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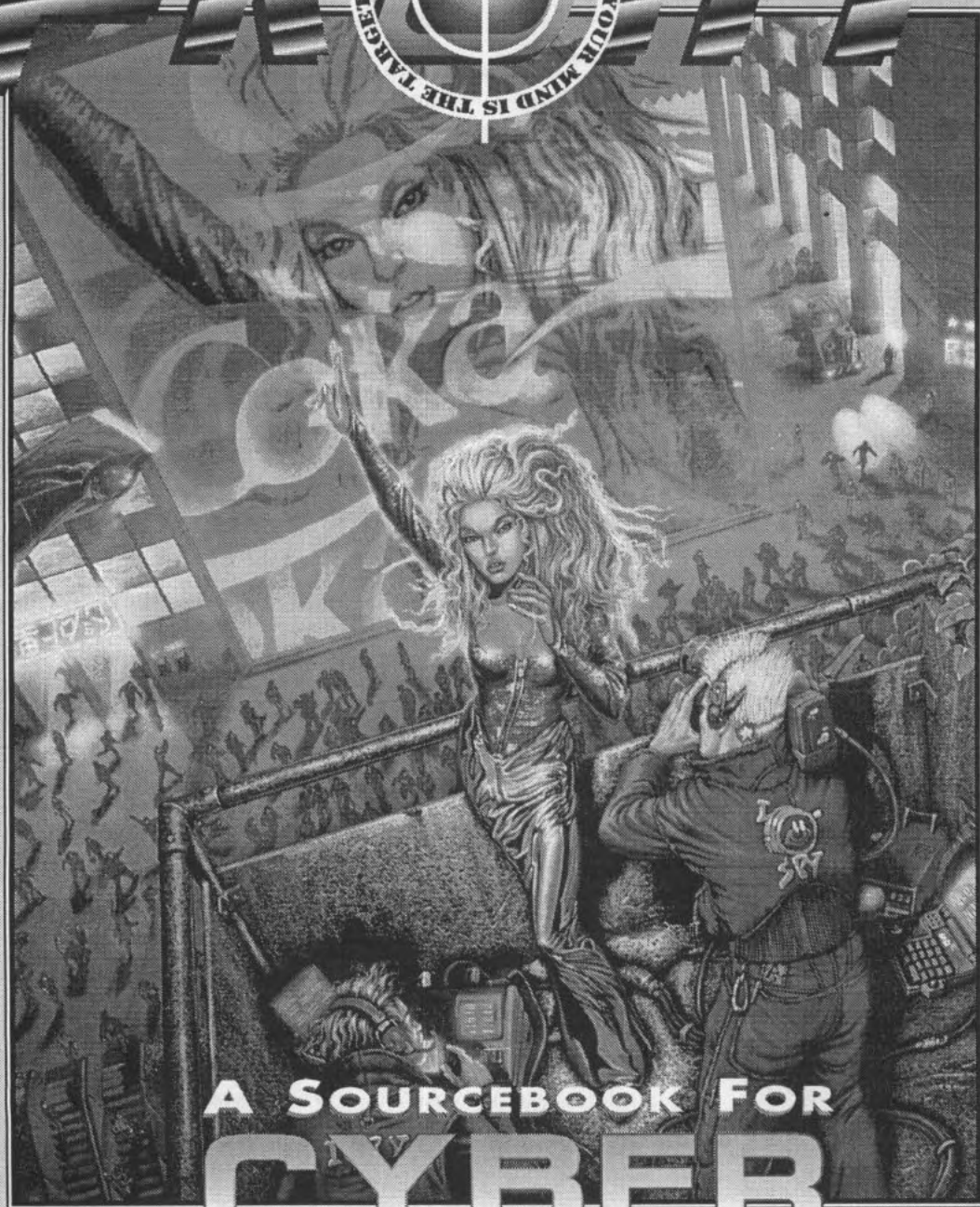
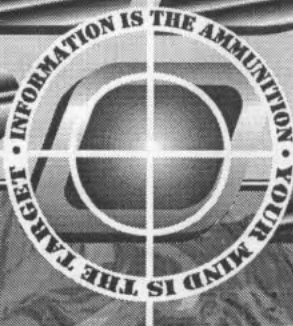
MEDIA FRONT



A Documents of the Revolution™ Sourcebook for

CYBERGENERATION

MEDIA FRONT



A SOURCEBOOK FOR

CYBER GENERATION



DOCUMENT OF THE REVOLUTION #2: MEDIAFRONT

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**R. TALSORIAN
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INTRODUCTION



"Congress shall make no law... abridging freedom of speech, or of the press."

▼ Welcome back, CyberRevolutionaries, to our continuously-updating general reference guide to overthrowing the ISA. For those of you who have only a corporate education, the quote above is from the First Amendment to the original 1789 Constitution of the United States of America.

Yes, it sounds pretty archaic, but it guided our nation for over 200 years, up until people were willing to trade their freedom for security.

As you might have guessed from the above quote, the media is the primary focus of this installment, for the media has been the tool by which the ISA has won the hearts and minds of the common American citizen, and we must use it to help us win it back. You Vidiots and Glitterkids have been riding the cathode-ray dragon for a while, trying to turn the ISA's main gun back on itself. Well, it's time for the rest of us to wake up and smell the soya-kaf. The ISA puppet-masters are cranking up to steam-roller the CyberEvolved with a propaganda blitzkrieg that will try to make every parent see their own child as an alien monster. The resulting pogrom against you carbon kids could make the Holocaust look like a slap fest.

Thanks to the efforts of some of you California kids, we know more about the origin of CNMs than even the Machine (see *Ecofront*), although this information has raised as many questions as it's answered. Still, we want people to know what we know, but getting the public to listen to us is still a major problem.

Fortunately, technology is giving us new tools to reach out and touch, well, everyone. We'll show you some of these toys here. In addition, we'll tell you about others who have already been working themselves into the cracks of the Media Superhighway: broadcast pirates and their ilk. We introduce two more yogangs who've joined the fight, and a new Sport Evolved type that has come to our attention. This breed seems to be singularly useful in this electronic arena so you'd best know it's strengths and weaknesses. (As more of these types keep showing up, it's becoming obvious that the CNMs are adapting to our technology and environment; now if we could just figure out why.)

So take this material and run with it, CyberRevolutionaries. Learn from the Machine, but don't copy it. And keep the data flowing — right out onto the public videoboards.

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tion, actually inhibits the presentation of controversial issues of public importance to the detriment of the public." Unfortunately, it did not die. The government pushed it through to give itself more control over the hysteria of the media when things started to fall apart during The Collapse.

The third and final strike against the First Amendment was the passage of the News Veracity Act of 2025. Where the government had previously taken control of the airwaves and their fairness, now they took control of the actual content. According to the News Veracity Act, "The government shall regularly inspect licensees' public information dissemination to ensure that the content contains only factual information. Licensees who broadcast falsehoods, ungrounded conjectures, and libelous stories shall face fines, the cancellation of their permits, and/or criminal prosecution."

Again, the American public acquiesced. After all, who could be against a law prosecuting a station that told nothing but lies, slander, and rumors? When the bill came up for debate, anyone who opposed it found themselves under fire for supporting lawless, irresponsible pirate broadcasting. But again, it was the government itself that decided what was factual, and what was false, ungrounded, or libelous. Within a few short weeks every station in the ISA was either government-controlled or out of business.

These days, the electronic media is hopelessly dominated by the government, and by extension, the megacorporations. Even the print media is falling under follow-up bills to the News Veracity Act. All the stations are mainstream. Under their obfuscating facade, even the carefully-crafted "counter-culture" stations support the President unconditionally, and find that everything the government does is truly in our best interests. Their 'scandal' stories turn out, at the end, to be nothing of the sort. This is the challenge that faces us today: a public which has sold its soul to the Machine, and which receives its daily thoughts from the ISA's propaganda mills. We've got to make people start thinking for themselves again, by hitting them in the face with the truth, over and over and over.

Media in Mind: Life in the ISA

"To go from a job you don't like to watching a screen on which others live more intensely than you ... is American Life, by and large."

—Michael Ventura, *Shadow Dancing in the USA*

Life in the corp sectors is a well orchestrated routine of overwork, communal obligations and brain-draining media. While safe from most of the violence of the streets, the residents face a paranoid culture where each is subtly competing against the others for approval and privileges from the parent corporations.

Accommodations vary from spartan dormitories for single men and women, to modest apartments for lower income families (the Beavers), to elaborate condo cubes for the corporate climbers (the Movers). Ubiquitous Mallplexes provide glittering islands of plastic-coated consumerism amid the tightly patrolled neighborhoods, beckoning kids and adults alike to participate in the glorious process of capitalism. Corporate policy is treated as law, and the courts uphold it. Children are indoctrinated in company-run schools and youth programs, while the parents slowly learn to think of them as corporate property, not their own flesh and blood.

The mediacorps are naturally major players in this mental treadmill. Helping to mastermind the new broadcast laws of the 2020's, DMS and Net 54 have both found snug places in the new establishment. They have used their power and the above-mentioned provisions to take over many of the smaller independent stations which used to make up the majority of programming available to the public. (Did you know that once there were over 400 free stations open on the broadcast frequencies? Ask any Guerrilla.) Instead of closing these stations, the megamediacorps quietly shifted the content of the programming just enough to fall into line with their corporate agenda. Their masterful and malevolent manipulation of facts and images has allowed the corps to present only the pictures that they wish the public to see. At the same time, most of the shows on the now heavily monitored airwaves are designed to reinforce the power of the corps and the federal government while simultaneously discouraging any independent thought or action on the part of the populace.

Sour Milk from the Glass Teat

Naturally, the TV is the foremost instrument of oppression. One of the most obnoxious but effective tactics in this media sedation is the monstrous spate of pseudo-news magazines which litter most of the vid-channels most of the time. These are designed to give people the impression that they are informed, but in fact only tell them what the CEP wants them to hear; nothing kills curiosity faster than making someone think that they know what is going on. These form the perfect platform for disseminating propaganda in the form of "investigative reports" and "special bulletins." Here is where the mallbrains get fed their daily dose of insightful news stories about virtual sex in the Net, the growth of U.S. buying power, live lingerie shows, and how the homeless are responsible for their own terrible circumstances, all liberally sprinkled with subliminals and doublespeak. The most popular of these shows is *American Dawn*, with Dwight Lincoln and Vanessa Hardbridge, both appropriately clean yet quietly sexy vid-show clones of the type that the mediacorps seem to be able to keep pulling out of vats from somewhere under Appalachia. God knows that they always have a new set ready when the current ones get just a little too old or start to slip in the ratings, whichever comes first. Unfortunately, it plays on over 200 stations nationwide, and its current ratings are disgustingly good.

Here are a few titles of other mental-oatmeal tabloids so you can avoid them at all costs:

- *American Dawn* (first and foremost, which is no compliment)
- *The Now You Know Show* (with its anthropoid mannequin, Will Harkness)
- *Your Home, Our Home* (Is that a name or an ISA policy?)
- *Info-Flash* (high-energy, 24 hr. news channel. Old-time Guerillas call this "MTV meets CNN.")
- *Fireside With Jerry* (Mega right-wing commentary and news show hosted by ISA Senator Jerome Butterfield, NP/Ohio)
- *Have to Know* (A once-righteous vid-show co-opted by the ISA)
- *The Road to Prosperity* (Focuses on ISA economic news, all of which is good, of course.)

Sports shows (always a corporate favorite) are still a mainstay. They work beautifully to redirect the violent drives of the public while at the same time displaying the importance of team play and the futility of individual achievement. So while Combat Football and Roadwarrior Rally are more professionally produced than ever, the violence quotient has been increased, with an unspoken minimum-two-fatalities-or-it-wasn't-a-good-game rule. As I said before, the focus of these events is team effort over that of individual players; few "sports stars" are heralded as more important than their teams (or live particularly long, either). Players naturally belong to the company that sponsors their team, and free agency is a thing of the past. While it might seem strange that such violence is still encouraged on major networks, it is always carefully controlled, designed as a catharsis and opiate rather than a stimulant.

Pirate sports have still managed to find a niche for themselves, but the corps exploit them as thoroughly as the mainstream stuff. They know that underground sports like Battle-Skating and Dog-Duel draw the viewing audience which the corps most want to mind-jink: the quiet corpzoner who likes a little rebellion without real risk. So these shows are positively dripping with subliminal programming and are intentionally maintained in order to feed this material to a specific demographic element. So the next time you're watching Blacklist Basketball on channel 245, pull out those special eyeglasses we issued to you and check out the screen (see Subliminals, below).

Another popular type of kibble-vid is amateur peeper shows such as *Cyber-Eye* and *Let Us In*. These revolve around citizens

sending in their own vid-CDs which show any outrageous or embarrassing situations in which they can catch their neighbors.

Prizes are given for the most degrading act submitted as well as any vid revealing unpatriotic or treasonous behavior (these definitions having been expanded radically in recent months). The sort of watch-your-neighbor mentality this has bred in the corporate housing sectors should be pretty obvious to everyone. Now the government may not be the only ones recording you.

One would have hoped that with the advent of the new "Cellular" satellite media network, which allows anyone with one of the new Cellular Data Systems (see page 29) to access television and radio from around the world, people could just tune in something else, maybe even something honest. Ah, the ISA would have none of that. The fact is, the ISA doesn't want people to be able to get TV, radio, and database info freely from around the world. That would allow them to hear viewpoints and ideologies antithetical to their propaganda. So the ISA carefully monitors this cellular access. In fact a sort of "jamming war" has been going on between the ISA and broadcasters from around the world. It started early in 2022, during the separation of the U.S. corporations and their European parent companies, the "Second American Revolution." A media war accompanied the economic conflict, escalating to the point where the USAF was threatening to shoot down ESA relay satellites if they didn't limit their broadcast areas. The Euros naturally countered with the promise to drop another rock from their lunar massdriver, and both sides huffed and puffed at each other until the ESA backed down. Maybe it was because they believed that the USAF was willing to make their proposed suicide runs against the Tycho and Copernicus Moon bases. Sadly, I think the Euros were right.

Now the ESA satellites supposedly limit their transmission areas and allow the Media Council of the ISA to approve any programs to be transmitted into ISA viewing space. Of course, there are still some unmonitored broadcasts in a perverse reversal of Radio Free Europe. And naturally the ISA does its best to track, jam, and/or destroy the sources of these transmissions. In an age where nearly instantaneous communication and information exchange could add immeasurably to the quality of our lives, our magnanimous benefactor, the ISA government, has seen fit to cut us off from the rest of the world in a paranoid bid to retain its own power. Thomas Jefferson must be turning over in his grave.

What You Don't See Can Hurt You

But everything the ISA is broadcasting isn't listed in the TV Guide. We're talkin' subliminals. Okay, everyone's been using these since someone discovered that images and words, if blended subtly into regular programs on a low-key level, could be imprinted directly on the subconscious mind. And while advertisements have included sublims for the last fifty years, the ISA and the mediacorps have made this technique a serious tool, allowing them to pump propaganda directly into a person's hind-brain, bypassing their rational centers altogether. Whether it's some "buy this thing" message or a subconscious pacification

program, the ISA peppers its broadcasts with hidden pictures, buried words, and subaudio manipulative mantras. Some forms can be detected by special equipment (specially-polarized eyeglasses, extra-sensitive audio recorders, specialized detection software, and sometimes, simply low-speed playback off of a CD recorder).

While it's unlikely that you will find your brain thoroughly rinsed and spin-dried by these minor mental mini-missiles, you may find yourself developing little traits and habits which do not necessarily reflect your own inclinations. Such as *wanting* to trust a BuReloc officer, finding the thought of stealing corporate property very uncomfortable, or just wanting to go buy a Big Bro Burger ... right now. But beware, there have been reports of cases where the powers that be have managed to administer psychotropic drugs in conjunction with the subliminals. These supposedly allow them to install far more dramatic behaviors and messages; rumors of TV-programmed berserkers and/or mindless corp-drones continue to circulate.

SUBLIMINALS AND YOU

The pervasive use of sublims in the ISA over the last three years means that the players will have been exposed to quite a few hours of mental tweaking, and it takes an Average COOL roll to have avoided any minor habits due to this subconscious programming. Any such habits will be pretty low-key, however, consisting largely of such things as a mild reluctance to disobey a CorpSec patrolman (Easy COOL roll to defeat), or simply the desire to purchase Soy-So synth-chocolate (Average COOL to resist, unless you really like the stuff). The ref will no doubt have a few of his own in mind. Remember: These habits should be annoying, but not debilitating.

It can get worse. If the players have been exposed to a subliminal set-up that includes drugs and more intensive subliminal application, then they must make a Difficult COOL roll to resist the implantation. If they fail, they may be subject to more extensive programming, such as berserker rage when exposed to a key signal, and passive calm when exposed to another. Once uninstalled, these programs require a Difficult COOL roll to resist when exposed to the activating stimulus. So be careful when you sit down in your local theater or (God forbid) braindance parlor; you may be getting more than you paid for.

Vidiots have access to techniques for detecting subliminals. These range from special software for examining digital broadcasts to the polarized eyeglasses mentioned above. Different sublims require different detection techniques. In general, determining which technique to use is an Average *Commo* task and spotting sublims with the correct technique is another. Cleaning up a broadcast will require sophisticated studio equipment and a broadcast unit plus several Difficult *Commo* rolls. Simple sublims (like flashing a quick image into a recording) can be done on most Vidiots' portable systems with a Difficult *Commo* roll. Creating sophisticated subliminals requires a studio and a Very Difficult *Commo* task.

Many of you Vidiots have gotten pretty adept at spotting this stuff and are even learning how to clean up some broadcasts. Unfortunately, some of you have also learned to generate sublims of your own. While I understand your desire to turn such a weapon back on its users, it isn't what the CyberRevolution is about. We aren't here to *brainwash* people into tearing down the ISA or even into supporting us. Our job is to tell the public the uncensored truth and hope that they make the right choice. If we adopt every dehumanizing tactic that our enemy utilizes, we become just like the Machine.

That Old Time Rock & Roll

And you know that the music biz hasn't escaped this nefarious philosophy of conceptual brain-drain. As a twisted extension of the News Veracity Act, the CEP has established a special subcommittee to "oversee" the content of popular music. Can you say legislative censorship, kids? I thought you could. This Committee for Music Awareness effectively decides what records and lyrics promote the "proper image of our culture," and — more importantly — which do not. Those which don't, generally don't get major contracts. They've even posted a list of guidelines "to help young songwriters find the best voice for the New America." The bitch is, they got away with all this under the label of patriotism! I'm sorry, but anyone who wants to see what strictly "patriotic art" looks like should take a gander at the sterile and unimaginative material which came out of Nazi Germany and their art ministers during the 1930's-40's. If the comparison seems heavy-handed, I can only say that it's also all too accurate.

There is still a "garage band" circuit and a few underground stations which have the guts to broadcast its products. And its products are pretty raw, as only enthusiastic and passionate amateurs can be, but if you want unpasteurized music, it's the only game in town. But the ISA is notorious for infiltrating and twisting such markets to their own purposes (see Pirate Sports above). So, like any freedom of speech movement under a ruthless, totalitarian regime, this network is pretty paranoid. Contacts are almost always personal, and networking carefully screened. The Eden Cabal has some juice with this system (Hey, you Vidiots and Glitterkids make up half of it), and we don't hesitate to use it to broadcast our messages when we can.

An interesting side note to all this is, well, the rest of the world, most notably Europe. European studios are a lot more liberal than our current federally-monitored system, and that's where I do about half of my recording. That way I can get large pressings and filter them into the ISA through the black market. And don't accuse me of selling out either. The Euros don't censor me, and I make enough on my overseas sales to send my recordings into the ISA for free, and that allows the underground network to spread them around. The point is to get the word out there in as undiluted a form as possible. If the EEC is willing to help me do it, wonderful!

We'll Tell You What to Feel: Braindance In 2027

Once one of the rising stars of techno-entertainment, Braindance is currently on the decline. The ISA considers braindance chips to be a controlled substance, which really shouldn't be too surprising, considering that most drugs and other mind-altering substances and procedures have been put under strict control by the CEP. That is to say, that the government is the only one that can sell them. Only those braindance chips authorized and cleared by the FCC are available on the open market. If that thought doesn't scare the pants off you, then you're just not with the program. Count on anything legal being seriously pumped full of corporate brain-varnish and anything illegal being downright dangerous. Because the FCC controls and "screens" these chips so carefully, the number hitting the shelves has gone down radically. Thus the braindance market has slowly atrophied for lack of stimulus. Black market chips are still out there, but pirate producers have been so bludgeoned down by the federal police that the quality of their chips is chancy and the level of material usually poor.

Unfortunately, the ISA isn't going to let such a potential tool slip away from them. DMS, one of the leaders in braindance technology, is experimenting with a new and frightening concept: broadcast braindance entertainment. Even with digital broadcasting, braindance programs were previously too large to transmit effectively, especially over most radio and cellular bandwidths. But the new, high-density fiber optic cable systems will theoretically allow the immense volumes of data required for a real-time braindance to be sent straight into your homes. Routed through a simple braindance box (like the cable boxes of old) and linked by a set of wired trodes, you can enjoy braindance straight off the wire.

So now, along with the venerable *Rambone*, *Chainsaw Mercenary*, people can get *CDC Mutant-Hunter* and *ISA Executive*, brought straight into their frontal lobes. Who needs subliminals when you can make your audience feel elated at arranging the relocation of a thousand indigents, or at offing a cyberevolved fugitive after a violent chase? This is scary stuff, people. DMS' pilot network, WARP Broadcasting, is currently testing in the Atlanta, Ga. area. Which means a good deal of the Southeast can now plug in and allow DMS to do their thinking and feeling for them. If it proves successful, the cable net

THIS IS YOUR BRAIN ON CABLE

The ISA is right on one point: Braindance can act very much like a drug, being both anesthetizing and addictive. To avoid getting really caught up in braindance linking, anyone trying it for more than two hours must make an Average COOL roll, or be mildly hooked on the experience. This leaves you wide open to mental tweaking based on what experiences are pumped into your brain via the 'dance. Further Difficult to Very Difficult COOL rolls may be required to keep from embracing the 'dance's beliefs and emotional reactions. Be careful whom you let into your brain, kiddies.

will expand, spreading its addiction further like an electronic spider biting into our free will and sucking it dry.

Virtuality Is Its Own Reward

Virtuality movies and other interactive forms are just getting started. While they certainly have potential, the ability of the braindance to directly implant emotions as well as sensations may make it the front-runner in the mass brain-washing department. Still, Virtuality plugs into the entire global computer Net, allowing a large segment of the population easy access to info-interfacing that they've never had before. The ISA works very hard to make sure that the portions of the Net most people move through are carefully screened and presented. This is all designed to give the impression of the free flow of information, but the mediacorps are expert at flooding this medium with enough drek to quietly limit its accessibility. (For more on Virtual propaganda, see the upcoming *V-Front*).

Even as embryonic as it is, Virtuality has naturally been co-opted by the advertising community. V-cards in malls sprout six foot, singing tomcats praising the virtues of "Meow Me Now" cat food. Pedestrians are assaulted by automobiles appearing out of nowhere, displaying their opulent attributes with the help of a suitably sexy virtual model. Imagine dealing with dozens of interactive, three-dimensional billboards everyday on the street and you'll start to get the feeling of how mind-blowing a gauntlet this can be. If anything will drive people to take off their trodes, its might be this bombardment of inane VR. Of course one would have thought that bad commercials might have gotten people to turn off their TVs too, so don't get your hopes up.

Since Virtuality creates an interactive experience somewhere between the braindance and the hologram, at a median price, companies are now looking at Virtual chip players and other specialized forms of exploitation. The combination of static field technology and virtual input is beginning to allow people to install virtual constructs inside their own homes at a reasonable cost. Now you can live on the French Riviera, with a view of the Mediterranean, or lounge on the bridge of the Starship *Enterprise J*. It used to be that companies touted plastic as the affordable way to luxury; if you couldn't get the real thing, buy a cheap, disposable copy of it. Now, you can simply install it in your mind. But don't take your trodes off, or you may see your dingy, pathetic life for what it really is.

So Now You Know

The gist of this whole article has been to show how the Council for Economic Prosperity and the new government use the media in all its forms as a weapon to mentally anesthetize and spiritually emasculate the public. It is as a potent a force as BuReloc camps, CorpSec strike teams, and U.S. Army Net Sysops. But the secrets to its success are ignorance and apathy. If you know what they are doing, and care enough to do something about it, then its power is nullified. So think about what you see and hear, turn off your TVs, pull off your trodes, and go out and make some "media" of your own. Who knows? You may find the real world a lot more exciting than you imagined.

MEDIA GROUPS: THE CABAL HOOK-UP

When we think of Media organizations, we tend to think of Net 54, WNS, DMS, Universal Recording, Colonial Pictures, and other media giants. Unfortunately, most of the giants are already co-opted by the ISA, so we must also look to the smaller media activists for any potential help for the CyberRevolution.

WNS World News Service™

World News Service

WNS is a part of the Machine, although a distant and unruly fifth wheel instead of a critical cog. They are not broadcasters, so they are not held to the tightly-structured feel and content that the other ISA-bound broadcasters are. Further, WNS is a truly global organization, and actively avoided taking part in the Second American Revolution. No ISA office of the corporation ever considered breaking with the parent organization. No, WNS is what it has been for years: an information gatherer and disseminator. It's a job they love to do.

For years, WNS has nosed around every wastebasket, cubby hole, and jock strap in the world. They love to dig dirt, and although every corporation hates to have them probing their waste bins, they love to see their competitors squirm under the spotlight. Thus, although they are a corporation, WNS is still, after a fashion, accessible. They are one of the few organizations within the ISA who will listen to you instead of imprison you when you regale them with a tale of ISA or corporate horror. They keep journalistic neutrality even to the point of meeting with cyberevolved children. They have made their fortune by the good graces of their informants, and to this point, they are trustworthy. I've never heard of anyone who spilled to WNS getting in official trouble.

How you contact them: WNS has offices across the planet, and major headquarters in over 30 cities around the world. They are most easily contacted through the Net, where they have clearing houses in almost every city in the world (see the section on Atlantis in *Rache*

Bartmoss' Guide to the Net for one such example). WNS has no security procedures designed to identify informants; they've actually been able to fend off many assaults on the freedom of the press to protect their sources.

What they can do for you: WNS is one of the major news resources for broadcasters around the world, and they have a long-standing history of buying anything that's interesting, even if only to silkworm farmers in Southeast Asia. This gives you a double benefit: One, they pay you for your information, thereby helping fund your activities; and two, your story gets onto the wires. Unfortunately, WNS does not select what actually gets broadcast, but at least the facts are out there, and someone has to see them. Ultimately, WNS is the best environment for minor scandals, because such stories get ratings. Major scandals get the broadcasters unwanted ISA attention, so those stories won't get aired. Most ISA/corporate deadboys will flush any stories they don't want to get out, but they still have to read over them before they flush them. Further, there are still local stations, pirates, public access, and BBS's that will get the news out once it's on the wire. In short, by selling to WNS, you might not get definite results, but you'll scatter the seeds of truth around the globe.



Diverse Media Systems

DMS hasn't changed much since many of you juves were born; they're still the leaders in scummy entertainment, and their *Weekly World Enquirer* tabloid-format show is entering its tenth popular year, especially among the younger set. Bet you watched it yourself. They have many other popular syndicated shows, most of which are either live-action or consumer-generated. The audience-generated shows include several variants on the home V-recording shows, varying from do-your-own comedy to the privacy-destroying peeping-tom show *Neighbors*. Their live-action shows include *Crimehunters* and the ever-popular snuff show *Merc*, and rumor has it they're going to start a new show next season: *Plague*

Response Team. If this show gets on, you can bet it will be horribly slanted against the cyberevolved, and that could do a lot of damage to our credibility. After all, they'll hunt these kids down and shoot them, and justify it by the fact that the kids fought back. Isn't that the way it always goes?

In any event, DMS is the clearing house for shock, schlock, and sleaze. We've included them as an example of the Machine that you might be able to con into doing work for you. They are not reputable in anybody's book, probably not even in the opinion of their die-hard fans, but they are great for getting messages and images out into the brains of a large and excitable group of people. Of course, since DMS is one of the hydra's heads in the ISA, you'll have to be pretty damn tricky to get them to air anything remotely resembling something we'd like.

Net 54 is the same, another ISA toady mediacorp. They even lack the schlock factor, so there's no sense in even approaching them; you'll just get arrested.

How you contact them: DMS is more difficult to reach than other media organizations, mainly because they don't have the same need for information as others do.

What DMS doesn't film on the streets, they make up themselves with their staff of imaginative fiction writers.

To get their attention, you'll have to go through one of their regional headquarters, and either be very persuasive, flash a lot of cash, or have a great story all prepped for their review.

What they can do for you: DMS won't cross ISA. Instead, we consider DMS to be a source of information that might otherwise be restricted. After all, with their daredevil field reporters all over the place, they've got to have archives which deal with incidents we need more information on. Was one of your goboys offed by CorpSec assassins? It might be on one of their *Crimehunters* tapes. Likewise, checking who they roust on the streets can give us good leads on yogangs to approach for anti-ISA activities. You can also lead DMS into filming something you want to access later — an anonymous tip can go a long way.

Radio Free America

Built on the ruins of EIB, TRVTH, and several other networks destroyed by the passage of the News Veracity Act, RFA operates out of Cuba and broadcasts from sever-



al locations using specially-equipped airplanes. These planes fly only within the national airspace of Mexico, Canada, and Cuba, blasting their bandwidth with all sorts of juicy tidbits.

Naturally, the European governments go out of their way to make sure that no ISA planes happen to "stray" nearby and cause one of these flying pirate stations to suffer a "mishap."

Radio Free America is a popular station among those few Americans left who don't swallow the ISA line.

Unfortunately, their signal is often jammed by ISA emplacements, so many can't hear it even if they want to. RFA broadcasts the real unvarnished truth, as they understand it. Since RFA isn't on any of the standard news services, they must rely on listeners and other interested parties, which therefore include a lot of radical hacks. Although RFA does a good job of weeding out the hysterical diatribes and gross slants, some off-base information still sneaks its way through. This is worsened by the fact that Radio Free America maintains a (counter)revolutionary tone to their broadcasts.

How you contact them: RFA is a very paranoid group, because the whole of the ISA superstructure would love to see them burn in Hell. Offhand, the only way I know of to contact them is to go to Cuba and talk with them face to face. There are other ways, I'm sure, because some of the RFA's field reporters call in stories from Midville ISA and broadcast live. That means there are covert operatives in the ISA who know how to call Radio Free America safely. Perhaps the best way to get the attention of these operatives is to build a repeater station tuned to RFA's frequency, shove it in a van, and drive it around bringing the light of non-propagandist broadcasting to a benighted country.

What they can do for you: They can get your news on the air. It won't reach many people around the country, but you can bet that those it reaches are the ones who want to hear. They need the morale booster.

F.L.A.M.E.

FLAME

Hey, here's proof that the CyberRevolution is

not alone! Freedom and Liberty for the American Media (FLAME) is a citizen's group trying to unfetter the ISA

media. They originated in Tennessee but have managed to inspire affiliates around the country, anywhere there are citizens who retain enough clearheadedness to realize how tainted their news and entertainment has become. They work to pass local petitions and movements to open up more public access airtime and reduce the content limitations on broadcasters. They have occasionally managed to get programming aired that would otherwise be censored. For example, a massive sign-up campaign forced the governor of Oregon to allow statewide satellite access to BBC1.

Unfortunately these victories have been largely pyrrhic, as the DSA heavily monitors FLAME's activities. You can bet that if they were on the verge of accomplishing anything truly spectacular, that CorpSec or the Media Council would find some reason to legally discredit them or shut them down outright. As it stands, they are tolerated as an example of the "open-minded" policies of the ISA government, which means that they serve the Machine's propaganda purposes ... for now.

How to contact them: FLAME has offices and Net access across the country, but you can bet that the DSA is listening. Careful personal contact of FLAME representatives may be most effective, but remember: While they support freedom of speech, there is no guarantee that the person you deal with is ready to deal with the CyberEvolved or the CyberRevolution. Be cautious about what you reveal.

What they can do for you: It probably comes down to what you can do for them. They are getting pretty proficient at public campaigns, both in terms of boycotts and viewer write-ins. Your best bet might be to turn them on to an issue, quietly help them discover the most desirable resolution, then cover their backs against DSA intervention.

A PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Amazingly enough, some public access programming has remained to this day. Some claim it's because the mediacorps want to give aspiring young producers a forum, and some think it's because the American will to express oneself can't be repressed. The most likely explanation I've heard, though, is that it gives anti-ISA rebels a small outlet through which they can voice their opinion — and expose

themselves to the view and concurrent wrath of the authorities.

How you contact them: Every major city has public access programming, which you can arrange for through the local television stations. But you have to go through the station bureaucracy to get on the access list, which can be months long.

What they can do for you: They give you the (limited) opportunity to maybe broadcast for yourself. Most stations prerecord all such segments for later transmission, which means that they can censor your content into putty. If you take a flagrant anti-ISA stance, you may not recognize what actually gets broadcast. If you're lucky enough to get a live slot, you might be able to put out a (brief) message before getting cut off. You'd better be ready to cut and run though — and use a cover name when arranging for broadcast time. Alternatively, you could bury code phrases into the script for an otherwise nondescript show, to coordinate news and activities among yogangs across the city. Cutting satire is another option, though too much will get you in trouble as surely as burning the ISA flag. In all, your imagination is the only limit. But dancing in the mouth of the dragon is part of the fun, no?

Others

There are other organizations around; some will help you, some will harm you. Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) is simply an arm of the ISA, geared to making sure their version of the news is the only one which gets out. They were one of the citizen groups which helped see the passage of the News Veracity Act of 2025. Unfortunately, it's hard to fight sweet-sounding words like "accountability" and "verification", either legally or in the hearts and minds of the public. I mean, how can you feasibly argue that the media should be allowed to be wrong?

And hey, let's not forget that juvegangs can be an asset as well. Look at yourselves, right? The Vidiots are information-retrieval specialists, and information is half the battle with any media activity. They're easy to contact; go through the Net to one of their BBS's, or else ask them in homeroom at school. They can get you almost any information you want, and they know the Code. The Rads' poli-work also cues them into a lot of stuff that the ISA would rather not have widely known. Treat them right, and they'll do you better than you thought possible.

PRIME TIME: FIGHTING ON THE MEDIAFRONT



The actions occurring on the Media front are widely varied, and many are quite subtle. Some of these fights are not obvious to the American public, because to make them public would strip them of their effects; it's much harder to convince people when they know you're trying to. With media actions, remember it's better to give the public the information and let them draw their own conclusions, than it is to give them the conclusion right up front.

By the way, you're not alone out there. We're working on launching an Eden Cabal broadcast satellite. We can't say much at the moment, but stay tuned ...

SKI PATROLLING

Bismarck, ND

For those of you who've studied your history, World War II was just getting under way 87 years ago. During those days, Russia (at that time called the Soviet Union) invad-

ed Finland. The Finns, though outnumbered, came up with many innovative ways to fight back. One of the favorites was to send a ski patrol of a dozen people to slip between two Russian battalions at night and fire in both directions. Done properly, the Russian battalions would turn on each other, and might fight all night — and the nights are awfully long up north.

This tactic has returned with a vengeance today, and is perhaps our most effective weapon against the many-headed hydra of the ISA. In the Incorporated State of North Dakota, the kids have been running this tactic for a few years with notable success. In essence, they play the corporations running the state against each other by selective dissemination of rumors, information, and unrelated facts.

One recent situation involved the attempted rape of a teenage girl. Her father happened to work for Petrochem in their contracts department, which was then involved in negotiations with Arcadiex for some deal or other. It turns

out her would-be rapist was from Arcadiex. Broadcasting this fact outraged the girl's father and soured the negotiations team. Then the Bismarck Vidiots dug out the fact that the Arcadiex guy had worked for New East Asia Agricultural, before being traded to Arcadiex. They publicly speculated that he might have been a plant expressly placed to get Arcadiex and Petrochem feuding. This resulted in all three corporations becoming cold and distant. Although relations are slowly being restored, there are many company wage slaves who no longer trust their friendly competitors, and the power structure in North Dakota is beginning to unravel slightly under the pressures of this and other incidents. A few more wedges in the cracks, and who knows what might happen?

The Bad Guys: Petrochem, Arcadiex, and New East Asia Agricultural are the three corporations in control of North Dakota, and, with the help of the local Vidiots, they may be getting tired of the close association. Any of these two can be turned against the third, and doing so weakens the whole triad. Of course, being megacorporations, they can field some nasty weapons, equipment, and personnel on you if they clue in on your tactics. In addition, they have the backing of their puppet state courts.

The Good Guys: The Silos are the Vidiot yogang most in the face of the corps. They have partitioned their gang into three "cover" gangs, each of which has allowed itself to be "co-opted" by one of the three corporations. Each of the three pretends to be very loyal, and with corporate backing, they are able to gather lots of interesting information. Naturally, they all share all their information and plan its dissemination for maximum effect. This, combined with a little "advertising" of the parent corps, leads to the infighting we all know and love.

THE SHOTGUN APPROACH Baton Rouge, LA

In Baton Rouge, the local kids are taking advantage of the loose laws to barrage the average citizen with CyberRevolution propaganda, if you can call the truth propaganda. Basically, they've created a variety of posters covering all sorts of current events, and they plaster them everywhere. With documentation, photographs, and Virtuality imaging, they seek to change the public perception of certain local events for which the ISA-controlled media has twisted the implications and public opinion.

Many people are conditioned to disapprove of vandalism, but the persistence and professional quality of these bills has begun to catch some attention. People are even beginning to talk on the BBS's about the counter-media posters, and they're comparing the official line with that of the local yogangers. Not many are convinced yet, but at least they're questioning.

The Shotgun Approach is not a particularly dangerous one; all it requires is a brush, some glue, and a bunch of posters. If you're using Virtuality billing, a good slingshot and some very tacky glue is all you need to get your V-cards up. While it's against the law to post bills wherever you like, such vandalism is not usually more than a misdemeanor, but products with treasonous content (and CyberRevolution material usually gets dropped into that category) can bring the authorities down on you hard. Careful phrasing of content has prevented the Baton Rouge kids from getting in too deep, but sooner or later, some judge may decide that they've crossed the line and are now subject to felony (perhaps even Priority 3) charges.

Just as an aside, we've heard there's a group of Rads and Taggers (see page 35) in St. Louis doing what they call "T-squaring", so-named after Tiananmen Square. Their approach is similar to this, except instead of posting bills and V-cards, they use V-cards to rebroadcast performance art to protest recent events. It's live and very definitely in-your-face entertainment.

The Bad Guys: Even though the Machine is the enemy, the people these kids are fighting are the police, because it is the police who try to stop their attempts at graffiti. The police are why the locals kids never poster the same spot more than twice in a row, and this lack of consistency in posterage impedes the development of public interest. After all, if the kids could consistently hit the mass transit platforms, the public would always have something to read before shuttling off to work ...

The Good Guys: The Poster Kids are a Tagger yogang mainly involved in the production of these bills, although MallBrats, Vidiots, and BeaverBrats support them in acquiring materials, reproducing the posters, and plastering them in imaginative places, respectively. Right now, they're trying to recruit some BoardPunks to poster places on the fly, including slapping V-cards on the outside of tenth-floor corporate lounges to broadcast their images inside. The Poster Kids are a good source of how-to information if you want to set up a similar campaign in your town.

THE ELECTRONIC TOWN HALL

Richmond, VA

Like many other major cities across the country, Richmond holds live-feed town meetings "to gauge the wants and desires of the populace and make the ISA a better place for all." To be sure, the studio audience is anything but a random sampling, and all calls are carefully screened for acceptable questions and political leanings. But there are still ways in.

A combination of Looker (see pg. 32) and Facer gangs are currently working the Richmond area. The Facers dress themselves up as older citizens and role-play the parts of concerned, intelligent supporters of the ISA. Some of them are so good at it that it frightens us to hear them spout the official line with such vehemence. Using these disguises, they infiltrate the meetings and ask difficult pointed questions of the political guests. The Lookers simply show up as themselves; their recognizable faces combined with their general attractiveness usually guarantee them a seat (having people like that at the meetings helps boost the ratings). Once in, the Lookers usually get a fair amount of airtime to talk. (Hey, we know it's not fair, but that's showbiz!) While time-delay censorship can still cut off a good tirade, these kids get to use the Machine's own show to ask some hard questions. Just be prepared to make a quick exit if things get too — real.

The Bad Guys: The state governments and regional boards are the targets, and they can summon private security guards to handle anyone who's too disruptive. Nevertheless, given the public, live format, harsh reactions are uncommon ... until the cameras stop rolling.

The Good Guys: The Cameos (Facers) and the Thoroughbreds (Lookers) are two of the Richmond gangs using this tactic. Others around the country are catching on, however. Now, you can never be sure if the old woman protesting the corporate school policy is a parent or one of the students affected by the rule. Keep 'em guessing, guys.

SUB HUNTING

Los Angeles, CA

One of the most insidious tools of the ISA is subliminal messaging, and attacking these demons is an effective ploy. Right now, the largest part of the battle is learning to reveal these things for what they are. The Sharks Vidiot gang and KTAR, a local pirate station, are trying to keep the edge on the ISA. At this time, they're develop-

ment a digital software program which, when piggy-backed over a DMS broadcast, flags the subliminals with images of little green men. These remain onscreen long enough to illuminate the sublims and totally destroy any effect the broadcast may have carried.

This has given us a temporary advantage, but the initiative in this struggle has seesawed back and forth several times.

It's only a matter of time before DMS cracks the software and manages to negate the effect. That will simply mean a delay until a new "sub hunter" can be devised. At the same time, DSA ops are trying to locate KTAR's transmitters and shut the whole operation down, with a 5.56mm off-switch.

But other groups can mimic these tactics, spreading the effect. The Sharks are more than willing to share their software in return for taking some of the heat off them.

The Bad Guys: The Media Council and the DSA are the major ISA players in this drama. Net54 and DMS, as major mediacorps in the ISA fold, tend to be the major battleground over which this struggle is fought.

The Good Guys: The Sharks and their Tinkertot allies are the prime movers, although some Rads have been very important in making the Sharks' techniques public knowledge. There is room for research into new subliminal technologies, development of new technology, reproduction and distribution of devices, and the dissemination of this software into the hands of the public.

BLIPVERTIZING

Fort Worth, TX

Sad to say, but we're losing in some places. One of them is in attitude. Down in Texas, a group of Vidiots, Tinkertots, and Goldenkids have taken it upon themselves to twist the minds of the public by creating and inserting their own subliminals into broadcasts. We find this arrogant, disrespectful, and even dangerous. The CyberRevolution is founded on the idea that all individuals have the right to make their own choices, and using subliminals goes counter to that. Remember kids, the more you act like the Machine, the more you become the Machine.

The Bad Guys: From here, it looks like the ISA and the yogangs are both the bad guys in this situation.

The Good Guys: The only decent folks here are those who haven't gotten their hands dirty: the public. Stand up for them.

COMMUNICATIONS NEWTECH FOR THE CYBERGENERATION



▼ By Cameron Ride, special to the Revolutionary Journal.
BBS address: Mystic.Com/Insert [PASSWORD] ▼▼▼

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS MARCONI ... and Marconi begat wireless communication, and wireless communication begat broadcasting, and broadcasting brought forth two children, television and radio, and the further scions of electronic communication, and their progeny were upon the face of the world, and screwed it up righteously.

THE POWERS THAT BE LOOKED UPON THE WORLD ... and they saw that broadcasting was not enough, and they said "let there be the semiconductor", and the semiconductor begat the microcomputer, and the computers were in the hands of the many, and they were upon the face of the world, and screwed it up righteously.

AND LO, THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY WAS UPON THE WORLD ... and the high priests of two great churches said "let our idols be joined," and electronic communications and the microcomputer became one, and the power was distributed among all the people of the land, and the people cast up their eyes and blessings rained down from Redmond and Cupertino and Tokyo, and the high priests looked upon what they had wrought and said:

"Now, that's a party!"

From the *Vidiot Manifesto*, distributed on the Net April 30, 2024, the 85th anniversary of the first public demonstration of television, at the 1939 World's Fair. Author anonymous.

It's always the same old story: I could change the world, if only I could reach somebody. Let's delicately ignore the outrageous arrogance behind that statement and take a look at some of the

cold, hard facts. All the great prophets wandered the face of the Earth for years, proselytizing to small groups and individuals, and persuading others to help them spread their messages. Some say that the personal approach has no competition, but exposing yourself directly to the audience has some disadvantages. Jesus was nailed to a tree for his troubles. With big nails. It could happen to you too, if someone doesn't agree with your no doubt carefully articulated opinion. Back when we had a constitution there was an amendment (ever wonder why it had to be amended?) guaranteeing the right to free expression. That's reassuring in court, but a quick survey of the histories of Dr. Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, John Kennedy, Rajiv Gandhi, and Tesla Johansen shows how effective it is in real life. Amendments and free speech laws sound great, but hold one in front of a hail of bullets and bomb fragments and whaddaya-know! It's just a friggin' piece of paper! Nobody ever won a medal for having fragments of the Constitution picked out of their sucking chest wounds by a trauma team. We'll bury your martyred ass with a photocopy of the edict of your choice. Just make sure you specify in advance which one you want.

Well, the leaders and elocuters of the modern age learned in a hurry that the way to make a controversial statement without exposing yourself to maniacs with pipe bombs was to use the mass media. For a long time that meant newspapers. Now raise your hand if you regularly read beyond the headlines, funnies and sports page of a printed or electronic newspaper.

I thought so.

Later on, radio and television became the vogue. Now raise your hand if you regularly spoon vid or listen to the radio.

That's more like it.

Eventually, the television became the major tool for political proselytizing and evangelism. Entire political careers were forged and lost on television image and spin control. You could almost consider some of these virtual political careers. Log on to your On Line Information Service (OLIS) and look up a guy named Reagan. There was still a fundamental problem, however; control of the medium remained in the hands of the few. Access was precious, and obtaining it took power, or money (is there really a difference?).

But then, for all too brief a time, that changed.

Paradigm Shift

We trace the beginnings of the change in media to the 1980's and early 1990's, almost forty years ago. That's when two very different phenomena began to sweep through the world of electronic communication. On a corporate level, oligopolistic control of major media sources began to increase. Control of radio and television stations (not to mention newspapers, movie studios, recording labels, publishers, advertising companies, etc.) con-

centrated as the government relaxed regulations on media ownership. This fostered suspicion among the media literate, who considered the centralization of such potent power very ominous. With the government, itself media controlled and dependent, promising an "information superhighway" that would import 500 interactive channels into each living room television, optimists and cynics battled over the eventual result. Optimists foretold of a glittering web that would allow The People access to information from around the world. The reality, as is always the case, was somewhat less lustrous. Early incarnations of the information superhighway earned the derisive nickname entertainment superhighway, and no one took it seriously as a force for change in the world. Most people didn't want to interact with their media; they wanted to passively absorb it, like human sponges soaking indiscriminately in some foul brew. Literati stayed on the non-commercial computer net, which offered more of what they expected. For a while.

While monopolies were consolidating broadcasting and print media power into the progenitors of today's DMS and Net54, technology was making the broadcasting equipment more and more accessible to everyday people. By the mid-nineties an investment of a few thousand dollars bought you an excellent video camera, and a computer-based on-line editing system that you could set up on one desk in your bedroom. Similarly compact systems for recording and producing professional audio were also available. In early days, before the Collapse, these systems were the purview of hobbyists and academics, but, oh the power they hinted at! The only thing missing at the time was an easy way to distribute your creations. Those darned mediacorps sure weren't going to donate a whole lot of free broadcast or cable space no matter how many channels were available. Strictly pay-to-play.

The United States Collapse of 1996 changed everything. The grip of major political and commercial powers in the United States fractured, and then broke. Although mediacorps would reconsolidate after the breakup, with more violence and savagery than ever, it took years to regain the control they had once had. Technology saw to that. Soon after the Collapse came the second generation of personal media equipment: tools smaller and more powerful than anything yet imagined. In a way, the collapse of the U.S. helped to bring about the accessibility of this equipment. Much of it had been developed in Japan, and released only selectively in the U.S. With America fragmented and internationally paralyzed, Japanese corps relaxed and cut local deals with states and territories, and began exporting cutting edge technology that had been withheld. It took until 2010, almost 15 years, for post-collapse U.S. microtech companies to catch up.

The Cyberpunks were the first to use the second generation of personal media technology as anything other than a hobby. In their wars against the corporations, the government, and each other they found new, innovative, and deadly ways to use sub-

miniature and cybernetic level media equipment. With the development of the cyberdeck, the Net had come into its own as a virtual/visual medium, rather than a textual one. In a chaotic and jumbled society, the Rockerboys and Medias learned to depend on their own resources and technology. It was the golden age of the new media.

Of course, as the first time out of the barn, it failed.

The State of the Media

That brief, bright summer of media freedom crashed headlong into autumn as the ISA formed in 2023. As the Council for Economic Prosperity developed its stranglehold on the executive and legislative branches, so too did its talons reach out onto the airwaves. No longer would the police turn a blind eye on pirate stations, personal transmitters, or totally raw video artists. No, IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST, cable and the airwaves would now be swept clean of "rogue" or irresponsible programming. Vans with radio direction finders and CropSec logos patrolled neighborhoods; legitimate small stations either toed the party line or found their licenses revoked and their equipment impounded. The men in black could appear anywhere, at any time, and take anyone away, for any reason ... So while the level of personal media technology rose almost exponentially, so did the risks of using it.

But this rigid order may be fatally wounded by this Carbon Plague which has come from God knows where. A new order, chosen by someone, or something, is rising from the ashes. The Cyberevolved are young, but they have a destiny in a world more ripe for change than ever before. There are new niches and new paths for electronic media that exploit the fusion of man and machine more than ever. Those of us from the old world can only watch in awe as something beyond our experience sweeps us aside for a new generation.

But it ain't gonna happen without teevee!

THE CUTTING EDGE

These are the fundamental technologies that have revolutionized many computer-based systems in the last decade, with profound effects on the media.

Optical Chips: The synthetic diamond optical microprocessor, developed in the 'teens, finally married the microchip with state-of-the-art hyperplexing fiber optic lines. Now digital data carried as light impulses can be processed as light impulses, without having to be transduced back and forth between optical signal and electrical signal, eliminating time and error. Photo-reactive molecules and chains grown on the new generation of diamond chips can be "programmed" to respond, not respond, or respond differently to the different wavelengths of light to allow hyperplexing: the discriminate and independent processing of

A BIT OF THE BASICS

There are five primary broadcast methods currently in vogue:

Direct Cable: The primary mode of television broadcasting, this involves a central station, usually with a sat-dish, and a network of fiber-optic cables linking all the subscribing households. Satellite transmissions are picked up and unscrambled by the station and routed directly via the hardlink to TVs throughout the network. This allows for interactive TV as well as any sort of Digital or HDTV broadcast.

DSB (Direct Satellite Broadcast): This technique has broadcasters beaming transmissions up to relay satellites and the audience accessing via their own satellite dishes. While expensive to establish, this method allows almost unlimited global broadcasts. Which means the ISA has naturally put a moratorium on private satellite reception equipment. Cellular networks (see below) are stepchildren of this technology, but are currently the expensive playthings of the corporate elite.

VHF/UHF TV: This was the pioneer TV transmission mode using FM radio bands (see "Broadcast Blues", pg. 24 for more). Limited in range and power, these bands are now largely reserved for local stations and private purposes. And, although they reach a smaller audience, they also happen to be perfect for modern video pirates.

FM/AM Radio: These are by far the oldest modes of broadcast communication and are still the staples of audio broadcasting. AM (Amplitude Modulated) broadcasts can reach around the globe by bouncing off of the ionosphere, but, despite many improvements, tend to lack high audio quality. FM (Frequency Modulated) broadcasts are far shorter in range (usually within a 50-100 mile radius), but generally have greater fidelity. Both are still in common use.

Shortwave Radio: Like AM radio, this form of radio transmission has tremendous range but lamentable quality. Once the purview of ham radio hobbyists and emergency announcements, the EEC now uses shortwave to send "Voice of Freedom" broadcasts behind the "electronic curtain" that the ISA has erected around itself.

many signals at the same time by using different light wavelengths. The processing ability of these systems is currently measured in teraflops: trillions of calculations per second. High end chips can hyperplex up to 10,000 signals, devoting 1 trillion instructions per second (one teraflop) to each signal, with the data lightstream wavelengths separated by as little as .5 angstroms. Although a super-high end model like this might be 1cm square, sub-miniature models are now controlling microscopic nanotech, with datastreams carried over molecular-sized optical strands. Low power requirements make optical chips

ideal for cybernetic, portable, and sub-miniature applications. O-chips are delicate and fickle, and somewhat pricey, but they are becoming more and more common in basic equipment as manufacturing prices drop and fault-tolerance rises. Within a couple of years, they will be the standard.

No-fault Fuzzy Analog Replication: NOFAR is a data-compression protocol developed to take advantage of super-fast optical processing and transmission systems. It is also referred to as "triple-F", for Fast, Fuzzy, and Faultless. Compression allows large blocks of data to be stripped down to their essential information, making them faster to process and store. It is essential when dealing with the giant amounts of information that make up high definition audio and video signals. NOFAR is built into most current optical systems and into high-definition broadcast/receiving systems. Look for the FFF logo on your stereo receiver. If you have new digital/audio transmitting cyberware, it's probably NOFAR compatible as well.

Hybrid Non-volatile RAM: Storing and manipulating audio and video information takes a huge amount of memory. For years, you needed clumsy storage media such as tape, read/write CDs, and hard disks in order to ensure information quality. Retrieval could be slow, and editing and manipulation difficult. The development of super-high density, high speed RAM chips helped to change the way in which a/v information was stored. The current generation of fast chips are completely optical and NOFAR compatible, and they use a hybrid electronic RAM

and bio-molecular storage system that makes recorded data non-volatile. This means that you can store your a/v information as RAM, even if your unit loses power. This is true RAM, which can be manipulated and accessed in as little as 15ms. These chips are now replacing disk and tape systems in audio and video recording, and are also finding their way into new cyberware. On old systems you could only record up to 20 minutes of high definition video on a cyberoptic system that took two of a standard cyberoptic's four expansion slots. Now you can get two hours of a/v in one slot. Standard module sizes are 1-128 gigabytes. The modules range in size from single chips 1mm square to sandwiched arrays of 8 chips in a cube 3cm on a side. It all depends on how durable you want your system. HRAM video slugs used by field reporters are often large because they contain multiple modules imbedded in super-durable gels.



Video Equipment

Smaller equipment at higher resolution: That was the credo, driven largely by the need for portability. The modern Flatcam system is the ultimate portable video recording device. Flatcams have reduced video cameras to the level that audio bugs acquired long ago, but with audio and video fidelity undreamed of previously. The latest portable systems are flat chips about 8mm on a side (64 mm²), and 1.5mm thick. (There are reports of military models under 2mm diagonal, but they are not widely available). The chip is actually a sandwiched imaging system which includes a magnetic oil-based fluid lens under a clear membrane, a high-definition charge-coupled device (imaging chip), a micro transmitter or mini storage HRAM chip, an optical processor, and a membrane battery. Transmission ranges are low, typically 100 meters or less. Storage times are also low, ranging from 20 minutes to 4 hours for high end models.

Flatcams can have up to a 150° wide angle field of view, and 100x magnification zoom. This is all accomplished digitally, with no moving parts. The camera always sees 150°; you simply tell it which part of the picture you want transmitted through a remote control. The Flatcams use enhancement and digital processing modes which allow operation in extremely poor light conditions. Furthermore, systems are available which see infrared, ultraviolet, or broad-spectrum information encompassing everything from infrared through the visible range and into ultraviolet. Obviously, this much power gets expensive, and cuts down

on battery life and storage time. There are even models which you can stick to the back side of a one-layer wall that will see thermal images through the wall. Sub-miniature microphone elements provide stereo audio as a standard accessory on most Flatcams. Various mounting systems are available, including suction, adhesive on the back, adhesive on the lens (for mounting facing in through windows), hardmount, or nothing at all.

Flatcams are also built into other systems. When driven by external power and computers they can be very small and powerful almost beyond description (but we'll try). They are used in CDS systems (see sidebar), medical tools, news-gathering cameras, surveillance systems, vehicles and so forth. An externally driven Flatcam can be as small as .1mm, connected to its control unit by a hair-thin wire. They can even be translucent, acting as filters (they remove and scan only part of the light). A

SO WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN TO MY CHARACTERS?

All of this techno-jargon is fun, but you might be asking yourself how it relates to your *Cybergeneration* character, or even your *Cyberpunk* character. Check the Sidebars for explanations of how this technology affects your characters' equipment in game terms.

JARGON

Hyperplexing: Shorthand for super-multiplexing. Multiplexing is carrying several signals on one channel, frequency, or cable.

It's what allows a fiber-optic system to carry 500 television channels, and a single fiber-optic strand to carry thousands of digitized phone calls. Hyperplexing is used to describe third generation technology which can handle tens of thousands, and, in some cases, millions of signals at once.

Megaflops/Gigaflops/Teraflops: Million/billion/trillion Floating Point Operations per Second. A measure of how many calculations a computer or chip can execute in a second, and a measure of the overall speed of a processor. For example: 1990's supercomputers (Cray Y-MP, Thinking Machines CM-2) operated in the 1-30 gigaflop range.

RAM: Random access memory. Standard computer memory that is volatile: It loses all information when power is cut off.

OPTICAL SYSTEMS

Systems designed around optical chips are twice as expensive as non-optical systems. They also add +1 to skill checks made using that piece of equipment. Successful actions will execute in one third the time that they would on non-optical systems.

Optical circuits are available only in computer systems (SPD +1), cellular data systems (see below), and audio/visual and information processing cyberware. They are not available in weapons or cyberlimbs. Optical circuits are also fragile, and have a 25% chance of breaking if the equipment is subjected to rough treatment (being dropped, hit, etc.) and a 50% chance of breaking if exposed to extremely rough conditions (combat). Referees, use your discretion. For rough times, old-fashioned silicon is better.

NOFAR COMPRESSION

All audio, video and digital information broadcasting, transmitting, and recording equipment comes in old fashioned versions, and new NOFAR versions. This means you can get NOFAR cellular data systems, computers, audio/video cyberware, and audio/video gear. There are no NOFAR cyberdecks as yet. NOFAR is not used in weapons or cyberlimbs. NOFAR compatible units cost twice as much as basic units, but they add +1 to any skill check made using that equipment.

THE DYNAMIC DUO

NOFAR and O-chip systems are designed to work together in a seamless suite. If all of the equipment hooked up in a multiple unit system is both O-chip and NOFAR compatible, the bonus is +3 total. That's +1 for O-chips, +1 for NOFAR, and another +1 bonus for the compatibility of the system.

What is a multiple unit system?

Two discrete machines hooked together to accomplish some purpose. Examples of different kinds of units that can work together in a media situation:

- Audio/visual recording systems, such as cameras.
- A/V storage and processing systems, such as chip recorders, mixers, and video switchers.
- A/V compatible computers such as cellular data systems, and desktop systems.
 - Transmitters
 - A/V cyberware

The most common example in practical use will probably be cyberware hooked to other equipment. **NOTE:** Bonuses for any one kind of advantage are not additive!

Examples: If you have an O-chip cybereye hooked to an O-chip computer, and you are attempting some real time processing, the O-chip bonus is only +1. If, however, you have a NOFAR computer hooked to your O-chip cybereye, you get +2: that's +1 for the O-chips, and +1 for NOFAR. If the eye and the computer were both O-chipped and NOFAR, you would get +3 after the compatibility bonus.

COST

This may seem like a lot of advantages, but you are talking some serious cash outlay here. Each advantage (NOFAR, O-chip) is double the cost of a basic unit. Multiple advantages each add the cost of the basic unit again. Of course, some units, such as cellular data systems, are already NOFAR and O-chip compatible, but they are expensive to begin with. Oh, did we mention that the ISA has declared this sort of thing "restricted tech"? You've got to get a permit to buy any of these through legitimate channels. Possession without a proper permit may result in surgical removal of the item ... with a ripper.

Example: A basic cybereye is 500eb. A NOFAR or O-chip cybereye is 1000eb (2x the base cost). A cybereye with both NOFAR and O-chip technology is 1500eb (3x the base cost). Plus 500eb for a permit (assuming it could be obtained). Ouch. Any old Guerrilla is going to have to dig pretty deep into his hidden accounts to come up with that kind of Euro.

common use of the translucent systems is in camera-glasses. These appear to be sunglasses, but the lenses are Flatcam elements, with the batteries and processors mounted in the frames. Digital image stabilization, combined with a wide field of view, allows the wearer to concentrate on an area even with some head or body movement. Who needs cyberoptics? (Of course, Flatcams can be controlled cyberoptically.)

Video Manipulation

With modern video capture and storage systems came the need for modern video processing. Video images can now be controlled either by using software mounted on a regular computer or CDS, or by a dedicated video control unit. Video processing is intuitive now, almost like painting. Colors and images can be re-assigned or moved with a touch; computers can fill in missing background either by extrapolation, or by using stored image data. New information can be added or texture-mapped into or onto existing images quickly and perfectly.

How good are these systems? If you walked around a room with a Flatcam (or a digital stillcam) and got photographs of most of the interior, and then got video of Senator Pringle T. Fictional walking around Washington, D.C. (assuming he'd get out of the armored limo), you could re-map the senator into the video of the room, and tell the computer to make him walk around the room, making any movements, gestures, or expressions you required. Good software will even duplicate his style of motion based on the information available. It will also add reflections and shadows based on the light sources in the room, and random, fuzzy-logic generated events such as hair moving. The Senator can also be made to interact with objects in the room: picking up a vase, for instance. As if that wasn't enough, you will be able to re-orient your point of view in the 3-D space of the room in real time, even while the subjects are moving. If you ask to see an area not captured by the original cameras then the computer will fill in the details. With enough of the Senator's voice recordings to work from, the computer will even be able to synthesize perfect speech, right down to the flaws. These are not giant systems and can be built into a portable CDS! Take 'em anywhere!

Many video jox keep reference chips and discs that have digitized 3-D video models of "events", such as bullets striking bodies, water splashing, glass breaking, and so on. These events can be reconfigured to fit specific situations far more easily than the events can be created from scratch. Slapping together a computer-generated event from separate sources is called "foleying", after a twentieth century film-making technique where the sound effects tracks from movies were wholly created in the studio.

This is scary. With a good computer, good cameras, and a good software package, you can create completely fictional video — situations that never existed — and only an expert will be able to spot it. The technique is already making actors obsolete. It also

JARGON

CDS: Cellular Data System: A super sophisticated notebook computer with a full sized screen and keyboard and an integral cellular send/receive system. CDS systems can do anything desktop systems can do, with rare exceptions. See below and "Media Tools", pg. 29.

Texture Mapping: Computer animation technique that allows you to wrap a digitized image such as a photograph around a wire-frame or polygonal computer-animation skeleton. It creates very realistic images. In 2027 it allows wholesale replacement of the surface texture or appearance of any computer-defined object in an image.

FOLEYING SKILL CHECKS

These are skill checks for doing work that is undetectable, or detectable only by an expert beating the number by which the modification was successful. Foleyng requires appropriate hardware and software. Use *Programming*, *Commo*, or appropriate "Expert..." skill. Equipment bonuses can be applied.

To make minor changes in an image, sound, or video:
Difficulty 15.

To make major or wholesale changes in a sound, image, or video: Difficulty 20.

To create a wholly artificial image, sound, or video from disparate elements: 25.

To seamlessly manipulate real-time sounds or video on the fly: 30.

means that video (and audio) no longer makes useful evidence of anything any more. It can be completely engineered. Some fakes are too good even for most experts to spot, so all video must be regarded as suspect in sensitive situations, especially when dealing with people who have the resources to get the equipment. And that's not difficult: A computer video suite capable of doing everything I've just described now runs in at less than 10,000eb.

Just how real was the news you saw last night?

Radio and Music

You can still find good, old fashioned radio on the FM. And the media corps are doing everything they can to blow the crap out of the people responsible (see "Broadcast Blues", pg. 24). With direct digital satellite download and land line systems handling most of the on-demand music and audio programming, the FM band has become the province of mediacorp controlled national network shows. Fortunately, there are still a few hardy souls out there braving corporate wrath by firing up their pirate FM and AM stereo transmitters and programming street bands, vocal

JARGON

Digital Radio Broadcasting: Developed in the mid 1990's, digital radio replaced old-fashioned analog broadcasting in the early 21st century. It allowed higher fidelity, greater transmission range, and data subcarriers which could display text (originally traffic, weather, or song information) on your radio's screen at the same time as the music was playing.

Cellular: Strictly speaking, the term "cellular" is obsolete in 2027, since modern satellite communications webs allow personal communication from anywhere in the world, not just local microwave cells. It has become a general use term for any personal, mobile communications system, however. (Ex: Cellular cyberdecks, etc.)

edgerunners, and screaming revolutionaries. The equipment for stereo FM/AM digital (88.2 megahertz international standard sampling rate; twice what old fashioned CDs were capable of) or analog broadcasting is fairly cheap and portable. It's a good thing, too, because the ISA's response to a pirate signal over-modulating on top of a corporate one usually involves heavy weapons. The key defenses against being caught involve either moving your transmitter around all of the time, or moving your source and relaying it to your fixed transmitter (this allows a larger transmitter with a stronger signal, but gets expensive, because you have to keep on replacing equipment tracked and destroyed by CorpSec).

There is a guy named Yube Revox, an old Edgerunner out of Detroit, who has the ultimate pirate system. He broadcasts a 100 watt digital signal from his own body. He has the songs loaded into HRAM chips plugged into his sockets, and subvocalizes his announcements into a cybernetic chest mike. The whole thing broadcasts through a transmitter in his cyberleg, with all of the transmission gear disguised as power cells and EMP shielding. He once did a two hour show from the restaurant on top of the Net54 tower in Detroit. I have a signed chip of that. It's worth enough to buy a small country. He also likes to set up confrontations with corporate personnel and broadcast them live. I also have a recording of him telling the Arasaka station chief in public exactly how he broke into the local Arasaka computer and pillaged their data files. God knows how he got away with his life, but it's authentic. All of Revox's stuff is. Everyone in Detroit records his shows now because they know that the recording of when he finally gets killed will probably be worth more than the 100,000eb bounty on his head.

Audio, like video, has become infinitely malleable with increased computer power. With a few seconds of recorded voice to work from, a good operator using a computer linked to a digital wave form synthesizer can make that voice appear to say anything. I heard a tape recently of the late Richard Nixon (he was president about fifty years ago; ask your grandparents) singing the soul classic "Respect", originally by Aretha Franklin

(a contemporary of his). The tape took the operator all of about five minutes to make. He used digitized recordings of the song and of a Nixon political speech, and simply told the computer to take Nixon's voice wave form and map it over Aretha's singing.

Then he deleted the Aretha component, except for one verse where they sing duet. I still have a copy. I take it around to convalescent homes and get big laughs. You should see the old timers' faces light up!

One down side to the audio systems is that they've taken the personality out of corporate music. Corp-label producers think that the public won't buy anything that isn't 100% flawless, so they use real time systems to make sure that everything is in time (or calculatedly out of time) and that every note is perfect. By the time you listen to a recorded music chip, the music on it is 80% reconstructed. No bull. Live corporate music is often 50-60% reconstructed in real time. Even classic albums have been re-engineered. Play your father the new PolyClassix re-engineered version of the Beatles' "Abbey Road" or Nine Inch Nails' "Pretty Little Hate Machine" (off of the boxed 30 year retrospective issued in 2020) and watch him throw up. Hard-core types like Blood and Ice, Yube Revox, and other street bands are going retro, and putting out records and concerts "guaranteed authentic." No retouching. All the imperfections, all the humanity. You can hear the difference.

When these audio capabilities are combined with the video technology I've already covered, and the storage and capture systems that take full advantage of modern technology, the possibilities are completely limitless. I ask you again: Just how real was the news you heard last night?

VIDEO, THE NEXT STEP

Video has moved beyond television, and even beyond the 500 channel interactive system first envisioned by the advocates of the original "information superhighway." There are hundreds of channels available in any home, most of them brought in over fiber-optic land lines. Traditional broadcast of television is almost obsolete in the United States, Japan, and other industrialized nations. The spectrum space which used to be used for television broadcast is now devoted almost entirely to personal and corporate cellular, private, and government/police communication systems (see "Broadcast Blues", pg.24). High definition television signals can still be picked up over the air, but developments in ultra high-speed cellular transmission (the technology that made cellular cyberdecks possible), NOFAR data compression, and portable satellite reception have made picking up television broadcasts both personal and interactive. The new wave of cellular TV has just arrived.

Now, if you are at work, or someplace without a cyberoptic vid-feed, and you want to watch the Night City Rangers football team, you can bring your Cellular Data System (CDS, see sidebar, pg. 20) with you, call down the television schedule through

the cel-modem, and enter the code for the football game. Your unit will call back channel 5 at game time and link into the cellular transmission of the game, and you'll be able to watch it no matter where you are (as long as you are in your cellular service area, which can be worldwide). You can even order the event delayed, if you want. The two-way communication of a cellular system allows you to interact with the event by selecting the camera view you want, language of commenting, etc. Of course, you have to pay your cellular access bill every month, including the surcharge for video access, and sometimes the events are on a pay-per-view basis. There is a growing black market in cellular access codes. Keep yours a secret.

The ability to transmit full-motion, high-definition video over cellular lines also makes video calling and mobile video-conferencing a reality. Many CDS systems have a Flatcam and microphone built into the unit. With slots for HRAM video slugs also built in, you can also use your CDS to transmit pre-recorded video information. A conference system lets you network several sources. A full-scale multimedia conference is now easy to arrange, with a virtually limitless number of participants all contributing their images and voices as well as full-motion video and stereo sound. One person can store all of the feeds and edit them later. Needless to say, these systems are commonly used by media execs and news personnel.

If you don't have a cellular system, you can get a system with a built in satellite receiver (an add-on card in most CDS systems). These allow you to receive any commercial Ku, Nr, or Da band satellite transmission. Satellite systems are not interactive, but directories are commonly available. Many of the signals are scrambled to prevent pirating, however. There are, supposedly, cards available for receiving and descrambling classified military and corporate communications. I hear they are hard and dangerous to find, and very, very expensive. A freelance technical specialist such as myself certainly wouldn't know anything about where to get them.

Although it has been only marginally successful, television has become interactive. The cable system in most houses works both ways. People who don't use the computer net use their televisions for shopping, data access, OLIS, and the usual boring

range of services from airline reservations to bill paying. Everything is intuitive, non-threatening, and runs off of one remote control. All of these services can also be accessed through portable CDS systems as well. The Data-Term is becoming a thing of the past; the rich can carry their own now. The CDS has become the indispensable high-end accessory item of the late '20s. There are wholly cybernetic CDS systems, too, which can be accessed mentally or sub-vocally, and scanned through cyberoptics or through a braindance overlay system. They are expensive, and, with cyberware going somewhat out of vogue, not as popular as stand-alone models.



Computer Networks and Cellular Communications

Of course, the Net has been a reality for almost three decades now, and Netrunners have been exploring it as a virtual reality since the invention of the cybermodem in 2005. Cellular cyberdecks came soon after, with high-rate cellular transmission making it possible to communicate with super-fast systems from anywhere a satellite could be accessed. Originally, that meant being in a cellular service area. Later, with the advent of sub-miniature and PCMCIA type 8 up/down link cards, satellite access was direct.

Now, even with cybermodems in less use, cellular transmission can begin to dominate the world of data transfer. You can literally access anything from anywhere.

Your computer, be it CDS or cyberdeck, can access the sat-net from any point on Earth. From there, it's just a matter of having the access code or destination number for the host you wish to reach. The worldwide cellular sat-net system also allows the transmission of multiplexed full-motion video and audio signals. Anything can reach you wherever you are: movies, phone calls, music, conference video calls, graphics and numerical data. Modern satellite data-transmission rates approach 1 gigabyte per second with NOFAR compression.

That's like downloading an entire 60 minute stereo music chip (88.2mhz sampling rate) in 2 seconds. All information available on the net or in public or private OLIS systems can be accessed from anywhere in the world. At least theoretically; reality is somewhat disappointing.

Sadly, the limitations to this new technology are more political than technical. The ISA government rigidly controls what the

satellite network transmits into their airspace (See "Tool of the State", pg. 4). Most outgoing transmissions are required to use ISA relay systems, while at the same time the sale of CDS systems is tightly controlled. The result is that only the rich and privileged of the corpzones get access to this type of technology. And since they are the ones whose interests are most heavily vested in the current power structure, they are not looking to use these tools against it.

Of course, if you can get the equipment, cellular transmissions can be intercepted, so there has been a boom in cellular encryption technology so that sensitive information can be kept private. The security arm of the Arasaka Corporation has been on the cutting edge of user-configurable/addressable encryption systems. And they are not selling to anyone who might rock the pillars of power. There is an equally booming black market in encryption busting and cellular information pirating.

The new cellular transmission systems mean that you can take whatever video or audio you manufacture with your modern capture, editing, and storage systems, and you can transmit it to any other single person or group of people in the world ... instantly. Your digitized information can go anywhere, at any time, with no degradation. You make it. You alter it. You send to anyone, anywhere, at any time.

But that's just what our government is afraid of. So they've tried to limit access, curtail service, and censor transmissions. All for our own good, or so they would have us believe. The only question is:

How long are we going to let them get away with it?

Cameron Ride, San Francisco, California. Sat-net destination number 0909-2673-18.

JARGON

Satellite bands: These are the frequencies in which satellites transmit information. Satellites operate in extremely high frequencies, enabling them to transmit huge amounts of data very rapidly.

C Band: 4-6 gigahertz. (Obsolete in 2027)

Ku Band: 12-14 gigahertz. (Almost obsolete in 2027)

Nr Band: 15-19 gigahertz. (Mostly commercial.)

Da Band: 20-22 gigahertz. (Partially commercial, mostly military/corporate.)

PCMCIA: Personal Computer Memory Card International Association: The standard for credit card-sized add-on cards popularized for notebook computers in the 1990's. PCMCIA cards can be RAM, hard disk drives, network or modem cards, or other peripherals. Original types 1-3 were followed by several updates to keep the standard in line with evolving technology. Type 8 is the standard for CDS systems and cyberdecks.

MESSING WITH THE RICH KIDS' TOYS

Cracking a cellular system without an access code or decryption/encryption card is a *Computer Programming* or "*Expert Codes* (etc.)" check against a difficulty 23, or a *Commo* check against a difficulty 28.

Finding a CDS Codebreaker on the blackmarket is a *Streetwise* check against a difficulty 15 (*Streetsmarts* vs. 18) plus the bonus level of the card. That means any card over a +5 is going to be difficult to find, and expensive.

Expect to pay 100eb for every +1 to a decryption *Programming* or *Commo* check up to +5. Then expect to pay 500eb for every level from +6 all the way up to +30 (where no human element is involved). The change in price comes from differences between commercial and military/corporate encryption schemes.

CDS Programming Skill Difficulties (*Commo Skill* add +3)

- Cracking personal encoded communications: Difficulty 15.
- Cracking mid-level corporate communications: Difficulty 20.
- Cracking government and high end corporate communications: Difficulty 25.
- Cracking "most sensitive" government, military and black corporate communications: Difficulty 30. Those last two are capital offenses, by the way. Of course, if you're caught for any of this, you probably won't live to see a trial.

There is a 10% chance any given card will not work with any given signal. Few brokers will let you test the merchandise. Like the saying goes, if you have to ask ...

The alternative to buying a general codebreaker card is to try to steal or buy a stolen card from the corporation or military unit you want to eavesdrop on. Stolen cards have a 90% chance of automatically working, but they will only be effective until the card is discovered missing (depends on the player's precautions), or there is a standard rotation of the encryption scheme (1d10 days if you steal it yourself, 1/2d10 days if you buy one that has already been stolen). Stolen cards usually cost 1000-5000eb, depending on the corporation or unit they were lifted from. CorpSec is notorious for setting up stings around these kinds of things, however, so be more than cautious.

BROADCAST BLUES



▼ C.J. O'Reilly is an ex-patriot media who used to be one of the best in the old U.S. When the ISA took over, he split the program for Amsterdam and now works for various independent journals. He's a righteous source of info which means that there's an ISA bounty on his head should he ever re-enter the country. ▼▼▼ ALT

When was the last time you sat down to watch a vid, either off of the local airwaves or the satellite? Pretty recently, I'll bet. For all I know you're doing it right now! Aren't you ashamed? Now, having established that you are a hopeless vid-addict, with your arse-hairs slowly but inextricably weaving themselves into the fabric of your ratty, Smash-saturated couch, you must ask yourself, "What was the last thing I watched?" Okay, how about before that? Before that? Even before that?

Pathetic. Truly gross. I'd charf all over my keyboard if real whisky wasn't too valuable to waste. Needless to say, you watched big-budget, ISA pablum of the kind that is spoon-fed down the throats of 90% of this nation's population on a daily basis. What you completely ignored was the valiant, dangerous, unprofitable, and often high-quality work of those few local

small-time and street broadcasters who dare the Icemen to transmit the raw truth to you poor pathetic drones in the mallplexes and corpzones. Don't tell me you didn't know about them!

Ah, well, now you begin to see the source of the problem.

I have made a fair to middling living participating in, and later writing about, occupations so desperately unattractive that only the most committed, hardy and adventurous souls will dare try them. That is why I am a seasoned adventurer and master of men, and you are not. In an effort to broaden your horizons, and make you think a little more about the fearsome control the airwaves exert over our country (and your mind), I am going to use the measly space conferred upon me by this publication to tell you about the group of individuals who have seized some of that power back from the claws of the State and put it to work for average, everyday narfs such as us, thereby garnering my deep respect and admiration. These are the people who run local, independent, and underground broadcasting operations, head to head with the big boys of broadcasting and right in the shadow of the ISA Gestapo.

Background

Most of you have a deep familiarity with the products offered by the major media houses of the ISA. This is your usual lineup of action and violence, peeper-vid, soaps, ersatz-news magazines, made-for-vid movies, and daytime talk shows featuring topics so deviated from the norm that hardened boostergangers have been known to swoon at their discussion. This material is broadcast twenty-four hours a day, and is available either via your cable system, or off of the few FM TV bands left operating. It used to be that stuff was principally broadcast over the standard FM band. With the mass migration to cable and encrypted mobile satellite delivery large portions of what used to be TV spectrum were discarded as obsolete by the corporations. (This didn't happen with radio because there is no way to string a cable into your car.) There were three principal reasons for the evolution. First, all broadcast frequencies were legally government property, and subject to regulation and control. Second, there were only a maximum of twelve strong VHF signals available in any one area. As more channels became available, people invariably switched to cable or satellite, rendering UHF and VHF superfluous. Finally, local VHF (ch. 2-13) and UHF (ch. 14-69) signals could reach only relatively small areas, and people became spoiled by the advantages of cable and satellite, and disenchant-ed with the sometimes spotty reception of traditional TV signals.

This discarded spectrum space was not left to waste away. As government property it was still subject to regulation and control, and there were many proposals for military, corporate, or civilian use of the former TV spectrum. But an interesting thing happened along the way to consolidation of the airwaves: the Collapse. The fragmentation of the nation and the decline of government control left the television frequencies wide open: first come, first serve. Thus began the independent TV home-steading wars. For years after the turn of the century the FM television band was the playground of the small-time broadcast-ers, Vidiots, Techies, and a horde of other nameless freaks.

But the Incorporated States of America are here. Now, while small-time broadcasters still battle with each other for the right to use channels in a certain area, they also battle the newly repres-sive government, which sees any uncontrolled use of the broad-cast spectrum as a threat. And they are willing to kill *you* to prove it. Furthermore, large corporate broadcasters have the ISA's bless-ing to bomb into oblivion any small-time operation that cheeses them off one too many times. Local programming has crumbled in the face of corporate-backed personalities like the incredibly pow-erful neo-fascist hatemonger Calvin K. Kaswell (DMS Radio Services) and the equally extreme far left, politically correct Eurny Powell (Net54 World Radio Network). Even music has been reduced to prepackaged corporate flogging.

On the other hand, advances in equipment and computers have made it possible to run a functional broadcasting operation with a startup expenditure of about 10,000eb. Considering that one camera used to cost 30,000 U.S. dollars, I'd call that progress.

JARGON

Spectrum: To broadcast, you must have a medium. In the old days, that meant spectrum. Spectrum is shorthand for the portion of the electromagnetic spectrum that is suitable for broadcasting (as opposed to visible light, cosmic rays, etc.). In any county-sized area there are 69 television fre-quencies available. 12 of these are the desirable VHF chan-nels 2-13. These have strong signals, and can cover a wide area fairly easily. The other 57 are UHF channels. For techni-cal reasons, UHF signals are weaker, and more difficult to tune in. In any area, the VHF signals will cost more to buy, or will be fought over more fiercely.

Life In The Trenches

It's not easy to try to run an independent broadcasting opera-tion. In my recent travels I spent some time living and working with the folks who run Badass Dog Studios (BDS-TV channel 7), in Night City, California. Badass Dog was founded by a woman named Lydia Love. It's more or less a full service street station catering to edgerunners and other fringe types. They try to broadcast 24 hours, although it doesn't always work out. Their studio is located in a big warehouse in, predictably enough, the Studio City area of Night City. This area is kind of a ghetto for small time broadcasters. BDS shares the warehouse with the Cronkites, a Vidiot gang. The Cronkites let BDS move in and put their antenna on the roof in return for an hour a day of air time, a common way for micro-studios to do business.

Some micro-stations focus on one particular kind of programming, say, talk shows, or musical performances. Badass Dog is more typical. It broadcasts every piece of tripe that anyone connected with the station thinks might be of the remotest interest to any-one. And they're good at it. A typical broadcast day might include an interview with a particularly hot edgerunner, some video-exposé material gathered by a group of intrepid Vidiots, an envi-ronmental show detailing some of the latest Hayduking tech-niques, the Cronkites' *World News Hour*, a local sporting event (such as the bare-knuckle cyberfights held at the abandoned fac-tory down the road), an entire musical performance from a local club, a half-hour political rant, a cybersex show, an hour of the visual images downloaded from the cyberdeck of a Netrunner on a dangerous job, and an hour of Goldbergs. Special events are advertised on the net, through streetbuzz, and with fliers.

It didn't start easily for Badass Dog. When they started up there were no VHF signals available in Night City. They tried for chan-nel 7 after the previous owners were detonated by CRN Inc. (see below) for refusing to co-opt into their network, and for working aggressively against them. With the channel 7 frequen-cy available both Badass Dog and CRN tried to claim it for their own. There was a three-month war of jamming, drive-by shoot-ings, and bombings before Badass Dog enlisted the help of the Cronkites. CRN was no match for the Cronkites and their video exposés. And that's the way it is. A month later, Badass Dog was operating in all its glory.

GOLDBERGS

Goldbergs are something that deserve special mention. This is a popular pastime among Vidiots, small-time Medias, and others who work with independent stations. Goldbergs are crazy stunts performed for the camera or microphone, often at great risk to the performer. Stunts can be physical, such as getting into a shootout with the cops or riding your cycle through downtown night city at 100mph during rush hour, or of a more clandestine nature, such as sneaking into a tightly guarded corporate facility while broadcasting live. Needless to say this adds a certain element of extra risk. Goldberging is so named for Peter Goldberg of Los Angeles, California, who is principally remembered for dying in spectacular fashion on live TV when the charges he was planting deep in the heart of Petrochem L.A. went off early, taking him and 1,000,000 liters of gelled CHOOH₂ with them. Fortunately, when Goldberg's shoulder-cam was destroyed, his system switched over to the remote cameras that had been planted to catch the explosion, so the pleasure of the home viewers was not interrupted. Now that's good TV. A great Goldberg is still a fast way to gain the respect of local broadcasters and Vidiots.

Continued operation has not been a walk in the park for Badass Dog. As one of the more powerful and high profile independent stations they face challenges every day, from corporations ticked off by crazy Goldbergs, to other gangs antagonized by the Cronkites, to up and coming broadcasters who want a VHF franchise, to other stations competing for programming, to the growing DSA strikegroups. Of course, the major networks don't like anyone competing with them for viewers either, and they can strike with the government's approval.

Micro-networks are another dangerous factor at work. There are several small but growing groups that thrive on co-opting local micro-broadcasters into their networks. CRN, the California Religious Network, is the largest and most dangerous. Run by Orange County-based evangelist Troy Esparza, the CRN has been trying to co-opt a station in every major city in California. They use a satellite-based network to distribute their programs, which are based largely on anti-plague hysteria and pro-Final Quarantine propaganda. They still don't have a voice in Night City, which has kept the gang at Badass Dog understandably paranoid.

Most rogue stations get crushed by these various elements fairly quickly, so security is a top priority for BDS. They've managed to survive through a variety of tactics: using microwave or laser links to mobile transmitters to mask their main studio location, aliases for all their field reporters, and careful legal maneuvering to keep the ISA hounds off the track. While ISA law is rarely in any upstart's favor, a good and trustworthy lawyer can still be a powerful weapon, and even F.L.A.M.E. (see pg. 10) has been known to come a beleaguered independent's aid. But most of the time, they operate much like the French Underground did during the German occupation of the last century. (Boy, it sure is

easy to draw up those Nazi parallels when talking about the ISA, isn't it? Got any other totalitarian comparisons that *you* want to make?) While they've been successful so far, every day on the air is a risk, and Lydia is already considering whether or not they'll have to shift their studios to a new site soon. She doesn't want to take the Cronkites down with them if the hammer finally falls.

Small Fry in the Big Leagues

There are small time operators on the cable and satellite bands as well. It is much harder to carve a niche in the cable system, however. There is only a finite supply of cable channels, and a great deal of competition among the majors to control them. Hardware requirements are far greater and tracing is a piece of cake. At last report, Net 54 and DMS partially or wholly controlled fully 412 of the 500 channels active on Night City Cable. There is plenty of competition for what's left over, as well. Oh sure, you can sign up for public access time. They are now taking sign-ups for broadcast slots in 2034.

PIRATES

Of course, there are those people whose goal in life is to cause the maximum amount of chaos, and incur the maximum amount of risk at all times. I have great respect for these individuals, because they willingly accept a statistical life span a good 25 years shorter than the population at large. These people are, of course, video pirates, and they get their jollies from breaking in on large network cable or satellite transmissions, interrupting regular programming, and replacing it with their own. Needless to say, there is no faster way to persuade a major corporation to issue a death warrant in your name than to interrupt prime time. Case in point is Tyrone Raxter, who broke into the broadcast of the 2026 Mega-Bowl and pre-empted Petrochem's one-time only goodwill commercial which was a live, 90 second spot featuring live link-ups of crowds singing in eight different Pac-Rim countires. The stunt was ruined. Petrochem sued DMS for the production cost of the commercial (75 million euro), lost business (1.5 billion euro), and punitive damages for lax security (540 million euro). There was an out of court settlement for an undisclosed amount.

Tyrone Raxter, however, lives in hiding somewhere, having had his features surgically altered twelve times, and his genetic code altered through an experimental nano-tech procedure that rendered him sterile. He has not emerged to this day, eight years later, and is still under death warrant by DMS and Petrochem. There is also a government broadcast-piracy felony charge against him, but that is the least of his worries.

But of course, broadcasting is risky business. If it wasn't, it wouldn't be any fun. My hat is off to the hardy souls who chisel a living out from underneath the giants. Tune 'em in once in a while. You'll be glad you did.

From Night City, California, that's the way it is.

APPENDIX A

The Tools and the Talent

How do you set up a pirate station? Here are some tips and rules so that you can run your very own illegal (or semi-legal) broadcasting station. While Vidiots are great at setting up commo links and surveillance gadgets, putting together the components necessary for a broadcasting station may seem a little out of their league. This work should be done by professionals or Tinkertots, unless they are getting their equipment pre-fabricated. While pre-fab equipment costs more, if they just happen to "find" it, cost will not be an issue.

Transmitters

The most basic component required is a transmitter. Of course, the transmitter alone won't get you on the airways; you also need mikes, cameras if you're doing TV, and other gear to ensure the transmission gets through clearly. For these items, see the "Media Tools" section, pg. 29. For sample transmitter stats in rough terms, check out the following list.

Pirate FM or AM Stereo Digital Radio Transmitter

Create your own radio station.

Hours of fun until you get caught. All are assumed to have Weak Signal Quality.

- 1 Watt (a few blocks): 100eb. 10cm x 10cm x 3cm, 200g.
- 10 Watts (a neighborhood): 200eb. 10cm x 10cm x 3cm, 200g.
- 100 Watts (a small town): 500eb. 25cm x 15cm x 3cm, 400g.
- 1000 Watts (a city): 1000eb. 25cm x 15cm x 6cm, 1kg.
- Sub miniature or cybernetic: x2. 1-100 watts requires one option space. 1000 watts requires two spaces.



VHF Transmitters

Cost: 1000eb for a one mile radius of transmission, +1000eb for every extra mile up to 50 miles maximum. Can be set to transmit on any channel between 2 and 13. Signal Quality: Digital.

UHF Transmitters

Cost: 250eb for a one mile radius of transmission, +250 for every extra mile up to 25 miles maximum. 10% chance that the signal will not be accessible in any given location. Can be set to transmit on any channel between 14 and 69. Signal Quality: Strong.

Antenna Height

All TV transmitters require an antenna at least 25ft tall. The higher it is, the better your signal.

- Transmitter at ground level-5 stories: -1/2 to coverage distance.
- Transmitter mounted 5-10 stories high: -1/4 to coverage level.
- Transmitter mounted 10 stories high and up: full coverage.

Upgrades

Signal Quality can be increased to a maximum of Digital Quality (levels of Quality: Weak, Average, Strong and Digital). Each level increase costs 50% of the transmitter's cost (after transmission range is determined), though it does not increase the size or weight. A decrease in quality reduces the base cost by 25% per level to a minimum level (Weak).

Link-ups

Remember that your transmitter must either be hardwired to your station, or connected by a microwave or satellite link.

Microwave Links link stations and antennas up to 10 miles apart. These are directional, can be traced, and cost 1000eb.

Satellite Links connect stations and antennas over any distance. These are proprietary, encrypted signals, and can not be read by standard CDS units. Not to be confused with standard satellite broadcasting (see page 15, "Communications Newtech"). These cost 5000eb per year. Signal is untraceable, but it requires buying a satellite, doing business with a corporation, or serious hacking.

Signal Piracy

Piracy is no longer just a matter of burning ships and stealing gold. Nowadays it involves

broadcasting on unused frequencies or channels or overpowering existing stations. While the unused frequencies and channels are fair game, they're not easy to find. For every day of searching, a successful Difficult Commo check will find an empty AM frequency, while a successful Very Difficult check will yield an abandoned FM or UHF band. VHF bands are all occupied, if only by other pirate stations. Even if the vidpirates manage to find an empty wavelength, roll 1d10 every day it is used, on a 4 or less a legitimate station (or CorpSec) appears and tries to knock them off the air.

This brings us to the second option: plying the electromagnetic seas, hijacking occupied frequencies and channels. This involves bumping someone else out with a stronger signal, which more often than not peeves someone off, usually someone very powerful. Overpowering an existing station's signals requires a combination of brute strength and subtle manipulation. Often, it's only possible for short periods of time as the two station's technicians battle for control of the airwaves.

- To initially take control of an existing channel or frequency: Average *Commo/Electronics* check (add 5 to the pirates' skill level for every level of Signal Quality their station has over their opponents' and vice versa).
- Once taken, the owning station (at the Referee's discretion) will respond in 2d10 minutes. At this time, the Vidiot will have to make a Difficult *Commo/Electronics* check every minute to keep control. After that, there is a 1 in 10 chance after five minutes, +1 every minute thereafter, that a full CorpSec security team will locate the pirate transmitter. A -4 penalty to this check is imposed if the pirates keep on the move.
- Once control is lost, a Very Difficult *Commo/Electronics* check is required to regain control during the next 6 hours. If control is regained, Difficult *Commo* checks are required every minute thereafter to maintain control. If control is abandoned for more than 6 hours, the difficulty to take control returns to Average as the station drops its caution.

Other Skill Checks

- Hacking an illegal satellite linkup: Netrun required.
- Tracing a microwave broadcast signal: *Electronics* @ 17 or *Commo* @ 20.
- Tracing a satellite link: Requires a Netrun, or *Commo* @ 30.

Plugging in to Cable

Let's face it, most people who watch TV aren't tuning into the UHF or even VHF channels; the real interest is in cable TV. After all, it's got the most programming and the ISA promotes it, as they consider it the safest form of entertainment. This is for a good reason: While pirating the airways is relatively easy, cable-jacking requires skill and equipment. All the transmitters in the world aren't going to help you; you have to tap into that line directly, or alter the signal at the source. Splicing into a station's cable means direct contact with that cable, and so that you reach everyone, you have to chop into it at its source: where it leaves the station. Usually this means a half dozen guards and six inches of steel to bypass before the real fun begins. This fun includes not electrocuting yourself while playing with high voltage lines (try 10D6 damage to start; a Bolter has nothing on cable). Put your finger in the wrong place and you'll never try this again.

Okay, so you've been a smart Tinkertot and grounded yourself, taking precautions like rubber gloves and such. You have your own cable line, and want to splice your way in to control their line. There are two options: connect your line and pump a stronger signal through, or snip the existing line and replace it with your own.

• **Overpowering a cable signal:** Very Difficult *Kitbash* or Difficult *Commo/Electronics*. Failure results in a power surge to the character's transmitter, severely damaging it (2d6 days repairs required before it will be operational again). Success results in the characters being able to cut into the owning station's broadcasts whenever they want. However, the parent company has a 6 in 10 chance of finding the characters every five minutes of broadcast they run, and a 3 in 10 chance of finding the character's cable every hour after the first cablejacking occurs.

• **Replace a cable signal with your own:** Very Difficult *Commo/Electronics*. Failure results in no signal reaching the public. Whether successful or not, the owning station will respond in 1d6 minutes with Tech teams to investigate the problem and assault squads just in case it's not just a technical issue.

Looking over the options, it seems actually playing with the cables is more of a hassle than it's worth. Luckily, there is another way, assuming you know some Wizards or other net-proficient types. You see, the TV networks run their programming through computers, computers which can be reached through a quick netrun. You just get in, slide in recordings of your own programs and you don't even need a transmitter, 'cause the networks do it all for you. Of course, it's easier said than done.

THE RIGHT TOOLS

The equipment required to cablejack costs around 5000eb and is only sold to legitimate TV networks. Therefore, the characters are either going to have to put it together themselves or find some way to get their hands on it illegally. Assembling it themselves takes 2d6 days, 1000eb in parts from Techshack and a Very Difficult *Kitbash* check. A failed check results in all cablejacking checks being raised one difficulty level. The equipment weighs around 25kg, double if kitbashed.

Sample Wizard and Netrunner Skill Checks

- Inserting a short commercial in a network's programming would be a *Do Me A Favor* task affecting a Smart machine or a Netrunner *Programming* task @ 20.
- Changing programming to allow a half hour show would require a successful *Break Programming* check affecting a Smart machine or a Netrunner *Programming* task @ 25.

The net layout of the network computers is at the Referee's discretion, depending on the size and power of the station being affected. And beware of black ice carried on transmission sub-channels.

Assume after this occurs security on the Net will be improved significantly. Increase the difficulty by two levels for the next week, one level for the following month and then back to normal after that.

MEDIA TOOLS

The "Communication Newtech" and "Broadcast Blues" articles both introduce a wide variety of media technology. Here and in the following "New at the Mall" section, we list examples of much of this equipment as well as info on how to use it.

Hi-Tech Comm Gear

Optical Chips

Available on the open market in teraflop (trillions of calculations per second) ratings of 2, 4 and 8. 500eb per level, x2 for very small chips (1 cm), x3 for ultra small chips (1mm). Techies, TinkerTots, and Vidiots can use these chips to Kitbash systems and devices that have capabilities beyond non-optical devices. In addition to the skill check advantage of an optical system (+1), optical systems are faster than non-optical systems. 2, 4 and 8 teraflop optical chip systems are respectively 2, 4, and 8 times as fast as otherwise comparable non optical systems, and can handle double the MU. The chips are difficult to work with, however. Add +4 to any TECH-based skill check made while using the chips to assemble or modify a device. A failed roll might mean an irreparably damaged chip.

HRAM Slugs

Audio: 4eb per hour, up to 96 hours of 88.2mhz stereo sound. Reusable. **Video:** 10eb per hour, up to 4.5 hours of ultra high quality with stereo sound. Records up to 10 hours of a/v at lower quality. Reusable. Not the same as data MU (which is included with your CDS). +10eb per unit for padded ENG slugs. x2 cost for sub-miniatures.

Cellular Data System Personal Computer System (CDS)

(see "New at the Mall", pg. 30)

Satellite Uplink/Downlink Card

Allows communication with Sat-Net or any communications satellite to which the user has access. Extremely fast, NOFAR compatible. Gives user worldwide data and a/v access and transmission capabilities. Requires 10 free MU. 400eb. With user configurable/addressable encryption/decryption: 600eb, plus other end must have matching or cross-addressable system.

User Configurable/Addressable Encryption/Decryption Card

Accessory card for local cellular or Sat-Net compatible system. Allows secure communication of any kind of data through cellular or Sat-Net systems, with no reduction of transmission speed. Must have compatible systems on each end. Requires 5 free MU. Consumer model: can be cracked with a *Programming* or *"Expert: Codes (etc.)"* roll against difficulty 15. 220eb.

Sat-Net Membership

Allows high speed worldwide communication and access to all Sat-Net services. 250eb per month plus air time of about 20eb per hour. +10eb per month for house encryption (not trusted by major players).

Encryption Cracking CDS Card

Highly illegal. Doesn't work 10% of the time. Requires a CDS or compatible computer with 15 free MU. See page 30. 500-10,000eb.

On-line Information Service Membership

Membership on a computer on-line service offering access to audio, video, text, books, news, and general information on demand from your CDS or over landline. 15eb per month plus 1eb per hour.

Video Processing System, Audio Processing System, Integrated A/V Processing Computer, Integrated Flatcam, Flatcam Remote Control Unit, and Flatcam Glasses

(see "New at the Mall", pg.30)

Flatcam Pickup Only

Just the imaging device, with no storage or power. Requires the remote unit below, or other system. 100eb. x2 for sub-miniature systems.

Specialized Flatcams

See into the infrared or ultraviolet. Also translucent, unpowered systems. +100eb. x2 for sub-miniature.

Peek-through Flatcam

Sees through one layer of wall with thermal imaging. 1000eb. x2 for sub-miniature.

Public Sat-Net Receiver

Picks up public programming transmitted over Sat-Net. Can not transmit or receive encoded or private channel data. 10cm x 10cm x 2cm, 200g. 30eb.

Basic Studio Equipment

This is the basic equipment needed to run a small, independent TV station, except for the transmitter and transmitter link (detailed in "Broadcast Blues", pg. 27). These systems can all broadcast the Digital/Stereo HDTV standard, but they use a NOFAR compression system (see page 18) to allow the information-heavy HDTV signal to be jammed into old-fashioned UHF and VHF channels.

HRAM Recording Decks and Computerized Control System

(see "New at the Mall", pg. 30)

Monitor Screens and Cameras

(see "New at the Mall", pg. 31)

Peripherals

Lights, sets, audio sub-mixers, specialized equipment. Get what you need as you need it. Just make sure that you have some place to put it all when you're not using it. ... some place safe.

INTEGRATED FLATCAM

\$200 FOR BASIC SYSTEM WITH 2HRS RECORD/BATTERY TIME. +\$100 PER HOUR UP TO 8HRS.

X2 FOR SUB-MINIATURE SYSTEMS.

Ultra small (8mm square, 2mm thick), flat, high definition audio/video recorder. Wide angle or up to 100x zoom and digital stabilization and panning/tilting.

Option: Micro transmitter instead of recorder. Same price. Can be jammed or interfered with, but you need not retrieve it.

FLATCAM REMOTE CONTROL UNIT \$500

Supplies indefinite power, and complete control for up to 8 remote Flatcam units. 8hrs total video storage, expandable with standard HRAM video slugs. Each camera in use supplies one channel of storage, so if you record all information from two sources, you halve your recording time, and so on.

INTEGRATED A/V PROCESSING COMPUTER

DESKTOP: \$5500. (20cm x 35 cm x 30cm, 4kg, not including a monitor, v-trodes and keyboard.)

CDS EXPANSION CARD

(requires 15 free MU and a permit): **\$5000.**

A system capable of processing and manipulating either audio or video sources, or both at the same time. +4 to all Foley or related checks.

COMPUTERIZED CONTROL SYSTEM \$6500

A desktop computer system that takes the inputs from all video sources (cameras, remotes, and video recording slugs or decks) and audio sources (microphones), and edits, processes, and switches them as needs be before sending them to the transmitter or master recording system. This has all the features of an Integrated A/V Processing Computer or CDS plus control software, controllers, and connections. Maximum total inputs: 12 (6 video, 6 audio). Maximum total outputs: 2 (combined A/V). Can be cyber-controlled. One required for each broadcast or editing studio, but they can be cross-linked in a multi-studio station. +5 to all Foley or related tasks. **SOFTWARE, CONTROLLERS AND CONNECTIONS ONLY** (add to existing A/V Processing Computer): **\$1000.** **EXPANSION CARD AND CONTROLLERS FOR A CDS RUNNING A/V SOFTWARE: \$1100.** Requires 10 free MU. **EXPANSION MODULE** (control another six video and six audio sources): **\$1000**

CELLULAR DATA SYSTEM PERSONAL COMPUTER SYSTEM (CDS)

\$8000 basic, with no A/V memory or satellite communications. 1 processor, supports 40 MU, speed 6. **PURCHASE ALLOWED WITH PERMIT ONLY (\$1200).** **EXTRA 10 MU (MAX 80): \$1000.**

Extremely powerful, expandable computer systems about the size of a notebook or sub-notebook computer, with keyboards, optical processor, HRAM memory, NOFAR compression, high definition video screens, and basic, local cellular communications built in. Can manage all of the functions of a cyberdeck as well as a workstation or minicomputer. Slots for more HRAM, HRAM A/V slugs, and 6 function cards. Can be controlled by keys, pen/pointer, cyberlink or virtuality, or voice. Size: 20cm x 10cm. Weight: 700g. Concealable in a jacket.

BROADCAST HDTV RECEIVER CARD FOR CDS \$200

Turn your CDS into a broadcast receiver. Display images on the small CDS screen, or hook up your unit to any large display panel. Requires 5 free MU.

VIDEO PROCESSING SYSTEM

DESKTOP SYSTEM: \$5000. (20cm x 35 cm x 30cm, 4kg, not including a monitor, v-trodes and keyboard.)

CDS EXPANSION CARD (requires 10 free MU and a permit): **\$5000.**

A specialized computer (stand-alone or as an add-on card) capable of editing, processing, and completely manipulating several video signals at once. Can work in sync with audio processor. You can not work with audio or video signals without one, except on a purely amateur, low quality level. +4 to all Foley or related checks.

AUDIO PROCESSING SYSTEM

DESKTOP: \$1000. (20cm x 20 cm x 7 cm, 2kg, not including monitor, v-trodes and keyboard.)

CDS EXPANSION CARD (requires 5 free MU and permit): **\$1200.**

A computer capable of editing, processing, and completely manipulating several audio signals at once. Can work in sync with video processor. +4 to all audio Foley or related checks.

HRAM RECORDING DECK \$200

HRAM SLUGS COST EXTRA (SEE PAGE 29). Use for source material, or to archive programs.

MEDIAWERX

FLATCAM GLASSES \$500
Look like sunglasses, but record 4.5 hours of high definition video and audio.

MONITOR SCREENS \$100 EACH
See what you are creating. One required for each video input and output.

BROADCAST HDTV RECEIVER
Receiver only: \$150
With integrated screen: \$200-1000 depending on screen size.
Old-fashioned broadcast HDTV receiver. This receives FM television signals, rather than the satellite or cable based signals which are the norm today. Can have an integrated screen, or be hooked to any display panel. 25cm x 15cm x 5cm. 300g.

CAMERAS \$500 EACH
These are full sized video cameras, not flatcams, although flatcams can be used. They will accept HRAM slugs, or send their signals out to a control unit.

TRACKER \$2000
75% chance to track any one radio or television broadcast signal or jammer signal. 25cm x 15cm x 10cm. 1500g.

REMOTELINK \$1000
A mobile microwave link that allows you to send cameras and microphones out to remote locations and send those pictures back to your main broadcasting studio. Can control 4 cameras and 4 microphones. Maximum range of 5 miles. 25cm x 15cm x 10cm. 1000g.

JAMMER \$400
Jam any one UHF or VHF signal in a half-mile radius around the jammer. The bad news: Jamming signals can be traced. 25cm x 15cm x 5cm. 800g.

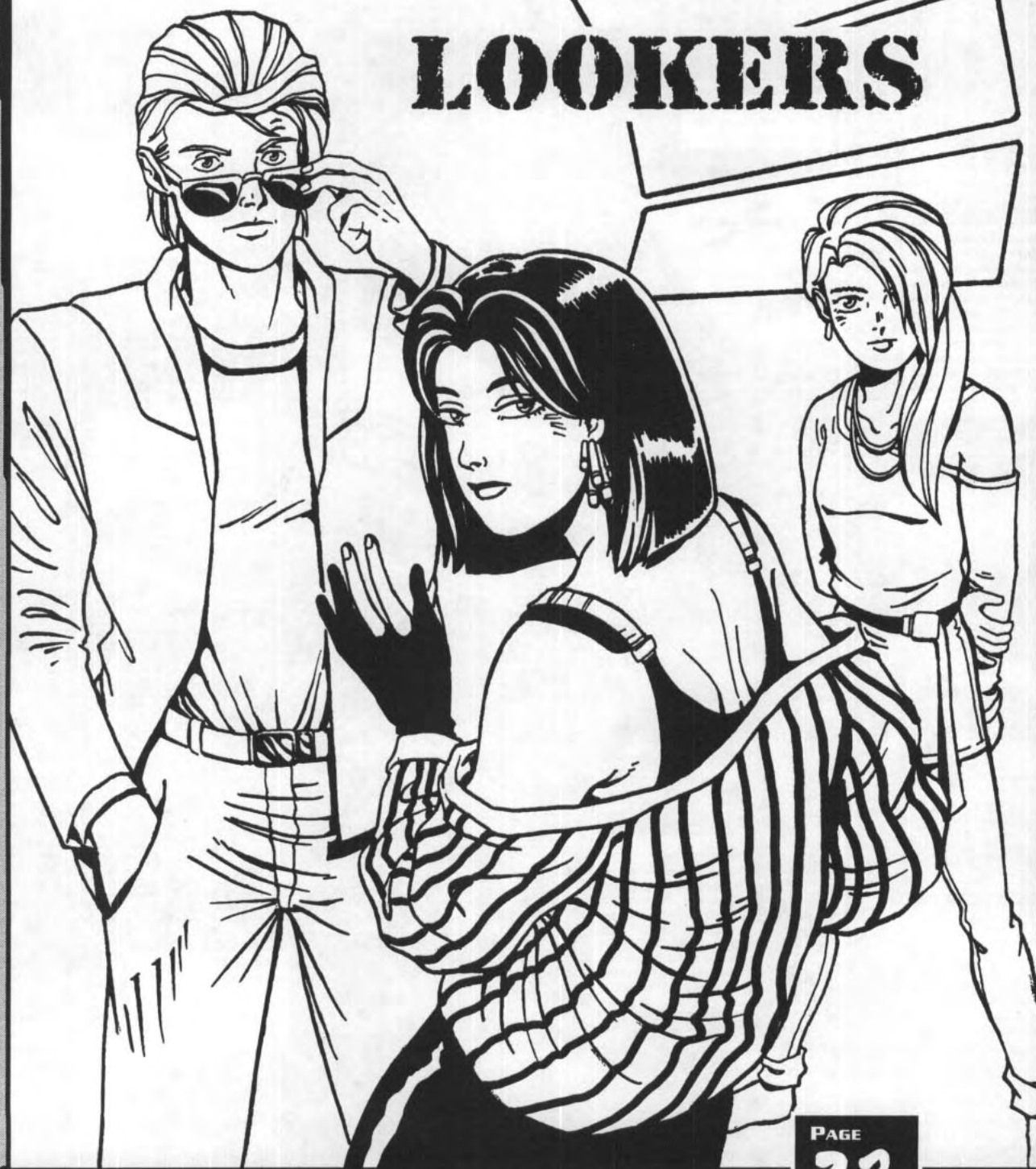
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NEW YOGANGS LOOKERS



Neck-whipping CoverKids and Beautiful People

"Damn straight I'm too
sexy. Touch me at your
own risk!"

"Now that I've got your
attention, I need you to
listen to me ..."

"Please? I'd be ever so
grateful (wink)..."

Let the Goldenkids depend on their money and the Glitterkids on their fame. Let those sorry junkies hobble on their crutches and bask in the pale glow of streetdrek adoration. You have the tools they lack, and you put them to use: your hair, your face, your clothes, your body. You set the trends the media follows; you display the looks they try to imitate. You are what they want to be — you're perfect and you know it.

You're the showcase people of the ISA, the inheritors of the supermodel cults of the late 20th century. You mix with the best and disregard the rest. Although you cultivate an air of artistic and social loftiness, the fact is you always maintain a finger on the cultural pulse of the nation, always showing people what they want to see, the moment before they know they want to see it.

What You Look Like

Perfect.

Like there's anything to add? Your clothes are always on the Edge, and shame everything worn by the supposedly avant-garde Glitterkids and Goldenkids, to say nothing of the affected styles of the MallBrats, Troggs, and Tribals. You seem to wear what you want, and whatever it is, you make it look custom-fit. Of course, it usually is; you've developed relationships with the best tailors and designers and they like to make things for you because you make their fashions look so good. Everything you wear is carefully selected for fit, form and color, to perfectly enhance your appearance. No one would ever dare to say you were out of fashion or tasteless; it would be such a patent lie that everyone would laugh them out of your presence. And your presence is what everyone wants.

Likewise, your hair is perfect, held just so by the best hair-styling proteins (it'd better, since you spent enough time working it into place). Your make-up (both sexes wear it) is so subtle, so expertly done, so flawless that it doesn't even look like you

have any on. You sculpt your body with exercise, not training it for size or power, but shaping it for just the right visual combination of tone and muscle weight. Your posture makes you look larger than life, and your poise intimidates people as soon as they approach. And if you ever want to know what a perfect look is, you just gaze in a mirror.

Subculture

Grace, beauty, and an understanding of the power of physical appearance: These are the centerpieces of Looker subculture. In today's ISA the public has been disarmed by a media that tells them what they need to buy and do in order to look and be desirable. But you've taken control of your own image, shaping it with skill and intelligence instead of products and propaganda. You've made your body into a weapon, and your keen mind tells you how to use it for maximum effect. By acquiring modeling and media contacts and making it onto the screamsheets and airwaves, the Machine now pays you to tell them what it means to be beautiful. And that's the kind of power that you're looking for.

But for all the glitz and glamour, this isn't an easy road. Only constant vigilance can give you the appearance of being completely unconcerned about your looks. You constantly check each other over like soldiers inspecting their weapons, looking for minor flaws that might cause problems, keeping tabs on what the public needs to see from you. Your spare time is filled with exercise regimes, evaluation sessions, and close monitoring of the trends and fads of the country. Not really a set of cliques like other yogangs, you and your compatriots are a tight fraternity of individuals, pushing yourselves like wolves on the hunt. Each of you is always looking for a new angle, either for yourself or for a goboy. Information on contracts, agents, fashion, and job opportunities are traded freely at informal get-togethers where you get a chance to let your hair down. You're all in this together: Alone you can achieve notoriety; as a bloc you can subtly shape the awareness of a culture.

People want to listen to a pretty face and a sexy voice. Once you've got both, you can opt to start swaying public opinion in the direction you think it should go. Become an undercover political activist, using your looks and charm to gain admission to select places where you can ask pointed questions with your dazzling smile. Speak out against those societal changes you think are dangerous. Take a date with some Goldenkid to cause a scene and get your point on the front page of the screamsheets. Why? Because once you've used your tools to get you and your yogang into a good situation, it'd be a shame not to put those same tools to work serving a larger goal, like the CyberRevolution.

Belonging

Joining the Lookers is not something you actively do; no one gets in unless they are first invited. It only makes sense; if you asked to be let in, you'd obviously lack the self-confidence and

attitude required to be a Looker. To get there, you have to think there. Getting invited means that they think you're well on your way to taking control of your own image, and probably don't need them. It's the ultimate compliment.

Of course, you could circumvent the normal method by aiming over the Lookers' heads and earning your name independently.

In a sense, you're still being invited to be a Looker, but you're being invited by the Machine, which may leave you vulnerable. Either way, to become a Looker, you have to be close to physical perfection, or at least show a strong leaning in that direction. You must demonstrate that certain style, that special aura, have features strong and fine enough to make people's hearts stutter (ATT minimum of 7), and cultivate an understanding of how to use all of it.

Ejection from the Lookers is handled as quietly as induction. If you lose The Look or get stuck up, you'll find yourself drifting away, invited out less often, overlooked at parties, offered fewer contracts. You just fade from the public eye like a mirage, and the next thing you know, you're back on the streets (or doing late-night infomercials). Some can make the transition to other careers, but many have never been able to recover from being ejected; most end up in places you'd rather not hear about.

Alles & Enemies

Because you are so beautiful, you have earned the scorn of the Goths, Megaviolents, Troggs, and Moshers, all of whom view you as narcissistic. The fact is, you rub their ugliness and tastelessness in their faces, so it's only natural they'd despise you. Most everyone else looks up to you, and Glitterkids and Goldenkids especially seek out Lookers for those photo-op dates. Rads also appreciate your subtle infiltration of the Machine and often support you more political activities. For your part, the yogangs you appreciate the most are the Guardians and the Streetfighters, who give you occasional bodyguard work; and the Vidiots, who can get you the exposure you need when the Machine turns its fickle attention elsewhere. You also get along well with the adult world, as long as they play your game (which, considering how well your holos sell, they normally do). Note that a Looker who gets an obvious physical cyberevolved trait (like a Tinman) is probably out of his or her career.

Slang

The Eye: public attention; a lofty position; the center.
Eyesore: stressed out, especially from media attention.

Lowballer: someone who sells out.

Poke: succeed, do well, finish.

Slinger: someone after sex, ego gratification, or both.

Spunker: Looker wannabe, egotistical person.

Tiffany: Goldenkid.

Ziffy: Glitterkid.

Yogang Skill: The Look (ATT)

Let everyone prance around, thinking that they look good and walk with an attitude. You know better; you have taken style and made it an art that most people are incapable of emulating.

The *Look* is the skill with which you use your tools to overwhelm those around you. With your skill you can score any date you want (Easy), appear much older than you are (difficulty = 2 points per year of age), bypass bouncers and other checkpoints using your charm (Difficult) and get yourself admitted to exclusive clubs (Average). Police tend to let you walk (V. Difficult) unless the evidence implicates you grievously.

You can use your *Look* skill as a rating of how far you've gone in modeling: how easy it is for you to land contracts, how often people recognize you on the street and beg for an autograph. This can be an advantage, because a Looker almost never goes broke — even the oldest Looker flames can still be used to sell spinners and dental-hygiene nanoscrubbers. The only exception are those who've been publicly smeared as Carbon Plague-infected. Of course, perfection can be a disadvantage at times as well, especially when you don't want to be noticed ("Yeah, officer, of course I saw him, he was running that way. Woah, what a gorgeous guy!").

Using Your Look Skill:

- **Walk the walk:** Having the *Look* means you are usually pretty fit; you can use (Look-2) + REF or BOD instead of *JackStuff* for athletics and other physical tasks (the GM should see pg. 47 for the "Don't Follow the Rules" article).
- **Make a living:** Generate your *Look* skill rating x \$200 per month in modeling and entertainment contracts.
- **Charm:** Use your *Look* instead of Little Angel for charming your way out of situations.
- **Get that job:** Get a city-wide modeling contract (Average), state-wide (Difficult), national (Very Difficult), International (N. Impossible).

If You're a Looker:

- 1) Tell me your name, age, and sex.
- 2) Describe what you look like. Besides perfect.
- 3) How'd you poke the Eye? Are you a cover girl? A pin-up calendar studboy? A Combat Sports Illustrated swimsuit model? A stereotyped actor? A teenage heartthrob?
- 4) Besides your V-Trodes, pick four things from the list below that you are currently carrying:
 - Personal cellphone.
 - Gold smartcard account with \$1000 (your savings).
 - Six dozen of your promo V-cards.
 - Expensive real leather outfit (SP 5).
- Portfolio with a resumé and several of your best photos and holos
 - Snoopboxx.
 - Interface mask (for when you're incognito).

TAGGERS



PAGE

35

"Just tagged 2nd from Farren to Sterling. What next?"

"Wow, David Whindam and the heads of the CEP as castaways in a Gilligan's Island mural. Cool!"

"I wuz here."

Picasso, DaVinci, Dali and countless others; you remember the names from those history classes where deadguy teachers tried to convince you what "real art" was. Sure, the old masters had style, but real art has to be alive, it has to have the Edge. Take Mark-X's "Faces of Life" on the side of the Arasaka Towers. That was art: ten-foot high kids sick with the Carbon Plague and in various states of evolution. When you saw it, it hit you hard; it disturbed you. That's 'cause it had the Edge; it made you think.

That's why Taggers operate the way they do, bringing the Message to the street through graffiti murals. Gangs like Mark-X lay them out, and a couple of days later the Cleaners wash them away. No matter. The Message got out, and a new mural will appear somewhere else.

But is Mark-X a ganger or a whole gang? Confused? You're supposed to be. Most people think Taggers are loners, spreading their tags wherever they go, like mutts marking their territory.

The truth is very different. Taggers actually work together in groups to produce the Message, a statement in the form of a mural. You cooperate so that you can work fast and get the job done before CorpSec comes a-knocking. But you sign under one name to confuse the Dead Guys into thinking only a couple of dudes are messing up the whole city. It's all image, something you understand intimately. The image is what talks to the masses and it's what you use to spread the Message.

And the Message isn't some ego-oriented, self-gratifying scrawl; it's a statement that says something to the juves who see it, a call to arms. The old artists did that in their time, but lifeless paintings hanging in dusty old museums don't mean jack anymore. It's gotta be here, now, and in their face. You Taggers know that, and there's no place you'd rather be.

What You Look Like

During the day you like to dress in loud and bright colors, enjoying the multitude of artificial dyes available. Making your own tie-dyed fluorescent t-shirts of day-glo orange and super-brite yellow, you're assured of never being missed in a crowd. Comfortable overalls or torn jeans covered in splashes of paint complement the obnoxious t-shirts. Some of you plant murals on

your own clothes, making yourself the canvas. To ensure a quick getaway should things turn sour, you prefer paint-covered running shoes. Of course, your nighttime activities require dark clothing for sneaking in and out of the shadows. And lastly, your hair is worn in that oh-so-stylish "wind blown" look, which is realistically created by standing high atop the tallest building in town during your escapades.

Of course, your look isn't your fault, it's just that your mind is constantly on your next work, and your personal appearance isn't really important. Besides, it's functional: The overalls offer pockets for holding the dozens of flashpaint cans (see *Cyberpunk* pg. 69) and max-perm markers you use to "correct" the ever-present PropSlogs. While young Taggers almost always use flashpaint, the older guys get their own air-brush backpacks for more detailed mural work. But there are no rules about what mediums you have to work in. Some Taggers have been known to play with fingerpaints or program V-cards if the urge arises.

Other than your supplies, which can get pretty elaborate, you don't keep a lot around. You try to travel light, 'cause you don't want to have to slog a bunch of useless drek around a Message site. Just a pack for your gear and a sack to sleep in is all you need. If you're the nostalgic type, you might have a book on Escher or Dali. Permanence isn't really an important concept to you, since your works rarely last more than a day or two.

Subculture

From chalk to flashpaint, Taggers have spread the Message of the street since the beginnings of civilization, from the walls of the pyramids to the sides of maglev trains. The Message hasn't changed much either, political criticisms of the pharaohs being all too similar to the critiques of the ISA today: Question Authority! And as the ISA tightens its grip on America, the need to get the Message out has never been more obvious or urgent.

What separates the works of Taggers from simple graffiti is presentation. You work on pieces with a scale and beauty all their own. Weeks of planning will precede a mural that covers the side of a corporate building or rises above the adboards along the interstate. This is no random, senseless vandalism; it's hard core political and artistic expression of the kind only found in dedicated individuals. You are highly organized, working together on your murals to speed the work and bring a mix of talents to the piece. Painting a mural on the side of the Arasaka Towers is not a one-man job; it requires a good half dozen Taggers working side by side to complete in a half hour or less. Any longer and you could have spinners buzzing you, critiquing your work with miniguns.

Because Tagger art is not appreciated by the Dead Guys; in fact, the ISA finds it criminal, treating Taggers as if they were murderers. So you cooperate despite that fierce independence which probably led you into this life in the first place. You gather to discuss ideas and critique others' work. There are concept

meetings as well as mini art shows as you vie for the right to design the next Message mural. A rivalry of sorts sometimes pops up between you and other Tagger "studios" as you compete to see which of you can create the ultimate Message. But always it's the Message that holds you together, along with the recognition of what you can accomplish working as a group.

Belonging

Back when you were younger, you scribbled your tag on desks, tables and doors at school. Then one day inspiration hit you and you created a mural depicting your principal as a fascist dictator with the teachers surrounding him as his devoted henchmen ruling over the oppressed students. Sure, you got detention for three months, but that's when the Taggers approached you. They recognized your talent and wanted you in their gang. First it was simple code messages in random scrawls, but soon you found yourself hanging from a rig at midnight, helping complete a caricature of the Night City mayor on the Heywood Express overpass. Now, you're reaching kids all over the city through mural Messages with your Tagger buddies. While you still individually scrawl a tag here and there, the Dead Guys think that the whole gang's only one person, one very deviant and busy person.

Allies & Enemies

To do all this properly and get those pieces done in secured zones, you need help, namely Beaverbrats. The two gangs are closely allied as you share similar goals and work together a lot. In general, Taggers admire the 'Brat's ability to get past security fences and such, while Beaverbrats think Tagger graffiti is pretty neat. Thus you see the wisdom of combining your strengths to stick it to the Machine more efficiently. There are even some members who cross over from one gang to the other. The 'Brats just wish you'd dress a bit more conservatively.

Rads are also closely allied with Taggers, as they often hire you to spread their particular Message, and what better way than spraypainted across an overpass? Taggers think Rads are a little too caught up in their own politics, but are otherwise okay. Others that you deal with are Arcorunners if you live in arcologies and Squats if on the street, but you aren't close with either yogang. Many other yogangs dislike Taggers for the simple fact that you claim everywhere as your territory, tagging whatever you want, wherever you want. This particularly ticks off Megaviolents who hate anyone infringing upon their turf, and the Guardians who dislike graffiti messing up their clean neighborhoods.

Slang

Cleaners: the city workers responsible for erasing graffiti.

Elmo: a derogatory term for non-Taggers who do graffiti.

Group: a gang of Taggers.

Mast: really incredible, as in "what a mast message!"

Message: Tagger graffiti with a particular purpose, typically denouncing the ISA.

MO: the type of art the Tagger typically does.

PropSlog: a propagandist slogan, generally from the ISA.

Rupture: an interrupted message or tag.

Sig: the name signed under murals or in graffiti.

Supplies: a Tagger's tools for graffiti.

Tag: a simple piece of graffiti, or as a verb, to create a piece of graffiti.

Yogang Skill: Messenger (EMP)

While anyone can spraypaint a wall, Taggers have the special artistic ability to create a piece that has a message, looks good and can be done in record time. The images will usually be fairly straightforward, but the execution can be quite exquisite, time allowing. The art itself can also be filled with images and symbols kids understand in a sort of visual GenSpeak (requiring an Average GenSpeak to decipher). This info may be simple, such as "security cameras in the area", or complex, as in "revolt against the ISA authority through destruction of property." The time required to create these Messages depends upon the complexity of the piece.

Taggers are also well versed in gang tags, such that they can often tell what gangs are active in a particular area by seeing just a few pieces of graffiti (Average). As they often intrude upon other gang's turfs, they also generally know that gang's size, leader and disposition (Difficult). This can mean the difference between life and death for gangs passing through Megaviolent territory as opposed to 'Facer turf.

Using Your Messenger Skill:

- **Graffiti Warnings:** For example, warn of a CorpSec controlled area. (Average) Requires 10 minutes minus Messenger skill (minimum 1 min.).
- **Message Murals:** Create a beautiful mural with a Message (15'x10'). (Difficult) Requires 1d6 hours, -30 min. per additional Tagger that helps out.
- **Decipher:** Easy task. Taggers can easily read hidden info in other Tagger's works.
- **Identify Turf:** Average difficulty. A Tagger can generally determine what gang controls a given area by seeing graffiti.
- **Gang Info:** Difficult. Most Taggers work in gang-controlled areas and get to know those gangs. They can give information on the leader, size and disposition of a gang whose turf they successfully identify.

If You're A Tagger:

- 1) Tell me your name, age and sex.
- 2) Describe what you look like.
- 3) Besides your V-Trodes and some flashpaint cans, pick four different things from the list below that you are currently carrying
 - Nylon carrybag.
 - Sleeping bag.
 - 1 set of mag-grapples.
 - Cybernetic claw grapple.
 - 100 meters of SuperString climbing rope.
 - Pack of 10 microflashlights.

JAMMERS

Hi. Glad you're still with us. Don't worry about your eyesight; it'll return shortly. Everything will look like static for a while, then it'll clear out. In the meantime, your hearing is as sharp as a bell, so listen up while I give you a rundown on what it's like to be a Jammer.

A Jammer is a rare type of cyberevolved and a relatively new development. Although the frequency of Jammers is rare, it appears to be increasing, so we can't offer any demographics at this time. We believe that Jammers were developed when the nanites discovered how important sound, music, broadcasting and such were to our society. Either that, or they are a more accessible form of Scanner, using sonic energy instead of electroencephalographic energy. We're not sure.

In any event, you have been converted to a master of sonic energy, both reception and transmission. You've become a walking recording studio, if you will. While you don't have the raw power of a Tinman or the direct influence of an Alchemist, your abilities are still considerable, and have the added advantage of being subtle and often difficult to detect.

I see you're having trouble swallowing your soda; I should have warned you about your throat. Your entire esophagus has been completely changed. Your throat and tongue, starting just behind your teeth and ending at the entrance to your lungs, is now a malleable hexite tube, which you can alter to suit your needs. This means that you can reshape the tube to provide any type of tone (or, as the audiophiles say, 'timbre') you wish, and you can change its diameter to better project and pitch your voice. You can focus your voice into a narrow megaphone or a powerful sonic punch.

Your vocal chords have also been altered to allow you much greater control than ordinary humans have. You can range from well below the range of human hearing to the upper range of what a dog can hear. You can also emit a pure tone, a normal human spread, a bell-like harmonic, or, with practice, a polyphonic sound (that's several distinct voices at once).

Your ears have been altered, too. Like your throat, they have been replaced with hexite, although the front part of the auricle (the ear lobe, the tragus, and the helix of the upper ear) still have a covering of cartilage and skin. We recommend that you wear your hair long to cover the rest of your metallic ear. The hexite portions of your ear can be reshaped as you see fit; you can even spread them out like Dumbo and — oh, that's an old Disney movie. You know, Disney? Boy, society really has deteriorated. Never mind. As I was saying, you can spread your ears into any

shape you want. Make them big and parachute-like, and you can pick up very soft sounds. You can focus them like a cat for directional hearing, or wrap them like a thin cone to act like a parabolic mike. And since you can shape the cone as you wish, listening at doors has never been easier — getting a perfect seal is a cinch.

But not only are your external ears all new, the inner ears are also improved. You are much more discerning in your listening abilities.

You can tell if someone is stressed, much like a voice analyzer. You can tell the difference between a recording and the real thing. You can tell between a voice and someone trying to mimic that voice. And, of course, you can also listen to sounds above and below the human norm whenever you want. What hope we have to communicate with the dolphins and whales depends on you and your kind, one of these years.

All of this is accomplished by the extra wiring that has been done in your brain. The aural and lingual portions of the brain have been better wired to use much more of your brain power. You've heard, I assume, that most humans don't use more than about 10% of their brain, right? Well, you can use 50% or more of your brain for the control of your ears and voice. And, as an added benefit, you have a small transmitter in your brain stem which you can use to broadcast on radio waves. You can broadcast any sound you know. Your range is limited, you can only overpower a nearby station for a few dozen feet, but hey, every little bit helps, right?

You still have maybe an hour or so before your sight returns, so you might as well start practicing! Bird calls, anyone?



JAMMERS

SONIC MANIPULATORS AND EXPERT AUDIO MIMICS

▼ This report was taken from the government a mere five days after we located our first Jammer. The report suggests that they had a Jammer for a minimum of a few weeks before that. This is a disturbing development, because it appears that Tuere has galvanized the CDC and has the full backing of the government. Note also that John Hunter is no longer the recipient of the memo; his association with Chaing may have gotten him into trouble.

▼▼▼ Alt

Source: Dr. Margaret Tuere, CDC
[NSecA@FtGGMeade.
.R&D_DBioP.TC1

Destination: Lt. Gen. Chris Iacolucci
DoD@Pent..NSec_Tac..JH1<EYES
ONLY — READ and DESTROY >
Message Reads:

General Iacolucci:

Our future depends on our ability to fight back against these creatures, and I trust the army to your capable hands. We cannot try to handle these mutants with kid gloves, because every day they get more and more dangerous. As an example of their damned adaptability, another subclass has appeared, which we have dubbed Jammers.

So far, these CNM-infested former humans have been able to control electricity, radio energy, and chemical energy. Now they have added sonic energy to their repertoire. The more I study this hideous plague, the more I feel like we are a doomed species unless we act decisively, now.

Simply put, the Jammers have amazing control of the transmission and reception of sound. They have a hexorganic voice synthesizer instead of vocal chords: a strange bastardization of normal and mechanical, yet all without the elaborate central processor like the Wizards have. Even though they can broadcast in the radio spectrum, they do it with a simple hardwired processor, which seems unaffected by EMP guns. The supercarbon structure of this device surpasses all limitations of mere organic constructs. They

aren't restricted to "normal" voices, either. Jammers can make any sound they want, from a normal human voice to a car horn to a piano to nails on a chalkboard (a sound of which our test subject was particularly fond).

Their voxsynth is further enhanced by their hexite esophagus, which can be reshaped to allow for better focus and amplification of sound. The esophagus can be reshaped to change the timbre of the voice. With practice (as our subject did), a Jammer can divide the esophagus into two or more channels, giving each a distinct voice. Although it's more difficult, the Jammer can even manipulate the separate channels to modulate the voices separately — having one channel singing a song (using manipulations in the esophagus itself to act as lips and tongue) while the other channel hums a counterpoint.

Their ears are likewise modified to hexite. They can be reshaped to fit any task, whether focusing on a band or even a single frequency, to directional enhancement, to dramatically increasing sensitivity to ambient sound. It appears that they can even filter out background noises by selectively eliminating certain disturbing frequencies.

Finally, these things have a small radio transmitter mounted in between their cerebrum and cerebellum. Since it has a very small internal power source as compared to the Wizards and Bolters, it lacks range and punch, but it can overwrite standard broadcasts up to ten meters away, and can be picked up on a clear channel as far as a kilometer. They appear to control the broadcast frequency the same way they can control the pitch of their voice: by "feel." Fortunately, with their limited CPU, their broadcast control is not precise; they tend to broadcast in a sloppy band, which may give us a way to secure our systems against false broadcasts.

You may think control of sound does not come across as much of a threat to national security. I beg to differ. These are not teenagers; they are synthetically-mutated monsters, driven by nanites of unknown origin. Although sound is seemingly small in scope, the flexibility of the medium is alarming, and the ease with which Jammers can conceal themselves among the general populace is only exceeded by Scanners. A Jammer's ears and tongue are the only manifestations which give them away (for which I suggest that short hair be mandated as the uniform code for all schools, public, corporate, and private).

The radio and sonic manipulation are all but impossible to spot under any but clinical conditions.

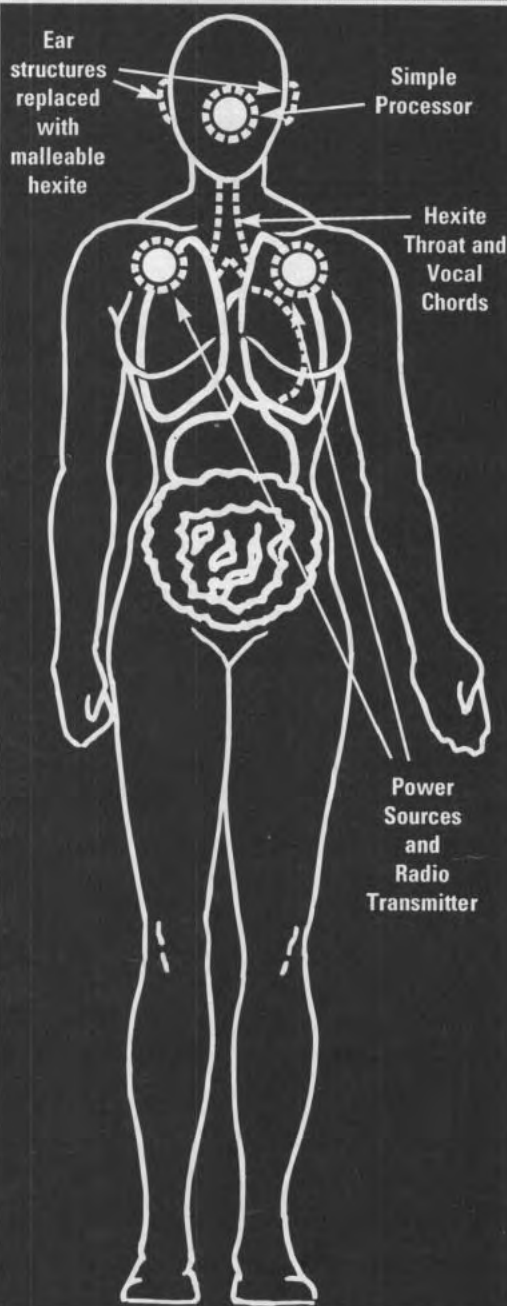
Jammers can bypass voice-activated security with near impunity. Once a Jammer has listened to someone he has an uncanny ability to imitate that voice. Given the incredible range and selectivity of their hearing, they can pick up voice patterns across a crowded football stadium. The only security against having your voice stolen is to stop talking, which of course is impossible. This means that voice locks can no longer be trusted. Similarly, we'll never be able to get a voice engram on these mutants, which will impede identification and pursuit.

Additionally, Jammers can communicate very easily among each other and with certain animals like dogs. Jammers can speak with each other using infrasonics and ultrasonics, below or above the range of normal hearing. With the ability to modulate their voices using nothing but their hexite throats, Jammers can carry on conversations while sitting around quietly with their mouths slightly open. Since they can vary the pitch at will, monitoring such conversations would require a lot of equipment.

Another problem, and perhaps the one with the most far-reaching consequences, is that Jammers have the capacity for echolocation. Fortunately, our subject never seemed to realize this, and we can hope that others will be equally slow on the uptake. Simply put, echolocation requires an adaptable voicebox and exacting hearing, both of which Jammers have. The subject emits a brief high-pitched pulse, and listens to the echoes as the sound bounces off objects. Bats and many marine mammals use echolocation to move, and it's only a matter of practice until these things learn to use it as well. Echolocation has nearly boundless consequences; with it a Jammer can see in total darkness, tell whether an adult has cyberware, spot secret observation doors and one-way mirrors, and even whether you've eaten recently. Experienced Jammers could tell whether or not a gun is loaded, how fast someone's heart is beating, and what the proper combination of a mechanical lock is. Echolocation combines the best of radar, vision, and x-rays; about the only thing it can't tell you is color.

There are other difficulties as well. Jammers can incapacitate adults with sound, by using loud, high-frequency noise or a focused subsonic punch. Jammers have the ability to shatter many solid crystalline structures in much the same way as an opera singer can break a wine glass by voice alone. Fortunately there are not many items susceptible to this outside of the dining room.

Additionally, the acute hearing of the Jammer subclass may cause difficulties in our own use of dissimula-



JAMMER SKILL: HOLLER [BODY]

This is the Jammer's ability to produce, assimilate and broadcast (both sonically and via radio) sounds of various types. Your skill starts at +1. The difficulty of the task depends on whether you're trying to listen, speak, or imitate, and the degree of accuracy required.

DATA PAD®

tion, synthetic voices, and other psywar techniques that have been proven effective against the juvenile infected, and may force us to completely redesign our approach to controlling this contagion.

The radio aspect was difficult to pin down, but once our subject began falsifying intercom messages using our voices, we caught on. The potential is there for a lot of confusion in the electronic media, but any damage they

can cause is apparently restricted to audio transmissions with localized effects. This seems to be the only area where the potential effects are not stupefying.

▼ Wrong! ▼▼▼ Alt

I hope I have convinced you that this new mutant form is a sleeper: seemingly weak, but very effective when the various facets of the power are used. Good luck, General, and please call for anything the CDC can do for you.

JAMMER POWERS

LISTENING

Attempting	Diff.
Directional hearing	5 to 15
Filtering background noise	10
Bandwidth reduction	20
A human voice at 20 meter range	10
A human voice at 50 meter range	15
A human voice at 100 meter range	20
A human voice at 200 meter range	25
Voice stress analysis	15
Infra- / ultrasonics	10

DIFFERENTIATION OF SOUNDS

Someone imitating another person	10
Someone imitating a sound	auto
Differentiating a recording from real life	15
Differentiating an AI voice synth from the real person using a digital medium	25

IMITATION

Some sample difficulties:

- **Simple sounds:** small chimes, ticking clock, watch beep, dripping faucet, sniffing, whistle
- **Average sounds:** telephone ringing, a voice you're very familiar with, a sneeze, a dog's bark, an exact repeat of a phrase or sound you've heard clearly, a creaky chair.
- **Difficult sounds:** the president's voice, a spinner powering up, adding a small modification to a phrase you've heard clearly
- **Very Difficult sounds:** someone shouting when you've only heard him speak, someone speaking when you've only heard him over a phone or radio.
- **Nearly Impossible sounds:** spinner crash, a chromatic rock song
- Each additional voice adds +5 to the difficulty.

BROADCASTING

- Can broadcast in the AM, FM, and shortwave frequencies to receivers within 50 meters. Signal Quality is Digital (see "Broadcast Blues", pg 28).

- Can broadcast via radio any sound recorded or handled under the Imitation rules above at a +5 to task difficulty.
- Jammers can only broadcast audio, but can override the audio track of a digital TV program (+8 to difficulty).
- Scrambled signals can be pirated, but not deciphered or imitated without the proper coding.

ECHOLOCATION

Attempting	Diff.
Seeing basic shapes like doors and chairs	5
Seeing small shapes like cups and pictures	10
Sensing cyberware, secret doors, people behind a curtain	15
Telling if someone's eaten recently, locating hollow hiding places	20
Telling if something is made of two or more substances, hearing breathing	25
Sensing the options in a cybereye, whether or not a gun is loaded	30

JAMMER STATISTICS

Special Skill: Holler voice range: variable
radio range: fifty meters

Special Attack Sonic Stun (see *CGen*, pg. 145. Range equals average of Holler and BODY). May only be used eight times per day without straining the throat (-1 BOD for every use after the eighth)

Special Bonus voice modulation allows +1 to +3 to social skills when speaking

NOTES

- Jammers can retain a number of voices equal to one half their INT stat times their Holler skill.
- Jammers must eat 1% of their BODY stat every 8 hours. If they fail, their throat and ears solidify, and they can only be fed intravenously to recover. Jammers do not hibernate.

STUPID CYBERTRICKS

▼ Well, punks, Rache Bartmoss here, although those of you who didn't already know that need to have your idols recalibrated to include me and my cat. Alt assures me he's here, sitting on my frost-covered coffin with icicles dangling from his whiskers. Yeah, right, and I'm Santa Claus. Anyway, thanks for nothing for jamming the BBS with all your little comments, you cretins. Sure, blather away and make more work for me to do, just trying to keep this BBS secure from Whindam's prying ISAs. Blah blah blah blah. By the way, many of you may have noticed the posting which addressed me as "Rache Barkmulch." You may find this funny, just like some of you thought "Peatmoss" was funny, but rest assured that I found the snot-nosed little ingrate who posted the Barkmulch note and roasted his brain alive in his skull — once I found his brain, that is. So back off the name-slinging and get back to racking the ISA. ▼▼▼ RACHE

▼ Despite what Rache said, he didn't get the kid. He [BARTMOSS E-MAIL TEXT VIRUS KICKS BUTT OVER ANY ANALOG FE-MAIL CODING! ELECT RACHE BARTMOSS! DEATH TO CENSORSHIP!] through. ▼▼▼ ALT

REALISTIC DUD

I'm a Scout (see *Ecofront* — Alt). I took the idea for the fake gun and did it one better, because it's easier to shape and the victim spends even less time looking at it before acting on it — a Scout grenade! Everyone knows basically what a hand grenade looks like: a squished baseball with square knobs all over it. Shape one of your probes like a grenade, cough up a lot of extra leash, and toss it where you want it. We were in a building and needed to get down a stairwell to where several dead-boys were holed up. I dropped a grenade, and when they ran for cover, our Tinman dropped down behind, followed by our StreetFighter. Neither got shot, so the play worked! —Knuckles, Lynnwood, WA

▼ Again, a creative idea, though of limited application. The metallic sheen of hexite makes this trick impractical for the creation of baseballs, but what the heck. Fortunately, most non-vets don't know what a grenade is really like, and tend to panic more than they should. Vets will probably react differently, and either fall on the grenade or try to drop it back out the window. This is not a bad thing, however, because if you're on the ball, you can then grab them with your probe. The vet ain't

been born that expects to grab a grenade only to have it grab him back. ▼▼▼ HAMMER

HYPERTEXT

One good way to resolve a grenade scare is to roll the Scout's Probe Ops skill versus the targets' COOL plus either Combat Sense or Authority. Give the targets a penalty which reflects the quality of their training — standard security guards should get about a -5, BuReloc a -3, CorpSec a -1, and military personnel no penalty at all.



HARD TO SWALLOW

When I found out that I was a Jammer, I thought I was screwed. I mean, everyone else gets monoblade arms and tasers and stuff and all I get is to honk like a goose. Big whoop. But then we got stopped and searched by some cops, and we had some contraband on us. Without thinking, I popped that stuff in my mouth and swallowed. I guess I made some sort of pocket inside my throat to catch it, because I was able to cough it up again after the cops left. It was all gooeey with spit, but it was safe and we weren't arrested. Pretty bumped, huh? —Philer, West Texas

▼ True enough. With a hexite throat, you can swallow just about anything, even knives and the like. That doesn't mean that you can eat anything — blades and poisons will still have a field day in your stomach, so don't let them go all the way down — but you can still play cyberhamster. And if you manage to divide your throat into two partitions, you should be able to swallow something down one and talk out of the other. There is one caveat for you: Even if you swallow something, it still has size. The ISA might learn to start looking for lumpy throats. ▼▼▼ ALT

▼ Oh, yeah, this is great! You guys think you're just so frackin' invulnerable, don't you? I can see it now: Some stupid sawed-off little weef tries to charf up the grenade he swallowed and all he drops is a pin. Ops! Man, the image just cracks me up! Some wide-eyed half-pint on all fours praying to the porcelain god, hacking like a dog and trying to cough up a high-explosive hairball! Bark bark bark BOOM! Ah hah hah hah! Talk about a mind-blowing experience! This I gotta see, just once. Hey, all you Jammers send me your addresses, okay? ▼▼▼ RACHE

DATA/PAYD®

HYPERTEXT

The difficulty of swallowing something depends on its size, whether or not you swallow it completely, and whether you need to protect it against saliva by creating a sealed hexite bubble instead of a pocket or shelf. Note also that the kid has to be able to fit the item through his mouth ...

Golf ball, thimble, needle	5
Plum, V-Card, spool of tape	10
Knife, pen, banana (whole)	15
Sunglasses, drumsticks	20
30-round clip for an assault weapon	25
Holding the item in the throat	+2
Holding the item in a sealed hexite bubble	+5



TOOLS AT HAND

Scout probes are useful for more than just scouting and faking people out with sculptures. You can also form them into handy tools when your Alchemist lets you down. I've made a hammer, a screwdriver, and wire cutters with my probes. Also, since the probes hide in your arms, it makes it easy to smuggle tools into a restricted area.

— Retro, Savannah, GA

▼ There's little to comment on this, but be sure to practice a lot at home before you make your tools in the field.

▼▼▼ Mitch

HYPERTEXT

Simple objects like hammers can be made automatically. Tools which require some precision (Phillips screwdrivers, thin putty blades) are Easy, and intricate or jointed tools (saws, tin snips) are Difficult. There may even be Very Difficult tools, but they are rare and specialized.



HOT POTATO

I've been taking some biology in high school, and I've come across something which might help Tinmen to handle too-hot objects. I've heard that Tinmen have a problem carrying very hot items as the heat migrates up their hexite limbs. Arctic animals have a similar problem with cold, and they solve it by having their veins next to their arteries in their limbs; the veins cool the arterial blood as

it goes to the feet and the arteries heat the venous blood as it returns to the heart. I figure if Tinmen could learn to do this with small portions of hexite, they could carry just about anything they want. — Rage, Richmond, VA

▼ Smart idea. The concept is called counter-current heat transfer, and it could be applied to Tinmen limbs by setting up a variety of internal currents and eddies in the limb. Essentially, by pumping energy into the system (by moving the hexite about), you can keep up the heat gradient from your torso to your hand. One of our kids has been able to keep a 300 degree gradient along his arm. Similarly, you can keep from frying your behind when walking through coals by pumping your legs. Be careful though; tossing lava around without the proper practice could leave you in the hurt locker.

▼▼▼ MITCH

HYPERTEXT

Ordinarily, heat flows from hot to cold. A Tinman can pick up a very hot coal and throw it with no problem, because the coal doesn't remain in the hand long enough to cause problems. If the Tinman wants to hold onto the item for a long time, he must make a Hexite Shaping roll every few minutes. This ranges from Easy for a hot light, to Average to pick up a hot barbecue, to Difficult to hold a piece of phosphorous as a torch, to Nearly Impossible to hold a piece of tungsten near melting point. Failure means the Tinman starts to take heat damage. Damage can be as fast as one point per round for tungsten (with damage continuing past the time the kid throws the tungsten away as more heat dumps into the torso) to one point period for a barbecue.



HYPERTEXT

MORE STUPID CYBER TRICKS

If you have an idea for a stupid cyber trick that you'd like to share with your fellow revolutionaries, by all means, send it in. Include the name of the gamemaster, the player, the character's handle, and your (real) home town. Be a part of history in the making!



THE GEN GM



This is our regular section for the Gamemaster who has to keep all you cyberkids in line. Players reading beyond this point are subject to a medical examination by CorpSec. If you pass you graduate to a body bag ...

The topics of media technology and manipulation in the 21st century could fill volumes. Here, we've done our best to give you the basics in *CyberGeneration* terms, but don't hesitate to draw from other sources. Films and shows such as *Max Headroom*, *Wild Palms*, and *Looker* and books like *1984* and *Little Heroes* can give excellent inspiration for campaigns buried in propaganda and mind manipulation. Of course, studying the Nazi regime's control of cultural images, the evolution of corporate advertising in the last forty years, and American leaders' current use of the media can be frighteningly educational as well. Most of the really scary stuff is all too real ...

The Vidiot Challenge Staying Alive and On The Air

Vidiots are the yobang equivalent to the Media class from *Cyberpunk*. They know how to use technology to get the word out

on things many people don't want broadcast in an environment that has become actively hostile towards this sort of thing. Since they tend to be pretty high profile, Vidiots in the ISA have to cover their butts more than most. Say they start up a small broadcasting unit to spread the news about Petrochem's illegal takeover of a Colorado State Park. How do they keep DSA and Petrochem goons from finding their little pirate set-up and perforating their adolescent butts? Here are some things to suggest and watch for:

- Make their transmitter mobile. A van can fit most of the equipment necessary for this sort of thing, although it could only handle pre-recorded or live-on-the-scene style TV broadcasts. Look at BIG-TIME TV from *Max Headroom* for an example of a mobile station (although they'd be dead meat in the ISA without better countermeasures). Mobile stations are great for short broadcasts, but a prolonged broadcast will result in the mobile DSA units triangulating on them and closing in.
- Using someone else's transmitter, either by splicing into cable, or pirating onto someone else's frequency. Unfortunately, few broadcasters take kindly to this sort of electronic hijacking. They will use their best means to trace your tap and then to snuff you out. And their "best means" can be pretty effective.

- Sell the story to a legit station that has the resources and the guts to broadcast it. But the ISA is shutting down such stations one after the other ...

- Find a means of communication that isn't easily traced, such as graffiti, posters, v-billboards, etc. While these usually reach a smaller audience, they can often be even more effective on that limited scale.

Meanwhile, they should be doing their best to link up with other pirate broadcasters (like Badass Dog) in order to combine their resources for maximum effect. Such people may not be active members of the CyberRevolution, but, as the saying goes, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend", and the kids might expect tacit cooperation if nothing else.

Is Anyone Listening? (Or Broadcast Blues, Part Deux)

Once a station or Vidiot group has got the transmitter up and running, they can broadcast their stuff, but is anyone listening? What kind of an audience do they have? This really depends on whether they are hijacking an existing station's broadcast or just using a vacant airway.

Pirate stations using empty bands or channels begin with a small base audience, as those bands and channels are normally empty, so generally ignored. The station is considered to have a base Audience Rating of 0. If they are overpowering an existing station's signal, they gain that station's base Audience Rating minus 2. The original station's Audience Rating will range from 3 to 6 at the Referee's discretion (the higher the rating, the more popular it is). Cable stations, due to their inherently stronger appeal, will have a base Audience Rating between 5 and 8. Note that the more popular the station, the more adverse its reaction to piracy will be (i.e., Net54 will send assault teams to quiet the pirates while the Barney Channel might just call the cops.)

Next, consider whether the group has told anyone about their venture. A Rad using Organize will do wonders, as will a little

Streetsmarts word-of-mouth spread around the city. After all, most likely the group's target audience is other kids. The amount of advertising acts as a modifier to the base Audience Rating, beginning with +0 for no advertising, to a maximum +4 for a great deal of publicity.

The station's Audience Rating is further modified according to the Audience Rating modifiers, as well as the host of the station. This host has a major effect, making or breaking a station's reputation. This is often the domain of Rads, Guardians and sometimes Goldenkids. They use one half their Yogang Skill as a bonus to the Audience Rating.

Recalculate the popularity of the station every day or week of transmission (Referee's discretion), as the character's broadcasts could become popular culture. Or, if they don't make it big right away, they could try hijacking different stations' signals, though this will end up annoying multiple corporations and increasing the amount of ISA attention directed at them. In any case, if the group does their job, they can influence the city they live in and successfully fight the ISA on the MediaFront.

AUDIENCE RATING MODIFIERS

PROGRAMMING		SIGNAL QUALITY	
Interactive	+3	Weak	-2
Entertainment	+2	Average	-1
Mixed	0	Strong	0
Political	-1	Digital	+1
News	-2	TV Station	+2
Special Interest	-3	Cable TV	+3
RANGE		AGE	
1 mile	-1	Less than 24 hrs	-1
5 miles	0	1 day to 1 week	0
25 miles	+1	1 week to 1 month	+1
		1 month or more	+2

AUDIENCE RESPONSE TABLE

AUDIENCE RATING	RESPONSE
0	<i>Half-second Interest:</i> Only a few juves will have heard or seen the broadcast, and only with a passing interest.
1-2	<i>Momentary Glance:</i> While flipping through the hundreds of stations most juves come across it, but don't really find it that interesting.
3-4	<i>Interesting:</i> A number of juves in the area find the station interesting enough to remain tuned for at least a minute, and it makes them think, a little.
5-6	<i>Fascinating:</i> The station gains the attention of a good portion of juves who think it's pretty neat. They actually talk about it later and it could even influence their opinions.
7-8	<i>Absorbing:</i> Developing true fans, the station more than captures the juves' interest: It becomes the voice of youth and begins to attract the attention of the ISA.
9-14	<i>Enthralling:</i> Even kids not watching or listening have heard of the station and what it's about, and it has a huge following. The ISA is definitely interested — better look into moving!
15+	<i>Phenomenon:</i> Everyone, including the dead guys, know of the station and it has a fanatical following. At this stage, the characters cannot turn back. The fans adore them; however, the ISA has death warrants in their names.

With the ISA cracking down on pirate operations, getting the word out using underground stations isn't that easy, but recently use of GenSpeak has ensured that only the right people get the messages broadcast to the public. What this means is that only yogangers will understand the transmissions. Boost the Audience Rating by +1 for kids if the broadcaster's *GenSpeak* skill is 6 or higher, and reduce it by -3 for dead guys. Therefore, a station might be immensely popular with kids, but barely known to adults.

The Face of the Enemy

As should be obvious, the ISA is actively crushing the kind of gonzo video-journalism which old-time cyberpunks took for granted. The broadcast of unauthorized material is now considered an offense against the public good, such acts are a felony by definition. And it's just amazing how many felonious pirate broadcasters are killed in firefights during apprehension. It does save the taxpayers a lot of money in trials, though.

Since the Media Council (see pg. 5) is an executive committee, they simply mandate what is "acceptable" and what is not (of course, that's a pretty frightening thought all by itself). The main group coordinating the *enforcement* efforts is the Domestic Security Agency (see *CGen*, pg. 174) with CorpSec as back-up if large-scale forces are required (something that chafes CorpSec no end). The DSA can call on the local police (who generally hate such operations) as well as BuReloc (who look forward to any excuse to beat up on people).

The DSA operates radio triangulation vans as well as special broadcast software operatives (the equivalent of a radio band Netwatch) who work to track and locate any transmitting offenders (see "Broadcast Blues" for tracking times). But, being the DSA, they use a lot of subtler techniques as well, such as posing as underground media "artists" in order to sell illegal programs to pirate stations, nailing them in the process. And that's just the beginning. As the DSA becomes more active in an area, the cyberkids can expect all sorts of stings waiting in the shadows.

When pitting your players against all these enemies of free expression, use the following guidelines. DSA field ops can use the Good or Exceptional Agent templates (*CGen*, pg. 187). Any CorpSec or DSA thugs will use Good CorpSec templates (*CGen*, pg. 188) and the police can use Average CorpSec (*CGen*, pg. 186).

The kids have one big advantage however: The Eden Cabal info network is getting better and better, which means that any sort of serious background check on new people may reveal something to raise suspicions. The exceptions to this may be the Raptors. Its can be hard to peg these kids, they being cyber-evolved themselves. Spotting them often only happens after the damage has been done, which means they usually survive to move on to another assignment. The strain of this kind of work

isn't easy on the Raptors either. Keep in mind, these are kids too, not hardened agents or solos. Many feel the strain of playing a role that will result in the betrayal of other kids just like them.

And some of them break ...

One group that you should be careful not to *constantly* classify as the enemy is the kids' parents. In the adventure that follows, many parents have fallen prey to the propaganda of the state and the insidious philosophy of Final Quarantine, and now fear their children as kevlar-infested monsters; they may even make attempts to kill their own offspring. But in many cases these people are victims almost as much as the CyberEvolved, and should be spared if possible. Of course, convincing your players of this after Dad has just tried to blow their heads off may be tricky. Try to get the players to see the whole picture, not just a tiny piece of it. That's what being a Revolutionary is all about.

CyberGeneration Q & A

Here we share a few questions sent in by you GenGMs along with their answers.

You say Tinmen don't feel pain past the "irritation point." What is the "irritation point" and when does it come into play?

The intent of this was mainly for roleplaying purposes: The Tinman is unlikely to have his attention or morale affected by intense pain or wounds. Thus a bullet in the ribs won't stop him from completing what he's doing unless it puts him into shock (he fails a Stun/Save roll), disables a limb or other area, or it kills him outright. Standard torture is also pretty useless on a Tinman. If you want to make this a modifier to his Stun/Save roll, that's up to you, but I'd only recommend that if your Tinmen are getting blown away far too easily.

When a Streetfighter uses *Kata*, does it take the place of his *Streetfighting* Skill or does it just add damage?

Kata can replace *Streetfighting* for melee and contact combat, as well as missile combat with some martial art weapons (if the Streetfighter specifies the weapon type with which he trains: shuriken, composite bow, etc.). Gun combat still uses *Streetfighting* (there is no Gun-Fu in *Cybergeneration* ... yet).

The premise for ISA seems strange: Why would the corporations want to take the place and thus the responsibilities of the government?

The ISA is a more complex concept than we had room to describe thoroughly in the basic *Cybergeneration* game (the *ISA Sourcebook* is in the works). Don't think of it simply as corporations taking the place of the government, but rather as an alliance of corporations (the CEP, see *CGen* pg. 173) which now controls the Federal Government so completely that they can do whatever they want to and get federal support (read: your tax dollars) for it. This allows them "legal" means and powers to totally control their employees' lives as well as to bury anyone who gets in their way. Nice for them; bad for us.

Don't Follow the Rules

Yeah, that's right, don't follow the rules. By now that should be the *Cybergeneration* credo. We've found that a lot of GMs (and players) are taking the skills system too seriously, too strictly.

That goes for you *2020* GMs, too: no reason to march in lockstep. Yes, we list an associated statistic for each and every skill in the rules. In *2020*, we even categorize the skills under their statistic. So what, you ask? So many GMs think that this means the skill must always be added to this particular statistic when making a skill check.

Relax a bit, punkers; right there in the *2020* rules we say, "determine which of your stats is the most appropriate to use." In *Cybergeneration*, we tell you to play fast and loose. This means you can bend the rules when the situation warrants. In fact, the whole concept of role-playing games is to bend the rules whenever needed. But enough theory. Let's show you how this works in action.

Take your average Tinkertot who wants to beat the living daylight out of a GoGanger who ruined a new gadget of his. Were the Tink to walk right up to the GoGanger and start a-swingin', we can all readily agree that he'd use his REF stat and his *Streetfighting* skill. Not a problem. But we all know your average technogeeb doesn't stand an ice cube's chance against a battle-hardened 'Ganger, so the Tinkertot abandons the frontal

approach concept and decides to ambush the bully instead (Never turn your back on a wounded techno-geek ...).

How should you determine how good an ambush site he finds? Well, it's an intelligence-based problem, right? Problem-solving, evaluating visibility, alertness, all these things fall under the domain of brain power. But ambushes are a combat situation, somewhat beyond the purview of *Get A Clue*. Setting up an ambush falls right under the *Streetfighting* skill, which is REF-based, right? Now we have conflicting answers. What to do?

Have the Tinkertot roll a skill check using INT plus *Streetfighting*. He gets the advantage of his superior smarts in finding a great place to hide, but must compensate for his lack of combat experience in finding a workable ambush site.

Other statistics can be crossed with *Streetfighting* as well. EMP could be used to determine whether a kid can figure out what a compatriot is likely to do in a combat situation. TECH could be used when trying to make booby traps or COOL when trying to maintain your icy calm during a brawl..

Using cross-statistic skill checks leads to more realism (and much better flexibility). Any skill could be cross-rolled with any statistic given the right situation. The list is endless, but we'll start by giving you some of our ideas in the list below. Each common yogang skill has two alternate examples of how it may be used.

TASK	SKILL	STATISTIC
Fade into a crowd when a cop is looking for you	Blend	COOL
Pass yourself off as a member of a different yogang	Blend	EMP
Intimidate someone into following your orders	Fearless Leader	BODY
Look for a kid in a burning building	Fearless Leader	COOL
Give an incorrect interpretation of GenSpeak to an adult	Genspeak	EMP
Mislead another juvie using double-entendre lingo	Genspeak	COOL
Find what's wrong with a mechanical device	Get a Clue	TECH
For girls: figure out if that boy is interested in you	Get a Clue	EMP
For guys: figure out if that girl is interested in you	impossible, ask her out any way	
Fix that leaky coolant line	GoGo	TECH
Pass the written part of your driver's test	GoGo	INT

TASK	SKILL	STATISTIC
Outrun a CorpSec agent	Jock Stuff	MOVE
Tear a phone book in half (useless, but impressive)	Jock Stuff	BODY
Melt an adult's heart	Little Angel	ATT
Stick to your story during a CorpSec interrogation	Little Angel	COOL
Dodge a question with a blizzard of incomprehensible snow	Schoolin'	COOL
Find a flaw in someone's alibi ("But he was left-handed, so ...")	Schoolin'	TECH
Figure out what kind of weapon someone has under their coat	Streetfighting	INT
Unjam a gun during combat	Streetfighting	TECH
Notice that you're being followed	Streetsmarts	INT
Talk your way past yogang sentries to see the gang leader	Streetsmarts	ATT
Stand perfectly still when a guard walks by the open office door	Thief Stuff	COOL
Tell whether someone is asleep or just faking it	Thief Stuff	EMP

KERRY EURODYNE

"The difference between right and wrong used to be a matter of who was left standing at the end. Now ...

Kerry Eurodyne has one hell of a voice.

Ever since he and superstar Johnny Silverhand parted ways, disbanding the hit group Samurai, Kerry has been a successful solo artist. He's withstood the test of time. His albums have gone platinum. His broken guitars have been auctioned for thousands of eurodollars. And his singing voice is recognized worldwide.

The year was 2013. Kerry was at the start of his solo career, eager to shout his own message. He'd done his time touring with Silverhand, and he had a deep concern for the destructive culture that dominated the world. The road trips were sobering: Fans murdered each other just to get tickets, everyone carried a gun, and the scenery from the tour bus was either a polluted corporate structure, or a colorless mother Earth raped of her resources. Filled with determination, Kerry started writing songs again.

He had a favorite phrase: "Time for Change."

First there was his off-center album *Modern Trenches*, chronicling the tragedies and heroes of the Second Conflict.

Then came *Critical Mass*, the tribute to the victims of the annihilation of Colorado Springs in 2008, followed by *Made in America*, a dedication album to the families who suffered in the Chicago bioplague of 2012. In each of them, Kerry chanted behind synthesized choruses: Time for Change.

But it was the Age of Survival; most people were only interested in cheap drugs, fast rides, and slow death to enemies. Firefights were an everyday occurrence. Though people loved Kerry Eurodyne's sound, they didn't seem to grasp the meaning of his lyrics. Like an angry father scolding someone else's child, Kerry sang the world's injustices to tone-deaf ears.

Three types of people emerged from this age: the dead, the paranoid, and the retired. The dead were the easiest to deal with—you sold them for parts. The paranoid were mainly the ones in power. They had won the game of backstabbing, murdering, cheating, and soul-selling. The retired were the people that had quit playing the game:



yesterday's edgerunners, now too old, too wounded, or too tired to keep up with the latest ways of burning their opponents. Kerry related to them all too well.

These people were looking for more value out of life and were taking more responsibility with their actions. It even became a trend. Noted one reporter: "It felt like the Second Coming of Manners." Kerry Eurodyne smiled — maybe change had come.

But so had the ISA. The year was 2023, and Kerry was starting to work on his latest album, *Facing the Nightmare*. His daughter, Derry Eurodyne, had just celebrated her twelfth birthday when he began to realize his most important audience—the kids. Ultimately, they controlled the future. But how would he get their attention? Then a Neo-Progressive Party agent approached him with an offer of unlimited sponsorship. To spread the gospel across the nation, Kerry needed money, and the Neo-Pros were ready to donate to his cause.

Plus the Neo-Prog Parties had purchased the four largest radio networks in the U.S., promising him valuable air time.

So he was there when the ISA was declared in 2024. It sounded like a great deal. The ISA seemed to be doing great work to rebuild the nation, sure enough, but exclusive sponsorship was a big commitment. Too big for Kerry's taste. Instead, he met them halfway. He wrote several pro-government jingles including one for the Gun Bounty. He performed at high schools. He hosted anti-violence rallies. But the youth were more interested in alternative "garage band" talent and actually accused him of selling out to the Machine. Disheartened, Kerry began to suspect that they were right.

Then the Carbon Plague arrived, and everything did change.

The year was 2026, and the ISA had declared war against the CNM virus. Kerry was urged to support them, and received pre-written melodies produced digitally from samples of his voice. "Support Whindam," the lyrics said, "and your children will be safe." The only thing needed was his personal approval before they were sent to be mass-produced. But the ISA seemed to have turned on him; it now had a ruthlessness that chilled. Kerry politely backed out of his deal before his sponsor's power had a chance to strangle him.

He reunited with the man now called Mister John Silverhand, and found a place in the CyberRevolution. Given a new purpose in the wake of the most destructive virus since the Black Death, Kerry Eurodyne took to the stage with a new album and a fresh message: *Domino Destiny*. A new trend was forming, and once again Kerry Eurodyne wanted to be its voice.

And the kids finally listened. Suddenly, it was the children that filled his concerts. They sang along with his songs on the radio. His album titles and choruses became secret code words for clubs and yogangs.

Then, like a dark chord in a haunting song, the Plague found his daughter Derry. He was on tour and out of town when it happened, and by the time he got home, she was gone. All that was left was a note scribbled by some uninformed teen yoganger: "You adults suck. Kidz rule. The CNM makes us strong. Yer dotter is getting strong. She is one of us now."

Frantic, he scoured the streets looking for her and sent word through Alt's network for any news. Days later, in an abandoned hideout, they found her, dead from the Change. She had been thrown into a bathtub and covered with faxpaper—a shallow, porcelain grave for the GlitterKid daughter of a megastar. Enraged, Kerry demanded answers but found none.

If a yogang or group of CyberEvolved had taken her, no one admitted to it. Though little could have been done to help her, Kerry felt certain that she would have survived if he'd been with her. Guilt and anger battled for control of his soul.

Kerry Eurodyne is now at the crux of a severe emotional crisis. Once proud of the CyberRevolution, he now feels somehow betrayed by fate, and unsure about whether he can continue to be part of the movement. As one of the few Revolutionaries who's worked both sides of the street, his connections have made him very valuable. But with his current instability, they may make him extremely dangerous.

How long will the Samurai ride the sword's edge?

TEMPLATE		Kerry Eurodyne			
INT	9	REF	7	COOL	10
TECH	7	MOVE	7	LUCK	5
BODY	8	EMP	8	ATT	9
S. ABILITY		Charismatic Leadership			10
NOTICE	7	ATHLETICS	8	DODGE	7
DRIVING	6	COMPOSE	11	HUMAN PER.	4
RIFLE	4	HANDGUN	7	SMG	5
MELEE	6	PERFORM	11	STEALTH	6
L L L L S S S C C C C M M M M M2 M2 M2 M2 M3 M3					
Cyberpunk™ BTM		-3	🌀 HITS	8	ARMOR 14

Gear: Cyberaudio (with recording and radio link), Neural Processor, Chipwear socket, Reflex Booster (+2), Smartgun Link, Biomonitor, Lt Armor, Heavy Handgun.

MABEL KHEINN

Field Supervisor, Night City DSA

"This is a PLAGUE, not a blessing, and these children are the dangerous and tragic victims of it. We must now make the hard decisions of how to deal with them."

Unlike many of the current crop of ISA flunkies, Mabel Kheinn isn't in this for power; she believes in what she is doing. And what she is doing is attempting to contain the single greatest threat humanity has ever seen: the CyberEvolved. She has seen the statistics. She knows that the Evolved are growing, and if not stopped now, threaten to displace normal humans within four generations.

Reacting to the most basic racial survival instinct, Mabel and millions like her have decided that humanity must not fall to the cold logic of an evolutionary imperative, even though the price may be the nation's own children.

This hard attitude has come from a hard life. Mabel was born October 7th, 1989, in Louisville, Kentucky, which made her about seven when the Collapse hit. While her unemployed father found succor in Smash, her mother scrambled to support the family with a series of odd jobs and desperate tactics. Mabel escaped to the Army when she was an under-age sixteen. She was just in time to be shipped to

Ecuador and the jungle hell of the "Second Central American Conflict." Any remaining innocence was burned away by images of napalm devouring grass huts and the screams of mutilated friends. When she returned in 2008, she immediately requested reassignment out of the field and into Army Intelligence. There, she participated in reseaching the ill-fated attempt by Military Intelligence to take over the Crystal Palace in 2009. Narrowly avoiding the purge of M.I. which resulted from that debacle, she laid low for ten years, just marking time.

She finally came into her own during the Second American Revolution in 2021. As the Eurocorps sent in their troops to retrieve their "wayward" U.S. holdings, her group helped coordinate the U.S. military's response, which consisted largely of occupying those facilities first and claiming them as U.S. property. During the campaign, her fiancé



was killed on an operation she was directing. After a dark and mournful time, she resolved to avoid further "emotional entanglements" and commit herself to her job.

She continued to excel at her duties. When she finally left the service in 2022, she was quickly recruited by the embryonic CorpSec. Field work revolved around "deactivating" rogue edgerunners and other malcontents that insisted on placing their personal interests above the needs of the growing industries which were rebuilding the nation.

This was child's play compared to Ecuador. Whether it was scouting a site for a BuReloc operation or preventing Eurocorp spys from infiltrating a Neo-American corporation, she threw herself into her work. As well as building a strong reputation among the field ops as an excellent and perceptive investigator, she was willing to follow orders — intelligently as compared to blindly — which made her popular with her supervisors.

By the time the ISA was declared in 2024, she was well established in the CorpSec Undercover Operations Division. It was she and a few other agents that brought the Undercover Division's activities to President Whindam's attention. Once it became apparent how effective a force they were, he soon co-opted the entire division as his own Domestic Security Agency. While still nominally part of CorpSec, in reality the new agency now operated as a separate part of the Executive Branch.

Just as her career seemed about to bloom, life dealt her another joker. When she coldly rebuffed the advances of a senator she had been assigned to protect, he got physical: big mistake for both of them. When she was done with him, a Trauma Team had to collect what was left. While she once again avoided dismissal, her career with the Agency appeared to be so much kibble.

But her vocal sentiments about the cyberevolved had garnered the attention of Margaret Tuere, the new head of the CDC, who shared Mabel's paranoia about the plague survivors. With Tuere's sponsorship, Mabel has slowly managed to work her way back into her superiors' good graces. Her assignment as the head of the Night City branch of the DSA is her chance to re-establish the Agency's confidence in her abilities: Night City is still relatively new territory for the ISA (as NorCal was a free state until recently) and handling the "pacification" of the area is both an opportunity and a test. She does *not* intend to blow it.

She has already managed to establish herself with her field ops; they know her rep and respect her. She has care-

fully cultivated her attitude towards the Raptors under her command and now views them as tools to be handled carefully, then disposed of quickly when the job is done. Her relationship with BuReloc is good, as they know that they can count on her support with their own operations. The local police, on the other hand, resent her ability to step in and take over almost any investigation at her whim and to conduct city-wide operations without civil sanction.

She will pursue her duties here with the same single-mindedness that has marked the majority of her career. This means that the cyberkids of Night City can expect to find themselves facing any number of undercover operations designed to smoke them out. And she is very good at her job.

Mabel has kept on a rigorous physical training program and, even though in her late thirties, she appears a decade younger due to judicious nanotech applications. Her demeanor is what you'd expect from a person of her background: direct and efficient with little or no emotional expression. That's not to say that she doesn't have emotions; she just viciously represses them in order to do her job. Unlike many who hunt the cyberevolved, she takes no pleasure in killing these children, but sees it simply as her necessary duty. Her unrelenting attitude and uncompromising policies have made her equally harsh with her personal life, limiting it to cordial relationships with her fellow DSA agents and employees. There *is* a person in that attractive but rigid frame, but she has honed herself into the semblance of a machine. What it will take to throw a monkey wrench into those gears?

TEMPLATE		Mabel Kheinn, Administrator			
INT	10	REF	9	COOL	8
TECH	7	MOVE	6	LUCK	3
BODY	7	EMP	5	ATT	9
S. ABILITY		Combat Sense		9	
NOTICE	8	ATHLETICS	6	DODGE	7
DRIVING	5	LIBRARY SEARCH	9	HUMAN PER.	8
RIFLE	5	HANDGUN	7	SMG	6
MARTIAL ARTS	6	INTERROGATION	8	STEALTH	6
L L L L S S S S C C C C M M M M M2 M2 M2 M2 M3 M3					
BTM	-2	HITS	7	ARMOR	18
Gear: Cyberaudio (with radio link, scrambler), Neural Processor, Chipwear socket, Reflex Booster (+2), Cyberoptic x 2, Smartgun Link, Biomonitor, Med. Armor, Einstein GeniusGun.					

OCCULT OF PERSONALITY



A CYBERGENERATION® ADVENTURE

Warning! Players must not read past this point!

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INTRODUCTION: THE BIG LIE

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The cyberkids stumble on an important data chip through interactions with various yogangs. It contains information on Dr. David Chaing and the Carbon Plague. To further their goals, the characters construct an artificial Chaing to counter an anti-Evolved media blitz, and discover further clues to the origins of the Kevlar Death.

Persecution of the Evolved is on the rise; even other kids are getting into the act. A cursory look at the media shows that the slant is getting harsher on the popular infomercialtainment shows like *American Dawn*. Introduce this into your campaign however you like — perhaps with an advertisement for "Impotent transsexual parents who saved their families from diseased mutant offspring, next on the *Harold O. Talk Show*." Couple this with increased police harassment on juveniles (like the player characters), who are the only age group that's cyberevolving, and you'll get the idea across.

Further, have the characters see and hear the effects of the CDC-sponsored propaganda campaign. Since your characters' path through the adventure will vary, take these elements and have the characters encounter them as they best fit in with the flow of your run. Remember that the propaganda will also affect how some people respond to the characters. Some examples of the propaganda campaign are as follows:

Posters, Handbills, and Billboards

- There is one poster that is prominent throughout the city. There are several variations, but they all follow the same theme. The posters show a happy, middle class family, with a mother and father doting on a boy and girl at a table set with a Norman Rockwell feast. Everyone is happy. There is a dog begging for table scraps. The ethnicity of the family varies depending on the neighborhood, but the words at the bottom are always the same: "Success from health; health from purity." And in smaller letters, below: "Avoid contamination. Keep your family pure. Call the CDC for details."

- Another common poster shows a Carbon Plague-stricken boy of about twelve, dressed in rags, hunched against a brick wall, and with the characteristic black limbs of a Tinman. The legend says "Help us get him off of the streets. Report infection to your local CDC office."

- A third, more malignant design shows an adult hand and a child's hand reaching for each other across a stylized virus design. A red circle and slash is superimposed on top of the hands. The legend says, "Don't Touch! Infection can be deadly! Contact your local CDC for information."

- Finally, a poster which shows a leering mother clutching her equally leering, obviously cyberevolved son. The child is drawn with exaggerated, mutated features and distorted limbs. The legend says "Report her! She's endangering your family too!"

Graffiti

Anti-evolved graffiti is becoming more common in the city. A common sight is a solitary Phi-Q logo. Another common one is a stenciled human skull with a DNA helix burned onto the forehead, and the legend "Best Defense." Other graffiti that the characters may see include the openly hateful "Save the strong! Kill the freaks!" and the cryptic "Moo Moo Mutants! There's no pot of gold ... are you ready for mind control?" This last is a red herring, but the characters may puzzle over it a while.

Television and Radio

The CDC is running several commercials on television, V-channels, satellite, and on-line services, with the same messages that are on the billboards and posters. The most common TV spot shows a family sitting around a table having a picnic. There are parents, a son, and a daughter. Over a few seconds, everyone touches the son in some way. As each person does, he or she is reduced to a skeleton instantly. Finally, the son is by himself, eating at a table filled with skeletons. The final voice over says: "Remember, report all suspicious illness to the CDC. It isn't worth the lives of your family."

The politically ambitious head of the CDC, Dr. Margeret Tuere, is also making many personal appearances on interview and news shows. The characters may very well see or hear her discussing the Carbon Plague. Some things that she is likely to say include:

- "The saddest thing about this plague is that the worst effects strike our children, our most precious and defenseless citizens. That's why early reporting of symptoms and quick action is so important. Who wants to see children suffer?"

- "Of course it is difficult for children to be separated from their parents and friends when they go to a recovery camp, but I think that there are benefits also. They get to share their experiences with peers going through the same things. Whom does a child trust more than another child?"

• *"As with all serious diseases, the solution is to be comprehensive. You can't ignore any detail, and you can't let sentiment interfere with the progress that must be made to protect the greater population. But you must also be sure to retain your humanity."*

• *"Obviously there will always be those few, selfish people who, however misguided, callously put their own needs ahead of those of their neighbors, friends, children, and community. They are the truest traitors that this nation has ever faced."*

And of course she's got some oft-quoted soundbites:

- *"If you love our children, you have to support our efforts."*
- *"Those who stand against quarantine are hateful people who want to see our children suffer."*
- *"Although there is pain now, we will forge a stronger nation from this crisis."*
- *"Time and love heal all wounds, but science cures disease."*
- *"Your unquestioning diligence and patriotism are the greatest gift you can give our good men and women on the front line of this crisis."*
- *"Civil rights advocates just don't get it. We're all in this together."*

Buzzwords

The proliferation of propaganda is having an effect on the citizens. Here are some buzzwords that the characters may hear bandied about in conversation (by adults or mature teenagers):

Carbon Traitors or Poxers: People who interfere with CDC efforts: cyberevolved sympathizers, people who aid plague victims or the evolved, parents and family members who shelter cyberevolved children.

Cured/Cleansed/Purified: Killed.

Family Education Program: CDC program to brainwash parents to suspect and report their kids, or anyone else's kids who might be infected. Common in schools.

Purity: Used specifically to mean absence of Carbon Plague symptoms. Parents may refer to a "purity screening" exam and a "purity certification" for their children. There is a lot of reference to "preserving the purity" of the population.

Recovery Camp: Used as a benign-sounding replacement for relocation and quarantine, often by self-deluding parents. No one has "recovered" from the camps.

Special Treatment Centers: CDC labs where plague victims and the evolved are studied, vivisected, etc. Often near recovery camps.

Youth Education Corps: A CDC-sponsored program of "pure certified" children and teenagers who teach other kids to ostracize and report the cyberevolved or poxers. Also common in schools.

DR. DAVID CHAING

The characters (and more so, their parents) remember David Chaing from television broadcasts. He was a Centers for Disease Control spokesman and a prominent figure during the initial outbreak and spread of the Carbon Plague. Whether he had any connection to the development or release of the Plague is unknown to the general public, although the V-card that the characters have found offers some tantalizing clues that his connection was in some way important.

Chaing was a common guest on news and talk shows, and was often cited in on-line and hard-copy text news reports. He was a popular calming influence, articulate and knowledgeable, and with a natural charisma that made him an island of sanity in the middle of a chaotic disaster. No one knew what his official connection to the crisis was; he was usually cited as a "government scientist" working on "the problem of the Carbon Plague", or as a "CDC spokesman."

Dr. Chaing was humanitarian, however, and in his interviews he always seemed more interested in the possibilities opened up to the survivors of the Carbon Plague than in eradicating them. Older (14-18 years) characters may also remember him from some earlier, more minor disease outbreaks, such as Gabon Fever in 2022 and the Whip Disease in 2025. Adults will remember him as a prominent figure and brilliant young researcher from the days of the Wasting Plague, way back at the turn of the century. It was after his work in Chicago that he got a nationally-syndicated column in many of the Net newsboards and became a household name. He was more famous than Dr. Marcus Welby had been in the previous century, and had the added bonus that he was a real doctor, and didn't just "play one on TV."

Nevertheless, when the Carbon Plague was raging at its worst, Dr. Chaing vanished. President Whindam demanded a full investigation, and publicly prayed for his safety. Chaing's appearances and announcements were taken over by stone-faced, less charismatic bureaucrats advocating more radical and deadly solutions. Nothing more was heard from Dr. Chaing, although his name was invoked as a sort of blessing for the heinous actions being undertaken by the ISA and the CDC under the sinister guidance of Chaing's former colleague, Margaret Tuere.

He is well remembered, though. People still wonder "what ever happened to that nice doctor from the news?"



PART I: BRINGING IT HOME

This is the media blitz which starts the adventure, and Night City's own Nightcrawlers (a Vidiot yogang) is fighting back. If you've played "Where the Wild Things Are" (the adventure included in *EcoFront*), then your characters have already met the Nightcrawlers, at least peripherally. Otherwise, it's up to you to decide why the Vidiots contact the PCs.

As an illustration of how bad things have gotten in the good old ISA, the characters have a run-in with Final Quarantine. As we said, it's just an illustration... *Cybergen*-style.

Hi Mom!

Choose one of the characters (one with a 'Family' plotpath?) and do the worst thing imaginable to them: have his parent(s) turn on him by embracing the coldly logical ideology of Final Quarantine. Preferably, the parent should have cause to suspect (or know for a fact) that their kid is infected. The parent then takes it upon themselves to remove this threat to the planet, up close and personal.

There are several ways to toss this into your players' faces outlined below. Choose whichever best fits the pathos of your campaign. Regardless of which option you select, though, role-playing the parents is very important. Psychologically speaking, what we have here is a war with parental love and protective instinct on one side, and intellectualization and naked primal fear on the other. A hard situation. Even while the parents are actively trying (or worse, succeeding) to kill their kid, they'll be in denial. The strain, incomprehensibility, and desperation should be obvious to all.

This section of the adventure is not intended to kill any characters; it's to whet the appetites of the players and refamiliarize them with the insidious philosophical virus known as Final Quarantine. Gear the capabilities of Mom, Dad, and any siblings or assassins to the level of the characters; these are not corporate killers, just normal people pushed over the edge. Just because the juves win doesn't mean they won't feel paranoid, especially if you bring in family members from two or three other characters.

And finally, play up the psychological aspects of this situation.

For the victim (and friends), the world suddenly turns upside-down. The people whom they trusted instinctively are suddenly the enemy, and they won't stop. It's possibly the worst thing that can happen to a kid, because if you've reason to fear your own parents, whom can you trust? There is no escape ...

The Strong, Silent Type

If the victim character is always and forever getting into trouble, dear old Dad can come to bail him out. Generate some sort of situation, either a hot one (a rumble with some Megaviolents or fleeing a security guard) or a less active one (laying low in a condemned tenement on 21st Street until the heat blows over), and have Dad show up in a fashion like this:

Suddenly, you see the family station wagon pull up to you, that ugly mint-green hardtop old-fashioned wheel-roller for God's sake, but nonetheless your family's car. The driver's window rolls slowly down, and Dad, resting his elbow on the sill, leans his head out. "Son," he says, "I know you're in trouble again, but regardless of what you've done, you're still my boy. I know things have been hard, son, but try to understand I've tried to do the best I can. Hop on in, now, let's get you out of here and work things out, father to son, man to man. Deal?"

This is a V-controlled car with cameras, computer guidance, and a V-sim of Dad in the driver's seat. If asked why he's a V-sim, Dad replies that it makes it easier to search and keep in contact; it's a live sim of him, and allows him to use the phone and computer to aid his search. (This makes for an interesting effect, because V-Dad will occasionally reach for apparently nonexistent phones and keyboards — these items exist at home, but the V-simulator doesn't create them in the car next to V-Dad.)

Dad won't want to give any of the target's friends a lift, but if pushed he'll agree to give them a ride and drop them off wherever they want — as long as it's somewhere else than Home. If the other kids press for "a place to stay" or some such, Dad gently but firmly states that he needs to "clear the air between me and my son, to help each other and keep the family together" and for that they'll require privacy.

So what happens? Dad subtly kicks the V-sim into self-generating mode and sets up an ambush at home. When the car arrives, he tries to kill his son for the safety of his other kids. He almost succeeds, but part way through he freaks out and staggers out of

the house, gasping and retching. If the other characters are skulking nearby, they see this, along with Dad holding a bloody ax or a bayonet or something. If they're elsewhere, the victim character can take this brief reprieve to crawl to the phone and call them for help just as he passes out from shock.

As the characters try to intervene, Dad suddenly finds new resolve, borne both of fear that they'll see his heinous crime and of paranoia that they're mutants come to steal his boy and turn him against the rest of the family. He goes in to finish the deed, and they must somehow stop him. Naturally, strange kids attacking dear old Dad will bring other family members into the fray, perhaps even a family Schutzhund cyberdog (see *EcoFront*). The emotional effect of all this familial mayhem shouldn't be underestimated. Even if the child escapes and the father is unharmed, the repercussions will be extreme and the family itself probably short-lived. And if the kids actually kill Dad somehow, well, patricide has driven more than one kid over the edge. Make them deal with the serious consequences of such an act.

I'm Doing This for You

A second option relies on a chance encounter. Hey, it happens, right? The advantage here is that the parent can then be from anybody's family, no matter how strained or fractured or dysfunctional that family is. Dear old Mom is off in the Nichiban Mall shopping. Sure, Mom lives in Heywood and never goes there, but this time she's looking for something really different for Uncle Clarence ... and who does she come upon but her prodigal daughter. Mom's overcome with emotion — shock, surprise, hate, fear, glee, anticipation — but they cross her face so quickly that the kids would be hard pressed to identify anything more than surprise.

"Nicole?" she says, using that name you're so embarrassed about. "Oh my God Nikki is that really you I don't believe it! Nikki, come here, please, I—" She stops and guffaws once or twice, somewhere between a sob and a hysterical laugh, then she seems to get a grip on her emotions. "You need new clothes, you've grown so much. Everyone's asking about you, and I just don't know what to say. Nicole, dear, I have something for you. I'm really sorry I—" Again her words get stopped up by a wracking shudder. You see a tear wind its way down her cheek from her vacant-looking eye, then she calmly pulls a pistol from her purse and fires.

Mom's a space-case here, folks. She is way off the deep end, and will stop at nothing until her precious evil daughter is dead so she won't mutate the rest of her beloved children. Mom doesn't want her sweetie to bring shame to the family name and bring the ISA down on the house like a hammer.

And when we say Mom will stop at nothing, we mean nothing. She'll chase her through crowds of police, waving a gun, or stop on a dime and use tears and parental cajoling to torque the kids into making a mistake. "I can't believe I tried to hurt you, I'm so sorry! Nicole, forgive me! Please come back, baby, I promise to help, really!" BLAM! BLAM! "Oh, Nikki, I shot you! How could I?"

It's for You!

If Mom and Dad don't have the courage to pull the trigger themselves (a likely situation), they can always find a like-minded individual to do the dirty work for them. In this scenario, Mom and Dad offer to let the kids have a party at their house, because they're planning a night on the town (getting hammered out of their skull in a public place so they won't have to think about anything — not even an alibi). They leave the kids money to buy several pizzas, as well as a coupon to use to save some euro.

The kids call, and when the doorbell rings, an assassin dressed in a pizza delivery uniform walks in and opens fire on the target character. (If the characters don't call, the parents can always phone the order in for them.)

After the characters resolve the situation, they can gather the following clues:

- Mom and Dad scribbled out the phone number on the coupon and wrote in a new one — which brought the "special delivery."

- The target character's photo is no longer on the mantelpiece — it's folded up in the assassin's back pocket (if he got away, he dropped it while running).

- Mom and Dad didn't call to check up at 9:00 p.m. like they always do.

- If the characters call the number again, they get a guy who fakes being a pizza place. If they search Internet's data banks, the number is unlisted, and gets invalidated the next day.

When they come home, Mom and Dad are surprised to see their child alive, but then pretend like everything's normal. They are slow to react when told of the assault, however, and will try to get back to life as usual as quickly as possible. Whether or not they will try this again is up to the GM. And the kids probably don't sleeping too soundly in their beds in the days that follow ...

Sibling Rivalry

I've got a real hard fact to digest for you, cyberkids. Not every adherent to Final Quarantine is an adult. Many are other kids, who, being less rigorously logical, can be more easily swayed by the compelling emotional arguments of that particular point of view. This goes double considering the amount of anti-Evolved propaganda that's receiving airplay.

Instead of being attacked by a parent, one of the target's brothers or sisters turns coat. This is the least physically threatening of the scenarios, but perhaps the most psychologically damaging, because the kids are supposed to stick together against the adults, right?

The attack itself starts with the target seeing a younger brother, very obviously distraught and trying to act like he isn't. After talk-

ing him down some, he suddenly pulls a large filet knife and launches a clumsy attack. Although easily defeated (though not necessarily without injury), the kid utterly freaks out, calling the target character a monster, an evil nasty sister slug, and a variety of other grade-school epithets, and runs off into the night crying hysterically. If caught, he panics and freaks so much that any onlookers thinks he's being assaulted or abducted; to him, his big sister is completely evil and monstrous, and nothing can ever change his mind.

Makes you feel real good about yourself, huh, kid?

Strong Stuff

The image of a character being assaulted by his own parent or other family member should be pretty frightening and extremely disturbing. We don't recommend that you use more than one of these incidents in your game, otherwise it's too easy to get the players to be totally paranoid (and homicidal) towards all adults.

You don't want to simply have an "it's us against our parents" mentality dominating your campaign.

The purpose of this encounter should be to drive home, in a very personal and in-your-face manner, how dangerous the propaganda campaign which the ISA is implementing is. Most parents don't adhere fanatically to the government policy or belong to a hidden cell of PhiQ, but more and more are being won over by the ISA media blitz, tightening the noose around the CGen's collective throat. The ISA is trying to drive a wedge between parents and their children, thus removing one line of defense for the kids themselves. The idea should be to win the adults back to the side of their children so that they can face the real enemy together.

No, it's not going to be easy, but their families are worth it.

FINAL QUARANTINE

As described in the *Cybergeneration* rules, this is not a secret society per se, but a fraternity of like-minded individuals. In a sense, their doctrine is much akin to a computer virus — if you are convinced that a "final quarantine" is the only solution (infected), then you undertake to convey the message to other parents as well (spread the infection). Any adherent to the Final Quarantine philosophy is likely to know only a handful of others — even if someone convinced their neighbor that it's the only answer, they might never have the courage to actually bring the subject up again and confirm the fact.

This is now beginning to change; there is a dire force at work in the ISA which is organizing the disciples of Final Quarantine into a real-life secret society; about 20% of Final Quarantine believers have been inducted so far. The characters discover this later in the adventure, but for now, we just re-introduce them to that beloved group.



PART II: DEAD HEIR TIME

The characters get contacted by the Nightcrawlers to find a friend of theirs whom, they fear, is in trouble. They locate the juve (now dead), and embark on a search for the vital data V-card he carried.

Here the adventure truly begins, as the characters encounter the Nightcrawlers. The Nightcrawlers have been trying to research how and why Dr. David Chaing of the CDC disappeared. As a part of their efforts, they hired a Facer to infiltrate a government installation. This Facer gets in deep kimchi, and the Nightcrawlers ask the PCs to help. Tailor this part to account for how the characters dealt with their first encounter with the Nightcrawlers. The better they did on the adventure, the more the Nightcrawlers like them.

It's late, and you're watching the Tonight Show with Jess Nutsuna celebrate its eleven-ty-fifth anniversary show with God-only-knows-how-many reruns of skits, even back to the old flatvid days of Jay whatsisname. At least the mindless humor is a welcome change of pace from the evening infomercial-tainment shows, where they're running specials on the horrid things certain cyberevolved kids have done back in Missouri.

Suddenly the feed gets interrupted, and a short-haired femjuve resolves through the breaking static waves. Strangely, the red portion of the feed is still showing the Tonight Show, and it's somewhat distracting.

You recognize the juve's outfit; the all-black jumpsuit and white cyberworm logo identify her as a member of the Nightcrawlers, a local Vidiot yogang.

"Yo, cho," she says, as the red ghost of Jess cuts to a commercial. "We know who you are, we know where you're at. And we got us a problem we thought you maybe could help out with. Meet us at The Twilight Zone in the Nichiban Mall pronto." Abruptly, the juve-ganger's vid feed disappears, leaving you all staring at an image of a latchkey kid cheerfully cleaning a toilet bowl with Spark-L-Zest. You shut down the vid before Jess comes back on.

The Zone is your typical 2027 virtuality arcade, located just off the street in the Nichiban Mall. It's well lit, public, crowded, and well monitored by a variety of security cams, all of which make it the perfect place to discuss clandestine activities. At the entrance is a poster with bright red letters which read: "Infection = Time Bomb." Below that is an illustration of a dead, seemingly half-melted young man, and the caption, "Infected children die upon reaching maturity — but treatment is available. Don't cut your life short, come see us. Your privacy is assured."

Inside, the Nichibanditos play F-33 Wasp Interceptor and the Fedds Guardian gangers run amok on CDC Mutant Hunter to the amusement of many cheering onlookers. The characters need only search for a few minutes before they find the Nightcrawlers, gathered around a Redline Racer V-game. Without removing her eyes from the overhead screen, one of the Nightcrawlers begins talking. She's the one who cut into the character's signal with the pirate feed.

"Yo, cho," she says, sotto voce, "call me Subretta. We got us a snafu that's a little beyond our gain, and we were hoping you might be able to wrap for us. Where to roll? Okay, from the top. You've seen the slant they're raving on the Carbon Plague in the media. Well, we know you guys got the big CD, and we don't much care. What hits our shop is that our parents are looking at us like we're something what crawled out of the chop bin, like they're expecting us to go kevlar on 'em. Basically, we don't like the way the Big Eye is painting all us kids as monsters-in-the-making. I had to go mobile, myself. Taped some freako telling Mom that the big axe is the only solution, and I think she bought into it." Subretta pauses, and takes a deep shuddering breath.

"So to fight it, we were snufflin' for word on David Chaing. The big CDC guy, who up and canceled last May. No reruns, no sequels, he just vaped. We poke around some, snuffle some garbage, and we get a lead. So we hire us a Facer to do the 60 Minutes thing, try to pull some inside scoops for us.

"We get a press call from him today, message left on our squawk box, hot tip, going to tape so fast the chrome burns. He had it all on a mock Silverhand V-disc ready for the swap, but he's also drawn attention, big trouble, Corpsucks all over. Rendezvous is ten minutes from now, but we figure the Machine is looking for us to be looking for him. Too hot and heavy for microviolents like us. We figure you folks can look without being

seen, and probably kick some butt if you do get sussed. Can you take it?" She glances over at you expectantly.

Once the PCs agree to look for the Facer, she clasps hands with one of the males in the group and says, "Thanks, cho, we owe you." She and the other Nightcrawlers leave. (When that character opens his hand again, he'll find a simple small silver ring — Subretta is light-fingered.) As the last Nightcrawler shuffles past the group, he "accidentally" bumps against one of the other PCs and says, "Oops. Hey, you dropped something." That something is a V-card.

The dropped V-card is reference material for the PCs: It has photos of the Facer in all his various disguises, with his infiltration disguise and his real face highlighted. Also included is a map of where the rendezvous is supposed to be (place it wherever you like), the passcode needed to unlock the Facer's secret data, and a schematic of the V-card itself; it's made to look like a copy of a MediaGods music/vid V-album, but won't withstand close scrutiny. Basically, the Facer's info is in a hidden V-file.

The Twilight Zone is a centerpiece of 2027 yoculture, and it would be a real shame for the time in here to last but a few minutes. Dig out those old plotpaths and throw a monkey wrench into the works. If there's no easy pickings there, just toss in a random yogang or two. One playtest group crossed a Mallbrat, who then paintballed their Facer out of spite. When the paintballed character went into the restroom to change, lo and behold, there were a pack of Gogangers looking for a good time. One of the PCs convinced them that some Megas were trashing their bikes outside. Sadly enough the group didn't leave the bathroom before the Gogangers returned, looking to even the score on that punk who made fools of them.

Deadline

By the time the characters get to the rendezvous area, the agents of the DSA have already caught up with the Facer and killed him.

Fortunately for the CyberRevolution, he staggered out of their sight before he died, and by the time they caught up, he no longer had the V-card with the information (more on that below). Now, the DSA in Night City (or your campaign area) is under the command of a very canny woman named Mabel Kheinn (see pg. 50). She knows there's a juve underground, and she suspects that the Facer is affiliated with them somehow — why else would he have infiltrated a government building? She has one of her agents search the body, while another hangs out in the background and observes. When the PCs come across the Facer and the agents, they should be smart enough to avoid contact (and arrest). Eventually, the agents leave, disgusted at their failure.

Then the kids can approach the body and conduct a search of their own — and attract the attention of the covert operative left behind who begins casually tailing them. Work this shadowing into the game as best fits the paranoia of your players. Perhaps they won't even notice.

Hot Leads

In this section, the players have to deal with the street yoculture scene. Each encounter is designed to make them deal with a different psychology, a different world outlook. No specific locations are given; place them to suit your needs. Start things off by having the PCs' search for the V-card get interrupted:

While you're poking around the area, you see the lid of a nearby dumpster raise up, and two feral eyes look out at you narrowly. Then the lid opens further, and as the funk of garbage washes past, you see the head of a Squat about six years old. You can't tell if it's male or female. "Seriously fresh," says the Squat, looking at the dead Facer. "That's a rank bag your goboy gots." The Squat chuckles, an absurd sound from such a fetid-looking juve. "But you wants to know who skagged your dross, yeah? Don't go home without it, yeah?"

This Squat, named Chutney, was among the pack that looted the Facer's corpse right before the DSA guys showed up. The DSA opened up on them, naturally, leaving an older goboy a little deeper in the alley lying face-down in a pool of oily water and blood. Chutney knows a Squat named Bugger grabbed the V-card from the Facer's hand, and where Bugger was going: three streets over and down, to the wide alley where the Squats have their main lair. The PCs can get that information by giving Chutney some food. Good food. And a good amount of it.

Chutney, of course, is a survivor, and won't tell anyone anything until fed. If the PCs try something funny, Chutney drops back into the dumpster with the lid clanging shut. Then he/she/it slithers down through the garbage and out a rusty hole in the back rear of the dumpster. Catching the Squat at that point is difficult, and involves a lot of dumpster-diving and searching through garbage. Chutney's not stupid, though, and knows that a Squat won't go far antagonizing everyone. The PCs can get their information eventually.

Following Chutney's directions, the characters come across the Squat in question, along with one or two Squat goboyos:

You find the Squats you're after, in the alley where Chutney said they'd be. They're badly beaten up. Two lie in the alley, one is hanging two floors up from a hook through the seat of his pants, and one leans against a wall with two short steel straws speared into her jugular. Her blood leaks slowly out, and drains to a sewer grate.

The one with the straws piercing her throat is cold, pale, and dead as a doornail. The two in the alley are in dire need of medical attention. The one hanging by his drawers is in reasonable shape; the Goths who hit this group wanted someone to watch. After all, what is horror without a witness? The survivor identifies the Goth yogang as the Demented Sects, which hangs out nearby, and says that they abducted Bugger (the Squat with the V-card) for their amusement. A character knows where the Sects hang out with a *StreetSmarts* roll of 20 or better (15 or better for Goths, Megas, GoGangers, and Moshers). If they fail, they'll have to ask around...

You reach the Demented Sects' hangout by climbing a fire escape to the roof of the building. Up on top, you find a large chalked symbol, sort of like a cross between an ankh and a pentagram. The chalk on the symbol has been messed up in several places. Black candles lie about; most are on their sides or broken, but a few are still guttering. There's a few Goths around, mostly lurking at the edge of the building. They seem to be sullen, but then again, Goths always seem that way.

Fortunately for their captive Squat, the Demented Sects were interrupted by the arrival of the Fedds, pumped and primed after a rousing time playing CDC Mutant Hunter. The Fedds drove off the Sects, confiscated a lot of their stuff (including sacrificial knives and the Facer's V-card), and left with Bugger in tow. To find this out, the characters must deal with the leader of the Sects (see sidebar below), and convince him to tell them the story. Could be rough ... the Sects hate to admit defeat.

Finding the Fedds is a not a big problem, because even though they have no square of their own, they make no effort to conceal themselves; in fact, the more visible, the better, as far as they're concerned. A half hour of asking around on the streets should lead the PCs to the Fedds, hanging out at the New Harbor Mall.

The Fedds are a naturally suspicious lot, and it has been worsened by recent efforts applied by the ISA. See, the Fedds have been dealing with evolved Megas and the like, and local ISA operatives have managed to convince the Fedds that every evolved person is a threat. In short, the Fedds have been co-opted by the Machine. When approached for information, the Fedds first ask a bunch of questions designed to ensure that the

Nekrolai, leader of the Demented Sects

Stats: INT 6, REF 7, TECH 3, COOL 8, ATT 2, LUCK 5, MA 6, BODY 3, EMP 2

Skills: Deathwalk 10, Fearless Leader 9, GenSpeak 8, Get a Clue 8, JockStuff 4, Schoolin' 7, Streetfighting 5, StreetSmarts 7, Thief Stuff 6

Outfit: Who needs an outfit when you've got twenty rabid Goths awaiting your every whim?

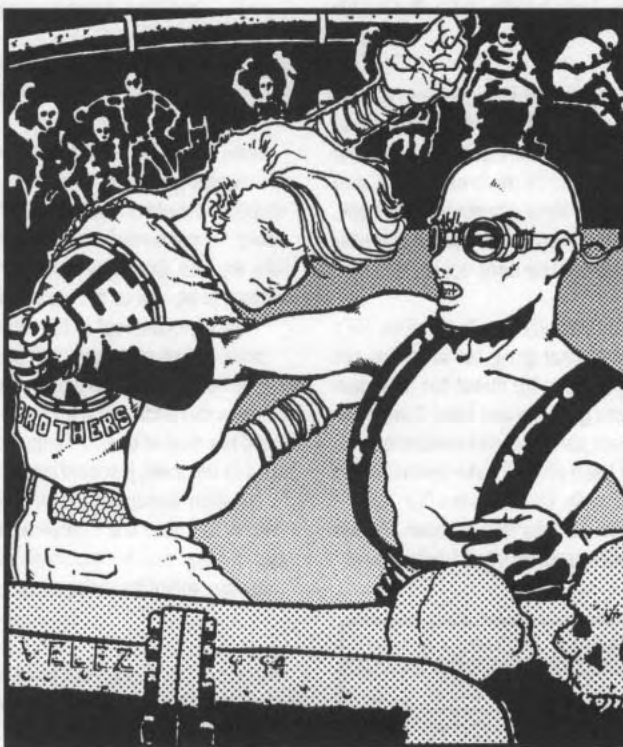
Nekrolai has only a tenuous connection to the real world, and that is expected to be lost shortly, when he kills himself. In the meantime, he leads the Sects as a sort of messed-up mentor, instructing them in his own bizarre philosophy of yin-yang life and death. Sort of like if you crossed Charles Manson, Louis Farrakhan, and The Crow. The real story of what happened to Bugger and the V-card is most easily brought out if the PCs claim to want vengeance on the Fedds, although other stratagems may work as well — like perhaps a dumptruck diving showdown, or even helping Nekrolai achieve his goal of a really artistic death. Just remember, when playing Nekrolai, there's no reason to stay within the bounds of reason or even realism. He's just not that kind of guy.

PCs are not criminals of some sort. "Why do you want to know? What's the V-card to you? How did you find out we threw the Goths?" They also watch for any evidence of cyberevolution so the group must be careful. Once convinced of the PCs' noble aims, the Fedds have no reason to hold out on them, and say, "Yeah, we found a stolen wallet, a V-card, a ring, and a few knives. We donated the ring and the money in the wallet to charity, since it didn't have any ID. The knives, the V-card, and the wallet itself we dropped into the storm drain on the corner of 17th and Williams. Someone down there took them, though. We heard someone call up to thank us. Gave me the creeps."

Once at that corner armed with a flashlight for visual aid, the characters can readily see a wallet down there, torn apart. The knives and V-card are missing. The V-card is now in the hands of the Trog (see sidebar), running the lines below the streets of the city. If the characters explore the sewers to try to find them (what choice do they have?), they endure encounters with spiders and rats and alligators before they finally catch up with the Trog in a large chamber known as the Warbasin. There's a reason they named it that ...

You finally locate the Trog, in a large, dimly lit chamber. There are seven of them. The room is more or less circular, and skulls line the walls, some broken, others staring blankly into the center where two of the Trog are fighting. You're not sure if they're practicing or serious. The other

Trog notice your arrival, and suddenly all eyes — including those of the two fighters — are on you. They all slowly rise to their feet, and wait silently.



The Trog do not respond to any but direct questions, and that only if directed to a specific Trog. Every time a Trog answers, he asks a question of his own in exchange. The V-card was picked up by Smeg, a very small Trog dressed entirely in deep burgundy. Unlike many of the other Trog, his head is not entirely bald; he keeps a small shock of bristly hair growing out over each ear. Smeg has already given the card away, but he will not tell the PCs anything. The only way to resolve this is the way all disputes are resolved in the Warbasin ...

The fight is single combat, Smeg (who knows about the V-card) against one PC. This is the group's champion, unless one of the PCs belongs to a hated yogang like the Goldenkids, in which case

Smeg will insist on fighting that particular "sell-out."

Meanwhile, another Trog blows on a conch shell, and other Trog start filtering in to watch Smeg fight a muffin. If Smeg beats the PCs' champion, he has a cold laugh at their expense, and tells them they couldn't have won, because he already traded the card away to Kry, an ArcoRunner in the New Harbor Mall in exchange for a polymer slingshot. If the PC wins, they get the same information, but with less joviality on the part of Smeg.

Inside Scoop

Finding the ArcoRunner is no problem, because, frankly, he wants to be found. He's Kry, a cyberevolved four-

teen-year-old juve who's tough, noble, athletic, attractive, compassionate, and possesses a keen mind. In short, he's every girl's heartthrob and every guy's best friend. Unfortunately for all con-

TROGS

This Yogang is described in *Bastille Day*. They're a group that hangs out in the sewers and underground accessways of the city, forming their own culture underground, away from the "muffins" or surface dwellers. They are taciturn, stealthy, and know the underground labyrinth like the back of their hands.

Smeg

Stats: INT 5, REF 8, TECH 4, COOL 8, ATT 3, LUCK 7, MA 4, BODY 4, EMP 3

Skills: Fearless Leader 3, GenSpeak 5, Get a Clue 7, JockStuff

5, Schoolin' 1, Spelunking 8, Streetfighting 6, StreetSmarts 2, Thief Stuff 7

Outfit: For the fight, he only uses brass knuckles and leather armor.

Cold and blunt, Smeg has no personal grudge against anyone; it's just that when there's a dispute in the Warbasin, you fight.

Although he's only ten years old, he has a quickness and strength which are surprising for such a small juve. He also acts a lot older than his young frame and high-pitched voice indicate; after all, he's a Trog. Smeg will not fight to the death (in either direction), and doesn't hold a grudge afterward.

cerned, Krys is also a Raptor; his mother works as a controller at the local office of the Domestic Security Agency, and he has been pressed into service as a covert field operative in exchange for immunity from prosecution — and medical testing, internment, etc. His immunity also covers his family, which means if he runs away or double-crosses the DSA, he'll be giving his two kid sisters over to the ISA's cold steel hounds and destroying his mother's life utterly. Since his father was killed by a streetpunk assassin back in '22, Krys considers himself to be the man of the house, and his sense of duty and devotion will not let him turn on his family like that. He'd never be able to live with himself. Instead, he is forced to do other tasteless chores to save his family — chores like infiltrating the CyberRevolution and double-crossing fellow juvegangers. Does he like it? No. But it's his duty.

Krys is a Facer and a Wizard. He uses his Facer skills to change personas as needed in his attempts to infiltrate new groups. His

Wizard power he uses primarily to store digitized data on the people he associates with. He doesn't do much netrunning, and claims to be inexperienced (he's not). He is a genuinely good guy, and this should come across. Have him be very helpful and useful. Up until he turns against the PCs.

Krys' cover story is that he's relatively new to the area. He's been trying to join a new ArcoRunner gang, but so far has not made much headway. The trust level on the street has hit a new low, what with all the persecution going on and Final Quarantine incidents on the rise. The kids are paranoid, and newcomers are treated coolly at best. He has been able to make contacts with the Tregs, but they're not his style. He'll help the PCs "just to have a place to belong." It's obvious they're more open-minded than the other juves he's been dealing with.

TEMPLATE		Christian Boland (Krys)					
INT	8	REF	6	COOL	8		
TECH	5	MOVE	5	LUCK	3		
BODY	4	EMP	4	ATT	7		
S. ABILITY		Wizard/Arcane				6	
BLEND	3	GO GO	0	STREETFIGHT	4		
FEAR. LDR.	6	JOCKSTUFF	6	STREETSMART	7		
GENSPEAK	5	LIL ANGEL	2	THIEFSTUFF	2		
GET A CLUE	6	SCHOOLIN	5	FACEDANCE	9		
L L L L S S S S C C C C M M M M M2 M2 M2 M2 M3 M3							
BTM	-1	HITS	4	ARMOR	12		

Gear: Whatever he needs, he gets from the DSA. He carries gear typical of the yegang he's trying to emulate ... plus one or two surprises to get himself out of hot water (like a DSA emergency pager, kevlar armor undershirt, and an EMP gun in his duffelbag).

Krys tells the characters that he traded the V-card for cheap to a Tinkertot he'd met, in order to garner a bit of acceptance. The Tinkertot has a lab in the upper reaches of the mallplex, and Krys offers to take them there. Their reception is not quite what's expected ...

Krys leads you via claustrophobic crawlways and dizzying climbs to an area in between the top floor and the roof of the Mallplex. The ceiling is low, forcing you to stoop slightly as you walk. Up ahead you see an area sealed off with scrap sheetrock and plasticrete. An access panel jury-rigged with hinges acts as a door.

Krys opens the door, waving you forward, when suddenly you hear a loud metallic twang, as a young girl comes charging out at the lead character with a sharpened pipe in her hand.

Fergus the Tinkertot has had a hard day, and now she's making it harder for everyone else. Twenty minutes ago, she was lunching with her mom and her older sister, and everything was okay, when her sister asked her, "Taste my milk, will you? It's got a weird taste to it." Her mom suddenly yelled, "NO!" Fergus stopped, the glass halfway to her lips. "Honey, don't," her mom said. "It's poisoned. Your sister's a monster, and I can't let her take you, too. Get away from your sister." The next few minutes were a living hell as her sister and these horrid metal creatures which dropped out of her arms tried to exact revenge on her mom. Fergus managed to delay her sister long enough for the poison to work, leaving a corpse in the hallway with gaping tubes in its hands and half-formed things with their metal limbs around her mother's neck. Fergus looked at her mom, and saw no horror in her eyes, just cold manipulative satisfaction. The whole situation was too much for Fergus, and she ran to hide in her secret lab. Now she's paranoid, defending herself against anyone, for fear that her mom will hunt her down, and for fear that she, too, might be exposed to the Carbon Plague and have evil things crawl out of her body.

Fergus is too wigged out to do much, although she might fight like an animal. She most certainly will go over the edge with fear if she sees an evolved character. Most of her defenses are the Rube Goldberg sort of traps you'd expect from a Tinkertot; gear them to suit your PCs. Once the PCs get past them, they easily find the Facer's V-card and take it. If no one displays obvious evolution, or if the players play a canny mind game, they can get the story from the near-hysterical Fergus. Or perhaps they can piece it together from the things she yells as she tries to fight them. Regardless, make sure they get the V-card at long last.

A BIRD OF PREY

Sensing that something big is going on, Krys will try to hook himself up with the group and tag along for the duration of the adventure. He's quite likable and fairly competent so it would be easy for the group to get suckered (Remember: He's a Wizard and cannot be Scanned). He may even fake some romantic moves on one of the female characters. See Page 64 for more on his possible involvement in the adventure.

PART III: CANCELLATION

Armed with the information on the V-card, the Nightcrawlers decide to use Dr. David Chaing to counter the media blitz. The characters get caught up in this counterattack on the subtle electronic brainwashing.

Now that the characters have the V-card, they can access the information on it. Hopefully, they have the common sense and courtesy to invite the Nightcrawlers to share in the information as well, as some of it (that part dealing with the media) is written in broadcasting technical English, and isn't easily understood by the average juve. In a nutshell, here's what the late great Facer found:

- Chaing disappeared under very unusual circumstances, and the case is still considered open and unsolved.
- His family has been "silenced", although it is unclear whether this means killed, bribed, or something else.
- There is no evidence to suggest whether he escaped or was killed.
- The ISA is "adjusting" experimental data as well as Chaing's reports to make for better propaganda to control the populace.
- The DSA is monitoring all stories where his name is mentioned, and following up on authors who write with an

unacceptable slant.

- There's a WNS memo saying they agreed to kill a story on Chaing and relocated their reporter to the Rio Grande Valley to cover the Tex-Mex riots.
- Lt. Gen. John Hunter was cashiered because of his involvement in the Chaing incident, but it's unclear how he was cashiered and what he did which earned the ISA's displeasure.
- The ISA is still trying to crack Chaing's note files, in an effort "to seal the breach."
- The ISA is deliberately gearing news releases, rumors, and "leaks" to shape public reaction to the Carbon Plague.

We Interrupt This Broadcast

At some point, the DSA agent tailing the PCs becomes overconfident and gets noticed. If the characters are careful, they can spot the tail themselves and try to bushwhack him before he calls the DSA heat down — there's no way they can complete the mission while under surveillance. If not, well, the Nightcrawlers can spot the tail and refuse to work with them until he's taken care of, or else the Demented Sects might drop the agent's corpse off on some character's doorstep with an explanatory note scrawled in Transylvanian.

Or, if you want to put the fear of God in your players, launch a

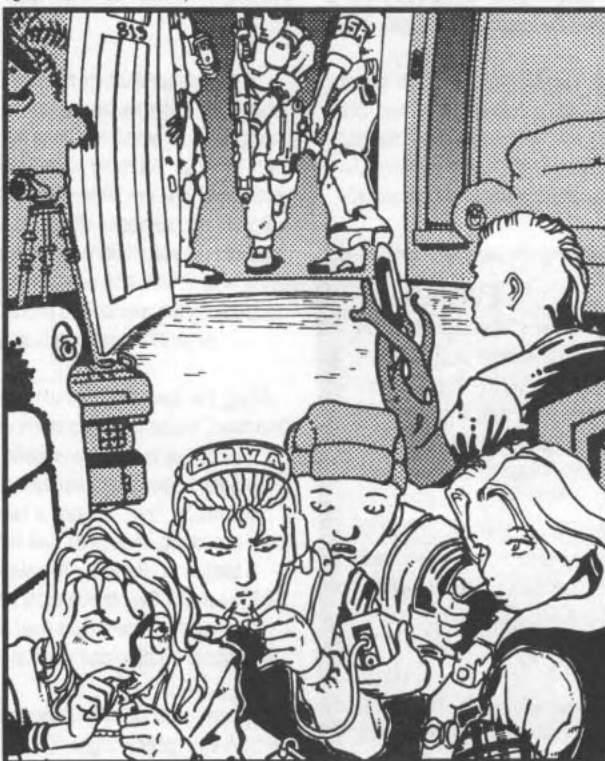
full-fledged raid against the team, complete with six DSA agents in Med. Armor with Genius Guns and Tasers.

Warning: The point should be to frighten your players, not kill them; give them a means of escape. The specifics of the attack are open; do it however will most fuel your players' paranoia, replete with electronic gadgets and such.

To make the encounter personal, have a DSA agent address one of the characters by name as the cyberkids close for the pounce or interrogation: "I'm warning you; don't try any funny stuff, Jackal." What is important is that the kids recognize that they are dealing with a powerful group that knows them personally, and that the kids recover another clue. The clue the kids get is a V-card in the wallet of

the agent. They can get it either by carelessness on the part of the agent, cleverness on their parts, or by out-and-out beating the agent in a knock-down drag-out cyberevolved brawl. The V-card is gold-colored. On one side are the symbols "PhiQ", and on the other is a presstab which starts a V-recording (featuring Mabel Kheinn; Krys will recognize it, though he will not say anything).

A low-grade virtuality recording activates above the card. The video image has been scrambled, but you can vaguely make out the torso of a woman seated at a desk or a table. She turns to face the camera, or so you assume. It's hard to tell what she's looking at with her features all pixelated. She says, "I am less than pleased that you were unable to recover the data — he



was just a kid for God's sake, not even a mutant. There was information on there which could seriously impair our campaign. This could set us back months." She sighs, stands up and walks to a window behind her desk, then continues. "We anticipate that some of the youth gangs might try to use this information to serve their own ends, to try to justify somehow that being a mutant is acceptable. Follow the activists you encountered, [drop a few character names here] and their friends, and make sure they don't cross paths with any media thugs. Remember, these are not children any more. They are terrorists, felons, and nanite-infested monsters. Follow the directives to the fullest extent, and we'll take care of any official problems that arise within the organization." Suddenly she is interrupted by the beep of an incoming call, and a holographic torso appears over the corner of her desk. "Mac," says an imperious female voice, "We need to talk. Now." The woman sits back down, leans forward to press a button, and the recording abruptly ends.

This final voice is that of Margaret Tuere of the CDC; the characters have a chance to recognize her voice during one of her "public service" appearances on national TV talking about the dangers of the Carbon Plague. Jammers, with their sonic-recording ability, are automatically successful.

EVIDENCE?

Why would Mabel Kheinn leave her voice on a recording where it could potentially fall into the wrong hands, or even be used against her in court? The answer is, in 2027, she didn't. Computers have become so powerful, and virtuality programming so accurate, that anyone can make a recording of anything, real or imagined. The V-card of Mabel is low-quality; it could be done by anyone with a reasonable computer and a vid of Kheinn taken from the news. In other words, it's inadmissible as evidence. If someone tried to claim it was her, they'd be damaging their own credibility; after all, Mabel Kheinn is a respectable ISA DSA employee, right?

PHI Q

To most people, Final Quarantine is simply a point of view which strange and fanatic people adhere to. But now, it is evolving into something far worse. Dr. Margaret Tuere of the CDC has begun to form the devotees of Final Quarantine into a secret society called Phi Q. Some people who believe in Final Quarantine have declined to join, but most adherents have readily become members in a secret society for the salvation of the human race; it gives them more emotional support, a refuge against persecution, and a special secret to share with others. Because anyone can become a Final Quarantine advocate, Phi Q has members infiltrating everywhere. Tuere runs the CDC, and is warping the view of those she reports to as well as the American public. The local Phi Q chapter leader in NorCal works for the DSA. You guessed it: Mabel Kheinn. And now that Mabel has the faces of some of the PCs, you can bet she'll be dogging their steps for the rest of their lives.

Not Another Subplot!

If Krys is tagging along, then he will be reporting the group's activities to his mother as often as he can comfortably slip away to do so. This need not be as disruptive to the scenario as it would seem. First, he may not be able to get away very often if the pace of the adventure is kept high. Second, because of the nature of his info drop (dialing a voice mailbox on a non-descript number), he won't get up-to-date responses and instructions. If you want to further complicate matters (or just cut your players some slack), you may have Krys' activities remain unconnected to the DSA groups following the players and monitoring the Chaing connections. This is easily rationalized, since the DSA is a fairly large organization with several operations going on in a given area at the same time. It may take a while for someone to connect the movements of a Raptor agent to activities being monitored by other operatives.

If he is around when the team finds their tail, he'll know that other DSA activities are centering around them, and try to report in as quickly as possible. Since he is in a hurry, he may be unusually careless, seeming nervous and abruptly excusing himself in order to sneak out. This should hopefully spark the players' suspicions and someone should follow him, confronting him as he makes his call. If he is unaware of the tail, he will continue as before, and it won't be until he witnesses some other DSA activity (such as the monitoring of the Chaing associates outlined on page 67) that he gets sloppy in his impatience to report.

Along the way, Krys will work to further ingratiate himself with the team, trying to get as much information on who they are and who they know. If you really want to twist the knife, have a romance bloom between him and a female PC. This could turn serious for Krys, creating a terrible rift in his soul. The players should be sharp enough to suss him out before they try to contact a station in "Part V." Otherwise, based on his reports, a crack DSA team hits the players right before they can start their broadcast. Even if they fight their way clear, they'll have lost their broadcast window and the anti plague victim bill passes. Ouch.

Any confrontation with Krys could get very ugly as he activates his DSA emergency pager (which can be jammed by a *Holler* skill check at 12 or an *Arcane* at 20) and tries to shoot his way out with the EMP gun. He will also use his Wizard abilities to cause as many distractions as possible to aid in his escape. If subdued instead of killed (the preferred resolution), he will beg the players to let him go if just to save his family from DSA retribution. Roleplay this to the hilt: It's his major concern and he is willing to suffer any form of punishment from the team as long as they promise to save his kin. This could lead to a whole mini-scenario where the team must go and save Krys' sisters after they finish their current mission. In the meantime, they should be able to get Krys to work for them, feeding false reports to his mom (any chance of recruiting her?) until such time as they can rescue his sisters. Remember one of the Revolution's credoes: Turning someone to your side is a far greater victory than killing him.



PART IV: LOOKING FOR A GOOD MAN

Here the characters track down more information on David Chaing, and gather the resources to launch their counterattack.

Obviously, the characters have a personal stake in any developments concerning Phi Q.

Cyberevolution is a one-way ticket, and unfortunately Margaret Tuere and, locally, Mabel Kheinn are doing their best to cancel that ticket. CDC propaganda and the shadowy presence of Phi Q are turning trusted friends and family members against cyberevolved children. Fortunately, the characters should realize that circumstances have put them in a unique position to counteract Tuere and Kheinn's lethal influence.

Why? They have a V-card filled with sensitive documents that prove that the ISA is using a propaganda campaign in an attempt to control the Carbon Plague and the cyberevolved.

It also indicates strongly that the ISA was afraid of Chaing, or something that Chaing knew. And, finally, it establishes that Chaing has not been officially acknowledged as dead. If he were to re-appear, he could not be claimed to be an impostor (or, more correctly, a forgery), because no one could refute his existence without admitting some inside knowledge of foul play — and thereby submitting themselves to intense investigation. Given Chaing was such a popular personality, this is a powerful tool. The characters also have an alliance with the Nightcrawlers, and who better to help you arrange video-piracy than a resourceful gang of Vidiots who now owe you a favor?

The Code Blocks

Also stored on the V-card, in high density memory, are several hundred million lines of computer code that the V-card reader can't access directly. It is not virtual information. The characters can call up a display of the code and look it over. A *Programming* or *Arcane* check at 20 will reveal that it is an AI code and personality matrix, but fragmented, with a few key sections missing. It is as if, perhaps, the download of the matrix onto the card was interrupted. It could be any AI personality matrix, either artificial, or patterned off of a human being. It is impossible to tell without either spending months scanning the code by hand, or by writing a subroutine to analyze the code. That will require a *Programming* or *Arcane* check at 20. Success will reveal that it is a human matrix. Unfortunately, it will not run without the missing personality and memory segments. Oddly enough, it has some computer-viral characteristics. Its identity and purpose are a complete mystery. Could be a DSA spy program for all the characters know ...

The code is a fragmented download of Chaing's personality, but the characters won't discover that until later. It was created by him as a diary, with the help of one of the Wizards he analyzed. Both he and the Wizard had begun to get wise to where the CDC was heading.

Why a Media Counterattack?

The characters may take some time to realize it, but a media counterattack is their best bet at this point. As kids, the characters are almost all media-junkies themselves, in one way or another. Furthermore, their chances of surviving any direct confrontation are exactly zero. The best way to strike a blow for themselves while keeping risks to an acceptable (although still dangerous) level is to use the media. This also takes advantage of the Vidiot skills and contacts of the Nightcrawlers, who now owe the characters a favor. The Vidiots may suggest it as a good option, if the characters don't come up with it themselves. If the Nightcrawlers aren't around to suggest it, the idea could filter down from John Silverhand, through the characters' Eden Cabal contacts.

The information on Chaing's V-card makes it obvious that Chaing was both feared and respected by the ISA, the CDC, the DSA, and others proposing drastic measures for dealing with the Carbon Plague and the cyberevolved. The characters may suspect that Chaing is dead, but, thanks to an ISA ploy, the population-at-large still considers him "missing." Chaing's authority, combined with his charisma and recognizability, make him a potent weapon for a media counterattack.

You might also have the characters stumble across an installment of the V-TV show *American Dawn*, with Margaret Tuere calmly and charismatically detailing the benefits of rounding up and disposing of infected and cyberevolved youngsters. This should define the media as the battleground nicely. Use bites from the "Propaganda" section given at the start of the adventure.

Then throw in a little incentive and time pressure. The good citizens of Night City are voting soon on a citywide referendum to strip Carbon Plague victims of all of their civil rights. Although there are no real civil rights under the ISA, they still exist in name. Should this referendum pass, it would be an important propaganda victory for Tuere, Kheinn, and the CDC, and it would diminish public support for the cyberevolved. Tuere will be in town on election night, making personal appearances, and appearing on *Night City News*, a local flatvid news-magazine show. Scheduling a Chaing broadcast on the eve of the election, or even directly opposite Tuere's appearance, could make a critical difference. It's the 21st century. Flyers don't work anymore. If you want to reach the voters, you'd best use the vids!

Paranoia!

To launch a media counterattack, the characters will need raw material and information that can be used to assemble a program for a pirate broadcast. Ideally, this means high-quality digital video or virtual images of Chaing from several angles (enough for a full computer map of his features and expressions), and a high-quality recording of at least several minutes of his speaking voice. For added insurance, the characters should try to get hold of some extremely personal or sensitive information that will help them to "prove" to skeptical viewers that their Chaing is real, and not just the V-sim that it actually is.

The characters may think that this will be a simple task, but it is not. For some dark reason, the ISA has gone to great lengths to make Chaing into an un-person, a sort of idealized icon or figurehead: a Carbon Plague Colonel Sanders. There is little reference to Chaing in any publicly available information source, including libraries, on-line services, video and news archives, or government offices. What exists is fluffy and useless (see "Useful Sources", below). Even people who should know about David Chaing will offer nothing of value. Furthermore, if the characters attempt openly to research Chaing in any depth, they will encounter deep suspicion.

For example, if they call the Centers For Disease Control in Atlanta:

"We had a Dr. Chaing. He left a while ago. No further information is available."

"But you must have more. He was on TV all the time."

"I'm sorry, I show no more information on Dr. Chaing."

"Are you sure?"

Suddenly a new voice is on the other end:

"Uh, yes, perhaps we can find more information for you. Can I get your name? Where are you calling from?"

That's when a smart character hangs up. Characters who stay on the line for more than 30 seconds after the government becomes suspicious will have their call traced. DSA agents will show up in force (4-6 agents) for a chat within three minutes. You better run, juve.

Alternatively, the characters may successfully track down someone they know to have had personal dealings with Chaing. Most of these encounters will go like this:

Ding Dong!

"Yes?"

"Umm. Hi. I, umm. Did you know, umm, David Chaing?"

"Never heard of him."

"Uhh, but we heard you were his cousin/assistant/stockbroker."

And we thought you could ..."

"Sorry. Can't help you. Get off my property before I call BuReloc."

I have a gun."

Slam! Click.

You get the picture.

The characters may be surprised to find that at least half of Chaing's former close associates have vanished without a trace, along with their immediate families. Friends and peripheral family members of Chaing's disappeared associates will either be completely ignorant ...

"Who knows where they went? I heard it was some government trouble. Moved out of the country, I hear. Naw, I never hear anything from them."

... or so scared they are dangerous:

"*&%\$! him! And *&%\$! you! Don't call me again (sniffle sob)."

Either way, it will become obvious to the characters in short order that they have ventured into very dangerous territory. Juves call it The Dead Zone: the province of the deadboys and zombie girls, where the stakes are much much higher than grounding and losing your allowance. But hey, they knew the job was tough when they took it.

We Be Jammin'

With enough sonic input, a jammer could imitate David Chaing on the phone. This will garner surprised — and therefore unguarded — responses from the phone contacts. This is a very dangerous game to play, because it's sure to bring down the heat, but it will certainly flush more clues out of the brush. Toss out any information you think they need.

Who's Watching the Watchers

Emphasize the paranoia surrounding the knowledge of, or past association with, Dr. Chaing. Anyone who might have worked with him and is still alive has been warned by the ISA not to reveal anything about him, or to comment upon him in any favorable way. Many will not even acknowledge having met him. A few have even been conditioned via braindance to forget every-

thing about him, causing Scanners to detect nothing more than a blank confusion when his name is mentioned. This will make things very weird for the characters if they talk to anyone whom they know for a fact has had past dealings with Chaing.

The paranoid atmosphere is well-justified. The ISA is watching closely for signs of anyone snooping around for information on Chaing. In fact, all of Chaing's known surviving relatives and former associates are under surveillance by the DSA, and have had their communications tapped. If the characters actually end up in electronic communication (phone, data, etc.) with any of these people for longer than one minute, they will be traced. A single, general inquiry will not cause any trouble, but persistent, sloppy probing will raise red flags all over the ISA corridors of power, and ISA will talk to DSA, and DSA will come have a very short, very lethal chat with the characters. Also, remember that many adults and healthy kids subscribe wholeheartedly to the CDC propaganda, and might report the characters if they reveal that they are cyberevolved. On the other hand, some may try to help ... and so endanger themselves (see "The Hammer Falls" on page 72).

COMMUNICABLE UNEASE

By reading outdated on-line, newspaper, and magazine issues, or watching some old news reports, the characters can learn the names of several of Chaing's former contemporaries at the CDC in Atlanta. These are not people who are mentioned in specific connection with David Chaing, and after his disappearance, they have distanced themselves from said association. None of them are local, but some phone calls can net the characters interesting responses:

- Nelson Dupree, CDC researcher, now in Vermont. Asks, "Berko? Is that you?" then hangs up, no matter what the answer is. Repeated calls will lead to a disconnected phone.
- Catherine Yin, CDC administrator, still in Atlanta. Bursts into tears. Tells the characters not to call her again. Hangs up. Later reported dead in car accident.
- Pulan Udaresh, NIH researcher, last reported in Washington, D.C. Simply "disappeared."
- Lynne Haberstdt, CDC administrator now with Johns Hopkins University. May direct the characters to the Berkowitz family, but she's very nervous and cagey, and requires some persuading.
- Jamie Vasquez, ISA government liaison, still in Atlanta. Angrily tells the characters not to make "crank calls." Reports them to DSA.
- Judd Prinzler, CDC administrator. Last living in Atlanta. His murder is still unsolved. No further information available.
- Peter Berkowitz, CDC researcher, now in Night City. See below.

Extended family members of these people can respond in the way you think most entertaining, or spookiest. Some may want to help, but have family in Night City, vulnerable family.

Paranoid, Dangerous Agencies

These are organizations that will report David Chaing inquiries to the DSA. Naturally, these are the organizations that the characters will be referred to when they draw a blank elsewhere.

- ISA Federal Offices
- ISA National Library, formerly the Library of Congress
- Centers for Disease Control
- National Institutes of Health
- Government Computer Networks (if the characters make an open inquiry or are caught making an illegal netrun)
- Public Universities (50% chance)

Useless Agencies

These folks are no help whatsoever.

- Official Media and News Archives
- Official On-line and Information Services
- Everyone Else

If the characters suspect that the bugging is there, they can try to evade it. A Vidiot can detect and disable DSA electronic surveillance with a *Commo* check of difficulty 20. A Wizard could detect and disable computer-based surveillance with an *Arcane* check of 20. These checks alert the DSA that they're monitoring has been sussed, but rolls of 25 or better scam the surveillance completely, and the characters get away clean. This is one of those rolls where no one knows if the attempt failed until unhappy DSA agents knock on the front door.

The DSA has set up free-roaming sentry computer programs on all major data, voice, and virtual communications webs. These sentries are designed to raise the red flag on detecting any inquiry concerning David Chaing over known lines of communication. There is a 50% chance that they will intercept and report any communication the characters make over public circuits. Any report will be investigated to see if it concerns *the* David Chaing (there is more than one David Chaing, after all), and what the nature of the inquiry is. Detecting and disabling these systems is the same as detecting and disabling the direct bugging surveillance. Another approach to disabling this security is to flood the comm channels with communication about the other Davids to distract the sentries.

Legwork

There is only one person still in Night City who had regular contact with Chaing: Peter Berkowitz (see below). The characters can get a lead from Chaing's other associates, they might pull something off an illicit BBS, or they may try randomly approaching members of the Night City CDC staff and fishing for information.

The DSA is watching Night City CDC employees, at least until the referendum passes. There is a 25% chance that any given

CDC employee or family member is under surveillance by 1-2 undercover DSA agents at any time. The DSA agents are very sophisticated, however. They have microphones and computer equipment that enable them to monitor any conversation in their line of sight, any single conversation in even a large, noisy crowd, and any single conversation in a structure with a window or other thin, hard surface that will reflect a laser beam. If they detect any mention of Chaing they will listen to determine whether or not they should get involved.

The characters are streetwise survivors, of course, and here they can use their youth to their advantage. First, they can detect the physical surveillance with a *Get A Clue* check of 15. A *StreetSmarts* check of 15 will enable the characters to pick up some yongang rumors of local DSA surveillance, and this might give the characters an advantage in spotting a stakeout. Then, if the characters wish to contact someone who is under surveillance, they can arrange something that will not seem suspicious. For example, the DSA is not likely to pay much attention to a couple of juves who hop a wall or knock on a front door to try and retrieve a soccer ball that landed on someone's property. Look for strategic use of the *Little Angel* skill. After all, what pack of pre-teen juves could be involved in an espionage plot involving a vanished researcher? Nonetheless, the characters should have some covers and ideas worked out in advance.

If the characters are unlucky enough to get caught by DSA agents because of suspicious Chaing inquiries, they'll be taken in to DSA headquarters for interrogation and medical examination. If they don't free themselves or no rescue party comes, they will be summarily executed after interrogation. End of story. A close encounter or two ought to convince them of the gravity of their situation.

FACE TO FACE

Here are a few miscellaneous Night City CDC employees that the characters can approach and ask about Chaing, and the responses they will get.

- Terry DiNapoli, researcher. Claims no knowledge of Chaing. Will refer the characters to Peter Berkowitz.
- Ozzie Cates, Public Information Officer. Is a DSA agent under cover in the CDC. Will act friendly, and report the characters.
- Andrea Powers, administrator. Gets very scared, then angry, and yells at characters to leave her alone.
- Kaneda Hamano, researcher. Scared, but can be convinced to refer the characters to Peter Berkowitz.
- Lloyd Ritter, Administrator. Fully believes Tuere propaganda. Will report characters.

Family members of these people are very little help. Some of them subscribe to Tuere's propaganda and might report the characters.

Useful Sources

So what methods might the characters successfully employ to find either some information on David Chaing and his disappearance, or to locate a past friend or associate who is based in or near Night City? We see two offhand: The Berkowitz family and Scarab.

First Path: Peter and Sebastian Berkowitz

There is a CDC branch office and field research facility in Night City, where David Chaing was based when he visited Night City during the Early Days of the Carbon Plague. It is located on 10th

Street, near the corporate plaza, and run by a man named Peter Berkowitz. He is the only person at that office who was stationed there at the same time as Chaing. For some reason, there was a large staff turnover shortly after Chaing's disappearance.

This is publicly available information, and will raise little suspicion. The characters can also learn all this by talking with the yogangs in the 10th Street area. The Terminals, a Goth yogang that hangs out near the CDC because of their morbid fascination with disease, are particularly good sources. Once again the characters will have to be diplomatic and ready to trade.

Berkowitz lives out in the wealthy district of Pacifica (see the *Night City Sourcebook*, page 179), and his house is easy to get to. The problem with Berkowitz is that he has been thoroughly brainwashed by Margaret Tuere's propaganda campaign. Some chatting with the local kids, mostly upscale Mallbrats and Beaverbrats, will reveal that Berkowitz had three kids: Sebastian, 15, Sabrina, 12, and Erik, who was 10. Erik got sick, and then recovered as a cyberevolved Wizard. Berkowitz sold him down the river to "protect" the rest of his family, and young Erik was torn crying from the arms of his hysterical mother and shipped away by CDC agents. Word is that Erik died on the vivisection table at a CDC "recovery camp."

Obviously, direct contact with Berkowitz will be extremely dangerous. He will not hesitate to report the characters if he suspects that they are cyberevolved, or if they ask about Chaing. Berkowitz will, however, be cheerful and gracious, delaying the

The Eden Cabal

If the characters fail to track down any resources, they can try to finagle a face-to-face with Alt through their Eden Cabal contacts. Alt will vanish into the Net briefly, and return with the names of Berkowitz, and a mention by Silverhand of Scarab. The characters can take it from there. Save this for a last resort; resourceful characters should be able to pull this much off on their own.

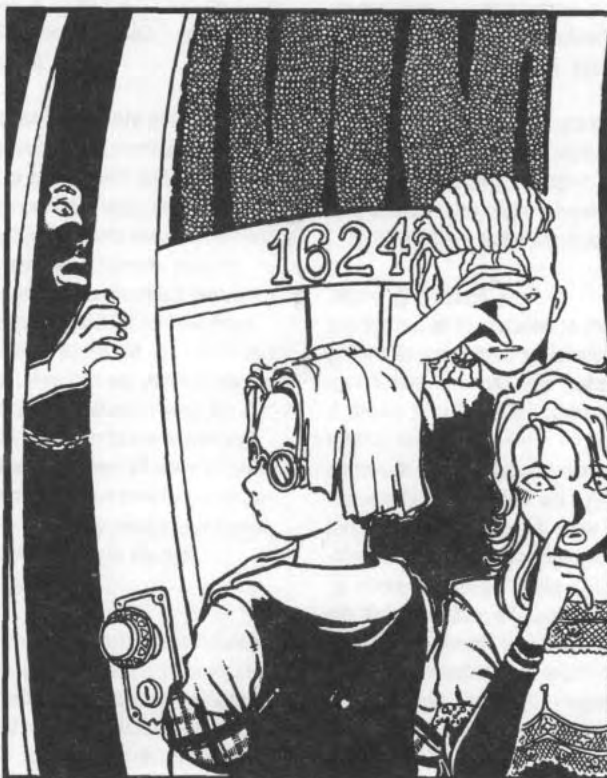
characters right up until the arrival of the agents he secretly called. Berkowitz' wife, Helen, had a nervous breakdown after Erik was torn from her. She doesn't talk any more, and lives as an invalid at the Berkowitz home. Scanning her will reveal nothing of value, only a great, deep, grief as she wastes away in her bed, attended to only by a machine.

Sabrina is a Goldengirl brainwashed as fully as her father. She will run screaming from any cyberevolved kids she encounters and tell Daddy. She knows nothing of any use, but on the other hand, she shares the general yogangers' contempt for the Machine. If she thinks her dad's calling the heat on the PCs, she'll let them know. "Bastion always told me that this would happen sometime."

Sebastian is another matter altogether. Driven into a deep rage by his brother's fate, Sebastian has never forgiven his father. Sebastian spends

as little time as possible around the house because he runs with his Mallbrat yogang, a couple of which are cyberevolved, and he lives in deep fear of his father pegging him as a carbon traitor and having him sent away. He only shows up often enough to avoid suspicion, and to attend to his mother. If the characters talk to the neighborhood kids, they will learn of Sebastian, and can either wait for him to come home (1D10 hours) or search him out at a nearby mall, where he works at the Hot 'Za.

Initially, Sebastian will be wary of the characters, suspecting Raptors. If the characters role-play well or offer any evidence to prove their intentions they can easily win Sebastian's confidence. Once he warms up to the characters and learns what they intend to do, Sebastian will be happy to help. He certainly remembers Chaing.



"Yeah, my dad used to work with him. Didn't like him. Probably the only reason my family is still alive. Chaing went poof one day, and so did a lot of people working with him. Who knows where?"

"Before he vanished, Chaing got pretty paranoid. He knew something was going down, what with the way Maggie and him went at it at the CDC. Dad talked about it a lot. He came over one night, gave my father a V-disk, said if he ever disappeared to give it to the press. Problem was, my father hated Chaing, but never had the guts to tell anyone. Dad thought he was using the Carbon Plague and the media to get famous, make himself the man, so he erased the disk and threw it out." A sly smile spreads across Sebastian's face. "I kept it, on account of Chaing was my Mom's favorite. She has all his books. Don't know if you can get anything useful off of that disk. But you're welcome to try."

If things have been going easily for the characters, have Sebastian demand a trade for the disk. Use your imagination and make your characters work for it. Sebastian can also provide the names of other local people who might have worked with Chaing. You know what good they'll be ...

Chaing's Disk

It takes a *Commo* or *Arcane* check at difficulty 14 to recover any information from the disk. Failure might destroy any remaining data. Much of the data has been lost, but there are several fragmented sequences of Chaing speaking while sitting at a desk. It is not much, not even quite enough for a good a/v person to Foley up a V-Chaing. What the reconstructed disk does have is another damaged copy of the AI matrix from the V-card. If the characters have recognized that code for what it is, they may realize that this disk gives them many of the segments missing from the V-card copy. It might be enough to make the matrix functional, although there will still be a few gaps. The problem is that the reconstruction will take a *Programming* or *Arcane* check at 25, and the characters probably don't have the computer equipment to either compile or check the matrix. Ultimately, they won't be sure what it is supposed to do. What kind of risks do they want to take?

There is also one audio-visual sequence where everything is actually intelligible for more than a second. Tell the characters:

"As you watch, the fuzzy image resolves for second, and the sound clears up. Chaing is visible, sitting at his desk. He is in the middle of saying something. You hear, "... truth is that you could take every human being off the face of the Earth and the ..." static "...I'll be viable if anyone ever came back to ..." Then the image wavers and dissolves into static again."

Second Path: Scarab

Another source that may prove useful for the characters is a man named Scarab. He is a legendary character among Vidiots. The Nightcrawlers may refer the characters to him, or a Vidiot player character might know him (*StreetSmarts* check of 15). Another

way the characters might encounter Scarab is by doing research through official news organizations. Any reporter the characters talk to will officially brush them off, and most who have published pieces on Chaing in the past seem just as paranoid as other past associates and family members. One reporter might track the characters down later, however, and tell them that a man named Scarab might be a good source of archive material on David Chaing, or anybody else for that matter.

Scarab has a group of about fifteen worshipful Vidiots who hang out at his place and provide him with raw footage, security, and other services in return for access to his equipment and file material. He calls them his "Acolytes", and they call themselves "the Jade Chitin", but other, more jealous Vidiots call them "The Dung Beetles." Characters might know of them, or run into them in the course of their other legwork.

Scarab is what Vidiots and Medias call a Feed Junkie. Once he was Rafael Ibanez, a star V-reporter for one of the major networks, but he slowly grew to love the product more than the source. Now he spends 24 hours a day wired into his pirate taps of the international satellite feeds. Every network and every independent channel is beamed into his house constantly. Even scrambled feeds are no problem for Scarab; he has some of the most sophisticated decoding software and hardware known. What comes into his house is the raw material being transmitted back and forth by the networks, not the filtered, distilled product eventually piped into people's homes. Interesting material is cataloged and saved on superhigh-density storage disks. Scarab was a wealthy man when he began his peculiar descent into insanity. Now he supports himself well by selling information, unlicensed copies of V-news and video news reports, and raw footage to anyone who can find him and pay the cost. "Distributing the truth" is how he defines it.

Scarab is strictly freelance, and will deal with anyone he likes or who can meet his prices. He is not a member of the Eden Cabal, although he has traded with them in the past. Scarab maintains his safety through his unbelievable web of surveillance and communications. He also preys on the internal intrigues of the government to protect himself. The DSA secretly use him to spy on other branches of the government, since his sources are outside of official channels. In return, they don't bust him, even though he sometimes causes them problems. As a fallback, Scarab also has stashed enough dirt and blackmail material to destroy at least fifty top administration and DSA officials. The characters won't learn anything of Scarab's more sinister contacts, although they may wonder why he hasn't been closed down yet.

Scarab is easy to find. He never leaves home. He can't stand to be without his feeds. In fact, if he is taken away from them, he will go into a kind of withdrawal, screech and cry, and finally go dangerously psychotic. His place is a huge, old, Victorian mansion on Parkside, on a corner lot in a run-down neighborhood south of the university. All of the windows are blacked out, either by heavy curtains or paint. If the characters visit at night

they may see the flickering lights of video images shining through small holes in the blackout material. Predictably enough there is a video camera surveying the front porch and door. A knock will bring a thin, ratty looking girl of about 14 to the door. She is one of the Acolytes.

"You delivering something?" she asks. She is confrontational and suspicious, and will not want to give the characters an audience. "Scarab doesn't like to be disturbed. "Face time don't come easy. Especially by no pack of uptown charfs."

Getting in for an audience ("face time") with Scarab will require:

- A convincing, role-played explanation.
- A trade. Some kind of service for the Acolytes. Check your character plotpaths for ideas that will be particularly painful.
- A gift for Scarab. Rare video material and video equipment are always welcome. If necessary, the Nightcrawlers might be able to give the characters something that will suffice, but they'll want a favor for it.

Eventually, the characters should get an audience. They are led into the front hallway by the Acolyte. The weirdness of the situation becomes clear quickly; video screens are the only source of light. Every inch of every surface in the house is paneled with video flatscreens of various sizes — even the floors are cluttered, and other screens dangle precariously from the ceilings. The only exceptions are power outlets and some of the painted-over windows. Other Acolytes sleep in hammocks or on mats tucked into corners, or else work with Virtuality gear in large closets converted into editing suites. The electric bill must be beyond belief.

Finally, the characters reach Scarab's sanctum, in the center of the second floor. This room is the weirdest of all. As they enter the door closes behind them, and the characters find themselves suspended in a room where, no matter what direction they look, they face a flickering video image. Each of the panels measures about 1 foot by 8 inches, and there are literally about a thousand of them in all, each with a different feed. Alert characters (Get a Clue at 15) notice feeds from inside NCPD police

precincts, all the rooms within the house, and local corporate office buildings. The sound from each panel is a low murmur, but combined it is a confusing, almost demonic sound. The overall effect is deeply hypnotic — the characters must beat a COOL check of 12 or they zone out. Sitting in a lotus position, on a small, slowly rotating dais in the center of the room, is Scarab. He is emaciated, and his eyes gleam darkly from between his craggy, overgrown brow, and an enormous, unkempt beard. Personal hygiene and food are obviously afterthoughts for Scarab. Fifteen interface leads drape down from sockets in his head to plugs in the surface of the dais.

As the dais turns, the characters move into Scarab's field of view. He actually looks happy to have visitors, and he stops the rotation and speaks in a raspy voice:

"Welcome, welcome, my friends. I saw you approach. Hem. What do you seek? Enlightenment? Hem. You can find it here at the temple of the sixty-cycle image." He extends a bony finger vaguely in your direction. "What image do you seek?" He moves his finger to point at one of the screens, and all of a sudden the image leaps forward, transformed into a 6-foot by 9-foot holographic projection that hangs in the air between Scarab and the wall. The accompanying sound suddenly fills the room, an ad for Meat-E Nuggitz dog food on Net 54. As he moves his finger previous screens recede and new ones leap out: a news show, a CDC public-service announcement, a soap opera. Scarab extends several fingers and several images jump out at once, shifting and bending to fit into the room, interacting in a stilted choreography. Scarab laughs, a hollow tinny sound.

If the characters tell Scarab that they want images of David Chaing, he will close his eyes for a moment. Deep in the basement, a V-disk jukebox cues up. Suddenly, every screen in the room will display the same image of David Chaing making a televised speech. The date is April 17th, 2026, shortly after the Carbon Plague hit its ten-thousandth victim. Chaing is making a speech.

"... a time of trial for all of us. I won't try to put a pleasant face on what we all know is a tragedy of the greatest magnitude.



That is a job for the politicians, and I am not a politician. I do make a pledge to you, on the dawning of this black day. We will find a way to overcome this blight that spreads among us ..."

As Scarab raises his hands, the image flickers and changes to Chaing on an interview show. A newsman in a nice suit is asking questions.

"... confidence at this time, when, so far, all efforts have amounted to nothing."

Chaing replies, "Well, Ted, we've been spoiled by our technology to believe that there is an instant solution to everything. Diseases don't work like technology. They don't follow our orders. They thought tuberculosis was licked. Then, in the 'nineties it came back, stronger than ever. I don't want our people making the same mistakes with the Carbon Plague. If we lick this thing, we have to lick it once and for all ..."

The image recedes back into the wall, and Scarab says, "Now my children, tell me what you need."

Once the characters explain, Scarab says that he needs something in trade for his services. A copy of Sebastian's V-disk will suffice since it is something Scarab doesn't have, and he might even offer to take a crack at cleaning it up more. He'll tell the characters to come back in a few days and see if the Acolytes have had any luck with it. If the characters don't have Sebastian's disk, they'll have to trade with something else. Scarab always enjoys a good Goldberg (p 26). Are the characters game for a try?

In return, Scarab provides the characters with:

- Copies of as much Chaing footage as they want.
- Names, addresses and pictures of local associates and family members who were interviewed by the media when Chaing was a local celebrity. You know how they'll react if the characters come calling.
- Copies of recent coverage slamming Chaing as an irresponsible demagogue. It was aired in a localized market and received a terrible public reaction. The ISA tried no further attacks of that type, and instead tried to take an apotheosis approach.
- Footage of Mabel Kheinn and Margaret Tuere from news appearances, including an unbroadcast, post-interview feed of Tuere saying to an anchor on a news show interview set, "Ask me the wrong questions again and you'll be covering the inside of a re-education camp, first hand. The CDC has the authority, and I'm the CDC now."
- This handy nugget of information: "Heh, heh. Be careful kiddies. A lot of information and a great many stories find me in my sanctum here. I saw what happened after Chaing vanished. Half

of his family and half of his friends wiped out as an example. Everyone else too terrified to be a problem. Will you be next? Will I?"

Creepy guy, but the message is clear. Chaing's former friends and associates are terrified because, after Chaing disappeared, someone launched a Stalinesque purge as an object lesson. For whom is unclear. Why is obvious. Don't mess with Tuere. Don't talk about Chaing.

Scarab and Sebastian's Disk

If the characters pay a repeat visit to Scarab after trading him a copy of Sebastian's disk, they may get some more useful information. Scarab can tell them a little of the nature of the AI matrix, if the characters haven't yet discovered it, and tell them that it is designed to become a Chaing-based AI but its exact purpose is unclear. Furthermore, it has some odd viral characteristics of complex and unknown effect. Of course, whether or not enough of the code is intact for any part of it to operate remains to be seen.

SCARAB (Rafael Ibanez)

Media

Stats: INT 10, REF 5, TECH 9, COOL 8, ATT 3, LUCK 6, MA 5, BODY 5, EMP 6

Skills: Credibility 6, Oratory 6, Streetwise 9, Human Perception 6, Interview 7, Persuasion and Fast Talk 5, Education and General Knowledge 7, Expert: a/v 10.

Cyberware: Basic processor, basic cyberoptics, multiple interface system with multiple a/v feeds and control interface, machine link, chipware socket.

THE HAMMER FALLS

If the characters are careless enough to attract the attention of the CDC or the DSA (or if things aren't moving quickly enough, or perhaps if Krys has been allowed to make a damaging report), have the government launch a hit. Of course, a full blown government hit would probably wipe out the kids, so instead have the agents hit whomever the characters have been trying to contact. For example, if they've been pestering Peter Berkowitz a lot after having attracted attention by talking to a lot of other CDCers, the DSA might hammer Berkowitz and his family — ideally just as the characters are approaching or leaving his residence. Or perhaps they see an adult who has given them some small bit of help get carried away for "questioning", never to be seen again. The object for the characters here should be to run like rabbits. The object for you is to show them not to play around: People die in the ISA, and when they die, it is fast, ruthless, and leaves no trace.

Of course, Scarab himself is left alone. Just how deep do his fingers extend?



PART V: BATTLE OF THE NETWORK SUPERSTARS

Now that they have the source material, the characters need to foley up a completed V-Chaing. Then get him on the air ...

The characters will probably try to achieve one of two basic foleys: either a pre-recorded segment, or a computer-generated following-model that will map a foleyed V-Chaing around a player-character's words and actions in realtime. A recorded version is easier, and won't crash during a broadcast. A following-model is more difficult, but will allow the V-Chaing to respond in realtime to a Tuere broadcast. Of course, a twelve-year-old slacker is probably going to use twelve-year-old slacker diction and grammar, something which will be obvious no matter how slick the foley that overwrites his words and movements. It's just something to think about.

The content of the V-Chaing segment is totally up to the characters. Have them describe what they want to do, and decide, based on their creativity and originality, how much effect that would have. The characters are welcome to consult with others when deciding on the content, but pay attention to whom they spill the beans! It could come back to haunt them if someone talks ... or is a Raptor.

The characters can also try to use the matrix code on the V-card and disk to try to reconstruct the AI that it is supposed to be. Of course, they still don't know what it is supposed to do. The matrix can be successfully re-assembled on a desktop computer or CDS

with a *Programming* or *Arcane* check at 25. Unfortunately, even if the check is successful, the initial results will probably be disappointing. Nothing will happen. Wizards could tell that something is there, but it is just receiving, not responding. What the characters don't know is that the AI is designed to activate only if certain conditions are met, and those conditions will probably not pop up until the characters make their broadcast. The conditions are that the AI must detect an open pathway to the Net and satellite channels. Of course, these conditions will arise soon.

If the opportunity comes up, Alt will be able to analyze the AI matrix, and tell the characters what conditions will trigger its activation. She will not, however, be able to predict what the AI will do. The viral qualities seem to be directed towards self-repair of the code.

Foleying up a Chaing

Technically, foleying up the recorded version will require a *Programming, Expert: A/V* or related, or *Commo* check at difficulty 22. The following-model requires a *Programming, Expert: A/V* or related, or *Commo* check at 28. A failed recorded version will simply glitch, or look wrong, or sound or look bad depending on the margin of failure. A badly failed follow-model simply won't work. A closely failed follow-model is worse! The characters shouldn't know they failed until the program glitches or crashes during the broadcast, or the AI goes funny (see below). Equipment bonuses apply, but your characters should be ready to burn some prep time and LUCK points to make this work. Have them describe their preparation. The characters might need help in setting up their Chaing. Once again, they should be careful whom they ask. The Nightcrawlers are trustworthy, but they might be getting scared about now.

You can add some time pressure by telling the characters that they might want to have their V-Chaing ready in time to compete with an upcoming prime-time appearance by Margaret Tuere. Tuere is stumping for the city referendum (see page 66), and it is critical that the characters be ready to go in time. Set the amount of time as you see fit, depending on how much stress you want to put the characters under. We suggest lots of stress.

Whole lots.

The characters also need a relatively sophisticated setup to do this on, hopefully an a/v processing computer or CDS system (see page 30). The Nightcrawlers do not have anything this sophisticated. That leaves the characters with two options:

- Ask Scarab for permission to use some of his editing facilities. Scarab will be cool to this request, since it deepens his involvement considerably, but still is open to persuasion. The characters will have to do a big, big favor for him. Use your imagination. This could also cause problems if the DSA comes calling and the characters are around.
- Find the people who are going to set up their pirate feed and ask to use their equipment. Since your characters are going to be

carrying a prestigious recommendation into this, they might find this the better option.

Finding a Station

There are three ways that the characters can find a broadcaster to arrange a pirate break-in for them.

- Ask Scarab for help. He can send the characters to Badass Dog, but he can't provide an introduction. This may make it tough for the characters to get any cooperation.
- Go searching on their own. Good luck. "You want me to what!? Who are your references? Kiss off!" Slam! Of course, one of the characters might already have a personal contact. Once again, if it fits the greater scheme of your campaign, go for it.
- Through the Eden Cabal. This is the course we recommend because it helps to set up some situations which will be resolved in future adventures. (Hey, this is a running story, you know.)

Alt

The characters need to find a person good enough to rig up a major pirate broadcast. This will not be a child. The best course is for the characters to ask their Eden Cabal contact for an audience with Alt. Considering how serious a project the characters are involved in, they will get a chance to talk to the mythical Netrunner (or at least her encoded personality).

Alt is as enigmatic as ever, appearing as a wave of symbols and vaguely recognizable facial features in the electronic image of the V-term. She says, "To do what you want will take someone who is gifted, who has a rare skill with media." She flickers out of the image, and then returns. "I don't know such a person, so I asked The Mystic. He doesn't have his last seven years' of memories, but he knows someone who'd still be tapped in. Find the Samurai-man Kerry Eurodyne. Tell him Silverhand sent you, and say, 'the smoke has settled.' Kerry has a great many friends in the city."

Eurodyne

The characters can track Eurodyne down at the Grand Illusion club, just off High Street, in the Med Center district of Night City (*Night City Sourcebook* page 116). This is the club that the original Johnny Silverhand and Kerry Eurodyne used to own together. Now the situation is unclear. With Alt's introduction, access will be no problem. Eurodyne is a dark and brooding man (see his bio on page 48 for more info on his current situation and mindset).

"Kee-rist. So the revolution still wants my help, does it? I'd think they'd look elsewhere by now." He takes a long hit off of a strong drink, and then says bitterly under his breath, "All hail the Evolution." He shakes his head. "Now, what was it that I am supposed to be able to do for you?"

Once the characters explain their request he could send them one of two ways:

First Path: Badass Dog

"Yeah, yeah. I think I know the guy for you. Look up an operation called Badass Dog productions. They set up pirate feeds for Silverhand and me more'n once. Never missed a trick, never got traced. They might agree to let you guys set something up. Take 'em my card." Eurodyne hands the kids a guitar pick with a tiny holographic image on it. It is the logo of Samurai, Eurodyne and Silverhand's old band.

Review the write-up on Badass Dog studios (pages 24-26) and look at the personnel list on page 76 to get the setup of the studio, and remind yourself what NPCs the characters will be meeting. Make the trip to Badass Dog an interesting role-play session for the characters. They have to deal with the Cronkites and the various station staff in the course of getting in. Fortunately, most of the Badass Dog staff study propaganda, and haven't yet been warped by the deadly CDC philosophy. The characters' main contact will be Badass Dog director Lydia Love (page 76). If the characters have no introduction, Love will tell them to get lost. If the characters come with Eurodyne's card, she is willing to listen, and to help. Friends mean a lot.

"It's a tall order kids, but I think I can help you out. The thing is that we have to arrange plausible deniability, if you know what I mean. We're not really an inconspicuous organization, and I don't want the DSA shutting me down and blowing away my staff. It's hard to find good help."

Love would rather that the characters assemble their V-Chaing by themselves, and involve a minimal number of her staff. If absolutely necessary, however, she will get her computer director, Genoa Estrada (page 76), to give them a hand. Estrada will arrange the pirate feed for the characters, and provide them with a studio to work from. The character's broadcast is a break-in — it will not pre-empt Badass Dog's regular programming, nor should it lead the authorities to Badass Dog unless Estrada or the characters screw up in a major fashion. Estrada has set it up so that the characters can interrupt about half of the major satellite feeds coming in to Night City. They won't get total coverage, but they'll get good coverage. It's also a safe bet that the local independents will pick up and rebroadcast anything the characters send, increasing the visibility of their V-Chaing.

Second Path: Booster Shockwave

"Yeah, yeah. I think I know the guy for you. Look up a man by the name of Booster Shockwave, down South of the Freeway. He set up pirate feeds for Silverhand and me more'n once. Never missed a trick, never got traced. He might agree to let you guys set something up. Take him my card." Eurodyne hands the kids a guitar pick with a tiny holographic image on it. It is the logo of Samurai, Eurodyne and Silverhand's old band.

Booster Shockwave operates out of a small, dusty shop generically called "Booster's Electronic Repairs." It's in an industrial neighborhood deep in the South of the Freeway area. Booster is

MEAN 'N' NASTY AGAIN

If the characters have made any enemies in the course of this adventure, the following section might make a good place for an attempt at retribution. The characters will be criss-crossing Night City, talking to Kerry Eurodyne and representatives of Badass Dog Studios. If the kids have been cruising, why not an ambush? If the characters have been careless at any time in the adventure this is a good place for their troubles to come home to roost. They'll have a hard time explaining their pirate broadcast to a bunch of DSA agents. Also, the characters will be crossing through a lot of neighborhoods infested by a lot of yogangs. Check those plotpaths and look for character histories and gang rivalries that could haunt the players as they near success, personal affairs interfering with life again. Say, wouldn't it be awful if a rival yogang or jealous boyfriend busted into the room just as the characters were running their broadcast?

a small, hyperactive man who wears a leather helmet on which are mounted an astounding number of electronic probes and sensors, as well as lights and magnifying lenses. The dusty shelves in his store are covered with jumbles of all manner of electronic equipment. One table is obviously his work surface. An extremely intricate device of unknown purpose has been laid open, and its parts spread out for examination.

At first, the characters might be suspicious of such a crackpot, but he has Eurodyne's confidence. At the sight of the guitar pick, Booster will take the characters into his confidence:

"Ahh, yes, Kerry. Kerry, Kerry, Kerry. He needs to cheer up. A good lad, though, yes, a fine lad. I set up many a pirate 'cast for him and Silverhand in the old days. Piping Samurai concerts out over the feeds. Drove the networks crazy. Never had a clue who was responsible. You know, I was working for the, as a freelance tech in those days. Learned a lot of secrets about how to bust open a network feed. Heh heh."

If the characters explain what they want, Booster will seem a little more cautious, but he will still agree to help. His history with Eurodyne and Silverhand runs deep.

"Tricky, tricky. Asking for big trouble. I'll tell you what, though. I'll still help you. You're kids after my own heart. Remind me of how I was when I was a teenager. Always getting into trouble. Always getting shot at. Ahh, those were the days. Here's what I'm gonna do. I got to cover my ass. Hope you understand. I won't set up anything for you, but I'll set it up so that you can do it yourself. I'll leave the equipment set up and a set of basic, er, instructions for you. And I'm gettin' on, you know. I might just forget to activate my alarm on ... on ... When did you need to do this?"

The characters will have to actually break into Booster's shop on the evening of their broadcast. They will have to take real pains to

BADASS DOG PERSONNEL

Bear in mind that Badass Dog is a relatively large street production house. This list is typical of the personnel that you find among larger, 24-hour independent studios. Smaller houses can operate with less than one quarter this number of personnel.

Lydia Love, Station Manager and Program Director: Responsible for overall management, staffing, selecting news coverage, and programming decisions. **Character Type:** Fixer. **Key Skills:** Streetdeal, Streetwise, Social, Persuasion and Fast Talk, Expert: Broadcasting, Leadership.

Leonard Commerce, Technical Director: Responsible for setting up and maintaining broadcast, lighting, production, and transmission equipment in the field and studio. **Character Type:** Techie. **Key Skills:** Jury Rig, Expert: Broadcast Equipment, Education and General Knowledge, Basic Tech, Electronics, Programming, Photo and Film.

Genoa Estrada, Computer Director, Assistant Technical Director: Responsible for overseeing computer production and communication equipment, arranging computer and transmission break-ins, and designing computer security. **Character Type:** Netrunner. **Key Skills:** Interface, Awareness/Notice, Education and General Knowledge, Programming, System Knowledge, Basic Tech, Cyberdeck Design, Expert: Broadcasting.

Yushio Akeda, Stage Manager: Responsible for overseeing the broadcast studio, studio personnel, and equipment. Deals with talent on stage. Smooths communication between technical staff, performers, and management. **Character Type:** Techie. **Key Skills:** Jury Rig, Persuasion and Fast Talk, Social, Martial Arts, Basic Tech, Electronics, Photo and Film, Expert: Broadcasting.

Hallie Juno, Sound: Responsible for setting up and maintaining sound equipment in studio productions and live situations requiring specialized sound needs. Essential when dealing with musicians. **Character Type:** Techie. **Key Skills:** Jury Rig, Composition, Basic Tech, Expert: Sound Equipment, Electronics, Programming.

Grey Cole and Kira Dey, Directors: Supervise the performance and broadcast of live programming originating from Badass Dog. Supervise the control room during broadcasts. Strong creative element in staging productions and choosing camera angles and computer effects and transitions. Work closely with producers. **Character Type:** Medias. **Key Skills:** Credibility, Perform, Composition, Expert: Broadcasting, Photo and Film.

Ozzie Krueger and Ali McQueen, Producers: Arrange performances by contacting and booking talent and guests, researching necessary information, coordinating production and personnel, and supervising live performances. A very important job, but sometimes replaced by visiting personnel. Also serve as field talent scouts, spotting and booking entertaining acts. **Character Type:** Fixers. **Key Skills:** Streetdeal, Streetwise, Intimidate, Interview, Persuasion and Fast Talk, Composition, Education and General Knowledge, Expert: Broadcasting.

Xavier and Denise, News Anchors and Show Hosts: Host Badass Dog's street affairs news and expose shows from the studio. Often serve as talent in other productions. Local celebrities. **Character Type:** Rockerboy/Girl. **Key Skills:** Charismatic Leadership, Oratory, Persuasion and Fast Talk, Wardrobe and Style, Personal Grooming, Social, Seduction, Perform, Composition.

Tyler, Britt, Portia, Quint, and Swede, Reporters and Technical Crew: Serve as field reporters and talent, as well as studio technical crew, running cameras and helping to assemble shows. Some are young Vidiots as well. **Character Type:** Medias and Vidiots. **Key Skills (Medias):** Credibility, Wardrobe and Style, Persuasion and Fast Talk, Human Perception, Composition, Film and Photography, Awareness/Notice, Interview, Streetwise. **Key Skills (Vidiots):** Commo, Get a Clue, Blend, Streetsmarts.

Union Jack DeSalvo, Security Director: Oversees security of the station as well as talent and productions in the field. Often hires freelance assistants, or uses the Cronkites for help. **Character Type:** Solo. **Key Skills:** Combat Sense, Intimidate, Streetwise, Awareness/Notice, Martial Arts, Melee, Driving, Stealth, Pistol, Rifle, Submachinegun, First Aid, Electronic Security, Pick Lock, Athletics.

Philip "Crazy Phil" Kwan, Goldberger and Security Assistant: Every respectable independent studio has a house goldberger. Phil is one of the best. His specialty is infiltration, rather than confrontation. He doubles as security assistant. **Character Type:** Solo. **Key Skills:** Combat Sense, Endurance, Streetwise, Awareness/Notice, Hide/Evade, Martial Arts, Athletics, Motorcycle, Pistol, Melee, Demolitions, Programming, Electronics, Electronic Security, Disguise.

Freelancers: Various people who don't work full time for the studio, but may contribute to productions or serve as technical or security staff, talent scouts, performers, producers, etc. About twenty work for the station regularly; many have only contributed once or twice. **Character Type:** Various. **Key Skills:** Various.

make sure they are not seen and reported. Booster doesn't mind a little damage to the shop, but he has to make any break in seem credible in case things go bad. It's his only defense against going down too if the DSA shows up. Play this tightly. If the characters screw up or make too much noise, someone will call the cops.

Once inside, the characters will have Booster's equipment, already set up, and a set of instructions for broadcasting either their recorded material, or their follow-model. Successfully executing the instructions will take a *Commo* check at 15. Failure means that the signal doesn't go out, fails during transmission, or, worse, that the DSA traces the signal and shows up to bust up the party. Use your judgment. Booster has set it up so that the characters can interrupt about half of the major satellite feeds coming into Night City. They won't get total coverage, but they'll get good coverage.

It's also a safe bet that the local independents will pick up and rebroadcast anything the characters send, increasing the visibility of their V-Chaing.

Words and Pictures

Even if the characters aren't doing the grunt technical work, the content of their program is totally up to them. Have them write a script. If they are trying to respond to Tuere's election night interview, here are the points that she raises. A script for her is a good idea, too; it gives you something to work from when the Chaing AI suddenly comes to life.

1. The Carbon Plague is lethal and communicable. It must be stopped at all costs. It can never be considered a force for good change in the world.
2. The only means of control that work are drastic. She advocates quarantine camps, and the "merciful euthanasia" of evolved plague victims who are clearly "no longer human."
3. People who advocate or advocated less drastic control measures are heartlessly endangering the rest of the population, and are short-sighted, crazy, or malicious.
4. The city referendum will clear the path for comprehensive "local action" to wipe out the Plague and the infected population.
5. She also brings up a bunch of data to support her claims. Much of the data is based on Chaing's but has been altered so

that it fits the conclusions they want drawn. In short, she backs up her points with lies.

Special Guest Star

Here is where the AI-matrix pops up. As the characters use computer systems to foley up their V-Chaing, the viral-construction elements embedded in the V-card and disk code will kick into operation. If the V-card and Sebastian's disk are ever accessed by the same computer, the viral subroutines will recognize that, between the two sources, there is a minimum amount of functional code available to rebuild the matrix. The sophisticated viral routines will run stealthily in the background, reassembling the matrix from all of the available code. Only a *Programming* check at 30 will detect that anything unusual is going on. The matrix will not swing into visible action until it detects that all of its activation parameters have been met.

When the characters begin their broadcast, they open channels directly into the Net and into the satellite bands to make their pirate break-in. This satisfies the AI's activation parameters, and the reassembled code downloads several remote front programs into the Net, like spores. This front program is a sort of interface program, and draws on the V-Chaing in their system and on the Night City Public Library database for material. Then, using the characters' feed as source material, it will take over their broadcast.

If the characters are doing a pre-recorded feed: Imagine their surprise

when their V-Chaing suddenly deviates seamlessly from what they have recorded! Furthermore, it begins responding in real-time to events happening on other channels — individually. If the characters are pre-empting Tuere's election-night broadcast, the supposedly pre-recorded V-Chaing suddenly begins countering Tuere's statements, appearing on a split screen with her. Elements of the characters' programming are still incorporated (this is important; don't make their work in vain), but the AI is obviously running the show now. It may even engage a shocked and enraged Tuere in conversation, and, at the same time, introduce itself to the characters on another screen. (It can run multiple images of itself at any given time.)

If the characters are doing a follow-model: The model suddenly stops following the character that it is slaved to, and



strikes off, perfectly, on its own. Everything else proceeds as with a pre-recorded version.

If possible, the V-Chaing AI will respond to Tuere's arguments in a realtime, point-to-point manner. Its responses to her major points:

1. The Carbon Plague cannot be stopped. It is already too late. Further, it is fulfilling a necessary function, bringing the Earth and humanity back into balance, and moving humanity along to the next stage in its logical evolution as an information-based nanorganic hybrid.
2. Euthanasia and quarantine are the desperate, cruel measures of a corrupt, obsolete system desperate to preserve the status quo at all costs. The communicability of a nanotech virus is infinite, and quarantine in such a case is pointless, though politically expedient for the elimination of rivals.
3. Smart people recognize the right of the cyberevolved to live, and to forge a place for themselves in the brave, new world, and will help the cyberevolved, who are, after all, just children. Those who advocate learning to live with and develop these new hybrids are visionaries.
4. The referendum will be a disaster that will lead to wholesale slaughter that will soon extend beyond the cyberevolved and into the general population as a state doomed to death goes through its final, cataclysmic throes.
5. As for experimental data, Chaing long ago downloaded self-extracting executable spores throughout the Net. He gives passwords for hackers to retrieve and explode these files, to prove that Tuere's methodology is questionable, to say the least.

Revelation

As the AI gains the advantage over Tuere, stations drop out one by one due to "technical difficulties." Others stick with it. At the end of the broadcast, the AI drops the big bombs:

"You can quarantine or kill every human being on the face of the Earth, and never defeat the Carbon Plague. Ignorance and fear make you think that quarantine and euthanasia are the answer. Just because the Carbon Plague only affects humans, you think it only infects humans? The truth is that the Carbon Plague is in almost every living organism on Earth.

"Every whale, cat, bird, tree, shrub ... Almost everything over one cell in size is infected, and maybe even some below. There are doubtless CNMs in the stratosphere and beneath the Antarctic ice. The reason the CDC doesn't admit this is because it scares them too much! It means admitting defeat! As long as human beings are born, they will be exposed to the Plague, and they will evolve. Or die. Nothing can change that.

"What I'd like to know, Dr. Tuere, is why the government funded Blanc Research for two years before the Carbon Plague first made

its appearance. It's well known that Blanc was an industry leader in epidemiology and nanotech, and a top-notch free-lance research outfit. Why, then, did the government fund them under such secrecy? And why was it never released that the lab was destroyed?"

Tuere is shocked almost beyond belief by this accusation from her old nemesis, but, as a credit to her resilience, she recovers quickly. "Don't be taken in by this ... this cheap stunt. This is the work of insurgents and traitors desperate to manipulate the Plague for their own greedy ends. Don't be fooled!"

Nonetheless, her credibility has been damaged, and the Night City referendum will not pass.

After the broadcast, the V-Chaing AI explains its true nature to the characters. It downloads itself from the characters' computer to a safe location Alt sets up. From there, it plans to continue to follow its programming and search for references to the Carbon Plague. Where those references are inaccurate, it hopes to set the record straight. It does have one final thing to say:

"Eventually, they may find a way to isolate my source code and destroy me. Until then, I'll be doing my best for you. All of you. Don't reveal that I am a construct. The cyberevolved need someone to believe in. Let them believe in Chaing as a real person, fighting for them. Trust me. Your faith won't be betrayed."

Then the construct will vanish. Will it re-appear? What does it have to do with the real Chaing? Does it know what happened to the original David Chaing? No one knows.

Fade to Black

Whether or not the characters succeed, and how well they succeed, depends on your judgment of their efforts, assuming everything was successfully broadcast. The best scenario is that the city-wide referendum is defeated, causing a public relations nightmare for Tuere, Kheinn, and the local CDC. Also, people are captivated by the reappearance of David Chaing, and the rumor mill swings into high gear. The CDC will have to direct tremendous efforts into propaganda to control the cult of personality swirling about David Chaing. Remember, if either Tuere or Kheinn knows anything about Chaing's disappearance, they can't admit it openly. Officially it's still a mystery.

At worst, the characters will produce a terrible show, everyone will spot it for a fake, and Tuere and Kheinn will score a victory as they point to the desperate work of "alarmists" to oppose a sane and reasonable response to the deadly Carbon Plague. The characters don't get the necessary parts or the necessary contacts to complete their own broadcast or allow the AI Chaing to re-assemble. The referendum passes, and there is new paranoia for the characters as Tuere chalks up a major propaganda victory.

Does it work? Will it fly? Only the next day's ratings will tell. Tune in again. Same dark time, same dark channel.

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SmartDoc
Striptape binders
SuperString
Towlink, Battarope

CGen 99
Eco 32
Eco 33
CGen 92
Eco 33
Eco 33
CGen 88
CGen 99
Eco 33
CGen 97
CGen 92
Eco 31
CGen 89
CGen 89
Eco 32 (also see Animals)
Eco 33
Eco 31
Eco 33
CGen 97
Eco 32 (also see Animals)
CGen 100
see SuperString
CGen 92
CGen 92
CGen 99
CGen 101
CGen 89
CGen 89

BDay: Bastille Day, **CGen:** Cybergeneration,
Eco: EcoFront, **Med:** MediaFront

TAKE BACK YOUR TVS! 2027-

The nation's populace is fed an unending stream of propaganda and psychological sedatives via the myriad forms of electronic entertainment which permeate ISA culture. Can the Cyberevolved break the iron grip the government has on the minds of the masses? Tune in and find out ...



This second of the *Documents of the Revolution™* series takes the *CyberRevolution™* onto the airwaves as the tools of the Media in 2027 are brought to bear. Radio, Television, Virtuality, and Braindance are the weapons in this duel to either free or enslave the thoughts of America. From new broadcast technology to the pirate stations that use it, *MediaFront* shows you the means to wage this new kind of war. You can subvert the Machine with the glamorous *Lookers*, or spray-paint over government propslogs with the artistic *Taggers*. But you'd better do *something*, because the ISA is on-the-air and in-your-face!

The *MediaFront* Sourcebook includes:

- A new Evolved type uniquely suited for this environment: the Jammer
- Two New Yogangs: The *Lookers* and the *Taggers*
- All sorts of new media-related technology and gear
- A profile of The Badass Dog, an underground TV station and the people who run it
- Guidelines for setting up your own broadcasting group
- A complete adventure set in the midst of a media campaign in which the fate of the cyberevolved may be decided!



CP 3351

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MEDIA FRONT

A DOCUMENTS OF THE REVOLUTION™ SOURCEBOOK FOR

CYBERGENERATION

**R. TALSORIAN
GAMES, INC.**