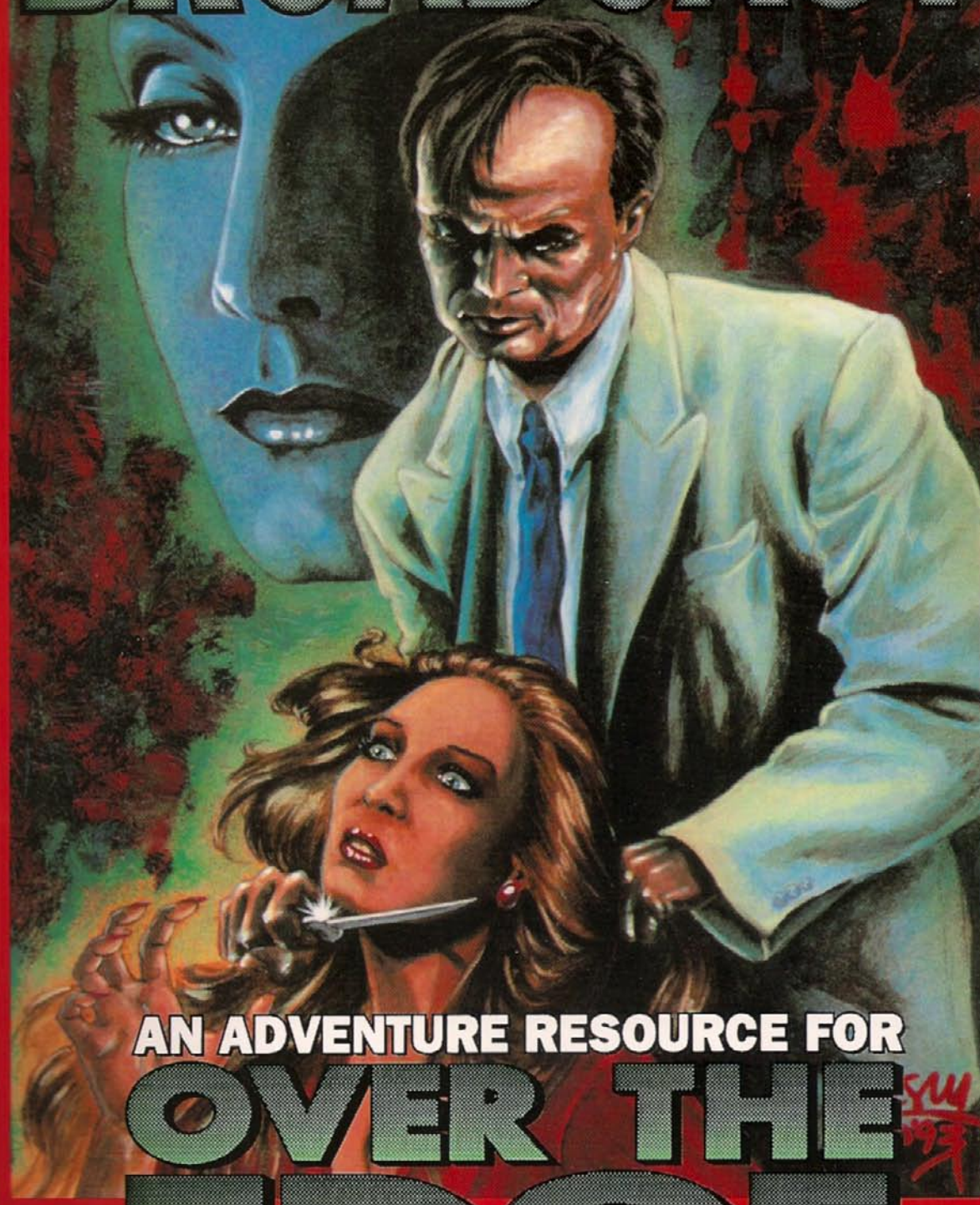


BROADCAST

Unauthorized



AN ADVENTURE RESOURCE FOR

OVER THE EDGE™

by Robin D. Laws

**Spontaneous
Psychic
Manifestations!**

Expert: "It's Age of Aquarius"

**OVER THE
EDGE™**

Nusbaum Baffled!

*"Wish I Knew," Says
Beloved Doctor*

Al Amarja Today

"The Only News You Need To Read!"

'Unauthorized Broadcast'

OTE™ Adventure Not To Be Missed!

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- **Flexibility:** The conclusion of this story is entirely up to the player characters. Their fate is in their own hands.
- **The Meaning of Life:** But is it right? You decide.

by Stan Nyb and W. H. Jet
Staff Writers

NORTHFIELD, MN — Atlas Games proudly presents *Unauthorized Broadcast*, by Robin D. Laws, the latest in its line of adventure resources for *Over the Edge™*, the role-playing game of surreal danger.

Potent New Drug

What happens when you add a potent and unknown drug to the volatile society of the Edge? The player characters find out the hard way.

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Mixed Blessing

Explore the delightful consequences of having something for which people would pay dearly, or kill.

Al Amarja topic for discussion on Computer Networks

by Meteor Sarab
Staff Writer

THE EDGE — *Al Amarja Today* has learned that, despite ongoing government efforts to minimize publicity, our placid island has become a topic for discussion on international computer networks, such as the Internet and America Online. On the Internet, there is even a mailing list devoted to discussion of Al Amarja and the Edge.

Stefan Giorgopolous, a spokesman for Monique D'Aubainne, historic liberator and current shepherdess of Al Amarja, commented: "Apparently these people are convinced that Al Amarja is the fictitious setting of a role-playing game. So long as this remains true, Her Exaltedness sees no reason to intervene."

*"When we found it,
we couldn't believe
our luck. When
the assassination
attempts started, that
we believed."*



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Unauthorized BROADCAST

An *Over the Edge*™ Adventure Resource
by Robin Laws

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Bland light piano jazz leaks from hidden speakers. Ice cubes tinkle discreetly inside highball glasses. Hushed conversations pool together into a soothing wave form of deal-making. At this particular lounge, located on the fifth floor of Swaps (OTE™, p. 105), every sound is a whisper — and the word most often whispered is “money.”

The gentlemen at table sixteen, tucked away in a corner near the kitchen, are no more or less discreet than anyone else here. All four of them are clad in the latest Armani suits. Three of them, Han Chinese, seem to have been born in them. The other, a Caucasian man named Kenneth Winbergh, looks a little out-of-place in his clothing — even a casual observer can sense the air of the small-time hustler about him.

Patrons and staff of the bar suddenly break off their sentences, looking quizzically about. They’re hearing something in their heads: a man speaking in a Yorkshire accent.

“These wankers have the bloody money all right, but it’s up there tighter than a @#\$\$ing suppository.”

The Asians tense, glaring at Winbergh. They’ve recognized his voice. With their abrupt movement, all eyes are on table sixteen. It takes seven seconds for Winbergh’s expression to melt from the sphinxlike blankness of a poker player into a deer caught in the headlights of an oncoming range rover.

“Oh my bleeding Christ, they’re all reading my thoughts.”

Now the only sound in the lounge is the vapid music, still noodling on mindlessly as sweat beads across Winbergh’s face.

“Stop it — stop it you @#\$\$ing bastards! You’re not allowed!”

There is another pause, and then Winbergh throws his head between his legs, weeping. His thoughts come like a river bursting a dam.

“I know you’re all laughing at me you’ve always been laughing at me well I don’t care really I don’t and I didn’t do anything with Jimmy Hawkins behind the trees after the Christmas bash and I’ll @#\$\$ing kick anyone’s bleedin’ head in if they say it’s so and stop it stop it stop it!”

Winbergh stands, as if pleading with the crowd, who are still frozen in appalled fascination as his thoughts scroll through their minds.

“Those break-in jobs weren’t me, they were another bleeding Kenny Winbergh, I’m a businessman — a legitimate businessman and bleeding Christ those other triad bastards are gonna bleedin’ kill me — “

The three Asians rear back in their chairs to grab Browning 9mms from their shoulder holsters. The silence shatters as waiters scream and drinkers dive over the bar for cover. The Asians curse in Cantonese as they realize that they’re in The Edge and they’ve been forced to leave their guns at home. Winbergh barrels for the exit, still spilling his thoughts all over.

“@#\$\$! There are no triads. No other triads. I mean, these blokes ain’t triads either — @#\$\$, you know I’m lying, I’m up to my bleeding arsehole in triads — “

Before anyone can react, he grabs a steak knife from a nearby table with one hand; with the other he seizes a well-heeled businesswoman by the throat. He holds the knife to her exquisite neck as he backs out of the lounge.

“Okay, you can read my bleeding thoughts, so you know I mean it when I say I’m gonna cut this bitch’s @XX\$ing carotid artery if you — never, I never let Jimmy do any of those things to -”

Kenny Winbergh is dead. Cecilia Nardini, a crack agent of Constance D’Aubainne’s security staff, has just glided up to him and killed him instantly with a paperclip applied to a certain vital nerve. He slumps to the gleaming tile floor, his psychic monologue cut off.

But the mystery has just begun.

ACT ONE: The Setup

Poor Kenny has fallen victim to a new drug called Broadcast, slipped to him at random by its disturbed inventors, Stanislaw Bacewicz and Grazyna Skrowaczewski. This and further, similar incidents throw The Edge into a tizzy: every power broker worth his salt wants to get his hands on the secret of Broadcast. One of the PCs finds himself in possession of a valuable clue — a glimpse of a suspicious figure. But when they track her down, they find themselves in possession of the only supply of the drug — and perhaps the formula to make more. At this point they learn that it's not always an advantage to have something everyone else wants. Particularly if "everyone else" means the Net, Cheryl D'Aubainne, the Pharaohs, the Mr. Le Thuys, and the Movers.

BROADCAST

In its refined form, Broadcast is a crystalline powder that looks like table salt. Soluble in water or any other liquid, it adds no odor, taste or color to substances it's mixed with. It takes around ten minutes to penetrate the average brain, at which point it rewires unused neural pathways into psychic amplifiers. The user then involuntarily begins to telepathically broadcast her thoughts to every human brain within a 150 m radius. All humans have atrophied psychic receivers; the power of Broadcast is enough to temporarily activate them. The victim realizes what's happening because her psychic receivers pick up an echo of her thoughts. Piecing this together with the astonished stares of the crowd, she'll typically begin to panic, fearing that her innermost secrets will be revealed to all. This panic is self-fulfilling, bringing those secrets to the conscious level for broadcast.

Use: In this adventure, Broadcast is used only as an offensive drug. But it is possible to imagine recreational uses for it if it ends up diffusing into The Edge's drug market. Insufferable megalomaniacs might get a kick from downing a dose and cruising through a crowded street, forcing every passerby to taste their musings. Broadcast might well replace the bullhorn for political harangues and street corner ranters.

Broadcast won't become a tool for conspirators wishing to get specific information from a victim

— there's no guarantee that the subject will think about the desired thing immediately after being dosed.

Downside: The unprepared victims dosed with Broadcast in this plot fall apart immediately when their thoughts are revealed to others. They're not prepared for its effect, and have too many secrets. Others taking it purposely may have the self-control to emit only the thoughts they want. Such recreational users will find that in the short run, Broadcast is physically addictive; once the brain has been reconfigured by a dose, it craves more. Psychologically, users will become hooked on the feel of vicarious power that comes from literally imposing their thoughts on others. Longtime abusers might short circuit their neural connectors and go brain dead, or become permanent broadcasters, unable to shut the effect off. Or they might get to the point where they can't hear their own thoughts except when they're being broadcast.

Pushers: As the story begins, only Bacewicz and Skrowaczewski have a supply of the drug and the means to produce more. The PCs' choices will determine who ends up controlling the supply.

Availability: See above.

BACEWICZ AND SKROWACZEWSKI

Stanislaw Bacewicz (STAN-itz-lav BASS-i-vitz) and Grazyna Skrowaczewski (GRATZ-na SKROV-a-CHEV-ski) are fringe scientists on the lam from the authorities of the new Polish government — see pp. 14-15. During an argument in a Munich train station, Stanislaw vows to prove to Grazyna that the human race is irredeemably degraded. Take anyone at random, he claims, and reveal their innermost thoughts to the crowd — they'll all prove to be gross and pathetic wretches, nursing oily little secrets. To prove his point, he unveils his pharmaceutical masterpiece, Broadcast, and proposes that they test it by dosing unsuspecting victims at random. The formula for Broadcast and a mere ten tablets of it are all he was able to salvage after destroying his lab in Warsaw. Proceeding to their prearranged refuge, The Edge, they begin to execute Stanislaw's plan.

BERSERK IN SWAPS

Posing as a refrigerator repairman, Stanislaw gets brief access to the bar area of the Swaps lounge. There he drops a solution of Broadcast, frozen in an ice cube, into the ice tray. He then leaves the building; Grazyna stays to observe the results, hiding behind a newspaper on a bench in the mall area outside the lounge.

You can decide whether to have the PCs enter the action during this episode, or merely hear about it after it happens. If you can think of a seamless way to motivate a PC to be in the lounge just before Winbergh loses it, open the adventure here. If not, introduce the plot through secondhand sources.

If PCs are present, events may not unfold as described in the teaser. Stats are provided on p.14 for Winbergh and Nardini should the PCs decide to intervene at any point. They might succeed in calming Winbergh and saving his life — or they could make a nasty situation even worse. If the PCs intervene, they might make an enemy of Nardini; if she decides they've harmed Constance D'Aubainne's interests, she'll pose a serious threat to them. Or they may annoy her only mildly, in which case she'll just have them harassed by security during any future visits to Swaps.

PCs who rescue Winbergh will be sidetracked in their investigation of the mystery; he thinks he's been set up by triad rivals of his business partners, working through a corrupt Customs & Immigration agent. If they follow his lead, you can get them into all sorts of trouble messing with competing Hong Kong sub-units of the Net, and with C&I security.

In the long term, Winbergh's gratitude might be worth something — he'll reward them by letting them participate in a profitable shady business scheme. According to your wishes, this could be a straightforward payoff, or the setup for another adventure later on in the series.

Whether or not Winbergh survives, a PC on the scene should see Grazyna watching from the bench outside the lounge. Allow him a good glimpse of her looking suspicious and then rushing away. If PCs attempt to follow her, she'll escape — Nardini, suspecting the characters of involvement in the plot, will order a security team to intercept them.

THE EDGE ABUZZ

PCs not at Swaps during the incident soon hear of it — it quickly becomes the talk of the town. PCs who were there hear variously distorted accounts of it.

The Swaps incident becomes a minor topic of discussion at every place where rumors are floated and speculations exchanged. Who caused it, and how? The most popular suspects are the government, the CIA, or the Lemurian vampires (OTE p. 154). Competing theories claim that the Broadcast effect was achieved through psychic power, sorcery, or microwave radiation.

Accounts of the incident become more distorted the further the PCs are from the socioeconomic circles of the Swaps crowd. In Swaps or Sequins, a more-or-less accurate version is told. At sports bars in the Arms Barrio, Nardini is proudly labelled a Peace Force officer instead of a Golden Knight. At Sad Mary's or Lou's Booze, the triad members are said to have had pistols with them — dozens were killed in the crossfire of a shootout between them and the Peace Force. At Den of Thieves, it's a firefight between rival gangs, with the Broadcast effect left out of the story altogether.

STAGING FURTHER BROADCAST EVENTS

In the following days, there are at least two more incidents in which unsuspecting victims are dosed with Broadcast and destroyed by their own thoughts. These further incidents put the various power groups of Al Amarja on alert: a potentially destabilizing new force is at work. They all want to get sole control of it. It becomes common knowledge that many powerful people want the secret — which means a big cash-in for whoever learns it.

Since victims are being dosed at random, it stretches credibility for the PCs to be present at more than one incident. If any of them were at Swaps, further incidents occur in the background. They can rush to the scenes after events happen, but at best they'll get a clearer idea of Broadcast's effect. Subsequent episodes occur only to reinforce the importance of Broadcast.

If the Swaps incident happened offstage, PCs should be present at one of the further incidents.

There they get a good look at Grazyna but fail to apprehend her immediately.

GMs can choose victims and scenes of these further incidents to suit their own purposes. Each follows the basic pattern of the Kenneth Winbergh incident. Broadcast events can happen in any public place Stanislaw could access — restaurants and bars are ideal choices. If you still need an onstage incident, place one in the PCs' favorite hangout. Victims should be GMCs who can be quickly destroyed by the revelations of their secret thoughts. Have one victim kill himself dramatically. Another might burst out into the street, to be creamed by a passing jitney. Victims might also be slain by their own associates if their thoughts reveal them as traitors.

If the PCs have already solved the mystery behind either the tulpas (OTE p. 166, or the forthcoming sourcebook, *Wildest Dreams*) or the agaras (OTE p. 103, or the *New Faces* adventure resource), members of these secret groups would make ideal victims. A human-seeming agara could commit suicide out of shame when revealed — or be murdered by a horrified spouse or Throckmorton Operative. A tulpa would self-destruct even more colorfully, exploding into thought-waves. Minor characters from previous sessions might make interesting victims; the incident has more impact if it happens to a character the PCs already know.

THE VITAL CLUE

When the PCs realize that Broadcast is a big deal to many competing power groups, and when they've seen Grazyna and figured out that she's a clue to the mystery, it's time to move the plot into its second act.

Let them explore a dead-end clue or two. If they get into interesting conflicts trying to track down the mystery woman, allow them to keep going until they realize they're chasing smoke.

Interpolate these scenes with others that keep the heat on by demonstrating that they're not the only ones investigating the Broadcast mystery. Multiple reward offers for information appear in *Little Scratches*. A coterie of mutants from *Bitter & Herb's* fantasize about the plastic surgery they could afford if they uncovered the truth. The PCs pass a Peace Force squad interrogating some hapless lowlife types, fruitlessly demanding clues from them. Gamblers at *Winds of*

Change lay odds on who will end up controlling the effect. After the third incident, Broadcast is the number one topic of conversation wherever the PCs go.

When suspense is at its maximum, the PC who got a look at Grazyna simply sees her passing by on the street. Since she's by no means an experienced covert operator, the group should be able to follow her to her hideout with relative ease.

Coincidence? Precisely. The PCs get a crucial break due to pure luck; without it one of the dozens of other groups after the secret would get to it first. Because of their good fortune, the investigators are about to find themselves over their heads in Edge politics.

If they're clever, the PCs let Grazyna lead them to her apartment. She's carrying something in a brown paper bag, and is striding along with a distracted, purposeful air about her. It should be clear that she hasn't seen them, and is therefore unlikely to give them the slip.

An overzealous character might make the mistake of accosting her. If they do, she'll bolt, leaving her paper bag — and the large carving knife inside it — behind her. (Also in the bag is a cash register slip from Luigi's Castle of Cutlery; it's a new purchase.) A patrol unit, suspicions aroused, appears from an alleyway and detains the PCs, subjecting them to a general interrogation. The nature of the patrol will depend on the neighborhood you have selected for this pivotal scene: in *Broken Wings*, it'll be Dunkelburg's Security; in *Flowers*, the Aries Gang, and so forth. Though the purpose of the encounter is to prevent the PCs from capturing Grazyna before she can reach a vital plot point, it might escalate into a full-fledged sequence of its own if the group is foolish enough either to start a fight or give away the fact that it has a clue to Broadcast. In the later case, they'll be subdued, taken to the patrol's leaders, and encouraged none too delicately to tell all.

After dealing with the patrol — in one way or another — they have to find Grazyna's apartment. This means asking around the neighborhood without revealing themselves as Broadcast hunters. The patrol hauls them into headquarters (possibly for the second time) if they're discovered interrogating the locals.

Once the players seem to have done the appropriate amount of sweating, allow their characters to find a friendly soul who recognizes Grazyna from their description and points to her third-floor tenement apartment. There they're in for a surprise.

ACT TWO: The Twist

The only entrance to Stanislaw and Grazyna's apartment is a fire-escape that goes up the side of their decaying building. (Situate this in the downscale barrio of your choice.) If they've followed her here, the PCs see her go up the fire escape and disappear through a window, paper bag and all.

PC groups smart enough to follow Grazyna without grabbing her managed to avoid an earlier encounter with a patrol appropriate to the neighborhood. Not so fast. At this point the patrol appears and briefly questions them. Their suspicion level depends on the previous behaviour of the group — if they were being obviously sneaky in their pursuit of Skrowaczewski, they might be in for a fair hassle — possibly even getting hauled down to headquarters.

This delay means that the group arrives at the apartment anywhere from a few minutes to several hours after Grazyna enters. Groups who tried to ap-

prehend her earlier may be as late as several days. Details of the following scene will be slightly different depending on the elapsed time.

When they enter the apartment, the only sound is a ticking alarm clock. Both Stanislaw and Grazyna are dead.

If Grazyna entered the apartment with her paper bag, Stanislaw has been stabbed to death with a large carving knife. He's been stabbed dozens of times. He lies on an offer-stuffed sofa; it and his clothing are soaked through with blood. A wide sticky pool of it congeals around the sofa.

If Grazyna was chased earlier and dropped her knife, Stanislaw's throat has been slashed with a razor.

If the PCs were delayed only briefly, Stanislaw's wounds are fresh. Though he can't be revived, his body is still warm. A trail of red spatters on the hardwood floor leads to the washroom, the weapon lying



Stanislaw is correct. He has proven the last thing I believed, the essential bedrock of my consciousness, to be a naive mistake. We were always taught that there was no such thing as Human Nature. In capitalist systems, people did not behave badly, dominating and swindling his fellow man, because it was in his essential nature. He did it because it was what he learned to do, what a class society taught him to do. Because it was learned, it could be unlearned. If sin could be learned, virtue could also be taught. Man was perfectable, a better human could be nurtured, with the correct ideological upbringing.

But now everything is gone. The world we fought so hard for has been destroyed, eaten from within by termites. Ronald MacDonald wipes himself on the hammer and sickle. Girly magazines and romance comics cover bookstores shelves. Mobsters sell nuclear secrets to the highest bidder. We who have sacrificed so much — our love, our humanity, our scruples, to fight the worst aggressors against our system — we flee in rags. Grinning fishmongers elected by mobs of long-fingered sybarites rule.

To Stanislaw, all is a joke. He laughs in my face. He says I was a fool to ever believe the spirits and bodies we broke were broken in the name of a better future. He says it our own evil natures that drove us to ... and that there is a human nature, and it is bad. That all we are is our darkest secrets, and there is no good. Take anyone, reveal his thoughts to all, and each of them will be destroyed. And he is right. All three, all three we have revealed — all have been... and he laughs. He laughs in my face. For he has been correct all along. This is a world of worms and dung only, and nothing is worth anything, and my every belief, even my passion for him which I wish I could rip out from my heart with my bare hands —

Yes, he is correct. But if man is all baseness, and corruption, there is no reason for him to go on living. If Stanislaw is all baseness, the only way I can escape him is

If I am all baseness, the only way I can escape myself is

on a bathmat. Grazyna is dead in the tub. She's fully clothed, and the tub is full. Leading from the tub is an electrical cord, still plugged into a socket; she's pulled a space heater into the water, electrocuting herself.

In Stanislaw's hand is a prescription bottle containing 10 capsules of Broadcast. They are labelled as such, in Polish. The complete formula for the drug is in his shirt pocket, scrawled in barely legible writing with a felt-tip pen. If you don't want Broadcast to be introduced to The Edge on an immediate, permanent basis the paper is soaked with blood. The ink has run, obscuring the formula forever.

A search of the room yields only one item of interest — Grazyna's diary. It offers no technical details of Broadcast or any of Stanislaw's other chemical breakthroughs. Instead, it's a document of Grazyna's tortured relationship with the man. It enumerates in painful detail their past history, their flight to Al Amarja, the reason for the random dosages of the drug, and her final decision to kill him. Though the early entries are in Polish, they switch to English upon arrival in The Edge. The last entry, dated on the day before the PCs discover it, is provided as a handout (on the opposite page).

Given the pacing of the adventure, the players were likely expecting to find just another clue in a long trail leading to the mystery of the drug supply. The ease with which they've gotten their hands on the city's most treasured secret may give some of them pause. They're right — the adventure has only begun.

THE MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS

Here the adventure becomes far less linear: the PCs have a very hot potato on their hands, and their initiatives determine whether they grab a bit of power or get themselves killed. They have either the formula for Broadcast and a demonstration supply, or enough of the drug for a lab to analyze. Many dangerous people want it. The trick is to get the best deal for it before the disappointed low bidders wipe the team out.

The following groups want sole control of Broadcast very badly:

THE NET

The Net wants Broadcast to be disseminated widely throughout Al Amarja. They want monopoly control of

this commodity. They see it as a potentially very lucrative product. Oriented towards profit, they care little if wide availability leads to the embarrassing exposure of the odd Net agent. Few Net operatives work undercover anyway.

The pinstriped types at the upper echelon of The Net assume that whoever gets their hands on Broadcast will be a rough customer. So they've tapped local mob leader Shania Raimondi (OTE p. 105) as manager of this operation.

The international Italian-style Mafia is but one of the constituent criminal business enterprises that make up the Net, so this is a natural alliance. Raimondi is a board member of Al Amarjan Investments; her mob organization in The Edge is the distribution cushion between Net execs and the street gangs who retail drugs in the neighborhoods they control. Violent nut cases like Avan Bloodlord and Molly, Queen Mother of Baboons, are far happier dealing with Mafiosi than they would be with slick Net types. After all, they've all seen The Godfather — associating with actual mobsters makes them feel like real, high-class criminals.

Raimondi has in turn picked her father's consigliere, Bruno Di Donato, as the negotiator to deal with any Broadcast vendors. Di Donato is accompanied by mob soldiers loyal to the Raimondis. He can if necessary secure assistance from either direction on the criminal food-chain: from international heavy hitters supplied by The Net to the street-level goons of barrio gangs.

He has money to offer for Broadcast, pure and simple. With the financial resources of The Net behind him, he can outbid all others — he tacks ten per cent onto the highest competing offer. He's reluctant to offer continuing physical protection as part of the bargain; any agreements of this sort will be reneged on once The Net has its access to Broadcast secured. With a full expense account, he figures he'll be able to run this as a straight business deal. He won't resort to the rough stuff unless the Broadcast vendors foolishly conclude that this is a deal they're in a position to refuse: "Look, I'll give you 110 grand. Any higher than that, and it's cheaper to hire someone to take the drug and slit your throats in the bargain."

Bruno has no interest in Grazyna's diary.

CHERYL D'AUBAINNE

To the head of the Temple of Divine Experience, Broadcast has a potential for good that no one else can be trusted to harness. Used by enlightened religious leaders in the proper context, it could be a powerful emotional bonding agent among believers. Imagine a

sermon delivered by a spiritual leader on Broadcast! On the other hand, used by the uninitiated, it could continue its path of destruction through Al Amarjan life. Especially if that soulless, materialistic bitch Constance gets her filthy mitts on it.

Cheryl leads the Broadcast operation behind the scenes; she's represented in negotiations by her lawyer, Dominique Petitdidier. Petitdidier is accompanied by one of Cheryl's bodyguards, Sofia Gridenko (use same stats as Simon Xin, p. 116, OTE). Dominique can draw on a large pool of gorgeous Sommerites and tantric masters of all genders and persuasions, all willing to share themselves with the PCs to aid the cause.

Besides the company of pliable Sommerites, Dominique is prepared to offer as much as \$100,000 for a monopoly on Broadcast, and the short-term protection of Cheryl's bodyguards, if needed. They would also gain Cheryl, one of the few simultaneously powerful and nice Al Amarjans, as a grateful contact.

Both Cheryl and Dominique would be appalled by Grazyna's diary of despair; given the chance, they'd burn it.

PHARAOHS

To the Pharaohs, Broadcast is just another incomprehensible new development of the perverse warrior-slaves. They want to secure exclusive access to it and lock it away forever. Its use would just add more chaos to the world, and the Pharaohs crave order.

Hektor Kiptavos (OTE p. 148) conducts negotiations with the party personally, representing himself as an agent for a major US research clinic. He argues that the drug must be studied responsibly, and held from the market if it continues to prove dangerous. He's been authorized to offer the group \$50,000 up front, plus 1% of the gross profits of the drug, or any derivatives of it, should they ever be marketed. (This is, of course, worth nothing, since the Pharaohs have no intention of making it available.)

If the PCs have already met Kiptavos and have some inkling of his dark allegiances, he'll hire a skilled lawyer to argue on his behalf. The lawyer believes the cover story.

The Pharaohs would just as soon destroy the formula and supply of Broadcast as store it away themselves. If it looks like the PCs are going to sell the rights to someone else, Kiptavos will instruct a Quisling cell within the Peace Force to plant a bomb in the PC's headquarters before they hand it over. If he knows they've secured it somewhere else, he'll try to discover the hiding place it is and blow that up instead.

Hektor would laugh long and hard if shown Grazyna's diary. He knows that Stanislaw is right, that what he calls humanity is utterly base. The irony is that Bacewicz never guessed why, dying ignorant of the real truth about the mutant warriors and the ideal glug civilization they overran.

THE MR. LE THUYS

Mr. Le Thuy likes what Broadcast has been doing up till now: he refers to the effects of the random dosings as prime examples of APE, or "Accelerated Personal Entropy." He wants to control the supply and keep it off the market, so those dosed with it unexpectedly won't be familiar with it and will therefore continue to self-destruct in an impressive manner. If he gets possession of it, he'll want to select its targets more carefully. Hektor Kiptavos, for example, would make an excellent test subject.

Despite the commercial success of Zoroaster, the Le Thuy conspiracy is not as well funded as the others. In order to keep informed, he'll send a negotiator, Stephen LeThuy, to talk to the group. But really he's counting on cat burglar Zoltan LeThuy to penetrate their security and steal the supply and formula before the bidding concludes.

Mr. Le Thuy would also want Grazyna's diary if he knew what was in it; as a textbook of despair, a reading of it would give him an additional bonus die when persuading weak minds.

MOVERS

The Dionysus Cell of Movers supports Bruno Di Donato's efforts on behalf of the Mob on behalf of The Net on behalf of Constance D'Aubainne — who is in turn acting on behalf of Dionysus. Or is that the other way around?

The Gladstein Cell, however, wishes to control Broadcast themselves. Their point woman is Lisa Sheng, who will officially represent herself to the party as an agent of the World Health Organization, a department of the United Nations. (Mover moles there have supplied her with proper ID, and confirm her status if contacted.) She argues that the UN is best equipped to use Broadcast for the good of all humankind, or keep it locked away if no positive use can be found.

If this argument seems to be working on the group, she sticks with her cover. But if one or more PCs seem less than altruistic, she'll secretly approach them on an individual basis, and reveal herself as a



representative of a secret worldwide group called Cell Z. She'll offer each a route to wealth, power, hedonistic excess or whatever they seem to want, if only they'll quietly swipe the Broadcast secret from their team members and hand it over. Lisa approaches more than one group member if necessary. If a PC does give her the stuff, she initiates him into Gladstein (though he'll think he's Cell Z) with a \$5,000 signing bonus. The others she initiates into a dummy Mover group called Sonata Seven, used by the Gladsteins for disinformation purposes.

Lisa wants Grazyna's diary as well; the Gladsteins are completists when it comes to filing away information.

REACTING TO PC CHOICES

Once the PCs have Broadcast, they can either save it for their personal use, sit on it — and gain no benefit from it — or try to unload it. As soon as they announce that they have it, word will spread. Even if they already discreetly approach a single a potential

customer, none of these organizations are sufficiently leak-proof to prevent hot news like this from getting out. A receptionist at the Temple of Divine Experience confides to a friend how amazing the sermons are going to become. A Glorious Lord loudmouth boasts that his mobster pals are about to introduce a new product line. A professor in the Chemistry department at D'Aubainne University, who has been looking increasingly Vietnamese lately, hacks into the E-mail file of a Gladstein Mover colleague. Soon after the PCs tell somebody about their find, all interested parties know and make approaches to them.

If the PCs use a dose of Broadcast for their own purposes, some watchful eye discovers them. Again, one power group might get to them first, but all quickly learn about it.

If they choose to sit on their secret, you must be prepared to move another plot into place to keep them occupied. Ideally you can rig this episode to tempt them to use Broadcast, or to make them hungry for cash or the protection of a powerful group. Eventually they'll have to deal with the consequences of their success.

ACT THREE: *The Windup*

Where this story goes from here is up to the players. They're approached by the various powerful customers described in the last section. They may decide to meet with them separately, or play them off against one another around a conference table. They may be clever enough to check out the cover stories of clients like Sheng or Kiptavos, or they may have no idea how much danger they're in. A cohesive group will do better than a fractious one; every customer (other than Cheryl D'Aubainne) will be looking for an opportunity to divide and conquer — a secret deal with a single person willing to betray the others could be a real bargain for them.

You may run a disparate group of PCs rather than a team, using the cutaway style (OTE p. 185-186.) Involve characters not in on the Broadcast discovery in this portion of the tale. Negotiators may hire other PCs to do legwork for them: "Psst. No, no — don't run. I'm safe? See how safe I am? I'm this \$500 in this envelope worth of safe, and my envelopes get even safer as we go along, right? I see I have your attention. All you gotta do is go talk to some friends of yours for me. You do recognize the faces in these photographs, don't you?"

Depending on how scattered your group is, and how deeply they're involved with various conspiracies, the onstage action in your game might be almost entirely between the PCs, with players taking the roles of buyers and thieves as well as vendors. This can get as wild as you can handle.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

When things begin to get too safe for the PCs, add complications to the mix. Here are some suggestions to add to problems they'll no doubt create for themselves.

At some point, the Le Thuys will definitely stage a burglary attempt on the PCs' headquarters, led by Zoltan. The only precaution adequate to foil his cat burglary skills is an around-the-clock guard. Virtually any guards hired by the PCs turn out to be corruptible;

they're bought off by an obviously losing competitor to grab the loot themselves. Smart PCs guard the stash personally — but this means directly confronting Zoltan when he makes his burglary attempt. You may choose to arm Zoltan with knockout gas and an oxygen mask, allowing him to escape with the supply, the formula, or both. Or you can give the PC on duty a shot at defeating Zoltan; when she discovers a Hungarian burglar who has the same last name as — and bears an odd resemblance to — one of the negotiating lawyers, the PCs might be drawn into an investigation of the LeThuy conspiracy.

Just before the transaction is about to go down, Kiptavos orders a bombing attack on the PC headquarters; if it was a good idea to have someone on site to stave off burglary attempts, it's a liability here. Give any PCs on the premises the chance to discover the bomb. They might either try to defuse it or give you the opportunity to run a good old tick-tick-tick countdown as they try to get clear of the building.

If one member of the PC negotiating team is particularly hostile to Di Donato, he might order a hit against that member. A killer waits for him with a blowgun and a poison dart with his name on it.

On a lighter note, Cheryl D'Aubainne may decide to besiege the group with earnest Sommerites, begging them to provide Broadcast to the spiritual community. There's a rumor that Karla Sommers is coming to Al Amarja for a press conference; they'd dearly love to present her with a dose and share her thoughts. The most addled of them might even get violent if disappointed.

The actions of the player characters will no doubt provide inspiration for further plot developments of this sort.

THE BIG FINISH

If the players are strongly engaged with the idea of getting the best possible deal for their characters, you might not feel the need for a big dramatic finish. A nice anticlimactic, nonviolent payoff might be just the thing your group is looking for.

However, if a big cinematic finish is more to your tastes, slot in a last minute reversal. Allow one of the low bidders to grab the formula just as things seem to be winding down to a happy ending. The PCs can give chase, followed by agents of all of the other groups. This could be a mad, mad, mad ride through the barrios, or a bloody revenge conclusion, depending on the tone you want to adopt, and how much chaos you want to unleash. The logistics of this chase depend on where the PCs situate the hand-off, who they're selling to, and how much they've angered the other groups along the way.

For example, the enforcers for every group except the one getting the drug converge on the PCs. The Peace Force (dispatched by Cheryl D'Aubainne) charges into their HQ, and as they flee, the bomb planted by the Pharaohs goes off, obliterating the Peace Officers. As our heroes wipe their brows in relief, a bunch of paunchy Vietnamese men with machetes start after them. They dart into an alley headlong into a passel of mob soldiers. As the PCs scramble up a precarious fire escape, rivets popping all along the way, the gangsters and LeThuys tear each other to ground beef. The panting PCs watch this cheerfully from the rooftop, but Mover assassins are waiting behind them — and so on.

DENOUEMENT

Since the PCs get dropped into the Broadcast story through sheer plot contrivance, it's best to engineer some kind of reward for them as it finally concludes. The group shouldn't end up worse off than they started; make them earn it, but let them profit from the deal (unless they've been so foolish that this would defy credibility).

This adventure will have further effects on the rest of your series. The group will have made contacts with a powerful organization — possibly even a lasting alliance, depending on who they pick. They'll also have seen the outlines of several major conspiracies they might have been previously unaware of. If they're unlucky, they'll have gained the permanent enmity of one or more of these groups. This could put them in permanent danger, or encourage them to check out the plastic surgery options offered by Dr. Nusbaum. Or they might be respected as petty power brokers, encouraging others to approach them to negotiate various deals and scams.

Broadcast itself might make a return appearance in the story. If sold to the Net or Cheryl D'Aubainne, it's

put to use quickly — either as street drug or spiritual prop. Once they discover its addictive properties, Cheryl's preachers abandon it — perhaps too late. If the group has formed an alliance with the Cheryl, they may be called upon to dispose of the stuff permanently, or protect the Temple from a probable raid from a disappointed low bidder.

LeThuys will use it sparingly and strategically to eliminate high-ranking members of other secret conspiracies. The Gladstein Movers could use it for just about anything — even they're not sure what their motivations are. If the Pharaohs have their way, it will vanish forever — but perhaps a quisling will betray them and steal it, involving the PCs somehow in the process.

INTERSECTIONS

Airwaves

Chris Denning ("The Conspiracy Show") and Carol Weinning ("Meet the SMOC's") may have their own opinions on the nature of "this new telepathic phenomenon," which may get PCs involved in the Broadcast plot or mislead them once they are involved.

New Faces

You can use the Roentgen Operatives as a competing group out to get the Broadcast secret. Introduce them before the PCs find Bacewicz's apartment, so the group knows what it's up against. Later you can reintroduce them as another negotiator group on behalf of their bosses, or an infiltrator group out to steal the formula, or both.

Welcome to Sylvan Pines

The events of this adventure, including attacks that enemies might launch, could well send the PCs to the funny farm. Alternately, Sylvan Pines could soon start filling up with psychically wounded people who've been exposed to failed copy-cat drugs that underground chemists have been concocting in an effort to duplicate Broadcast's effects.

Kenneth Winbergh

Doomed Dealmaker

Winbergh's brush with Broadcast reveals more than anyone would ever want to know about him. He's a quasi-legitimate businessman who's come to Al Amarja to close a deal with Hong Kong affiliates of the Net to manufacture counterfeit Reeboks in Romania. If PCs save him from his fate, he'll suspect he was set up by his C&I interviewer, Dwayne Naghibolhosseini (OTE p. 84), who he thinks was acting on behalf of Triad group hostile to his new business partners. You decide if he's right or wrong; in any case this is a red herring.

UK man, age 54, 167 cm, 84 kg, paunchy, combs hair forward over bald spot.

Languages: English.

Traits

Shady Business, 4 dice — Expert at striking profitable deals that operate within inches of the law. (Exudes aura of sleaziness despite ritzy garb.)

Insecure — Ever since childhood, he's been afraid that people are laughing at him behind his back. (Freaks out when his big shot image is questioned.)

Cecilia Nardini

Icy Security Agent

Dressed in sharp-edge business gear — accent on the shoulder-pads — Cecilia looks like any other up-and-coming capitalist shark getting her share of Swaps' financial feeding frenzy. Actually, she's a real cool killer, well paid by Constance D'Aubainne to seek out trouble and neutralize it before it happens. Cecilia affects a deeper-than-normal voice and phony French accent. Behind her eyes is emptiness; there's only a rudimentary personality inside her carefully-controlled image.

Italian woman, age 29, 172 cm, 55 kg, white hair with black roots, sharp features.

Languages: Italian, English, Al Amarjan patois.

Attacks: 4 dice, X3 damage with commonplace objects.

Defense: 4 dice.

Hit Points: 28 (trained to roll with blows)

Traits

Exotic Killing Techniques, 4 dice — Highly trained at hand to hand fighting, including ways of killing with

commonplace items like sharpened pencils, paper clips, and toothbrushes by hitting specific pressure points. Strikes for X3 damage with any of these items. (Look of cold danger in her eyes.)

Timing, 3 dice — Knack for showing up in the right place at the right time. (Seems to be everywhere at once.)

Security Protocols, 3 dice — Fully familiar with modern security techniques and equipment. (Often seen talking into secured cellular phone.)

Pathological Loyalty, penalty die — Her extreme deference to Constance D'Aubainne makes it difficult for her to act on her own initiative. In situations not covered by one of Constance's standing orders, she suffers a penalty die on all decision-making. (Has dyed her hair white and wears it the same style as Constance.)

Stanislaw Bacewicz

Misanthropic Fringe Scientist

Stanislaw Bacewicz is the former head of the research department of Poland's internal security organization. With the implosion of Communism in Eastern Europe, he's fallen on hard times. He's in Al Amarja to prove a point to Grazyna Skrowaczewski, his partner in twisted science (and a mutually destructive ambivalent love affair).

Bacewicz has always had the darkest possible view of the human race, including himself. He has set up the entire Broadcast plot merely to throw the irredeemable sleaziness of humanity in Grazyna's face.

Polish man, age 62, 200 cm, 75 kg, tall and gaunt, with long horse-like face and crown of snowy hair atop his high forehead. Wears cheap tweed suit and glasses with thick black frames.

Languages: Polish, Russian, some English.

Traits

Fringe Pharmacy, 4 dice — An expert in mind-altering and -controlling substances; given proper equipment and resources he could produce all manner of pharmaceutical horrors. (Small stains and acid burns scattered on jacket.)

Misanthrope, flaw — Incapable of trusting or forming attachments to other human beings. (Rude.)

Grazyna Skrowaczewski

Despairing Fringe Scientist

Since her days as a graduate student in Krakow, Grazyna Skrowaczewski has been tied to Stanislaw Bacewicz in a passionate love/hate relationship. A fervently idealistic believer in Marxism, she's spent her life with him trying to cure him of his contempt for humankind. In order to maintain her connection to him, she's assisted him in countless betrayals of her own beliefs. The long, painful death of Communism has driven her to despair.

Polish woman, age 49, 172 cm, 55 kg, blonde hair carelessly tied back into a ponytail, cat's eye glasses, baggy cardigan sweaters and shapeless polyester skirts.

Languages: Polish, English, some Russian.

Traits

Fringe Pharmacy, 3 dice — As Bacewicz's assistant, she duplicates his knowledge without his genius. (Fingers permanently discolored by various chemicals.)

Sick Relationship, flaw — Grazyna might have turned out all right if she'd never met Bacewicz. She can't live with him and can't live without him. Looks like she'll have to kill him. (Haunted look.)

Bruno Di Donato

Mob Consigliere

Handsome, smiling and a sharp dresser, Bruno on first glance seems to be a bit of a lightweight. Those who know him casually, and know what he does for a living, point to him as evidence that the Mafia just doesn't make 'em like they used to. Appearances are deceptive — he's a tough negotiator who places as much value on human life as he does on cellophane wrappers. What he does value is the respect of his dear departed dad — a tough, undemonstrative man who was the previous consigliere to the Raimondis. Like his father, he's unquestioningly loyal to the Family; he wears his hair slicked back just like his dad, and so on. He's worried that the Family's power is shrinking, squeezed between the Net above and the gangs below. Scoring control of Broadcast is important to him, as it'll show that the Raimondis are still players in The Edge.

Northern Italian man, 180 cm, 75 kg, long hair slicked back, well-placed dimples.

Languages: Italian, English, Al Amarjan patois.

Traits

Negotiation, 4 dice — Coldly evaluates all variables in a situation and always knows the strengths and weaknesses of the guy across the table inside out. Gets best results with the soft sell — but knows when to get nasty, too. (Talks in smooth, soothing paragraphs.)

Charm, 3 dice — Covers his calculating manner with a blanket of personal warmth. As good with the ladies as with hardcase business partners. (Dazzling smile.)

Criminal structures, 3 dice — Knows the ins and outs of the various criminal organizations in the Edge, and how they interconnect. (Name dropper.)

Father complex — His soft spot is his need to live up to his idealized image of his departed father. Any insult directed at Pop, or insinuation that Bruno doesn't measure up to his dad, makes him lose his usual cool. (Dresses like updated version of his father.)

Dominique Petitdidier

Nurturing Lawyer

The lawyer for Cheryl D'Aubainne and her Temple of Divine Experience is a short, heavy French lady with a familiar, motherly manner. Although not a devout believer herself, she deeply respects Cheryl's spiritual mission. Her expertise at making people feel comfortable is not a trick; she's a truly kind person who still believes that decency coupled with strength can triumph, even in The Edge.

French woman, age 57, 140 cm, 90 kg, auburn hair piled high, always wears colorful scarves.

Languages: French, English

Traits

Comfy manner, 4 dice — Makes negotiating partners feel at ease; inspires trust and confidence. (Touches people she's speaking to.)

Corporate Law, 3 dice — Knows how to identify and protect the interests of her clients. (Turns legal jargon into plain talk.)

Noncombatant, penalty die — Never a fighter, Dominique suffers a penalty die on any combat action. (Overweight.)

Stephen LeThuy

LeThuy Mouthpiece

Stephen LeThuy was formerly Stephen Richards, a young hotshot lawyer rising high in a major US firm. Dumped by his bride during an ill-advised honeymoon in The Edge, he turned to despair. This made him easy pickings for a certain cruelly persuasive news agent, who turned him to the nihilist cause. As the DNA alteration continues, Stephen is becoming a junior replica of his master.

US man, age 32, 175 cm, 73 kg, thick eyeglasses, blond hair turning black.

Languages: English, Vietnamese.

Traits

Law, 3 dice — The transformation has taken the

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cutting edge off Stephen's former ambition and skill, but he still knows how to handle himself during a negotiation. (Speaks in legalese.)

Still transforming, penalty die — Not used to his new and changing body, Stephen suffers a penalty die on all physical actions. (Chiselled features getting round and puffy.)

Zoltan Le Thuy

Nihilist Cat Burglar

Zoltan is descended from the Hungarian nobility, which gave him access to European high society long after his status withered. In order to maintain his lifestyle, he partied with the elite in the evening and stole their jewels in the dark of night. After many years, this charade of a life began to seem meaningless to him. Buying a racing form in the Flowers Barrio, he found himself confessing his self-doubt to a friendly vendor. Now he's turned his skills to the service of entropy.

Hungarian man, age 52, short silvery hair turning long and dark, elegant features turning round and puffy.

Languages: Hungarian, English, French, Italian, German, Vietnamese.

Attack: 4 dice, X1 unarmed.

Defense: 4 dice.

Hit Points: 32 (slippery)

Traits

Cat Burglar, 5 dice — Knows how to case a joint, penetrate it stealthily, defuse security devices, crack combinations, and escape in silence. (Moves soundlessly.)

Judo, 4 dice — Tries to disable opponents without causing permanent injuries. (Feline grace.)

Wears Contacts — To compensate for his suddenly deteriorating eyesight, Zoltan has recently taken to wearing contacts. If one slips out, he gets a penalty die on all actions dependent on clear sight. (Contacts visible if you look.)

Lisa Sheng

Gladstein Mover Operative

Lisa, a bright and cheerful overachiever, suspects she may be close to breaking through into the upper echelon of the Gladsteins. She's determined to succeed in this assignment, thinking it'll be enough to put her over the top. Recruited as a grad student in physics, the Movement has been good to Lisa. Her only regret is that she can't explain to her proud family just how influential she's about to become.

Canadian woman of Chinese heritage, age 29, 158 cm, 56 kg, pretty and very fashionable.

Languages: English, Cantonese.

Attack: 3 dice, X1 fits plus X5 stun-only with taser-ring

Defense: 3 dice

Hit Points: 21

Traits

Moving, 4 dice — Very good at personal persuasion; also skilled at the multi-leveled thinking required to navigate within a Mover hierarchy. (Seems sweet and sincere.)

Fighting, 3 dice — The Gladsteins have given her a ring that looks like jewelry but is really a miniature taser, packing the full wallop of the real thing when delivered with a punch. (Gold ring looks too big on her delicate hand.)

Physics, 3 dice — Has full grasp of regular physics; with time, could also figure out any fringe physics device. (Uses fractals, quantum physics and chaos science as metaphors in conversation.)

Epileptic — Although she doesn't know it yet, the Gladsteins used her as a guinea pig in an experiment that went wrong, artificially inducing epilepsy. (Susceptible to seizures when exposed to pulsing lights.)