

CHAIN REACTION



An Adventure for The Roleplaying Game of Transhuman Conspiracy and Horror

port crate scheduled to be shipped back to Mike's Custom Morphs.

Simha 19, 19:59 – Synthmorph labors pick up the crate containing David at the Doll House and transport it through HLS to a Comex semi-automated supply truck. Comex then ships the crate to Mike's.

Simha 19, 21:00 – David arrives at Mike's. The Smoke Lions place him in a simulspace immersion tank/healing vat and begin a running an automated psychosurgery program on him in order to force him to find a cure for Chain Reaction.

Simha 20, 12:15 – David's psychosurgery is complete and he beings working on a cure.

Simha 20, 14:00 – Firewall receives a report of a missing scientist. As several other scientists have recently died under mysterious circumstances, Firewall decides to activate a group of sentinels in the Olympus region to investigate.

EVENTS

This section briefly lists the events that will occur during the adventure:

Simha 20, ~15:00 – The characters receive a message from the Thousand Heavens MARG informing them of a new quest. Information steganographically encoded into the message indicates that it is a request for a meeting from a Firewall proxy.

Simha 20, ~17:30 – Comex sends Zaizan a copy of the invoice for David's delivery and Zaizan realizes that the lab was not totally destroyed. He hires an ultimate mercenary, Chimera (see p. 21), to finish the job. Chimera is currently in another city and will take some time to arrive.

Simha 20, ~22:00 – Jason Healy, an indentured worker sleeved in a pod morph, goes on a rampage at a biomorph only bar. He guns down twelve people with a shredder before being tackled by several patrons. A few moments after being tackled he explodes like a bomb, killing the people subduing him. Overall there are 15 dead and 12 injured.

The shooting is widely reported in the media with some outlets trying to spin it as terrorist attack by the Barsoomian Movement: Jason was one of the people forced to evacuate the city by the OIA during the Fall. He died when the cheap life support system supplied by the hypercorp failed and he was forced to work off a second indenture, something he was very angry about it.

Simha 20, ~23:00 – After 132 hours of subjective research time David completes a simple, orally administered vaccine for Chain Reaction. High doses of the vaccine will also cure existing infections, provided it has been less than a week since infection. Under the influence of Hyper-Drive, David also conceives of a highly contagious airborne virus that will confer immunity to Chain Reaction and begins work on it.

Simha 20, ~23:00 – The Lions debate on what to do with the cure and ultimately decide to make sure it works before doing anything else. They start producing doses of the vaccine using the remains of the lab. With their limited resources, they will only be able to

CHAIN REACTION

Chain Reaction is a marvel of pathogen engineering created by some of the top scientist on Mars in a time accelerated simulspace while they were drugged with the experimental, mind-expanding Hyper-Drive. It consists of three distinct viruses: CRA, CRB, and CRC, contained inside a bacteria. The bacteria is designed to enter a biomorph and replicate rapidly, triggering an immune response which then destroys some of the bacteria, releasing the viruses.

Once released into the host the first virus, CRA, invades the victims cells, causing them produce a potent organic explosive. The second virus, CRB, causes nanoflechettes to grow underneath the victim's skin. These nanoflechettes provide safe harbor for the remaining bacteria. Finally the third virus, CRC, invades the victims brain and alters it so that, when a victim infected with CRC is in close proximity to multiple biomorphs, it will release a hormone to trigger the organic explosives created by CRA.

Once triggered the explosives will go off within one to ten minutes, killing the morph, and distributing infectious body fluids and nanoflechettes throughout the area.

Chain Reaction is spread by ingestion, injection, or direct fluid contact. Once exposed a character must make a DUR Test or become infected. Medichines give a +20 bonus to the test and identify the pathogen as a common MSRA infection. After infection, it takes about a week for the victim to become armed, though they may detonate prematurely if exposed to high heat, large electrical currents, or high-velocity impacts. After the victim is armed, the explosion caused by Chain Reaction automatically kills the victim and inflicts 4d10+DUR kinetic damage with 0 AP in an area. The explosion also spreads the pathogen: any biomorph or non-alien pod injured by the explosion and not killed outright has a chance of becoming infected. Infected pods will not self detonate. ■

produce one dose every hour and it takes four doses to cure an existing infection.

Simha 20, ~23:30 – Eli Leaton, a VR drafter for a local engineering firm sleeved in a ruster morph, takes a break from work to clear his head. Wandering through Central to get some fresh air, he is confronted by several OIA officers on suspicion of public intoxication. The officers, perhaps agitated by their mnemonic augmentations all simultaneously malfunctioning, proceed to savagely beat him. After receiving a particularly vicious kick from one of the officers, Eli explodes, killing that officer and wounding four others. An edited version of the event is released to the media, and interviews with the heroic OIA officer who died attempting to stop a suicide bomber are widely aired.

Simha 20, ~24:30 – Chimera attacks the lab, killing David. Depending on when the characters reach the lab, this event may happen earlier.

MISSION HOOK: THOUSAND HEAVENS

The characters all receive invitations to participate in a new quest in the massively-multiplayer augmented reality game, Thousand Heavens. Thousand Heavens is a game in which the players are placed in one of a number of heavens or hells and must help the saints or demons that reside there to advance. Steganographically hidden in the invitation is a brief, encrypted message from Firewall indicating that the sentinels should go to the quest briefing, which is at 16:00 in front of the Knox Building.

The Knox Building is a 150 story skyscraper in Central notable for holding the University of Chicago's Olympus satellite campus. In front of the building is a small domed plaza in the perpetual shadow of the surrounding skyscrapers. A small crowd of Thousand Heavens players have gathered in the plaza, waiting for the quest to start. To those using the Thousand Heavens AR overlays, everything appears normal until 16:00, when a shaft of light shines down from above, revealing a small hill in the center of the plaza. On that hill is a fig tree and hanging upside-down from the tree by a rope tied around one foot is a naked man. His eyes are closed.

When you approach the upside down man, his head turns to face you and his eyes open, revealing two voids full of stars. He speaks and his voice is that of a woman:

"Seekers of Enlightenment, you who would change destiny and turn aside fate, heed my words: a man known as David Williams is missing from his place in the Heaven, he entered his residence yesterday afternoon, never left, but is no longer there.

David is a virologist and we fear that his disappearance is connected to the recent deaths of five other scientists, working in similar fields. Your task is to find out what happened to him.

Obviously, this task is time sensitive and you should make haste. To speed your journey I have prepared gifts for you; with these you can climb the Spire of Heaven to where David dwells. Good Luck."

READ ALOUD

The person speaking is a Firewall router codenamed Proxy 21. She is using a MARG feature that allows quests to be tailored to specific groups of players (usually those in a particular heaven or hell) to speak only to the characters, the other game players present will receive a different quests. The characters may ask her questions securely over the mesh. When they are done talking to her the virtual beam of light fades, causing the hill, the tree, and the man to disappear.

The gifts are electronically transmitted to the characters and are fake ego IDs which identify the characters as students at the University of Chicago's satellite campus in the Knox Building. The IDs all currently have r-rep 10, c-rep 5, 50 credits, and 50 crypto-cred (p. 154, *Panopticon*).

DEAD SCIENTISTS

The following five scientists have died recently:

Dr. Kazuki Murase – a virologist studying bacteriophages for Ecologene. He died in a car crash.

Dr. Ryoo Hee Sok – a virologist at the University of Mars whose work focuses on determining how viruses can alter neural functioning. She was crushed when a flying car fell on her.

Dr. Momolu Mensah – a biosculpter working on viruses for Ecologene at a remote habitat. Killed along with several others in a methane explosion caused by a life support system failure.

Dr. Gwendolyn James – an MIT nanotechnologist working on medicine pathogen detection systems. She was killed when a breach in a nearby lab released a disassembler swarm.

Dr. Angelo Arnoldi – a neurologist working on smart monkeys brains. He fell down an elevator shaft. Onto a box of bullets.

STAGE 1: INITIAL INVESTIGATION

The characters now have to try and find David. Some of the ways they may wish to start their investigation are checking the mesh, checking the surveillance spimes, and talking to his friends and colleagues.

CHECKING THE MESH

Following the initial Research Test to accumulate relevant data (p. 250, *EP*), a second Research Test with a 1 minute timeframe will turn up the following information:

- David is a virology graduate student at the University of Chicago. His thesis is on the use of bacteriophages to genetically modify previously deployed biosculpted bacteria colonies.
- He lives and works at the university's campus in the Knox Building.
- He maintains a modest lifelog containing only the highlights. The log has not been updated since well before he went missing.
- A list of David's friends and colleagues. David is fairly active socially and has many friends who are worried about him because he missed class, work, and labs today, which is very unlike him.
- A map of David's apartment in the graduate student housing section of the campus.
- David does not own a vehicle, when off campus he uses public transportation or walks.
- David has no surveillance spimes in his apartment and no roommates, though he does have a servitor robot to take care of his apartment and cook for him.

GETTING A CLUE

Here are some suggestions for dealing with common problems that can occur during the investigative portion of the adventure:

- If the players have absolutely no idea what to do let the characters make an idea roll (p. 175, *EP*) to come up with a broad course of action such as checking David's social profile or visiting his apartment.
- If the players are unable to put the clues they already have together let the characters make an Investigation Test (p. 180, *EP*).
- If the players have forgotten a clue they have already found, give the characters a roll to remember it (p. 175, *EP*).
- If the characters skills are too low to find a vital clue they can use taking the time (p. 117, *EP*), complementary skills (p. 173, *EP*), and teamwork (p. 117, *EP*) to increase their positive modifiers and moxie to cancel any negative modifiers (p. 122, *EP*). Additionally, the character's muses have their own skills which may be used to make the required tests (p. 332, *EP*). ■

CHECKING THE SURVEILLANCE SPIMES

There are no surveillance spimes in David's apartment though there are surveillance spimes in the halls of the Knox Building and especially at the security checkpoints at the ground floor entrances.

After the initial Research Test to download information from the spimes, a second test with a ten minute timeframe will reveal that David was last recorded entering his apartment at 14:34 yesterday. There is no record of him leaving.

After David entered his apartment, the only other people to enter were members of a Knox Building Security team who arrived at 14:00 Simha 20, searched for 5 minutes, and then left.

Once the characters know about the wig, the goggles, or the boots (and have correctly adjusted gait analysis software) the characters can retry the second Research Test (with a +10 if they know about both the goggles and the wig) to spot David leaving the building. Alternately, if they know David's destination, they can attempt to track everyone going to HLS from the Knox Building. This requires the standard pair of Research Tests with the second test having a one hour timeframe.

On a successful test the characters find David leaving the Knox Building and learn his current appearance along with the name of his fake ID (Victor Telscopy). If they do not already know his destination, they can then track him to HLS with two Research Tests, the second test having a five minute timeframe.

INTERVIEWING DAVID'S FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES

David knows too many people to interview them all in a reasonable timeframe. A successful Investigation

Test (relationship mapping software provides a +30 bonus) will reveal his closest friend is a fellow grad student named Marie Danielson. A failed test will lead them to a random friend or associate who knows nothing about David's disappearance, but may be able to point out Marie Danielson as someone who might know more.

Marie is currently at the university campus in the Knox Building. The characters can contact her either through the mesh or in person (see Entering the Knox Building below), finding her either way is a simple Research or Networking: Scientist Test. Depending on when the characters contact her, she can be in class, at her lab, eating at a cafeteria, or in her apartment.

Marie is currently under a lot of stress and isn't in the mood to talk to strangers: it will require a successful Persuasion or Protocol Test to convince her to talk to the characters. When they bring up David they will also need to make an opposed Protocol Test (Marie's SAV + WIL + WIL is 45). Failure results in Marie becoming suspicious.

If she is not suspicious, Marie will talk about her missing friend David, and a successful Kinesics Test at +10 will reveal that she is hiding something about his disappearance. A successful Persuasion Test with a -30 penalty will then get her to reveal that he was a Drive addict, though he preferred his Drive mixed with Juice (a combination known as Happy Thoughts), and that he got his drugs from somewhere in a section of the city called HLS.

If Marie is suspicious, she will thoroughly question the characters before talking about David. The characters may lie to Marie, however she knows David well and has her muse constantly checking the veracity of anything she hears. If the characters tell her something she knows to be false or can be easily verified online, no matter how good of liars the characters are, she will become convinced that they are somehow involved in David's disappearance and contact security. She will then attempt to keep the characters talking until security can respond. At this point a Kinesics Test will reveal that she is stalling for time.

STAGE 2: DAVID'S APARTMENT

The characters may decide to search David's apartment for clues. David lives in university housing section on the 98th floor of the Knox Building.

ENTERING THE KNOX BUILDING

For security reasons, access to the Knox Building is restricted to residents of the building, their guests, and people with legitimate business inside. This is enforced by security checkpoints at the entrances.

The fake ID's supplied by Proxy 21 list the characters as residents and will let them enter, provided they can pass the security checkpoints.

The checkpoints consist of short corridors with security guards stationed nearby. The corridors are covered with spimes that scan everyone passing through them. Spime types include video, t-ray

weapon scanners, explosive detecting chem-sniffers, and metal detectors.

Ranged weapons, large blades like swords and axes, and heavy armor are strictly prohibited (except for use by the buildings security forces). Anyone attempting to smuggle in a restricted item must make a hard (-30) Palming Test or be confronted and potentially arrested. For larger weapons, a larger penalty applies with some weapons, such as plasma rifles, almost impossible to sneak in.

In addition to the guarded entrances there are also entrances on the roof and in the network of tunnels and subbasements below the building. Gaining access to the building through the roof is not difficult but getting to the roof is tricky as Olympus is both a no-fly zone due to the space elevator and subjected to high winds. Accessing the tunnels is easier but a Navigation Test (30 minute timeframe) is required for the characters to find their way up into the building.

APARTMENT MAP KEY

David's small apartment is decorated in a minimalist style and has a stark white color scheme broken up with splashes of stainless steel and glass. It is spotlessly clean thanks to David's servitor bot.

There are no surveillance spimes in the apartment, though there are spimes to detect the air temperature, light levels, humidity, atmospheric composition, pressure, and the like. These spimes are private, though they will public report certain dangerous conditions such as loss of air pressure.

There are surveillance spimes outside the apartment's entrance, including video spimes. These spimes are currently actively monitored by a security AI since David has been reported missing. These spimes may be hacked (the security AI is merely monitoring the spimes and does not count as an active defender) but destroying or disabling them will cause the AI to dispatch security officers to the apartment.

1. ENTRANCE

The door to the apartment acts as an interior air-lock door (15 armor, 100 DUR, 25 WT) and is secured with an electronic lock (p. 291, *EP*) that accepts a wireless code. The door is set to open from the inside without needing the code.

The lock will attempt to alert security through a hard-wired connection if it detects tampering. The characters can also hack the lock, it is considered actively defended with an effective InfoSec of 60. If the lock detects an intruder it will attempt to alert both David and security. If the lock is successfully hacked its logs can be checked (p. 6).

2. WINDOWS

These floor to ceiling windows are made of one-way smart-glass to preserve the occupants privacy and can be set to any opacity to create the optimum light level in the room. They are currently set to full transparency. Because they protect from the martian atmosphere the windows are very difficult to break (30 armor, 150 DUR, 30 WT).

3. COAT CLOSET

This room holds coats and a couple pairs of shoes. There is an empty shoe box here that serves as a clue.

4. LIVING ROOM

The living room contains white couches and a low glass table with stainless steel legs. The table has a holographic projector built into it with circuit traces visibly running through the glass. The projector is set to only be accessible by David, but it can be hacked using InfoSec (p. 6). Additionally, there is pill bottle hidden in the right rear table leg (p. 6).

5. KITCHEN

This small kitchen has a moderate quality maker built into a wall, a refrigerator, an oven, a sink, and many cabinets. Everything is white and very clean.

When it is not cleaning David's servitor bot (p. 17) resides here. The bot was in the kitchen when David left and did not see him leave. If the servitor bot sees the characters and doesn't recognize them, it will attempt to alert David and, when that fails, it will alert security.

6. LAUNDRY ROOM

Off of the bathroom is a small room that contains a combination washer/dryer and a hamper.

7. BATHROOM

This is a small room containing a toilet, a cabinet with a sink, a mirror, a tub/shower, and a towel rack. There are adhesives and solvents for use with wigs and a first aid kit in the cabinet.

8. BEDROOM

This room is mostly open with a small white bed designed to fold up into the wall in one corner. The bed currently down and freshly made.

8. CLOSET

This closet contains a dresser filled with clothes. On the dresser are four mannequin heads, three of which are wearing wigs: a very long blonde, a short black, and a brown wig that matches David's usual hair. The fourth mannequin head is bare.

SEARCHING THE APARTMENT

The characters will probably want to make sure the apartment is clear of intruders and hazards before searching it.

Searching the apartment after it has been cleared is a Scrounging Test with a modifier and timeframe based on what the characters are looking for:

■ **Searching for hidden compartments or concealed items:** has a -20 modifier and a 30 minute timeframe. Success reveals that there are hidden compartments in the metal legs of the living room table where parts of the hologram projector are located. Checking the right rear table leg reveals a small orange plastic pill bottle that contains two green pills.

■ **Searching for anything out of place or missing:** has no modifier and a 10 minute timeframe. Success reveals that there is a plain, empty shoe box in the coat closet that has a strong new shoe smell and is too large to match any of the shoes present.

■ **Searching for clues as to what was on the fourth mannequin head:** has a -20 modifier and a 10 minute timeframe. Success reveals a single shoulder length synthetic red hair trapped in the hinge of the closet door that has escaped the servitor bots vacuuming.

ANALYZING THE CLUES

THE DOOR LOCK

The door lock contains records of when it was opened. It does not have an entry between when David arrived at 14:34 Simha 19 and when security arrived at 14:00 Simha 20. However, anyone examining the records can make an Interfacing Test to notice that they have been altered. An exceptional success also reveals that the records were edited around 17:00 on Simha 19.

THE HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTOR

The projector built into the living room table is set so only David can access it, but can be hacked using InFoSec (it's not actively defended) with a +10 modifier.

Once hacked, the projector's memory can be accessed with an Interfacing Test. The projector was last used several days before David disappeared and the last thing it was set to display was an attractive female morph in tight clothing wearing a pair specs built as cyberpunk goggles. These goggles are distinctive enough that they can be used to help image recognition software find David leaving the building (p. 4).

THE SHOE BOX

Examining the empty shoe box found in the coat closet reveals a manufactures code. A Research Test with a 1 minute timeframe will link that code to a pair of lace up boots. An Investigation Test will then reveal that, because the soles on these boots are so different from what David usually wears, they will prevent gait analysis software from finding him. An Interfacing Test with a 5 minute timeframe can then be made to adjust gait matching software to compensate for the boots, allowing it to find David leaving the building (p. 4).

THE HAIR

Checking all the people with shoulder length red hair that are leaving the building may be enough to find David (p. 4).

THE PILL BOTTLE

The pill bottle hidden inside the leg of the living room table has no label and is mostly empty: it contains only two small green tablets with black smiley faces on them. These pills are a mix of Drive and Juice, commonly called Happy Thoughts. They are not infected and the characters can identify them in several

different ways:

■ Using an appropriate knowledge skill (such as Interest: Black Market Drugs, Interest: Drug Dealers, or Interest: Drug Dens).

■ Downloading and then analyzing (a 5 minute Research Test) a catalog of all the registered pill shapes and markings will reveal that these pills were not mass produced by a legitimate pharmaceutical company.

■ Using a mobile lab or chem sniffers (or enhanced sense: smell if the pill is ground up and a small amount inhaled) can identify the pills as a mix of Drive and Juice with a successful Academics: Chemistry Test (5 minute time frame).

■ A Research Test (1 minute) can be used to find an unused lab on one of the research floors where the pills can be identified with a successful Academics: Chemistry Test (5 minute time frame). Treat the lab as an immobile version of a mobile lab, with built in software acting as either Academics: Chemistry 40 or giving a +20 bonus to Academics: Chemistry Tests.

■ A level 2 favor (30 minute timeframe) can be used to find a discrete individual capable of analyzing the pills (p. 289, EP). If this is done on the university campus using r-rep, the networking test receives a +10 bonus due the availability of people with the appropriate training.

■ A level 2 g-rep favor (30 minute timeframe) can be used to identify the pills by their color, shape, and markings as most likely a mix of Drive and Juice known as Happy Thoughts.

■ A character with medicines can ingest the pills and have the medicines determine what they are with an Interfacing Test.

LOCATING THE SOURCE OF THE PILLS

Once they have identified the pills the characters can attempt to determine where they came from:

■ A level 2 g-rep favor (30 minute timeframe) will reveal that the best place to get anything to do with Drive is from one of the dealers affiliated with the Shui Fong triad which has been flooding the market recently. The character's source will also reveal that it is usually the dealer who compounds the two drugs and, while many dealers use green pills with smiley faces for Happy Thoughts, the exact composition varies with dealer.

■ If the characters have the exact chemical composition of the pills, a level 3 g-rep favor (one hour timeframe) will track the pills to a seller operating out of The Thousand Candles brothel in HLS. This might alert Julia (her Networking: Criminals skill is 65) that someone is looking for her (p. 288, EP).

STAGE 3: HLS

There are no publicly available video spimes on HLS, so the characters will have to get creative when tracking David. Two of the possible techniques they might employ are talking to people on the street and attempting to find his dealer.

TALKING TO PEOPLE ON THE STREET

The characters can talk to the people on the street to see if they saw David. Since the HLS is fairly large the characters may have to talk to multiple people to find out where David went. The best people to talk to are those that have mnemonic augmentation or eidetic memory, have a good view of the street, were likely on the street on the day in question, and are willing to talk to the characters. An Investigation Test will reveal this to the characters. Some of the people who meet the criteria are:

- **Vendor pleasure pods:** These pods work at the booths and carts located throughout the souk. When interacting with these workers, a successful Protocol Test will reveal that the characters need to purchase something before the workers will talk to them. After that the pods will be willing to help the characters out, provided there isn't a line.
- **Window pleasure pods:** These pods stand in the windows of brothels as living advertisements and they often have nothing to do other than pose and watch the people on the street. The characters will have to enter the brothel to talk to them as almost all the brothels block external mesh access and the pods will want to be compensated for their time.
- **OIA Officers:** The OIA equips its officers with mnemonic augmentation, though it often 'malfunctions' whenever the officer misbehaves. If the characters are willing to risk weapon scans, probing questions, beatings, and arrests, they can ask the officers if they have seen David. Be sure to give the characters a Protocol Test to avoid any slip ups when dealing with the OIA officers.

TRACKING THE DRUGS

The characters can call in g-rep favors to find out who is dealing what in HLS. Drive is everywhere right now thanks to the Shui Fong, but only certain dealers deal Happy Thoughts.

Unless the characters keep their networking tests quiet, looking for specific sources of Happy Thoughts in HLS might alert Julia that someone is looking for her (she has a Networking: Criminals skill of 65).

Searching for all the people dealing in Happy Thoughts in HLS is a level 2 g-rep favor (30 minute timeframe). Success results in seven sources being mentioned:

- **Mechanist:** a unique brothel that caters to people looking for the unusual. It consists of sterile, empty or nearly empty white rooms and all of its workers are synthmorphs with partial masking. One of the workers, UNIT 420, sells drugs,

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

As the characters travel from one part of HLS to another, they have a chance of having a random encounter: roll 1d10, if the result is even roll again and consult below:

Roll	Encounter
0	Roll twice more
1	Belligerent OIA Officer
2	Inquisitive OIA Officer
3	Pickpocket
4	Someone who mistakes a character for a sex-worker
5	Gawking tourist
6	Con artist trying to scam credits
7	Religious fanatic
8	Shady vendor
9	Violence

which he keeps in hidden compartments in his morph, on the side.

- **The Thousand Candles:** a catholic church themed brothel. Among its attractions are naughty catholic school girls and nuns. The dealer here, Julia, is the one who sold to David.

■ **Intimate Enhancements:** Feeling small? Intimate enhancements offers a wide range of body modification services. The staff are all well endowed splicers in fetish nurse outfits, some of whom will also 'write prescriptions'.

■ **Wrasslar:** offers nude wrestling in a large fighting pit. The pit can be filled with mud, Slip, jello, etc. to make the matches more exciting. Wrasslar also offers private wrestling sessions or exhibitionists can wrestle in the public ring. Several patrons here deal to other customers, mostly combat drugs (Bring It is especially popular), but some also have other types of drugs.

■ **Vorhaul:** A strip club with pretensions, Vorhaul uses lights, hologram projectors, music, and exotic morphs to create an 'artistic' experience. The club's owner, Steel Adam, also sells drugs, both legal and illegal, to 'enhance' the experience.

■ **Wen Tsu Apothecary:** Wen Tsu runs this small stand that sells 'Traditional Chinese Medicine'. Of course by 'Traditional Chinese Medicine' Wen Tsu means illegal drugs.

■ **John King:** John King is one of the rare dedicated street dealers. He has a network of couriers and lookouts that has, so far, allowed him to avoid arrest by the OIA police.

If the characters know the exact composition of the drugs David uses, they can instead spend a level 3 g-rep favor (1 hour timeframe) and be directed directly to The Thousand Candles.

HLS: OVERVIEW

Located between Janks-Yao and Deshengmen (about 30 minutes from the Knox Building or an hour if using public transportation), HLS is the center of Vice in Olympus. Here the Shui Fong and the Big Circle Gang battle each other for control of the Olympus Underworld.

Physically, HLS is six domes linked together by walkways. Permanent storefronts line the edges of the domes and walkways while more transient enterprises crowd the centers. There is no vehicle access here: the walkways are much too cluttered with shops and foot traffic to get anything through at more than a snails pace. During the day the domes let in some weak sunlight, but at night orange-red streetlights bounce off the red facades of the storefronts and combine with the omnipresent red neon signs to create a diffuse red glow.

HLS is named because it is a souk located on a shortcut between a black (hei se) line train station and a blue (lan se) line station. People figured out that if you got off at one station and hiked to the other you could save about an half an hour in transit time and a couple of credits in transfer fees. Why they didn't connect the two lines when they were building them is one of life's many unanswerable questions. The large amount of foot traffic attracted business and HLS was born.

Many of the business here are owned by legitimate branches of the triads, but those looking for less than legal entertainment need to check

out the places that seem to have no connection to organized crime. The legitimate branches are called 'legitimate' for a reason.

In the secret war between the two triads the Big Circle Gang has traditionally held the upper hand in Olympus. That is starting to change as the Shui Fong is dumping a staggering amount of Drive onto the market, collapsing the price and cutting deep into the Big Circle Gangs smuggling profits. Despite the rivalry between the two triads, HLS sees very little violence. Partly this is due to the triads being unwilling to risk their profits with overt actions, but mostly it is due to the large number of OIA Police officers who patrol here. Easily recognized by their black and safety yellow uniforms, the OIA officers make sure that souk remains profitable and safe.

People don't like their vices exposed to the public (well most people don't like their vices exposed), and so there is very little surveillance spime coverage in HLS. This no surveillance policy is enforced by a fleet of stealthed bughunter drones that randomly sweep through the streets. No one knows who actually owns the drones but the smart money is on one or both of the triads, though some suspect Datacide or even Anarchists. As one bughunter can destroy tens of thousands worth of surveillance spimes in a couple of hours, and there are at least fifty of the buggers loose in the district, everyone has pretty much given up replacing the destroyed spimes: it simply isn't economical. ■

STAGE 5: THE THOUSAND CANDLES

The Thousand Candles is a brothel with a catholic church theme. One of the workers here, Ju Lin (who goes by the alias 'Julia Juggs'), also deals illegal drugs supplied by the Shui Fong. The Thousand Candles was David's source of Happy Thoughts and he came here every couple of weeks to resupply.

Synthmorphs, non-human pods, uplifts, and especially neotenics are not welcome in The Thousand Candles. A Protocol Test will reveal this before the characters enter the establishment.

RECEPTION

When the characters enter the brothel, a Perception Test reveals two worker-pods (Chen and Nelson, p. 18) dressed as priests lounging inside an interior door to the storage room. If the characters include unwelcome morphs or attempt to cause trouble, Chen and Nelson will come out and politely ask them to leave. If the characters refuse, they will stop being polite and attempt to throw them out, wirelessly alerting the OIA police if they think it is necessary.

After a few moments a pleasure pod going by Sammy Surprise (p. 19) will come out of the living area to greet the characters.

TALKING TO SAMMY

Sammy is acting as the receptionist for the brothel. She is dressed in a slightly askew fetish nuns habit and carrying a wooden yardstick. Sammy will welcome the character to The Thousand Candles and ask them if they are here for the afternoon/evening 'service' or perhaps they would like to receive 'communion' or maybe a 'confessional'. She will straighten her habit while she talks, attempting to bring attention to her body, while her muse will send the characters a file with the brothels services and rates.

ASKING SAMMY ABOUT THE DRUGS

A Protocol Test is required to broach the subject of illegal drugs with Sammy. On a success she will obliquely reply that Julia Juggs is one of their most popular girls and the characters are sure to have a good time with her. Sammy does not know the details of Julia's business.

ASKING SAMMY ABOUT DAVID

Sammy does not wish to lose business by divulging information about a client. Getting her to check her memory to see if David visited will require a successful social skills test:

THE THOUSAND CANDLES

The Thousand Candles was originally part of a christian church built into the side of a dome that would eventually become part of HLS. During the Fall most of the church's congregation was forcefully relocated to the Amazonis Planitia (now the Titan Quarantine Zone) and the church's priests and staff followed them.

As the vice industry began to pick up in HLS, the church was sold and partitioned into three businesses: the storage wing was turned into a morph shop called the Doll House, the kitchen area became Kim's Thai Kitchen, and the rest became The Thousand Candles brothel.

The church had no vestibule and the brothel's entrance leads directly into the nave. The brothel still has the church's original furnishings and altar, though the genuine wooden crucifix from Earth has been sold. The church is illuminated by lights hidden behind stained glass windows and by hologram projectors that give the illusion of flame to the thousands of candles that cover every convenient surface.

Two small wings branch off from the nave: one is where the workers entertain their clients and the other contains the prostitutes living quarters.

Like most brothels, The Thousand Candles is shielded from mesh signals so only its internal mesh can be accessed by customers, though the staff can access the external mesh through an encrypted router ■

THE STASH

While Julia keeps a small amount of inventory on hand for sales, the majority of her drugs are hidden within a secret, shielded compartment in her footlocker in the prostitute's dormitory. Julia has rigged up a simple trap that will cover the drugs with scrapper gel should anyone attempt to access the compartment without sending a wireless deactivation code. The trap is rather crude and characters gain a +30 bonus on Demolitions Tests to disarm it (timeframe of 1 minute).

Julia's stash contains mostly Drive and compounds of Drive with other drugs as she expects the price to increase soon. An appropriate knowledge or networking test will reveal the total street price is about 50,000 credits. One percent of these drugs have been tainted with Chain Reaction. If the characters want to sell the drugs they will need to spend favors to unload it (p. 289, *EP*), hopefully while keeping quiet to avoid retaliation from the triads. ■

■ **Deception or Persuasion** can be used, but both suffer a -20 penalty since tattling on a customer is potentially bad for business.

■ **Protocol** can be used to bribe Sammy. This will cost 250 crypto-cred.

■ **Intimidation** will cause Sammy to have Chen and Nelson throw the characters out unless a critical success is scored. The characters may make a Protocol Test to realize this before attempting intimidation.

David was in privacy mode and payed in crypto-cred so Sammy doesn't know either his real name or his alias. If provided with a description, Sammy can check her memory to find that a person matching David's description did indeed visit yesterday at 18:24. He is a regular and he asked for Julia as usual. Sammy does not have a record of him leaving, but she was busy with customers for most of the afternoon and might have missed him. She can supply the characters with XP of his visit if they ask.

TALKING TO JULIA

A session with Julia costs 100 credits per hour plus 25 credits per additional person. Julia is currently dressed as a catholic schoolgirl and will take the characters back to the 'classroom' to perform her services.

ASKING JULIA ABOUT THE DRUGS

Bringing up illegal drugs with Julia requires a successful Protocol Test. Julia will be happy to sell to the characters. She has a fairly wide selection, but most of her stock is Drive (currently at trivial cost) and compounds of Drive with other drugs.

ASKING JULIA ABOUT DAVID

If the characters ask about David by name, she will deny knowing him. If they ask about Victor or provide an image of him, her response will depend on if she knew someone was looking for her:

■ **If Julia was warned:** she will assume their interest has to do with David's disappearance and attempt to lure the characters into an ambush she has set up (see Stage 5).

■ **If Julia was not warned:** she will lie and tell the characters that Victor (the name she knows David by) was here, but he left after purchasing an abnormally large amount of Drive from her. She did ask him why he was buying so much and he said that he was in some sort of trouble, though he didn't elaborate, and he needed to stock up because he was going to lie low somewhere in Fuxingmen for a couple of months. Julia will not share an XP of David's visit with the characters, saying she deleted it to ensure her customers privacy.

GETTING JULIA TO TALK

Julia will not talk about what really happened to David, so if the characters want to find out what she knows they will have to find an alternative way of getting the information out of her. Some options are:

- Isolating Julia and then intimidating her into giving the characters an XP of what happened,
- Hacking into Julia's cyberbrain to get the information from her mnemonic augmentation, and
- Killing Julia and performing a psychosurgical interrogation on her stack.

TRACKING THE CRATE AND TRUCK

Instead of trying track David by talking to the people in The Thousand Candles, they might try to find someone who spotted him leaving the brothel. This is useless as he was transported from one of the adjoining businesses in a crate.

However, if the characters find out about the adjoining businesses and ask around for packages being sent from them, they might be able to find someone who spotted the crate containing David being taken from the Doll House by synthmorphs; after David disappeared only that crate has been large enough to transport his entire body.

They may then be able to track the crate and the synthmorphs out of HLS. Once outside of HLS they can track the synthmorphs using surveillance spimes to where they loaded the crate onto a Comex semi-automated delivery truck.

Once they have an ID on the truck the characters can attempt to track it. However, rather than have central warehouses, the advanced logistical software at the heart of Comex is able to have one delivery vehicle exchange packages with another such that all packages are rapidly and efficiently routed to their destinations without undergoing the time and expense of processing them at a central location. Thus the truck that picked up David transferred him to another truck which then delivered him to Mike's Custom Morphs and both trucks also had numerous other stops and transfers. This makes figuring out where David went by tracking the truck difficult (-30 Research Test, 1 hour time frame), though a Comex employee or contractor can do it easily as a level 3 favor.

STAGE 5: JULIA'S AMBUSH

Forewarned of the characters coming, Julia will attempt to lure them into an ambush using a fake XP.

JULIA'S STORY

When Julia is warned that people are looking for her, she will assume that they are trying to find David and fabricate a story to lure them into an ambush. To sell her story, she will create a fake XP using her Interfacing skill, AR illusion software, and XP from David's previous visits. Characters checking the XP's validity must make an opposed Interfacing Test.

Julia does not want to seem overeager and will only give her fake XP to the characters if they convince her to do so with a social skill test or by bribing her with at least 400 in crypto-cred. Julia will also obliquely tell the characters that before the XP started, she sold David drugs and, instead of his usual Happy Thoughts, he bought several doses of Alpha, Phlo,

JULIA'S XP

Julia's XP is full sensory but does not have any emotional tracks. The XP begins with her in the same classroom she took the characters, lying face-up on one of the desks with her skirt pulled up and her legs spread so that David, who is standing in front of the desk, can have sexual intercourse with her. He is thrusting very hard and fast and when Julia looks at him (she is usually looking up or back) he is visibly angry. He also intermittently rants about how 'they' are all a bunch of frauds and how he will show them all once he gets the last piece of evidence from that 'rat bastard' at Xu Fu Chang's, how they will all pay once this gets out, etc.

After David finishes having intercourse with her, Julia sits up on the desk and watches him put on his coat and a small messenger pack. Then David does something strange: he reaches into his messenger pack like he is taking something out, but doesn't seem to remove anything. He pantomimes unfolding something and then putting on a coat. As he does so he begins to disappear: first his right arm, then his left, then his torso, and finally his head. Once David is fully invisible, his disembodied voice says that he will see himself out, the door to the classroom opens and the XP ends. ■

XU FU CHANG'S

Xu Fu Chang's was a small bar and restaurant in Janks-Yao named after its owner, an ex-gate-crasher sleeved in an xu fu morph. Located on an underground street that connected two populated domes, Xu Fu Chang's went out of business when one of the domes was abandoned due to the shrinking population and sealed off to preserve air and heat. ■

and MRDR. She won't offer them an XP of this for obvious reasons.

If asked about Xu Fu Chang's, Julia will take a minute to search her memories and then say that it was a nearby bar in Janks-Yao (about 10 minutes away walking) that shut down several months ago. The characters can make a simple Research Test (1 minute) once they have mesh access to confirm this.

XU FU CHANG'S BAR AND GRILL

Xu Fu Chang's has been gutted and now consists of a single large room partially divided by some of the remaining interior walls and held up by four support pillars. The spimes inside the building were removed along with everything else. The only entrance is a single heavy interior airlock door (15 armor, 100 DUR, 25 WT) which is not covered by the streets

sparse surveillance spimes.

Julia has hired a combat-drug junky named Gwin (p. 20) to ambush the characters here. Gwin has prepped the area for his ambush. Specifically:

- He placed a sticky, chameleon-coated overload grenade set for wireless detonation on the wall at a strategic spot (so that after it goes off the characters will also have a -10 glare penalty when attacking him),
- He put a radio and several speakers inside the building and rigged the door so it wouldn't open in order to lure the characters into a cluster in front of the doorway, and
- He planted a microbug to cover the doorway so he can see when to launch his assault.

Currently, Gwin is hunkered down behind one corner of the building about 12 meters away from the entrance and wearing a full invisibility cloak.

THE AMBUSH

If all goes as Gwin planned, the ambush will unfold as follows:

- When Julia warns him the characters are coming Gwin will take a hit of Kick.
- When the characters arrive they will walk right past him thanks to the invisibility cloak (he can only be seen with x-ray or radar systems and gets an opposed Infiltration Test to avoid detection).
- Likewise the characters will walk past the grenade because of its chameleon coating (spotting it requires an x-ray or radar system and a Perception Test at -20, due to its small size).
- Once all the characters are past, Gwin will apply a piece of anti-cloak to his eyes so he can see.
- As the characters approach the entrance, he will activate the radio which will play a violent screaming argument, occasionally punctuated by kinetic weapon fire, between David and someone else.
- The characters hearing the commotion (a Perception Test at -10 due to the door), will cluster around the door attempting to open it.
- Combat will start. During the surprise phase Gwin will use one quick action to detonate the overload grenade, a second quick action to move to the corner (which counts as -20 cover), and a complex action to fire his shard pistol on full auto (see his tactics on p. 20).
- On his subsequent actions Gwin will continue to fire on full auto, but will use his quick actions to aim before firing.
- Once all the characters are down, he will move in, shoot them to make sure they are dead, and cut out their stacks with his vibroblade.

If Gwin is captured or interrogated he is quite willing to betray Julia, but only knows that she hired him to kill the characters.

STAGE 6: MIKE'S CUSTOM MORPHS

The characters should eventually track David to Mike's Custom Morphs, a front for the Shui Fong triad's drug distribution. Mike's is built into one of the terraced levels of a large dome in Janks-Yao (about 20 minutes by vehicle from RLS or 50 minutes by public transportation). If the characters manage to arrive at Mike's before Simha 21, they will find the building partially intact and have a chance to rescue David. If they arrive later, all they find is rubble as Chimera, the mercenary Zaizan hired, has finished the destruction of the building.

The dome that houses Mike's has seven terraced levels with large sections of low rent housing built into and on the terraces. Culturally, everybody strictly minds their own business and nobody sees nothing. This, and the low property values, is what attracted the triad. Because it is located in a populated area, there is significant spime coverage of the exterior of Mike's, though currently there is a hole in the coverage that obscures the warehouse entrance. The Smoke Lions created the hole as part of their attack and the locals haven't gotten around to filling it.

Inside of Mike's there is sparse spime coverage that does not include surveillance spimes, as the triad didn't want a record of their illegal activities.

SMOKE LIONS

Two of the surviving four Smoke Lions are on the street level floor while the other two watch over David and the microbiology lab. All the Lions are monitoring the external surveillance spimes and might see the characters approaching (with teamwork their Perception is 60). If they spot the characters they will set up an ambush, believing them to be members of the Shui Fong:

- If the characters enter through the warehouse door the two Smoke Lions on the ground floor will ambush the characters from behind the crates in the warehouse.
- If the characters enter through the front door, they will hide past the break room until the characters start climbing down and then they will round the corner and open fire, kneeling or laying down to use the floor as cover.
- The Smoke Lions on the second floor will set up their ambush around the mouth of the tunnel, using the doorways for cover.
- The Smoke Lions have figured out enough about the purpose of the facility to know the basics of Chain Reaction and believe that they are likely infected with it. In reality only two of them are infected. The infected lions are not yet fully explosive but still may explode if hit. Anytime one of the infect lions takes a wound from an attack they need to make a maximum MOX x 10 Test or explode like a HE grenade (3d10+10).

The Smoke Lions may be criminals, but they aren't

monsters: they want to prevent the spread of Chain Reaction and find a cure for those already infected (like themselves). Thus the Smoke Lions can be reasoned with if the characters can convince them that they are not with the Shui Fong, who the Smoke Lions believe are behind the bioweapon.

BOMBS

There are three unexploded bombs in Mike's: one is in the testing room, another is in the transit room, and the third is in Drive storage. These bombs are very stable and will only detonate if triggered by a primer charge.

STREET LEVEL MAP KEY

1. ENTRANCE

This door is the main entrance to the building. It is locked and there is a sign on it saying that the business is open for appointments only.

The door is an interior airlock door (15 armor, 100 DUR, 25 WT) secured by an e-lock. Both a card and a key-code are needed to open the lock. The lock is not wirelessly enabled and cannot be hacked using InFoSec. It also contains circuits that will disable the lock if physical tampering is detected.

2. WAREHOUSE DOOR

This large interior airlock door (15 armor, 100 DUR, 25 WT) leads to the warehouse. It opens vertically by hand and is unlocked: the Smoke Lions permanently disabled the lock when they attacked.

3. WAREHOUSE

This is a small warehouse area containing several old, empty metal crates that were here when the triad moved in. The three larger crates are 1.2 meters high and provide moderate cover to people standing behind them and major cover to people ducking down behind them. They have 20 armor, 50 DUR, 20 WT.

4. ELEVATOR

This elevator moved items from the warehouse down to the lower level. It is not operational as the lower portions of both the elevator shaft and the counterweight shaft have collapsed and the cable connecting the elevator to the counterweight has detached, causing the elevator's emergency brakes to engage.

5. STAIRS

These stairs down to the lower level were destroyed in the collapse and are impassible.

6. OFFICES

These small, abandoned offices contain old chairs, empty desks, and barren shelves. The floor has partially collapsed beneath them and some of the furnishings have slid down into the collapsed section.

7. BREAK ROOM

Part of this room has slid into the collapsed area created by the self-destruction, leaving a large hole in the

SOURCES OF STRESS

The following can inflict stress damage:

- Learning about Chain Reaction is a WIL x 3 Test to avoid taking $1d10 \div 2$ SV.
- Knowing about both Chain Reaction and any of the bombings requires a WIL x 3 Test to avoid taking $1d10 \div 2$ SV.
- Knowing about the infected ammo and having been hit recently with a flechette spray weapon is a WIL x 3 Test to avoid $1d10$ SV.
- Watching any test carried out in the bomb chamber is a WIL x 3 Test to avoid $1d10$ SV.
- Being damaged when a person explodes requires a WIL x 3 Test to avoid $1d10$ SV.
- Knowing about Chain Reaction and having taken damage from a Chain Reaction explosion is a WIL x 2 Test to avoid $1d10 + 3$ SV.
- Knowing that the fluid in the bomb chamber is infectious and coming into contact with it is a WIL x 3 Test to avoid $1d10$ SV.
- Seeing someone die of Hyper-Drive withdrawal requires a WIL x 3 Test (or WIL x 2 if the character has also taken Hyper-Drive) to avoid taking $1d10 + 2$ SV. ■

wall by the door. Secured to the twisted door frame is a knotted rope that hangs down into the collapsed section (the rope gives +30 bonus to Climb Tests).

The remaining room contains a couch, a low table, and a pantry with a non-functioning maker and a small refrigerator that is miraculously still running.

8. BATHROOM

This was the employee bathroom. It was destroyed when the floor under it collapsed.

9. COLLAPSED SECTION

This section sunk down to form a large hole when the self-destruct mechanism collapsed the area under it. The sides of the hole are slabs of heavy building material that used to be the floor. The entire area is covered in loose rubble and has the occasional protruding chunk of rebar. Climbing down safely is a simple Climbing or Freerunning Test but climbing up requires a Climb Test. A tunnel has been dug through the side of one of the slabs in order to access the remains of the lower level.

LOWER LEVEL MAP KEY

This level has partially collapsed. Despite appearances, using explosive weapons such as grenades or seekers will not trigger significant further collapse: only carefully placed demolition charges will finish the job.

1. ELEVATOR SHAFT

The elevator shaft and the counterweight shaft were both collapsed when the self-destruct went off, rendering the elevator inoperative. Without lengthy excavation it will be impossible to get through this way.

2. STAIRS

These stairs up to the street level are now totally collapsed.

3. BLAST CHAMBER

This thick-walled room is accessed by a heavy blast door that can only be opened from the outside. Inside the room is covered with blood and body tissue and contains four mangled corpses dressed in the gray and yellow colors of the Smoke Lions. All of the corpses have had their stacks popped. A successful Perception Test will also reveal several body parts that don't belong to any of the Smoke Lion corpses: the remains of the biomorph that exploded in the room.

In addition to the dead bodies, there is a set of high end hologram projectors behind protective panels in the ceiling and numerous spimes hardwired into the walls. These spimes can be accessed from the control panel in the testing room.

The fluid in this area is still slightly infectious. A biomorph or pod coming into direct contact with it must make a DUR x 2 Test or become infected with Chain Reaction (medichines give a +30 bonus).

4. TESTING ROOM

There is a control console located in the northeast portion of this room. Sitting in a chair in front of the control console is a case morph that is missing most of its head. The morph has no stack but an examination of the ruined cyberbrain and a hard (-30) Hardware: Electronics or Hardware: Implants Test (5 minute timeframe) will extract a gamma fork of Dr. Murase (p. 3) which will know some of what was going on in the lab.

Examining the control console will reveal that it controls everything in the blast chamber on a successful Interface Test. The control console also recorded data on the experiments conducted in the blast chamber, including the one being conducted when the Smoke Lions were killed.

On the north wall there is a set of shelves containing various medical and scientific instruments such as auto-injectors and syringes. There is also an unloaded, unlocked (anyone can use it) shard pistol sitting on one of the shelves.

On the west wall of the room there is a black box. Examining the box reveals that it is a powerful bomb. A Demolitions Test will further reveal that the bomb was activated but did not explode due to a faulty detonator.

On the south wall of the room are two large refrigerated cabinets with transparent fronts through which a large collection of body parts can be seen. Each body part has a small green label with a date and experiment number. All the body parts were infected but the cold has killed the pathogen.

5. MICROBIOLOGY LAB

This is a small microbiology lab with several intact synthetic shells working in it. The shells do not have cyberbrains or stacks, instead being controlled using puppet socks slaved to the research computer in the

computer room. The shells will ignore everything but their work.

Running down the center of the room is a work bench with several stainless steel sinks set in it. Sitting on the top shelf of the central work bench are large, clear containers of common chemicals such as DI water, ethanol, and acetone with smaller opaque bottles containing other useful lab chemicals sitting between them. Some glassware and more chemicals are located in the cabinets under the workbenches. A Scrounging Test (5 minute time frame) may be used to find a useful chemical, such as Slip, or the ingredients to make a crude explosive device.

Along the north and south walls are two benches with scientific instrumentation useful in microbiology and genetic engineering: centrifuges, microscopes, DNA sequencers, DNA replicators, and the like. The south bench also has a shallow refrigerator holding chemicals that must be kept cold.

6. INCUBATOR

This room is at body temperature (32°C) with multi-level wire shelves lining the walls. The shelves hold hundreds of Petri dishes and culture filled test tubes, all of which contain versions of Chain Reaction.

Additionally, there are several boxes of flechette ammunition for a shredder or shard pistol on the shelves. If the players do not deduce it themselves, an Investigation, Spray Weapons, or Hardware: Armorer Test will reveal that the ammo is most likely infected with a biowarfare agent.

7. CLEANING ROOM

This room contains shelves full of clean glassware on the east wall. On the south wall is a work bench with multiple sinks and several squeeze bottles of common solvents, such as ethanol and acetone, sitting on it. In the south-west corner is an autoclave. The cabinets below the bench contain larger bottles of the cleaning solvents and a tray containing a variety of acids.

8. PREPARATION ROOM

This room contains workbenches lining three of the walls and a large cabinet. The north bench has several sinks set into it. The cabinet contains precursors for agar gels, several types of sugars (glucose, sucrose, fructose, etc.), and other ingredients for creating substrates on which to grow microbes.

9. COAT ROOM

This room has only a locker holding clean lab coats.

10. TRANSIT

This room is largely empty with several destroyed robotic shells scattered across the floor. The shell remnants do not contain cyberbrains or stacks.

On the west wall of the room is an explosive filled black box similar to the one in the testing room.

11. COMPUTER ROOM

This room is very cold. In the center of the room is a modified healing vat with a biomorph immersed in it.

HYPER-DRIVE

Hyper-Drive is a powerful cognitive enhancer that combines aspects of nootropics such as Drive and psi drugs such as Psi-Opener. Hyper-Drive must be injected and needs to be kept cold until used. One dose lasts for two hours and gives +10 COG, +5 INT, and access to the Enhanced Creativity, Instinct, Predictive Boost, and Savant Calculation psi sleights. Hyper drive comes with numerous and horrible side effects as it rewires the subjects brain. It is also highly addictive (-50 penalty), both mentally and physically, and if a Hyper-Drive addict is sober for more than an hour, they will go into convulsions and die as their brain turns to mush. ■

Several large, heavy fiberoptic cables run from the vat to banks of hundreds of computers located on the north and east walls.

The biomorph in the vat is David. He is naked except for a simulspace immersion rig and several IV's running into each arm. The lines for the IVs run out of the vat and into a refrigerator perched on a nearby table. Checking the refrigerator reveals a device designed to inject a controlled amount of a blue fluid from a central reservoir into the IV lines. The reservoir is designed to be easily removed and replaced, and is labeled with "Hyper-Drive" and several long alphanumeric codes. How much Hyper-Drive remains depends on how long it took the characters to reach this point; there were 17 doses when the mission began at 16:00 and one dose was used every 2 hours thereafter. If the characters try to remove the Hyper-Drive a COG x 3 Test will reveal that they need to find some way to keep it cold.

There are several monitors and keyboards for physically interfacing with the computer banks. Checking the contents of the computers is an Interfacing Test with a 10 minute timeframe. A success will reveal the following:

- Detailed design data on Chain Reaction.
- A time accelerated (x9) simulspace for performing psychosurgery and an AI to perform the surgery. The AI has Psychosurgery 40, Academics: Psychology 80, and Academics: Neurology 80. A second successful Interfacing Test (1 minute) reveals that the last thing the AI was set to do was induce an overwhelming desire to find a cure for Chain Reaction.
- A time accelerated (x12) simulspace for performing pathogen research. This simulspace is currently active.
- Inventory and supply data for the lab. Examining this data is an Investigation Test with a 10 minute timeframe and will reveal that the lab supplies, the Drive, and the Hyper-Drive all came from the same source, and that several samples of the Chain Reaction were taken back to whoever supplied the lab.

■ Data on the Chain Reaction counter-agents that David is developing or has already developed.

■ Medical data. A Medicine Test or an appropriate knowledge skill test (5 minute timeframe) will reveal that they are analyzing the response of biomorphs to a new drug. A more thorough check (2 hour timeframe) will reveal that the drug greatly increases cognitive functions but has horrible side-effects, mostly involving permanent neural damage.

Removing David from the vat without injury is a Medicine Test. David will not want to leave and will insist on being returned immediately. He can be reasoned with but, due to psychosurgery, all he wants to do is find a cure for Chain Reaction. David is also addicted to the Hyper-Drive and without at least one dose every three hours he will go into convulsions and die.

12. MORPH STORAGE

This is where the morphs for the front business were stored. Many of the Smoke Lions who survived the initial assault were here resleeving their dead friends when the self-destruct went off, blowing them to pieces and collapsing the room.

13. CUSTOMIZATION

This was where the morphs were customized. The most common customizations were installing hidden compartments, installing cyberlimbs with hidden compartments, and installing skin pouches. The Drive was then placed in these compartments prior to the morphs being shipped.

14. BATHROOM

This was the employee bathroom for the level. It was buried when the self-destruct mechanism activated.

15. DRIVE STORAGE

Drive was stored here prior to being tainted and shipped out in the morphs. The west half of this room collapsed when the lab's self-destruct mechanism activated.

On the north wall of the room there is a black box similar to the one in the testing room.

16. TUNNEL

This tunnel was dug through the side of the collapsed section by the trapped Smoke Lions. The tunnel is very narrow and only one regular sized morph can pass through at a time.

STAGE 7: WHEN ULTIMATES ATTACK

Chimera (p. 21), the ultimate mercenary hired by Zaizan, will arrive at Mike's Custom Morphs sometime between the 18:30 and 24:30 on Simha 20. If the characters are in the building between these two times the GM should have the mercenary attack at the moment which will create the most drama. Good choices are when the characters have found David or when they are preparing to leave the building. Chimera's objectives are:

- Destroy the building. To accomplish this they have prepped several bombs which they will plant after they have cleared the building.
- Recover the remaining Hyper-Drive. They have brought an insulated container to transport the Hyper-Drive to their rover which they have equipped with a small refrigerator.
- Retrieve the research data from the computers and then insure that the computers are destroyed.
- Capture the stacks of any intruders.

DEBRIEFING

AFTERMATH

For several days random doses of the Drive passing through Mike's Custom Morphs were tainted with Chain Reaction. Thus the explosions caused by Chain Reaction will continue to increase for the next several days and then taper off. During that time a terrorist group calling themselves 'A Plague of Locus' will convincingly take credit for the attacks, fanning the flames of war between the PC and Locus.

If the characters did not find David's vaccine then a second wave of explosions will begin approximately one week after the first and then a third wave will start about a week after that.

If the characters did find the cure, they need to determine what to do with it. The easiest solution is to

give it to Proxy 21. She will use her connections to convince the OIA that the terrorists are using the explosion to seed a bioweapon (which can be confirmed by simple blood test once it is known what to look for) and give them the details of the vaccine. The OIA will ensure that all the people injured by the explosions receive cure doses of the vaccine, thereby preventing the second and subsequent waves.

REZ AND REP AWARDS

Depending on how they did during the mission, the characters may gain Rez points and Reputation rewards as described in the table below.

FOLLOWUP

Depending on what they discovered during the mission the characters may have several things to follow up on:

THE DRIVE FACTORY

Zaizan has samples of Chain Reaction and unrestricted access to the source of Drive. If not stopped, there is nothing preventing him from tainting future shipments. The characters will need to track him down and stop him. This is detailed in the next *From Blinding Heights* adventure: *Dance with the Devil*.

HYPER-DRIVE

The characters may want to discover the source of the Hyper-Drive and prevent the drug from being further used for evil. The search for the Hyper-Drive is detailed in the third *From Blinding Heights* adventure: *Kill the Queen*.

THE BOMBINGS

The characters may be tasked with investigating the terrorist group 'A Plague of Locus' who claim to be behind the attacks. This is covered in the fourth *From Blinding Heights* adventure: *Right Round*.

REZ & REP

OUTCOME	AWARD
The characters determined David's fate and reported it to Firewall	1 RP
The characters failed to reach David before he was killed	-5 i-rep
The characters discovered Chain Reaction and reported it to Firewall	1 RP
Characters retrieved the design data on Chain Reaction and David's vaccine	1 RP, +5 i-rep
Characters recovered samples of Hyper-Drive	1 RP
Characters blew their cover	-15 c-rep, -15 i-rep
Character participated in the mission	1 RP
Character contributed to achieving success in a significant way	1 RP
Character achieved a motivational goal	1 RP
Player engaged in good roleplaying	1 RP
Player significantly contributed to the session's drama, humor or fun with roleplaying	1 RP

CHARACTERS

This section describes NPCs in order of appearance.

PROXY 21

Firewall Proxy

Morph: Synth

Motivations: +Anonymity, +Firewall, +Capitalism

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
30	10	20	15	25	15	25	5

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
7	1	50	10	100	40	8	80

Traits: Allies (OIA), First Impression, Social Stigma (Clanking Masses), Uncanny Valley

Active Skills: Deception 70, Fray 50, Freerunning 60, Hardware: Electronics 65, InfoSec 70, Interfacing 65 (Forgery 75), Kinesics 65, Networking: Automonists 60, Networking: Criminals 60, Networking: Hypercorps 60, Networking: Firewall 60, Persuasion 60, Programming 60, Protocol 60 (Firewall 70), Research 80

Knowledge Skills: Academics: Computer Science 50, Art: Acting 30, Interest: Decepticons 40, Interest: Firewall Resources 70, Interest: Inner System Law 50, Interest: Martian Politics 70, Interest: Mesh Black Markets 50, Language: English 90, Language: Mandarin 80, Profession: Forgery 70, Profession: Security Ops 50

Rep: @-rep 40, c-rep 65, g-rep 65, i-rep 70

Implants: Access Jacks, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Dead Switch, Eidetic Memory, Hyper Linguist, Math Boost, Mnemonic Augmentation, Multitasking, Skin Link

Gear: Quantum Computer, Anonymous Account (5), Fake Ego ID (Many), Software (AR Illusion, Exploit, Sniffer, Spoof, Tracking, Kinesics)

Armor: 6/6 (synth armor)

Roleplaying: Proxy 21 is a newly minted Firewall Router. Her codename reflects her original task of forging fake IDs. Now her primary task is to ensure the safety of Olympus and the space elevator. To that end she has secured allies within the OIA. Proxy 21 has a quirk that when communicating through AR games, she tries to stay in character.

MARIE DANIELSON

Graduate Student

Morph: Female Exalt

Motivations: +Nanotechnology Research, +Personal Career, +Techno-Progressivism

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
25	15	20	20	15	20	15	1

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
8	1	30	6	60	35	7	53

Active Skills: Freerunning 70, Hardware: Electronics 70, InfoSec 60, Interfacing 60, Kinesics 40, Networking: Scientists 55, Perception 50, Programming 70, Research 65

Knowledge Skills: Academics: Nanotechnology 70, Academics: Biology 50, Interest: Running 40, Language: English 80, Language: Mandarin 40, Profession: Lab Technician 55

Rep: c-rep 30, r-rep 50

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Eidetic Memory, Low Pressure Tolerance, Medichines, Math Boost, Mental Speed, Nanophages, Skinlink, Temperature Tolerance (Improved Cold)

Gear: Smart Clothing, Guardian Hive

Armor: 0/0 (none)

Roleplaying: Marie Danielson is a graduate student at the University of Chicago. She is a nanotechnologist, commonly called a 'bug doctor', studying the use of nanomachines as complements to biosculpted bacteria in waste management systems.

Marie is David's closest friend and is quite worried about him. She knows that he is a heavy user of a drug combination called Happy Thoughts (Drive mixed with Juice) and fears his drug habit got him in trouble with the underworld. She doesn't know exactly where he gets his drugs, but does know that it is in a section of town called HLS. Emotionally, Maria is currently torn between revealing this information and keeping her friend's secret.

Tactics: Marie always uses full defense, substituting freerunning for fray.

DAVID'S SERVITOR BOT

Servitor Robot

COG 10	COO 10	INT 10	REF 20	SAV 10	SOM 10	WIL 10	MOX 0
INIT 6	SPD 1	LUC 20	TT 4	IR 40	DUR 30	WT 6	DR 60

Active Skills: Hardware: Electronics 20, InfoSec 20, Interfacing 40, Research 20, Perception 40, Pilot: Walkers 40

Knowledge Skills: Interests: Servitor Bot Specs 80, Language: Mandarin 80, Profession: Cook 40, Profession: Maid 40

Implants: Access Jacks, 6 Extra limbs

Armor: 4/4 (bot armor)

Roleplaying: David has a servitor bot to take care of the apartment and prepare slightly better quality food using ingredients from the maker in the kitchen. The bot was designed for cleaning and is non-humanoid in shape with six arms in a 360 degree radius around its body and four legs. Several of the arms end in tools such as spray nozzles or vacuum hoses instead of hands. The bot is usually online and can be hacked: it is an active defender and will attempt to shutdown if it detects an intruder.

Tactics: The servitor bot has an AI that is good for only cooking and cleaning. It accepts commands through the mesh and will ignore any audio stimulus, but if it sees someone that it doesn't recognize the bot will take action: it attempts to contact David over the mesh and, if that fails, to alert building security.

KNOX BUILDING SECURITY

Corporate Security Officers

Morph: Rusters

COG 15	COO 20	INT 15	REF 20	SAV 10	SOM 20	WIL 10	MOX 1
INIT 8	SPD 1	LUC 20	TT 4	IR 40	DUR 35	WT 7	DR 53

Traits: Planned Obsolescence

Active Skills: Beam Weapons 50, Clubs 40, Fray 40, Intimidation 40, Investigation 30, Kinesics 40, Networking: Hypercorps 20, Perception 40, Protocol 40, Unarmed Combat 40

Knowledge Skills: Interests: Inner System Law 40, Language: English 85, Language: Mandarin 60, Profession: Security Ops 60

Rep: c-rep 15

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Enhanced Respiration, Medichines, Temperature Tolerance

Gear: Cuffbands (2), Prisoner Masks (2), Specs, Software (Tactical Network)

Armor: 10/10 (light body armor)

MELEE Shock Baton 40 (DV1d10 + 3 + shock)

RANGED Pulsar 60 (DV 1d10 + special, Mode SS, smartlink bonus included)

RANGED Pulsar 60 (DV 2d10, Mode SA, Ammo 100, smartlink bonus included)

Roleplaying: These security officers are private contractors assigned to the Knox Building. They travel in pairs and when responding to a complaint they will first check to make sure that the situation is safe, which includes scanning for weapons using t-rays. They will then investigate and attempt to figure out what is going on, possibly detaining any suspicious person.

If the responding officers are outnumbered, unsure what is happening, detect a weapon, or think violence will ensue, they will call for additional support.

Tactics: The officers first action is always to call for backup. Then, when not outnumbered and against unarmed biomorphs, they will enter melee with their shock batons. As soon their opponents are stunned they will place them in cuffbands and prisoner masks.

If up against synthmorphs, many opponents, or armed opponents, the officers will draw their laser pulsars and attempt to intimidate the opposition into surrendering. If their opponents don't surrender, the officers will fire once using the less-lethal mode of their pulsars then switch to lethal mode. They always try to use at least a quick action to aim before firing and, when they fire in lethal mode, they will concentrate fire if they hit with their first attack or will sweep the beam if they miss.

If the normal officers are outmatched, they will attempt to contain the situation until a SWAT team arrives. The officers will not leave the Knox Building, though they will alert the OIA police if their opposition flees the building.

OIA FOOT PATROL OFFICER

Corporate Police Officer

Morph: Martian Alpiners

COG 10	COO 20	INT 15	REF 20	SAV 10	SOM 20	WIL 15	MOX 1
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INIT 7	SPD 1	LUC 30	TT 6	IR 60	DUR 40	WT 8	DR 60
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Traits: Situational Awareness, Fast Metabolism, Planned Obsolescence

Active Skills: Beam Weapons 50, Climbing 30, Clubs 50, Fray 40, Freerunning 40, Intimidation 40, Investigation 35, Kinesics 45, Kinetic Weapons 40 (Medium Pistol 50), Networking: Hypercorps 20, Perception 40, Protocol 40, Unarmed Combat 50

Knowledge Skills: Interest: Criminal Groups 30, Language: English 70, Language: Mandarin 85, Profession: Law Enforcement Ops 40

Rep: c-rep 15

Implants: Anti-Glare, Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Bioweave Armor (light), Cortical Stack, Direction Sense, Enhanced Vision, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell, Grip Pads, Low Pressure Tolerance, Medichines, Mnemonic Augmentation, Oxygen Reserve, Respirocytes, Sense Filter (Vision, Hearing, Smell), Temperature Tolerance (Improved Cold), T-ray Emitter

Gear: Cuffband (2), Prisoner Mask (2), Specs, Software (Tactical Network), Uniform (Black and Safety Yellow), Medium Kinetic Pistol (Extended Magazine, Smart Magazine), 2 Spare Clips (6 AP rounds and 6 zap rounds each)

Armor: 11/13 (armored clothing + armored vest + light bioweave)

MELEE Shock Baton 50 (DV1d10 + 4 + shock)

MELEE Unarmed 50 (DV1d10 + 2)

RANGED Medium Pistol 60 (with zap ammo, AP -3, DV 2d10 + 5 - half + shock, Mode SA/BF, Ammo 6, smartlink bonus included)

RANGED Medium Pistol 60 (with AP ammo, AP -10, DV 2d10 + 3, Mode SA/BF, Ammo 6, smartlink bonus included)

Roleplaying: These lightly armed officers patrol heavily trafficked areas, using their enhanced senses to detect trouble (note that their enhanced sense of smell can detect things like gunpowder residue on a successful test). If interacting with anyone suspicious, they always perform a weapon scan using their T-ray emitter.

Tactics: These officers first call for backup from the other officers in the area. They will then draw their stun batons (against small numbers of biomorphs) or pistols and order their opponents to surrender. If their opponents do not comply they will attack. Against biomorphs, they will set their smart magazines to use zap rounds and fire in semi-automatic mode. Against synthmorphs they will use AP rounds fired in short bursts for +1d10 damage. When using their firearms these officers use quick actions to aim if possible and try to avoid firing into crowds when using AP ammo.

JIAN CHEN & RYAN NELSON

Thousand Candles Bouncers

Morph: Asexual Worker Pods

Motivations: +Duty, +Security, +Wealth

COG 10	COO 15	INT 15	REF 15	SAV 20	SOM 25	WIL 15	MOX 1
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INIT 7	SPD 2	LUC 30	TT 6	IR 60	DUR 35	WT 7	DR 53
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Traits: Edited Memories, Social Stigma (Pod), High Pain Tolerance 1

Active Skills: Intimidation 55, Kinesics 45, Networking: Hypercorps 20, Perception 50, Protocol 55, Unarmed Combat 60 (Subdual 70)

Knowledge Skills: Profession: Bouncer 40

Rep: c-rep 20

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Bioweave Armor (Heavy), Cortical Stack, Cyberbrain, Eelware, Medichines, Mnemonic Augmentation, Neurachem, Puppet Sock

Armor: 7/7 (armored clothing + heavy bioweave)

MELEE Subdual 70 (+ shock)

MELEE Densiplast Gloves 60 (DV 1d10 + 4 + shock)

Roleplaying: Chen and Nelson are bouncers at The Thousand Candles. They are sleeved in asexual worker pods and dressed as catholic priests. They attempt to be unobtrusive as possible until needed. They are very polite and, provided no violent actions have yet been taken, they will attempt to get their opposition to leave voluntarily before resorting to violence.

Tactics: If outnumbered Chen and Ryan attempt to damage and stun any biomorph opponents with blows from their fists (they do not make touch attacks). Once they are no longer outnumbered or only synthmorphs remain, they attempt to subdue their opponents and bodily drag them out. They won't hesitate to wirelessly call for assistance from the OIA police officers if they need it.

SAMMY SURPRISE

Thousand Candles Prostitute

Morph: Hermaphrodite Pleasure Pod

Motivations: +Sex, -Indenture, +Wealth

COG 15	COO 25	INT 15	REF 15	SAV 20	SOM 20	WIL 15	MOX 1
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INIT 6	SPD 1	LUC 30	TT 6	IR 60	DUR 30	WT 6	DR 45
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Traits: Edited Memories, Social Stigma (Pleasure Pod)

Active Skills: Clubs 50 (Rulers 60), Deception 50, Fray 40, Interfacing 45, Intimidation 30, Networking: Hypercorps 40, Persuasion 45, Unarmed Combat 40

Knowledge Skills: Art: Acting 45, Language: Cantonese 85, Language: Mandarin 75, Language: English 75, Profession: Erotic Entertainment 60 (Spanking 70)

Rep: c-rep 5

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Bioweave Armor (Light), Clean Metabolism, Cortical Stack, Cyberbrain, Enhanced Pheromones, Medichines, Mnemonic Augmentation, Puppet Sock, Sex Switch

Gear: Fetish Nun Habit, Yardstick

Armor: 2/3 (light bioweave)

MELEE Yardstick 60 (DV 1d10 - half - 1)

Roleplaying: Sammy's real name is Sam Wu. She died during the Fall and is now working as an indentured prostitute at The Thousand Candles brothel. She is okay with the work and has a generally flirtatious nature, though she tries hard to be domineering when dressed as a naughty nun. Sammy occasionally serves as the receptionist for the brothel and while she does not know all the details about Julia's side business, she knows that Julia is connected to one of the triads and that certain clients should be directed to her.

Sammy saw David (she does not know his name or alias) enter. He is one of Julia's regulars and Sammy directed him to Julia as usual. She did not see David leave but she was busy with her own clients for portions of the afternoon and could have easily missed him leaving.

Tactics: Sammy will wirelessly alert the bouncers if it looks like there will be trouble. If attacked Sammy will take full defense actions, using her clubs skill if possible, and attempt to escape.

JULIA JUGGS

Thousand Candles Prostitute/Drug Dealer

Morph: Female Pleasure Pod

Motivations: +Easy Money, -Indenture, +Survival

COG 15	COO 20	INT 10	REF 15	SAV 25	SOM 20	WIL 15	MOX 1
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INIT 7	SPD 1	LUC 30	TT 6	IR 60	DUR 30	WT 6	DR 45
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Traits: Edited Memories, Social Stigma (Pleasure Pod)

Active Skills: Deception 60, Fray 40, Interfacing 55, Intimidation 30, Kinesics 55, Networking: Criminals 65, Perception 65, Persuasion 45, Scrounging 45

Knowledge Skills: Art: Acting 45, Language: Language: Mandarin 80, Language: English 60, Profession: Distribution 55, Profession: Erotic Entertainment 60, Profession: Smuggling Tricks 55

Rep: c-rep 5, g-rep 30

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Bioweave Armor (Light), Clean Metabolism, Cortical Stack, Cyberbrain, Emotional Dampeners, Enhanced Pheromones, Medichines, Mnemonic Augmentation, Puppet Sock, Sex Switch

Gear: School Girl Outfit, Assorted Drugs, Software (AR Illusions)

Armor: 2/3 (light bioweave)

Roleplaying: Julia's real name is Ju Lin. Like Sammy, Julia died during the Fall and is working off her indenture as a prostitute at The Thousand Candles. Unsatisfied with the hand life dealt her, Julia is dealing illegal drugs for the Shui Fong triad to improve her lot. She has arranged for the drugs to be shipped to the Doll House, a business adjoining The Thousand Candles, where she picks them up. She then sell the the drugs to her clients at The Thousand Candles.

Julia had just bought a large supply of Drive when the Shui Fong flooded the market and prices dropped. Feeling betrayed by the Shui Fong and deep in debt, Julia sold the location of what she believed to be the Shui Fong's drug factory to the Smoke Lions for a large amount of money, hoping that the factory would be destroyed and her inventory would rise in value again.

Things went wrong as the location she sent Smoke Lions to was not the factory. The Smoke Lions then blackmailed her into kidnapping David Williams and delivering him to them from the Doll House.

Julia is currently very scared and angry at the situation she's in but she hides it with her emotional dampers.

Tactics: Julia will alert the bouncers wirelessly if attacked. She will then take full defense actions while attempting to escape.

GWIN

Combat Drug Junky

Morph: Male Martian Alpinar

Motivations: +Combat Drugs, +Hedonism, +Thrill-Seeking

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
15	20	15	15(25)	10	25	15	4

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
6(8)	1(2)	30	6	60	40	8	60

Traits: Addiction (Minor, Combat Drugs), Fast Metabolism, Planned Obsolescence

Active Skills: Blades 40, Climbing 45, Fray 65 (75), Freerunning 40, Infiltration 50, Networking: Criminal 50, Perception 60, Spray weapons 60, Throwing Weapons 40, Unarmed Combat 40

Knowledge Skills: Interest: Combat Drugs 50, Interest: Martian Drug Dealers 50, Language: English 40, Language: German 85, Language: Mandarin 50, Profession: Combat Tactics 40

Rep: g-rep 20

Implants: Anti-Glare, Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Bioweave Armor (Heavy), Cortical Stack, Direction Sense, Cybernetic Enhanced Vision, Enhanced Hearing, Grip Pads, Low Pressure Tolerance, Medicines, Oxygen Reserve, Respirocytes, Temperature Tolerance (Improved Cold)

Gear: Invisibility Cloak, Anti-Cloak Patch, Extra Magazine for Shard Pistol, Chameleon Coated Sticky Overload Grenade, Microbug, 2 Poppers of Kick (changes to stats noted in parentheses above)

Armor: 6/8 (armored clothing + heavy bioweave)

MELEE **Vibroblade 40** (AP -2, DV 2d10+2)

RANGED **Shard Pistol 70** (at <11 meters, AP -10, DV 5d10+6, Ammo 100, smartlink, full auto, and range-damage modifiers already included)

RANGED **Shard Pistol 60** (between 11 and 30 meters, AP -10, DV 4d10+6, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 100, Can hit two targets within 1 meter of each other, smartlink, full auto, and range modifiers already included)

RANGED **Shard Pistol 50** (between 31 and 50 meters, AP -10, DV 3d10+6, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 100, Can hit three targets each within 1 meter of the next, smartlink, full auto, and range modifiers already included)

Roleplaying: Gwin is a combat drug junky. Julia has hired him to ambush the characters, telling him they are rival dealers attempting to muscle in on her turf. She has promised Gwin his choice of drugs when they are dead and has given him an invisibility cloak and two Kick poppers as a down payment.

Tactics: Gwin always uses full auto bursts (already included above) and will try to hit multiple people if firing at medium or greater range. He likes to shoot from cover and will use a quick action to aim if possible, but he won't sacrifice attacks to aim. Gwin will use his moxie to aid his attacks: against targets that can't fray he will flip-flop rolls to get a hit and against targets that can fray he will upgrade successes to critical successes.

SMOKE LIONS (4)

Gang Members

Morph: Rusters

Motivations: -Chain Reaction, +Smoke Lions, +Survival

COG	COO	INT	REF	SAV	SOM	WIL	MOX
10	20	15	20	15	25	15	1

INIT	SPD	LUC	TT	IR	DUR	WT	DR
7	1	30	6	60	35	7	53

Traits: Edited Memories, Planned Obsolescence

Skills: Blades 45, Deception 35, Fray 40, Freerunning 50, Intimidation 45, Kinetic Weapons 35, Networking: Criminal 35, Palming 40, Perception 30, Spray Weapons 35, Scrounging 35

Knowledge Skills: Interest: Triad Politics 40, Language: Mandarin 55, Language: (Arabic, Korean, or Lithuanian) 85, Profession: Distribution 40, Profession: Law Enforcement Tactics 20

Rep: g-rep 2

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Enhanced Respiration, Temperature Tolerance

Gear: Covert Ops Tool, Gang Colors (yellow and gray), 4 Popped Stacks, Ranged Weapon (together they have 3 Light Pistols (Extended Magazines), a Railgun SMG, and a Shredder)

Armor: 3/4 (armored clothing)

MELEE **Knife 45** (AP -1, DV 1d10 + 4)

RANGED **Light Pistol 45** (DV 2d10, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 21/32, Smartlink modifier included)

RANGED **Railgun SMG 45** (AP -5, DV 2d10 + 5, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 18/20, Smartlink modifier already included)

RANGED **Shredder 45** (AP -10, DV 2d10 + 5, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 80/100, Smartlink modifier already included)

Roleplaying: The Smoke Lions were a gang associated with The Big Circle Gang triad. The Smoke Lions originally had around 30 members but most were killed during an assault on Mike's Custom Morphs or by the Shui Fong triad. Vytutas Kask, Abdu Al-Fayed, Li Ok-myung, and Kwang Ae-Sook are the four surviving Smoke Lions. The surviving members have not left Mike's Custom Morphs because they believe they are infected with Chain Reaction. Their priority is finding a cure for themselves. They are still debating what to do after that: the current consensus is to sell the cure in order to pay for the recovery and resleeving of the dead Smoke Lions.

Tactics: In combat the Smoke Lions will first take cover and then open fire. When shooting they always use at least a quick action to aim and use two short bursts (+10 to hit). They are trying to conserve ammo and won't fire if they can't aim. Two of the Smoke Lions are currently infected with Chain Reaction. If they suffer a wound they must make a MOX x 10 Test or explode. The Lions were only recently exposed to Chain Reaction so, while the explosion will still kill the Lion, it only does 3d10 + 10 damage.

DAVID WILLIAMS

Missing Grad Student

Morph: Male Menton

Motivation: +Finding a Cure to Chain Reaction

COG 30	COO 15	INT 20	REF 10	SAV 15	SOM 10	WIL 20	MOX 1
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INIT 7	SPD 1	LUC 40	TT 8	IR 80	DUR 35	WT 7	DR 53
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Traits: Addiction (Drive, Moderate), Addiction (Hyper-Drive, Terminal), Modified Behavior 3 (Forced to search for Chain Reaction cure)

Active Skills: Disguise 50, Freerunning 30, Interfacing 65, Infiltration 60, Investigation 60, InfoSec 60, Impersonation 50, Networking: Hypercorps 40, Networking: Scientists 65, Perception 50, Programming 55, Research 65

Knowledge Skills: Academics: Biology 60 (Microbiology 70), Academics: Virology 70, Interest: Cognitive Enhancing Drugs 55, Interest: Countersurveillance Techniques 55, Interest: Illegal Drug Dealers 55, Language: English 90, Language: Mandarin 60, Profession: Lab Technician 55

Rep: c-rep 20, r-rep 40

Implants: Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Cortical Stack, Eidetic Memory, Hyper Linguist, Math Boost, Multi-Tasking

Gear: Fake Ego ID (Victor Telscopy), Respirator, Smart Clothing, Smart Backpack, Specs, Red Wig

Armor: 0/0 (none)

Roleplaying: David is a virology graduate student at the University of Chicago. His research focuses on the use of bacteriophages to alter the biosculpted bacteria used in life support systems *in situ*. David is also a Drive addict, a fact known only to his closest friends due to his countersurveillance efforts.

As part of his countersurveillance technique David wore a disguise when he left his apartment: a shoulder length red wig that covered half of his face; a pair of cyberpunk goggles; and a respirator that, while not sealed, still effectively obscured the lower part of his face.

After being kidnapped by Julia and Delivered to the Smoke Lions, David has been subjected to temporary psychosurgical behavior modification and for the near future his only motivation is to find a cure to Chain Reaction. He is still highly intelligent and can be reasoned with if the characters can convince him that helping them will allow him to better find a cure.

David is also currently addicted to Hyper-Drive. If he goes three hours without taking a dose of the drug he will go into convulsions and die. This will happen repeatedly if he is resleeved in a biomorph as Hyper-Drive is mentally addicting.

CHIMERA

Ultimate Mercenary

Morph: Female Ghost

Rep: @-rep 30, c-rep 30, e-rep 20, f-rep 10, g-rep 35, r-rep 20

Implants: Access Jacks, Adrenal Boost, Anti-Glare, Basic Biomods, Basic Mesh Inserts, Bioweave Armor (light), Chameleon Skin, Clean Metabolism, Cortical Stack, Cybernetic Enhanced Hearing, Dead Switch, Eidetic Memory, Electric Sense, Endocrine Control, Enhanced Vision, Ghostrider Module (Goat), Grip Pads, Hardened Skeleton, Math Boost, Medichines, Mnemonic Augmentation, Multiple Personalities (Lion and Serpent), Muscle Augmentation, Neurachem (Lv. 2), Nanophages, Oracles, Puppet Sock, Reflex Boosters, Respiocytes, Sense Filter (Vision), Wrist Mounted Tools

Gear: 3 Applications of Liquid Thermite, Covert Ops Tool, 5 Extra Shredder Magazines, Fake Ego ID, Insulated Container, Lens Crazer, Martian Rover, Miniature Radio Farcaster, 3 Guardian Angel Drones, Quantum Radar, Radio Booster, Shredder, Smart Backpack, Software (Encryption, Exploit, Facial/Image Recognition, Kinesics Software, Radio Motion Detection, Sniffer, Spoof, Tactical Networks, Tracking), 3 Time-Bombs

Armor: 20/19 (light bioweave + heavy body armor with chameleon coating, fireproofing, lotus coating, offensive armor, shock proof, and thermal dampening + full helmet)

Roleplaying: Chimera is three egos sharing the same morph. Two of the egos, Lion and Serpent, use a multiple personality augmentation to share the body while the third, Goat, resides as an infomorph in a ghostrider module. Each of the three egos is detailed in a following section.

Tactics: For this mission Chimera will park their rover some distance away from Mike's Custom Morphs. Serpent will then infiltrate to the warehouse door using the chameleon coating and thermal dampeners to hide her presence. Once at the warehouse door, Lion will take over and activate their adrenal boost and neurachem augmentations which will give them the changes to stats noted in parenthesis in their entries and let them ignore an additional wound modifier (for a total of 3). Then Lion will storm the building, hoping to overwhelm the opposition with violence of action. Chimera will not retreat unless they have completed their objectives even if heavily wounded. For specific tactics see each ego's section below as well as the guardian angel and martian rover sections.

CHIMERA: LION

Ultimate Mercenary

Motivations: +Combat Domination, +Honor, +Personal Development

COG 10	COO 30	INT 20	REF 30(40)	SAV 2	SOM 40	WIL 30	MOX 5
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INIT 10(12)	SPD 3(4)	LUC 60	TT 12	IR 120	DUR 55	WT 11	DR 83
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Traits: Brave, Danger Sense, Ambidextrous, Feeble (SAV), Shut In

Active Skills: Beam Weapons 60, Climbing 55, Fray 85 (95), Free Fall 60 (70), Freerunning 75, Infiltration 50, Kinetic Weapons 60, Perception 65, Pilot: Aircraft 45 (55), Seeker Weapons 60, Spray Weapons 75, Throwing Weapons 50, Unarmed Combat 45

Knowledge Skills: Academics: Military Science 40, Academics: Physics 40, Interest: Warrior Codes 60, Interest: Military Technology 60, Language: English 60, Language: French 85, Language: Japanese 60, Profession: Military Ops 60

RANGED Shredder 85 (at <11 m, AP -10, DV 3d10 + 5, Mode SA/BF/FA, Ammo 100, Smartlink and range-damage modifiers already included)

Roleplaying: Lion is socially awkward and not very bright, but excels at combat. He formed a partnership with Serpent and Goat and became Chimera so he could focus on fighting instead of talking or thinking.

Tactics: If the guardian angel drones have actions remaining, Lion will use the extra complex action granted by the multiple personality implant to *direct control* them (normally a quick action). He uses his quick action to either move to cover, preferably within 10 m of an opponent, or to aim. He then uses his complex action to fire two short bursts (+1d10 damage or hitting two close targets) with his Shredder. He will use called shots to bypass armor against heavily armored opponents. If engaged in melee he will switch off with Serpent.

Lion will use up to two of his moxie offensively (flip-flopping results to get a hit or upgrading a success to a critical to prevent fraying and bypass armor) and the other three defensively (flip-flopping results on a Fray Test or upgrading a fray success to a critical success).

CHIMERA: SERPENT

Ultimate Mercenary

Motivations: +Honor, +Personal Development, +Womanizing

COG 15	COO 20	INT 15	REF 25(35)	SAV 25	SOM 40	WIL 25	MOX 6
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INIT 9(11)	SPD 3(4)	LUC 50	TT 10	IR 100	DUR 55	WT 11	DR 83
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Traits: Brave, First Impression

Active Skills: Blades 65, Climbing 55, Clubs 55, Fray 65 (75), Free Fall 45 (55), Freerunning 75, Infiltration 80, Intimidation 50, Kinesics 50, Navigation 45, Perception 55, Persuasion 60, Pilot: Aircraft 45 (55), Protocol 60, Unarmed Combat 75

Knowledge Skills: Academics: Anthropology 55, Art: Dancing 50, Art: Singing 50, Interests: Military History 60, Interests: Pick Up Lines 55, Language: English 85, Language: French 45, Language: Japanese 60, Profession: Military Ops 55

MELEE Unarmed 75 (DV 1d10 + 3 + shock)

Roleplaying: Serpent is the face of Chimera. Though skilled at socialization, infiltration, and hand-to-hand combat; Serpent is bad with ranged weapons, technical skills, and networking. To compensate for her weaknesses, she formed a partnership with Goat (networking and technical skills) and Lion (ranged combat skills) and they became Chimera.

Serpent is usually the dominate personality outside of combat. A notorious womanizer, Serpent doesn't agree with the strict ascetic ideals of the other ultimates, which is why she is freelancing on Mars.

Tactics: During this mission Serpent will only switch out with Lion if they are infiltrating or engaged in melee. If possible she will first use the extra complex action granted by the multiple personality implant to *direct control* the guardian angel drones and have them ram her opponents.

She will then use her complex action to make an unarmed combat attack. If she is not suffering high negative modifiers and is in melee combat with two or more opponents, she will target multiple opponents with her attacks. If she is up against at least three biomorphs, she will attempt to hit three of them with touch attacks (-10 to each attack) to incapacitate them or give them shock penalties. Otherwise she will target two opponents (-20 to each attack) with normal attacks. If up against opponents in heavy armor she will use called shots to bypass armor.

Serpent will use up to three of her moxie offensively and reserve the other three for defense.

CHIMERA: GOAT

Ultimate Mercenary

Morph: Infomorph

Motivations: +Honor, +Mercenary Career, +Personal Development

COG 30	COO 10	INT 15	REF 5	SAV 15	SOM 5	WIL 25	MOX 2
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INIT 4	SPD 3	LUC 50	TT 10	IR 100	DUR -	WT -	DR -
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Traits: Situational Awareness, Social Butterfly, Information Control

Active Skills: Deception 55, Demolitions 60, Hardware: Armorer 60, Hardware: Electronics 60, Hardware: Industrial 65, Hardware: Robotics 55, InfoSec 70, Interfacing 65, Investigation 60, Networking: Autonomists 60, Networking: Criminals 60, Networking: Hypercorp 60, Networking: Media 30, Networking: Ecologists 30, Networking: Scientists 30, Perception 60, Persuasion 60, Pilot: Aircraft 55, Pilot: Groundcraft 50, Programming 60, Research 60

Knowledge Skills: Academics: Business 50, Academics: Chemistry 45, Academics: Computer Science 60, Academics: Cryptography 60, Academics: Engineering 50, Academics: Physics 60, Interest: Conflict Resolution 45, Interest: Hacker Mesh Forums 55, Interest: Investing 50, Interest: Literature 50, Interest: Underworld Politics 50, Language: English 60, Language: French 50, Language: Japanese 85, Profession: Military Ops 60, Profession: Security Ops 50, Profession: Squad Logistics 55

Roleplaying: Goat is the third member of Chimera and resides in their ghost rider module. She is the brains of the outfit. Unlike Serpent and Lion, Goat is all business and she is responsible for the boring parts of their lives: handling their money, obtaining contracts, maintaining their equipment, and securing their mesh systems. She is a capable hacker and is also responsible for hiding their presence from surveillance spimes.

Tactics: Goat handles the sensors and communications. On her turn she uses her complex action to actively stealth their communications signals (p. 252, *EP*) a quick action to actively defend their network (p. 253, *EP*), and a second quick action to make a detailed Perception Test using the feeds from their drones, their quantum radar and radio motion detection systems, and any spimes they have access to. Goat will not use the quantum radar while they are trying to infiltrate unless they are about to open a door or perform some other activity in which they may be ambushed.

If necessary Goat can use the puppet sock to take physical actions such as placing and arming explosives.

CHIMERA'S GUARDIAN ANGELS (3)

Guardian Angel Robots

COG 10	COO 10	INT 10	REF 25	SAV 10	SOM 10	WIL 10	MOX 0
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INIT 7	SPD 2	LUC 20	TT 4	IR 40	DUR 40	WT 8	DR 80
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Active Skills: Hardware: Electronics 20, InfoSec 20, Interfacing 40, Research 20, Perception 40, Pilot: Aircraft 45

Knowledge Skills: Interests: Guardian Specs 80, Language: English 80

Implants: 360-Degree Vision, Access Jacks, Chameleon Skin, Eelware, Enhanced Hearing, Enhanced Smell, Enhanced Vision, Lidar, Light Combat Armor, Neurachem, T-Ray Emitter

Gear: IR/UV Laser Designator, Miniature Radio Farcaster, Radio Booster

Armor: 14/12 (bot armor + light combat armor)

MELEE Ram 45 (DV 1d10 + 4 + shock, double DV if moving at running speed, the guardian angel takes equal damage (or less for soft targets) – 12)

Roleplaying: These guardian angel drones have been given upgraded communications systems and equipped with laser designators so they can provide targeting for indirect fire. The drones electronically communicate only through the farcaster and thus cannot be hacked.

Tactics: Chimera will not use the laser designators during this mission as they are worried about triggering a collapse when using explosive weapons. The guardian angels will be sent first into any potentially dangerous situation such as through a door or tunnel. If the drones spot hostiles they will attempt to take them out by ramming, targeting biomorphs by preference.

CHIMERA'S ROVER

Martian Rover Vehicle

COG 10	COO 10	INT 10	REF 20	SAV 10	SOM 10	WIL 10	MOX 0
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INIT 6	SPD 1	LUC 20	TT 4	IR 40	DUR 200	WT 40	DR 400
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Active Skills: Hardware: Electronics 20, InfoSec 20, Interfacing 40, Research 20, Perception 40, Pilot: Groundcraft 40

Knowledge Skills: Interests: Martian Rover Specs 80, Language: English 80

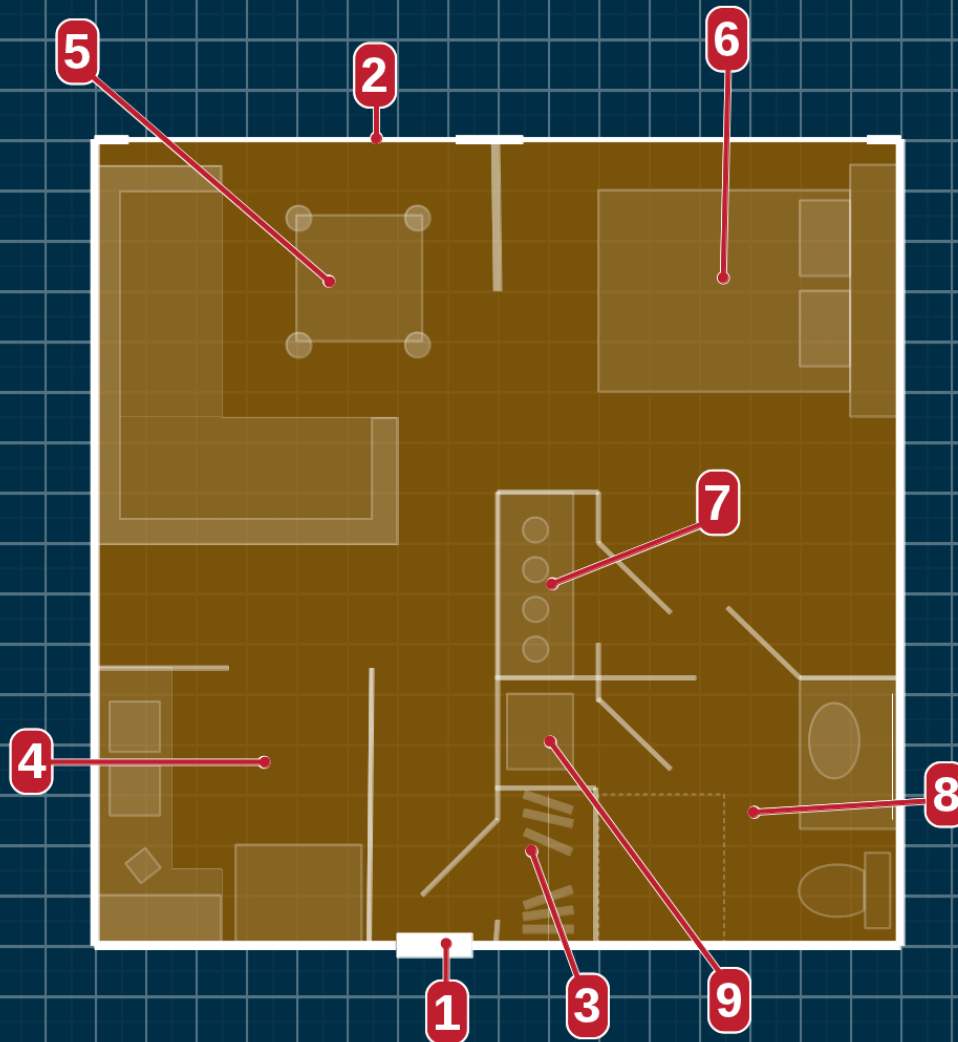
Equipment: Cargo Trailer Hitch, Drone-Launching Rack, External Cameras, Fabber, Headlights, Miniature Radio Farcaster, Mobile Lab, Radar System, Radio Booster, Two-Person Airlock, Weapon Locker

Armor: 20/15 (vehicle)

Roleplaying: This rover is painted gray with the words "Black & Company: Painting and Interior Redecoration" on the side. The rover electronically communicates only through the farcaster and cannot be hacked.

Tactics: The rover will wait until it is instructed to come pick up Chimera. If attacked it will drive away.

DAVID'S APARTMENT



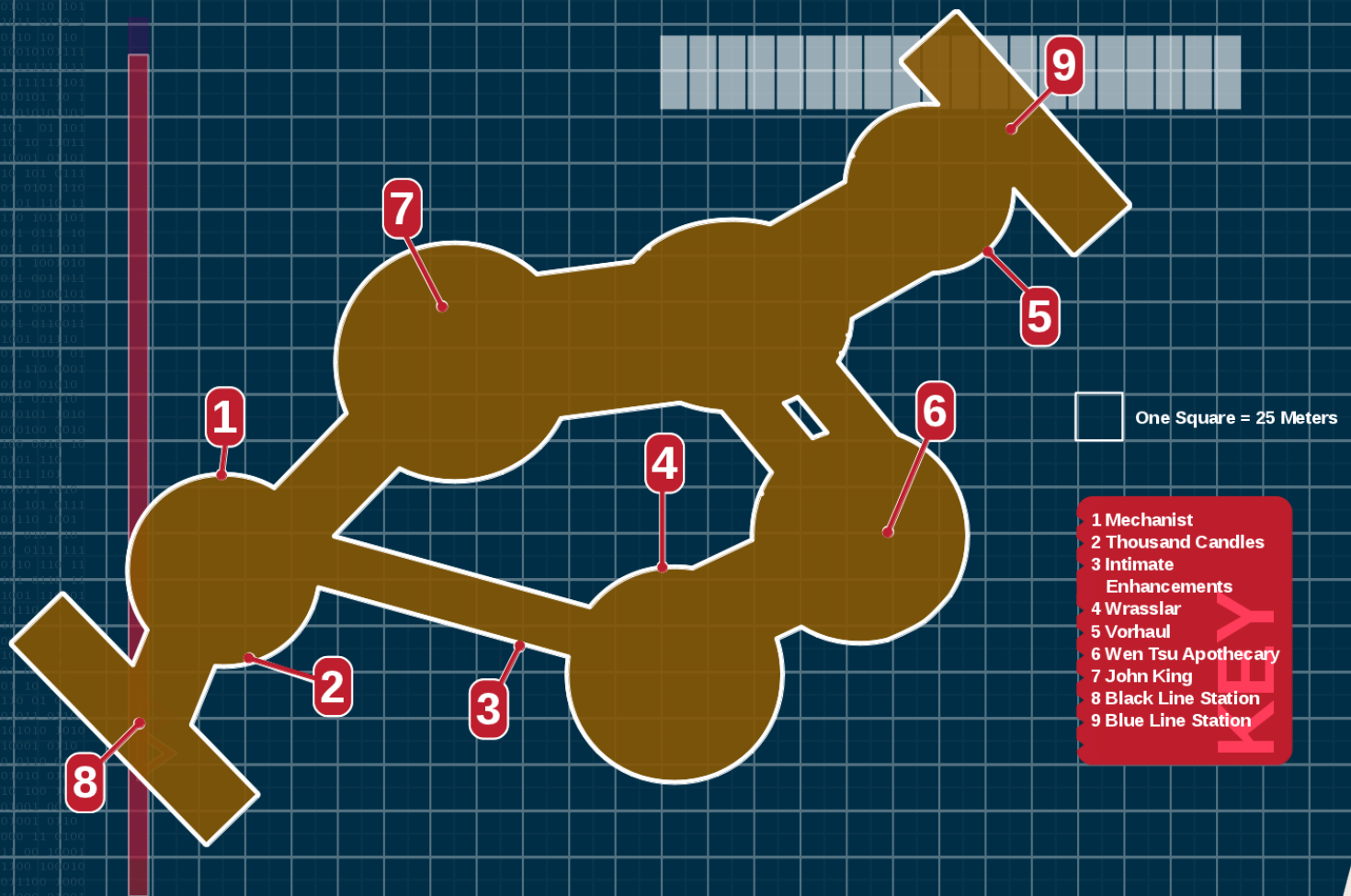
One Square = 0,3 Meters

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Window
- 3 Coat Closet
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Living Room
- 6 Bedroom
- 7 Closet
- 8 Bathroom
- 9 Laundry

KEY

CHAIN REACTION

HLS



THOUSAND CANDLES

- 1 Entrance from HLS
- 2 Church
- 3 Storage
- 4 Working Area
- 5 Living Area
- 6 To Thai Kitchen
- 7 To Doll house

KEY

One Square = 2 Meters



XU FU CHANG'S



- 1 Entrance
- 2 Support Pillar
- 3 Sidewalk
- 4 Sticky Grenade
- 5 Gwin

KEY

One Square = 1 Meters

5

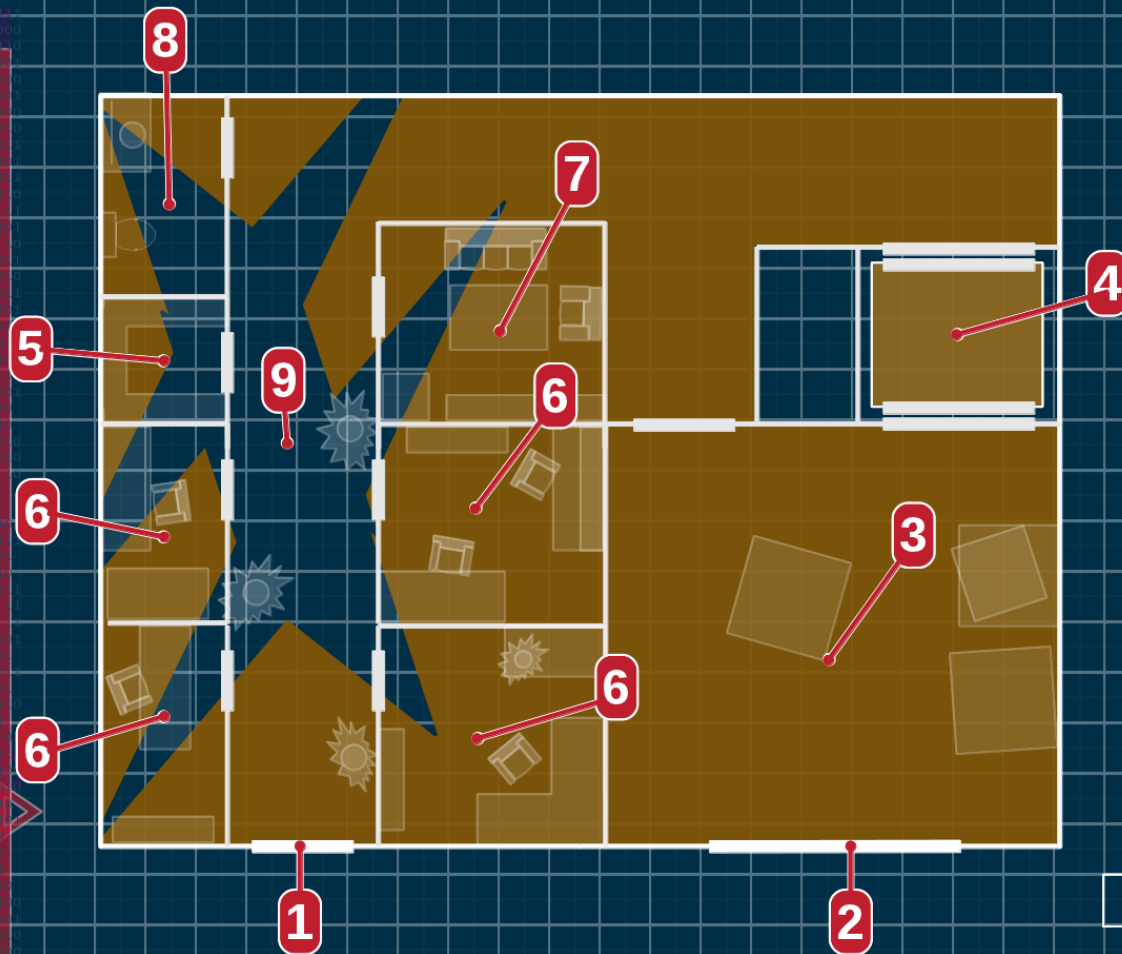
2

1

3

4

MIKE'S STREET LEVEL



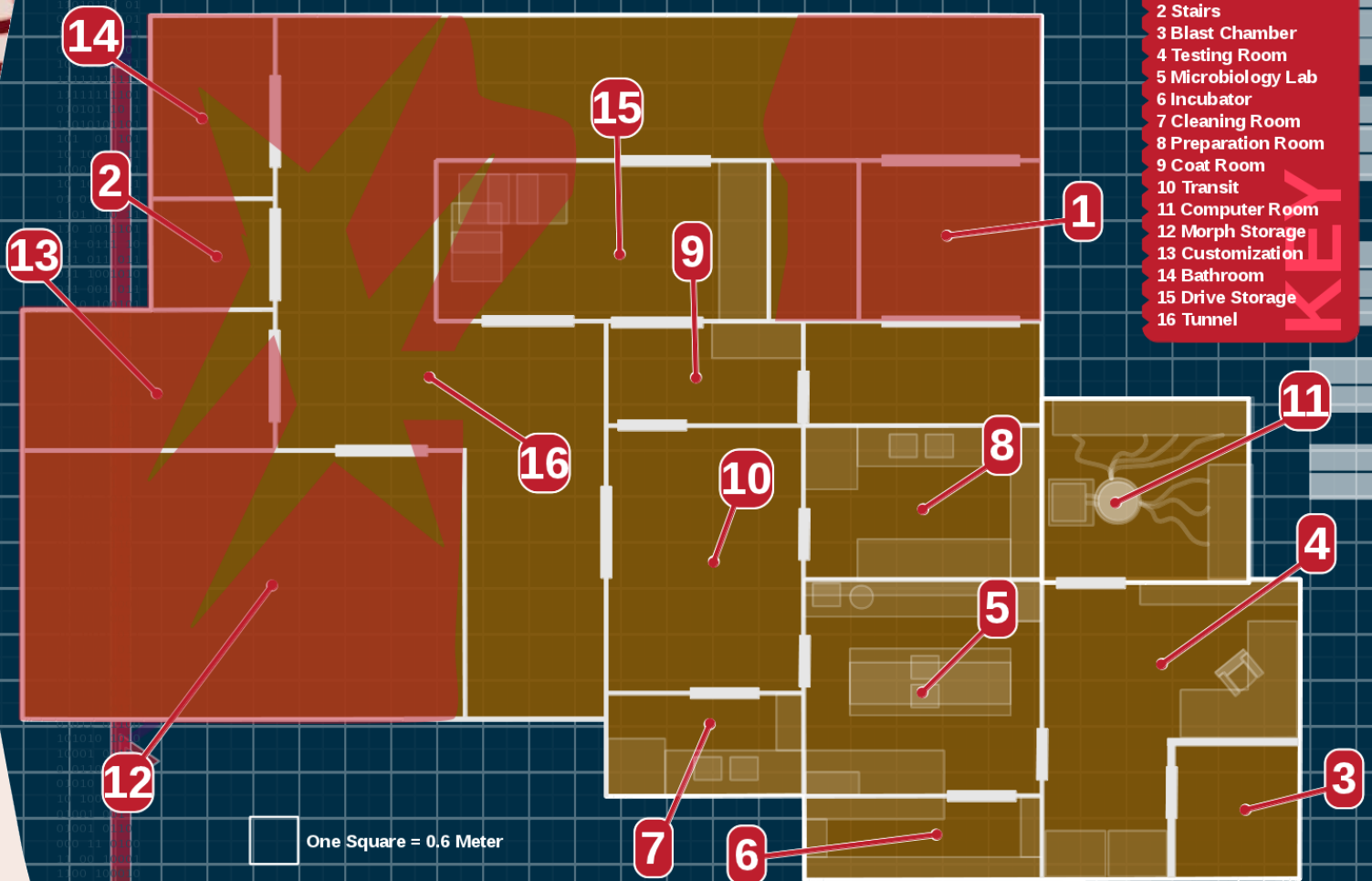
- 1 Entrance
- 2 Warehouse Door
- 3 Warehouse
- 4 Elevator
- 5 Stairs
- 6 Offices
- 7 Break Room
- 8 Bathroom
- 9 Collapsed Section

KEY

One Square = 0.6 Meter

MIKE'S LOWER LEVEL

- 1 Elevator Shaft
- 2 Stairs
- 3 Blast Chamber
- 4 Testing Room
- 5 Microbiology Lab
- 6 Incubator
- 7 Cleaning Room
- 8 Preparation Room
- 9 Coat Room
- 10 Transit
- 11 Computer Room
- 12 Morph Storage
- 13 Customization
- 14 Bathroom
- 15 Drive Storage
- 16 Tunnel



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Based on the original works of Posthuman Studios
Visit them at <http://eclipsephase.com>

Cover Art taken from Panopticon, p. 44.

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