Cyberpunk RED

JUMPSTART KIT

WORLD BOOK

CYBERPUNK RED

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JUMPSTART KIT WORLD BOOK

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Dedicated to the amazing people of R. Talsorian Games, past and present. Together, we make the future.

NEIL BRANQUINHO

1 WELCOME TO THE TIME OF THE RED

Pay attention, punks. My old man used to say History will bite you in the ass if you don't learn about it. It's like a rabid dog that will go after you if you keep going back to its hideout. So, I'm going to fill you in with some history you'd better learn pronto, now that you're on the Street.

Because you do not want to get bit by this beast.

—Trace Santiago

THE WORLD BEFORE THE WAR

The **Time of the Red** is not all that unfamiliar to someone who has lived through the twenty–teens (2013 to 2019) and through the boom–town years of the 2020s.

What follows is a brief overview of just a few of the major factors that have shaped the *Cyberpunk* world since the 4th Corporate War ended and where things stand in the Time of the Red.

In the United States, thirty–two years of corrupt government and financial destabilization had resulted in a nation divided––by class, by race, and by economics.

AMERICA IN THE DYING LIGHT

By the end of the 1980s, it was evident that the nation was in trouble. Most social norms had dissolved under an all engulfing wave of competing special interest groups, media–fueled fads, and an overall "me first" world view. By 1994, the number of homeless on the streets had skyrocketed to twenty–one million. The technical revolution had further torn the economy apart, creating two radically divergent classes—a wealthy, technically oriented, materially acquisitive group of Corporate professionals, and a poor class of economically unstable, unskilled, blue–collar workers. The middle class was nearly eradicated. It was this dismal beginning that led to the American landscape of the 2000s.

In large cities, business areas were clean, neat, well–lit showcases, free of crime and poverty, controlled by powerful Corporations. Ringing the central areas were the Combat Zones—decrepit, squalid suburbs and burned out ghettos teeming with boostergangs and other violent sociopaths. The outer suburbs were also Corporate–controlled zones; safe, well–guarded tracts where executives raised their families in relative security.

Throughout the Midwestern states, many small towns were abandoned, as local farms, businesses, and banks collapsed in the wake of drought, famine, and economic chaos. The farms were bought up by huge Agricorporations, and were maintained with hired workers, machine labor, and well–equipped guards. The open freeways became battlegrounds, as armed packs of boostergangs travel from city to city, looting and pillaging like mechanized Visigoths.

> ## ALL RIGHT PIPSQUEAK, TIME TO SEE IF METAL REALLY IS BETTER THAN MEAT. LET'S DANCE.
>
> *MORGAN BLACKHAND*

THE GOLDEN TIME OF *CYBERPUNK*

It wasn't all bad though. In the crammed megacities that replaced the many small towns and suburbs that died in the Collapse, a feverish explosion of technological wonders and headlong capitalism created a glitzy, super–powered world dominated by huge Megacorporations that strode through the world like nations. They raised armies, fought for international domination, and shaped everything around them, while below the glittering towers of the ultra–rich seethed an ever–growing population of destitute, starving people scrambling just to survive. The only leveler was technology, as the masses trapped on the "Street" used cyberware, weapons, and raw cunning to beat their implacable Corporate foes. Whether they were called Edgerunners, Cyberpunks, or just plain rebels, they were the ones who stood up against the power of the Megacorps and fought to win against all odds.

And this was the world as it was before the devastation of **the 4th Corporate War**.

THE 4TH CORPORATE WAR

Like the 1st and 2nd Corporate Wars, the 4th Corporate War began when rival Megacorps flexed their military muscle to achieve a financial objective. In 2021, IHAG, a Megacorp specializing in underwater shipping and technology went bankrupt, leading to two rival ocean–based Megacorps (CINO and OTEC) squaring off for a hostile takeover of IHAG's remaining assets. At first, both Corps engaged in the typical opening rounds of this kind of battle; stock manipulations and economic warfare, but as the conflict grew out of hand, both companies began to engage in outright warfare.

THE HOT WAR

Unable to gain the advantage, both Megacorps then moved up to the next level of the war; each hired the forces of still larger Megacorps to provide troops and military material—in this case, OTEC hired Militech, an armaments and security force based in the United States, and CINO hired Arasaka, a security Megacorp based out of Japan. As the two largest paramilitary Corporations in the world, both Militech and Arasaka had been spoiling for a fight for most of the late teens and early 2020s, and the CINO–OTEC conflict provided the perfect excuse.

As major international Megacorps at the absolute apex of Corporate power in the *Cyberpunk* age, both combatants were at a military scale equal to many of the smaller nations of WWII, fielding armies with tens of thousands of troops. Both sides also possessed extremely advanced transportation and logistics systems, allowing them to strike at each other any-

where on the planet. This combination of sophisticated military technology and lightning tactical movement made it all but impossible for many legitimate nations to stop conflicts within their borders. Small engagements soon flared into major show-downs, until the battle reached a fever pitch worldwide, with forces from both Megacorps engaged in major battles that embroiled entire cities.

THE ORBITAL WAR

By mid–2022, pitched battles involving aircraft, AVs, tanks, power armor, and thousands of troops were the rule. Interdiction strikes on international trade were common as were strikes on energy production and transportation systems. Cyberattacks disrupted banking, information, and media services; orbital space narrowly escaped becoming another battlefield only because the space–dwelling "Highriders" began to hit both sides with lethal suborbital "artillery" strikes capable of wiping out most of a small city.

The world was literally in the midst of the long anticipated Third World War, albeit without the obligatory hurling of nuclear weapons between sides. **Then came the Night City Holocaust.**

THE NIGHT CITY HOLOCAUST

On August 20th, 2023, unknown forces detonated a "pocket nuke" on the upper floors of the Arasaka Towers complex in Night City (on the western US coast). The Nuke, while not a city killer, reduced most of the central city to rubble and killed thousands of people. It was never formally decided who had triggered the Nuke—some partisans blamed Militech's over-zealous desire to crush Arasaka, while still others blamed the detonation on an Arasaka area denial weapon set off to protect its headquarters.

THE PARTY ENDS

The Night City Holocaust was the last straw. Within hours, then–US President Elizabeth Kress nationalized Militech, placing it thoroughly under the control of the still sizable United States military, and banished all Arasaka forces from the continental US under the threat of a retaliatory strike on Arasaka's Tokyo headquarters. Other nations swiftly followed the US's lead, nationalizing and/or interdicting assets of both participants of the War.

The War was finally over. Now came the Aftermath.

THE TIME OF THE RED

In the aftermath of this worldwide conflict, atmospheric particles from the nuclear blast in Night City, as well as debris from orbital weapon strikes, conventional explosives, and the wartime burning and annihilation of cities and agricultural areas created an eerie red pall over skies worldwide. For nearly two years, skies were tinged with a bloody red color, which eventually died down to brilliant red sunrises and sunsets through the next decade. Known as the Time of the Red, this would be the backdrop for the first years of the post–War recovery, only fading away as the battered populations of the world began to reconstruct their shattered cities. But despite the weakening of the atmospheric effects, the name has stuck among the survivors of the worldwide conflict, and, much as the 1920s was known as the Roaring Twenties and the 1930s as The Great Depression, in future histories, the period between the end of the 4th Corporate War and the present will probably always be referred to as **The Time of the Red**.

ADRIAN MARC

THE UNITED STATES IN THE TIME OF THE RED

Superpower No More

Since the end of the 4th Corporate War, the United States has lost much of its superpower status; but that doesn't matter much as most of Europe and the Far East are in the same position. What US military exists is organized as Combined Operations Groups (COGs); task forces that combine ships, aircraft, armor, and infantry into a cohesive fighting battalion; their main mission is to deal with threats to the BosWash Corridor and the Federal Government's interests. On the other hand, since the 4th Corporate War, several of these COGs have broken away from the United States and are operating as private armies for hire, running personal mini–kingdoms, or even acting as marauding packs of well–armed raiders.

FRAGMENTED AMERICA

In many ways, the United States is very much as it was in the late 1800s—a "civilized" East Coast controlled by the Federal Government in Washington DC, a "Wild West" of independent territories west of the Mississippi River, and an unincorporated West Coast from Seattle to Mexico. The territories are pretty much on their own, hiring local militia or mercenary armies to keep the peace, while the sprawl of Night City is maintained by its own system of interlocking local factions and power blocs.

The United States Government is still primarily centered in the Boston–Washington Corridor (aka BosWash) from New York to Miami, where it operates as the effective regional government much as the regional councils do for Night City. The branches of the Federal Government still operate as before; there is an Executive, Legislative, and Judicial Branch—these just have little or no effect on anything past the Mississippi, and their members come almost exclusively from the East and near Midwest.

President Kress

The current President is Elizabeth Kress; a hard–nosed, ex–military officer who was elected a year before the start of the now infamous 4th Corporate War. Honest, fair, and tough enough to face down any threat to US sovereignty, Kress has held the job for over a decade; re–elected four times in a total disregard for the rules on term limits, she is pretty much the only thing holding the US together after years of war and collapse.

NIGHT CITY

Night City was the place hardest hit during the War, and the damage is STILL everywhere nearly twenty years later. For starters, the city was surrounded by Militech forces and under total Arasaka control by the tail end of the War. Street to street fighting was already savage, and in the last few days before the Nuke, had approached a fever pitch. In some ways, the detonation was to become a "clean" end to a landscape already littered with burned buildings, wrecked vehicles and dead bodies. Over all of this was a dense red pall (The Red) that painted everything the color of blood and poisoned the air for miles around.

Post–War Night City was a wreck, but a wreck that was determined to rebuild. And one of the things that helped the most in the rebuilding process was the creation of the Pacifica Confederation.

The Pacifica Confed

After the War, **Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Northern California, and British Colombia** unified into an ad hoc, loose union called the Pacifica Confederation. In the Time of the Red, the Confederation is busy rebuilding their infrastructure. They also host several large US Government bases which have permanent leases, but do not otherwise exercise much control over the local population.

Night City is a Dangerous City of Dreams

This alliance has allowed Night City to survive as an independent "city state" on its own. The rebuilding city has become a free trade zone for the Confederation, as well as an entry point for the rest of the world when it doesn't want to deal with the rest of United States. In the Time of the Red, Night City is a cybernetic Casablanca, and like its famous cinematic counterpart, it's dangerous, nearly lawless, and a great place to make the Big Score.

Sasquatch is Watching

One other useful thing: in the process of rebuilding, the Washington/Oregon part of the confederation has allowed the one time Petrochem subsidiary, Biotechnica, free reign to design and release a number of experimental plants and animals which they hope will restore the once burgeoning ecology. So be careful out there in the woods, kids.

Maintaining the Power Balance

Overall, the Pacifica Confederation is a powerful economic region (a main trade port to what remains of Asia) with access to a lot of military power too (the local Combined Operations Groups at Bremerton and Ft. Lewis–McChord have generally supported the stable and sensible locals over the unstable main US Government.) Kress' New United States is going to have to work hard indeed to woo this confederation into an allied membership where they can work with Washington DC in exchange for a great deal of independent governance.

The Confederation's members are also willing to work with the rising new Megacorps, but on their own stringent terms—a

sort of "Screw up, Mister Megacorp, and we'll call on our friends at Lewis–McChord to flatten you." policy. But they are too economically powerful to need to actually sell out to the new Megacorps and that's not going to change much in the next few decades. So, while the Corps are ubiquitous in Night City, they walk a much more careful line knowing that the locals are capable of waging their own Corporate War against them.

In the Time of the Red, this relationship is in the process of being defined and the Corps are currently learning the hard way that the Seattle/Vancouver/Victoria boys do not fool around. In the Time of the Red, everyone walks lightly in the Pacifica Confed.

THE WORLD BEYOND IN THE TIME OF THE RED

Beyond the borders of the remaining United States is a world in flux.

THE EUROTHEATRE

The Eurotheatre has been badly battered by the War and the subsequent loss of its ESA and Orbital colonies to the Highriders.

The World Stock Exchange and the Common Market have managed to maintain a stable economy in which most of the European nations participate––the exceptions are Italy, Spain and Greece, all of which are now suffering violent, chronic political upheavals. Here, the international Corporations still have a great deal of power, but various Euro–governments have skillfully used the War to keep the Euro business barons under control. Only Great Britain has suffered major economic trouble––swamped by massive immigration and an antiquated technological base, its streets are still almost as explosively dangerous as the United States'. The rest of Europe is in recovery mode, as individual nation states struggle to rebuild damaged financial and industrial hubs affected by the War.

Despite the massive reforms of the early 1990s (and the subsequent purge of hardliners in 1991), New Russia is still weakened by antiquated technology and still cannot feed its hungry population, although the War has leveled the playing field a bit. With the continuing failure of the region's economic and social reforms, hardliners are once again gaining strength and a showdown between the surviving cold warriors and a new generation of aggressive oligarchs is coming fast. These oligarchs are similar to the Megacorporates of the roaring 2020s; hungry, dangerous, and willing to use heavy amounts of bribery, murder, and mayhem to accomplish their aims.

THE MIDDLE EAST

The Meltdown of the 90s left vast areas of Iran, Libya, Iraq, Chad, and the Arab Emirates as radioactive fields of glass. Only Egypt, Syria, and Israel survived intact, and because of their already ruined state, were mercifully left alone for most of the War. But new alliances and power blocs are struggling to take control once again now that Megacorporate power has been curtailed. With the world trade in oil and raw materials disrupted by Corporate conflict, there is a new interest in mining the remains of the Meltdown nations, and in response, many of the national groups in the Middle East are starting to band together to reform and resist the invaders.

AFRICA

Once a fractured continent of warring countries under a bewildering array of dictators, democracies and socialist states, the New Africa was born as Euro–nations negotiated with these scattered nations to build the Kilimanjaro mass driver. The African states have since established solid footholds in space—nearly one third of all space construction workers are African, and the majority of spaceport facilities and construction areas are on African soil. The resulting population has evolved into a "national" group called the Highriders; a space–based, high tech society linked by Pan–African roots and a determination never to be victims of colonial oppression again. Declaring their independence during the War (and enforcing it with commandeered orbital weapons), the Highrider Assembly is carefully neutral in the Time of the Red, ready to deal with all sides as long as their sovereignty (and control of space) is respected.

ASIA

The Far East and Asia are now a hodgepodge of damaged nations, with Japan slowly recovering from the ravages of the Arasaka Corporation's abortive coup. China is still recovering from the loss of Hong Kong through a biological terror attack, and fierce battles in both the South China Sea and the Mongolian Plateau for access to strategic resources has left the government exhausted and almost tottering. Korea, both North and South, have become strongly isolationist, although North Korea, drawn into the conflict by promises of Arasaka support, has collapsed into a chaos of warlords and petty fiefdoms. Hammered by the savage fighting over trade routes and oilfields, much of Southeast Asia, the Philippines and Australia are isolated, damaged, and potential prey for the next powerful group that comes along.

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA

After several lengthy wars with the United States in the 1990s and early 2000s, Central America emerged as a strong union of independent states, working under a pact of mutual

cooperation. The US was expelled from all but the Panama Canal Zone (which it still holds by sheer military force against ongoing guerrilla aggression). But during the War, Nationalist factions in Brazil and Columbia used the Corporate fighting to support their own bids for land and influence—the result was a shattering of the old alliance that only now is beginning to be rebuilt.

THE MEGACORPS IN THE TIME OF THE RED

The 4th Corporate War ended the age of Corporate domination. Even if they were not involved in open combat, many Megacorps found their operations fatally wounded through the breakdown of communications, NET information systems, global transport disruption, and collateral damage.

The New "Corpos" Survive...

But the Megacorps aren't out of the picture entirely. In many cases, local or regional offices continued to operate in a reduced capacity—if they could get the materials and funding to do so. These companies sometimes renamed themselves but continued where possible, to provide the services they were known for. Some Corps (like Raven Microcyb and Kiroshi) broke into smaller units that shared a common trade dress, but were often run by entirely different Corporate officers. Still other Corps just fell apart entirely, but found their assets seized by competitors or ambitious regional managers hoping to cobble together a personal Corporate fiefdom.

The result is that in the Time of the Red, the Megacorps aren't all that mega anymore. These "Corpos" (as they are dubbed on the Street) are closer to what Corporations were in the mid–20th century—local companies powerful on a regional, or even national scale, but without the enormous international reach of the roaring 2020s.

...And Are Still Dangerous

This doesn't mean they're toothless—far from it. Corps in the Time of the Red are, if anything, more rapacious and power hungry. There's fewer rules out there and ambitious Players in the front office are willing to do practically anything to gain an advantage over a resource or market. They may not be able to field giant armies with tanks and troops, but they can still deploy powerful covert ops squads and bribe the right governmental overseers to allow them to take out their enemies when it's important enough to them. It's just that in this post–War environment, the most determined Edgerunners can also field hardware and advantages that can often equal these smaller Corps. And there are even a fair number of Edgerunners who are using the open market to start their own "baby Corps" to take on the tottering "old guys." There's a new and dangerous game to be played out in the marketplace, and in this fragmented new age, everyone can play.

SO WELCOME TO THE TIME OF THE RED, CHOOMBATTA. IT'S MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE ONCE GLAMOROUS AND HYPER CHARGED LOST TIME OF THE CYBERPUNK 2020S. THE BODY COUNT IS HIGHER AND THE STAKES EVEN NASTIER.

BUT THAT'S NOT GOING TO STOP YOU, IS IT? DIDN'T THINK SO.

TRACE SANTIAGO

NEIL BRANQUINHO

2 DARK FUTURE COUNTDOWN

1990—1993

- **A secret 'coup' launched by "The Gang of Four," a coalition of government agencies, effectively ends federal democracy in the US.** Many states begin ignoring federal authority, declaring themselves "free states".

- **Start of First Central American Conflict.** American Imperial ambitions, justified as part of the war on Communism and narcotics, kills hundreds of thousands. American veterans return home dismembered and maimed, driving the demand for cyberware.

- **Breakup of Soviet state.** From this point, the USSR begins a new era of rapprochement with Western Europe; by the 2000's, the "Neo–Soviets" are the Eurotheater's most powerful allies.

- **Eurospace agency launches Hermes spaceplane.**

- **CHOOH² developed by Biotechnica.**

- **First arcology built on ruins of Jersey City.** Sixteen "arcos" begin construction over the next five years, until the collapse of 1997, leaving the huge structures half completed, filled with squatters and homeless.

- **The Treaty of 1992 establishes the European Economic Community.** A common currency unit (the Eurodollar) is established.

- **The US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) develops and spreads several designer plagues worldwide, targeting coca and opium plants.** Governments of Chile, Ecuador, and Afghanistan collapse.

- **A savage drug war breaks out between Eurocorp–backed drug dealers and DEA all over the Americas.**

- **First use of high energy laser lift arrays. Simple mass driver established in Canary Islands by Eurospace Agency.**

- **First TRC biologic interface chips developed in Munich, United Germany.**

- **AV–4 aerodyne assault vehicle developed to deal with increasing riots in US urban zones.**

- **In retaliation for US attacks on Bogotá, Colombian drug lords detonate small tactical nuclear device in New York. 15,000 killed.**

1994—1995

- **World Stock Market Crash of '94.** The US is caught manipulating European and American stock markets, a worldwide financial meltdown results from the news being made public.

- **US, European Community, and the Neo–Soviets start a new space race,** seeking economic and military advantages over each other.

- **Kilimanjaro mass driver begins construction,** under joint agreement between ESA and Pan–African Alliance.

1996

- **The Collapse of the United States.** Weakened by losses in the World Stock Crash, overwhelmed by unemployment, homelessness and corruption, many city governments collapse or go bankrupt. The US Government, snarled in a staggering deficit and the machinations of the Gang of Four, is totally ineffective.

- **Nomad Riots.** By now, 1 in 4 Americans are homeless. Hundreds of thousands riot for living space throughout the US, Nomad packs spring up on the west coast and spread rapidly through the nation.

- **First appearance of boostergangs.**

- **US Constitution suspended.** Martial law established in US.

1997—1998

- **Mideast Meltdown.** A very limited thermonuclear war destroys much of the Middle East. Radioactive fallout spreads around the world. World oil supply drops by half.

- **'Rockerboy' Manson killed in England.**

- **The Drought of '98 reduces most of the Midwest to parched grasslands.** Between agribusiness Corps and drought, the family farm all but disappears.

- **10.5 quake shatters Los Angeles; Pacific Ocean inundates 35% of the city.** An estimated 65,000 are killed.

1999

- **Millennium cults begin to appear, predicting an apocalypse on 1/1/2000.** Thousands migrate to isolated communes and temples to "await the end".

- **Tycho Colony established.** A mass driver is constructed to provide raw materials for orbital platforms.

2000

- **Millennium cults run amok on 1/1/2000 in orgy of suicide and violence; most destroy themselves.**

- **First "extended family" poser gangs established.**

- **Crystal Palace space station begun at l–5 Lagrange point.**

- **Wasting Plague hits US and Europe, killing hundreds of thousands.**

2001

- **The framework of the NET firmly in place with construction of the Worldsat network.**

2002

- **Food Crash.** Mutated plant virus wipes out Canadian and Neo–Soviet crops. US agribusiness crops survive due to new biological counter agent. Neo–Soviets accuse US of biological warfare.

2003

- **Second Central American War.** US invades Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela. The War is a disaster that costs thousands of American lives and leaves thousands of troops to struggle home on their own.

- **WNS media star Tesla Johanneson exposes secret NSA transcripts of the First Central American conflict.**

- **The remainder of the Gang of Four is swept away on a wave of reform.** Elections resume, although heavily influenced by the Megacorporations.

2004

- **First cloned tissue growth in vitro.** Micro–sutures, sterilizer fields developed.

- **Tesla Johanneson assassinated in Cairo.**

- **1st Corporate War (2004–2005).** Commando raids and cyberspace attacks between EBM and Orbital Air introduce the world to the age of direct Corporate warfare.

2005

- **Cybermodem invented.**

2006

- **First human clone grown in vitro.** Mindless, it only lives for 6 hours.

2007

- **2nd Corporate War (2007–2010).** SovOil and Petrochem fail to negotiate with each other over newly discovered oil fields in the South China Sea, and begin blowing each other up instead. Even cynical observers are shocked at the level of violence.

- **Braindance developed at UC Santa Cruz, California.**

DARK FUTURE COUNTDOWN

2008

• **US assault on Russian weapons platform MIR XIII.** Eurospace agency intervenes and the Orbital War breaks out between the "Euros" and the "Yanks", until Tycho colony mass driver drops a two–ton rock on Colorado Springs. An uneasy peace is reached.

2009

• **Corporations eradicate mob rule in Night City.**

• **Abortive takeover attempt by US "terrorist group" of Crystal Palace construction.** ESA discovers Defense Intelligence Agency plot and drops five–ton rock off the coast of Washington D.C. as a warning.

2010

• **Network 54 now controls 62% of all media broadcasting in US.**

• **Human clones are now viable, but no technology exists to implant personalities or intellect into them.** They are primarily used to provide body parts for the super–rich.

2011

• **Crystal Palace is completed.** ESA now has a permanent hold in the High Orbit zone.

• **ESA/Soviet mission reaches Mars.** After a landing, the mission returns and Mars is abandoned for a decade.

2013

• **April 13, 2013. Johnny Silverhand concert spirals into a riot in Night City.** The rioters kill 18, wound 51. Old Arasaka complex gutted.

• **Soulkiller virus developed.**

• **Netwatch, previously a private organization, is established worldwide by joint US/ Eurotheatre treaty.**

• **First true Artificial Intelligence developed at Microtech's Sunnyvale, CA facility.**

2014

• **I–G transformations redesign the NET.** During this time, renegade Netrunner Rache Bartmoss plants the DataKrash virus into the architecture of the NET.

2016

• **3rd Corporate War (2016).** Unknown cyberterrorists attack the networks of Corporations world–wide, causing billions of eb worth of losses.

2020

• **Carbon Plague incident.** A Corporate AV crash releases a nanotech plague on the outskirts of Night City. The plague ravages the city for two weeks, then mysteriously stops.

• **Chicago Rebuilding Project begins.** Financed by visionary Dr. Richard Storm of Storm Technologies, project joins Nomad groups under the unifying banners of the Aldecaldo and Jode Families.

2021

• **Euro Aquacorp CINO attempts to acquire bankrupt Aqua–corp IHAG.** Rival Aquacorp OTEC attempts to act as "white knight" in the hostile takeover. As both Corps line up allies, a dangerous war at sea begins.

2022

• **Covert operations expand as Arasaka Security and Militech spar to see who will control the outcome of the CINO/OTEC War.**

• **Rache Bartmoss, Netrunner supreme, is killed in a Corporate raid.** Two weeks later, the dead man switch for his DataKrash virus activates.

• **4th Corporate War.** Covert operations explode into a shooting war as Arasaka and Militech move front line troops into battle. The ensuing conflict involves operations all over the globe, with heavy combat in major cities worldwide.

• **The Chicago Rebuilding Project collapses as Arasaka Corporate factions detonate virus bombs in an effort to deny the city to Militech.**

• **DataKrash virus now infests 78.2% of the NET.** Aware of the virus' potential, Saburo Arasaka sets out to create a secure database in the new Arasaka Towers facility in Night City.

• **Seven Hour War. Fed up with the fighting, Highriders at O'Neill 2 declare independence, using deltas and scavenged mass drivers to drop dozens of lunar rocks at key sites all over the planet, causing widespread death and destruction.** US and Japan officially recognize the new Highrider government.

2023

• **Total breakdown of international trade.** Container ship and air travel have been totally disrupted. Supplies and food sit on the docks worldwide, unable to reach stores, factories or suppliers. Many Megacorps collapse.

• **August 20th, 2023. Night City Holocaust.** An incursion team led by Solo Morgan Blackhand and Rockerboy Johnny Silverhand attempt to steal/destroy the Arasaka

Secure Database in the Arasaka Towers facility. During the assault, an area denial nuclear device is detonated, which destroys much of central Night City. Over a half million people are killed. Another quarter million die in the resulting aftermath.

- **Militech is nationalized by US President Elizabeth Kress through the expedient of reactivating Militech CEO Gen. Donald Lundee's reserve commission.**

- **Beginning of the Time of the Red.** Atmospheric particles from the nuclear blast in Night City, as well as debris from orbital rock strikes, conventional explosives, and the wartime burning and annihilation of cities and agricultural areas creates an eerie red pall over skies worldwide. For nearly two years, skies are tinged with a bloody red color, which eventually dies down to brilliant red sunrises and sunsets through the next decade.

2025

- **End of the 4th Corp War.** This includes a three year wrap up as pockets of fighting are quelled by Militech and national armies. While there is only one nuke dropped during the war, the world's infrastructure is severely impacted, although not destroyed.

- **NET is officially down.** Alt Cunningham establishes the Ghost World in the ruins of bio–destroyed Hong Kong. As everything in HK is dead, the Chinese government puts a 100–foot wall around HK to keep the plague contained.

- **Japanese government almost breaks down.** By repudiating Arasaka, national face is saved. Arasaka is reduced to a Japan–only Corporation for the next decade. European Union is pretty much restored.

2026—2030

- **The Diaspora begins.** Groups displaced from wrecked cities now set out to reclaim nearby cities abandoned since the Collapse. They are supported by Nomads who set up convoys between cities.

- **There is massive looting of old tech and abandoned storehouses.** Only scattered Corps are still functioning on a very reduced basis, while local businesses take up the slack.

- **Very limited VPNs within Corporate parks.** AIs occasionally creep into the wrecked city's old NETs to seek out other AIs to join the Ghost World.

- **Arasaka breaks into three warring factions.** The Bakafu Faction, headed by Hanako Arasaka; the Princess Faction, headed by Michiko Arasaka, Kei's youngest daughter, who as a US citizen, allies with the new US Government; and the Rebel Faction, headed by Kei's rebel son Yorinobu).

- **The United States is now a functional dictatorship under Pres. Elizabeth Kress's State of Emergency.**

ALEXANDER DUDAR

DARK FUTURE COUNTDOWN

2030—2035

- **Resettlement of Suburban Night City.** In time, Night City Central will be rebuilt, but for now, the foothills and the small cities around Night City are over—packed with refugees who fled the radioactive ruins of the Corporate Zone.

- **Reestablishing of Nomad High Roads.** Nomads now operate ports and container ships. Corporations are now mostly local, but as Nomads establish trade routes, Corps branch out regionally.

- **Start of CitiNets, local VPNs established in some of the Reclaimed Cities.** These networks are usually "airgapped" with only limited (and strongly controlled) access between them. Netwatch oversees the development of this new series of networks, with Corporate backing.

- **Rumors that Rockerboy Johnny Silverhand's body has been found in cold storage in a body bank in the wreckage of Old Night City arise.** Although this is never substantiated, the claim is that it has been stored there by a full—borged fan of his who recovered it from the Arasaka blast site.

- **Start of Night City Reconstruction.** Gigatons of fill are shifted from the radioactive ruins of the central City, uncovering the previous buried Morro Rock. Much of the old Bay is filled in. The shape of Night City begins to change.

2035—2045 (PRESENT DAY)

- **First Wave Cities start Reclamation under support from local governments and remaining Megacorps.** These First Wave Cities are ones that require only a limited amount of resources to rebuild.

- **"We have no United States until we have a country again" Pres. Elizabeth Kress.** While local elections resume, there will be no national elections until a treaty exists between Free States and remaining United States.

- **Rebuilding of old factories and individuals starting to replace lost tech.** New Corps start to rise from the wreckage of the 4th Corporate War.

- **Rumors spread that legendary Solo Morgan Blackhand has been spotted in various First Wave cities.**

- **Netwatch attempts to clear out the R.A.B.I.D.S. and reestablish the Old NET.** After a losing three—year battle, they give up and shut down all the major Nodes into the Old NET (although some Netrunners still try to go there to loot the abandoned systems).

- **Establishment of first Data Pools, information servers and exchange systems designed for open use within the limits of a city.** Data Pools produce free, open content created through the collaborative efforts of a community of users. In design, they are similar to the hyper—stack "page" system attempted and then abandoned for the NET in the early 90's.

- **Rise of the first Mega Buildings to handle population expansion.** These are "all in one" arcologies designed to create safe habitable zones rapidly

- **Beginning of first new factories, replacing, upgrading, or repairing old and scattered tech.**

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE SUNLIGHT/ SCREAMING FAST AND MEAN AND LOW?

GET YOURSELF ILLUMINATED/ GET YOURSELF THAT CYBER GLOW.

MADE OF STEEL AND HARD EMOTION/ GIVE MY LOVE AND FACE THE DAY/ IN YOUR FACE AND HERE TO PARTY.

NEVER GONNA FADE AWAY.

JOHNNY SILVERHAND, NEVER FADE AWAY

ANSELM ZIELONKA

3 NIGHT CITY 2.0

NIGHT CITY: THE OVERVIEW

Name: Night City

Founded: 1994

Population: 5 million

Businesses: Technical, light industry, trade, electronics

Night City was founded rather recently as cities go. Before 1994, the area was just a clutter of unincorporated suburban sprawl between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

The core of this suburban area was a small coastal town originally known as Morro Bay. Located at a junction between Northern and Southern California, it boasted a fairly large and sheltered port as well as the (by then defunct) Three Fingers power plant. But in the chaos of the Collapse, the small town fell on hard times and only periodic North/South traffic kept it alive.

TRACE SANTIAGO

Trace Santiago is the son of famed Aldecaldo Family leader "Nomad" Santiago. Although he was raised on the Road, he has become well–known as a leading Media of the 2030–40 period, writing several exposes and books about the 4th Corporate War and the Age of the Red. This document is in the collection of his twelve year old niece Valentina, who, at the time was asking Trace for help on her Rolling School homework. In this archive, Trace's personal comments are in the sidebars.

"So you wanted to know more about the whole history of the City, neh? Just harass your Media uncle for the answers, so you can pass the School Tests and get your pa to give you a new cyberbike? I promise, choomba, this is gonna cost you. I plan to make you wash my bike for a month to pay me back."

THE MORRO MASSACRE

In late 1992, a band of roving boost-ergangers descended on the tiny coastal hamlet and nearly razed it to the ground in a four–day orgy of murder and looting before troops from Fort Ord were able to reach the town and destroy the invaders.

NIGHT'S GAMBLE

In the aftermath of the Collapse, an enterprising land developer named Richard Night bought up the entire town of Morro Bay, the majority of which would later become the Corporate Center and City Center areas. Night was able to buy the entire region cheaply because the local economy was destroyed after the shutdown of the Three Fingers power plant, the infamous massacre, and a devastatingly small population.

NIGHT'S VISION

Night proposed starting a new, safe, clean Corporate city, free of crime and urban blight. By offering lucrative tax packages to several major Corporations (PetroChem, for example, had established drilling rights off the coast), he was able to establish a strong economic base as well as an instant population of Corporate employees.

THINGS FALL APART

As planned, Coronado City was a clean, open community with rapid transit, and safe streets. Unfortunately, Night's plan went awry. In using his own advanced building techniques and materials, he excluded a number of established unions and construction firms, many of which were controlled by organized crime syndicates. Four years after initial construction, the powerful gang bosses murdered Night and took over the "Night" City project, renaming the city in Richard Night's memory.

Between selling contracts to their cronies, setting up drug and extortion rackets, and generally inviting the scum of the Collapse into the area, the gangs managed to turn a relatively clean, modern city into an embattled war zone. Crime, drugs, prostitution, random violence, and cybernetic terrorism soon became the rule of law. By 2005, the name Night City had taken on a grim and deadly new meaning.

THE CORPORATE TAKEOVER

In 2009, the Corps decided they'd had enough. In lightning strikes, covert Solo squads eliminated most of the gang leaders and established a Corporation–controlled City Council. The newly elected Council, faced with chaos in the City, deputized Corporate security forces and allowed them full authority within the City limits. The Corporate and City Centers were cleaned out and restored to their pristine state. The old Harbor Mall (originally built in the 1980's), was demolished and the New Harbor Mall constructed.

NIGHT CITY IN 2013

By 2013, much of the worst excesses of the City had been crushed under the ruthless heel of the Megacorps. The basic services such as police, fire and support services had been reestablished, and if the Corporate masters were oppressive, at least to the average punk on the Street, it was better than dodging gunfire on the way to the Vendit booth.

NIGHT CITY IN 2020

By 2020, Night City was a rapidly growing urban region, still rife with urban violence and street crime, but with strong economic growth in the Corporate sector. It was the quintessential city of the *Cyberpunk* future—gritty, dangerous, but possessed of an urban slick and stylish cool that made it unique. As Bes Isis, Net 54 newscaster and one of Night City's most well–known public figures put it at the time…

NOBODY EVER LEAVES NIGHT CITY. EXCEPT IN A BODY BAG.

Because of its Free State status, Night City was home to units on both sides of the 4th Corporate War. Perhaps as a result, the War was not kind to Night City. There was constant street to street, building to building fighting throughout the City, especially around the Corporate Zone where both factions maintained substantial office complexes. Even before the nuclear event that wiped the center area out, people were abandoning the city in droves, doing whatever they could do to avoid getting sniped by drones, crushed by tanks, or just gunned down by Corporate kill squads. A big chunk of the City was wrecked and people were climbing all over themselves to get to safer spots like Heywood and Pacifica.

Then both sides went over the line and some bright boy set off a bomb.

Night City During the 4th Corp War (2022)

In retrospect, it was just Night City's bad luck that it was a Free City in an area not controlled by a larger national power. Neither of the Corporate combatants was stupid enough to drop a nuke in the middle of some place where the remnant US or the still powerful Eurotheatre held the reins. In fact, probably the only thing that kept then–President Kress from wiping out every Arasaka stronghold on earth was the fact that Night City wasn't technically part of the US.

So, they dropped a **nuke**.

The twin Arasaka Towers were 140 floors tall, making them among the tallest buildings existent at the time. They were joined by a high bridge around the 60th floor mark. With the exact location of the Arasaka master database unknown, Militech decided the best course of action was to use a pocket nuke (carried by a hand–picked black ops team) to level the entire structure. The Militech team didn't really care about the loss of life, as they had already written the City off as a loss to Arasaka months earlier in the War.

The bomb triggered in the Arasaka Towers was roughly twenty–five percent as powerful as the bomb at Hiroshima. A tactical nuke a bit larger than a "suitcase bomb." It was designed to utterly demolish the master database and make it unusable in any way to a rival Megacorp. The Nuke was prematurely detonated at floor 120 (1200 feet), in Kei's apartments where the Soulkiller lab was located.

The blast pretty much obliterated the twin towers, splitting them in half and causing them to collapse outward. The entire center of the city became rubble in seconds. Most people in the area died instantly

A lot of Night City was built on fill, because the original elevation was only sixteen feet above sea level. So, the Arasaka nuke caused a minor earthquake that liquefied parts of the fill and flooded the inner city.

The Bomb

The explosion was technically an air blast since the detonation went off at roughly 1,200 feet. (Little Boy, by comparison, had a detonation height of about 1,900 feet). While this lessened overall long–term radioactivity, most of what remained penetrated only the huge skyscraper towers surrounding the blast (they were later scraped off and buried as fill in the Bay). The high blast area and the tons of raw concrete and steel there was instantly converted into particulate debris which rained down on the entire NorCal region and far out to sea for many months.

The dust cloud spiraled up into the sky, turning it red for almost two years. Even several years after the blast, suspended particles caused the skies at dawn and dusk to glow a lurid crimson, inspiring people who lived through that time to call it the Time of the Red.

After the Fall: Survival Mode (2023–2025)

Night City was inhabitable within 24 hours of the detonation. Many people were unaffected as they were heavily cybered up or had radiation filters installed in their bodies already. However, the Nuke and its aftermath destroyed a large part of Night City's housing, forcing people to move out to the suburbs or to areas even

"I know all this because my dad, Old Man Santiago, was there as part of the assault on the Towers. He doesn't talk much about it, but if you get him drunk enough, he occasionally breaks down and spills some details. He lost a lot of people in that mess, and he always swears that in the end, they weren't the ones who set the Bomb off."

Later, when this was uncovered in the early 2040's thanks to Trace Santiago's revelations, it would back fire spectacularly, driving Night City to realign itself with Arasaka rather than Militech and the New United States

Editor

> *"The Old Man says that if the nuke had been detonated where they planned, the heavily shielded underground complex would have absorbed the main blast and saved the rest of the City. I don't know if he was right, but I aim to find out."*

> *"Night City's seductive but remember you're a Nomad.*
>
> *That means guns. Guns and cyberbikes. That's how we hold the line. We don't have any home except the caravan. We don't have any rights except what we take. We get run out of town by cops; we get raided by the roadwarrior packs, and we survive because we've got guns and bikes..."*

further out from the city' center. Worse, the liquefaction of the fill the city was built on broke gas mains, water pipes, and electrical grids. Streets became twisted chunks of asphalt, strewn with wrecked ground cars, while fallen AVs lay scattered among the debris of broken skyscrapers. Night City might technically be inhabitable but it was far from pleasant. Even then, it wasn't as bad as some other cities like Rio and Hong Kong.)

Much of the area beyond Greater Night City had been abandoned during the Collapse. But now, people started moving north, south, and east as soon as they could. Neighborhoods found a new unity and purpose, even if it was grudgingly built on a shaky foundation. They weren't looking for rebuild yet. They were looking for food, clean water, and shelter. In a wasteland of ruins, gangs, renegade Corporate fighters, and radioactive wreckage, the denizens of Night City were in survival mode. And survival is what the inhabitants of Night City do best.

AFTER THE FALL: THE RECOVERY (2030–2040)

President Kress blamed the Night City attack on Arasaka, although she was soon able to determine that the actual weapon used had been supplied by a Militech strike team. The Big Lie was that Arasaka blew up the Corporate Center in an area denial attack to stop Militech from seizing the Arasaka's Night City office. In point of fact, Arasaka did actually have a much larger thermonuclear device buried in the foundations of the Towers for just that reason, but the explosion of the Militech pocket nuke rendered this plan inoperable. No one knows where the Arasaka Bomb actually wound up after the Fall of the Towers, and since only a few of the upper echelon of the zaibatsu (such as Kei and his father Saburo) even knew about this fallback, the knowledge of the Arasaka weapon has since passed into the realm of legend.

IN THE REALM OF CONSPIRACY AND RUMOR

Very few people knew anything about the Militech–backed strike team or its composition. Rumor has it that the veteran Solo, Morgan Blackhand, operating as a hidden government asset, passed the information about the failed raid onto President Elizabeth Kress independently; this is still only in the realm of legend, as no one has seen Morgan Blackhand or his corpse since the Fall of the Towers. In any case, Kress used this (and the reactivation of General Lundee's commission) to gain leverage over Militech, bringing it to heel and nationalizing its assets as part of a resurgent US Government. Bringing the full force of her military and propaganda resources to bear, Kress painted a lurid picture of Arasaka as an evil foreign Megacorp run by a madman, who wantonly destroyed an American city in the pursuit of personal power. Arasaka's charters to operate in the United States were immediately revoked, its members and board declared terrorists, and its assets either seized or driven offshore.

Yet, for all of this political theater, Kress showed little or no interest in helping Night City recover. Much as previous Presidents during the Collapse had done, she wrote the city off as unrecoverable and offered sanctuary in a new United States to the surviving refugees. There were two reasons for this; first, with the resources of the United States already stretched to the breaking point, there really were very few options left to Kress. Second, the flinty and farsighted American President saw this as the perfect way to bring the wayward "Free State of NorCal" (and its lucrative technology base) back into the Government's control.

But stubborn to the end, Night City fought back.

NIGHT CITY.... AHWOOOO!

UNKNOWN

AFTER THE BOMB: THE REBUILDING (2040–PRESENT)

Roughly two million people in the greater Night City region were left homeless due to the Bomb, either directly or because of flooding from the liquefaction of the city's foundations. Survivors fled into overcrowded tent cities in the surrounding suburbs of North Oak, Westbrook, Pacifica, Heywood, and South Night City. But tent cities aren't real homes and it was obvious that something needed to be done fast.

The remnants of the Night City government turned to outside resources, calling in old markers and favors from a wide variety of Edgerunners. Recovery was lead by the Nomads of the Aldecaldo Clan and their allies in the StormTech Corporation. With a lot of experience in city rebuilding due to the Chicago project, StormTech and the Aldecaldos were uniquely equipped to construct extensive temporary housing from shipping containers and later formocrete modules brought in by rail and sea.

But first, the ground needed to be cleared to put up even these rudimentary structures. Most of central Corp Zone had been destroyed. The wreckage was far too vast to dig up and cart to distant landfills, so the survivors used bulldozers and jury–rigged main battle tanks (abandoned by both sides) to shove the debris into the Bay. Most of Night City's inner neighborhoods had already been razed to the ground in the ceaseless battles preceding the Fall of the Towers. Now, the wreckage became the land that new mega–buildings and old cityscapes rose upon, once more ready to challenge the smog filled skies. And the building keeps going on, despite gangs, plagues, riots, and all the other inconveniences that are just another part of the Time of the Red.

This ongoing rebuilding period has also cemented Night City's relationship to the outer world. Abandoned by President Kress and her "New" United States, Night City has no intention of ever yoking itself to that tottering governmental shibboleth again. Kress's successors are going to be in for a really long and ugly war if they want to take this particular Free Zone back into the fold; frack, they might even ask Arasaka for help if it comes to that. As for the European Theater; the Euros can go their own way just as long as they don't mess with Night City's particular path. Like a cyberfighter who's been hit, knocked down, and has risen again with a scream of heavy metal rage, Night City has dreams. It dreams of becoming the biggest, baddest, most important city on the planet one day.

And it's a big dreamer

MAKSYM HARAHULIN

NIGHT CITY IN THE TIME OF THE RED

Back before he returned to the High Road, my dad used to hang out in Night City a lot. He said that for all the grungy, dangerousness of the place (and trust me, I've got no illusions that my dad wasn't in the middle of the most grungy and most dangerous parts)—there was a glittering, gorgeous center that was the flip side of the eurobuck coin. Back then, if you had the money and the connections, Night City could be the best place on earth—filled with the beautiful, the cybered up, and the powerful. Of course, if you were (like he was in those days) a young hired gun looking for a job, it could bounce from super slick and glam all the way to miserable and homicidal just like that.

Today, just like in my old man's day, what life in Night City is like depends on where you are. Neighborhoods and zones vary wildly, depending on what faction/gang/Corporation controls the local turf, and even then, conditions can change on the flip of a euro. But overall, the Night City region can pretty much be divided into five zones.

THE HOT ZONE WASTELAND

This is the area that used to be the central Corporate Zone. While much of this area had been bulldozed into the Bay as fill, the remainder is still a haunted landscape of wrecked, twisted skyscrapers, burned out vehicles, and the entombed bodies of the unlucky.

Although the radiation has subsided, it's still present and most people have abandoned the area to the worst of the gangs. If you go here, you probably are either a ganger, suicidal, or a scavenger looking to find something that's hidden in the endless wreckage.

THE REBUILDING URBAN CENTER

Not all of Night City was obliterated in the Holocaust. Already heavily built up with skyscrapers and densely packed urban construction, a considerable amount of the urban center has survived. But the detonation and subsequent destruction has damaged the seawalls and breakwaters that kept the Bay and the outer Pacific Ocean from rushing in. Periodic flooding is a regular occurrence, and power and water are chancy at best. The NCART subway still runs, when the tunnels aren't flooded; the City planners are working to raise the majority of the track into a new monorail configuration, but that will take time and money the city doesn't have.

In the Rebuilding Center, cranes and construction gear are everywhere. The looming skeletons of new Corporate towers rise from the broken bones of the Old City, patrolled by vigilant private armies and mechanical sentry drones. The work never stops, and the Center is awash with the slam of heavy machinery and brilliant with construction arc lights.

THE OVER PACKED SUBURBS

In the aftermath of the War, most of central Night City was uninhabitable, not because of residual radiation, but due to the loss of power, sewer, and water services. The suburbs became host to a huge number of tent cities and unregulated refugee camps smack in the middle of what had previously been safe Corporate "beavervilles." While huge megabuildings are under construction to house the refugees, this region is crowded, crime ridden, and on the edge of disaster all the time.

THE RECLAIMED PERIMETER

When Night City was the regional hub, it was surrounded by a constellation of smaller towns and suburbs. Most of these were abandoned during the 2000—2020 period, as they were too far out to protect from the roving go—gangs that plagued the area. Now, supported by Nomad Families and private security, the Reclaimers are attempting to transform ghost towns into new homes for the dispossessed of the City.

THE OPEN ROAD

In the 2020s, the Open Road was home to roving go—gangers and well defended Nomad caravans. But as the Nomad Families take greater control of the world's commerce and shipping routes, they're using surplus military hardware to drive out the go—gangs and make the roads safe for travel. The roads are still open, wide and dusty, with dead and burned out vehicles littering the landscape, but increasingly, the Open Road is looking more Route 66 than Route 666.

CHANGE IS COMING

In the Time of the Red, Night City is a city in the midst of massive change. Areas are constantly being rebuilt. The first temporary housing is rapidly being replaced by a new generation of gigantic mega—buildings; modeled after the old New Harbor Mall Arcology (which was destroyed by shellfire in 2022), these towering structures encompass living spaces, entertainment, food courts and shopping malls, all in their centralized hubs. As time goes on, these will probably evolve to be the main habitable space in the Night City megacity, especially in such depressed and razed exburbs as Watson and Heywood.

The New Un–Normal

Services are spotty, the law is chancy; you can't run the NET to the edge of space anymore, much less grab an Orbital Air luxury flight up to the Crystal Palace, but in general, things still work in Night City. You may not be able to get the latest digital Agent or the best weapons on the market (there is still

a major problem with supply chains that were disrupted by the War), but thanks to the explosion of rooftop and green–wall gardens, bandit solar collectors, and refabbed hardware from your friendly neighborhood Tech, you're actually eating better (when you eat), have access to more reliable power and gear, and can even count on the local Fixer setting you up with new drugs and new cyberware right off the (illicit) Streets.

IT'S NOT THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE 2020'S, CHOOMBA. BUT THE STREET STILL WORKS.

TRACE SANTIAGO

PARTICULARS

"Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."

—Mao Tse–Tung

POLITICAL

Politically, the current Night City is more or less run (and we use the term loosely, indeed) by a junta of old city government, Edgerunner and Nomad factions, and the few Corporations whose assets have survived the War. This City Council is dominated by the most aggressive or charismatic members of these disparate factions, including:

- **T**he **Nomad** Families
- **Edgerunner** factions, including Netrunners, Solos, Rockers, and other "Cyberpunk" types.
- The old **City Government.**
- The Corporate interests of **Zetatech, Biotechnica, Petro-Chem,** and (recently and covertly) **Arasaka.**

A District Manager chosen by their group is nominally in charge of their part of the City. The Council and District Managers are theoretically in charge of:

- The local **Data Pool.**
- **Zoning** designations for Corporations and neighborhoods.
- **Road and infrastructure taxes** (collected from Corps, factions and neighborhoods).

- **Freelance PI** and **Police** licensing.
- City contracts for **construction** and **justice services.**

There is no Mayor or strong central leadership, and fights between factions are frequent and are sometimes settled on the Street with weapons instead of in meeting rooms through negotiation. No one faction holds the upper hand and between the shifting alliances and agendas, things generally get done without descending into open warfare on the Streets too often.

Although badly underfunded and strapped for supplies, each area of Night City has its own Fire and Emergency Service Departments. Maintained by a levy on the local Corps and neighborhoods, these small units are heavily armed.

PUBLIC SERVICES

Hospitals

The two public hospitals established in the 2020 *years (City Medical Center and Crisis Medical Center) still exist in the* Central Night City area, but they suffer from lower level flooding and regular disruption of basic services such as water, power, and communications. The hospitals are, however, the last stand when it comes to major surgery and the ability to handle periodic plague outbreaks like those that were common in the period right after the Fall. There are now a number of constantly shifting clinics scattered across the area which have become the Red period's main source of medical care; outgrowths of the often covert ripperdocs of the 2020s, they are where most people go to get medicine, emergency care, and moderate level cyberware installations. The City also maintains a large cryo body bank, a holdover from the days immediately following the Fall when corpses were choking the Streets; these cavernous, refrigerated chambers, filled with racked cold slabs for cadavers, support a booming business in illicit body part trade.

Information

Data Terms, established in the 20–teens, are still located on the corners of many (30%) City Streets, and can be used to access information, computer services, fax–mail and NET input. It's a testament to their indestructibility that they still operate even with the NET broken. However, enterprising Netrunners, Techs and Fixers have taken to rewiring some Data Terms to require a CredChip or other form of payment in order to gain access. Most Data Terms are also patched into the local Data Pool system, allowing them to be used as phone booths, message boards, news readers, and PopMedia access points.

Data Terms also make great cover, in case you were wondering.

The NET

Overall, the War has totally wiped out most NET traffic; what little survived the destruction of server and wiring infrastructure was severely compromised by a deadly cybervirus that ravaged the Grubb–Ihara protocol–based systems at the War's end. This "DataKrash", rumored to be the creation of deranged master Netrunner Rache Bartmoss, has made running the old NET an almost suicidal proposition; the remnants of Netwatch (the global police of the NET), have done their best to ban Netrunners from large sections of the NET to keep the Krash from spreading. This is implemented by literally destroying key NET nodes in the system and taking still others offline. What NET traffic still exists in the Red period is limited to heavily secured VPN or "airgapped" systems which network together a single group, building, or campus.

The Data Pool

The Data Pool is a Citywide information network that is built on the backbone of the earlier Data Term systems of the pre–Red era. It connects information servers and exchange systems designed for open use within the limits of a city. Data Pools produce free, open content created through the collaborative efforts of a community of users. In design, they are similar to the hyper–stack "page" system attempted and then abandoned for the NET in the early 90's. In Night City, the Data Pool has replaced the NET as the primary means by which residents communicate and share ideas and information.

LAW AND ORDER

Between the Corporate battles during the War and the Fall of the Towers, law enforcement in Night City literally fell apart. During the first years of the Time of the Red, random Solos and Law Enforcement Officers gradually began to reassert control over the roving gangs and looters on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis. The more money and resources the locals had to throw at the problem, the better these ad hoc police units were, with Corporate "rent–a–cops" getting the best vehicles and hardware overall. Perhaps because of their limited assets, bribery is common and corruption standard. As for the old NCPD, the only real survivors were the members of MAX–TAC or "CyberPsycho Squad". Incorruptible to the last and still led by their commander, Max Hammerman, this lone bastion of the NCPD maintained an iron–fisted control over any and all incidents involving suspected cyberpsychotic elements in the City. Slowly, Commander Hammerman and MAX–TAC began asserting more control over the districts of Night City, pushing out protection cartels and recruiting freelance Solos into their ranks. By 2030, Max Hammerman and MAX–TAC had reestablished the NCPD, operating as an independent law enforcement department maintaining contracts with each District Manager in Night City. The NCPD is the only public service in Night City that is uniformly provided across all districts. They are efficient, dangerous, and reasonably moral, making them a safe investment for all of Night Cities District Managers.

Hammerman himself is a man on a crusade—to maintain law and order and protect the innocent. NCPD has an impartial code that it follows to the letter. It ends fights, no matter who starts them; if you're a security service guy fighting a bunch of boosters, you'd better put your weapons down when NCPD shows up, or they'll open fire on you, too.

I DON'T NEED NO STINKING BADGES

While Night City (and many Reclaimed City Zones) maintains their own police forces, other areas just hire a Security force to protect key city buildings, like the local Records Hall and Council Offices. For these guys (and others) law enforcement services are instead licensed to a variety of professional, NeoCorporate, private police and local forces, deputized to patrol/control a specific area by the owners of that area.

These include:

Security Services

Private businesses that employ hundreds of uniformed "rent a cops" hired to patrol urban areas, office blocks, and upscale living areas. The largest of these in Night City is the local branch of Lazarus Security, the heir to the 2020s ubiquitous Arasaka and Militech. These Security Services have arrest authority in Night City, but maintain no jails.

Corporate Security

Similar to Security Services, but loyal to one specific Corporation, Corp cops do not have arrest authority beyond their employer's facilities or the right to maintain jails, but who's going to stop them?

Personal Bodyguards

These are individuals who have been licensed and bonded by the local District Manager, similar to the way Private Investigator's licenses were given out in the old days. Personal bodyguards are licensed to use maximum force only in the event that their clients are in immediate physical danger. Without arrest authority they must call whichever group is legally active in the area to take prisoners.

Freelance Police

A variation of personal bodyguards, these are Solos hired to provide security and protection for a neighborhood. Protectors "patrol the beat" of their area, dealing with threats as they turn up. Freelance Police have arrest authority, as granted by the neighborhood they work for. They sometimes have holding cells, but more often as not remand prisoners to the local Security Facility.

TRANSPORT

Public Transportation

Astoundingly, the Night City Transit Corporation (NCTC) provides for bus service on most major city thoroughfares. NCART (Night City Area Rapid Transit), a public Corporation with some private (read: Corporate) funding, sometimes functions but is often submerged under several hundred feet of salt water due the collapse of the Night City water table. There are plans to rebuild the flooded sections above ground and extend the new monorail way to cover the growing suburban areas of North Oak, Westbrook, Pacifica, Heywood, and South Night City.

Night City Metro

The local airport would handle both domestic and international flights if there were any. Unfortunately, the chaos of the War disrupted most regular transit—private jets and aero-dynes exist only for the wealthy.

As part of the reclamation of the City, plans are underway to establish an orbital space-plane /delta rail–driver launch site on the recently uncovered mass of Morro Rock. As a volcanic batholith, it is the most geological stable area in the entire region and the perfect ground for launching things into space.

Freeways

Night City is on State Highway 828, which runs east to connect to I–5. Ground transit to San Francisco is about four hours due to road gang activity and bad roads; to LA about six hours.

The Nomads

The most reliable transportation in or out of Night City is offered as a service by the Nomad Clans. Individual Clans sponsor heavily armed convoys to Cities along the Coast, throughout the West, and even to the edges of the New United States. These convoys, often made up of over a hundred vehicles ranging in size from giant multifamily combis to small and armed escort cycles, are capable of standing off even the most determined road–gangs and rogue mercenary groups. Sea–based Clans have commandeered everything from abandoned luxury liners to gigantic container ships and pressed them into service; these are the only reliable way to get out of Night City via the sea lanes.

By Air and Even Space

Need to travel faster? Nomad Clans now control a sizable percentage of the aero–zep (modern cargo blimps) traffic around the region and overseas,. usually backed up by satellite snub fighters and AV's. There are few actual commercial jets or other winged aircraft available (too expensive to operate), but if you're really in a hurry, there are an assortment of ex–ESA (European Space Agency) or Orbital Highrider pilots commanding their own suborbital scram–jets; like the legendary Han Solo, these "Deltajocks" go out of their way to avoid legal entanglements and will move any cargo (including you) for the right price.

"Okay, Miss Valentina, that's what your uncle knows about Big Bad Night City. Now you get back there and write up a good report—in your own words— yes!—and get your precious bike. And remember; I want my bike washed and waxed by next Tuesday, neh?"

THE CITY OF THE FALLEN ANGELS.

NOT TO MENTION THE LEGION, THE CHROMERS,

THE GILLIGANS, THE INQUISITORS...

LT. STRAWBERRY MORRESSEY, NCPD

EDDIE MENDOZA

4 | EVERYDAY THINGS

So, you're just in from the Open Road, neh? You're a Family member and I wouldn't be a good member of the Pack if I didn't take care of a brother. Let me fill you in on how they do things in the Big Bad Night City.

–Trace Santiago

STAYING OUT OF TROUBLE

BACKGROUND

Let's start with the cops (which is the first thing you're gonna need to know in the City). First of all, most are now called Lawmen, since their ambit covers a lot more than the old school City Beat. The Lawmen of the Time of the Red, whether civil or one of the new private contractors, are organized much as they were during the 20th century with Homicide, Vice, Burglary, and Traffic Squads; about 5 men each. There has also been great efforts to retain the venerable —and necessary—Maximum Force Tactical Division (also known as the Psycho Squad or MAX–TAC), whose main job is to deal with cybernetic criminals. While the average beat cop hits the Street in an armored squad car, wearing an armor jacket, helmet and carrying a smart–chipped Militech sidearm, the Psycho Squad detail employs aerogyros, AV–4's, miniguns, assault weapons and missile launchers.

City cops can patrol all areas of the city. Corporate Cops are deputized to patrol only Corporate facilities. However, in areas where a large number of office areas are side by side, this effectively can turn an entire downtown region into Corporate Cop territory. Corporate Cops are usually better armed and armored, and often have full Trauma Team medical coverage. They are also more vicious, sadistic and likely to shoot first—after all, they know the Corporation can cover the incident up.

There are also Lawmen on the open highways as well. Since a lot of new Reclaimed Cities don't have police forces set up yet, these wandering marshals are much like the range–riding Wyatt Earps of the Old West—hard riding and fast shooting.

THE UNIFORM CIVILIAN JUSTICE CODE

In 1999, the US Government established a Uniform Civilian Justice Code to replace the many laws and regulations that had previously governed the nation. The Code is the guideline for all criminal procedure in the United States of the 2040s and in Night City. Here are the important rules:

Murder vs Self–Defense

Self–defense is defined as "any instance in which the assailant can show just cause that their life, or the life of another party was threatened, in circumstances where a duly appointed officer of the law could not be summoned, or where it was impossible to restrain the injured party by any other means.

Drugs

Theoretically, narcotics may not be possessed within the premises of the United States. However, bio–engineered plant diseases developed through the 1990's by the Drug Enforcement Agency wiped out 96% of the coca and opium plants in existence, making the point moot. The law also does not cover "designer drugs" such as endorphins and some synthetic narcotics, which are defined as medicinal.

Besides, you're in Night City. It's not PART of the United States anymore, choomba. Smoke 'em if ya got em...

Hard Time

Nailed for a Crime? Plea bargaining (pleading guilty to a lesser charge to speed up a trial) has been eliminated. Probation is almost unheard of. The death penalty is standard for murder cases—there is a three month appeal process during which new evidence can be introduced. Most felonies have mandatory prison terms of 5 to 10 years. Lesser crimes are covered by exile or personality adjustment.

Bang. You've Got Justice

The simplest method of punishment is still execution. Most states have a State Executioner who administers justice with one well–placed .44 slug at point blank range. They are also empowered to hunt down escapees from Death Row.

HOW YOU STAY IN TOUCH

In the Time of the Red, the cell phone of the 2000s has been replaced by a device that is a generational step beyond its predecessors. Even back in 2013, cellphones could make calls, record information, take pictures, and play music. Some could even download videos. But the **Agent**, introduced just before the world went to hell, is a new tech solution and goes a lot further than just taking your calls.

What makes your Agent unique is its Self–Adaptive AI. SAAI is the programming that operates your Agent. It is not a true AI, but rather an interlocking program set that manages data and "learns" how to do things by interacting with its owner. That'd be you. This allows the Agent to manage your life—to make sure you have the time to do what you need to do (crimes, killing people, getting out of trouble, and so forth) instead of going to the store to pick up something you forgot.

What Your Agent Can Do

• Make phone calls in voice, flat–screen, or 3D holos.

• Record calls, forward calls, or send them to voice mail.

• Scan the Data Pool to locate a person, place, or thing, and display the result as a map, a GPS guide, or a vocal file.

• Send or receive text messages as well as download scream-sheet (news) updates keyed to particular subjects you want to keep track of.

• Keep your schedule for you and act independently on events, like ordering a gift, paying from your cred account, and having it delivered to the recipient.

• Maintain a personality complete with name, voice, and even a holographic face/body. Some lonely souls stationed on distant transport runs or orbital stations have been known to reprogram their Agents to act as surrogate lovers, as well as personal assistants (with the aid of specific cybernetically driven "enhancements" to meet very specific needs.)

• Find information on a topic by cruising the Data Pool, looking for facts, and compiling simplified reports (you choose the report parameters) that can be delivered through text, graphics, or speech.

• Link to most of the appliances in your conapt.

• Monitor supply use, order when low, and have everything delivered to your door.

• Talk to your clothes and make recommendations for tailoring or replacement.

- Store thousands of hours of programming including music, video, and games, and display them on its own on–board LCD or holoscreens, or automatically seek out any unused video/audio device in the area and project though that.

- Word processing using voice or a VR keyboard, downloading the output to Data Pool or a hard–copy printer.

- Record images in 2 or 3D (depending on model) or sound in stereo or surround and upload the files to the Data Pool.

Agents come in three types, each about the size of an old school cellphone. **Basic** (stripped down without a lot of extra bells and whistles), **Expensive** (with most bells and whistles and extra functions), and **Luxury** (Everything you can cram in).

You'll need a service provider to sell you connectivity. No one company owns connectivity. There are dozens of providers in Night City and new ones rezzing in every day.

WHAT YOU'RE PACKING

Melee weapons in the Time of the Red range from knives to swords, clubs, tasers, and a host of other lethal damage dealers. Its rough out there and everyone is packing something.

There are guns, too, and they are generally designed to use a specific class of ammunition based on the size of the gun. These are grouped by Light (up to 9mm), Medium (9mm to .45), Heavy (magnum rounds), and Very Heavy (specialized "super guns") types. Shoulder arms follow the same classification system, allowing almost any local Tech to produce ammunition as needed.

Where do you get weapons? There aren't any Militech showrooms these days. But any decent Fixer can hook you up at the local Night Market. There's a ton of options—after all, there was a War less than two decades ago—but you'll have to take potluck. Who knows! You might score an old Malorian, or a classic wheel–lock. In most cases, if you want to get a good gun, you're going to have to talk to the local Fixer or hit the Night Markets when they pop up.

While there's a certain style in using an old model sidearm like a Colt .357 or .45, the sensible Cyberpunk knows that a more modern pistol makes a good backup. Since the introduction of the Glock 17 automatic in the mid–1980s, most major handgun manufacturers now produce polymer resin pistols in a variety of calibers.

POLYMER ONE SHOTS

The most ubiquitous of these weapons are the various models of polymer plastic handguns. Easily created using 3D printing, they are cheap and even available from some Vendit machines. Manufactured in a variety of bright, designer colors, these so–called "Polymer One–shots" carry an easy to load 10 or 8 round clip of caseless ammunition, retail at 150eb to 300eb, and are usually available anywhere firearms are sold. They combine practicality, durability, and style in potent little packages. The somewhat ancient Cyberteen™ line includes airbrushed casings with colorful shapes and artwork molded right in—making them the perfect gift for the young consumer interested in personal defense. And who isn't in Night City?

HOW YOU GET AROUND

Surprise, surprise. Contrary to expectations, the Dark Future has not yielded any staggering new developments in transportation. Years of economic strife and civil unrest have discouraged research into new ways to travel—in fact, the very act of travel has become very restricted. Don't expect the inner city world of the Time of the Red to be much like the 20th century—a network of crowded freeways, packed trains, and swarming airports. Instead, think of it as a patchwork of badly up–kept roads, abandoned airports, and trains plagued by gangs and intermittent service.

GROUND CAR

Power plant: $CHOOH_2$ or methane fueled internal combustion.

Structural Damage Points: 50. Armored cars may have up to 30 SP of armor on all surfaces including windows.

There haven't been any major changes in automobiles since the 1980s—externally. Most cars are still basically a box on wheels, with smooth or hard edges. The Cyberpunk ethos being, "if it works, keep it till it doesn't work." In the cash poor environment of the 2000s, auto manufacturers kept to conservative, unimaginative designs, so that by the end of the 4th Corporate War, the average family car was little changed from its practically antique roots.

Almost all cars available in the Time of the Red are powered by tanks of liquefied methane or meta–alcohol fuels such as "$CHOOH_2$." Electric cars are the exception, not the rule. Control systems are roughly similar to those of the late 20th century employing a few more digital displays and push button controls.

CYBERCARS

The biggest change to automotives in the last several decades came with the introduction of cybernetic control systems. These employ servos at the wheels, throttle, and transmission, all of which are controlled by a modified cybermodem in the dash. The driver simply "studs" into the cybermodem and thinks the car through the motions. Even decades after their introduction, cybervehicles are relatively uncommon—the upgrading price is steep, and the removal of external controls renders the vehicle useless to anyone but a cybered driver.

CYBERBIKES

Power plant: Alcohol or hydro fueled internal combustion.

Ground speed: 100 to 160mph.

Structural Damage Points: 25. Armored bikes may have up to 15 SP of armor on all surfaces including tires.

There's a huge number of bikes and trikes out there these days as well. Most are hydro or CHOOH^2 fueled, with inputs for direct cyberlinkage if desired. Models include Kundalini, BMWX, Harlon–Dawson and Toyo–Tomo.

F–152 AEROGYRO

Power plant: One 2600 rotary aircraft engine.

Performance: Max airspeed 300 mph.

Operational radius: 50 miles.

Structural Damage Points: 40

The riots of the late 90's required new tactics for operating in urban areas. Chief among these was the introduction of light, one–man helicopters or aerogyros. Even in the Time of the Red, the F–152 is used by police units, Corporate defense teams, Solo assault operations teams, and Nomad clans. A civilian version, known as the Bell–15, was a popular recreational vehicle before the War.

McDONNELL–DOUGLAS AV–4 TACTICAL URBAN ASSAULT VEHICLE

Power plant: One Pegasus II Vectored Thrust Turbofan (21,180 lbs. thrust).

Performance: Max airspeed 350 mph.

Operational radius: 400 miles.

Structural Damage Points: 100. Most AV–4s are armored to an SP of 40.

The nearest thing to a science fiction jet–car, the AV–4 Tac Vehicle was developed as a light assault aircraft capable of operation in close urban areas where rotary and tilt–wing aircraft cannot penetrate. Short, bulbous, and equipped with only rudimentary maneuver wings, the AV–4 has the aerodynamic characteristics of a rock, relying on the brute force of its huge jet engine to keep it aloft (the original Pegasus engine lifted a 19,550 lb. Harrier jump–jet, while a fully loaded AV–4 weighs about 8,600 lbs.).

The AV–4 is used by those security forces that have them for urban assaults (using 2 belly mounted GAU–12U mini–gun pods). They are also useful as emergency vehicles—specifically by the Trauma Team (See page 33) organizations—or as Corporate vehicles for special deliveries and meetings.

MAKSYM HARAHULIN

HOW YOU GET WORD

DATA TERM

The Data Term is a street corner computer terminal, built into a heavily armored concrete post. Data Terms have a direct link to a central Data Pool in their home city, and can provide hard copy "flimsy" maps of the area, information, news updates, phone numbers, current event listings, entertainment information, and shopping services. Data Pool Rates are about 1eb per minute.

Most Data Terms are operated by a DT service, which is often a subsidiary of a local MediaCorp.

SCREAMSHEETS

To stay competitive with television, most newspapers now use holo–digital technology. Pages are rendered on computer, then translated into digital code. This code is transmitted to hundreds of Data Terms across the area, which produce the paper on demand using a high–speed printer. The result is a slick, flimsy newspaper known in street slang as a screamsheet.

Screamsheets have many advantages over previous newspapers. You can dial the Data Term to print only the sections of the paper you want, paying 0.1eb per page printed. New editions can be compiled in hours, allowing the public to keep abreast of a story even as it happens (although most scream sheets are updated at 6:00 am, 12:00 pm, 5:00 pm, and 10:00 pm).

These days, screamsheets can also be downloaded onto a personal Agent and read entirely on screen or via holo.

DATA POOL

Data Pools are information servers and exchange systems designed for open use within the limits of a city. Data Pools produce free, open content created through the collaborative efforts of a community of users. In design, they are similar to the hyper–stack "page" system attempted and then abandoned for the NET in the early 90's. They are free to use by anyone who has access to a Data Term or an Agent.

EDDIE MENDOZA

Data Pools Can Be Used As:

• Message networks allowing voice, text, or video to be sent to and received from other phones or Data Pool accounts

• Information exchanges; media boards that can be shared by members of a group.

• Research and information databases. Similar to an encyclopedia, but with information added freely by users and then vetted or voted for inclusion.

• Shopping services allowing users to post items for sale or request items that they want to buy.

WHAT YOU WEAR

If you're barely surviving, you're probably wearing rags. If you've got a little money, clothing in Night City becomes more interesting.

Digital fabric integrates micro circuitry into the weave of material, allowing the cloth to have properties beyond mere adornment and protection. Some weaves incorporate light emitting threading that allows the material to act as a video receiver. Some weaves are made up of vibrating monofibers that allows the cloth to emit sounds. Other weaves involve embedded pheromone sprayers that emit perfumes or other scents. Still others have temperature regulation systems or sensors that can pick up the body's natural electrical fields to gain important information on the wearer's condition. Most buttons and zippers incorporate microcomputers to control these functions. Heat sensitive patches and badges also allow the user to control functions of the digital fabric. By adding a patch or badge, you can often integrate new functions into an existing piece of clothing.

High–end Clothes in the Dark Future

• Can know if they are ripped or dirty and can report this information to Agents or other readouts. Their "tags" not only contain cleaning and wear data, but also manufacturer's codes, order numbers, and sizes. The Agent can order replacement clothing based on this data.

• Can adapt themselves to temperature changes by monitoring your body temp and tightening /relaxing the weave to let air in or out.

• Can receive digital information from an Agent or other transmitters and use it to adapt themselves to hostile conditions, becoming weatherproof, acid proof, or fireproof.

• Can change color or project 2D images on the cloth itself.

• Can change colors or textures by using simple controls or mini–cams with chameleon matching programs.

• Can power small electrical devices by incorporating heat or solar sensitive threading into their composition. Plugs and

hookups are integrated into the lining or other parts of the clothing.

• Can harden themselves into effective body armor.

Digital Fabric is not only used in clothing. It is also used to make "floppy" hardware—video screens that can be worn like bandannas, musical key–boards and keypads that can be rolled or wadded up into a pocket, and computer peripherals that can be stuffed into a purse or backpack. Digital "chameleon" fabrics are used to hide vehicles or operations from observation, while digitally reactive fabrics can harden themselves to steel–like consistencies to stop bullets.

WHERE YOU GET STUFF

There aren't many stores around in the Time of the Red. And if you're looking for a convenience store for a bag of soy chips (or to hold up for a few bucks), forget it.

VENDITS

In 2045, most low–cost, day–to–day purchases are done via Vendits—self–contained vending machines that dispense everything from meals to clothing to weapons. All you have to do is swipe a CredChip over the scanner (Vendits do not trade in hard currency), press a few buttons or say a few words, and within moments your desired purchase drops out the slot. A Vendit can be placed almost anywhere; they are self–powered using a small thermal battery good for five years, and use an on–board data link to call for repairs, refills; even protection (although most don't need much protection, as Vendits are typically armored to SP50 and have built in taser and stun–gas AP systems to discourage vandals). Vendits are programmed to answer simple questions and often have on–board digital printers to deliver custom items based on templates stored in the machine. Because they're durable and easier to maintain than an actual storefront, Vendits are often found in even the most destitute areas of Night City.

NIGHT MARKETS

These are markets that can spring up anywhere in the City, often without warning; whenever a good shipment comes in off a transport or something really useful is uncovered by the Nomads or Fixers, a Night Market usually comes into being to sell it. Night Markets are mobile shops mounted on trailers, vehicles, shipping containers, and whatever else has mobility and some spare volumetric to display stuff. Getting to a Night Market is as much about connections as it is about money. Some of the best markets are top secret affairs and require an invitation or access codes just to find them. Night Markets can pop

up for a couple hours, then vanish forever, or regularly show up at specific sites if they can depend on enough security and space to set up shop.

WHAT YOU EAT

SYNTH–FOOD

Pollution, toxic waste, and wanton resource stripping (not to mention a massive global war) has left many croplands barren and many food staples either endangered or outrageously expensive. America's response has been to create processed substitutes for whatever it needs.

KIBBLE

Kibble is the standard base–line food product. It is a mass–produced nutrient made primarily of kelp, plankton, and soy proteins (none of this "Kibble is PEOPLE!" drek) that fulfills most nutritional requirements, but smells and tastes about as good as its canine namesake. NeoCorps often dispense this to laborers as part of their "support" programs (of course, the cost is deducted from their pay). Most people in the urban zones have at least one meal a day of kibble, but try to have something with more variety as their main meal, if they can afford it. A kibble diet runs about 30eb a week.

PREPACK

The next step up from kibble is Prepack: meals that can be microwaved or self–heated for consumption. They still tend to be largely soy and grain–based "faux food", but they are usually flavored more effectively and may even have a few bits of real meat or veggies inside. Good Prepack has a higher percentage of natural food and is almost like restaurant fare, just in a bag. Just press the tab and its heat and eat. A Prepack diet runs about 100eb a week with Good Prepack pushing the price up to 250eb per week. Prepack is far more common in Executive and wealthy homes; if you want Prepack in Edgerunner turf, you'd better hope your local Fixer has a supplier, choomba.

FRESH FOOD

Fresh food had always been standard fare for the City elite and a rare luxury for the average person. It's gotten even rarer in the Time of the Red, with a one exception.

Guerrilla Gardening

Right after the War, getting any kind of food into the Cities (and past the raiding gangs, the warring Megacorps, and the issues of just plain lack of transportation) was nearly impossible. Faced with starvation, many Edgerunners suddenly developed green thumbs—tearing up previously abandoned lots and revealing the soil beneath—kitbashing the materials needed to make rooftop gardens, acid filtering rain barrels, and water sprinkler systems. Within a couple years post–War, there were a lot of gardening sites in Night City; small, carefully tended and feeding the populations of local conapts and neighborhood squats. It was actually good food for a change (if you didn't mind the radioactivity and toxic waste traces).

Killing for Cabbages

This didn't go unnoticed by the non–farming communities—like the Boosters, go–gangers, and other groups not particularly interested in raising their own crops. Savage wars broke out over these guerrilla gardens spaces, with the body counts growing (but reprocessed into fertilizer when possible) monthly. Whole neighborhoods armed up and started patrolling their Upper Forties, ready to maim and kill anyone who had a hankering to steal a tomato.

Meet the Meat

Things got even more heated when some enterprising farmers began raising real chickens, dwarf pigs, and even goats (cows are still rare). Individual animals and herds were shipped through Nomad convoys with heavy Solo protection, creating a new form of "cattle drive." Needless to say, there were attempts to rustle the range that ended up with many of the would–be rustlers buried in the Night City equivalent of Boot Hill.

The Market Price

By the present day, things have died down a little bit. A detente was reached, especially between the Growers and the NeoCorporates. In exchange for some heavy security from the Corporate types, the Growers provided their partners fresh food, and both sides profited. So, while there are still raids on individual city farms and rooftop gardens, on the whole, everyone involved is benefiting. And if you happen to know or work with someone who's growing fresh food, you've got a good chance of scoring some every so often.

HOW YOU HAVE FUN

TELEVISION AND RADIO

No longer as pervasive a force in the Age of the Red as it once was, broadcast has returned to its roots as a locally based form of entertainment. Far fewer channels and stations crowd the airwaves, and most are subscriber services, limited to a single city or to small audiences of cities within a few hundred miles of each other. If you don't pay the bill, you don't get the codes to descramble the signal. Programming runs across a range of interests, including sports, news, music and music vid-

eos, old movies, foreign shows, religious programming, debate, erotic and adult programming, business news, and weather. In addition, there are still many single band pirate radio stations scattered throughout the post–War world.

Network Programming

In the Euro and Asian theaters, most programming is still state–controlled; the BBC in Great Britain, and NGK TV in Japan, for example. Before the 4th Corporate War, three privately owned entertainment networks dominated the media landscape of the United States: New Century Broadcasting (NCB), World Broadcasting Network (WBN), and Network News 54. These networks were the broadcast divisions of three massive entertainment conglomerates, each producing data chips, games, streaming content, videos, movies, and books for the masses. Their product was bland, mindless, and catered to the lowest possible denominator. With the collapse of the NET, however, getting consistent network–produced content from station to station has proved nearly impossible. As a result, radio and television face fierce competition from new entertainment forms being shared via the PopMedia and the Data Pool.

Sat Feeds

There are still a few satellite feeds for those who can afford (and guard) reception dishes, featuring programming from around the world (many of the sat feeds of the late 2020s were casualties of the War). There are also a large number of "pirate" TV stations, operating out of hidden locations and through cable and pirate Highrider satellite patch ups. These are often a major source of news and information untainted by Corporate or government interference.

In addition to the standard high definition flat–screen TV of the pre–War era, experimental (and expensive; up to 10,000,000eb per set) holographic TV systems are still available if you know the right Fixer.

MEDIACORP MEDIA

By the mid–2020s, most media in America was controlled by one or more gigantic multimedia Megacorps, such as the ubiquitous Network 54 or its most aggressive rival, DNS. Even news was channeled through a Megacorporate filter, with World News Network (WNS) dominating the airwaves through its 22 channel, 24–7 cycle news programming (heavily laden with subliminals and talking head commentary). The problem was that as the 21st Century wore on, these mighty media megaliths become little more than house organs for their parent Corporations, or mouthpieces for the dominant political party of the time. With a corrupt FCC controlling access to the airwaves, there wasn't much chance that a dissenting voice could break through, so for most of the early *Cyberpunk* Age, people were resigned to a diet of insipid reality shows, mind–numbing entertainment vids, bad movies, and Corp–sponsored sports shows.

THEN CAME THE WAR

Then came the 4th Corporate War and the DataKrash. The MediaCorps were the hardest hit by these events, since they depended on the NET's instantaneous communication and access to huge TV/radio transmitters to broadcast their programming. But as established media outlets fell apart, new ways to disseminate information and programming arose to fill the gap. And the main format to make the cut was PopMedia.

PopMedia is entertainment and news programming created by independent producers instead of huge MediaCorps. Combining audio, data, and visual images in a short and easy to consume format, PopMedia provides much of the Time of the Red's programming (as well as an ungodly amount of trash). Most PopMedia comes from five main sources; New MediaCorps, Rockers, Idols, Independents, and Medias.

NEW MEDIACORPS

In the Age of the Red, a New MediaCorp can be a as big as a multi–city operation, or as small as a few talented artists, techs and producers working to get content out.

Rockers and Idols

Rockers are usually performers or agitators who operate without the support of a new MediaCorp. They provide performance "shows", combining concert footage, music tracks with visuals, personal observations, and even braindance experiences. Idols are similar to Rockers, but their programming also mixes in formatting similar to the old–style "reality" show of the 2000s — it's all about them.

THE MUSIC TAKES US TO THE HEART OF OUR CULTURE AND ALLOWS US TO MONITOR ITS PULSE

ROCKERBOY MAGAZINE

Independents and Medias

Independents and Medias produce news, gossip, vid/braindance shows, investigative reporting, and commentary on current events. They also create "talk" shows as well as documentaries and informational programming.

THE DATA POOL

What makes PopMedia possible is the Data Pool; a Citywide LAN network that links the Red world together in lieu of the old NET. Each City has its own version of a Data Pool, requiring the user to set up their own account in order to log on and use its facilities. Data Pools are also limited; their LAN structure, a requirement in a world where rampant NET sabotage is the rule, is a fully hardwired system and just doesn't have the same flexibility as the old, satellite supported NET.

Since the Data Pool is an open–ended database, anyone can easily drop new PopMedia programming into it, with new entries easily found by Agent search functions. Getting a new PopMedia download is as easy as clicking a link—and once you've loaded it into your Agent once, it'll keep downloading that program or similar ones until you say stop. PopMedia is also flexible and viral; since the Data Pool has integrated feedback, this means that it can track how many times a program is accessed and react accordingly. A PopMedia program

may start out only occupying one time slot, but as subscribers mount and word gets around, it may end up dominating a huge percentage of the overall possible bandwidth. This also means that competing shows often find themselves battling for bandwidth; that means small outfits go toe to toe (and gun to gun) with the MediaCorps, new and old.

BRAINDANCE

An offshoot of the same neural interface technology that spawned the cyberware revolution, braindance is considered by many to be the purest form of entertainment around. A braindance box consists of a memory chip playback unit and a cable that can stud into an interface plug or convert to surface trodes. It plays chips which contain recorded experiences—not just visual and auditory sensations, but complete emotional and tactile information as well. Braindance chips let you feel what the performer was feeling at the time. As with most tech, braindance is a double–edged sword; it's been used to pacify prisoners almost as much as it has been used to entertain the masses. In the 2010s, it looked as if braindance technology was to be the next great step in entertainment. However, psychological addiction and the expense of producing quality brain dance chips has made this format less popular. In the Age of the Red, braindance is an occasional luxury for most and a dangerous obsession for a select few addicts.

ADRIAN MARC

EDDIE MENDOZA

5 RUNNING CYBERPUNK RED

So, How Do I Run This Game?

Glad you asked. We're here to help guide you through your first foray into game mastering. *Cyberpunk Red* is a challenge for even an experienced GM, in that you must create the right atmosphere of social decay, invasive technology, and pervasive paranoia throughout your entire game. We're here to give you a few tips for running game sessions highlighting these elements and the unique flavor that is *Cyberpunk Red.*

THE ENVIRONMENT

The urban environment is critical to your *Cyberpunk Red* world. It's a maze of towering skyscrapers, dangerous alleyways, and burned—out ruins. We concentrate on Night City in this product, but whether you use our city or create your own, remember that your setting has to have all the right elements. There should be garbage—strewn alleyways and bodies lying in the gutters. There should be wild—eyed lunatics, staggering through pre—dawn streets, muttering darkly and clutching sharp knives. Taxis don't stop

in the combat zones. There are firefights at the street corner as the local gangs slug it out. Players should find their apartments regularly broken into, their cars vandalized, their property stolen. Crossing town should be like crossing a battlefield, filled with looters, rioters, and boostergangers.

The **4th** Corp War has left parts of many urban centers burnt out husks, martyred monuments to militant capitalism that are only now being reclaimed by scavengers and Corporations alike. The former site of the Arasaka Towers in the Night City is one of the most extreme examples: a blasted area blocks across where the residual radiation keeps out all but the crazy or the desperate. And Night City has plenty of both.

While many stories start in the urban zones, *Cyberpunk Red* doesn't have to be limited to that. Beyond the cities are the sprawling wastes and the dust–choked, lawless highways of a brutalized United States. These areas were left barren in the wake of climate change, economic collapse, and industrial abuse, but are now dotted with scattered Reclaimer settlements and Nomad encampments. This is a land of dust, sweat, and CHOOH^2; where convoys of scrap vehicles and megacombis keep the lifeblood of food and tech flowing between the cities. Here Players can find everything from Mad Max maniacs in spiked out war trucks to determined families looking to defend their freeholds.

Most days will be grim, gloomy, and overcast. Rain slick streets are a staple of the genre. When the sun does come out, it should be the overly bright crimson of a smoggy Los Angeles day. And the stars never come out, due to the smog and lunar particulates. But it doesn't always rain. At least, not since the Time of the Red messed up the upper atmosphere...which is what you get when you throw lunar rocks into the Earth. Expect wild shifts in weather patterns as things are still settling down. The ozone layer decayed, the greenhouse effect took over, the air is full of hydrocarbons, and the ocean full of sludge.

There are no birds singing in *Cyberpunk Red* —at least not in the city—but they are starting to creep back into the outer areas as some of Biotechnica's more experimental projects come to fruition (spoiler: some of those things are not birds—at least as we know them).

There are laughing children these days, but they may be laughing over things you and I would be appalled at. Growing up in a nuclear bomb zone gives you an odd perspective on life. Kids don't get much parenting on the Street, and what raising they do get usually involves drugs, guns, and unhealthy extracurricular activities.

IT'S A MATTER OF TRUST... OR NOT

Paranoia is important in a **Cyberpunk Red** run. Players shouldn't always be able to tell who's good or bad just by looking at them. Choices between sides are often ambiguous— there should be no clear–cut sense of good and evil, much like real life. Sworn enemies may be thrown together without notice

or preparation. Heroes may have to do something illegal or distasteful to accomplish something good; villains may have to do a little good once in a while. Building a group that has your back is essential if you're going to last long.

CONTRAST

The Red Era should have staggering contrasts. In the glittering citadels of the rich, there should be fine food, expensive vices, and beautiful scenery. On the Street, things should be cold, hungry, and desperate. This divide only widened when the 4th Corporate War shattered transport and information systems. Food shortages and data blackouts became all too common. There's no middle ground between the haves and have–nots any more. It's all or nothing.

KNOW THE WORLD

Immerse yourself in the genre. We've given you a start with the background and adventures in this book, but you should also hit your local video store or streaming service, the library, and the Internet for source material. Also, the *Cyberpunk Red* core rulebook will flesh out a lot of more details of the world of 2045 and the Red Era when you're ready for it.

PLAY FOR KEEPS

Play hard and fast. You should not be afraid to kill off Player Characters. You should constantly be getting them into fights, traps, double crosses, and other soap opera situations. Trust should not come easily and no place should be absolutely safe. Keep the pressure on. This doesn't mean you shouldn't play fair, but you should always play for keeps. If they cache weapons or supplies somewhere, steal them. If they stop for a rest, send in the boostergangers. If they can't handle the pressure, they shouldn't be playing *Cyberpunk Red.*

SET THE MOOD

Create an atmospheric gaming room. Get out your heaviest rock, techno, or rap music and play it during your run. Encourage your Players to dress the part with leather overcoats, mirrorshades, and punk fashions. Adopt the slang and invent your own. Replace all the lights in your room with dim red bulbs. This is the dark future here.

TEAMWORK: WE CAN DO MORE DAMAGE TOGETHER!

Finally, put the Players into teams. You'll notice *Cyberpunk Red* groups are not typically social. The Players will have few reasons to trust anyone, and the conventional reasons (stop evil, kill monsters) for an adventuring party won't work.

For this reason, you'll need a more solid "hook" on which to hang a *Cyberpunk Red* adventure. And one of the best hooks is the team. A team is a group of people who are already thrown together by Fate in some way which forces them to cooperate. They don't have to like each other, but they have to work together. PCs can be given assignments from a "higher power,", be connected by blood, or the entire group can be faced with a problem which requires mutual cooperation to solve. The group works together or it dies. Simple.

MEET THE TEAMS

Below, we've listed a number of teams which might naturally evolve in the *Cyberpunk Red* world. Each proposes a good mix of Character Roles and offers many ways in which all the Player Characters can become equally involved. Not every team presented will fit with the pregenerated Characters in this Jumpstart. They are included to give you a feeling for what types of teams you'll see in the *Cyberpunk Red* Core Book.

NeoCorporate Teams

Corporate teams are groups that are oriented around a specific Corporation, working together to accomplish the company's goals. The main base of operations is the Corporation's offices or security areas. A Corporate team might consist of a Fixer (making deals and watching out for Corporate interests), a Netrunner (who runs the team's intrusion and computer systems), a Tech (to maintain Corporate equipment), a Solo or two (who handle the combat), and even a Rockerboy (to act as the team's spokesperson).

Bands

Bands are any group of Rockers who have gotten together to play music. The band travels from place to place, getting into trouble at each new gig, holding concerts, and raising hell. The main base of operations can be a practice hall, a club, or a road bus. There may be any number of Rockers in the band itself (typically three to four). In addition, there will be at least one Fixer (who acts as manager), a possible Tech (to handle equipment needs), a Nomad (someone needs to drive the bus!), and several Solos (who are both bodyguards and roadies). Any Role can join in on the fun as a groupie.

Reclaimers

Reclaimers represent a new movement in the Time of the Red. Pioneering sorts with a desire to carve homes out of the abandoned cities of Old America, Reclaimers come from all walks of life and have all manner of reasons why they have banded together to build their homestead. A Nomad leading the group on its journey to the new location is an excellent idea, and Solos and Fixers will be needed to protect the supplies and group while they work. Netrunners and Techs may want to exploit any abandoned computer systems or old technology.

Trauma Teams

Trauma Team was a major service Corporation before the war. Since then, independent franchises have maintained groups of licensed Paramedics who patrol the city responding to the calls of accident victims who subscribe to their service. They usually operate from an AV—4 Urban Assault Vehicle, redesigned into an ambulance configuration and armed with a belly—mounted minigun. A typical Trauma Team includes a driver (can be a Fixer or Solo, although Nomad is best), one or more Characters with the First Aid Skill, and two or more Solos acting as "security." The team may also have a Dispatcher (usually a Fixer but possible a Netrunner) in charge of sending them on their missions.

Mercenaries

Mercs are commonly hired throughout the *Cyberpunk Red* world. A typical merc group could include at least one Fixer (to handle contracts), one Netrunner (to handle security systems, computer assault, etc.), one Tech (for weapons), and any combination of Solos or Nomads (as grunt soldiers and vehicle operators). A merc group could operate out of a club, a bar, or a former military base camp left over from the War.

Cults and Boostergangs

While typically reserved for bad guys, Characters can aspire to be part of a boostergang or cult. The Characters may have been born on the Street or ended up there due to job loss, personal tragedy, or simply from a desire to find a (somewhat) socially acceptable outlet to kill, loot, and pillage.

But gangs can also be created for positive purposes — neighborhood defense, to stop other more violent gangs, or to resist a major invasion by government or the Corps. In this context, you could look at Robin Hood or WWII resistance groups as gangs. A typical Gang would have lots of Solos, Nomads, and Fixers. There might be a Tech around, and possibly a Netrunner to handle equipment and computers. A gang might even have a Rockerboy friend who parties with them. Gangs typically operate out of clubs, bars, and deserted buildings.

Nomad Packs

Nomad Packs are natural teams—they are already together in one group, and everyone knows each other. A good Nomad pack could include a few Fixers (to handle in—town negotiations), a Netrunner (who handles the pack's intelligence work), Techs (for vehicle repair and scavenging work), and any number of Nomads and Solos. The pack operates from the Caravan—an assemblage of RVs, trailers, buses, and cars running

goods across the blasted landscape of freeway America. The team could travel with the main caravan or as scouts traveling ahead in their own vehicles.

LAWMEN

The Lawman team could work for one of the many security forces or Corporations providing for profit law enforcement in Night City or they could be an independent group hired by a neighborhood to keep the peace. Their squad could work out of a heavily fortified building and might include Fixers to run things or work investigations, a Netrunner to keep an eye on computer crimes, a Rockerboy to interface with the public, a Tech to take care of equipment, and Nomads to drive the beat. Don't forget a few hardened Solos to take on the cyberpsychos. Lawman teams allow the GM to break the group into smaller units of "partners" if needed. The team might also be a band of hard–driving Marshals who scour the open road seeking out the go–gangs and road warrior wannabes who infest the highways.

MEDIA TEAMS

Media teams go anywhere and do anything to get the story. A Media team can operate out of a Data Pool hub, a scream-sheet office, or even a major network news bureau. A good Media team might include Fixers or Rockers to investigate the story and report on it, a Netrunner to run communications and do a little digital snooping, a Tech for the equipment, and a few Solos or Nomads to provide muscle, protection, and transportation.

DON'T GIVE UP YOUR DAY JOB!

Any one of these Teams can fit a Character Roles that isn't described. A Rockerboy could moonlight as a Trauma Teamer to experience life on the Street or a Nomad might do a little time with a Corporate team to represent their Pack's interests in the city. In these cases, the Character part in the team should be treated as a hobby or side job, which may evolve as time passes.

MISSION BUILDING 101

We include a full adventure for you to run in the *Cyberpunk Red Jumpstart Kit*, as well as several screensheets that act as seeds for further adventures, but you don't need to stop there. You can build your own adventures, too!

A *Cyberpunk Red* game session will generally involve a Mission: a task that is set before the team. Here are just a few suggestions for the kinds of missions you can present to your Players, but, trust us, keep playing and they'll be coming up with ones of their own soon enough.

INTRUSION/HEIST

The classic heist scenario is a mainstay of the genre. A patron contracts the team (or they decide for themselves) to steal something —software, prototype technology, gene templates, food— from a target. The team has to gather information (maps, NET/physical security, etc.) and then plan how they'll infiltrate the location, deal with security, get the loot, and then get out again in one piece. A variation on this is the Insertion: The team is secretly planting something in the target location rather than removing it, such as a software virus, a recording device, a bomb, or even a person.

Of course, then they have to actually pull it all off ... and few plans survive contact with a clever GM. These missions are particularly good for involving a wide variety of Roles as the team designs their caper. Binge some episodes of Leverage and take notes.

The adventure Precious Cargo () is a simple Heist mission.

ASSAULT

This is the brute force version of the Intrusion. Here the team is supposed to directly attack a target, usually with a specific objective in mind (such as kidnapping, overt theft, to act as a diversion, or to just plain blow stuff up). An assault often features planning similar to that of the Intrusion, but everyone knows that serious violence is the endgame. Note that The Hit (i.e. assassination) is a one–shot variation on the Assault. Ideally.

We advise caution here: Assaults can end up with a lot of the PCs being carved up for parts at the local Body Bank.

The adventure Definitely Not Kansas () is an example of an Intrusion that could easily be played as an Assault.

INVESTIGATION

This is a subtler mission where the team has to ferret out some specific information in order to solve a problem. It could be for a contract to find a missing person or looking into why the last two Nomad food convoys haven't made it to the drop point. Investigations are characterized by lots of leg–and NET–work, trying to use Street and Corp contacts, data raids, deduction, and occasional arm–breaking to discover the nature of the danger and how to deal with it. These are great opportunities for Characters to interact with your NPCs (other than through their HUDs) and are great for building up the landscape of Night City.

Sometimes determining the truth is enough to fix things, but an Intrusion or Assault mission may be necessary to ultimately solve the problem.

DEFENSE

Here the Characters are forced to react to something that somebody else is doing, such as a direct attack on the team or an attempt to steal something from them. In this case, the NPCs drive the action and the team has to decide how to respond.

The Apartment ([page 39](#)) and the Just Like Real ([page 48](#)) are examples of Defense missions.

Escort missions, where the Team is assigned to protect something or someone as they get from Point A to Point B, are a variation. Are they ready to get that tanker full of CHOOH^2 past those amped—out go—gangers blockading the road ahead? Sure they are.

KEEPING IT RED

Tips for Running Any Mission

- Keep it Street level. The PCs should have good basic skills but always know there are bigger guns out there.

- Add some twists. Each mission should have betrayals, surprises, and unexpected events. Ideally, the seeds of these twists have been right in front of the team the whole time. Remember: Trust is a slippery thing in the Time of the Red.

- Always make it personal. Most threats should start as aimed straight at the PCs, but, as the plot grows, they may realize that the issue is much bigger than they knew.

- On the flip side, no matter how big the plot is, the Bad Guy should know the PCs' names and be carving them onto bullets. They'll keep showing up on their doorstep with bigger and bigger threats until they get what they want.

- Think about what will motivate your team to take the mission. Sometimes it's a Pull, an opportunity to get something the PCs want, and sometimes it'll be a Push: a threat or attack the PCs have to deal with. The specific hook for each mission can be based on the orientation of the PCs' Roles.

- NPCs are people too. Make the non—Player Characters in your game memorable by giving them unique mannerisms and descriptions. If you can act them out, all the better. Have that Fixer look like Steve Buscemi if he fell asleep in a tattoo parlor and got his suits from Goodwill. He's got a lazy left cybereye and talks in clipped, nervous phrases, using slang that's at least ten years out of date. He says he's got a lead on a dataslate shipment that's coming into port tonight and is ripe for the taking. Whaddaya say, bud?

- Try to find something for each member of the team to do in each mission. Give them a variety of tasks and encounters, so everyone gets a chance to shine. And remember even Netrunners can help during a combat if they remember they can hack into the building's HVAC system and make it billow smoke into the enemy's eyes!

MAKE IT YOURS

Now that we've shown you a bit about how we do things, it's up to you to make *Cyberpunk Red* your own. Remember that story ideas are everywhere: films, TV, books, even the news. Steal from the best, crib from the rest. But in the end, it's the inspiration that you bring to the game that matters most.

Cyberpunk Red is a setting where many of the our worst fears have come true, leaving a world that's beaten, battered, and torched. But it's also a place of hope, where cunning, courage, and a righteous attitude can make all the difference to those struggling to rebuild.

So what's your story going to be, choombatta?

CYBERPUNK IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT.

MAXIMUM MIKE

SOME EXAMPLES OF MOTIVATION

TECHNICAL: Access to new technology or abilities. Dangle some shiny new cyber or netware and see if they bite.

COMBAT: A direct threat or other physical danger. Two gangers with guns break into the room...

PERSUASION: A con job or chance to talk themselves out of (or into!) danger. "It's a solid op. A surefire! Would I lie to you?"

COMMUNITY: The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. Can they swing the deal that gets the antibiotics in time to save the kids in the freehold?

REPUTATION: Street cred that can give them the clout they're looking for. "We crash this concert and every NET service will be begging to sign us."

But whatever hook you use, never lose sight of the main story you're looking to tell.

GANGS OF NIGHT CITY

Bradi Bunch

The Bunch is a poser gang who use bio–sculpting to look like members of an old sitcom. They are an extended family gang which protects runaway children. A few older "adults" run the gang and protect the turf, while the younger members steal and deal. They're territorial and fiercely protective of their members.

Red Chrome Legion

The Legion is a neo–fascist hate gang; young people united around a certain hate group ideology. Uniforms and militaristic slogans are the rule. The Red Chromers will attack anything that they think isn't "right."

Metal Warriors

The Metal Warriors are a combat gang, with their activities centering around a "warrior's code". Elaborate combat rituals, ranks, and body armor are all part of the mystique. Combat gangs are dangerous, because once they declare a war on someone, they never give up.

Piranhas

The Piranhas are a typical party gang. They party, drink Smash, take and deal drugs, and mug people, all as part of a "just because" lifestyle. To these guys, the Party is everything.

NIGHT CITY ENCOUNTERS

Welcome to the mean Streets of the City. These encounter tables are fast and nasty ways to keep your Players moving, thinking, and living in *Cyberpunk Red*. **Just roll a percentage (2d10, with one representing the tens' place) to determine the outcome.** Each listing refers to one of the three NPCs on the Encounters handout, sometimes with modifications. Remember, just because we give you stats doesn't mean each encounter should result in combat; use these as role-playing opportunities whenever possible. Feel free to alter the participants or the locale for extra variety.

(1–5) Local Law

Two patrol officers, armed with Assault Rifles, armored in Kevlar. If you are wearing visible weapons or armor, they stop you and demand identification. If you're argumentative, they call for backup (3) officers to take you in. If you reach for a weapon, they'll shoot first, fill out the paperwork later. (**use Private Security**)

(6–11) Corporate Guards

Four Corporate guards patrolling the area. Wearing Light Armorjack, and carrying Medium SMGs. Unless you work for their Corporation, they don't think you have any business hanging around where they're operating. Move it, punk. (**use Private Security; Replace Kevlar with Light Armorjack and Assault Rifles with Medium SMGs**)

(12–17) Nomads

A mixed group of six Nomads. Wearing Kevlar, carrying Knives and Very Heavy Pistols. Moderately drunk and looking for a fight. They hassle anyone they find attractive in your group. Face it: they want a fight. Give them one. (**use Booster; Replace Leathers with Kevlar and Slice & Dice with Knives**)

(18–24) Boostergang

Five low–level street punks from the Piranhas boostergang. If you look like easy prey and have money, they'll rough you up. They're armed with Very Heavy Pis-

tols, Knives, and Speedware. (**use Booster; Replace Slice & Dice with Knives**)

(25–30) Street Punks

Six smashheads, looking for credit to feed their habit. If you're not wearing Corporate or gang colors, they try to rush you right on the street. Armed with fighting knives; no armor. (**use Street Scum; Replace Rippers with Knives**)

(31–36) Nomad Truck

Three Nomads from the Steel Vaqueros are dealing with a broken down truck. Two of them are facing off with a group of eight local gangers while the other tries to fix the motor. If you ignore them, they ignore you, but the Nomads may take an offer to help (Roll 1d10: 1–6, Yes; 7–10, No). (**Nomads: use Booster; Replace Leathers with Kevlar and Slice & Dice with Rippers. Gangers: Use Booster**)

(37–42) Boostergang

Six members of the Iron Sights gang, armed with Medium SMGs, Rippers, Low Light Cyberoptics, and Speedware. They hassle anyone in the party who stands out, shake you down for money, and generally are spoiling for a fight. (**use Booster; Replace Very Heavy Pistols with Medium SMGs and Slice & Dice with Rippers. Add Low Light Cyberoptics**)

(43–44) Techs

Two Techs, with Shotguns, wearing Kevlar vests. Roll 1d10. 1–2, they're lugging a crate of tools into an AV–4. 3–5, they're working on a City system in your path. 6–10, they're walking toward you on their way to work. (**use Private Security; Replace Assault Rifles with Shotguns**)

(45–50) Culties

The Reckoners are out in force. Six of them, armed openly with Knives and Heavy Pistols, corner you to preach that the red sky was a sign of the End Times. If you just blow them off, they try to beat their truth into you. (**use Street Scum; Replace Rippers with Big Knucks**)

(51–54) Private Investigator

Roll 1d10. On 1–3, they are ahead of you, hassling an informant on the street

corner concerning the whereabouts of a suspect. 4–7, they are shadowing someone ahead of you. 8–10, they stop you and ask you whether you have seen the person they're following. The PI is armed with a Very Heavy Pistol and is wearing a Heavy Armorjack. (**use Private Security; Replace Kevlar with Heavy Armorjack. Remove Assault Rifle**)

(55–57) Corporates

Four Corporates from a local firm, trying to find a taxi. They are wearing suits woven with Kevlar and carrying Heavy Pistols. Roll 1d10. 1–4, they're being followed by thugs intent on robbery. 5–8, they think you're boosters and open fire at any provocation. 9–10, they think you're trouble and call for Corporate backup (see Corporate Guards, above). (**use Street Scum; Remove Rippers. Add Kevlar and Radio Cyberaudio**)

(58–64) Locals

Young people from the local neighborhood (**use Street Scum; Remove Rippers and Heavy Pistol**). Roll 1d10. 1–5, they are being held up by two thugs from the Metal Warriors gang (**use Booster; Replace Leathers with Heavy Armorjack**). 6–10, they are being beaten severely by Inquisitor cultists for the sin of having designer eyes. (**use Street Scum; Replace Rippers with Knives**)

(65–70) Firefight

Great. You just walked into a major altercation between the Bradi Bunch and the Red Chrome Legion. Each side has 6 members who are wearing Light Armorjack and wielding Very Heavy Pistols and Cyberweapons. Pick a side, or pick a target. (**use Booster; Replace Leathers with Light Armorjack. Keep Slice & Dice or replace with other Cyberweapons as desired**)

(71–75) Trauma Team

The AV–4 hits the ground in the middle of a recent firefight and the medics start tending to the half–dozen wounded gangers. Roll 1d10. On a 1–5, the Team decides you're bystanders and ignores you. On 6–10, they figure you're part of the problem and the Solos open up with Medium SMGs. (**use Private Security; Replace Kevlar with Heavy Armorjack and Assault Rifles with Medium SMGs. Increase Marksmanship to +4**)

(76–80) Reclaimers

You run across a well–equipped group trying to hot–wire an abandoned building into the local power grid. Roll 1d10. On 1–5, they ignore you. 6–8, they send two of their own to "check those guys watching us." 9–10, they blow out a local transformer and the entire block goes black. General panic ensues. (**use Private Security; Replace Assault Rifles with Shotguns**)

(81–85) Medias

A camera and interviewer team, staking out a building on a hot assignment. Roll 1d10. On 1–5, they're spotted by their story–subject and a conflict ensues. You, of course, are right in the middle of it. (**Media: use Booster; Replace Leathers with Kevlar and Very Heavy Pistols with Heavy Pistols. Remove Slice & Dice and Speedware. Add Camera Cyberoptics and Amped Hearing Cyberaudio. Story–subject: Roll again on the Encounter Table**)

(86–88) Major Criminal

You've walked into a major operation of the ruthless Vilshenko syndicate. Four Solos armed with Very Heavy Pistols and Shotguns and wearing Heavy Armorjack are unloading contraband cargo out of a truck. Roll 1d10. 1–4, they don't notice you. 5–8, they notice you and one warns you off. 9–10, they decide you're a witness and ought to be totaled right now. (**use Private Security; Replace Kevlar with Heavy Armorjack and Assault Rifles with Shotguns**)

(89–00) Scavvers

Four dirt poor scavengers rooting through the ruins or garbage near one of the burned out city blocks. All have filthy Leathers and are armed with a variety of makeshift Knives and Heavy Pistols. Roll 1d10. On a 1–6, they beg you for hard cash or anything you can spare. On 7–8, they ignore you. On 9–10, they try to rob you. At the GM's discretion, the scavvers may have up to a dozen fellow scavs nearby who come to assist if violence *ensues*. (**use Street Scum; Replace Rippers with Knives. Add Leathers**)

Inquisitors

The Inquisitors are a cultie gang; like the hate gangs, they center on a specific ideology, but in this case it takes religious overtones. The Inquisitors think cyberwear is blasphemous, and think nothing of tearing it right out of your body. They consider this "saving your soul."

Iron Sights

The Iron Sights are a small but surprisingly tough combat gang of borderline cyberpsychos. Once funded by Arasaka, they fell on hard times after the war. But word on the Street is that they have a new benefactor and are once more flexing their rippers.

Reckoners

The Reckoners are one of the many apocalyptic cults that have sprung up after the war. They roam the streets, preaching the coming Harvest of Souls, recruiting from the homeless, and looking for donations, often taken from your unconscious body. A few are serious crazies who want to evoke the End Times right now with blood and C9.

Steel Vaqueros

A Nomad Pack out of Salinas, California, their ragtag convoys make the coastal highway run from the Santa Cruz agriplots to the southern cities. They take in anyone who displays skill, dependability, and who can keep up. Smart and relatively honest, they have supply deals with several Reclaimer groups trying to repopulate and rebuild Night City.

STOP!

Everything beyond this point is for *Gamemasters* only. If you are a Player, don't read beyond this point or you'll spoil the adventures your GM plans on running for you. Sure, it sounds like that'll give you an advantage during the game but role-playing isn't the sort of thing you cheat at. Things are more fun when you don't know what's coming. Trust us.

If you are the GM, read on! On the following pages you'll find *The Apartment*, a full adventure ready for you to run. You'll also find the *Screamsheets*, which are one–part "in world" news articles (you can share those with your players when the time comes) and one–part adventure seed. With just a little work you can use the *Screamsheets* as well as the maps and the punchout "standees" which came with the *Cyberpunk Red Jumpstart Kit* to run more adventures for your Players.

And don't stop there! Got an idea for an adventure! Fantastic! Use the advice in the *How to Run Cyberpunk Red* chapter and create your own thilling tales in the Dark Future. Remember, Cyberpunk is what you make it.

ANSELM ZIELONKA

6 ADVENTURE: THE APARTMENT

INTRODUCTION

"The Apartment" is a short adventure for first–time Players. It's designed to be played straight out of the box with the included pregenerated Characters but could easily be run with fully customized Characters from the core *Cyberpunk Red* book. If your Players happen to be verifiable badasses, they could probably handle one additional unit in every combat. If, for some reason, you want them to suffer (perhaps for the sin of power gaming), have WorldSat undertake two separate strategies in Part Three simultaneously.

The concept of the adventure is simple: The Characters all live on the third floor of the same apartment complex, which is owned by one of the Player Characters. How they came to own the building is your call, but we suggest you pick one of your Players with dead parents and say that they inherited it three years ago. It's one of the few non–Corporate owned apartments in Night City, four blocks away from the Combat Zone. The Characters aren't alone; their families might be with them, depending on their Lifepaths. The building is also full of other tenants, some of whom are listed in Part One. Their rent helps cover needed repairs and bribes needed to keep the building safe, and it all breaks even, barely. This close to the Zone, nobody comes to collect property

tax. The downside of this is that there are no government services available in the area. So long as the relevant Fixer (Rex) is paid, most of the boostergangs don't bother the building's inhabitants. It's a good situation, and paradise when compared to the rest of Night City.

The roof has a view of the city that could be on a postcard. Of course somebody wants to take it from them. WorldSat has already determined that the Characters' apartment complex will be the location of their latest communications tower and won't give up their plans without a fight. WorldSat's actions are up to you, but we've included some options in Parts Two and Three that we know work well depending on what Roles your Characters are playing.

Here's the short version: In Part One, you'll get Characters as invested as possible in their apartment building. In Parts Two and Three, a Corporation will try to take it from them. Characters must fight hard to survive and defend their little slice of urban paradise. Simple, right?

PART ONE: MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS

After you've explained their situation with the apartment, one by one have your Players introduce their Characters. Ask them about their Lifepaths. Are they in a relationship? Are their parents dead? Do they have a younger sibling to take care of? Remember, as a GM, NPCs from Characters' Lifepaths are useful for making them feel invested in the world. Your Players have control of their Characters, but you have control of damn near everything else, including their friends and families. If they fit well, feel free to make some of the included neighbors into their friends or family members. Maybe they live with the Character in their apartment, or next door. It's your call. If a Character really doesn't want to board with their relative, ask them if they would have kicked them out onto the street. It's a tough world out there.

Once all the Players have introduced themselves and shared their Character's Lifepath, it's time to introduce the world around them, starting with their neighbors. This area of Night City attracts those driven out to the fringes by the circumstances of the dark future. Some would be eaten alive if they lived any closer to the Combat Zone, and this is the furthest they can afford to run. Others like living near the criminal element because it makes it easier to find work. We recommend picking at least three of these colorful Characters to share a wall, ceiling, or floor with any of the Characters:

Gina Zepada

Gina has been living alone in her apartment since before the Characters moved in. She's an animal lover. Sounds of squawking and mimicked human speech can be heard coming from her apartment. When asked which of her three pets, Rico, her salmon–crested cockatoo, Puddles, her aldabra tortoise, or Spooky, her veiled chameleon is her favorite, she refuses to answer on principal, because she refuses to use the word "pet" to describe them. According to her, she has three roommates. Strangely, all three of these animals are totally natural, and not, like most animals in the dark future, created by Biotechnica. Gina doesn't like to talk about where she got them, but she sometimes refers to them as "rescues". If she doesn't trust you, she won't let you anywhere near Rico, Puddles, or Spooky. Gina used to be a member of a "pro–nature group" that used "direct actions" to fight back against Corporations, until her name and face got too recognizable and she was forced into hiding. Biotechnica would love to get their cloning reference animals back and would pay good money for information leading to her arrest by Corporate security. She keeps a loaded shotgun for the day they try. Use the statistics of the Nomad pregenerated Character for Gina.

Rico Robinson

Rico is another long–term tenant of the building. Everybody seems to know Rico, his music, or his old band. Each morning on the fourth floor of the building is accompanied by Rico's music, which begins with several scales and evolves seamlessly into experimental melodies. Though he typically begins in the morning with the trumpet, Rico switches between several instruments before the afternoon, recording as he goes. During lunch, he mixes his recordings together, adding guitar and drums. He doesn't stop playing when asked, but nobody has asked in a long time. When Rico was younger, he was part of a band called The Night Children, who broke up almost as fast as they got famous. Nowadays, Rico is semi–retired, and occasionally plays the clubs around the Combat Zone as a solo act, accompanying himself with his own recordings. He is good friends with Gina, and they often share meals. Her salmon–crested cockatoo isn't named after him—that's merely a coincidence. Rico is good friends with the bird that shares his name; whenever he comes over to visit, it always greets him, "Hello Rico!–squawk–Hello Rico!" Use the statistics of the Rockerboy pregenerated Character for Rico.

The Andersons

The Andersons, led by twenty–five–year–old matriarch Molly Anderson used to live on the street in the Combat Zone until they were able to pool enough eurobucks together to crawl out of that hellhole. A total of five people live squeezed into their single apartment, all members, biologically or otherwise, of Molly's family: Judie Anderson, the tall one, Maurice Anderson, the short one, and Marco and Andy Anderson, the twins. "Family" is Molly's word for it, but from an outside perspective, the Anderson Family is clearly a gang, and their matching A–N–D–E–R–S–O–N knuckle tattoos make it very easy to make that inference. Having survived the daily trauma of life in the Combat Zone together, the Andersons have become one cohesive unit that serves Molly's will without question. They all, however, claim they have never killed anyone they didn't have to. Nowadays, the Andersons do much less crime, violent or

otherwise, than they used to, and as a rule, never steal from anybody living in the apartment building. Lately, Molly has gotten into the good graces of the local Fixer, Rex, to keep the family's criminal acts sanctioned by the local underworld. Use the statistics of the Fixer pregenerated Character for Molly, and the street scum statistics for the rest of her family.

Dr. Carver

Dr. George Carver moved into the apartment building only recently, to cut down on his nightly commute between Trauma Team shifts. Moving closer to the "action" also allowed Dr. Carver to set up a second source of income for himself, an unlicensed surgery ward for illegal cyberware, colloquially referred to as a Ripperdoc. George isn't a medical doctor, but he knows his way around machines, which lets him get by, as most of his patients are more machine than human. Shortly after he moved in, he rented the apartment neighboring his, converting it into a sterile environment. He spends most of the day sleeping, as every night he works in a high–stress environment and he needs to stay fresh. To drown out the ambient sounds of gunfire, Rico's guitar, and Rico the cockatoo's squawking, Dr. Carver lined his walls with sound–dampening foam, which has helped him get a lot more sleep. The foam also keeps the screaming of his patients to a minimum, which helps the rest of the apartment get more sleep. It's a win–win. He would be happy to repair any of the Characters' damaged cyberware in exchange for a break on the rent. Use the statistics of the Tech pregenerated Character for Dr. Carver.

> NOTHING'S FREE. AND IF A CORPORATION MADE IT, THE HIDDEN COSTS ARE DOUBLE...
>
> *UNKNOWN*

Grant Jung

Grant is a Solo who works primarily for the local Fixer, Rex. Professionally, he goes by the handle Royal. Grant's room is paid for as part of the building's yearly payment to Rex that keeps the building safe from the area's many boostergangs who would love to terrorize it. Rex has made it known far and wide that Royal lives in the apartment building, and that information alone is a great deterrent. Despite his reputation, Grant isn't a bad neighbor to have. When he isn't running jobs for Rex, Grant loves to unwind by playing cards. Every month, he organizes a community poker night on the roof of the building. Bets are made exclusively in mini liquor bottles. Nobody cheats. The younger members of the Anderson family learned quickly not to play pranks on him after one of them had to visit Dr. Carver afterwards, for which Grant apologized. Grant doesn't like people standing behind him, and his eyes reflexively scan any room he enters. Even when relaxing, he doesn't like to take his armor off, except behind his apartment's specially installed reinforced door. He won't talk about it with anyone who wouldn't understand. Use the statistics of the Solo pregenerated Character for Grant.

PART TWO: SOMETHING'S WRONG IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Characters should have some time to interact with their neighbors before they notice a black car has been parked across the street from the apartment all day. Near the vehicle, two private security in Militech uniforms guard a man standing in front of an easel, making measurements while operating a set of cameras mounted to each of his shoulders. The Characters can't see what's displayed on the easel unless they get closer. If Characters go investigate and are spotted, the private security will approach and tell them to move along or they will be shot. One warning is all they get. If they approach again, the security goons will open fire.

In the event of a combat, use the booster statistics for the man behind the easel, who gets into the car as soon as possible to drive as far away as he can. An extraction team of four private security will arrive to secure him in an hour if he's captured or unable to escape. Characters who get close enough to the easel to get a glimpse, or beat information out of the man, learn WorldSat is planning to tear down their apartment building to install a communications tower in its place. Even more distressing, scribbled near the bottom of the plans is tomorrow's date. Judging by the fact that they haven't already asked, they probably aren't going to. Characters who aren't able to get this information, either by the means listed above, or their own research, simply aren't warned in advance of what's coming for them in Part Three.

ADVENTURE: THE APARTMENT

PART THREE: CORPORATE WRATH

Later in the day, the CitiNet goes down in a quarter mile radius centered on the Characters' apartment building, rendering communication via Agent useless, and the Data Pool inaccessible. Simultaneously, discreetly placed radio jammers all over the same area shut down radio–based communications. WorldSat giveth, WorldSat taketh away. People panic, and 90 percent of the apartment goes into hiding. The remaining 10 percent arm themselves. The neighbors from Part Two are part of the 10 percent. What happens next is up to you. What follows are four options that we know work well. We recommend you pick one suggested for the specific Roles that your Players are playing.

Where There's Smoke

Recommended if you have a Tech in the party.

During the chaos, a fire truck speeds toward the apartment building with its lights on, parking across the street. A team of five fully armed firefighters (use Private Security statistics) begins earnestly doing their job, setting off the fire alarm and ushering people out of the building. While they may be dressed like it, they aren't actually firefighters. And there isn't actually a fire, either. They've been hired by WorldSat to empty out the building for demolition. Their disguises are excellent, and they've rehearsed their Roles well. After they clear out some of the first–floor apartments, they set up smoke emitters in some of the rooms to add to the ruse, locking the doors to said rooms to keep them from being discovered. Seeing through their costume requires a keen eye, and a DV16 Perception Check. The smoke emitters are also a dead giveaway. If the firefighters suspect they've been discovered, they open fire immediately. The second phase of WorldSat's plan begins: The smoke emitters planted on the first floor are rigged with timed C9 explosives, which were set to explode in one hour. When the Characters learn of this, twenty minutes remain on the timer. Defusing one is a DV18 Basic Tech Check. Half of the time remaining on the timer disappears whenever the Check is failed or the bomb is jostled. There are three such bombs hidden on the first floor. If all of the bombs go off, the building crumbles in on itself, completely demolished. If only one or two bombs go off, the apartment building falls into the building on its left or right, crunching its neighbor in the process, nearly causing a domino effect. If all of the bombs are disabled, the threat is contained, for now. WorldSat must re–evaluate their plan for the communications tower, and they settle on a new location with fewer local risk factors.

Unknown Caller

Recommended if your Players (or you) love combat.

During the chaos, somebody's Agent rings, which is strange because everybody's Agent is jammed. The voice on the phone asks to speak to the Character who owns the apartment build-ing. Should the Characters attempt to hang up the call, the Agent won't be able to drop it. The person on the other end of the phone claims to be an employee of WorldSat who wants to end this situation without violence. They offer the Character 100,000 eurobucks for the building, and will show them the money if they come to the window to see it. If the Character goes to the window, two Private Security 25m away on the street shoot at them. If they don't fall for the bait, combat begins shortly thereafter—the shots meant for the owner destroy the window. When combat starts, two additional private security breach the apartment building's first–floor entrance. They arrive at the third floor in three rounds. The voice on the other end of the line taunts the Characters during the firefight. That voice is Julian Adder, better known by his handle, Streamline, a Solo that works almost exclusively for WorldSat. Use the statistics of the Solo pregenerated Character for him. He's watching the firefight from hiding on the sixth floor of the building across the street, putting him 25 meters away from the action on the third floor of the apartment building. A DV20 Perception Check uncovers Julian's hiding spot before he reveals himself. When the tide of the battle seems to be turning against his forces, he enters the firefight. If possible, he does so from range. If the fight has moved away from the window, he fires a zip line down to the apartment nearest to the fight and crashes through the window to engage in close quarters. After the firefight is over, no additional reinforcements arrive. WorldSat backs off, forced to re–evaluate their plans, having lost a key asset.

It's Just Business

Recommended if your Players fall deeply in love with their neighbors.

The Characters wait for something bad to happen, but nothing does. Two of the neighbors you introduced in Part Two stand beside the party, ready to defend the apartment building alongside them... or so it seems. One of the neighbors has an idea, to search the building room by room for jammers blocking radio–based communication, starting from the top floor. They'll need half of the party to accompany them to speed up the search. Another neighbor wants to gather a group to go talk to Rex, the Fixer in charge of this area. The streets aren't safe after dark, so they invite the other half of the party with them. If the Characters agree, one group heads into an alley where a single private security waits to ambush them, and the other group heads to the fifth floor of the apartment building where another private security hides for an ambush. Both ambushes happen simultaneously, and the Characters realize their trusted neighbors betrayed them when they turn their guns on them during the ambush. Combine both of these encounters together if the Characters refuse to split the party but still follow their neighbors into one of the ambushes. Their reasons for betraying the Characters are as follows: Gina was blackmailed by WorldSat with information from her past. Rico's old band member is WorldSat's hostage. The Andersons were offered a great deal of money to betray the Characters, as was Dr.

Carver. Grant was hired through Rex by WorldSat to betray the Characters. Whatever the reason, their betrayal culminates, most likely, in their death. After the tragic scene, no reinforcements arrive from WorldSat. The failure causes the Corporation to rethink their plans, and they decide on a new location for their communications tower.

Hack Attack

Recommended only if you have a Netrunner in the party.

Amid the chaos, a helicopter approaches the roof of the apartment. It's carrying a strike team, composed of five private security and a secretive Netrunner known only by her handle, Crunch. Use the Netrunner pregenerated Character for her statistics. After the strike team lands on the roof, they split into two groups: Three of the private security head down the stairs to eliminate the owner of the building, who they know lives on the third floor. The other two private security back up Crunch as she accesses the building's network via a company backdoor built into the satellite dish on the roof. Once in the building's NET, Crunch quickly gains access to the building's control nodes. Using the nodes, she can mess with the building's sprinklers, fire alarm, apartment lights, hallway lights, and elevators. Immediately, she triggers the sprinklers and fire alarm in the building owner's room on the third floor, killing the lights as well for good measure. The combined annoyance gives a -5 to any roll attempted in the room. The strike team's plan is to flush the owner of the apartment into the hallway, so the team of three on third floor can gun them down. If the Characters hide in another room, Crunch makes that room equally awful. If one of the Characters is a Netrunner, they can enter the building's network via access points located near the fire alarm or elevator to put a stop to Crunch's meddling. If the Characters dispatch the team of three private security, Crunch orders the remaining two to go finish the job. Once they reach the third floor, if she is still in control of the building's network, Crunch cuts all of the building's lights and shuts down the elevator. Using the fire escape on the roof, she abandons her Corporate gig, as she's not about to get killed over it. Once the fifth shooter expires, no reinforcements arrive from WorldSat. For now, the apartment building is safe.

The Apartment Building's Network

Level	Encounter	Ability (DV)
1	Password	(Backdoor DV15)
2	Control Node Sprinklers, Fire Alarm	(Control DV12)
3	Control Node Elevators	(Control DV12)
4	Control Node Lights	(Control DV12)

CONCLUSION: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

If the apartment building is still standing in the morning, the Characters are victorious. Sometime during the following day, the jammers hidden in neighboring buildings are discovered and destroyed. The CitiNet is also restored to the area. The other tenants in the apartment building throw a party for the Characters, and for a short few months after the incident, pay their rent on time with greater frequency, which makes their landlord's job much easier. While the Characters are no richer than they were before, their reputations have grown to level 3 around their neighborhood. Jobs will be considerably easier to find—and will pay better. Who knows where the Characters will go from here? You should. If you need help figuring that out, check out the screamsheets for adventures the Characters can take on next. The screamsheet Precious Cargo is a good next step if your Players are newer to roleplaying. If they are more experienced, the screamsheet Definitely Not Kansas might be more up their alley. There is so much more to explore, both in Night City and beyond.

ALEXANDER DUDAR

HALLWAY AND INDIVIDUAL APARTMENT MAPS

Players can use the following floorplans to determine which apartment is theirs and personalize their home.

Cyberpunk RED

Calvano Brings Exclusive Southern Neo–Italian Flavors to Night City

NCT NIGHT CITY TODAY NEWS

NIGHT CITY · 6 HOURS AGO

Renowned chef Leonardo Calvano brings his unique take on Southern Neo–Italian cuisine to Night City with his new restaurant, Paradiso Terrestre. Our reporter, **Jericho Hunt**, caught up to him for an exclusive interview to discuss the opening.

JH: Mr. Calvano, thank you for your time. I'm sure you must be quite busy with work from the opening. I'll get right to it: Why bring *Paradiso Terrestre* to Night City?

LC: Magic, Jericho. Night City has the magic I need to make culinary miracles. It's the culture. It's the atmosphere. The people. The music. The soil of culture here is rich with nutrients. Here I will build a paradise of luxury cuisine. It is my vision. I look forward to sharing it with those who dine at my table.

JH: Tell me more about your vision. What would a dinner at *Paradiso Terrestre* entail?

LC: An hour before your reservation, our private aerodyne picks you and your party up. Inside its custom interior, my exclusive mixologist will create for you an aperitivo to engage your senses while you travel to our compound beyond the noise and trouble of the city. Antipasto is also served in the air: olives, my prized coppa and mozzarella, on country bread. The meal is precisely timed for freshness. You are our only guests for the evening, and everything must be perfect. When you land in our compound, primo is served in the garden: Spaghetti alla Carbonara. The flavors of pork cheek, aged parmesan, and black pepper, glossed with a freshly beaten egg. I am there with you, personally attending to your experience. Secondi is where the creativity comes to a crescendo, Lobster al Night City. It is a new taste—one that captures the magic I spoke of. Ammunition. Truffles. Gasoline. This is followed by insalata, to cleanse the palate. Slices of pear are served, accompanied with a creamy tangy cheese, from my own goat. Before we must part, I serve Torta Caprese, my mother's recipe, in her memory. After that, our aerodyne will take you wherever you wish to go. Many choose the opera.

JH: Wow. Sourcing all of your ingredients must be quite the challenge. How have you approached it?

LC: What freshness demands, we exceed. Despite the challenges of the world today, we are above them, solely focused on the future of Southern Neo–Italian Cuisine. When authenticity is demanded, we import directly from Italy. Our resources are not meager enough to accept substitutes. Our supply chain is immaculate, just like our dishes.

JH: Congratulations again on your opening. One last question. How does one go about getting a reservation at *Paradiso Terrestre*?

LC: A bird flies by using its wings.

SCENARIO 1: PRECIOUS CARGO

Players' Information

A well–known Fixer approaches the Characters while in Night City. They offer them a combined 30 percent stake in an armored car heist they're bringing together if the team is willing to run point on it and finance their own equipment, other than an anonymous vehicle the Fixer is willing to provide. While they're cagey about the details of the heist until an agreement can be made, they're upfront that the team has to overcome armed resistance to rob an armored car. High risk, high reward.

Could be a big score, if it all goes down in their favor...

GM's Notes

The Fixer offers to provide them with an anonymous vehicle for the job at a 30 percent stake but would be willing to increase their stake to 35 percent if they use their own vehicles instead of his. They also provide the option of a 25 percent stake for the Characters, where the Fixer also provides the crew with a motorcycle (in addition to the anonymous vehicle) which does not need to survive the job. A Character can negotiate with the Fixer to make a minor concession (5 percent additional stake, add an additional vehicle, etc.) in the terms of the agreement assuming they are convincing enough with a DV17 Persuasion Check or a DV15 Bribery Check.

Once an agreement has been made, the Fixer will reveal an important piece of dirt they have on one of the Characters (from their Lifepath) to discourage betrayal. They stress that they don't like to threaten people like this, but needs to for their own safety. They are not lying and will send an armored car driven by a Nomad and carrying two Solos to punish betrayal.

The Fixer goes into detail about the plan for the heist: In two days, a lone armored car will leave Night City for a heavily defended compound in the mountains. At one point during its trip, when it crosses a single strip of road between Nomad territories, the car will be particularly vulnerable. At that point, the Characters are to stop the car, disable the tracker it's probably equipped with, and steal the car, taking it to a safe house the Fixer has set up in Night City so that they can unload its cargo. The Fixer will not reveal what the armored car is carrying, except to stress that it is fragile, but not toxic, and that if the cargo gets destroyed, nobody is getting rich here.

At the weak point, when the armored car enters the Characters' view, two private security are inside it, and it's escorted by one more private security on a motorcycle. The Fixer's info wasn't completely correct. When the private security realizes what's going on, they open fire. The highway map can loop around itself to simulate a long straight stretch of road. For dramatic purposes, the Characters' vehicles and the armored car should stay neck and neck so they can enjoy a high–speed gunfight. To keep the game moving quickly, treat all vehicles as having SP10. Cars can take 50 damage before they can't move, and motorcycles can take 25. Characters can target a double damage weak point on a vehicle at the cost of taking a -6 to their roll, just like trying to hit a head shot.

After they've had their fun, they find the tracker in a pack of cigarettes on the dashboard of the armored car. The motorcycle has a tracker hidden in a storage compartment under the seat. If they forget to disable any of these and give away their position, two Solos on motorcycles intercept the crew during their trip back to Night City. Otherwise, they arrive at the safe house without further incident. The trunk of the armored car is refrigerated and is carrying 25,000 eb of authentic Parmigiano Reggiano. The Characters are paid according to their stake in the heist. If they were smart, maybe they have a new bike, too!

The Dangers of Interactive Braindance Entertainment

BY DAWN DAVIS, CONCERNED MOTHER FROM DEL CORONADO HARBOR · 1 HOUR AGO

Am I the only parent worried by my child's use of interactive braindance? Stop me if you've heard this before: My child spends more than five hours every day in braindance. When he comes home from Del Coronado High, he hardly even says hello before he locks himself in his room and hooks up to that infernal machine. Who knows what sorts of unsavory Characters and lifestyle criminals he's interacting with on a daily basis? Is he in a juviegang? I heard him say the word "choomba" once. That's an illegal drug reference, I'm pretty sure. Whenever I call him to dinner, he takes ages to unplug himself from his stupid elf game. Sometimes I have to message him on my Agent to even get him to respond. I've heard this same story from other mothers in our Del Coronado Harbor community, and we all share the same concern: This rampant use of interactive braindance is melting the precious minds of the youth and will lead to a degeneration in our small community's cherished morals if left unchecked. Use must be limited to no more than four hours a day.

NIGHT CITY NEEDS YOU

Think you have what it takes to clean up the streets? Think you have the unwavering sense of justice and excellent marksmanship of a true pro? We'll be the judge of that. Graduates from the Night City Police Academy receive a free Heavy Pistol and a career! What are you waiting for? Take your shot today!

SCENARIO 2: JUST LIKE REAL

Players' Information

After buying the Characters some drinks, an off–duty NCPD cop strikes up a conversation with the Characters in a karaoke club and asks them if they would like to make some easy money——and maybe even have a little fun, too. Officer Lantz is trying to recruit a team of serious–looking edgerunners to play the part of a ruthless booster gang during an upcoming simulated hostage situation exercise at the police academy. Since the exercise takes place in a new and improved interactive braindance, there will be no danger to the Characters (as long as the hardware doesn't malfunction). The department will be able to pay each of them 300 eb and will buy them lunch afterwards at the mallplex. Lantz is particularly interested in making the simulation as hard as possible for the recruits, especially for a rookie sniper nicknamed Ten Gallon, who she thinks needs to be knocked down a peg. If he isn't able to shoot any of the Characters in the head during the exercise, Lantz will hook up each party member with 20eb out of her own pocket.

GM's Notes

On the day of the simulation, Characters arrive at the Night City Police Academy, where the receptionist waves them through the weapons detector without inspection and calls the simulation instructor to come meet them in the lobby. The instructor takes the Characters into a side room and briefs them. He notes down their weapons and capabilities and assures them interactive braindance has no chance of killing them, unlike those old illegal braindances. He echoes the claim that dying is completely safe in the new interactive braindance, and if it weren't, he would have already killed off most of his students. Not that he has as many students now as he used to——before the nuke. The NCPD is struggling just to retain control these days.

The Characters learn the simulation is a simple hostage situation. In the simulation, the Characters will play the role of a ruthless boostergang holding a VIP hostage in their Corporation's thirty–second–story boardroom during a power outage (which has shut down the elevator and created a standoff). The Characters' goal is to protect their hostage for three hours until the end of the simulation. The students' goal will be to rescue the hostage from the building. In the simulation, Characters are equipped with whatever they walked into the police academy wearing, so that they feel familiar with their equipment. All of the Characters' stats are the same as they are outside the simulation, and being in the simulation changes nothing about the game rules–wise. Before the simulation, a DV15 Basic Tech Check can confirm that the Segotari RUSH Revolution systems being used for the simulation are malfunction–free.

When the simulation begins, a long present in patterned wrapping paper that alternates between cacti and cowboy hats rests on the boardroom table near the hostage. It's a single use missile launcher. The present is addressed to whichever of the Characters Officer Lantz liked the most.

There are ten police academy students taking part in the simulation. Nine use the "private security" stats; Ten Gallon is a Solo.

Ten Gallon spends the entire simulation 150m/yds away from the building in a police aerogyro, which is piloted by another student, attempting to line up perfect shots on the Characters with his assault rifle. He only aims for the head, which imposes a -6 penalty to all his attacks, and he only takes a shot when he has a clear line of sight. The helicopter moves to another side of the building occasionally to keep the Characters on their toes. The Characters might want to barricade themselves in, but there isn't enough material to cover every window. It's also dangerous to set up a barricade while someone is aiming at you. Treat the edges of the provided office map as floor to ceiling windows.

An hour into the simulation, four of the police academy students will attempt to breach the thirty–second floor of the building through the windows on the side of the building that the Characters are defending the least, by rappelling down from the thirty–fourth floor.

Two hours into the simulation, the power suddenly comes back on in the building, and the remaining four police academy students attack from the elevator. The Characters weren't informed during the briefing that the power would come back on suddenly; the instructor wanted to surprise them so this could simulate a raid. Should the raid fail, the instructor will end the simulation then and there.

After the simulation is over, as promised, the instructor takes the Characters to the mallplex for a slice of pizza... along with all ten of the police academy students who participated in the simulation. The students are a bit annoying, and ask a few too many stupid questions, but hey, free pizza.

Biotechnica Delays Release of Designer Drug

BY JACKIE MCGEE · LA JOLLA, SOCAL · 25 HOURS AGO

A spokesperson for **Biotechnica** announced today that the upcoming release of their designer drug *Securicine* has been delayed for a month. The company assured customers that pre–orders will be honored in the order they were received and the delay has been caused purely by a shipping issue caused by high demand for the drug. When **Biotechnica** revealed the project to the public early last year, they touted it as a "revolutionary all–day prevention against disease, poison, and pain, designed for your unique physiology." Since their announcement, a representative from **Militech** at their Night City regional office has commented on the status of their order: "Despite the delay, we stand behind our trusted business partner **Biotechnica**. *Securicine* performed well during our internal tests, and we look forward to receiving our order as soon as possible."

M I L I T E C H

NIGHT CITY SECURITY ADVISORY

Combat Zone Worse Than Usual

by J.E. Munroe

The freaks and murderers of the Combat Zone have been out in force lately. After three weeks of a sustained increase in the rate of killings, we began to suspect something new may be going on in the Zone. We drew straws to decide which intrepid reporter to send to uncover the truth. I drew the short straw. A new street drug, known as "**Emerald City**" seems to be the culprit. It appears a new player is pushing it, but I was unable to get specifics due to my abundance of self–preservation instinct. I don't get paid enough to do this shit. Nobody is editing this anyway. Watch this see print. Those on the drug seem to feel no pain and display increased aggression, often directed at things only they can see. While researching for this report, I saw a booster throw a grenade at a screamsheet box behind him because it was "following" him, and then walk off with shrapnel sticking out of his back. My advice is to try to stay out of the combat zone a little more than you usually do for a while. These types of things have a way of sorting themselves out—violently.

SCENARIO 3: DEFINITELY NOT KANSAS

Players' Information

Biotechnica quietly approaches the Characters with a lucrative job offer. A new drug, "Emerald City" has hit the streets of the combat zone; it eliminates its users' ability to feel pain, with side effects including aggressive behavior and massive delusions (at only 225 eb per highly addictive eight–hour dose). Biotechnica wants it taken off the market so they can study it without worrying about competition. While normally taking any drug off the black market would be impossible in Night City, at present, Emerald City has only one supplier, a relatively new posergang called The Yellow Brick Road, who have undergone elaborate bodysculpt jobs to look like Characters from **The Wizard of Oz**. In addition to blowing up the gang's drug operation (located in the basement under their combat zone hideout) with remote detonated C9 explosive packs, 4 units of which the Corporation will supply to the Characters for the job, Biotechnica wants them to acquire at least 30 kilos of the drug to deliver to them for study.

Biotechnica is willing to pay 10,000 eb upfront, and another 7,000 eb on delivery of the drugs.

GM's Notes

An Exec within Biotechnica has planned to betray the Characters from the very start. The street drug Emerald City is actually an old prototype of their upcoming designer drug Securicine, which was accidentally left in one of their secret facilities in the combat zone when it was decommissioned. This building later became the hideout of The Yellow Brick Road, who began to produce it in their old facility and put it on the black market. The existence of an early prototype on the black market has the potential to lead to large losses for the company as its prototype form would be much easier to reverse engineer than its final form, Securicine. The Exec who was responsible for decommissioning the combat zone lab would certainly lose his job if this information got to his boss, so he's hiring the Characters to cover his tracks. It's worth mentioning that underhanded sabotage is typically not how Biotechnica operates, and this Exec has effectively gone rogue in an attempt to save his job, which he believes to be easily worth more than lives. He's a bad apple in a typically not–so–bad Corporation, especially by Corporate standards.

The C9 explosive packs the Characters receive are indeed remote detonated, but they have been set up with two separate remote detonators. The Characters can discover this if they are paranoid enough to make a thorough inspection of the explosives. A Basic Tech Check of 15 could remove the second receiver in each of the C9 blocks, foiling the sabotage plan.

Biotechnica sends a Solo to shadow the Characters as soon as they enter the combat zone, with plans to blow the charges and bring the building down on the Characters after they deal with The Yellow Brick Road. They are in direct connection with the Exec via Agent. A Perception Check of DV15 can notice him following them faintly in the distance. You should give the Characters a chance to make this roll unless they are being willfully ignorant of their surroundings. If they are confronted early, the Exec aborts the sabotage plan immediately, and orders the Solo to get out of there asap.

The Yellow Brick Road is made up of twenty–four members, half of which use the "Booster" statistics and have bodysculpted themselves into shiny tin men; the other half use the "Street Scum" statistics and have bodysculpt jobs that make their bodies lanky and thin. Given that they also wear almost exclusively burlap, this makes them look like scarecrows. Not all of them are present in the hideout at any given time, as many are busy selling drugs all over the combat zone. All of them are breaking the first rule of drug dealing —they're high on their own supply—which makes them immune to the Seriously Wounded Wound State. It also makes them likely to do aggressive, delusional things like shoot a wall or stab their friends.

The leader of their boostergang is a Tech who goes by "Dorothy, Queen of OZ", who is only ever present via a custom–built projector and speaker system she installed behind a green curtain in the back of The Yellow Brick Road's headquarters. Dorothy's private network can be accessed by a Netrunner through this projector. She's also taken control of the secret cameras Biotechnica installed in the club that the company used as a front and in their secret office/testing facility underneath the floorboards, where the gang now keeps their drug lab. Dorothy is actually in the building next door, in a room only accessible via the roof, where she keeps her aerodyne. She would have liked to be further away if it was possible,

but this was the farthest she could stretch Biotechnica's NET architecture, and she really enjoys the dramatic allure of interfacing with her gang in this way.

When the Characters arrive at the gang's headquarters, five scarecrows are outside in the street, protecting the main entrance. Two tin men are inside the first floor of the club, talking to Dorothy's projection about business. One tin man is in the alley where the headquarters' side entrance is, smashing his head against the side of the wall repeatedly. Four more scarecrows are in the drug laboratory in the decommissioned Biotechnica office under the floorboards cooking up a fresh batch; the entrance, under a loose tile in the club's bathroom floor, has been left open. Approximately 400 kilos of Emerald City are stored in yellowed bricks that line the laboratory.

If the Solo shadowing the party is still around to watch the party clear out the facility, they detonate the charges the moment he sees them come back onto the first floor from the basement. An Athletics Check of DV15 could get a Character out of a building falling down around them, allowing them to avoid taking 5d10 damage from the collapsing ceiling to their body, which can be soaked by armor. It all happens much faster than it does in the movies. The Solo waits ten minutes to see if any of the Characters survived the blast and attempts to eliminate any found alive. Biotechnica plays dumb about their sabotage if confronted about it but still pays the 7,000 eb, so long as the Characters held up their end of the bargain.

Dorothy's Private Network

Level	Encounter	Ability (DV)
1	Password	(Backdoor DV12)
2	File *Contents: Turn Back Last Warning*	(Eye–Dee DV8)
3	Hellhound *Custom Icon: Lion*	
4	Control Node Cameras	(Control DV12)
5	Password	(Backdoor DV12)
6	Hellhound *Custom Icon: Terrier*	
7	Control Node *Projector, Speaker, Dorothy's Microphone*	(Control DV:12)

THE BEST CYBERPUNK GAMES ARE A COMBINATION OF DOOMED ROMANCE, FAST ACTION, GLITTERING PARTIES, MEAN STREETS, AND QUIXOTIC QUESTS TO DO THE RIGHT THING AGAINST ALL ODDS. IT'S A LITTLE LIKE CASABLANCA WITH CYBERWARE...

MAXIMUM MIKE