

What Goes Up©1992, 1997
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Cyberpunk 2020

Back when the cost of orbital workstations came down, some nations toyed with the idea of passing laws requiring the corporations to do their dangerous work in orbit. Of course, these laws never got off the drawing board. These days, however, a lot of corporations are realizing that an accident in space is cheaper to contain than an accident on earth (the savings in PR alone almost makes it worth it). Those that have come to this realization have moved a lot of their stuff up the well. Of course, we all learned the hard way that what goes up must come down.

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Introduction:

In this moderately difficult adventure, a group of PCs, expecting to be engaged in a simple courier job, will be drawn into a very interesting case of industrial contamination. The adventure can be set in any city that has an aerospace port.

Getting the PCs Involved

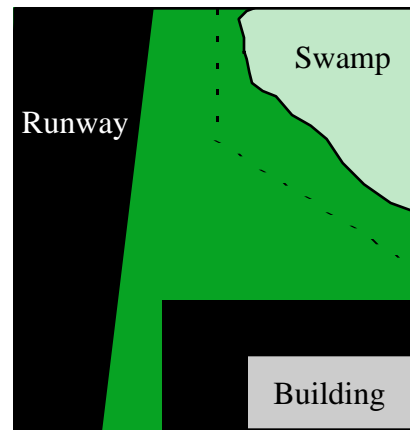
The PCs (or their agents) will be approached by two classically anonymous corporate personnel (Logan Bilstants and Janet Towlend). These two people will offer them a simple courier job. Up to four PCs are hired to pick up a delivery at the aerospace port and transport it to another transport team twenty miles away (the rest can come along, they just won't be paid). The two will specify that at least two of the PCs be solos. If there are not two solo PCs, the company in question will hire two NPC solos (they will hire any NPC solos associated with the group, if available). The pick up is to be made on the runway (the PCs will be told that "everything has been arranged") and once the pick up is made, the PCs are to go immediately to the exchange site. Upon the completion of the job, each hired PC is to be paid 2, 000 Eurodollars. The PCs will be equipped with a Courier Van, but they must provide the rest of their equipment. The PCs will find that the van has been equipped to transport hazardous biological and chemical materials. If the PCs are clever, they can bargain for up to an additional 1,000 each (transporting hazardous agents in unmarked vehicles is illegal). If they make too much of a fuss about it, they can end up dead. If the pair are asked about the job, they will say that they do not expect any trouble, but they always

expect the unexpected. They will not be accompanying the PCs to the airport.

Crash Landing

The Orbital Air space plane is scheduled to land at the aerospace port late at night. The space plane is supposed to drop off its normal passengers and cargo at the terminal and then taxi over to the hanger area, where the PCs will be.

As the PCs wait, listening to the tower on the van's radio (Logan and Janet will suggest they do this, so they can be ready to meet the shuttle as soon as possible), they will hear the space plane pilot requesting landing confirmation, then there will be a loud explosion in the background, followed by dead silence. The next thing the PCs hear will be the voice of the air traffic controller warning the space plane that it is coming down too fast. There will be no reply from the space plane. In a matter of seconds, the PCs will see the space plane's lights



as it plummets towards earth. The space plane will hit the runway, its landing gear still up, and skid down the runway. During its skid, a wingtip will strike a fuel truck and the sparks from the skidding will ignite it, creating a fireball on the runway. The space plane, with patches of burning fuel on it, will come to a halt not far from where the PCs are located. The space plane will sit on the runway, smoking, for a few minutes. Without warning, the explosive bolts of the space plane's emergency escape hatch will be fired, throwing the door onto the runway and two figures will emerge. The two (Jackson and Spender) will charge the PCs, guns blazing. During the course of the firefight, a third person (Weston) will leave the hatch carrying a bulky object (a container of A-454) and run through the chain link fence and into the swamp. A difficult skill roll using Awareness/Notice will enable a PC to spot the fleeing figure.

Jackson and Spender, under the influence of Agent 454, will attack until they kill everything in sight (then they will turn on each other) or they are stopped. Four minutes after Jackson and Spender attack, four airport security guards will arrive and five minutes later, eight more guards will arrive. The guards will attack Jackson and Spender. When Jackson and Spender are neutralized, the guards will ask the surviving PCs to remain for questioning.

The Space Plane

The space plane will be moderately damaged by its semi-controlled landing (Jackson "piloted" it in) and will require repairs before it can be used again. The PCs will have a chance to enter the spaceplane. The emergency crews will move in after the firefight, but they will be happy to let the PCs go in first. If the space plane is entered by the PCs, use the map provided on page 28 of *Near Orbit*. The

emergency escape hatch opens into the passage between the cockpit and the passenger section. The door to the cockpit has been blasted open and the dead crew are in their seats, except for the pilot who is on the floor (he was thrown there by Jackson). The controls have been shot up. The passenger section is full of dead people who are still strapped in for the landing. They have all been shot. The right hand cargo bay door is undamaged and the interior contains cargo boxes. The left hand bay door is open. The interior contains numerous transport boxes as well as three acceleration couches. Near the couches is a standard hazardous material transport container, which is open. It contains room for three containment modules, but only contains two. If the transport container is carefully examined, an average roll using the Awareness/Notice skill will reveal a tiny puncture in the top of the container. If the PCs pull out the top module, they will find that it contains two metal cannisters with biohazard markings. One of them has a tiny hole through it and is empty. If the PCs check the angle of the holes, they will be able to find a tiny piece of metal embedded in the side of the container and a tiny, sealed hole in the spaceplane's hull. After the PCs find the container and have a chance to examine it, Logan, Janet, and four corporate solos will show up in CBN suits. They will take the container and the PCs and load them onto a hazardous material transport van. The PCs will be taken to a corporate hospital, examined via remote instruments, and then released for the briefing (see below).

If the PCs opt not to enter the shuttle, Logan, Janet, and four corporate solos will arrive in CBN suits. Two of the solos and Logan will stay with the PCs while Janet and the other two solos enter the shuttle and remove the container to the van. The PCs will be taken to another van and brought to the briefing.

The PCs may decide (for some reason) to take the container. If they do, the corporation will hunt them mercilessly and will kill them in very painful manner if they find the PCs. If the PCs resist Logan and Janet, the pair will use force if necessary to get them to go to the briefing. The pair has no qualms about snuffing all the PCs on the spot if need be.

The Briefing

The PCs will be brought to an office rental building and taken to an office on the tenth floor. They will be accompanied by Logan, Janet and their four solos. They will have to leave their weapons in vault in the lobby. They will wait in the room four about an hour and then a middle aged woman will come into the room, along with two aides and two solos. The aides will set up a computer that is linked to a projector. The woman, who will not give her name, will tell the PCs that part of what they were hired to transport has been taken from the shuttle and that the company would like to hire them to recover the missing item. She will offer them 100 eurodollars a day and is willing to go up to 300 a day, with a bonus of 2,000 each for the recovery of the item. This fee includes the price of the PCs silence. She will indicate, if the PCs get obnoxious, that she is more than willing to have them killed and replaced by more reasonable people.

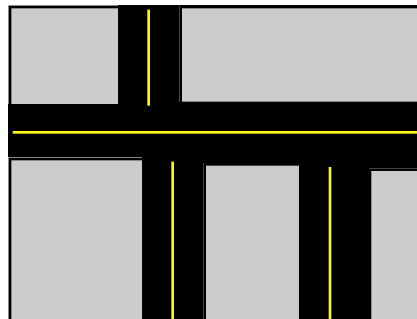
If the PCs accept the deal, she will tell them that the person with the is Mark Weston, a freelance solo. She will tell the PCs that the three men (Spender, Weston, and Jackson) were transporting a new military grade biological agent. As far as she can tell, based on Janet's report (and any info the PCs may provide) the spaceplane was struck by a small piece of metal which pierced one of the containers, releasing the agent. The agent effected the three men and caused them to kill everyone else on the shuttle. If asked about the agent, the woman will say that it is a military agent that induces paranoia and homicidal mania in those exposed to it. The agent decomposes rapidly (which is why the PCs were not affected by it) but has a long duration (estimated to be as long as forty hours). If she is asked why Weston didn't attack, she will say that he is known to have enhanced antibodies which may have interacted strangely with the agent. She will provide the PCs with pictures of Weston as well as all available data about him. She will then close the meeting and leave.

If the PCs decide to try something, there are six corporate solos outside the door. If the PCs do not accept the job, Janet, Logna, and the woman will leave and the solos will attack them as soon as they leave the room. They will try to kill the PCs. If the PCs escape, they will be hunted by the corporation, who will kill them if they are ever caught.

If the PCs realize that all the secrecy indicates that the company is up to something illegal (which they are) they may decide to go to the government. However, w/o evidence (some A-454) they will be unable to convince the government to aid them. If they go to a company for help, the company may be responsive and hire them to get the A-454 for them. Of course, the PCs don't know which corporation they are currently working for, so there is a chance they may contact the very company they have been dealing with, which would be bad for them.

On the Hunt

After fleeing the crash site, Weston will enter the city. In his current condition, he is convinced that the shuttle was shot down and that enemies are hunting him, trying to steal the A-454 he is guarding. Weston will spend his time moving about the city, for he is far too paranoid to stay in one place for long. While he will be almost normal at times, he will be subject to random fits of homicidal mania. During such fits he will attack anything around him. Once a fit has passed, he will be convinced that he has just fought off "the enemies" and he will seek someplace to hide. While these fits will result in many deaths, they will provide a way for the PCs to locate Weston since they can monitor the police bands for reports of psychos. Of course, this method may lead them to unrelated incidents



(after all, there are all sorts of "normal" psychos in modern cities). Once the PCs find Weston, they cannot simply gun him down. He has one cannister of A-454 on him and shooting him is likely to result in the cannister being pierced, which would release the A-454. This would result in a very bad situation, especially if it occurred in a crowded area. Further, Weston has hidden the other cannister (exact location left to the referee) and it will be found (and probably opened) by somebody at some point if the PCs or the company doesn't find it first. The company that hired the PCs will definitely want the other cannister back, and the PCs may be able to negotiate for additional money for finding it (up to another \$1,000 each for it). If Weston is taken alive, the PCs may be able to get the information out of him.

If 80 hours pass from the time Weston was exposed (the shuttle landed about half an hour after he became affected), he will recover from the agent, contact the company, and return the cannisters. If the PCs find him before he is able to contact the company, he will go along with them (since he was supposed to deliver the items to them in the first place) and the PCs will receive their reward.

Resolution

If the PCs take Weston alive and return both cannisters, the company will pay them the agreed fee, plus an additional 500 each. If the PCs kill Weston, but return both cannisters, the PCs will be paid. In both cases, the company will see the PCs as dependable and will hire them in the future for similar jobs.

If the PCs return one cannister, they will be paid half their fee and may be hired for later jobs. What happens to the other cannister is left up to the referee. If the PCs actions result in exposing people to A-454 (for example, they shoot a hole in the cannister) the company will not pay them.

If the PCs decide to turn one or both cannisters over to the government or another corporation, they may receive a large sum of money (more from another corporation than from the government). If the government receives the agent, they will investigate the situation (the agent is quite illegal in most countries), while a corporation will either use it to blackmail the company that produced it, or will duplicate it for their own purposes. In either case, the company will seek to retaliate against the PCs.

If the PCs get killed, they will be buried or sent to the body banks, depending on their funeral arrangements.

NPCs

Jackson

Role: Solo

Int: 7 Ref: 8 Tech: 6 Cool: 8
Attr: 4 Luck: 3 MA: 4 Body: 7

Emp: 4

Primary Skills: Combat Sense +4, Awareness/Notice +3, Athletics +4, Hide/Evade +4, Brawling +5, Handgun +5, Sub-Machinegun +4, Spaceplane Pilot +1, Z-G combat +1, EVA +1

Cybernetics: Speedware (Sandevistan), Rippers (both hands), cyberoptic(right) with Targetting scope, Low Lite, and Anti Dazzle, Neural Ware Processor, and interface plugs.

Equipment: Smartchipped H&K MPK-11, Sternmeyer Type 35, Metal Gear (Torso only) SP=25, Leather pants (legs)SP=2

Description: Jackson is from an African-American clan that is heavily involved in space. Unfortunately, Jackson cannot handle zero-gravity for long (the effects of it hit him faster and harder than normal), and he ended up drifting into security work. If the PCs don't kill him, he will be grateful when he recovers and will be favorably inclined towards them. At the start of the adventure, Jackson will be a homical maniac due to the A-454.

Spender

Role: Solo

Int: 3 Ref: 8 Tech: 4 Cool: 7
Attr: 3 Luck: 5 MA: 6 Body: 9

Emp: 3

Primary Skills: Combat Sense +3, Strength Feat +4, Gamble +1, Archery +2, Athletics +5, Brawling +7, Handgun +4, Rifle +7.

Cybernetics: Cyberarm (right) equipped with Hammerhand and Hydraulic Rams, Mr. Studd, Contraceptive Implant, Pain Editor, Neural Ware Processor, Interface Plugs.

Equipment: Armalite .44, Smartchipped Kalishnikov A-80 Hvy. Assault Rifle, Metal Gear armor SP=25.

Description: A macho-man, meat headed, killing machine. He doesn't like anyone smarter than him, which is just about everybody. At the start of the adventure he will be in a homicidal state due to the A-454 (this is actually not much different from his normal mental state).

Weston

Role: Solo

Int: 7 Ref: 9/11 Tech: 7 Cool: 9
 Attr: 7 Luck: 4 MA: 6 Body: 7/9
 Emp: 2

Skills: Combat Sense +6, Intimidate +2, Leadership +4, Hide/Evade +3, Wilderness Survival +2, Athletics +5, Martial Art (Karate) +4, Driving +2, Handgun +6, Sub machinegun +6.

Cybernetics: Kerenzikov Boosterware (+2), Neural Ware Processor, Interface plugs, Subdermal Armor, Muscle and Bone Lace, Enhanced Antibodies, Cyberoptic(right) with targetting scope, Teleoptics, Low Lite, Anti-Dazzle, Cyberarm (right) with reinforced joints, RealSkinn, Popup Miltech Arms X-22, Nose Filters.

Equipment: Smartchipped Colt AMT Model 2000, H&K MPK-11, Metal Gear SP=25

Description: Weston is a former US soldier who is currently a freelance solo. Weston is an involuntary cyborg. During his service he was shot up rather badly in a firefight and was put back together with metal parts and nanotechnology. His primary motivation is to accumulate enough money to retire comfortably and have his metal parts replaced with cloned organic parts. If the PCs take him alive, he will be grateful and willing to aid them at times.

Logan

Role: Corporate

Int: 8 Ref: 7 Tech: 6 Cool: 6
 Attr: 6 Luck: 7 MA: 4 Body: 6
 Emp: 5

Skills: Resources +4, Personal Grooming +3, Wardrobe and Style +4, Human Perception +3, Interview +6, Social +4, Education & Gen. Knowledge+6, Athletics+2, Handgun +2.

Cybernetics: Cyberaudio with phone splice, Skin Watch.

Equipment: Mini Cell Phone, Pocket Computer, Miltech Arms Avenger.

Description: He is typical of the middle level corporate involved in hiring outsiders. Logan is rather unimaginative, does not have much personal initiative, but is loyal to the company. To him, the PCs are just tools like his phone or computer.

Janet

Role: Corporate

Int: 9 Ref: 7 Tech: 7 Cool: 8
Attr: 8 Luck: 7 MA: 5 Body: 7

Emp: 6

Skills: Resources +5, Personal Grooming +5, Wardrobe and Style +5, Intimidate +2, Human Perception +4, Seduction +3, Social +4, Language (French) +2, Stock Market +2, Athletics +3, Martial Arts (Karate) +3, Handgun +4

Cybernetics: Neural Ware Processor, Interface Plugs, Contraceptive Implant, Enhanced Antibodies, scratchers.

Equipment: Mini Cell Phone, Pocket Computer, Smartchipped Federated Arms X-9mm.

Description: Janet was born to a poor family. Her brother and two of his friends were killed protecting her from a streetgang, and things got worse until she earned a corporate scholarship to college. She excelled in school and happily joined her sponsoring corporation to work off her debt. Once she got into the corporate world, she began using all means available to her to advance her power and position. While she appears to be, and in fact is, a ruthless, power hungry person, she consistently earmarks funds for college scholarships and donates her time at the high school and college level. If the PCs impress her, she may incorporate them in her plans (she wants to have a tough group that is loyal to her). She could be a very useful ally for the PCs.

Corporate Solos

Role: Solo

Int: 5 Ref: 7 Tech: 4 Cool: 7
Attr: 5 Luck: 5 MA: 4 Body: 7

Emp: 4

Primary Skills: Combat Sense +3, Interrogation +2, Athletics +4, Martial Arts (Karate) +4, Handgun +5, Sub Machinegun +4, Drive +4

Cybernetics: Adrenal Booster, Neural Ware Processor, Smartgun link, cyberoptic (right) with targetting scope.

Equipment: Smartchipped Sternmeyer Type 35, Smartchipped Arasaka Minami 10, Kevlar Armor jacket SP=14, Mastoid Commo.

Description: Corporate muscle. These stats reflect a standard corporate solo. If the PCs are particularly tough, these NPCs can be beefed up a bit (heavier weapons, higher skills, etc.)

Agent 454

Type: Military Agent

Strength: +3

Diff: 30

Cost: N/A

Duration: 4D10 hours

Agent 454 is a heavy duty military agent which combines a witch's brew of viruses, chemical compounds, and even a few nanites. The effects on those

exposed to it are as follows: 1) REF is increased by 3, 2) It negates pain effects (+3 to stun saves), 3) It increases CI by 3. The agent has the following side effects: 1) Paranoia (as per page 114 of *Cyberpunk 2020*) 2) Psychotic Rage (as per page 114 of *Cyberpunk 2020*). Fortunately, the agent itself has no lasting side effects. It takes 1D10 minutes for the agent to go into effect after if breather in, 2D10 if there is only skin contact.

If a person exposed to the agent has Enhanced Antibodies, Toxin Binders, or Nanosurgeons, the agent will interact with the nanites. The result of this interaction doubles the agents duration (4D10 X 2 hours), but reduces the psychotic rage effects as follows: Each hour the user/victim has a 50% chance of going into a psychotic rage for 3D6 minutes. After the rage ends, the person will be extremely paranoid (even more than normal for the drug) for 1D6 hours. At the end of the agent's duration, there will be no agent induced side effects. The agent takes 2D10 minutes to work if breathed in, 4D10 if there is only skin contact.

The drug currently exists only in a gaseous form. One cannister can produce enough gas to fill a sphere 10 meters in diameter. Of course, the actual area of effect depends on wind, the ammount of the agent released, and so forth. A person in an airtight suit (like a space suit) cannot be affected by the agent, while a person with some sort of filter or breathing apparatus (like Nose Filters or any oxygen mask) can be affected by skin contact.

The agent is currently unlicensed and is quite illegal to produce, possess, or sell.