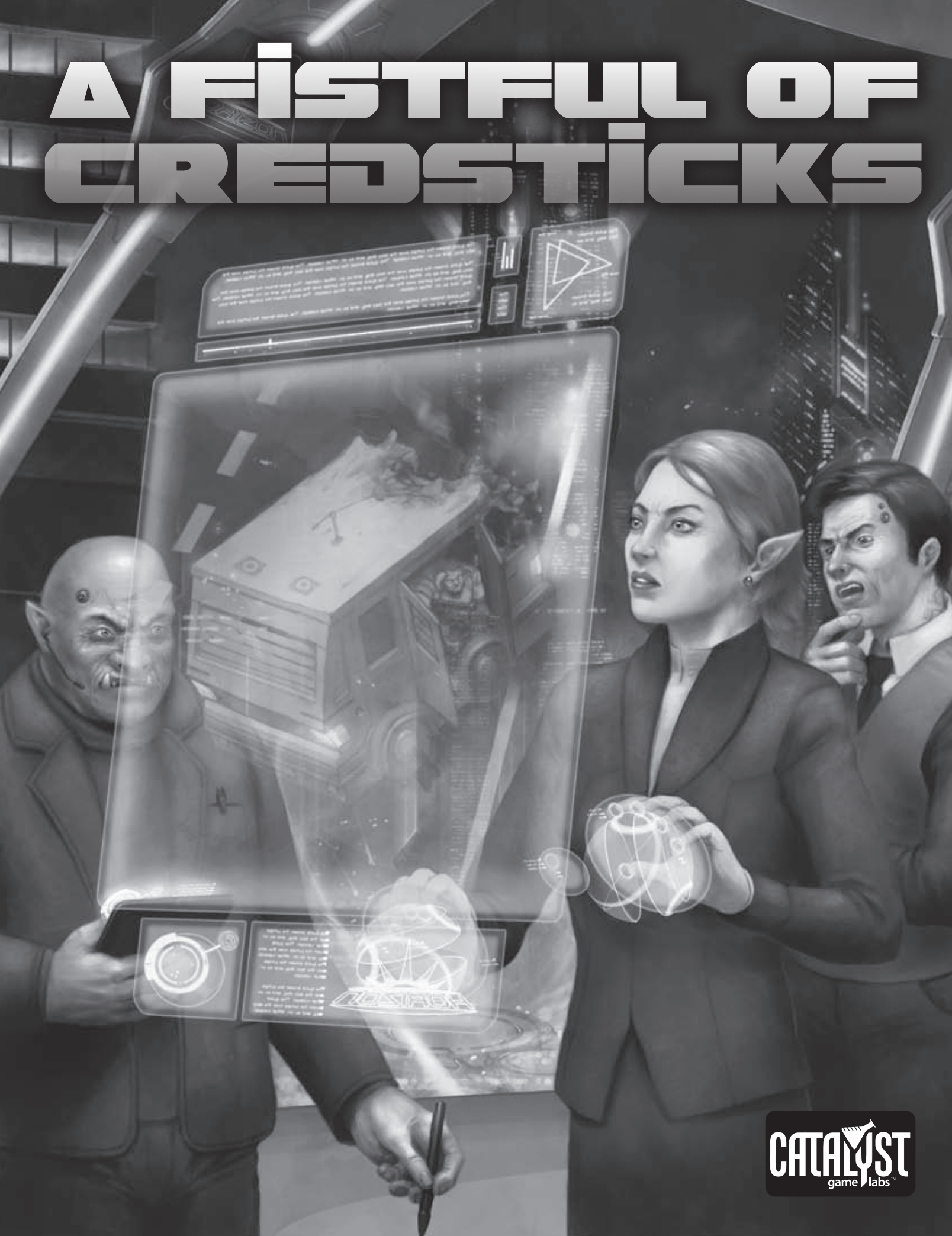


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A FISTFUL OF CREDSTICKS



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... A FISTFUL OF CREDSTICKS ...

- >USER 1: 15:43:23 Negative Event Alcohol
- >USER 4: 15:43:25 Negative Event Violent Sport
- >USER 1: 15:54:51 Negative Event Violent Sport
- >USER 6: 15:55:01 Positive Event Vegetables
- >ERROR USER 8: 15:55:03 Matrix Unknown Node
- >USER 1: 15:55:10 Negative Event Alcohol
- >USER 5: 16:03:32 Negative Event Cigarette

Two towering windows hung before Mike in his cluttered virtual workspace; one scrolling text, the other a series of images with correlating timestamps. Mike began to drift asleep as he watched the windows scroll by. Manually validating the software was too tedious for anyone to take, even the lead programmer.

"Mr. Anderson?" said a disembodied voice.

Mike's mind jolted alert, startled by the voice. He paused the scrolling windows and turned to a pile of data files. As he rummaged through the pile, an icon of a classic alarm clock popped out. He grabbed the floating icon: 16:55.

Shit, he thought. *So close*. Moving to another pile of files, he took a few and jacked out of VR to AR. In an AR window he saw his boss approach from behind. Mike swiveled in his chair to face Ghupta Dhoom, or "Doctor Doom," as his employees called him.

"Ah, Mr. Anderson, how is the beta test going?" said Dhoom as he sat down in Mike's cubicle.

"I'm seeing 82 percent recognition of objects for referencing." Mike shared the files documenting his report. "But I think Jay needs to upgrade his sniffing algorithms, half the places User 8 and User 10 go to are unreadable."

Dhoom flipped through the report on his commlink. "OK. I'll coordinate with Jay. Hey, I was coming by because I had another question. I'm seeing extra query volume from LMG. Did we add testers?"

"We shouldn't have. The test group was selected because of their limited interaction with other P2.0 users. Let me check."

Mike opened the LMG logs and ran an ad hoc filter. He found the new userids and referenced them with P2.0's user-identified SIN. "Oh. Shit. We got a problem. LMG has replicated at least twice more, and you aren't going to like it."

"Why?"

"Look at the name tied to this SIN." Mike sent the results to Ghupta.

"Shit!" Mike saw Ghupta stand and cross his arms into his decision-making stance. "All right, we need LMG to stop guiding her—do we have an option flag to do that?"

Mike opened up a soft copy of LMG business docs in a new window and queried it. "No. It wasn't part of the requirements."

"Figures. What other flags can we use?"

Mike went to the functional docs and pulled up the list of LMG flags. One caught his eye. "U56? It says 'Do Not Contact.'"

"Great! Use that one."

"There's no code behind it." Mike flipped through the links of functional docs. "And no specs."

"Typical subcontractor work," Ghupta grumbled. "All right. We'll have to add functionality to that flag to prevent her from receiving LMG data."

"That's going to take hours, maybe even a day or so to work out all the bugs." Mike writhed inside as it sunk in that "we" meant *him*.

"Better that than having this beta test get out of hand and blow up in the press. Call Jay and tell him to get his ass in here. I'll order pizza and soda."

Mike let out a plaintive sigh. "Sure. Can you make one pizza the works?"

"Can do. Ask Jay what he wants on his." Ghupta walked off back to his office.

Another night's overtime for the salaryman, thought Mike, as he dove headfirst back into VR.



INTRODUCTION

Ever since Horizon ascended to the rank of a AAA corporation, there have been more questions about it than answers. Could a megacorporation be as benevolent as Horizon seems? How did it become so powerful so quickly? And just what is this “Consensus” that people keep talking about as being a key part of the corporation’s decision-making process?

A Fistful of Credsticks is the first in a series of three Horizon adventures that will enable *Shadowrun* players to become more deeply involved with the Horizon Corporation and to get a look at some of the activities happening behind the scenes. All three adventures in the series can stand alone, but playing them all (in any sequence) will provide gamemasters and players with an increased understanding of how Horizon works.

PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

A Fistful of Credsticks can be run with only the *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition* rulebook. However, many of the characters presented in this adventure draw from the additional core supplements *Arsenal*, *Augmentation*, *Unwired*, and *Runner’s Companion*. All rules in this adventure are assumed to follow the rules presented in *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*. A gamemaster can, of course, use any optional rules that best fit his or her game.

This adventure will take the player characters from the Seattle Metroplex to Los Angeles. Much of the adventure concerns the P2.0 (or “pito”) social network tool. Information is given in this adventure to explain how the tool works, but gamemasters and players can gain a more detailed understanding of this software and its place in the LA social scene from the *Corporate Enclaves* sourcebook.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

A Fistful of Credsticks takes the player characters into the heart of the media capital of the world. Getting the players to Los Angeles from their home sprawl is addressed in the section *Would You Like to be in Pictures?* (p. 8).

The runners are first hired by another runner for a period of time to assist him in protecting his assets while they are being used in the filming of a movie. If the runners do well, they are hired on retainer during the filming of the movie as the adventure moves to Los Angeles. The adventure continues with more missions to be completed, leading the runners to a complex puzzle to solve.

The adventure’s goals can be accomplished through stealth, social interactions, force of arms, or any mix of the three. The adventure as written should be seen as a guideline. The gamemaster should keep the plot moving forward by making adjustments and reacting to the runners’ choices and actions while providing opportunities for them to exploit rather than “railroading” them from set piece to set piece. Since this can be challenging, each scene offers suggestions to address runners who decide to follow tangents or whose actions cause them to skip certain scenes.

The adventure consists of a variety of connected scenes. Of course, as any gamemaster knows, for every suggested scene and outcome, players will think of two or three alternative methods of getting to their objective. Dealing with these unexpected detours

is where a good gamemaster shines. These alternative paths can be fun and enjoyable for both the players and the gamemaster. In the end, the point is to have fun. Each scene will have some gamemaster hints for keeping players on track, or, alternately, for expanding on the tangents they may take.

MAIN SECTIONS

This book is divided into several sections designed to assist you in bringing the adventure presented herein to your table:

- **Preparing to Play:** A plot synopsis, necessary background information, and other useful details and data.
- **Adventure Scenes:** The adventure itself, broken down into individual scenes.
- **Legwork:** Summaries of information and data the player characters might find during their research.
- **Cast of Shadows:** Profiles of the primary NPCs with whom the player characters will interact during the adventure.
- **Player Handouts:** Information designed for players.

ADVENTURE SCENES

The adventure itself plays out over a series of interconnected scenes. Each scene contains some, or all, of the following subsections:

- **Scan This:** A brief summary of the events in the scene.
- **Tell It To Them Straight:** A text selection that can be read directly to the players or paraphrased when the player characters reach specific points in the scene.
- **Hooks:** Descriptions of ways that characters might be encouraged to play a scene.
- **Behind the Scenes:** The mechanics behind each scene, including NPC motivations and any secrets or special instructions for the scene.
- **Subplots:** Secondary adventures—or red herrings—that offer avenues for gamemasters to develop less linear adventures.
- **Pushing the Envelope:** Suggestions for gamemasters on altering the scene to challenge more experienced players or more powerful player characters.
- **Debugging:** Suggestions for getting the adventure back on track if the player characters’ actions derail it.
- **Places of Interest:** Locations featured in the scene, including descriptions and ratings for security systems and Matrix systems.
- **Grunts and Moving Targets:** NPCs in that particular scene. NPCs that are featured in multiple scenes are found in the *Cast of Shadows* section.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are essential to bringing any adventure to life; they include the allies, enemies, and contacts with whom the characters will interact during the shadowrun. Important NPCs have relevant profiles, including stats, in the *Grunts and Moving Targets* section for each scene. Major NPCs who appear in multiple scenes are listed in the *Cast of Shadows* section at the end of this book. Gamemasters can and should tweak the NPCs to make them more or less challenging opponents (see *Prime Runners*, p. 284, *SR4A*). NPCs in groups of grunts benefit from Group Edge (p. 281, *SR4A*), while individual NPCs in this adventure possess their own Edge stat to use.





GAMEMASTERING THE ADVENTURE

A Fistful of Credsticks is an adventure designed for *Shadowrun, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, and is the first in the *Horizon* series of adventures. As with any adventure, however, there are a few suggestions that will make the adventure, and gamemastering it, run more smoothly.

STEP ONE: READ THE ADVENTURE

Reading through the adventure prior to introducing your group to it ensures that you know what's coming down the line and are familiar with the entire story. This helps when your players (inevitably) come up with something not presented in the adventure.

STEP TWO: ASSESS THE ADVENTURE

Rarely does any gamemaster take a written adventure and run it without any changes. You may decide it needs to be more challenging for your players, or perhaps they form a specialized team (such as all mages) who will undoubtedly approach certain tasks in unique ways. You may want to switch certain NPCs with characters your players are familiar with in their game, such as a common fixer or gang contact. Assessing the adventure lets you make notes on how you want to customize it to best fit your game and your gamemastering style.

STEP THREE: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

You should have a copy of each character prior to running the adventure, so you can assess their individual (and group) skills, contacts, and abilities. If a scene calls for them to trek through a jungle and none of them have a survival skill, you

may need to tweak the scene so they'll still have a chance at success. If a character is sidelined for parts of the story due to lack of abilities or skills, the gamemaster should consider adding scenes that play to that character's strengths.

STEP FOUR: TAKE NOTES

Written notes help you keep things organized. You may want to jot down a note to give a particular handout to players at a specific moment or highlight important details about an NPC or combat scene. Taking notes during the adventure helps you remember characters' actions along the way, which can be useful when awarding Karma and handling contacts at the conclusion.

STEP FIVE: DON'T LET THE DICE RUN THE GAME

Dice rolls normally dictate the outcome of events in a roleplaying game. Sometimes, however, the dice fall in such a way that they interfere with the story. Remember, as gamemaster, you can always tweak the dice to enhance the story. As a rule of thumb, a gamemaster shouldn't fudge the die rolls to *hurt* player characters, but occasionally might tweak the roll to help them out or to help the story progress (softening a roll to seriously injure a player rather than killing them is one example).

STEP SIX: DON'T PANIC

You'll make mistakes. *Everyone* makes mistakes. You may forget a rule, misread a scene, or forget an important clue. Don't worry. The reason you're there is to have fun, and fun is far more important than a flawless performance. If you or the players make a mistake, do your best to straighten things out, then keep moving forward.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

As part of their driving goal of eliminating social ills, Horizon has initiated a program called Life Management Guide to identify and catalog citizens with social problems (alcoholism, theft, poverty, etc.). These tags push targeted advertising that, in theory, guides troubled citizens toward rehabilitation programs, as well as subtly blocking out temptations that encourage bad behavior. Horizon introduced the test program in limited segments of the existing P2.0 network in order to use the commlinks of P2.0 customers to send updates and receive test results. Their beta test program was first implemented among the A-Kidz, a gang already under contract with Horizon for a P2.0 broadcast.

P2.0

P2.0 is a win-win-win development for Horizon. Subscribers pay to create their own show, be it a video blog, documentary, edits of security footage, etc. Viewers then pay a smaller fee to access the user-created content. Finally, corporations pay for advertising time on the more popular shows. All Horizon has to do is maintain the system. This, of course, is a simplified management view of P2.0. The network has other user bells and whistles for users such as photo and video tagging, awards, and a ranking system (see *Corporate Enclaves*, p. 18). P2.0 is as fundamental to media etiquette in the CalFree State as a suit and tie is for business. The

CMS ranking system has become a measure of the new media aristocracy. Those who don't have P2.0 are merely subscribers/subjects and unworthy of conversation. For this adventure, P2.0 is not the focus, but the medium for the Life Management Guide.

LIFE MANAGEMENT GUIDE

The Life Management Guide is beta software used to record a user's habits, determine what are the "bad behaviors," and guide the user to a better life through the omission of temptations and projection of better options. Cynics would call it a denial of choice through illusion of reality. The designers counter that since AR can already be manipulated by the user to the point of contradicting reality, this software falls in the middle ground, offering the additional benefit of helping users move toward a better life. Consensus approved the development of the software with the Singularity Affiliate group Augmented Therapy.

Life Management Guide gives positive praise through users' commlinks via a virtual friend if there is one, or using "attaboy" messages when the user is making a good choice on health. Before a user attempts a negative habit, such as smoking, drinking, or using drugs or BTLs, LMG attempts to remove any AROs from those items, block any advertisement relating to those negative habits, and, when possible, obscure them on the image link. If that fails, then LMG delivers messages on rehabilitation programs such as AA that blend in with the AR advertising spam



most runners are used to. When purchasing items that are part of negative habits, LMG tags the transaction with messages such as how bad the habit is for your health, or how many years in prison the buyer may earn if caught in the middle of the transaction. If the commlink has virtual weather, LMG attempts to use lighting changes to guide the user to places where more positive choices are available. Users may quit negative behaviors because they heed the messages, or just to avoid the annoyance of the constant spam. The designers are fine with either option.

REHABILITATION PROGRAM U56

To help rehabilitate criminals at Horizon's rehabilitation centers, this therapy program was designed to make individuals find it undesirable or uncomfortable to socialize with the "wrong crowd." Through a program of psychological conditioning, the person is inundated with customized AR imagery inserted by the LMG software. Persons considered to be the "wrong crowd" are overlaid in AR with imaging patterns that are meant to stir negative reactions—or at least to be annoying. Without the support of the "wrong crowd," the person can be more easily managed with fewer setbacks. First tests of the rehabilitation program U56 began in New York.

PAN MODES

The PAN mode is important to keep track of in this adventure. There are three modes for commlinks (p. 223, *SR4A*). While the runners are working for Charisma Associates or the party, they must have their PAN in active mode. To do otherwise is considered rude, and showing up at the studio for work the offender will be continually stopped by security.

Anywhere else in Los Angeles, the runners have to at least be in passive mode to do any legwork, as most people there live for P2.0. Since this is against typical shadowrunning practice, runners may tend to forget it, which will affect how each scene plays out.

PLOT SYNOPSIS

Augmented Therapy introduced Life Management Guide through P2.0, using the existing commlink connections to send updates and to receive test results. The first test subjects for the Life Management Guide were the A-Kidz, a booster gang with a highly-rated P2.0 reality show. The gang was already under contract with Horizon to receive some physical augmentations in return for doing their P2.0 show, *Gang Life The A-Kidz* cannot complain about the software being installed, as it's technically part of their contract. While Augmented Therapy was testing Life Management Guide on the A-Kidz, a few of the test subjects did something unexpected: they broke away from the booster gang and implemented their own broadcast show. This new gang, under the leadership of Bacchus, was at the right place at the right time to attempt to blackmail Christy Dace, a popular music star, when her actions were recorded one evening. The Horizon profiling program jumped from the renegade A-Kidz to her commlink through P2.0's auto subscribing protocols and began the process of loading itself.

After a moment of panic, Augmented Therapy programmers got to work. So as not to bring this program to light before testing is complete, the programmers worked on functionality to stop the proliferation of the program from the A-Kidz beta testers. One of

the designers used a "Do Not Contact" flag and programmed it to prevent her from getting spammed by advertisements or social programs while they continued testing since it was the easiest solution. This flag also had another meaning in the design specs: "Undesired/unable to rehabilitate."

The adventure begins for the runners when they are hired by Slade, a courier/runner, who had made a deal with a big-shot trideo director, Ben Howard. Their job is to protect certain items that Slade is loaning to Ben during the filming of his next trideo. They earn their nuyen when another group of runners tries to steal Slade's property using an attack on NovaStar Pandora as a distraction. After the incident, Pandora's manager, Fermin, hires them to guard against any further attempts. Between Fermin and Slade, they get the runners to Los Angeles. One of the perks given to the runners is a subscription to P2.0. While having the subscription is not a requirement for protecting Slade's stuff, it does help in social situations that could come up with all the media stars the runners may bump into. Behind the scenes, Pandora learns that her close friend Dace is in some trouble that she can't talk about. Pandora suggests that Dace have her manager ask the runners for help. Pandora's knowledge of shadowrunners is limited, but she knows that they work with some discretion.

The runners are invited to a celebrity party, where Dace's manager Guiles asks them to do a job while they are down in Los Angeles. He wants them to find and recover a recording of Dace's indiscretion from the hands of a blackmailer. He knows that it hasn't been distributed (otherwise he would need spin doctors, not runners). The blackmailer, Bacchus, wants Dace to do a few trids for them, so he can move up in the P2.0 rankings and get some recording deals.

In the runners' investigation, they find that the recordings were taken to a club, where a second blackmailer, Steve, is the actual brains behind the operation. The runners' skills should be enough to get the job done. As the runners bring the chip to Guiles, Dace is there to destroy it. In the process of the investigation, the runners unknowingly become unwitting testers of the Life Management Guide.

Once the LMG takes a spot on the runners' commlinks, it subjects them to advertisements, AR omissions, and various other things to get them on the "right path" and eliminate "bad behaviors." A few days after the mission, while the runners are still in LA, Christy Dace and Guiles are found dead. Fermin fears that these could be vengeance-killings by the blackmailers. Or worse, as someone was able to find Dace despite all the measures that Guiles took to protect her. Fermin asks the runners to get him answers.

In their investigation, the runners will discover that the blackmailers did not kill Dace. In fact, while they are in pursuit of Bacchus, another sim star, Whyte Nyght, who was tied to the deceased and her recent indiscretion, is murdered. On their way back to Los Angeles, the runners themselves are ambushed by the killers. After the attack, they should be able to figure out that the common link between the A-Kidz, the murder victims, and themselves is the LMG software. More importantly, they will find the difference between the A-Kidz and themselves is that the runners have a U56 "undesirable" flag turned on, which gives a unique Matrix signature whenever their commlinks are active. When tracing the signature, the runners find three more commlinks with the software—presumably belonging to the killers.



The killers are three rehabilitated criminals from a Horizon institution in New York. Under a behavioral rehab program, they have been conditioned to be intolerant of the “undesirable” tag. In this case, “intolerant” means “homicidal.” These three independently killed Christy Dae, Whyte Nyght, and Guiles. Once they found a large group of people flagged as undesirable, they came together to target them. In the aftermath of their attempted assassination of the runners, their programming breaks down as they realize they are also undesirable.

The adventure ends with the killers trying to take each other out, and the runners as well. The killers, later dubbed the “Moral Vigilantes,” are eventually found to have killed eight people: Whyte Nyght, Christy Dae, Guiles, and five previously unsolved murders of criminals earlier in the year.

When the media reports on the Moral Vigilantes’ culpability in the murder of Christy Dae, Consensus terminates the beta test of LMG with Augmented Therapy and sends it to another associated company for “Phase 2 development.” Several viruses are released in the transfer, scrubbing any traces of remaining LMG software that might remain at Augmented Therapy or with the test subjects.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE IN PICTURES?

SCAN THIS

The group is hired by a fellow runner, Slade, to secure some equipment on loan to a director filming a new sim trid in Seattle: *A Fistful of Credsticks*. In an effort to increase his margins, Slade hires runners rather than professional security. He tries to sell them on the perk of seeing famous movie stars such as Pandora. Slade wants as many assets as possible to work with the director; he knows that Dean Costello, a hacker from Denver, is trying to undercut him to get in on the easy money. The job is to keep an eye on everything while the filming is done in Seattle. The director wants authenticity when possible, and Slade has been able to supply him with a great variety of current and historical weapons, armor, and uniforms. Slade meets the runners at the Gray Line.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

The morning brings heavy fog, casting everything in ghostly grays, pinpointed by LED lights along the street. News has been depressing with the war in the Amazon. Last year the media was flashing the war on tempo; now it’s all Aztlan vs. Amazonia. Interrupting the news, your commlink pages you. It appears to be your fixer. Hopefully he’s got work lined up, so you answer.

“Hey buddy, I may have some work for you. Do you know Slade? He’s that delivery man I use when I need stuff dropped off overseas. Well, he’s looking for some muscle. Meet him down at the Gray Line at 5 p.m.”

When they arrive at the Gray Line, read the following:

At Pier 63 you can barely make out your hand in front of your face; the lamps along the pier cast a soupy yellow haze over everything. Just off the pier is what appears to be a building

shaped like a harbor ferry. Disembodied voices echo out into the harbor. You cross a wide gangplank to the upper deck. Most of the tables are empty under the dim glow of heat lamps; a few patrons smoke out on the deck. The *maître d’* asks if you have a reservation.

When they are escorted downstairs, read the following:

The lower floor is fairly packed. The smell of seafood permeates the room. The thick glass wall opposite the stairs gives an unobstructed view of the harbor beneath the waves. The dining floor affords a wider view, down to the muddy bottom. Outside, an octopus slowly moves by, searching the mud for food.

You are led to a table where a lean elf in a bolo tie and cowboy boots sits with his back toward you watching the fish swim by.

He turns as you approach and smiles, “Howdy! Take a load off; I’ll have ‘em bring out the chow.”

He waits for everyone to be seated before continuing, “So I don’t know if y’all heard of me, but I’m Slade. It’s been a few months since I’ve worked with your fixer. I’m a courier out of Seattle to wherever my client wants their package delivered to. Here’s the deal: I need some security for my stuff while I’m here. I don’t know for how long, probably two days. I know, you’ve heard it before, when I say ‘It’s an easy job,’ but it really is. You’re just going to baby-sit my stuff while it’s being put into a movie.”

Slade slaps his knee, “Damn, cat’s out of the bag. That’s probably why I’m not a Mr. Johnson. Are you still interested? It will be five hundred per person per day.”

After they accept the job, read the following:

“Great! I’ve rustled a great many *collectibles* throughout the years. I’ve recently started working with Ben Howard—you know, ‘Big Ben,’ made that blockbuster last year for Pathfinder? Tremendous artist for sure, and—well, the man has a thing for realism. Which is how I’ve come to supply him with certain equipment to use in his films. Now, my gear is in the gray area, if you catch my drift ...”

“I’ve secured the gear at a safe house of mine. What I want you to do is to protect my gear when moving it to and from the house and while it’s on set. That was my agreement with Ben. Tomorrow, meet me at this address and I’ll give you IDs to bring my equipment on set. And hey, I’ve heard that Pandora is the leading lady in his new film. Maybe you can get her autograph!”

Trays of butter, razor clams, and filets of some fish arrive. Slade grabs a napkin, “Now enough yappin’, it’s chow time!”

HOOKS

Unless they’re already filthy rich, they’ll want to take this job. Their fixer has told them the basics of the job, and this is quite a generous sum for playing security. The meeting spot is not your usual abandoned warehouse, but at least it’s neutral. When Slade describes the job, the runners should be interested in relatively easy work and getting to meet sim stars.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Gray Line restaurant has a very quiet and casual atmosphere. There are a few customers topside smoking. Down below, there are 15–20 customers seated in the restaurant with four waiters working the tables.



Slade is a courier out of Seattle who makes deliveries around the Pacific. He's made several contacts in the media world, including the Seattle Band, Wild Cards, and "Big" Ben Howard. The runners' fixer can tell them that he keeps his word on deals with him. He can also tell them that Slade's a bit eccentric, liking the old west. He's watched too many classic trids.

The proposal is straightforward: Slade needs some cheap but intelligent muscle to watch over his equipment. Ben Howard and Pathfinder Multimedia require the gear for an all-day film shoot. Since Slade has his fingers in many pies, he can't do it himself. He starts with an offer of five hundred. Every net hit on an Opposed Negotiation test against Slade adds fifty nuyen, to a maximum of 5 net hits.

When they meet Slade the next day, he shows them an upscale storage unit the size of a small garage. Inside are various sized cases. He gives the runners an ID for security and tells them the first shoot is at the Space Needle. Continue with the scene, *Lights! Camera! Action!*

DEBUGGING

This should be a straightforward meet with no suggestions of ulterior motives.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The Gray Line

The Gray Line (p. 52, *Seattle 2072*) looks like a ferry tied up to Pier 63. You have to walk a gangplank to get to the upper deck, where six tables form the upper portion of the restaurant. Parabolic heat lamps and subdued lighting give customers a romantic view of the harbor even on chilly nights. When the fog rolls in, however, most customers head to the more popular lower deck. The lower deck has a fantastic view with three-meter-tall windows arching along the width of the restaurant. The dining room is over twenty meters wide with recycled wooden deck and nylon rope railing. Lighting along the bottom of the harbor gives the customers a better view of the sea life, with some that are occasionally on the menu. Ten tables seat an additional forty-five people. Everything has nautical terms, such as "galley" for the kitchen and "heads" for the restrooms. Meals cost around fifty nuyen, and the menu specializes in seafood. On the non-window walls hang a few bronze porthole window fixtures used as frames for mirrors and watercolor paintings depicting harbors and marine life. The restaurant has a casual atmosphere.

LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION!

SCAN THIS

The runners first deliver Slade's Red Samurai armor to the Eye of the Needle restaurant. During the shoot, the sim star Pandora gets mobbed by fans. Her security detail has been disabled by another runner team to create a distraction while they try to steal the armor. The runners will have to restore order at the restaurant and keep Slade's armor from being pinched.

Pandora and Christy Dae are close friends; for the last couple of days, Dae has been telling her that she's in some trouble that she couldn't talk about, and she didn't know what to do about

it. After seeing the runners in action, Pandora comes up with an idea of how to help her friend. If the runners are successful, Pandora suggests to her manager, Richard Fermin, that it might be best to have the runners on hand if this situation occurs again. Fermin agrees and asks the runners if they would continue on with the shoot back in LA on retainer.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Most trid directors would go for digital editing and replicas in their film using the Studios in Studio City, but Ben Howard, also known as "Big Ben," tries to bring authenticity to the recorded media. He believes that the real thing brings about a different emotional/mental response.

Slade has asked you to bring four large (two-meter-long) cases; each case contains what Slade describes as genuine 2057 Red Samurai armor, complete with the traditional forged katanas, to the Eye of the Needle.

As you arrive, you see that the base of the Space Needle has been cordoned off. Groups of fans and onlookers have gathered around the area. A small detail of security is waiting as you drive up. Fans scream at you, apparently thinking you guys are some sort of sim stars. Security guards in cleaner-than-normal uniforms request your SIN and clearance. You give them the ID you received from Slade, and they direct you to a place to park.

You take the elevator up to the restaurant. After a few moments, the elevator dings and the doors open onto a busy scene. Several field technicians are cleaning, moving items around, and adjusting the lights for the cameras. Big Ben sits at the far end in a troll-sized director's chair. He spins his traditional baseball cap in his fingers as he talks to some technician about where the cameras should be placed. Close to where Ben sits is none other than Pandora. Pandora is wearing Zoë's fashionable red leather jacket and pants with brass buckles, thigh-high black boots, and mirrored shades. She is using her commlink. With her in the booth sits an elven gentleman with a blond ponytail, wearing a gray suit and green tie. He appears to be fielding questions directed at Pandora from various technicians and makeup artists. After a few moments, Ben sees you with the cases. He gets up from his director's chair, followed by one of the technicians.

"All right! Are these the suits?" says Ben as he approaches. "Open one up. Let's see if Slade lives up to his word."

When you open one of the cases, a broad grin comes across Ben's face. "Nice. Very nice," he says as he caresses the red armor. "Even has some wear-and-tear dents. Thank Slade for me." James, the techie following Ben, shows you a section of the room partitioned off with green walls, where you can put the cases.

James, the techie following Ben, shows you a section of the room sectioned off with green walls where you can put the cases. Behind the walls are the stuntmen who will be wearing the armor. He then shows you an AR-marked place behind Big Ben's chair, where you can stand to be out of the way. As the stuntmen dress up, Big Ben calls for everybody's attention.

He lays out the scene:

"This is where Jenny Freelance—Pandora over there—meets up with Agent Johnson, who wants to hire her for a job. Suddenly, a unit of Red Samurai busts in to take 'em out. Lots of cool martial arts in this scene—Jenny wipes out the Red Samurai and accepts the job."



To you it sounds like a shadowrunner cliché, but hey, your job at this point is to watch Slade's stuff, not critique the movie.

Almost an hour goes by as lighting and costume issues are dealt with before Ben shouts, "Quiet on the set!"

The scene starts. Jenny Freelance walks into a semi-quiet restaurant from the elevator. She looks out the window before sitting down with a nervous-looking man in a white-collared shirt.

"So," she asks, "what's the problem?"

He takes a drink. "We need your skills to retrieve an item in Africa. We can pay your standard fee, but we need you to move at utmost haste."

"Sure. What's the job, and why the rush?"

"There's an important map that's up for sale, called the Piri Reis map. We want you to retrieve it, either from the auction house, or from the buyer. The trouble is, others know of its importance as well."

Jenny is about to say her line, when an elevator dings. Everyone turns to see the elevator doors open, and out comes a small mob of crazed fans, heading right for Pandora's table. It's not your job to round up the fans, but then you realize that you don't see any of her security around to stop them.

After taking care of Pandora and the Red Samurai armor, read the following:

The cavalry finally arrives: more than a dozen Knight Errant officers, Needle security, and men in black—presumably the movie's security. The confused fans are escorted out for questioning, while the thieves are secured with zip-ties and hauled away. Big Ben is on the phone with Needle owners talking about scheduling delays and negotiating a new filming time. DocWagon paramedics arrive in the next elevator, going from person to person checking to see if any need medical attention and/or they have a doc wagon contract. The stuntmen that were to wear the armor appear that they took the brunt of the attack and are being treated behind the green wall. The elf and Pandora are now surrounded by security. The elf appears to have some medical training as he's checking if Pandora has a concussion, though you're a bit distracted as you can finally see Pandora's beautiful hazel eyes. This leaves you standing in the midst of scattered Pandora memorabilia.

The elf leaves Pandora and walks over to you. He greets you, handing out his card, which reads "Richard Fermin, Media Arts Manager, Charisma Associates."

"Hey, I'm Mr. Fermin from Charisma Associates," he says as he shakes everyone's hand. "I appreciate you guys' help. Pandora wanted me to express her thanks." He looks to her and nods. Pandora smiles back as she is escorted by security down stairs. "I want to go one step further. If we have further incidents due to Ben's props, I would like to have your group there to handle it. I can offer you a retainer during the filming of Big Ben's new movie, plus I can set up accommodations while you are working for me."

When the runners accept, read the following:

"Great! I'll make the arrangements through Slade and see you in Hollywood."

HOOKS

First, the runners should be interested in getting more money for the same job, plus they get to sit around and watch a trid being

produced. Second, the runners won't have to worry about getting permits, visas, etc., as that will be taken care of between Slade and Fermin, so all they have to worry about is what to wear and what SIN to bring.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Horizon and Seattle Needle Security have cordoned off the base of the Space Needle. The valets who would have been there to meet tourists have been replaced by a Horizon/Pathfinder Multimedia crew directing the tech vans and trailers. Fans are kept at bay by AR warnings and wooden barriers with six Pathfinder Multimedia security officers on patrol. When the runners arrive, everything seems orderly, with fans patiently waiting for a glimpse of sim stars.

An hour after the runners, a second shadowrunning team arrives. They have been probing the security of the Space Needle since the day before, when they learned that Slade would be sending the Red Samurai armor here. They found that the standard security became compromised when Pathfinder Multimedia got involved. When they rented the whole restaurant out to Pathfinder, protocols were missed, allowing the hacker/rigger to make further holes in the physical and magical security while impersonating both security teams. They were able to dismiss the mage renewing the mana barrier on the main entrance and post most of Pathfinder's security to the Observation floor. The Eye of the Needle's wait staff was given the day off for the filming, leaving the restaurant vulnerable.

The team then moves quickly, simultaneously jamming security communication and psyching up a group of fans with the Mob Mood spell. The team's mage sustains the Mob Mood spell to enhance their obsessive-compulsive disorder to the point of violence. The fans break down the barrier and stampede toward the Needle entrance. The second team fans out to disable as many security officers as possible as they also rush the Needle entrance. From here, the team splits up, with half escorting the fans up the elevator and the others going for the staircase. The team consists of six members, three of whom are intermingled with the 25 crazed fans who fill the elevator (Mage, Decker, and Runner #1). The other three are at the stairway exit (Runner #2, #3, and #4). The hacker/rigger spoofs the security communication and watches the elevators, making sure that the rest of the security team is unaware of what is going on. The team also hopes that if anything goes bad, any observer would believe that it was all part of the making of the movie.

Once the elevator doors open, the fans rush toward Pandora, clamoring for her autograph and other things, pushing the actor playing Mr. Johnson and the drone cameras out of the way. The team by the stairwell attempts to sneak around the perimeter to the green-walled area to take the out the actors wearing the Red Samurai armor. The other three use the fans as cover, and take out anyone who still looks like security with stun batons.

The fans are crazed under the influence of Mob Mood. Like a panicked crowd in a burning theater, they don't care who they step on or over to get to Pandora. They carry photos, pens, posters, and T-shirts wanting her to autograph them. They scream to get her attention while fighting to get to the front of the group. While under the influence of the spell, they will not accept "no"



for an answer and will resort to vandalism, taking clothing, hair, furniture, etc. Note that these are innocent bystanders who are under the influence of a spell, so using lethal force on them will have a negative impact on the runners' reputation, not to mention the legal consequences when Knight Errant arrives to straighten things out. Some use of force would be understandable against the second shadowrunning team by all parties.

Without runner intervention, the other team will quickly knock out the stuntmen with the stun batons in the first round. They will then take another three rounds to steal the katanas and whatever pieces of armor they can bag up quickly (helmets, boots, etc.). They will use gas grenades upon exiting the building to cause more panic and confusion. A rigger is waiting at the bottom. It's a daring plan relying on confusion and chaos around the outside with all the fans.

Meeting with Fermin:

Fermin offers to pay 750 nuyen a day per person or the amount that Slade had negotiated with them, whichever is higher, plus their travel expenses to Los Angeles. This will supersede Slade's offer. Every net hit on a Negotiation test vs Fermin adds 100 nuyen per person, up to a maximum of 5 net hits. The runners will be considered to be working for Charisma Associates with the requirement of being on the set from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. handling the security for Slade's equipment.

After accepting the retainer:

Later that evening, Slade gives them a call. Slade looks relieved when he talks to the runners, as he now doesn't have to pay them to secure his stuff and he doesn't have to look for anyone for security detail in California. He tells them that his contact, Desperado, will meet them at the airport, and he sends them a photo of Desperado. Slade needs the SINs that they are going to be using while down in LA to quickly get working permits. He'll tell them that security is a bit tight due to the war going on with their southern neighbors, and the studio is already calling several favors to get Big Ben's stuff on the plane. This means not to go crazy with bringing toys to play with. The itinerary he delivers the next morning shows them being in Hollywood for seven days with a working visa of fourteen days for Charisma Associates. This work permit includes permits for carrying a heavy pistol and concealed holster when not on the set.

DEBUGGING

The runners may not try to rescue Pandora, opting instead to simply protect their own assets. Alternately, they may use more force than is necessary on the people controlled by the mage. Neither action does much for their reputation. With the former, have some technician try to save Pandora, but have him get knocked down and ask the runners for help. If the latter occurs, remind them that they are in a small space, and some of Pandora's people are mixed in that crowd. The key to this scene is professionalism, not kill count.

If the runners kill any of the fans, it puts them in a dilemma. To avoid the heat of law enforcement they would basically have to pay Slade to get them out of Seattle. He would do this by sending them to Los Angeles to watch his stuff. They will not get paid any more than what Slade is offering now.

PLACES OF INTEREST

The Eye of the Needle

The Eye of the Needle restaurant (p. 62, *Seattle 2072*) is a large, disc-shaped building that sits atop the Seattle Space Needle, 165 meters in the air. It is thirty-two meters across, with five meters of the outer ring containing the dining area. It's this last five-meter ring that rotates around the needle. There are three elevators—two fast, 275-meter-per-minute elevators for passengers, and one 150-meter-per-minute elevator for freight. Each elevator can hold twenty-five people. Most of the restaurant is open space, with the exceptions of the kitchen, restrooms, and storage rooms. Reservations are taken months in advance, as the restaurant is extremely popular. Everything is very posh, with fine lead crystal glasses, silver utensils, and porcelain plates. The meals are luxury items with fresh, real food. Meal prices average 500–700 nuyen, which is paid up front unless patrons establish a line of credit with the reservation. Asking for the bill here is considered a *faux pas*. The furniture and tablecloths are golden brown in color with gold trim. Track lighting circles the room for comfortable atmosphere. The windows give a great view, with touch screen features to enhance it with an AR overlay or informational view.

GRUNTS AND MOVING TARGETS

Ork Runners (Redfoot, Nilsson)

Redfoot is a heavysset Amerindian ork with a Mohawk hairstyle. Nilsson is a pale, muscular Swede, bald with a tattooed scalp.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
8	3	3	7	2	2	2	4	6	5	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 12

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Computers 1, Dodge 4, Etiquette (Street) 1 (+2), Intimidation 3, Perception 2, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 4, Thrown Weapons 2, Unarmed Combat 3

Qualities: Toughness

Gear: Armor vest, commlink (Erika Elite commlink w/Novatech Navi modified), garbage bags

Commlink: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4

Weapons:

Stun Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 6S, -half AP]

Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 16(c), w/concealable holster]

Gas Grenade [Grenade, DV 5S, CS/Tear Gas]

Knife [Blade, Reach 0, DV 4P, AP 0]

Human Runners (Harris, Utah)

Harris has medium height and build, lanky brown hair, and speaks with a Southern (CAS) accent. Utah is a tall black man with extensive burn scars on his left arm.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	3(4)	3	2	2	2	2	4.0	5(6)	2

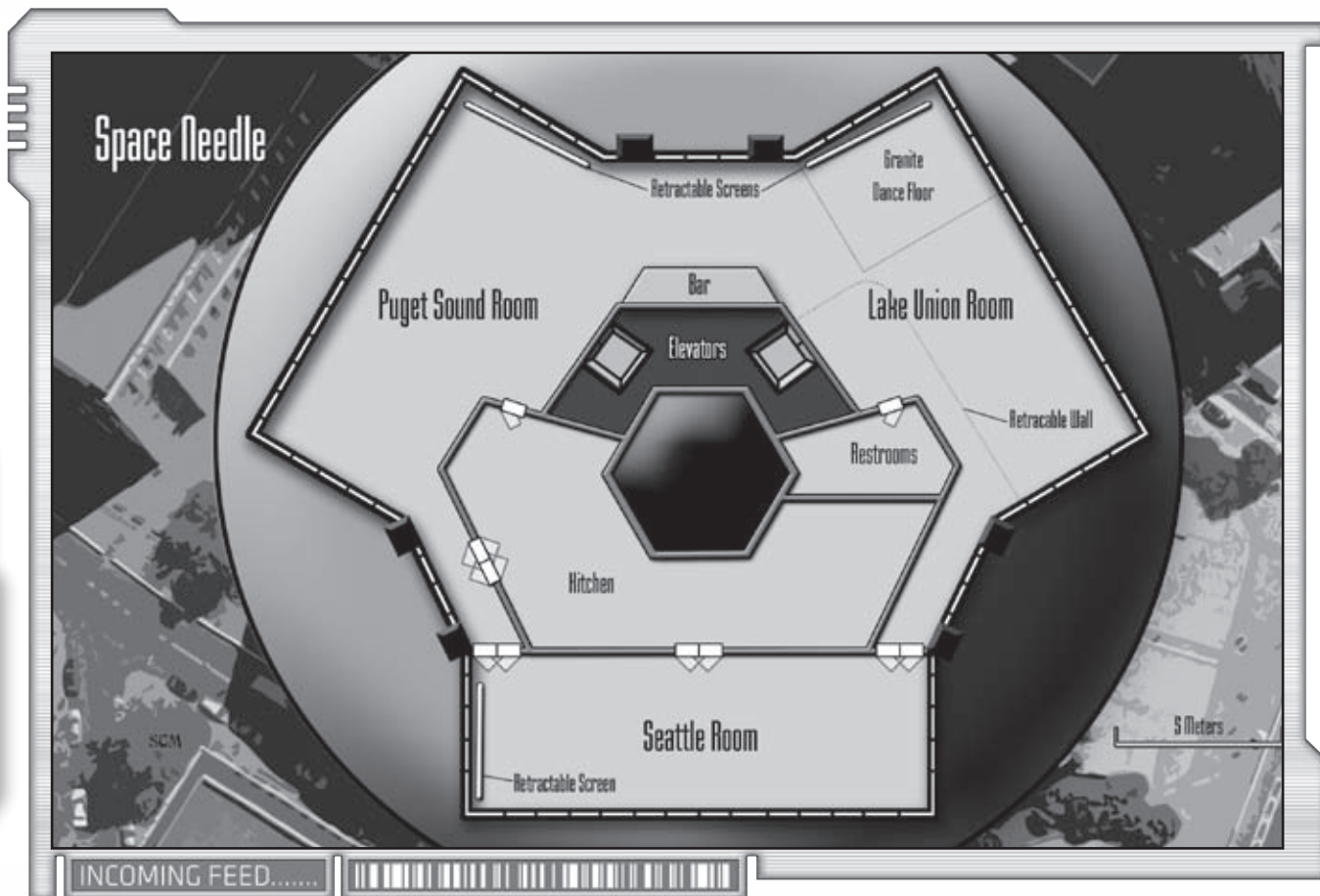
Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Clubs 3, Dodge 2, Etiquette (Street) 1 (+2), Intimidation 2, Pistols 3, Thrown Weapons 2, Unarmed Combat 3, Perception 2

Augmentations: Wired Reflexes 1





Gear: Armor jacket, commlink (Erika Elite commlink w/ Novatech Navi modified), contacts (w/ image link, smartlink, thermographic vision)

Commlink: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4

Weapons:

- Stun Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 6S, -half AP]
- Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 16(c), w/ smartgun, concealable holster]
- Gas Grenade [Grenade, DV 5S, CS/Tear Gas]
- Knife [Blade, Reach 0, DV 5P, AP 0].

Runner Mage (Pusher)

The street mage, Pusher, is a short human with a slight build, buzz-cut black hair, and a soul patch on his chin. He was born in Everett, but affects an Eastern European accent.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	M	Ess	Init	IP
3	4	5	3	5	3	3	5	6	6	8	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Assensing 3, Astral Combat 3, Clubs 2, Conjuring skill group 4, Etiquette (Street) 3 (+2), Locksmith 1, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Sorcery skill group 5, Stealth skill group 2

Gear: Armor jacket, commlink (Erika Elite commlink w/ Novatech Navi modified), contacts (w/image link, smartlink, thermographic vision)

Commlink: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4

Spells: Armor, Improved Invisibility, Stun Bolt, Mob Mood, Mob Mind

Weapons:

- Stun Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 6S, -half AP]
- Colt Manhunter [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 16(c), w/ smartgun system, concealable holster]
- Knife [Blade, Reach 0, DV 2P, AP 0]

Runner Hacker/Rigger (Sanchez)

Sanchez is a Hispanic-looking man with a wisp of a mustache. He has a nanite tattoo of a computer circuit on the side of his face and neck.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	3	6	3	2	5	4	3	4.6	11 (10)	1(3)

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Cracking skill group 4, Electronics skill group 2, Etiquette 1, Gunnery 4, Locksmith 2, Perception 3, Pilot Aircraft 3, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Pistols 2, Unarmed Combat 2

Augmentations: Commlink, implanted sim module (hot-sim), control rig, datajack, cybereye (Rating 3 w/ ocular drone, smartlink, thermographic vision, vision enhancement 1)

Commlink: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4

Programs: Analyze 5, Armor 4, Attack 4, Blackhammer 3, Blackout 3, Bio-Feedback Filter 4, Browse 2, Command 4, ECCM 3, Edit 2, Exploit 4, Medic 3, Scan 4, Track 3

Gear: Armor jacket, medkit (Rating 3), 4 offensive Lone Star iBalls, Bulldog Step-Van

Weapons:

- Ares Predator IV [Heavy pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 15(c), w/ concealable holster, 2 clips of explosive ammo]



Crazed Fan

Various male and female fans ranging in age from 18-25.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	6	4	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 9

Skills: Dodge 1, Etiquette (Media) 1 (+2), Unarmed Combat 1

Gear: Various types of commlinks (Device rating 3), Jenny Freelance/Pandora memorabilia, pen or marker

PARTY IN THE PCC

SCAN THIS

In this scene, the runners arrive in LA (minus gear that can't be brought through security). Desperado, Slade's contact in LA, meets them. He gives the runners P2.0 (which was paid for by Charisma Associates), hotel reservations, and a car rental. The reservations are paid for the whole week. Desperado picks up Slade's equipment and drives it over to Studio City, while the runners are directed to the Alternate, an unusual hotel downtown. After settling in at the hotel, the runners go to work at Studio 8, one of the largest production studios in Studio City. The runners find a minor security breach in the room where Slade's equipment is stored, when microdrones are discovered trying to record what's in the cases. The runners bring out more of Slade's toys for another scene in the trideo, this one set somewhere in the mountains.

Prior to the runners' arrival at Studio 8, Pandora calls Dae and tells her about them, saying that they will be down in LA soon. Dae then pesters her manager, Andre Guiles, to talk to Fermin to see if he can hire the runners for another job. Fermin is a little suspicious of how Guiles knew about the runners before they even arrived. He tells Guiles that he'll think about it. When Pandora approaches him an hour later, suggesting that the runners be invited to the party at The End of the World club, it becomes clear who is calling the shots. He agrees to Pandora's request, then calls up Guiles and tells him that he can hire the runners for what he needs them to do. Fermin figures that whatever Guiles wants the runners to do involves Dae, otherwise Pandora wouldn't be scheming like that. Guiles heads to the club early and secures a private meeting room, adding his own safeguards to prevent any rumors from spreading.

After a long day of filming, Fermin sends out invitations to the runners for the party at The End of the World. All dressed up, the runners go to this relatively secluded club in Hollywood. They meet several sim stars and listen to Hollywood gossip about everything from Teiko's music to the Aztlan-Amazonian war. After a while Guiles finally meets the runners. He introduces himself and asks them if they can spare a moment to meet privately with him. At this meeting, Guiles explains the delicate situation and asks for their help in an "off the record" job.

He tells them he is the manager for Christy Dae. Miss Dae had been caught in a compromising video a few days ago. Guiles had already started a cleanup process, but they met resistance when she received a blackmail letter. He's identified the blackmailer as Bacchus from the A-Kidz, a local gang. Since he doesn't want any of this released, and since they are not from around here, they are perfect to retrieve the video. Guiles doesn't believe it's stored on any

networked location; otherwise it would have already hit the streets. His people are standing by to counter it if it does get released, but that's more money than they want to invest. His department is constantly watched for news; he can't trust anyone in LA not to post this on their "me-feed/P2.0." Mr. Guiles wants the chip delivered to him at Studio 8 in Studio City, before Bacchus's demands of her performing with him in a video have to be met. The runners are given the last location of Dae's whereabouts and the name Bacchus to go by. The runners are not required to start that evening and can enjoy the party until it ends at 11 p.m.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Welcome to Los Angeles, home of sun, sand, and more surf than you can shake a stick at—if you don't mind the pollution. You arrive at El Toro Airport at 10 a.m. and are greeted by a troll with slicked-back hair, a thin leather jacket, a dark green T-shirt, and chrome shades. The troll introduces himself as Desperado. "Well, well. Looks like you've got amigos in high places. They've put you up in the posh Hotel Alternate. Yes that's the name; it's not an alternative to a hotel."

He escorts you to the luggage area, where you retrieve your stuff. "Follow me," he says. "Slade's stuff is being unloaded out here." He leaves through a side exit to where the drones are unloading the cargo. A monstrous SUV, all tricked out, is parked back there. Desperado pays an attendant and then opens the back of the SUV. The drones move to pick up the cargo from the ground and put it into the SUV. "I'll take Slade's toys over to the studio, while you guys check in at the hotel," Desperado says. "I'd offer a ride, but Slade's got a lot of shit to move."

He tosses you a set of keys. "I didn't think you'd want to sit in a jackrabbit they budgeted for you, so the blue BMW is yours while you're here."

He looks at his link, just as you get a message from him on yours. "So it looks like this Fermin guy got you some invites to P2.0. You'd best be installing that, given the crowd you'll be hanging out with. Just don't get too comfortable with it, unless you get a following like me. You'll probably only get fifteen minutes of fame before losing your subscription. No worries though, it's not for everyone. Now, I'm not the tour guide around here. Slade just paid me to get you in the right direction and to move his stuff to Studio City, but if you forgot to pack something you need, give me a call."

He then gets into his SUV and drives off.

When they install/review P2.0, read the following:

Getting P2.0 adds a new icon to your commlink's AR, consisting of three concentric colored rings, each one with a numeric value inside. The numbers represent how popular you are and how connected you are down here in California. The center ring shows how close you are to Horizon CEO Gary Cline, the next ring is for Membership, or how many people are on your personal network, and the outer ring represents your Subscription, which is the percentage of *viewers*.

"You're probably asking yourself right now what these rings are all about," says a recording of a man decked out like a parody of a movie agent, complete with shades and antiquated cell phone, that came with the P2.0 app. "Through each ring you can see in more detail what the value is made up of. And here," the agent directs you inside the P2.0 network, "this gray stick figure, which you can



personalize, represents you in reference to the rest of the network. Trifling, no? Well, fear not, there's a placeholder for blogging and me-feeds, allowing me to manage links to other blogs and videos that reference you or your P2.0 ID. And what are viewers? They're the rest of the network who want to watch your P2.0 channel (me-feed and blog). I also handle the compiling of multiple videos on the P2.0 network to make for a more contiguous video feed. It keeps people from changing channels too often."

The other slightly annoying factor with the P2.0 application is the pushy broadcast the P2.0 agent wants to execute from your commlink to talk to every other commlink or drone. You finally mute the agent after hearing it say, for the fifth time today, "Here's my card, let's do lunch."

At the Alternate Hotel, read the following:

Your room is at least a step above the coffin motels you're used to hiding out in, though the décor is questionable. The rooms are heavily themed, from the "Stormy Sea" of room 21 to the "Forested Canopy" of room 25. At least you can turn off the AR channel of the Stormy Sea to keep from getting seasick. Each room also includes a small balcony, a bathroom, and a multipurpose kitchenette/living room/office alcove.

As you look out from the balcony, your view of Los Angeles gives the illusion of a complete recovery. From the Alternate, you can see concentric walls out to the west where, block-by-block, downtown has been partially reclaimed from the sea. Beyond that are corporate islands where recovery took place quickly lest salvaging pirates get to the area first. Downtown is heavily covered in AR, containing both adverts and the images of buildings in pristine condition. Some of them appear the way they used to look at the turn of the century, while incomplete buildings show their future appearance. Flocks of drones can be seen buzzing around downtown, looking for whatever they believe to be newsworthy enough to gain viewers.

Unique to California is the P2.0-driven competition of those who can afford the subscription to create a proliferation of independent reality shows to grab subscribers. It's also the first place you can watch a million channels of reality shows and still find nothing on.

At Studio City, read the following:

The afternoon sun shines brightly here, even through the pollution haze. Heading east over to Studio City, you see many large (up to four-story), white, windowless buildings, each broadcasting the trids that were filmed there. They contrast with the more colorful condos and office complexes in the area. Each of these buildings is a large studio complex, where the stage can blend virtual and real elements into a fantastic trideo. At least that's what the P2.0 agent tells you.

You drive past several gated private roads and drone sentries before the car stops and tells you that you have arrived at your destination. Before you is a large, gilded security fence with a pair of bored-looking security guards sitting in a guard shack. Beyond that, another large windowless building prominently displays a sign saying "Studio 8."

The guards request your credentials and verify that you are supposed to be there before opening the gates. You then drive into the large parking lot below the sign. As you exit the car, a dozen

iBall drones descend near you. Your links and P2.0 accounts are bombarded by queries. Before you decide whether or not you should go for your gun, they determine you are not newsworthy and leave. One gives an electronic snort of distaste as it goes.

Walking into Studio 8, you are amazed by what is going on inside. It's like an arcology, but with miniature mountains, oceans, and towns ... anything that the director wants can be built inside. The film stage alone looks to be 350 meters long.

The techie with Ben, James, recognizes you and comes over.

"Hi guys. I had Mr. Desperado put Mr. Slade's equipment in storage room 8A, over to your left. I'll show you the room." He heads off past what appears to be a green-colored, irregularly shaped wall.

"Over to the right of the stage are the meeting rooms, catering, restrooms, workshops, etc.," he says, pointing to the one- and two-story buildings nested inside the studio. "When the red light ARO is on in any of the rooms, it means that we're filming and everyone needs to be quiet. And here's storage room 8A."

He fumbles a bit with a hefty set of maglock passkeys around his neck and gives you one. "Here's the key. When Ben wants some piece of equipment, I'll come and find you." With that, he heads back to the stage, busy with something on his 'link.

The storage room is about as big as or bigger than your apartment. It's twenty by ten meters, with a six-meter-tall shelving unit and attached rolling ladder. Slade's cases fit neatly on the bottom corner of the shelving unit. Nothing appears to be missing.

Inventory of Slade's Cases

1. 2057 Red Samurai Armor w/ Katana (Suit 1)
2. 2057 Red Samurai Armor w/ Katana (Suit 2)
3. 2057 Red Samurai Armor w/ Katana (Suit 3)
4. 2057 Red Samurai Armor w/ Katana (Suit 4)
5. 2 macuahuitls and an obsidian knife
6. Thunderstruck Gauss Rifle
7. 4 sets of 6 shuriken
8. A riot shield with the Red Samurai logo

If the runners check the security, read the following:

The walls have signal-dampening material inside and the door has a hefty maglock on it. The room has its own temperature and humidity controls and those are available from VR in a barebones node.

After checking on Slade's equipment, read the following:

In Studio 8, you see Big Ben setting up another scene, somewhere up in the mountains. You missed his dialogue on the scene, because as you step in, Big Ben calls quiet on the set. The lights dim. Nothing happens for some time, but you feel the temperature rapidly drop to a brisk eight degrees Celsius when the action starts. You are a bit surprised by the sudden chill and occasional flake of snow. The ARO red light comes on and you see something happening.

Jenny Freelance is climbing up the green mountain shapes with a Sherpa.

She starts a conversation with the Sherpa. Apparently she's speaking Sherpa based on your link, but you don't have the software to understand it. Luckily, the AR has a CC channel:

<wind howling>

Jenny: How much farther is it to the temple of the four winds?



Sherpa: Not much farther. Another day or so.

Jenny: Great, I should have brought more chapstick. Have you heard of the Sextant of Worlds?

Sherpa: I have heard of a legendary device at the temple of the four winds. It is said that it can locate objects of power from a forgotten age, but only with the aid of a special map that was lost long ago.

<Jenny smirks>

Jenny: Look! Is that a light?

Sherpa: It appears someone has made camp.

<Jenny pulls out her binoculars>

Jenny: I don't see anyone there.

<Distant howl>

Then a dozen frozen undead pop up. This leads to several takes of more martial-arts combat, as the zombies keep falling apart in the cold. Two hours later, Ben calls out "Cut! Lunch break."

As people head to the cafeteria for lunch, Pandora's manager walks over to you. "Your reputation precedes you," he says, handing over an invitation to a private party. You can see there's an RFID signal coming from the invitation. He continues, "I'll level with you—one of my co-workers wants to hire you. I don't know the details, but if Pandora believes it's important enough to get you invites to The End of the World Club, then that's good enough for me. Party starts at 9 p.m. Take tomorrow off to do what you need to do; I'll take care of things here." He walks off out of the studio.

After lunch, Ben continues to shoot the scene.

Now at the edge of an icy mountain cliff, Jenny battles the undead alone over the body of her fallen Sherpa companion. Even though it's a movie, the adrenaline kicks in with the suspense.

Suddenly, some elf comes snowboarding down the mountain, swinging a sword. Pyrotechnics blast zombies over the cliff, apparently simulating combat magic. Your attention fades as the story focuses briefly on this guy, who tells Jenny that he's a mystic knight and he's here to help her. Ben ends filming for the day at four.

At The End of the World, read the following:

There's only one road you can take to The End of the World. After the twin quakes, what used to be a through road and intersection became a dead end overlooking a twenty-five-meter cliff face. That evening, you drive up the winding road into the Hollywood hills. Up here, the haze and light pollution blocks your view of the stars, but below, Los Angeles looks just as pretty as any galaxy. After ten minutes, you arrive on a stretch of road that ends in a cul-de-sac on a cliff. There are several other cars here; expensive-looking cars, but not pimped out. The view is breathtaking, with an unobstructed look over L.A. A warm breeze takes the slight chill out of the night air. Off to the far right is the Hollywood sign.

The End of the World is a high-class, single-story building. The grounds are dark, except for subdued yellow lighting along the sidewalk and over the door. The building is perched partially over the edge with serious reinforcement. As you approach the club, two "walls" step out of the shadows. One of these burly troll security guards lights a cigarette, illuminating his face. Apparently even the guards go for a little cosmetic surgery. The lighting over the door brightens a little so you can now see both guards well enough.

"Invitations please," asks the first guard. As you present the invitation, there's a loud buzz in the distance followed by a pop and flash of light.

"Glitterati drone," says the second guard in answer to your unspoken question.

"Go on in, gentleman," says the first guard, opening the door and handing back the invitation.

Inside, you see that the place has a classy look with brown colors and faux-wood furniture. This contrasts with the placement of jagged black stripes and irregular black spots. The AR has two overlay channels. One replaces the black with a view of the aftermath of the quakes from the perspective inside the club. The other is a present-day view. Looks like the place was in fairly bad shape after the quake, and someone recorded the moment.

Many people wander around; waiters serve entrees and drinks while the guests circulate among dozens of sitting areas. You can see Alexi Summers, who just brought out a new line of urban tribal for Evo, and Anthony Pardes with an armful of women. The other guests acknowledge your existence with cool greetings and empty small talk. Apparently you aren't high enough on the Pito scale for a full conversation. You overhear tidbits of conversations: producers throwing out ideas for the next blockbuster, an assortment of rumors, and a slightly heated argument over whether Teiko's next album, Lollipop Dreams, will beat out Chrisy Dae's Sunny Dae at this year's awards. A gentleman in a gray suit and dark green tie approaches you. He hands you a card with a familiar logo. It says "Andre Guiles, Media Arts manager, Charisma Associates."

"Evening, I'm Guiles—I've heard you are on retainer with Fermin," he says. "Can I have a private word with you to discuss additional business?"

When they accept, read the following:

He leads you off and down a hallway to a room guarded by a man and a hulking mastiff. Almost everything inside the room is black, with only a partial non-black frame. In the middle is a set of tables and chairs—sturdy, functional, and not at all comfortable. Once everybody's seated, he continues, "I have something that needs to be taken care of with the maximum discretion: the retrieval of an item for my client. Fermin and I have discussed this, and we agreed that I can pay you for this job in addition to your retainer."

When they accept the job, read the following:

"You've no doubt heard of Christy Dae—four Grammys for Best Album, four for Best Female Vocals, two for Best Sim Performance. A few days ago, Ms. Dae got caught in a compromising video that could seriously undermine her career. I've already started a cleanup process, but yesterday miss Dae received a blackmail letter. It was easy enough to identify the blackmailer as Bacchus from the A-Kidz gang. The A-Kidz are a local gang, and like most gangs they have their own P2.0 show—theirs is called *Gang Life*. Charisma Associates is constantly watched over by newshounds, and I can't trust anyone in town not to post this on their Pito, so you're in the best position to retrieve this video, not being from around here."

"I don't believe the video is stored on any networked location, otherwise it would've already hit the streets. My people are already allocated if it does get released, but that's more money than I hope to lay out. I'm authorized to pay you two grand apiece for



the retrieval of the video, to bring it back to me before it goes the public. Contact this number when you have it, and I'll meet you back at Studio 8."

HOOKS

This scene lets the runners get their feet wet, with an intro to Los Angeles and the way things work there. Events should follow in the order listed: airport, hotel, Studio 8, and then The End of the World, with little room for tangents. At The End of the World it's another job for them that won't conflict with their day job, and more money's always good.

BEHIND THE SCENES

When they install P2.0 on their commlinks, they see their current rating: C (inner ring) 7, M (middle ring) (each runner in the group + Desperado), and S (outer ring) at zero percent. Unless the runners actually create blogs or me-feeds, the Subscription ring will be around 0 percent. The runner's P2.0 score increases as they enter Studio City as people connect to them.

At Studio 8, in the studio storage room:

The storage room node is available for the runners to add their own security and/or upgrade the software. When the runners start to do so, they will find a dozen Kanmushi microdrones crawling around the shelves. The drones are on autopilot because of the signal dampening. Their goals are as follows: (1) record what is inside the boxes; (2) plant software in the node for a backdoor; and (3) get out with the information they have discovered. These drones are off-the-shelf, with little customization.

Urgent Message...

STORAGE ROOM 8A NODE

Sculpting: One blank white room with controls to a heater/AC/humidifier system

Authentication: Web of Trust

Privileges: Standard

Attributes: Firewall 3, Response 2, Signal 1, System 3

Spiders: None

IC: None

Resident Programs: Analyze 2

ARC: None

Topology: Stand-alone node

If the runners ask anyone at the studio about the drones—such as James, the lead technician—he will be shocked at the notion of spy drones on the set and want to know where the runners found the drones. He will then contact security to remove the drones. He will suspect that Amalgamated Studios, a rival media corporation, planted the bugs. Security will dispose of the drones for the runners.

When Fermin hands the runners the invitation to the club, he tells them most of what he knows: Andre Guiles is the manager for Christy Dace, and Pandora and Miss Dace have been talking together, so the job probably involves Dace. Since he doesn't

foresee any problems, he has no issues. The runners' inner ring score decreases to 6 as Fermin is now part of their network.

Unless the runners want to add a blog or media to their P2.0 channel, their S score will not increase above 0.05 percent. If they do, however, they will get cautionary comments from Fermin stating that posting anything about the movie is strictly prohibited. The same goes for anyone working on this studio lot.

At The End of the World:

The idea of the club is to get away from all the paparazzi and be able to meet socially with other equals. The club offers real food in small proportions and real drinks. Music is selectable for each guest via AR, with a few of the actual musicians here at the party. There is no dance floor—the club mostly consists of many different rooms for guests to lounge in and have conversations. There are a dozen security guards around the room tied to individual stars. There are also five bouncers and three large dog warforms for The End of the World in case anything gets out of hand. Two spiders monitor The End of the World and manage a drone-free zone around the club. Six hunter-killer drones are on the roof. The club's spiders take advantage of the irregular terrain to ambush any drones that come near the club to maintain the guests' privacy. Astrally there are several layers of security including dual-natured material in the roof, four patrolling watchers (all looking like little Oscars), wards, and a Force 5 guardian spirit, guarding against accidents.

Runners' P2.0 M ratings increase slightly by this time, up to 104, but the people on their network are some serious names.

As the runners mingle, they can overhear rumors circulating at the club. Insert these as you can while the runners are here:

- A new Gagaistic line of clothing is being debuted in Paris. They say the GaGa Effect is back with a vengeance and will beat out Zoë's urban line.
- That Maibumu concert last week in Denver by Ikemoto was crazy. Almost forty fans were injured because the arena was overbooked.
- There's been some bad blood between Mitsuhama and Teiko Ikemoto's father over her contract. Apparently he's not getting much money from his daughter's success and is trying to get more.
- Did you see the footage of Aztlan bombing Metropole? That's some serious damage. This is just ruining my vacation plans.
- I heard that Aztlan is pushing deep into the jungle, even using ground-penetrating radar to find El Dorado. I'm thinking of pitching that to the producers as next year's blockbuster movie.
- Amazonia has hired mercs and shadowrunners to sabotage the Nicaragua Canal and have effectively shut it down for months. Imports from Europe are going to skyrocket. How am I going to make a profit now?

Two rooms are available for private conversations, since even in the media world some people want more privacy when they make deals. Guiles will offer the runners two thousand per person to retrieve the chip, in addition to what they have negotiated with Fermin. Every net hit on a Negotiation + Charisma Opposed Test with Guiles adds 150 nuyen per person, up to a maximum of five net hits. Guiles is not overly concerned about the runners' fees, as the fallout from the chip would cost more. In



THE END OF THE WORLD NODE

Sculpting: The signal dampening prevents The End of the World from showing up until you get within three meters of the place. Even then it's a weak signal until you're inside.

Authentication:

Node 1: AccessID
Node 2: Web of Trust

Privileges: Standard

Attributes: Firewall 6, Response 4, Signal 2, System 4

Spiders: 2 professional spiders (stats p. 68, *Unwired*)

IC: Three Musketeers Suite 5 in each node

Resident Programs: Analyze 5, Encrypt 4

ARC: Alert Spider

Topology: Node 1 manages security, while node 2 supports the guests. Node 2 can only be accessed inside The End of the World.

the private room with Guile, he also can provide more information to help the runners in the investigation:

- Miss Dace was with some friends going to various parties starting at around 10 p.m.
- Miss Dace was separated from her security at Cadillac Avenue in the West Side at around two in the morning. This is a partially reclaimed area with some flooding.
- Guile attempts to save face for Dace by blaming himself for not making sure that her new hires were well versed in Miss Dace's habits, and that's how she got separated.
- At 2:30 a.m., security picked up her commlink signal and found her unconscious off Robertson Boulevard in a dive of a motel called the Cinderblock.
- Security got her out of the motel without being detected by drones by using one of her impersonators at a shopping mall.
- There weren't any guests at the Cinderblock, but apparently Bacchus was in the area.

He knows of Dace's history of BTLs, but will not divulge that information to the runners, nor will he allude to any problems she might have with drugs or alcohol. He will present Dace to the runners as the media presents her: a normal, happy, young woman who was an unfortunate and unwilling victim.

SUBPLOTS (OPTIONAL)

- James, the lead tech, thinks that someone tapped the video feed and asks the runners to investigate the Studio 8 node.
- An apparition has been seen floating in the office halls. Rumor suggests that it's the late actor, Ashton Tager, who died on the set years ago during the Twins. Big Ben wants to know why he's here now.
- Oh rats. Big Ben has been told that some rats, very big rats, have been found nesting in the prop room. Since the runners have guns, he asks you to exterminate them.

DEBUGGING**Getting on the Plane**

The runners may try to fly with a large cache of some seriously illegal equipment. Slade will caution them that since he's putting their gear on the plane, keep it to a minimum, and no grenades or other explosives. No vehicle can be shipped, but he has room for two drones, max.

The runners might balk at having P2.0. Desperado will tell them that they don't have to use all the features; just having the subscription will help if they have to deal with anyone at in Studio City.

At Studio 8

The runners can do whatever they want to the drones found in room 8A, and the encounter should be straightforward. The runners don't have anything else to do during the film shoot, though they're supposed to be professional. The runners may not want to go to the party, or wear a suit, in which case Fermin will hint that Pandora personally requested they attend, though this is only barely true. If they don't have a suit to wear, Fermin can suggest a tailor. They also have the option of asking Desperado, who can deliver suits at a ten percent discount—but they can't ask where they come from, and they only come in black.

At The End of the World

The runners are expected to act somewhat professionally. If they carry guns or gear more dangerous than a light pistol, they won't be allowed in. If they try to cause any trouble, they will be asked to leave (with force if necessary). Some bad behavior, such as heavy drinking, is tolerated if it's the sim stars doing it, but staff or security are not allowed to partake.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Studio 8: Studio 8 is one of many large studios used for filming trideos by companies like Pathfinder Multimedia. They are massive four-story structures measuring 400 by 250 meters. Most of that space is open for two large stages. Cameras, lighting, and even temperature can be manipulated and modified to get any shot. One side of the studio has several buildings inside the studio for administration, construction, cafeteria, and film editing. On the other side, behind the stages, is a hallway to rooms for storage, and props. These rooms are vast; some contain remote-operated cranes and computer indexing to help the crews find what they need.

The Alternate Hotel: No room is the same in this hotel. The furniture, the AR themes attached to the wallpaper, and so on are unique to each room. The rooms don't have official names; they are just numbered. The design of the rooms is done in partnership with the College of Arts and Interior Design. Each room is part of a senior project. The rooms measure four meters by five meters with attached bathroom and balcony. Pricing is 250 nuyen a day.

The Stormy Sea, room 118, includes a special humidifier to provide the occasional spray of salty air, along with a rowboat waterbed, life vest cushions, and life preservers framing oil paintings of ocean scenes.

The Forest Canopy, room 122, has thick green rugs with leaf patterns. Many potted plants including miniature banana



INCOMING FEED.....

trees and palm fronds fill the room. The bed is a hammock in a bamboo frame.

The Gobi Desert, room 93, is very hot and dry. The coffee table is a zen rock and sand sculpture; stacked rocks make up couches and chairs with blankets for cushions. Scattered cushions also serve as the bed. Fossils embedded in stone decorate the walls and floor. The shower is a stone waterfall.

The Arctic Circle, room 131, is well insulated to keep in the cold temperatures. Blue tinted acrylic table and chairs simulate carved glacial ice. Most items including the toilet are made to look transparent with acrylic material. The bed's blankets are faux fur, and the room is decorated with Aleut tribal gear and imitation scrimshaw artwork.

The End of the World: The End of the World is not new, but it recently became more prominent. After the Twins struck, part of the hillside near it dropped twenty meters, leaving a narrow peninsula above the devastation. The End of the World was the only building there left standing. The new cliff face has since been reinforced and The End of the World was repaired, but they kept the images of how the club looked after the quakes as a reminder in the AR imagery. There are rooms of various sizes within the club with open hallways and partial dividers. These rooms are comfortable places for casual socializing. There are two other rooms with closable doors, which can be used for private conversation and/or business deals.

GRUNTS AND MOVING TARGETS

(Drones in the Storage room) Shiawase Kanmushi

Handling	Speed	Pilot	Body	Armor	Sensor	Accel	CM
+1	2/10	10	3	0	0	1	8

End of the World Security, Troll Doormen (Teddy, Duke)

Both trolls are formally dressed in the uniform of the club, their heavy pistols all but invisible under their armored jackets. Teddy's curving horns end in gold caps; Duke wears a wrist brace to compensate from a training injury.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
8	4	5	9	3	3	3	3	3.3	8	2

Condition Monitor Boxes: 12

Armor (B/I): 9/6

Skills: Close Combat skill group 4, Dodge 3, Etiquette (Media) 3 (+2), Intimidation 2, Perception 4, Pistols 3

Augmentations: Bone Lacing (Kevlar) (α), Moderate Cosmetic Surgery, Cybereye Rating 2 [Flare comp, Low-light, Smartlink, thermographics], Wired Reflexes 1 (α)

Gear: Armored Jacket, Commlink (Erika Elite Commlink w/ Novitech Navi modified)

Commlink: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4

Weapons:

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 16(c), w/ smartgun, concealable holster]

The End of the World Security (Bodyguards)

The protection detail on duty inside the club is both functional and decorative. The guards are all armed, alert, impeccably dressed, and well mannered.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
5	4	5	4	2	3	3	3	3.2	8	2

Condition Monitor Boxes: 11 [10]

Armor (B/I): 9/6

Skills: Close Combat skill group 4, Dodge 3, Etiquette 3 (Media +2), Intimidation 2, Perception 4, Pistols 3

Augmentations: Bone Lacing (Kevlar) (*a*), Moderate Cosmetic Surgery, Cybereye Rating 2 [Flare comp, Low-light, Smartlink, thermographics], Wired Reflexes 1(*a*)

Gear: Armored Jacket, Commlink (Erika Elite Commlink w/ Novitech Navi modified)

Commlink: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4

Weapons: Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 16(c), w/ smartgun, concealable holster]

Warform Mastiff (Spike)

A meter tall at the shoulder, Spike has coal-black fur and wears a silver-studded black leather collar.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	6	6	1

Movement: 10/45

Skills: Intimidation 2, Perception 4, Tracking 2, Unarmed Combat 3

Augmentations: Enhanced Attribute (Body), Enhanced Skill (Perception)

Powers: Enhanced Senses (Smell), Natural Weapon (Claws/Bite: DV 2P, AP 0)

NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS

SCAN THIS

The runners will be able to do legwork and track down Bacchus. To do the job right, they will have to figure out where he is hiding the chip without his knowing. In the resulting tailing of Bacchus, he makes a call to Daece to arrange a time and place to meet and propose what will be filmed. He then calls Steve Paterson, the club owner, to tell him where the meet will take place. This can lead to the runners intercepting the call and learning that Steve is the brains behind this scheme. The runners can search the places where Bacchus hangs out, finally ending up at the club. It becomes a B&E to find where the data is being stored before this event hits the news.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Two days into the trip and you're already making money and friends; now to look for Bacchus. Funny thing about these Angelinos, it's like they all have some neuro disorder that makes them want instant gratification and attention. So it's easy enough finding Bacchus on his P2.0 channel; he's even posted what he had for breakfast.

Outside the Derma Club, read the following:

The Derma Club has lost most of its former glitz and glamour over the past decade. The streets and buildings in the neighborhood

all got shifted and dropped by the Twins, leaving everything slightly crooked. A patchwork of asphalt has allowed the occasional spill or runoff to concentrate and stain the road. Heavy bars on the windows and the gate in front of the door show the measures the owner has taken to deal with different times and a different clientele. The club has not even bothered to improve its appearance through AR. As you approach, a few rough-looking patrons shuffle in.

After arriving at Studio 8, read the following:

The Studio seems quiet, though there is some life moving around. There's a limo and a truck in the parking lot when you pull in. Two Pathfinder Multimedia bodyguards are standing at the doors of Studio 8, which is a little off from the normal security. They check your IDs before opening the door. One of the bodyguards escorts you inside. You are led to one of the internal buildings, where you meet Guiles in an office in a corner of the studio. Next to him is Miss Daece, looking a little tired. Her eyes are red from crying. Guiles nods to the bodyguard, and he leaves the room.

"You found it?" says Guiles, waiting for you to present it.

After the runners show him the chip, read the following:

"Good. Your payment has been deposited into your accounts."

He reaches for the chip. "Was it just Bacchus?"

Waiting for their response, he holds the chip for a moment and doesn't verify its contents. He then hands it over to Miss Daece. Miss Daece sets it on the table and pulls out a hammer. She gives the chip a few blows with the hammer. She starts crying and gives it a few more whacks. With tears coming down her cheeks, she exits the room. The security guard comes back in with a small crucible. Guiles brushes the chip debris into his hand and dumps it into the crucible. As the crucible heats up, the pieces begin to smoke and melt.

"This incident never happened. Good day."

Guiles and the security guard walk out of the room, taking the crucible with them, leaving you in the office with the acrid smell of burnt plastic.

HOOKS

The whole day is available for the runners to devise a plan, do legwork, and shadow Bacchus. Since they have leeway in their actions, the Behind the Scenes will play out within a timeline of events up to 7 p.m., when Bacchus is supposed to meet with Daece at the Derma Club.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Bacchus' schedule for the day

- Before 10 a.m.: Bacchus is asleep.
- 10 a.m.: Bacchus wakes up in a coffin motel downtown on Salt Lake Avenue. He heads down the street and eats breakfast at the Diablo Verde mobile restaurant.

Urgent Message...

DIABLO VERDE IS DA BOMB!

10:12 a.m.: Just ate bacon/egg flavored krill breakfast burrito. It's a good start to the day for only four nuyen. The burritos are very spicy—wakes up the sinuses! Wish he sold beer. Here's a link to Verde's roach coach. Anyone else like Verde's? Message me. If not, fuck off!!





- 11 a.m.: Bacchus heads over to an abandoned office complex. There's a sunken plaza at the office complex. He greets his gang and they start up a three-on-three game of Aztec court ball, street style. It gets streamed onto his P2.0 show. With all their cyber enhancements, they play very physically and try all kinds of trick shots. By 1 p.m., Bacchus' team wins.
- 1 to 2 p.m.: Bacchus and his crew head inside the office complex and get some junk food and cheap beer from a make-shift kitchen before sitting down to watch some pirated trids.
- 2:10 p.m.: The trideo has barely started when Bacchus gets a phone call. He looks at who's calling, mutters "Damn!" and gives the kill sign. *LA Gang Life* (his solo spinoff from the *A-Kidz's Gang Life* show) goes to commercial for Happy Dog Chow while Bacchus takes the call from Steve. The runners can intercept the call if they have infiltrated the complex (see rules for *Capture Wireless Signal*, p. 229 *SR4A*). See Intercepted Phone Call #1. If they just observe, then they can only hear Bacchus.

Urgent Message...

INTERCEPTED PHONE CALL #1

Bacchus: "Sup Steve?"

Steve: "Bacchus. I need you to call Miss Dae. Have her come over for the first shoot at seven. I have the studio ready."

Bacchus: "Don't tell me what to do, chump. It was my idea, my setup!"

Steve: "Yeah, it was your idea, but I had the smarts to monopolize on it. You thought you could just get, what, a million nuyen for the video? You don't have a clue to what those smiling managers can do to you."

Bacchus: "Fine, I'll give her a call."

Steve: "Good. Just think of the revenue you'll make from this video. And they can't touch your Pito score unless they want to spend a ton of cash from the fallout."

Bacchus: "Fine."

Call ends.

- 2–3 p.m.: Bacchus goes on a tirade off camera about how after this, he'll be alpha dog and no one, not Steve, not Leo, not anyone, will be telling him what to do! He heads over to another room in the complex and gets out some crudely made throwing stars and throws them in various scraps of furniture and broken electronics.
- 3–4 p.m.: Bacchus and his gang head out into the evening. *LA Gang Life* is back with a live video feed. Bacchus gets into a bondo-gray jackrabbit convertible and goes bar-hopping. He talks about his favorite bars and heads to a few of them. First he goes to the Brambleberry Cat for a pint and a game of pool, then he heads over to Ike's on the coast for some buffalo wings and their special, a Tokyo Rose.
- 4–5 p.m.: Bacchus continues to talk about some other clubs as they drive over to The Empire for some AR/VR games.

Bacchus prefers to play *BattleCraft* for Aerth, a very physical AR game played in a fantasy setting.

- 5:30 p.m.: Bacchus takes a break from beating on AR-generated foes and makes a call from a commlink, which is wired to a second commlink held by one of his gangers. He makes the call, but it's harder to intercept; (minus 2 to the skill check). He calls Miss Dae directly. In the Matrix, some hacker on the other end is making a trace back. The hacker can't complete the trace before the call ends.

Urgent Message...

INTERCEPTED PHONE CALL #2

Bacchus: "Hey there, sugar! Miss me?"

Dae: "What do you want?"

Bacchus: "Come to the Derma Club on Robertson Avenue, at seven. Bring a couple of outfits."

Dae: "Asshole."

Bacchus: "You know it."

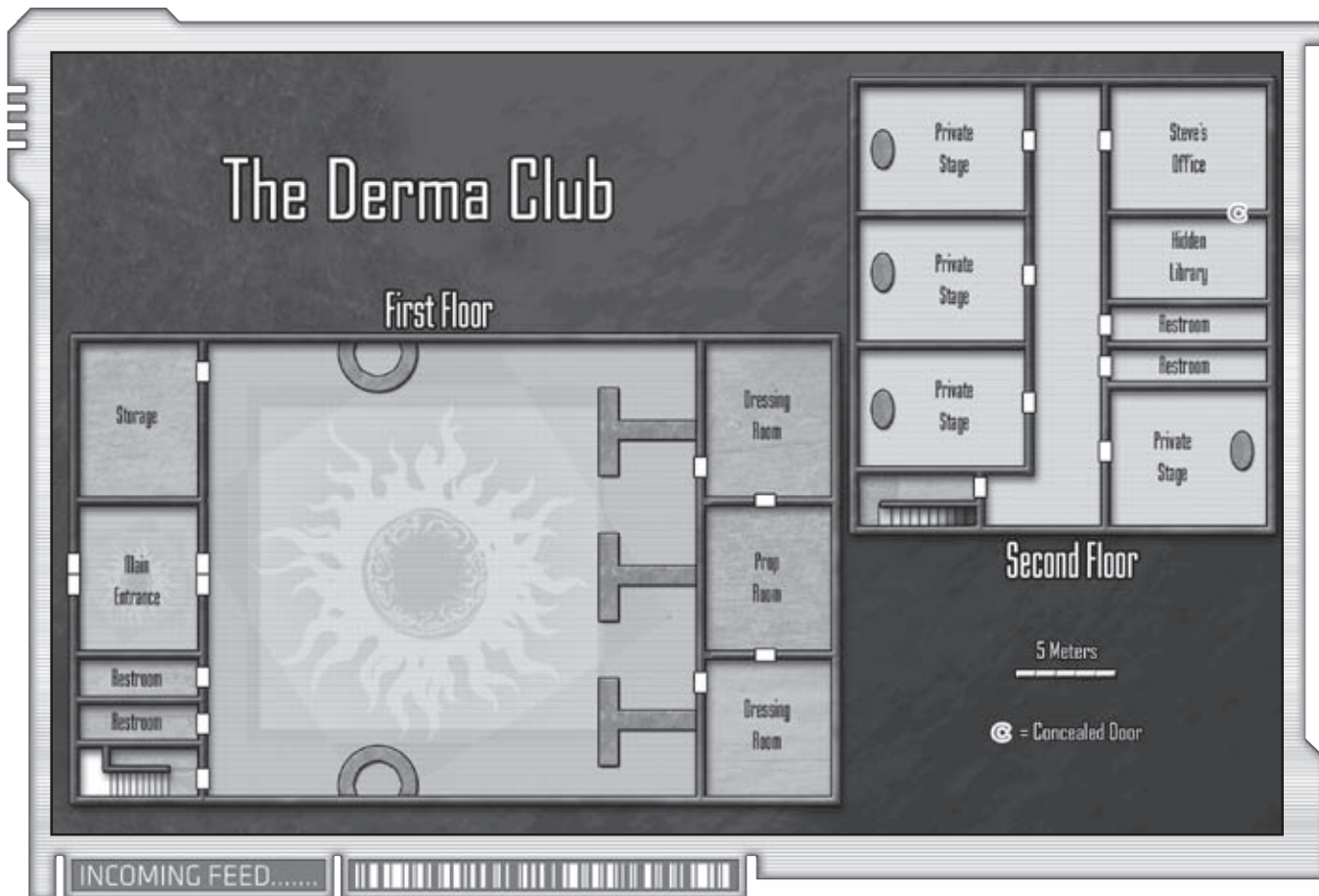
Call ends.

- 5:45 p.m.: Bacchus ends his *LA Gang Life* show by defacing A-Kidz AR graffiti tags.
- 6:00 p.m.: Bacchus and six members of his gang break away from the others. They drive down to the coast and jack a small aluminum skiff, leaving the rest of the gang at The Empire to "hold the fort" in *BattleCraft*.
- 6:20 p.m.: They then take a coastal route to the I-10 wall near Robertson Boulevard. They go up the on-ramp to cross the I-10 freeway. None of the news drones appear to be around, which is why they chose this path.
- 6:30 p.m.: Running a block, Bacchus arrives at the Derma Club, entering through the back alley. Inside in the prop room, the gang members are setting up lighting and drones for a trideo shoot.

A link to Diablo Verde's roach coach provides the runners with their first lead on Bacchus' approximate location downtown. They can talk to Diablo Verde about Bacchus, but he'll insist that they order a big breakfast (costing fifty nuyen). He'll tell them that an ork fitting their description was there. He got into a convertible and headed west. He serves the runners five quarter-pound enchiladas with extra green sauce. With this information, they can narrow the other searches' threshold by 2.

Bacchus hangs out at an abandoned office complex most of the time. The complex consists of three two-story cement buildings set in a U-shape around a sunken plaza. The buildings are ten meters wide by twenty meters long, divided into two to three offices each. The second floor is at street level, while the first floor is only accessible from the plaza. The video of them playing court ball shows a cityscape, but no streets as they are below street level. If the runners try to find where Bacchus is via the video, they will have to spend some time analyzing the cityscape from the show against images of downtown buildings. This will be a Computer + Analyze (10, 10 minutes) Extended Test to find that the office complex is located around Firestone





Avenue. The runners might also assume that since Bacchus is a rich kid (which they might have discovered through legwork), his father might own the complex. This would take a Data Search + Browse (12, 15 minutes) or Etiquette + Charisma (15, 20 minute) Extended Test to find that yes, Bacchus's father's power company owns the office complex and used to have a branch office at 22614 Firestone Avenue.

Bacchus may be at one of several clubs, which can be easily looked up on the Matrix. Bacchus doesn't have any clue, nor is he paranoid that someone might be following him. He has a big enough ego to believe that he has a loyal following of *LA Gang Life* fans. In fact, if he notices someone following him (especially if they are female), he'll go over to them and say, "If you wanted my autograph, all you had to do was ask. I don't bite, unless you like it that way. Where do you want me to put my signature?"

Bacchus is loud and arrogant. He doesn't like to lose and will be anyone's friend for a short time if they buy him a drink. If the runners happen to get on his good side while he's filming the show, their subscription rating goes up temporarily to 0.25 percent.

Inside the Derma Club

There are two floors to the Derma Club. The first has three large stages and tiered auditorium seating. The stages are T-shaped platforms, six meters long and six meters wide, with poles every three meters. The auditorium seating is not very private, though the lights all focus on the stage. Beside each seat is a small, round table for drinks. On either side is a four-meter-long bar where

trid projectors display miniature versions of the stages so no one misses the action. Backstage are two large dressing rooms and a prop room. The prop room has several closets filled with skimpy costumes. Upstairs are four smaller, private stages and Steve's office. Each private stage is a small, two-meter-wide oval platform; six seats are arranged in an arc on one side of the room, with steps and a small curtain on the other side. Steve's office houses the club's security node. Behind a concealed door in Steve's office is another room, where he has some old-school system operating.

This concealed room has an archaic library of trideo discs and chips. The machine is isolated from the network in the room and has no AR or VR menu access; a Computer + Logic (4, 10 minutes) Extended Test is needed to understand how to operate the device. There is a display screen that can cycle through the various channels. The runners can see the motel room at the Cinderblock as well as a few other rooms elsewhere. The rooms are all empty at the moment. To record a video, one places a recorder chip in the device, selects the channel, then presses the record button. These chips are compatible with commlinks, though the images are low quality. A Perception Extended (20, 15 minutes) Test is required to go through all the chips to find Dae's video. Up to four people can participate in this test. A glitch from any participant negates that round of successes for the group as the chip is misplaced, or the viewer misses seeing Dae.

The chip that Guiles is after can be described as a pornographic peepshow without sound. Christy Dae looks like she's on



drugs or BTLs; there are others in the room, also with nanopaste painted on their faces.

Security at Derma Club consists of eight security guards, one spider, and a pair of Dobermans. The security guards work in pairs, two at the front door, four watching the auditoriums on the main floor, and two on the second floor for the private stages. The spider watches the inside of the club through many cameras, and the Dobermans guard the girls in the dressing rooms and while they perform.

The front doors have been open since 5 p.m. Thirty or forty people are watching shows on the first floor. Security is alert, with a rotation of guards from the first to the second floor. There are no private shows scheduled for today, so security deters patrons from going upstairs.

Bacchus meets with Steve in the main room and talks about the trideo shoot until Daece arrives. Bacchus's men stay in the prop room. They get everything set up within ten minutes, then just hang out there.

Urgent Message...

THE DERMA CLUB NODE

Sculpting: A large neon sign shaped as a woman dancing around a pole

Authentication: Passkey

Privileges: Standard

Attributes: Firewall 6, Response 4, Signal 5, System 4

Spiders: 1 spider (see Grunts and Moving Targets)

IC: 2 MCT Bloodhound 4 (Patrolling), 1 Renraku Oniwaban 5

Resident Programs: Analyze 5

ARC: Scramble Security Hacker

Topology: Simple Standard Node

Inside the Cinderblock Motel where Daece was picked up

The motel is beyond run down; most likely it was flooded after the Twins and since then only the furniture's been replaced. The rectangular building lives up to its name, with six rooms in the front and six in the back. A simple maglock secures the rooms, but since there's faulty power it's a fifty-fifty chance the room can be opened without a key. Each spartan hole is four by four meters with a narrow bathroom, furnished with just a bed, nightstand, and dresser. In any of the rooms, occupants can guess at the debauchery that left so many stains and smells. A Perception (5) Test notices a few three-millimeter-wide holes in the ceiling and walls where a fiber-optic camera would fit.

Following the fiber optics

The runners can find the cables bundled into a PVC pipe on the roof. The pipe goes across the roof, ending at a laser repeater device pointed toward the Derma Club. On the roof of the Derma Club are three laser receivers.

Back at Studio 8

There are very few people here at this time. In addition to the Studio 8 security, there are another five Charisma Associate security

guards outside the Studio 8 building. There are also a limo and a truck in the front parking lot. Three of the five security men are around the vehicles, the other two are standing by the building. When the runners approach, they will be asked for their IDs if their commlinks are not in active mode. One of the security men from in front of the building will then escort them to the office, before going over to a work bench outside the office and picking up a crucible.

After Guiles receives the chip and Daece smashes it with a hammer, Daece runs out the opposite door and heads to the limo so she can be driven away (three of the security men go with her). Guiles puts the remains into the crucible, completely destroying the chip. When Guiles leaves, the security officer dumps the slag into an electronic waste container and puts the crucible back on the workbench. Guiles and the remaining two security men get into the truck and leave moments later. That evening Guiles calls down the wrath of Charisma Associates on Bacchus and the Derma Club, digging up enough dirt to bury them. Charisma Associates doesn't kill people, it kills character.

The runners' P2.0 stats are now as follows: C 6, M 400, S 0.1 percent. Additionally, Christy Daece has been added to their network. This is when the Life Management Guide software is added to the runners' commlinks via Daece. If the runners want to continue to check out the LA nightlife, some of LMG's advertisements will be projected on that runner's link. It starts out with small inconveniences while LMG gets integrated into the commlink.

Later that evening the subconscious programming, U56, is initiated in Abel, Bandril, and Cain. Abel pursues Guiles and uses his drones to take him out while on a winding road. Being in a ravine, Guiles' DocWagon signal and commlink are unreachable. Bandril tracks down the U56 flag to Daece's condo, where he is able to get a line of sight to her. He puts her to sleep with a Stun Bolt spell, then conjures a spirit of man to use its Accident power on the central home node (CHN) and create a gas leak to finish her off. DocWagon arrives quickly, but not fast enough to save her; the damage done by the spirit is too much.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If you want to make this scene more challenging, there are a lot of opportunities. Two suggestions are below.

- Police show up to the Derma Club after reports of drunk and disorderly conduct.
- While inside, one of the patrons doesn't like the look of the runner and starts a fight.

DEBUGGING

Ideally the runners will take a subtle approach to finding the chip. If they are heavy-handed and try to interrogate Bacchus or beat it out of him, all he'll give up is that it's at Derma Club. Additionally, the runners will have to do something about Bacchus and his gang if they've tipped their hand, since he'll warn Steve about the runners at the first opportunity. If this does occur, double the security at Derma Club.

There is a time factor involved as it is assumed that the runners will need to find the chip before Christy Daece arrives. Once they find the chip, some runners may want to try to copy it for their own motives. This may be possible, but will take ten minutes due to the older style of the chip and software format.



PLACES OF INTEREST

Brambleberry Cat: Brambleberry Cat is a local bar themed to the owners' impression of Tír na nÓg. Lots of old-world music, heavy pipe smoke, and games of pool are common in the Brambleberry Cat. The owners are an elderly couple from the U.K. who have imported various knickknacks and expensive beers to fill the bar. Prices average 20–25 nuyen for a pint of ale, lager, or stout.

Cinderblock Motel: A single-story, twelve-room motel that rents rooms by the hour, no questions asked. No phone or trideo service is offered, and the bed sheets are changed every week. Simple maglocks hold the doors closed. The Cinderblock Motel was submerged for a brief time before the I-10 Wall was put up. After drying out, the owner couldn't get much back from their insurance, so it was sold for one-tenth its value to a slumlord who turned it into what it is today.

Club Derma: Club Derma is a gentleman's club located on Robertson Blvd. It might have been posh once, but now it's only a few meters away from the reclaimed I-10 zone. The club hasn't moved into the AR age and has no overlay. High levels of salty humidity have discolored the paint and left a few areas of the security bars and razor wire rusted. The club is open from 5 p.m. to 9 a.m., and there's a fifty nuyen cover charge to enter. Drinks are cheap and bad, averaging five nuyen each.

Ike's: Ike's is a chopped-up fishing boat that was left from the Twins. The owner, Ike, has several half-barrel BBQ pits out back for cooking good soy chicken wings with various levels of spiciness. Drinks average 5–8 nuyen each, with plates of wings costing an additional 15–20 nuyen. Ike's seats eight inside the hold of the boat, and twelve outside at four tables.

I-10 Wall: After the Twins, a lot of downtown was submerged. Luckily most of the I-10 was still intact, being reinforced in case of earthquakes. Pueblo Corporate Council government used the freeway to lower large cement bricks under the freeway and started the process of draining Los Angeles. Since it was done rather quickly, there are still gaps between the freeway and the wall, allowing high tide and storm surges to occasionally spill over.

The Empire: The Empire is a large fifty by fifty meter building divided into various sections for virtual and augmented reality games. Fake weaponry and armor with AR overlays are available for the AR games. Rental of the space is ten nuyen an hour, or fifty nuyen for the day. Weapon and armor rentals are thirty nuyen for the day. Game subscriptions have to be provided by the customer.

GRUNTS AND MOVING TARGETS

Derma Club Security (8)

Probably the only thing still ugly in this plastic-surgery-happy town

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
5	4	5 (6)	4	2	3	3	3	2.69	8 (9)	2

Condition Monitor Boxes: 13

Armor (B/I): 10/4

Skills: Clubs 3, Dodge 2, Etiquette (Street) 1 (+2), Intimidation 2, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Shadowing 3, Unarmed Combat (Boxing) 5 (+2)

Augmentations: Bone Lacing (Kevlar) (α), Cybereye Rating

2 [flare comp, low-light, smartlink, thermographic], Smart Articulation (α), Wired Reflexes 1 (α)

Qualities: Martial Arts [+1 DV to unarmed, +1 Defense], Tough as Nails 2

Gear: Armor vest, commlink (Erika Elite commlink w/ Novatech Navi modified), form-fitting body armor (shirt)

Commlink: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4

Weapons:

Extendable Baton [Club, Reach 1, DV 3P]

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 16(c), w/ concealable holster]

Bacchus gangers (6)

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	3	5 (6)	4 (5)	3	3	3	3	4.22	8 (9)	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Blades 3, Dodge 3, Etiquette (Media) 1 (+2), Intimidation 3, Perception 2, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 3, Stealth skill group 3, Unarmed Combat 3

Augmentations: Smart Articulation (α), Muscle Aug 1 (α), Reaction Enhancer 2 (α), Cybereye Rating 2 [flare comp, low-light, smartlink, thermographic]

Gear: Armor Jacket, Commlink (Erika Elite Commlink w/ Novatech Navi modified), Contacts (w/image link, smartlink, thermographic)

Commlink: System 4, Response 4, Firewall 4, Signal 4

Weapons:

Rugar Thunderbolt [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, 12(c), w/ smart gun, lasersight concealable holster]

Cougar Fine Longblade [Blade, Reach 0, DV 4P, AP 0].

Derma Spider

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	3	4	3	3	5	5 (6)	4	4.85	9	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Clubs 3, Dodge 2, Etiquette (Matrix) 4 (+2), Electronics skill group 3, Electronic Warfare 4, Hacking 5, Perception 2, Pistols 3, Stealth skill group 2

Augmentations: Cerebral booster 1, commlink [Erika Elite commlink w/Novatech Navi modified], datajack, encephalon 1

Gear: Armor Jacket, Contacts (w/image link, smart link, thermographic)

Commlink: System 5, Response 5, Firewall 5, Signal 4

Programs: Analyze 5, Armor 4, Attack 4, Biofeedback Filter 4, Black Hammer 4, Browse 5, Command 5, Decrypt 3, Edit 5, Encrypt 4, Scam 5, Stealth 4, Track 4

Weapons:

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 16(c), w/ concealable holster]



Diablo Verde

Diablo Verde is a very large, green-skinned ork. He used to be a professional wrestler down in Baja and Tijuana until he had a bad accident and blew out both knees—not because of his wrestling, but because he was dating the wrong person’s daughter. He headed to Los Angeles and got into the food business, relying on his minor fame in wrestling to boost sales.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
9	4	4	7	3	3	2	3	5.4	7	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 13

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Skills: Artisan (Cooking) 2 (+2), Clubs 3, Dodge 2, Etiquette (Media) 3 (+2), Intimidation 2, Infiltration 2, Perception 3, Pilot Ground Craft 2, Pilot Watercraft 2, Pistols 3, Tracking 2, Unarmed Combat (Wrestling) 5 (+2)

Augmentations: Chloroplast Skin, Digestive Expansion

Gear: Armor Vest, Commlink (Hermes Ikon Commlink w/Iris Orb modified), Contacts (w/image link, smart link, thermographic), Apron

Commlink: System 4, Response 4, Firewall 4, Signal 3

Weapons:

Carving Knife [Blade, Reach 0, DV 7P, AP 0].

Chimeric Dobermans

These Dobermans are more muscular than normal dogs. They have a thicker hide with a black velvet covering. They have a slight protruding brow. It sounds like they whine, but it’s not because they are complaining—they are using echolocation to look for intruders.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
3	3	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	6	6	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Movement: 10/45

Skills: Intimidation 2, Perception 4, Tracking 2, Unarmed Combat 5

Powers: Armor (2/2), Attribute Enhancement (Body), Chimeric Ability (Echolocation), Enhanced Senses (Smell), Natural Weapon (Claws/Bite: DV 2P, AP 0), Skill Enhancement (Perception, Unarmed Combat), 7/4

CANDLE IN THE WIND

SCAN THIS

After completing the mission with Dae, the runners go back to their day job as security for Slade. At this point, the runners’ fake SINS have been compromised by the Lifestyle Management Guide (which migrated to their commlinks disguised as an automatic upgrade for P2.0, bypassing their normal protections). Based on their current habits, they receive tailored advertisements in ways to not smoke, drink, etc., for roughly a day. The U56 flag which also moved in with the LMG cycles through its functions and prevents the LMG from continuing to send advertisements or change the AR of the user’s commlink. This is a slow process that takes a day to complete.

While at Studio 8, everybody gets the news that Christy Dae has been found dead. Filming comes to a halt. Fermin asks the runners to meet with him. He tells them that Dae’s death was

not an accident and that in about two hours, the news of Guiles’ death will also hit the airwaves. Fermin is worried—no one should have been able to find Dae’s exact residence, as Guiles was very good in keeping her private life private. Fermin wants the runners to find who did this and how, as they could be a threat to other sim stars.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Without so much as a day’s rest, you head back to Studio 8 at eight in the morning. The soundstage has been revamped to look like the Himalayas again, but with real stone this time. Big Ben requests the big box. Inside it is a Thunderstruck Gauss Rifle. You wonder how the hell Slade picked up that one.

By one o’clock, the set is ready. As the scene is laid out, Jenny Freelancer has caught up with the competition at the Tibetan temple past the undead army. While they are busy figuring out the puzzle to get the Sextant of Worlds, Jenny ambushes the rigger and pulls out the rifle. Lots of real explosions—big ones—and real armored stuntmen flying all over the place.

Around two, and after a half-dozen takes, Big Ben calls for a break. Pandora is handed a towel and water bottle. She sees you sitting offstage and walks over.

“Hey guys!” You have to get over the shock of being so close to Pandora—beautiful *and* she knows how to shoot a gun—and now she’s also talking directly to you. “Could you do me a *teensy* little favor?”

She sits down next to them and talks a little lower, “I’m starving! I’d kill for an Organwich Works special with extra avocado, but I’m under contract with Horizon.” She waves her hands as she gets a little flustered trying to figure out how to explain it. “There’s politics involved, and it basically boils down to avoiding giving the Organwich Sandwich free advertising. By having me being recorded. Would you mind getting me two Organwich Sandwich specials with extra avocado? Please? Oh, and let’s keep it just between us, shall we? Our own little shadowrun.”

At the Organwich Sandwich Deli, read the following:

As Sally Sue on the advertisement says, “The ingredients come straight from the farm to the deli!” You wonder if that includes the sliced ham and turkey. There are only three Organwich Sandwich Deli stores in LA: one downtown, one in Fun City, and one in Escondido. Because of time constraints, you choose the store downtown.

Arriving at your destination, the store is not hard to find. The large barn-like facade sticks out in this urban environment. You also notice that your link is offering up coupons at Organwich Sandwich for two free toppings for fifteen centimeter or longer subs, and a free large nutri-water with any purchase of a thirty-centimeter sub. Even though it’s past lunchtime, there are still ten people waiting in line. This gives you time to review the AR menu and possibly pre-order something. The smell of freshly baked bread makes your stomach growl. Not everything looks like real food, but with the smells coming out of the kitchen, who cares?

After returning to Studio 8, read the following:

So, back on the set at 2:30 with the sandwiches that you smuggled in, you see Pandora sitting off the set. She’s wearing a





INCOMING FEED.....



A FISTFUL OF CREDSTICKS

long red trench coat and mirrored shades. She stands and walks toward you, carrying a large bag left purposefully open. You get the gist—she wants a secret handoff of the sandwiches. As you drop them covertly into her bag, her glasses depolarize briefly and she gives you a wink, then she continues walking to her dressing room.

For an hour, while you relive Pandora’s wink and stare at the scenery, you realize the techs have been building another set on the other side of the mountain. Walking around the mountain and fake snow drifts, you find yourself in a small jungle edging onto a Central American–looking temple, probably supposed to be Aztec, though you’re pretty sure that the large head sculptures are Olmec. Jim, the lead techie, looks down from the second floor of the temple and shouts, “Hey! Can you bring the case with the macuahuitls and the obsidian knife? Big Ben wants a camera check before shooting tomorrow.”

Heading over to the room, you can hear Big Ben yelling on the commlink as he takes an occasional drink from a large thermos. “No! No! A week is too long. I need those T-birds ready in three days. A storm front is heading towards Denver and I want things ready to shoot when I get there.”

<Pause>

“Then don’t worry about it. I’ll call Casquilho Imports. A Mr. Costello has offered to provide T-birds when I shoot the Denver scene.”

<Long pause>

“That’s what I thought. Thanks, Slade.”

He sees you guys and waves, before walking over to his chair to eat some snack someone brought him. You grab the case from the storage room and come back out.

At 3:34 p.m., chirps, beeps, and rings of commlinks go off simultaneously, getting their owners’ attention. Looking around, you see every technician, stagehand, and caterer stop in their tracks and start operating their links. A couple of girls burst into tears. Big Ben looks dumbstruck. He drops his drink and leaves the set. All over P2.0 and viralling out into the Matrix is some heavy news: Christy Dae is dead.

After getting the runners’ reaction to the news, read the following:

Fermin interrupts whatever you are doing and tells you to follow him. He leads you to the same office where you met Guiles. After you are all in, he locks the door and moves past the windows, activating the polarization for privacy, before sitting down at the head of the table. He rubs his fingers on the table and is distracted momentarily by the slight indents in the imitation wood.

“You probably have heard the news that Miss Dae is dead,” he says. “What hasn’t been released yet is that police consider it murder. Dae was found an hour ago, having died of asphyxiation due to a defective CHN in her apartment. Police have brought in para-forensics to the crime scene, which leads me to believe that magic was used.

He puts his link on the table and pulls a news headline. “In two hours, this news will be released. Guiles has also been found

dead. He was found at the bottom of a ravine southeast of The End of the World.

He adjusts his suit in his seat. "I'll be frank with you. Guiles hired you for some other job while down here. It doesn't matter to me what the job was, and I don't hold you responsible for Guiles' death because of it. My problem is Dae. Guiles kept her home life very private. So much so, he employed several Dae look-alikes so the media wouldn't know where she lived."

He adjusts his suit again, obviously agitated by this event. "I want to know how the killers found Dae. Did they torture Guiles or have some other inside information on our clients? Are the murders related to the job that Guiles wanted you to do? Is this retaliation against Guiles?"

He finally just stands up and walks around. "All of Charisma Associates is on high alert because of this. I'm offering you twice the retainer to get me answers."

HOOKS

The beginning of this scene allows the runners another tour of downtown while not on business. It should be fun for the runners to play with Pandora in a non-serious event. Once the news of Christy Dae's death spreads, the runners might be motivated by compassion that an innocent young girl was murdered, or honor due to the fact that their clients were murdered, possibly in retaliation for the runners' actions. If neither of these is sufficient, then Fermin's doubling of their fee should satisfy the motivation of greed.

BEHIND THE SCENES

At Organwich Sandwich Deli:

Organwich Sandwich is a little larger than a fast food place, with bar-style seating at the front, a few booths inside, and three tables outside. Several food attendants wait along a counter to assemble. Behind them, a dozen cooks prepare and slice the food for the attendants. Only about five customers are actually eating here; the rest have taken their subs and left.

Urgent Message...

ORGANWICH NODE

Sculpting: One giant farm displaying all the natural foods that go into the sandwiches

Authentication:

Node 1: Web of Trust

Node 2: Access Key

Privileges: Standard

Attributes:

Nodes 1-2: Firewall 4, Response 3, Signal 3, System 4

Spiders: Professional Hacker

IC: 1 Watanabe Electric Kitsune 3

Resident Programs: Analyze 3

ARC: Scramble security Spider

Topology: Node 1 allows customers to search the Organwich Sandwich Deli, view the various sandwiches and drinks, check on calories, and virtually assemble a sub sandwich. Node 2 is for the employees to check or order ingredients, security, etc.

The Life Management Guide

Except for the Organwich Sandwich coupons, one of the first effects of the LMG that the runners may perceive is that the AR menu omits alcoholic beverages; the link also uses an AR filter to blur out the drinks listed on the physical menu behind the attendants. Naturally, anyone viewing solely with their natural eyes will not see this effect. With a Perception (3) Test, the runner may perceive the link's attempt at blurring the drinks. Running a diagnostic of the link shows that everything is running as normal.

As the runners go through their normal routine, LMG offers coupons to fitness centers and whole-food stores. If they try to buy cigarettes, BTLs, or alcohol, the cashier gives the runner a weird look, makes a comment like "Why buy them then, asshole," or just cancels the deal if they're operating on the shady side of the law (that NPC would then be considered hostile to the runners). If the runners ask why they're receiving odd looks, and the cashier can show them the payment receipt.

On the receipt is a memo section, populated with interesting statistics:

- Tobacco smoke also contains many other chemicals. In fact, it contains over 4,000 chemicals, many of which are very harmful to our bodies.
- Each cigarette you smoke takes five to eight minutes off your life.
- Alcohol increases the occurrence of domestic violence.
- Don't drink and drive.
- BTLs can over-stimulate parts of the brain, causing dementia and memory loss.
- Three years minimum in prison for trafficking in BTLs.
- Your SIN has been recorded for informational purposes for this sales transaction.

If any of the runners keeps a virtual friend or pet, it behaves normally, but its usual responses are slanted toward the user getting their shit together:

- Let's take a jog or walk around the studio.
- Hey! Skip the jelly rolls and go for the salad!
- Instead of going out to clubs to drink, they still have drive-in trideos here, why don't we go there?

The exact manner of the LMG's messages depends on the virtual friend's personality; the LMG takes that personality and turns it into a counselor.

Besides guiding the runner toward personal improvement, LMG also becomes a sort of "cyber nanny," filtering out any Matrix information that is negative or depressing. The programming is imperfect, though, so it's a fifty/fifty chance that that some bad news gets through anyway.

As with any beta software, there are bugs in the system (p. 119, *Unwired*), and since LMG is so connected to other systems, it can introduce bugs into other software on the commlink. The most common bugs caused by the LMG are resource allocation errors, which reduce the System rating by 1.

At Studio 8

At 6 a.m. the following day, Steve Paterson (owner of the Derma Club) is arrested. Before the runners head to the Organwich Sandwich Deli, nothing unusual happens at the



Studio. Pandora heads off to her dressing room and gets into the leather outfit she was previously wearing in Seattle for the “shadowrun.” Jim (the lead tech) and Big Ben separately head to the cafeteria. Fermin is called away at 9 a.m., as Charisma Associates has called a meeting to discuss what the police have discovered. At around 10 a.m., Fermin and some of his associates try to get hold of Guiles, and the police tell them that they have found Guiles’ body.

After the runners get back, they still see some unusual pop-ups from LMG, such as the average calories in the food items found in the cafeteria. Fermin arrives shortly after the runners. After a long meeting with the police, the managers of Charisma Associates decide to release a statement about Dae’s death simultaneously to employees and news sources. Once that message is sent at 3:34, people are devastated by the news. Pandora is in her dressing room when she reads it and bursts into tears, inconsolable. Ben ends shooting for the day, and everyone goes home. He believes that they have a better chance than the police to find out what is going on.

LMG is a slight hindrance to anyone trying to find more news on Dae’s death, as LMG redirects them to sites that talk about her music and life.

SUBPLOTS (OPTIONAL)

The Life Management Guide determines that some or all of the runners have an “unhealthy interest in violence,” and blocks their commlinks from viewing or searching video and news reports.

DEBUGGING

The runners may be too proud to undertake what is essentially a gopher’s errand—not even for a novahot sim star like Pandora. Emphasize the compelling force of Pandora’s personality, the tedium of the studio between takes, and the appeal of any excuse to see more of downtown LA. If they still refuse to take on Pandora’s “shadowrun,” skip to the second paragraph of “After returning to Studio 8” as if they never left.

Once hackers on the team start noticing odd things happening due to the LMG software, they may attempt to take action against it. See *Behind the Scenes* (p. 32) for information on finding information about the LMG.

The runners may choose to simply remove the P2.0 package from their commlinks. This meets strong opposition from their employers, who are part of an LA subculture that believes runners without P2.0 must be mediocre and will make them look bad. They will compromise, though—if the runners do not want P2.0 on their commlinks, the studio will provide a disposable ‘link. They will load P2.0 on to it. The LMG will then migrate from Pandora’s ‘link (the LMG is part of the reason she developed a craving for a healthy sandwich from Organwich instead of having other fast food). This will allow the basic plot to continue.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Organwich Sandwich Deli: Organwich Sandwich Deli is a small chain of stores in Los Angeles. They have contracts with local farmers and bake their own bread in order to compete with Horizon. The deli has had marginal success and has expanded to three stores. Each of the stores looks like a bright red barn and is able to seat eighteen people. The delis are decorated in red and

white, with little barn-shaped napkin holders and haystack-shaped salt and pepper shakers. The owner, Sally Sue, started the business from her own farm in Apple Valley seven years ago. She uses organic natural and transgenic foods in Organwich Sandwiches, but offsets the cost by keeping the manufacturing and baking in house. Prices average twenty-five nuyen for combo meals, eighteen nuyen for thirty-centimeter sandwiches, and twelve nuyen for the fifteen-centimeter variety.

LA FREEWAY

SCAN THIS

The runners try to chase down the usual channels to find Bacchus, only to find that that *LA Gang Life* has been pulled off P2.0 and his subscription has been suspended. Looking up Steve and the Derma Club, the runners will find he was arrested early that morning and the police are investigating charges against him.

While Bacchus has fled Los Angeles, the A-Kidz are still around, as well as their show, *Gang Life*. The runners can get some info from the leader of the A-Kidz, Leo, who will tell them that Bacchus probably headed toward San Diego when his rating on P2.0 dropped unexpectedly and his media contracts terminated. If the runners pursue him, he tries to evade them, thinking they are Charisma Associates or something of that nature coming after him. While they are dealing with Bacchus, the news breaks that sim star Whyte Nyght was murdered on set. Bacchus does not seem to be the one targeting the rich and famous.

As the runners return to LA, the Rehabilitation program and Life Management Guide finally collides on the Five. The runners drive right into an ambush. When they finally beat back the attackers, the runners collect their wits as the killers flee into the darkness.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

With a new directive from Fermin, you leave Studio 8. The parking lot is devoid of cars, but is littered with trash due to the rapid exodus of people. Mr. Fermin wants answers on who killed Dae, and you might be able to get them. Maybe Charisma Associates can spin this so you can be a hero when you find them. Or maybe not.

At Club K read the following:

Driving to Club K, you see that there’s no door off of E Street. It’s all brick with a neon sign of a large K. It’s not until you circle around that you see people walking around back via an alleyway. Walking down an L-shaped alley between Kong Mart Whole Foods and an appliance storage place, you find the main entrance to Club K. A small parking lot between all the buildings holds some sweet motorcycles. Those you see entering Club K or out smoking are some heavily modified individuals with obvious cyberware. An aggressive thrasher metal beat leaks out from the doorway. Inside there seems to be some competition going on: games of pool, drone combat on the trid, and poker. Some seem really intense and into the game. You recognize a few of the gangsters as being with Bacchus. Above all this is a huge lion-headed man in a leather chair, watching and directing the others in these games. Apparently he’s the one in charge.



If the runners get an audience with Leo, read the following:

Leo leans forward from his chair. The lighting changes above the dais, focusing on the runners. Leo makes a cut gesture and the camera drones hanging from the ceiling move away from him. He steps down from the dais and grabs a beer from a waitress, "I doubt you're here for the games or to join the gang. What do you want?" he says in a deep voice.

When the runners ask about Bacchus, read the following:

"You looking for that piece of trash?" he laughs, "That asshole tried to pull off his own show and finally got what he deserved. His P2.0 subscription was revoked, and he ran."

He gestures toward the people playing games around him. "All of Bacchus' dogs are now coming back to me with their tail between their legs."

Taking a drink, he motions to one of the gangers you believe you've seen with Bacchus, "Nike! Where's that shit, Bacchus, hiding out?"

Nike replies, "He's heading for the border so he can get on a pirated network."

"There you go. Head down I5, you might catch him before he hits the border. He's still driving that POS convertible."

Leo moves back toward the dais, "Now if you excuse me, my commercial time is almost over, and we have to get back to the games."

When the cameras come back and the lighting changes, Leo lets out an intimidating roar and continues a tirade of how he's going to up the ante for the challengers. It's a different personality than the one you just talked to.

On I5 read the following:

I5 is a long isolated freeway with ocean on either side for most of the time. There's an occasional island nearby or car to pass. While the signs have been removed, there are still off ramps from the I5 ending in the sea. After twenty minutes, you see a familiar bondogrey jackrabbit convertible near San Clamente. Nothing looks bad at first, but then he accelerates. Something spooked him and now he's running. You turn on the chase scene music and pursue.

When the runners head back to LA, read the following:

The drive in the evening along I-5 is very tranquil compared to the hustle and bustle of this Hollywood lifestyle. Another hour south and you could have made it to Aztlan. Traffic is light, as those who can afford it take the air shuttles or the more secure Silver Bullet. The ocean seems flat and calm, breaking against the freeway pylons.

HOOKS

The runners are being paid handsomely to get Mr. Fermin some answers. This scene begins with the only lead that the runners have, which is Bacchus, and they should be encouraged to pursue him. While they might feel disappointed that Bacchus was not the killer, catching up with him leads the runners into an ambush set by the real killers.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The Matrix is cluttered with posts about Christy Dae. The threshold for all Matrix search tests increases by 1 for the remainder of the adventure. Below are the new search tables for Steve, Derma Club, and Bacchus

BACCHUS

Contacts: Gang

CONTACT	MATRIX	RESULT
0	0	Who?
1	1	Bacchus, god of wine, right? Did I win?
2	2	Yeah, that P2.0 guy. Some ganger with his own reality show.
5	3	Didn't you hear? Bacchus lost his contract with Horizon. He doesn't have a show anymore.
6	4	Apparently Horizon is taking legal actions against him for some breach of the contract. So he's bailed out of LA.
7	7	Something is going on with Smartlink, they've been out assessing properties all over Los Angeles.

STEVE PATERSON

Contacts: Street

CONTACT	MATRIX	RESULT
3	0	Who?
4	2	He owns the Derma Club.
5	3	He's been arrested for illegal prostitution and tax evasion.
6	6	Steve rubbed someone the wrong way. Horizon has hired some serious investigators looking for more legal issues to throw against him, including building code violations.

While Steve has been arrested, the runners will find nothing on his voyeurism schemes in the news. Charisma Associates doesn't know about it, as Guiles has taken it to his grave.

Bacchus fled Los Angeles after hearing what happened to Steve and noticing the slow loss of ratings to his P2.0 channel. Knowing the inevitable was approaching, he took off. With nothing much more than a six-pack and the clothes on his back, he drives off down I5. Without Bacchus, most of his gang has tried to move back to the A-Kidz, who have informed Leo of Bacchus' actions.

At Club K, it is difficult for the runners to get to Leo as some heavy A-Kidz muscle keeps those that aren't playing in the cheap seats or outside. The runners could take on these gangers, but with all the media attention on the live feed of the A-Kidz, it would be detrimental to their investigation and possible quick arrest being both downtown and with the police being on high alert after Dae's death and the killer on the loose.

If the runners ask what is going on, any of the gangers tell them this is initiation night, as Bacchus' boys want back in. They have to win to get even an audience with Leo. This might get the runners' attention as they try to enter the games. Runners can play in the games in order to talk to Leo. To win, it's an opposed Agility + Reaction or Logic + Intuition (4) Test in a game of cards or



joystick-controlled remote drone racing. Each runner can try to play. Losers are ousted to the cheap seats.

Alternately, they could get a hold of one of Bacchus' boys and interrogate him themselves. It would be a Charisma + Intimidation (4) Test or Charisma + Con (3) Test to get one of them away from the games. Then it's an opposed test using a Charisma-based skill to get the answer that "Bacchus has fled for San Diego down I5."

After getting on the trail of Bacchus, they locate him cruising down I5. This becomes a ten-turn chase scene, where the runners must out-maneuver Bacchus and stop him before he gets off the freeway. Bacchus attempts to outrun them—being on a freeway with no exits, he doesn't have many options.

They begin the turn at medium range between the vehicles. If Bacchus wins the opposed vehicle test, he will put the range at long distance and attempt to break away.

Urgent Message...

VEHICLES: CHASE COMBAT

Vehicle chase combat involves multiple vehicles traveling at high speeds over distance. Because of this, Chase Combat is different than regular tactical combat. Complete rules can be found in *Vehicle Combat*, p. 167, SR4A. Some specific highlights are included below.

- Time is measured by Chase Turns, with each Chase Turn being one minute long. Initiative Passes further subdivide Chase Turns.
- Engagement ranges are divided into three categories: Close (vehicles side-by-side or similarly close), Short (near, but not close enough to directly engage), and Long (within sight, but at a distance).
- At the beginning of each Chase Turn, all drivers must make a Vehicle Test. The winner chooses the Engagement Range for that turn.
- Drivers must spend a Complex Action each Chase Turn controlling their vehicles (see Vehicle Test Threshold Table, p. 168, SR4A). This action can be used to perform a Chase Stunt (see Chase Stunts, p. 169, SR4A).
- Passengers take actions during the Chase Turn in normal Initiative order.

When the runners finally stop him, he's very combative and probably a little inebriated. He tells them to fuck off and says he doesn't know what they're talking about. Using Intimidation against Bacchus suffers a penalty of -8 (Due to the following modifiers: Bacchus is hostile, character is annoying to Bacchus, character doesn't have the right look, Bacchus is physically imposing).

If they succeed in the intimidation despite the difficulty, Bacchus tells them that Dace never showed up at the club and the Derma Club manager was arrested this morning. He never thought that Horizon would think that he would have killed Dace. He's a little taken aback at this notion.

Urgent Message...

CHASE SCENE MODIFIERS

Player Characters (and NPCs) encounter a variety of modifiers during the chase scene. These can affect everything from their Vehicle Tests to targeting someone with a spell. A few common modifiers (and their table references) are listed below:

Vehicle Test Threshold Table, p. 168, SR4A

Example: Weaving through downtown LA full speed; Threshold: Hard (3).

Terrain Test Table, p. 169, SR4A

Example: Off-roading on the mud and sand of the shoreline; Threshold Modifier: Tight (+4).

Ranged Combat Modifiers Table, p. 152, SR4A

Example: Attacker on a moving vehicle (-3), Target has partial cover (-2), Target on a moving vehicle (-3), Visibility Impaired: Full Darkness (-6).

While they are interrogating him, another news flash hits the matrix: neo-metal sim star musician, Whyte Nyght was killed minutes ago. A video shows Whyte Nyght walking out on stage, then collapsing with blood oozing from his chest. The killer isn't seen in the footage. A Logic + Intuition (2) Test for any runner who searched for the chip recognizes Whyte Nyght as a participant on the blackmail chip. If they fail this test, Bacchus remembers seeing Whyte Nyght coming to the motel with Dace.

The runners have two options: take Bacchus back, or leave him. He complains if they take him with them and waits for an opening to escape. If they leave him, he'll get his car working again and continue down to Atzlan. One of the changes that the PCC had to make on I5 is constructing turnaround points along the freeway since most of the on/off ramps are submerged. It will take the runners a few minutes to find the next one and cross over to the northbound lanes. Fortunately, there is little traffic.

It's close to dusk by the time the runners head back to Los Angeles. Bandril and Able have been following the runners' US6 flag on their link. When they see that the runners have stopped, they find a place to set up an ambush. Bandril, the mage (See *Cast of Shadows*, p. 36), is up on a hill, a half a kilometer away from the action using a non-digital scope to target those that leave the car. He got to the hill via a skiff. What he can target is only the car and five meters around it, which is what he can see based on the overhead freeway lamp. While he's waiting, he organizes the debris left on the island thanks to an obsessive/compulsive disorder he picked up with the conditioning. Abel, the rigger (See *Cast of Shadows*, p. 36), has brought one dragonfly drone for each of the runners, plus the two suicide drones which were meant to disable the vehicle. He is several kilometers north on an off ramp of I5, captaining the swarm of drones. His objective is the same as Bandril's though he has more range and will cover Bandril and Cain's escape if necessary.

Cain has packed up from his sniper position after killing Whyte Nyght and is now following the runners' trail. Cain was driving south when he saw the runners heading back north. He pulls over and sets himself on the concrete barrier waiting for them to approach. His OCD has him sweeping off the concrete and piling the debris before he crouches on the concrete.

A FISTFUL OF CREDSTICKS

Five minutes into the runners' return trip, they encounter the double ambush by Able and Bandril. First, a shimmering physical barrier spell appears in front of the car, causing a collision. It is a Physical Barrier 6 spell (p. 211, *SR4A*) stretching across the freeway, making it unavoidable. To determine the damage to the vehicle, see p. 170, *SR4A* and estimate the runners' traveling speed. Following this attack is another attack by a pair of suicide dragonflies with plastic explosives (p. 325, *SR4A*). Both are an attempt to stop the car on the freeway, making the runners an easier target.

When the runners encounter the barrier, Cain, the muscle (See *Cast of Shadows*, p. 36), is two hundred meters north on the side of the freeway with a sniper rifle in his hand. He isn't firing during the surprise round, but waits to shoot the first person who gets out of the car. He has clear sight with the scope, but the runners will have cover on the far side of their vehicle from him. This should stop the runners from progressing further on the freeway.

After the surprise round, Bandril conjures a Spirit of Man 5 (4 services, Innate Spell Lightning optional power) to attack everyone in the car, with Abel's drones continuing to attack (with him captain-chairing one). If Bacchus is with the runners, the killers will not target him directly. A Perception (4) Test notices that the drones surprisingly will shoot around him to get at the runners. If Bacchus is with the runners at this time, he will take off, rather than helping them. His cybered legs give him that extra speed necessary for escape.

Due to the violent nature of the attack, LMG attempts to filter out the imagery through the runners' image link. This leads to a -1 penalty to Perception of enemy drones and manifested spirits as they appear blurred. At the same time, LMG sends the runners advertisements for Augmented Therapy services covering anger management and stress disorder therapy.

A bug in the LMG beta causes a flashing error code on the image link "channel out of sync; attempting to reset". This inflicts a -1 penalty to smartlinks as poor coding causes interference between the smartlink and image link. This is specifically an issue for runners using an image link and smartlink. If the smartlink is turned off, then the conflict is removed.

Cain leaves the scene when the runners either take out half of Abel's drones or Bandril's spirit. Bandril will cover Cain's exit if the runners try to pursue Cain. Abel will cover Bandril, if he sees spirits or magic leaving the freeway. Both Cain and Abel leave by car, and Bandril leaves by boat.

The runners will be able to approximately locate where Cain and Abel were set up in the ambush on the freeway. With a Perception (2) Test, they find that at Cain's position, all the trash was picked up. The same is true for where Abel was hiding. It's not that they are hiding evidence of their existence, as there are smudged fingerprints and footprints; it's more like they tidied up.

SUBPLOTS (OPTIONAL)

At Club K, Leo thinks about what the runners are doing and requests that some drones accompany them to record the end of Bacchus. They can be honorary A-Kidz at Club K if they do this.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

If you want to make this scene more challenging, there are several opportunities;

- At Club K, one of the gangers is convinced that the runners are cheating at the games and starts a brawl.
- Attracted by the violence on the freeway, Shedim, inhabiting corpses, have come to see what is going on. Wanting fresh bodies, they attack the runners.
- Not knowing that the runners are blocking the road, gangers trying to hijack a truck are surprised. The semi jackknives and motorcycles collide with the barriers. More chaos occurs with a second gunfight.

DEBUGGING

This scene needs the runners to be stopped on the freeway when they return to Los Angeles. Since their vehicle is stock, it will not have any special options, such as reinforced armor or run-flat tires. If the runners manage to keep the vehicle running, Cain will make called shots to the vehicle's tires. This should be a relatively quick but intense combat. If it appears that the runners are at a serious disadvantage, allow the sound of sirens to be heard and then end the scene with the killers fleeing law enforcement—though it turns out that the police were actually pursuing some other criminal down the southbound lane.

PLACES OF INTEREST

Club K: Club K is the headquarters for A-Kidz downtown. It's a lofty single-story brick building refitted for trideo production and warehouses on E Street. The actual entrance is an alleyway behind Club K. Club K is owned by Horizon for the production of *A Gang's Life*. Its interior is that of a club, with a bar, some tables, and a few retro sports tables like pool and foosball. The ceiling is an electronic web with controllable lighting, cameras, and other sensors, able to record everything going on in the main bar and kitchen area. Unique to the club is a dais with a well-worn leather chair. From here the leader can direct his gang's actions out in the street and in the club. There are a few rooms in the back where the gang can sleep things off.

I-5 Freeway: I-5 Freeway survived the Twins for the most part. It was the first to be repaired and was used as the major artery for supplies and rescue. Today I-5 is for people who can't afford an air shuttle or Silver Bullet maglev traveling up the West Coast.

GRUNTS AND MOVING TARGETS

Leo

Leo is one of the leaders of the A-Kidz. He is trying to push his star to greater heights in L.A. He substituted his elfish features for feline features and has attracted a larger female audience for the show. He became leader of the A-Kidz by gladiatorial combat against an almost-cyborg leader, Tee8 three years ago. It was just as well—Horizon was losing ratings for the show, as Tee8, was showing signs of cyber psychosis. Leo got to where he is not by the violence of gang activity, but by the theatrics he's added behind the scenes.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
4 5 5(6) 4(5) 4 3 4 4 2 3.95 8(9) 2

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 6/5

Active Skills: Artistry (Acting) 2 (+2), Blades 2, Con 3, Dodge



2, Electronics skill group 2, Etiquette (Media) 4 (+2), Exotic Weapon (Fang) 2, Intimidation 3, Negotiations 4, Perception 3, Pilot Ground Vehicle (Motorcycle) 2 (+2), Pistols 2

Augmentations: Fang Implants, Animal (Lion) features, Muscle augmentation 1, Commlink [TransAvalon w/ Iris Orb modified], Cyber Eyes [Low light, thermographic, smart link], Bone Density 1, Synaptic Booster 1, Simrig

Gear: Mortimer Great Coat

Commlink: System 4, Response 4, Firewall 4, Signal 4

Weapons:

Katana [Blade, Reach 1, DV 6P, AP -1]

A-Kidz gangers

Rich wanna-be gangers rebelling against their parents. They have contracts with Horizon for body modifications.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Ess	Init	IP
4	3	5 (6)	4	3	3	3	3	4.56	8 (9)	1

Condition Monitor Boxes: 10

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Skills: Blades 3, Dodge 3, Etiquette (Media) 1 (+2), Intimidation 3, Perception 2, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Pistols 3, Stealth skill group 3, Unarmed Combat 3

Augmentations: Smart Articulation (α), Muscle Aug 1 (α), Reaction Enhancer 2 (α), Cybereye Rating 2 [flare comp, low-light, smartlink, thermographic]

Gear: Armor Jacket, Commlink (Erika Elite Commlink w/ Novitech Navi modified), Contacts (w/Image link, Smart link, thermal)

Commlink: System 4, Response 4, Firewall 4, Signal 4

Weapons:

Rugar Thunderbolt [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, 12(c), w/ smart gun, laser sight, concealable holster]

Cougar Fine Longblade [Blade, Reach 0, DV 4P, AP 0].

BIG FINISH

SCAN THIS

After the assault, the runners will have to piece the puzzle together of how and why these people were targeted. The runners looking for a commonality will soon discover the social tags in relation to P2.0 software and the propagation of the software via the social network. The “Undesirable” tag has the most unique Matrix signature allowing a trace any time the commlink was in an active state. All three victims had the tag, as well as themselves. The runners can use this against the assassins and track them down. The closest killer is in the San Fernando Valley.

The killers find themselves flagged with the U56 marker after all the assassinations. Their conditioning breaks down from the conflict, and they start targeting each other. When the runners track down the first killer at an apartment complex, they find themselves in a crossfire as the other killers try to take everyone out.

In the aftermath, the runners will not find any survivors. After they call Fermin with what they have discovered, he arrives, taking charge of them as the police come on the scene. With the news, he'll thank them, but then tell them that they are too close to the news of Dae and the killers to be of any help with the trideo.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Well that just bites. People take pot shots at you and then run. Fuck the investigation; now it's personal. Who the hell are these guys, and what the hell is wrong with the link? Since there's only one way they could have gone, time to get the car working again.

At the San Fernando Valley area, read the following:

You drive into the Sun Valley Sprawl; dark-stained condos and apartments are packed densely in this part of LA. You've traced the signal to a four-story condo complex. This low-income condo looks like any other place with people going about their daily business. This evening is still busy with people coming to and from a nearby nightclub. Some street folk are converging on an alley behind the condo.

With little effort, the U56 flag can be tracked down to a condo on the third floor, two doors in. You can assume that this is how the killers tracked down Dae, Fermin, Nyght, and you. There's a light on in the condo, but no signs of anyone moving around.

After the runners finish off the killers, read the following:

Your commlink won't stop buzzing. Looking at the callerID, you see that it's Mr. Fermin. After all the combat, you find a place to sit down and answer the call.

“I see that you made the news. Do you have answers for me?”

When the runners say yes, then read the following:

“Good. I'm almost at your location.

An SUV arrives on the scene with familiar Charisma Associate security and Fermin.

He steps out to assess the damage, and then says, “Please get in the car, and we need you back at Studio City before releasing a press release to the authorities.”

This is one of the more unusual getaways you've experienced. The car doesn't break any speed laws and has a flock of drones pursuing it. PCC Security is at the gates as they pass through. You realize that as employees of Charisma Associates, you have some diplomatic immunity. It's kinda nice being recognized rather than having to be a deniable asset.

Inside an office complex, Fermin leads the runners to the same large office you met in twice before. At least a half-dozen workers are in here, chatting away. You can overhear the words “Moral Vigilantes” used more than once.

“Please sit,” Fermin says, as he himself sits down in a leather chair. “Tell me what you uncovered.”

After hearing from you, he calls in one of the workers and relays some of that information to them. He then looks at his commlink. “Shortly we will release the news that Christy Dae's killers have been killed and brought to justice. Your role in this will be edited and glossed over. People will be focused on the life of Miss Dae for months to come. I'm afraid, though, that your P2.0 rating has become too high to be of any service to Charisma Associates.”

He does a few more things on his 'link, “Your P2.0 accounts have been suspended pending a lengthy, unproductive investigation by PCC. Your flight to Seattle will be leaving in an hour and I have communicated this to Mr. Slade.”



Fermin sets his commlink down, “Off the record, I appreciate what you have done for Miss Dace.”

One of the workers comes in. “Fermin, I have a Mr. Desperado in the lobby.”

“Thank you. That means your ride is here. Anything you have at the hotel will be shipped to Slade as soon as possible.”

Heading out to the lobby, you see the same troll in shades, grinning at you. He leads you to his truck. “So, how was your fifteen minutes of fame?”

HOOKS

This scene gives the runners a chance to finish things, as they will want some justice after getting sniped at. At the conclusion of this scene the runners should have a feeling of accomplishment with the defeat of the killers.

BEHIND THE SCENES

The first question for the runners is how the killers had found them. They have time now to run a diagnostic on their commlinks. At this time LMG has quieted down to only sending them advertisements on local spas and massage parlors, figuring that with all the violence and wounds that the runners need to unwind and relax. The runners can make a Matrix Perception Test (p. 228, *SR4A*) to find the LMG program. LMG has a Stealth 3 program running to keep it from being noticed. Use the commlink’s firewall for the opposed test.

WHAT THE RUNNERS CAN FIND OUT

# of Hits	Result
0	Everything is 5x5.
1	Some program called Life Management Guide has been installed on your commlink.
2	Life Management Guide does two basic things; it modifies what is displayed on the user’s image link and it filters out data received through AR. It also modifies other AR programs installed on the commlink.
3	Life Management Guide has logic to determine “Positive” and “Negative” events and will try to steer the user away from the negative events (drinking, smoking, using drugs, etc.).
4	Life Management Guide sends and receives updates from a company called Augmented Therapy.
5	Recently an update came through that marked your link with a U56 flag.
6	Updates are still occurring to stop the displays to the link if the U56 flag is set. This flag also has a unique signature on the Matrix.
7	Further analysis shows that this software came through a backdoor on P2.0 and it spaghetti’d its way through many programs and libraries. It likely will take several days in order to remove it, and you’ll possibly have to reload programs back on the ‘link.

Urgent Message...



With at least two hits, the runner notices that their commlink is leaving an interesting digital trail, even when they are in Hidden mode. With an Extended Computer + Track (8, 1 Minute) Test, the runner can find the flag trail attached to each one of their commlinks, as well as three other commlinks that have passed near the freeway (the tag was picked up by the various gridlink and billboard Matrix objects).

If the runners still have Bacchus, they can interrogate him about this software, but the only thing he knows is that his Horizon contract allows them to install software whenever they want. He doesn't know what LMG is, and he just ignores the advertisements. He doesn't know anything about the U56 flag, and any runner can do a Matrix Perception (3) Test to see that his commlink does not have the U56 flag.

Tracing the other three commlinks will require another Computer + Track (12, 1 Minute) Test to locate them. The closest is in the San Fernando Valley, where Bandril lives in a cheap condo. The condo complex has a set of staircases on either side of the complex and a solid cement balcony, giving the whole place an adobe look. He has the same tracking knowledge of the U56 and will know they are coming. If the runners continue to trace the data trail, they will see the other two commlinks approaching the same location. Cain and Abel see this as an opportunity to wipe out everyone flagged by the Life Management Guide, including the other killers.

At the Sun Valley Sprawl, the scene unfolds as follows. The runners may change how or if an event takes place, so consider this a general guideline. Combat takes place between the two condos and the street between them:

Bandril stays within his home and uses his lodge, rating 5, to protect him from magic and waits for people to come for him. Cain arrived before the runners, and has climbed up the fire escape of the condo across the street and has set up his sniper rifle on the rooftop, aiming at Bandril's door. He has 6 successes to his Stealth Test for him to hide on the roof. Cain leaves his commlink in active mode on the front seat of his car a block away. It's not just to throw off the runners, but the other two killers. If the runners are on the Matrix tracing the flag, they will see it not too far away. If the runners turn off their commlinks (not just put them in Hidden mode), then the runners would not be considered targets until they attack.

Combat Turn

Event

- 1 Bandril stays within his home and uses his lodge, rating 5 to protect him from magic. He also activates an armor sustaining focus. Anyone going astral can see the astral barrier of the lodge, but unless they have a spell to see through the lodge, they cannot see him sitting down with a pistol in his lap. After the runners arrive, Abel shows up in a rigged truck with his remaining drones. The first target is Cain's car down the block. The car goes up in a fiery explosion.
- 2 Depending on the initiative order, Cain will shoot the first runner approaching the door. Bandril calls up his air spirit, Force 5, to use noxious breath on anyone near the door. This

can catch up to two targets. Abel approaches the condo, targeting the runners' vehicle if they are still in it. Otherwise he commands his drones to attack targets chosen by him. Cain takes this opportunity to shoot at Abel, cracking the windshield and scoring a light wound on him. A family of four on the same floor as Bandril run out of their home and down the staircase nearest to them.

3 Abel captain-chairs a drone and searches for Cain; finding a thermal signature on the roof, Abel fires on Cain, doing two boxes of physical damage and knocking him out of his firing position. This gives the runners a general location for Cain. People panic and flee the nightclub. Bandril stands up to get a better view of those outside and then tries to hit them with a fireball. He targets any drones as well, knowing how Abel uses drones. Bandril lets his spirit attack the runners. Cain attempts to evade by heading back down the fire exit and diving through a window on the far side of the condo. Abel's other drones continue to fight the runners.

4 Cain stumbles through the complex to a window over the street where the gunfight is taking place and takes a shot at Abel's vehicle. Abel, unable to pursue Cain without losing the drone in the confined space, puts that drone back on autopilot and jumps into the next closest drone and fires a wide burst at the condo. Residents start to flee from that condo to avoid the fight. Bandril finally exits his house. He casts another great fireball into the crowd with no regard for the safety of innocent bystanders.

5 This is the last round for general guidance. Bandril assists his air spirit in attacking the runners. Abel fires a narrow burst into the window and wounds Cain for another 2 boxes of physical damage. Glass and plaster cascade to the street. Cain braces himself from that attack and fires again out the window, this time in a perfect shot through the hole in the glass, wounding Abel for three boxes of physical damage.

Abel, Bandril, and Cain won't back down from this fight this time, as they know they will be hunted down if they leave each other alive. This is part of the breakdown of their conditioning. If any of them has a clear shot at each other, they will take it before shooting at the runners. So while the runners may be at a disadvantage in this situation, the conflict between the killers should offset the disadvantage. These three will continue fighting until only one remains.

After the fifth round of combat, the news drones descend on the carnage. When the cameras pick up the footage, Charisma Associates monitors it and someone reports the runners to Fermin. Fermin tries to get a hold of the runners while (if) they



are still in combat. He'll be in his car heading over to where the runners are fighting. It will take him a few minutes to get there, arriving at roughly the same time the police do.

SUBPLOTS (OPTIONAL)

Many people's lives are endangered in this firefight, so several subplots can be made from this:

- A fire breaks out in one of the condos and people are screaming at the window.
- There's a car crash trying to avoid the firefight, and the driver is still trapped in the car.
- Several people are caught in the fireball and are dying.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

PCC authorities could arrive early and try to contain the situation. They don't know who is who, so they will go after the runners and Abel, Bandril, and Cain with equal abandon.

DEBUGGING

Abel, Bandril, and Cain in the end will die, either at the hands of the runners, or each other. If the runners think about knocking one out, the other two will kill him off before consciousness is regained. If the runners see that they are converging on the San Fernando Valley and wait for them to converge, the only survivor of the encounter will be Cain.

AFTERMATH

The runners are sent home on a private Horizon plane with little media attention. The media continues for weeks with tributes to Christy Dae and minor news of Whyte Nyght and Andre Guiles' deaths. The "Moral Vigilantes" continue to be villainized to the point where PCC is forced to increase policing of the San Fernando Valley. Charisma Associates have done a nice job with the information being delivered to the public. Pictures found at one of the killers' houses show that they targeted Miss Dae for her skimpy outfit in her last music video. The rest of the details, including the runners' involvement and other deaths, have been lost to the focus on Dae's life and music. PCC have dropped trying to question the runners and are closing the case.

Days after the news of the death of the Moral Vigilantes, Horizon's Consensus makes the decision to move to phase two programming of the Life Management Guide. LMG is removed from all test subjects' commlinks, and the source code is delivered to another company affiliated with Horizon America. To make sure all the code and notes have been removed from Augmented Therapy, viruses are released and allowed to propagate through the employees and P2.0 so that in days, nothing is left of the beta test.

After several weeks, the runners receive an encrypted video from Pandora. It is a thank-you message from Pandora for what they have done for Dae. The video then continues to an advanced screening of *A Fistful of Credsticks*, a globe-trotting adventure featuring Jenny Freelance and her search for artifacts to lead her to Atlantis. While watching, you notice an interesting beginning clip of Jenny getting a secret delivery before heading to the Space Needle. The faces have changed, but the bodies are most definitely familiar.

Urgent Message...

TEAM KARMA

Situation	Award
Saving Pandora from the Fans	1
Not killing any fans	1
Retrieving Dae's chip	1
Not copying Dae's chip	1
Tracking down the vigilantes	1

Urgent Message...

INDIVIDUAL KARMA

Situation	Award
Surviving	2
Good roleplaying	1-3
Guts/bravery	1
Humor	1
Pushing the storyline along	1

Runners may acquire Slade, Desperado, or Fermin as contacts from this adventure.

LEGWORK

When a PC gets in touch with a contact, make a Connection + Connection test for the contact. The results of this test will determine how many ranks of information the contact knows about the question. (Apply die modifiers to this test based upon relevance of the contact to the subject matter.) A PC then makes a test of Charisma + Etiquette + Loyalty rating. The contact will reveal that many levels of information about that topic for free. (Up to the number of hits scored by the contact for that topic.) If the contact knows more, additional information will require a payment to the contact, either in nuyen, favors owed, or information to trade.

If the PCs have worked all of their contacts and are still missing important information, they may request that a contact ask around. If they do so, have the Contact make an extended (Connection + Connection (20 minutes)) test. Additional information may be available, and prices are up to the gamemaster's discretion.

A Data Search may also be utilized to gather information from the following charts. Players may make an Extended Logic + Data Search Test, and gamemasters are encouraged to utilize the optional rule that limits dice pools for Extended Tests by a -1 dice pool modifier (cumulative) for each roll after the first (p. 64, *SR4A*).

BACCHUS

Contacts: Gang

CONTACT	MATRIX	RESULT
0	0	Who?
1	2	Bacchus, god of wine, right? Did I win?
2	4	Yeah, that P2.0 guy. Some ganger with his own reality show.
3	8	Bacchus is the son of an energy baron, who owns the Sunlink power grid bringing power to both San Diego and Los Angeles.
4	16	Bacchus used to be on <i>A Gang's Life</i> with the other A-Kidz gang, but he rebelled and tried to make his own show in competition to <i>A Gang's Life</i> , called <i>LA Gang Life</i> .
5+	32+	Bacchus is talking about something big to add to his show. So far the only thing he's tried to add is rap.

A-KIDZ

Contacts: Gang

CONTACT	MATRIX	RESULT
0	0	Is that one of those classic teen bands?
1	2	It's one of many Los Angeles booster gangs.
2	4	Artificial Kidz, a.k.a. A-Kidz, are highly augmented corporate brats and rich-kid runaways who have put together a booster gang.
3	8	Horizon has been footing the bill for their parts as payment for their P2.0 reality show, which is called <i>A Gang's Life</i> .
4+	16+	The A-Kidz hang out at Club K when not causing mayhem.

AUGMENTED THERAPY

Contacts: Corporate

CONTACT	MATRIX	RESULT
0	0	Are you trying to virtually hit on me?
1	2	Augmented Therapy is a company that helps patients with phobias, stress, and addictions with Matrix-based therapy.
2	4	Augmented Therapy is a subsidiary of Singularity.
3+	8+	Augmented Therapy has been developing better environmental AR software and working to improve their patients' quality of life.

WHYTE NYGHT

Contacts: Media

CONTACT	MATRIX	RESULT
0	0	That's the thing that every woman's waiting for to ride in and save them from, you know, whatever.
1	2	That's that noe-metal rapper from the CAS.
2	4	His music is good, but a little outdated. Funny how he's already going downhill—he hasn't even hit thirty.
3+	8+	If it weren't for him doing all those drugs, he would have been more successful.



CAST OF SHADOWS

ABEL

Abel, 27, was a car thief for a chop shop for the mob in New York. He eluded police for two years, creating havoc with his drones to distract pursuing police. After his arrest, he was sent to a Horizon rehabilitation facility. He was released three years ago with a new identity. He's been working in Los Angeles as a cab driver and lives north of Hollywood. He keeps his cab immaculate. Abel is human, 1.7 meters tall, and weighs 70 kilograms.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
3 3 5(7) 3 3 4 4(6) 4 3 4.16 9(11) 1

Armor (B/I): 7/7

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Active Skills: Cracking 4, Dodge 3, Etiquette (Street) 2 (+2), Electronics 4, Gunnery 4, Heavy Weapons 2, Mechanic 3, Perception 3, Pilot Aircraft 4, Pilot Ground Craft 4, Pilot Water Craft 3, Pilot Anthroform 3, Pistols 3

Qualities: Black Market Pipeline (Vehicles), Gearhead 1, Media Junkie (Mild), SINner (Criminal)

Augmentations: Cerebral Booster 2, Control Rig (a), Encephalon 1 (a), Orientation system (a), Reaction Enhancer 2 (a), Touch Link

Programs: Armor 5, Attack 5, Biofeedback Filter 5, Black Hammer 5, Blackout 5, Corrupt 5, Data Bomb 5, Decrypt 5, Defuse 5, Disarm 5, Exploit 5, Medic 5, Nuke 5, Sniffer 5, Spoof 5

Gear: 6 Cyberspace Designs Dragonfiles, SecureTech Leg and Arm Castings, Toyota Gopher, Urban Explorer jumpsuit

Weapons:

Ares Predator IV [Heavy Pistol, DV 5P, AP -1, SA, 16(c)]

ANDRE GUILLES

Andre Guiles looks younger than his fifty-two years. He has the slightest grey in his dark-brown beard and at the temples. He is two meters tall and is slightly overweight at 115 Kilos. Before Charisma Associates, he worked for the Actor's Guild in Hollywood in the 2050s. For six years he was a bodyguard, and he has the scars to prove it. He then cashed in on a few favors and became a manager. He didn't do it for the money; he did it because, as a bodyguard, he saw that many stars didn't have the brains to protect themselves from their own weaknesses. They often created problems that, as a bodyguard, he had to pull them out of. As manager, he was militant in the skills he wanted his stars to learn, and he helped his clients make fewer mistakes. His background as a bodyguard also came in handy in those times when he had to body-check a crazed fan or nosy camera drone.

After Charisma Associates hired Guiles, they immediately matched him up with Christy Dace. His discipline did wonders to shape up Dace into a novastar. As she shot up in fame, his years of experience have kept the paparazzi away from her private life.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
4 3 3 4 5 3 3 4 2 6 6 1

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Active Skills: Perception 3, Dodge 2, Leadership 3, Etiquette 4(Media +2), First Aid 2, Negotiations 4, Pistols 3, Computers 2

Gear: Berwick Line Corporate Suit in charcoal grey with forest green tie (5/4), Commlink [Hermes Ikon w/Novatech Navi]

BACCHUS

Bacchus is a blend of the Roman god of wine and intoxication and the mythical satyr. He once ran with the A-Kidz and was a star in *A Gang's Life* on P2.0. He recently broke off and has been trying to go solo with his own reality show with a few A-Kidz that were loyal to him. He makes a few dollars with advertising on his P2.0, and on the side he works as a bouncer for the Derma Club. His so-called big break was seeing Christy Dace leaving a dive of a motel.

Bacchus is a 1.4 meter tall Ork weighing 115 kilograms, with two cyber legs sheathed in reddish-brown fur that end in cloven hooves. He also has had cosmetic changes adding horns and model-caliber looks. Bacchus also has bright reddish curly hair and a pointy red goatee.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
4 4 5(6) 5 3 3 3 3 3 2.6 8(9) 2

Movement: 15/37

Armor (B/I): 8/8

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Active Skills: Artistry (Acting) 1 (+2), Dodge 2, Etiquette (Street) 3 (+2), Intimidation 3, Negotiations 2, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Pilot Ground Craft 3, Unarmed Combat 4

Knowledge Skills: Alcohol 1, Strip Clubs 3, Media Stars 3, LA Streets 4, LA Gangs 4, Media Gossip 2

Augmentations: Raptor Legs, Minor Cosmetic Surgery, Wired Reflexes 1, Simrig

Gear: Neo-Victorian Steam Punk outfit in industrial grey and maroon (with shorts to show off the legs) 6[8]/6[8], Glowwand as a disco cane, Commlink [Hermes Ikon w/Mangadyne Deva]

Weapon:

Ruger SuperWarhawk [Heavy Pistol, DV: 6P, AP -2, SS, 6 (cy), smartlink, 2 clips of regular ammo and 1 clip of HE ammo]

BANDRIL

Bandril, 31, was a ganger, running with Merlyn's Pride out of New York, before he was arrested five years ago. For his flagrant disregard for the law and criminal history, he was sent to a Horizon rehabilitation facility. He was released a year ago with a new identity, but something fell through and he became SINless. He's been working under the table as a plumber and janitor at the condos where he lives.

Bandril is human, 1.75 meters tall, and weighs 72 kilograms. He has a compulsive nature for cleanliness from the conditioning.

B A R S C I L W M Edg Ess Init IP
3 2 3 3 5 5 4 4 6 3 6 8 1

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Skills: Conjuring 5, Counterspelling 3, Close Combat 1, Dodge 3, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Spellcasting 5

Qualities: Erased (7 Days), Compulsive (Mild), Vindictive

Gear: spirit of air (Force 5) with 5 services, spirit of man (Force 5) with 4 services, Force 4 sustaining focus, Ares Predator IV, Armored Jacket, NovaTech Airware with Iris Orb, Tag Eraser

Spells: Astral Armor, Lightning Bolt, Mana Barrier, Mana Ball, Mana Bolt, Detect Enemies, Physical Barrier



“BIG BEN” HOWARD

Benjamin Howard was born in 2028 in Sacramento, California Free State. Benjamin, also known as “Big Ben,” grew up with a fascination with biology. Later that fascination focused on sims and recorded senses and emotions. He got his Master’s in biochemistry at 23 at University of Southern California, and then continued there to study film. Graduating with a second Master’s degree in fine arts, he began a career with Pathfinder Multimedia. At thirty-one he directed back-to-back hits: *Ghosts of 2012*, a documentary on the rise of magic, which included some never-before-seen enhanced security camera footage from those days, and *Yomi*, a tear-jerking drama of a Japanese ork growing up fighting prejudice and gang pressures. Most of his films since then have been stunning documentaries or emotionally strong dramas, and he has won Oscars for best documentary and best picture of the year. There has been some controversy over some of the facts he’s presented in a few films, including the European-banned drama, *NightWraith* and the still-controversial trid documentary *Anguish*, based on events of the Night of Rage. His current film, *A Fistful of Credsticks* moves him into the action genre with heroine Jenny Freelance battling a faceless corporation tangled up in the recovery of the lost city of Atlantis.

Benjamin Howard is a troll who is 2.4 meters tall and weighs 250 kilos. He has thinning red hair and a goatee, which he keeps short, and a pair of bone-white, polished horns, which he sometimes tilts his hat over. He is very animated and passionate when discussing movies and film, though otherwise he is more reserved. He’s very charismatic and has gained several influential contacts allowing him to skirt the grey areas of legality in the making of his films.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
 8 3 3 6 4 4 3 3 2 6 7 1

Condition Monitor (P/S): 12/10

Active Skills: Perception 4, Dodge 1, Pistols 1, Etiquette 3 (Media +2), Negotiations 5, Leadership 4

Knowledge skills: Biology 3, SOTA Simsense Technology 2, Media Gossip 2, Entertainment Politics 4, Simsense Trivia 3

Qualities: First Impression, Hawk Eye, National Fame, SINner (standard), College Education

Augmentations: Minor cosmetic surgery

Gear: Hermes Ikon Commlink w/Mangadyne Deva OS



CHRISTY DAE

Christy Dae had a natural talent for singing since she was a child. Born in 2048 in Seattle, she was an early star, beginning at age fourteen when she was a singing star on a teen pop trid, *High School Musical, the Series*. After four years, her contract was bought out by Pathfinder Multimedia and her family moved to California. Pathfinder found that Christy Dae had been hiding a drug problem that was getting worse, but they managed to keep that out of the media. Pathfinder took the time to get her straightened out and trained before putting her back in the spotlight. After a one-year hiatus from the trid, Christy Dae came back in 2066 as a classic pop singer, and her first album, *Dancing with Fireflies*, which included hit music sung for *High School Musical*, was a huge hit. The album's variety of songs displayed her new vocal maturity and showed off her talent well. She won five awards that year, including album of the year, singer of the year, and song of the year. She continued to win at least one award every year and make global tours. Last year's album, *Rainy Dae*, built on her success, with her songs heard everywhere from commercials to trideos. Her only competition to date is the Japanese singing sensation Teiko.

Christy Dae is human, 1.65 meters tall, and weighs around 58 kilograms. She has blue eyes and long blonde hair with the ends enhanced with nanite color changers. She is well mannered and speaks softly. She is uncomfortable with unfamiliar faces off stage and tries to avoid the fans unless her manager is there. With those she knows, she is very friendly and playful.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
2	3	3	2	6	3	3	2	2	5.5	6	1

Condition Monitor (P/S): 9/9

Skills: Artist (Singing) 7 (+2), Computers 2, Etiquette (Media) 3 (+2), Infiltration 1, Influence skill group 3, Perception 2, Unarmed Combat 1

Qualities: Aptitude (Artist), Global Fame, Inspired, SINner (standard), Addition to drugs (Mild)

Augmentations: Simrig

Gear: Zoë Clothing, Commlink [Fairlight Caliban w/ Novatech Navi]



CAIN

Cain, 38, was a mafia hitman in New York before his arrest six years ago. Deemed a dangerous criminal thanks to his frequent violent outbursts and several incidents of fighting with other inmates, he was sent to a Horizon rehabilitation facility. After two years of treatment, he was released with slight changes to his face and a new identity, and set up in Los Angeles. He worked as a general laborer until the incident that triggered special conditioning.

Cain is a human 1.8 meters tall, weighing 140 kilos with dark, crew-cut hair and a short mustache. He has occasional shakes in his right hand and arm and developed a mild compulsivity to be tidy—both mannerisms stem from the two years of conditioning.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
4 4(6) 4(6) 6(8) 3 3 3 3 3 1.75 7(9) 1(3)

Armor (B/I): 12/8

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Active Skills: Athletics skill group 2, Close Combat skill group 4, Dodge 4, Electronics skill group 2, Etiquette (Street) 3 (+2), Long Arms (Sniper Rifle) 5 (+2), Perception 3, Pilot Ground Craft 1

Qualities: Buggy 'Ware 1, Black Market Pipeline, Compulsive (Moderate), High Pain Tolerance 2, Sinner (Criminal)

Augmentations: Bone Lacing (Aluminium), Cybereyes 2 (flare comp, low light, thermographic, smartlink), Muscle Augmentation 2, Muscle Toner 2, Synthacardium 1, Wired Reflexes 2, minor cosmetic surgery

Gear: Armored Jacket, Form Fitting Body Armor (half-body suit), Novatech Airware (upgraded 4/4) with Iris Orb

Weapons:

Ares Desert Strike [Sniper Rifle, DV 8P, AP -3, SA, RC (1), 14 (c), smartlink]

Cougar Fine Longblade [Blade, Reach —, DV 6P, AP -1]

DESPERADO

Desperado, Slade's contact in LA, grew up in San Diego. He migrated up from Aztlan to Los Angeles, working up the ranks to capo regime of the Mob before going independent due to a difference of opinion. He survived the Twins, and now prospers in his own business of vault diving, smuggling, and the occasional run. He has a minor following in P2.0 as a kind of Jacques Cousteau, only with a Spanish accent and criminal slant.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
9 4(6) 5(6) 9(11) 3 3 2 3 1 3.9 8(9) 2

Armor (B/I): 8/6

Condition Monitor (P/S): 13/9

Skills: Etiquette (Underworld) 3 (+2), Dodge 1, Perception 4, Pistols 3, Shadowing 3, Intimidation 3, Heavy Weapons 4, Thrown Weapons 2, Athletics group 1, Close Combat skill group 2

Knowledge Skills: LA Sea Smuggling Routes 2, Criminal Syndicates 2, Sports—Darts 1; Spanish (Native), English 4

Augmentations: Synaptic Booster 1, Digestive Expansion, Pollution Tolerance Adaptation, Muscle Augmentation 2, Muscle Toner 2

Gear: Armored Jacket, Hermes Ikon w/Mangadyne Deva Commlink, Shades with Image and smartlink.

Weapon:

2 Ruger Super Warhawks [Heavy Pistol, DV: 6P, AP -2, SS, 6 (cy), smartlink, 2 clips of regular ammo and 1 clip of HE ammo]

RICHARD FERMIN

Mr. Richard Fermin is the Media Arts Manager for Pandora. He has been with Charisma Associates since the beginning. Before that he lived in Eugene, Tir Tairngire, where he studied business and fine arts. He became Pandora's manager a year after her performance in the classic *Star Wars* series. As her success grew, he dropped many other clients until he was down to a handful, with Pandora as his primary focus. While his job title says media arts manager, he is also her sparing partner, paramedic, and bodyguard when the need arises. This has led to a close relationship between the two.

Mr. Richard Fermin is a 42-year-old elf with neatly cut dishwater blonde hair and a short, braided ponytail. He has a tan complexion and brown eyes. He keeps a calm, professional attitude in every situation. He speaks English without an accent, though occasionally uses a Sperethiel word or two as profanity, as they sound more colorful. Fermin is 1.89 meters tall and weighs 81 kilograms.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
4 4 3 3 7 4 4 3 2 6 7 1

Armor (B/I): 5/3

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Skills: Computer 3, Con 4, Dodge 2, Data Search 2, Etiquette 4 (Media +2), First Aid 3, Instruction 4, Negotiation 5, Perception 3, Pistols 3, Unarmed combat 3 (Judo +2)

Knowledge skills: Popular LA Clubs 3, Virtual Meeting Spots 2, Sinsense Production 3, Public Relations 4

Qualities: First Impression, Trustworthy, Day Job, SINNER (Standard)
Gear: Berwick Line Corporate Suit in charcoal grey with forest green tie, Hermes Ikon Commlink w/Novatech Navi OS

Weapons:

Colt America L36 [Light Pistol, DV 4P, AP —, SA, RC —, 11(c)]

SLADE

Slade is a Caucasian elf male, a transportation expert, and a well-traveled courier. Slade has worked himself into a part-time fixer position, and he has been maintaining many contacts inside and outside corporations, using their synergies to his advantage. He's the runners' contact for assistance in traveling to LA and helps them get into the trideo business. Slade speaks with a southern drawl, and his fashion style is Western, complete with hat, belt buckle, and boots; he's kind of an elvish John Wayne/Marlboro man.

B A R S C I L W Edg Ess Init IP
4(6) 6 5(6) 4 7 3 3 3 1 3.225 8(9) 3

Armor (B/I): 6/4

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Skills: Athletics skill group 2, Close Combat skill group 4, Dodge 1, Etiquette (Corp) 4 (+2), Exotic Ranged Weapon (Lariat (Lasso)) 2, Negotiations 3, Perception 2, Pilot Ground Craft (Motorcycles) 1 (+2), Pistols 4, Stealth skill group 2

Knowledge Skills: English N, Japanese 3, Sperethiel 2, Aztlan Spanish 2, Salishae 1, Underworld Politics 2, Mega Corp Politics 2, Historical North America 3 (Old West +2), Fashion 3

Augmentations: Cybereyes 2 [flare compensation, smartlink, thermographic], Encephalon 1, Cyber Ears 2 [audio enhance 2, balance augments, damper, sound filter 1], Enhanced Articulation, Synthacardium 2, Synaptic Booster 2, Bone Density 2

Gear: Commlink (TransAvalon w/ Iris Orb), Lined Coat, Harley Davison Scorpion, Lariat

Weapons:

2 Ruger Super Warhawks [Heavy Pistol, DV: 6P, AP -2, SS, 6 (cy), smartlink, 2 speed loaders of regular ammo and a speed loader of explosive ammo]

A FISTFUL OF CREDSTICKS



PANDORA

Pandora is a sim star for Pathfinder Multimedia. Her real name is Rebecca Oswick, and she was born in 2034 in Juneau, Athabaskan Council. Her parents are marine biologists. Her mother is from Quebec, so she learned some French. At the age of seventeen, she headed to San Francisco to look for acting work and hopefully build a career for herself. She worked as a hotel maid and as a courier until her big break at eighteen. Director Allan Ford took a chance, casting young Ms. Oswick as lead actress in a series adapted from classic *Star Wars* literature. The series was a huge success, and her talent was recognized. Rebecca changed her name to Pandora and continued to play strong female heroines. She's broken out of the typecasting with the occasional drama and suspense-themed films. Her current film is *A Fistful of Credsticks*, a fantasy action film, where her character must find the artifacts that will lead her to the lost city of Atlantis before some corporation plunders it.

Pandora is human, 1.85 meters tall, and weighs approximately 63 kilos. She has a tan complexion, hazel eyes, and shoulder-length hair with long curls. When relaxed, she speaks with a slight French accent, otherwise she has great control over her speaking voice, able to mimic a variety of accents. In her spare time she is active in skeet shooting, fencing, and has a black belt in Judo. Her physical agility is one of the main ingredients that make her sims so popular.

B	A	R	S	C	I	L	W	Edg	Ess	Init	IP
4	3	3	4	5	3	3	3	2	5.3	6	1

Armor (B/I): 2/1

Condition Monitor (P/S): 10/10

Skills: Artist (Acting) 4 (+2), Athletics skill group 3, Unarmed Combat (Judo) 2 (+2), Computers 2, Con 3, Dodge 2, Etiquette (Media) 3 (+2), Firearms skill group 2, Negotiations 3, Perception 3

Knowledge Skills: 21st Century Films 4, Popular California Nightclubs 3, Athabaskan Vacation Hotspots 2, Media Gossip 2

Qualities: Rich, Globally Famous, Ambidextrous, SINner, Distinctive Style

Augmentations: Simrig, voice modulator, minor cosmetic surgery

Gear: Berwick Skirt and Blouse, Commlink [Fairlight Caliban w Novatech Navi], Custom Shades



PLAYER HANDOUTS

ORGANWICH SANDWICH DELI

Organwich Works®
Ham, Salami, bacon, Asadero, Panela, tomatoes, spinach, wild greens, red onion, avocado, mayo, mustard

Ham and Swiss

Ham, Swiss cheese, mayo, mustard

The Club

Ham, turkey, Baladi, asadero, tomato, iceberg lettuce, red onion

BLT

Bacon, iceberg lettuce, tomato on a toasted sub

California Veggie

Cucumbers, wild greens, tomato, spinach, red onion, avocado, red peppers, light vinaigrette

Hollywood Hero

Double stack of ham, double stack iceberg lettuce, cream cheese, red onion, and red peppers. All sliced in quarters and rearranged. (The usual over-acting and cheesy scripts, lots of greenbacks, light on the fake tears, with a little cosmetic work)

MENU

Make it a combo with a 600 milliliter drink and freshly baked, lightly salted, corn based chips.

Sandwiches can be made on 9-grain wheat bread, wheat bread, or enriched, soy-based, white bread.



ORGANWICH SANDWICH DELI

DRINKS MENU

Nutri-water

Berries and Cream Shake

Sun Tea

For Those 21 and Over:

- Steam Beer
- Chardonnay
- Shiraz



... A FISTFUL OF CREDSTICKS ...

The morning sun breaks through the fog that morning as Mike walks into work with a cup of espresso soykaf from the downstairs cafeteria. Mike heads over to the elevator, observing that a lot of people here look tired and depressed, some wearing black. In the elevator, music from the posthumously released *Sunny Dae* album plays faintly in the background.

"Hello Debbie," he greets, the office administrator.

She just looks up at him with red eyes and waves. *Everyone has been affected by Dae's death*, Mike thinks, remembering how some of Dae's music and her image were contracted for an AR character for another project.

He walks past her through the maze of cubicles, dreading the tediousness of reviewing LMG's object reference logs today. He already pulled two all-nighters this week with the flag U56 code changes, and he was exhausted. He braces himself with another sip of his espresso before immersing himself in his VR office.

Mike almost chokes at the sight of his workspace. The windows are empty, completely glass-free. The stacks of notes and pseudo-code are all gone. Even his dictation agent is missing. He opens up a conference call screen and calls Mr. Dhoulm.

"Ah Mr. Anderson, good morning. What can I do for you?" says Mr. Dhoulm smiling from behind his desk.

"The Life Management Guide is gone! What happened?"

"Calm down, let me check my messages and see what happened to the server."

Dhoulm's smile fades as Mike watches him read. After a moment, Dhoulm looks back at the link, "Mike, I don't know what to say, Life Management Guide testing has been put on hold. The project has been sent to Singularity for phase two development."

"Phase two? What does that mean? There's been no enhancement documentation with this project."

"Calm down Mike, this was a Consensus decision from upper management. I don't like it either, but this says that we are done with this contract."

"Sorry. I know I shouldn't take it personally. It's just code." Mike pauses for a second, "So what now?"

"Well, you and Jay go have the day off, while I straighten this out and get a new project. Sorry you had to come in."

"No problem, see you tomorrow." Mike closes the link and exits VR.

The VR workspace became quiet again. From the shadows of the edges of the workspace, a rabbit-like creature continued to munch on a stack of notes.

Back in Dhoulm's Office, Dhoulm disconnects and turns his attention to the man in his office.

"Thank you, Mr. Dhoulm, for your cooperation," says the man in Dhoulm's office. "If you would finish signing the paperwork, Horizon will absolve Augmented Therapy of any missed work in the completion of LMG, and you will be paid in full."

Dhoulm looks over the paperwork once more and signs it. "I'm still not sure about all the measures needed to make sure LMG has been removed."

"Don't worry. Consensus has figured all this out and has planned accordingly."

The man leaves with the paperwork, and Dhoulm initiates the instructions in the contract.

ORGANWICH SANDWICH DELI

Organwich Works®

Ham, Salami, bacon, Asadero, Panela, tomatoes, spinach, wild greens, red onion, avocado, mayo, mustard

Ham and Swiss

Ham, Swiss cheese, mayo, mustard

BLT

Bacon, iceberg lettuce, tomato on a toasted sub

The Club

Ham, turkey, Baladi, asadero, tomato, iceberg lettuce, red onion

California Veggie

Cucumbers, wild greens, tomato, spinach, red onion, avocado, red peppers, light vinaigrette

Hollywood Hero

Double stack of ham, double stack iceberg lettuce, cream cheese, red onion, and red peppers.

All sliced in quarters and rearranged.
(The usual over-acting and cheesy scripts, lots of greenbacks, light on the fake tears, with a little cosmetic work)

MENU

Make it a combo with a 600 milliliter drink and freshly baked, lightly salted, corn based chips.

Sandwiches can be made on 9-grain wheat bread, wheat bread, or enriched, soy-based, white bread.

ORGANIC SANDWICH DELI

Nutri-water

Berries and Cream Shake

Sun Tea

DRINKS MENU

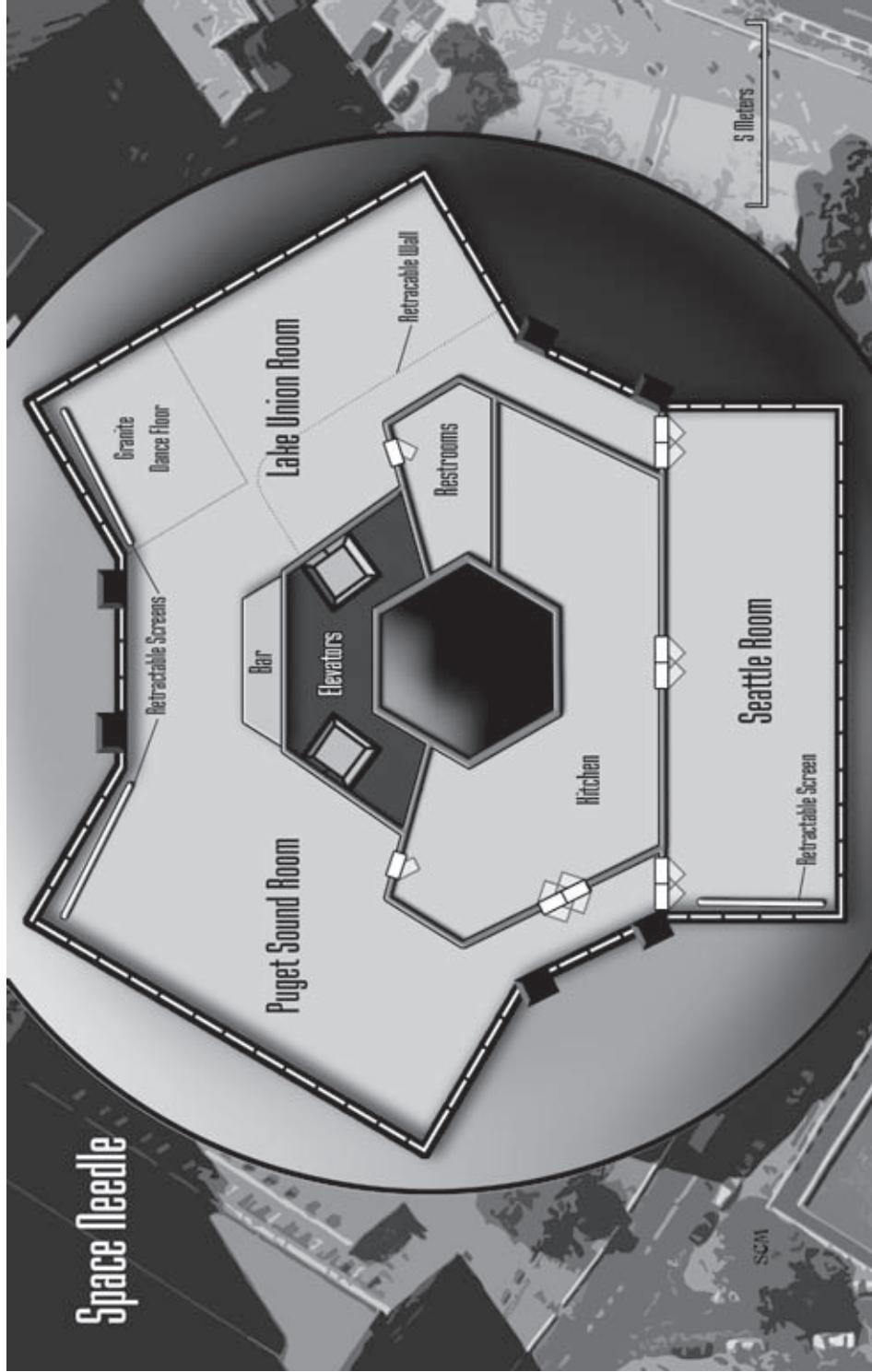
For Those 21 and Over:

Steam Beer

Chardonnay

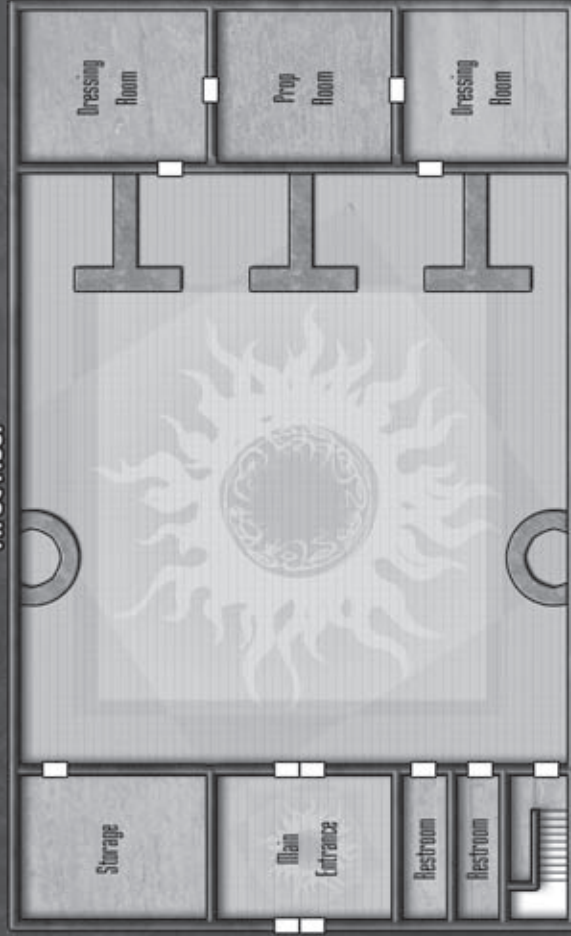
Shiraz

Space Needle

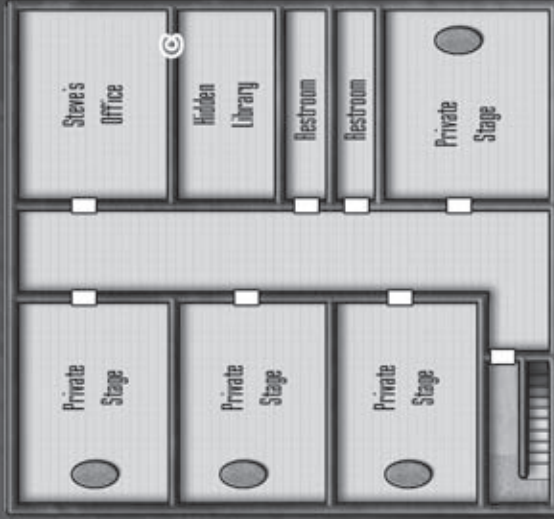


The Derma Club

First Floor



Second Floor



5 Meters

⊙ = Concealed Door

