

Fully Automated!

Playable Adventure Module

A Demonstration of Power

In this fast demo adventure, players get a taste of the world and how to play in it

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Dedication

This game would not have been possible without friends, family, and playtesters:

Tony; Si; Marge; Peter; Jeff; Ari ; AE Marling; Goose; Yar; Jonathan; Pyro; Toli, Kuster, Ryan, Bryce, Lawrencelot, Liren, Kurt, Joshua, Flynn, Jordan, poVoq, Five

Gratitude for our elders

This game would not be possible without all the wisdom and experimentation gifted to us by those who've come before and passed on what they observed. We give a special thanks to our elders who shared stories of culture in small towns and villages, yankee thrift, humility, service to neighbors, and to elders around the world who've tried to improve the world for those who come after, and pass down whatever knowledge they could.

We advise any GMs looking for fresh eyes to call grandparents and mentors and ask them for stories from times and places far from what we know here and now to inspire them.

Licensing



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Contact Information

Find us online at:

<https://fullyautomatedrpg.com>
<https://slrpnk.net/c/fullyautomatedrpg>
<https://mstdn.games/@fullyautomatedrpg>

Introduction

This is the first story in a collection of playable story modules for the **Fully Automated! Solarpunk tabletop RPG**. The rules and background can be found in the Fully Automated game manual. Assets for these stories should be available wherever you downloaded this manual, but can also be found on our website at fullyautomatedrpg.com.

This collection of stories was prepared as part of the release of this game, and makes up one of what we think of as the four legs on which the game rests. The aspiration of this project is to help raise awareness of the potential of solarpunk settings as a vehicle for telling diverse, exciting stories. People often take for granted that fantasy, cyberpunk, and space opera/western are blank canvases onto which one can tell stories that are epic; silly; dramatic; funny; small and character driven; and/or vast and politically entangled. But in order to convince more people that the same is true for solarpunk, we set out to create four key components:

- **A world guide:** Because this world is still novel, people need a factbook
- **A set of rules:** Without a set of rules, a world guide is of limited use.
- **A collection of playable adventures:** Rules and a world guide make a game, but still require a lot of work and invention from GMs. This campaign is intended to help new players kick off their adventures with a strong start.
- **A toolset for helping a community create:** In a sense, the most crucial component is a player base. Far more playable content comes from players themselves than publishers. Our hope is that by creating the other three components and then giving this game a name, we might create a vessel which others can add to and draw from, and that in doing so this game might become far bigger than what we as a small group could make.

To find community discussions and community content, check out:

- **Our community on Lemmy:** <https://slrpnk.net/c/fullyautomatedrpg>
- **Our wiki:** <https://wiki.slrpnk.net/fullyautomatedrpg:start>

All of this is to say that we hope you find herein something entertaining, insightful, or useful in whatever way those words hold meaning for you. And if you do, take it, use it, remix it, and share it. This game – like the future itself – belongs to no one, but rather all of us.

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Story Template

By Author

“A catchy tagline makes people want to know more... *or does it?*”

Session Planning

Story Summary

A story summary begins the Session Planning section with a concise overview of what the story is about. In this case, it's about explaining how stories in this book are formatted to help GMs read them (and possibly write their own).

Story Overview

The Story Overview expands on the summary by laying out more precisely what happens. Whereas a story summary is intended to let a GM quickly consider if the story sounds appealing, the story overview section lays out a relatively complete arc of the story. It describes the precipitating events, the stakes of failure, what goals constitute success, etc.

Templates are broken into two major sections: **Session Planning** contains explanations on what the session is about and instructions for what materials need to be prepared. **Session Running** is intended to be a referable resource for GMs to use during play, and is broken into discrete encounters.

Obviously, this structure can feel more linear than some players prefer, however we think it's easier for those folks to jump the tracks and improvise than it is for those looking for training wheels to do the opposite.

Themes

The Themes section provides room to briefly describe what feelings or concepts inspired the story, and what kind of subtext the story might be useful for exploring.

Establishing Context

The context section is for suggesting how the story fits into larger narratives. Does it expect the central characters to know each other well? Does it make any assumptions about prior events, or lay the groundwork for stories to come?

Events Outline

- Readers review a **Session Prep** section filled with metacommentary
- They see that the **Events Outline** bullets **key events** that connect essential plot points.
- They review **how assets are laid out**
- They read the section on **Session Running**

Locations

A list of locations is helpful for preparing backgrounds and maps

Characters

The character list includes bios that can be shared with players when learning about NPCs.

Handouts

An example handout:

Text or Images that players may receive within a session can be laid out in blocks like this one

Session Running

Establishment

The Establishment section describes how to open the session, often with opening text like:

“The time is _____. The day is _____. The weather is _____. You’re at _____”

A role play encounter

A location

Once the game is started, roleplay the scene in which the players find out what is needed of them. Roleplay Encounters often contain subsections to block off relevant information for convenient quick access during play, and sometimes descriptions of outcomes to rolls.

Decisive Success: Describe the outcome of rolling >28 (or whatever you consider a high roll).

Modest Success: Describe the outcome of rolling 22 – 27 (or whatever you consider an okay roll).

Neutral/Minor Failure: Describe the outcome of rolling 19 – 21 (or whatever is a weak roll)

Decisive Failure: Describe the outcome of rolling <18 (you get the idea)





Transit & Interstitials

Starting Location -> Destination

Offer some window dressing to let players know what is going on while traveling to another location, waiting for something to happen, or between days. Encourage players to talk amongst themselves about what they're doing next.

Combat Encounter!

Combat location

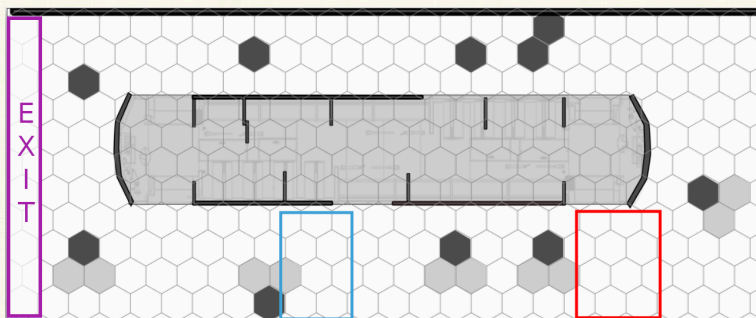
Character	HP	Armor	Speed	Attacks
Adversary 1	20	0	20	 Punch  Pistol
Adversary 2	20	0	20	 Punch  Pistol

Difficulty Adjustment

Describe the expected difficulty of the fight, and options for reducing/increasing challenge.

Setup

Describe the starting locations of tokens within the map.



Resolution

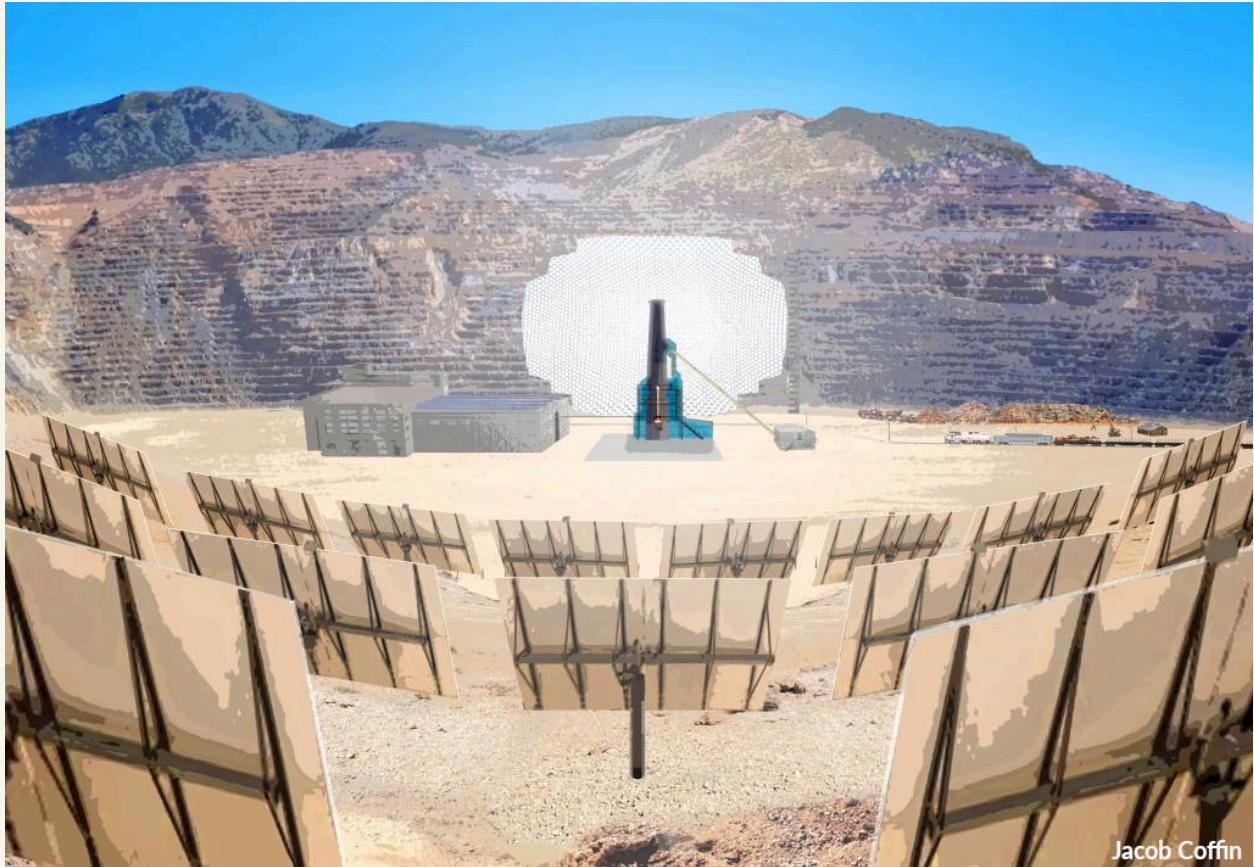
- If players succeed fully/succeed partially/fail:

The outcome is explained here. *"The GM begins to reads a block of stunning flavor text..."*

Conclusion

Location

We hope that laying out the structure we use for writing stories will be useful, both for helping people use this guide and also encouraging them to apply a simple and convenient approach to sharing their own adventures.



A Demonstration of Power

Written by Andrew Gross

Session planning

Story Summary

Players are asked by a data auditor to meet with the lead data manager for a hydrogen production plant and negotiate access to a data backup. The data manager explains his concern that if he authorizes the transfer the data will be lost. The players agree to recover it personally. When they do, they fight off adversaries trying to keep it out of the auditor's hands. The players then fly to the desert to give it to their contact, who finds evidence of corruption.

Story Overview

In this short introduction to the game, players are called upon to assist an auditor in recovering incriminating data before the target of their investigation takes extreme measures.

The story begins with the players in a cyberspace patio with Tomatillo, a data analyst and grid auditor. Tomatillo explains that they were probing the background of Avon Trent, known online as PoweRmaker. PoweRmaker is awaiting confirmation as chair of the Pacifica Grid Operators Consortium. Voting on the nomination closes in four days, during which time auditors across the technosphere are continuing to review their background.

One point under scrutiny is the Inland Empire Blackout of 2119. In August of 2119, a battery station suffered a heat-related failure and the Bakersfield Fusion Station spent 9 minutes trying to weather the demand before being forced to execute a controlled shutdown, plunging 90,000 people into a 6-hour blackout. PoweRmaker was the station chief and the shift operator of the nearby Victorville Fusion Station at the time of the blackout, and their performance during the leadup to the blackout has been a subject of intense scrutiny. So far, the available records imply that the plant performed to the best of its ability, but was unable to generate enough power fast enough to help Bakersfield avoid the shutdown. Even so, that year was the first year that Victorville outproduced Bakersfield's output, and set it on a trajectory to become the top performing station in the region. PoweRmaker rose to head the station, eventually putting them into consideration for chair of the grid consortium.

While trying to find something others had missed, Tomatillo learned that a hydrogen production plant run by Aquarius H2 next door has a direct hardline to Victorville Fusion Station's sensor array, which they use for managing their own operations. Tomatillo contacted the data team lead, Duncan Harris, and requested a copy of their data. Harris submitted an obligatory data transfer authorization to the rest of the Aquarius H2 cooperative, and within minutes had suffered a major network incursion that wiped the relevant records. Harris submitted a data loss announcement and attempted to restore the data from backups, and within minutes their backup storage was attacked as well. Tomatillo knows that they have an auxiliary backup, but says Harris won't touch it until after the nomination closes to avoid losing it too. Tomatillo asks the players to convince Harris that if authorized, they'll recover the physical auxiliary backup in order to find what is motivating someone to try to stop the investigation and also safeguard Aquarius H2's last copy of their historical sensor records.

The players are asked to call Duncan Harris and ask to meet about assisting with data protection. Harris invites them to meet in his office where he explains his reticence. The two previous incursions have demonstrated the technical proficiency to destroy the last available copy of the data, and a willingness to do so if he attempts to recover it. He's concluded that the safest solution is to take the attackers' hint and give them what they want. He'll wait until the vote is over before touching the backup, and give a copy to Tomatillo once he's finished reviewing the attack and hardening his system. The players

negotiate with him. They appeal to his sense of right and wrong, and offer to retrieve and safeguard the offline backup personally. Harris relents, and tells them to get into position to retrieve it as soon as the transfer request is submitted, since the attackers will likely strike as soon as they learn that he's approved the transfer. He gives them the location, and the players travel to the CalTech Center for Optimal Distribution of Power to await Harris' instructions.

As soon as Harris submits the request, the team heads in and meets with Uthra Jefferies, a research collaborator assigned to escort them to the offline backup. Uthra locates it and gives it to them, but as they're leaving a mysterious team claiming to be the actual authorized couriers demand the data drive under threat of violence. A fight ensues, but the players hold the attackers off. Jefferies offers them access to a set of ultralight gliders ready to depart from the top floor. Tomatillo offers the players coordinates to meet up, and they fly the gliders to a secluded location within Joshua Tree International Park. Tomatillo meets them with their dog Liba and their van, Winifred. They submit the data to the auditors distributed storage system and run a quick test, confirming that the data proves that PoweRmaker withheld capacity deliberately, triggering an unnecessary blackout to kneecap the Bakersfield Fusion Station. Within minutes the news is spreading across the Fediverse. Tomatillo then helps the players stow the gliders and invites them to make camp with them for the evening as the stars come out.

Themes

This adventure is meant to introduce players to the gameplay and lore of Fully Automated. It includes opportunities to see the mechanics of role play and combat in action, and it is meant to tell a story that helps players understand the technological, economic, and social condition of the world in which the game takes place.

Establishing Context

This story is written with several possible contexts in mind.

One is to forgo any continuity. 'Demonstration of Power' can be played as a fast tutorial level to demonstrate how roleplay and combat mechanics work. Players pick characters and assume they know each other.

It can also be the introductory story to further adventures. Players and the GM may want to establish how the characters know each other. Players can also use this as a meeting story. Characters who aren't already acquainted can be introduced to one another when called upon by Tomatillo. If so, the players may enter the cyberspace meeting room at the beginning of the story from different locations, then meet up in biospace when they go to talk to Duncan Harris.

If establishing some relationships or planning to integrate this story into the rest of the first campaign, it's recommended that players enter the mission with a basic understanding of how they got there.

Events Outline

- The players are **briefed by Tomatillo**
- The players **call Duncan Harris** and ask to meet.
- Players **meet Duncan Harris** and ask for access to the data. Harris is reluctant, but will concede if the players make sufficiently convincing promises to recover it safely.
- Players **go to the CalTech** Center for Optimal Distribution of Power.
- The players meet with Uthra Jefferies, and **Uthra gives them the data drive**.
- When trying to leave, **the Crusaders arrive and a fight begins**.
- Players defeat or flee from the Crusaders and **meet Tomatillo in Joshua Tree**

Locations

- Tomatillo's cybermeeting room
- Harris' home office in San Bernardino
- The CalTech COPD office (Hexgrid map available)
- Joshua Tree International Park

Characters

Tomatillo - An auditor asking for help recovering sensitive data

Avon Trent; PoweRmaker - The Chief Executive of the Victorville Fusion Station

Duncan Harris - The data team manager for Aquarius H2 hydrogen production coop

Uthra Jefferies - Researcher for the Cal Tech Center for Optimal Power Distribution

Bigsby Styles - One of the goons sent to recover the drive

Filigree Larson - One of the goons sent to recover the drive

Yusa Kravitz - One of the goons sent to recover the drive

Michaela Wayne - One of the goons sent to recover the drive

Dana Pigeon - Deceased agribotnist

Liba Dorthidge - Tomatillo's animal companion

Winifred Zoom02-05 - Tomatillo's camper van

Maps and other assets can be found on our wiki:

<https://wiki.slrpnk.net/fullyautomatedrpg:start>



An auditor and data analyst investigating Avon Trent

Names: Tomatillo; Sabina Tamayo (Given)
DOC: 2102_JUL_13 (Age 22)
Res: Sonora / Arizona / Variable
Species: Human
Gender: Non-binary (Any pronouns)
Followers: 6,300 - Restricted
Sapience: S5

Education Benito Juárez Publica, 2117
BS in Physics, Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan, 3rd Yr

Associations Desert Guides, 2118 - Present
Pacifica Grid Auditors Forum, 2121 - Present

Community Liba (Companion, dog); Winifred (Camper van, synth); Rudy (Digital assistant, synth); Maria Tamayo, Isabella Tamayo, Carmen Tamayo(Parents)



Chair nominee for the SoCal Grid Operators Consortium

Names: Avon Trent (Given); PowerMaker
DOC: 2072_AUG_29 (Age 52)
Res: Santa Clarita
Species: Human
Gender: Non-binary (They/Them)
Followers: 1,486,000 - Public
Sapience: S5

Education BS in Physics, University of Southern California, 2102
MS in Industrial Engineering, CalState San Bernardino

Associations Victorville Fusion Station, Station Operator, Chief Executive, 2112 - Present
SoCal Grid Operators Consortium, Board member, 2120 - Present



The data group lead for Aquarius H2 Hydrogen Production

Names: Duncan Harris
DOC: 2091_APR_22 (Age 33)
Res: San Bernardino
Species: Human
Gender: Masc (He/Him)
Followers: 11,900 - Quasi-private
Sapience: S5

Education BS in Industrial Chemistry, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 2114
MS in Electrophysics, UC San Diego

Associations Aquarius H2 Hydrogen Production, 2116 - Present
Arrowhead CoolParentsNet, 2124 - Present

Community Annie Harris (Child); Rita Harris (Wife);



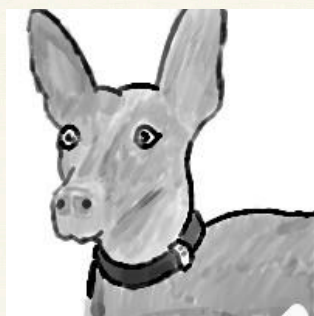
Researcher at the Center for the Optimal Distribution of Power

Names: Uthra Jefferies (Given)
DOC: 2102_JUL_13 (Age 26)
Res: La Cañada
Species: Chimpanzee
Gender: Female (She/Her)
Followers: 2,900 - Public
Sapience: S5

Education Altadena Enhanced Secondary, 2116
BS in Mathematics, Pasadena Community College, 2120

Associations Pasadena Climbing Club, 2113 - Present
Pasadena Flyers Society, 2120 - Present
CalTech Center for Optimal Distribution of Power, Researcher, 2119 - Present

Community Glen (boyfriend); Phyllis (Digital assistant, synth); Ronald and Cara Jefferies (Parents)
Altadena En-Chimp Geller Troop



Tomatillo's animal companion

Names: Liba Dorthidge
DOC: 2115_MAR_30 (Age 9)
Res: Sonora / Arizona / Var.
Species: Canine
Gender: Female (Any pronouns)
Followers: 450
Sapience: S4

Education Dorthidge Farm Puppy School, 2107

Community Tomatillo (Companion human); Maria Tamayo, Isabella Tamayo, Carmen Tamayo (Tomatillo's parents), Winnifred (Camper van)



Deceased famed herbalist & agribotanist

Names: Dana Pigeon;
DOC: 2036_FEB_13 DOD: 2119_AUG_19 (Aged 83)
Last Res: Redlands
Species: Human
Gender: Fem (Any pronouns)
Followers: 45,000 - Quasi-private
Sapience: S4

Education BS in Philosophy & Soil Science, University of Idaho, 2058
MS in Environmental Science, University of Nevada, 2066
MS in Education, University of California, Redlands, 2086

Associations UC Riverside, Professor, Dept. of Honorable Harvesting

Community Agribotanists Association of Pacifica



One of the independent adventurers sent to recover the data drive

Names: RedStar; Bigsby Styles
 DOC: 2088_MAR_04 (Age 36)
 Associations Anaheim Civilian Order of Protectors, 2118 - 2119
 The Crusaders of West Covina, 2123 - Present

The leader of this band of idiots



One of the independent adventurers sent to recover the data drive

Names: YellowEx; Michaela Wayne
 DOC: 2085_SEP_30 (Age 39)
 Associations Pacifica Coast Guard, Seaman Apprentice, 2109 - 2119
 The Crusaders of West Covina, 2123 - Present

Red's "seasoned" ex-military second-in-command



One of the independent adventurers sent to recover the data drive

Names: Blu'hawk; Filigree Larson
 DOC: 2093_AUG_15 (Age 31)
 Associations Inland Empire Call of Duty minors league, 2117 - 2121
 The Crusaders of West Covina, 2124 - Present

A friend of Red & Yellow, with a bit more sense than the two of them.



One of the independent adventurers sent to recover the data drive

Names: Green; Norma Wayne
 DOC: 2196_SEP_12 (Age 28)
 Associations The Crusaders of West Covina, 2124 - Present

Yellow's sister, younger by 11 years. Gets annoyed with constant jokes about being the "rookie". The most self-aware of the bunch.

Tomatillo's camper van

Names: Winifred Zoom02-05;
 DOC: 2105_FEB_01 (Age 19); Res: Sonora / Arizona / Variable
 Species: Vehicle-embodied synth
 Gender: Female (She/Her/It)
 Followers: 9 - Restricted
 Sapience: S4

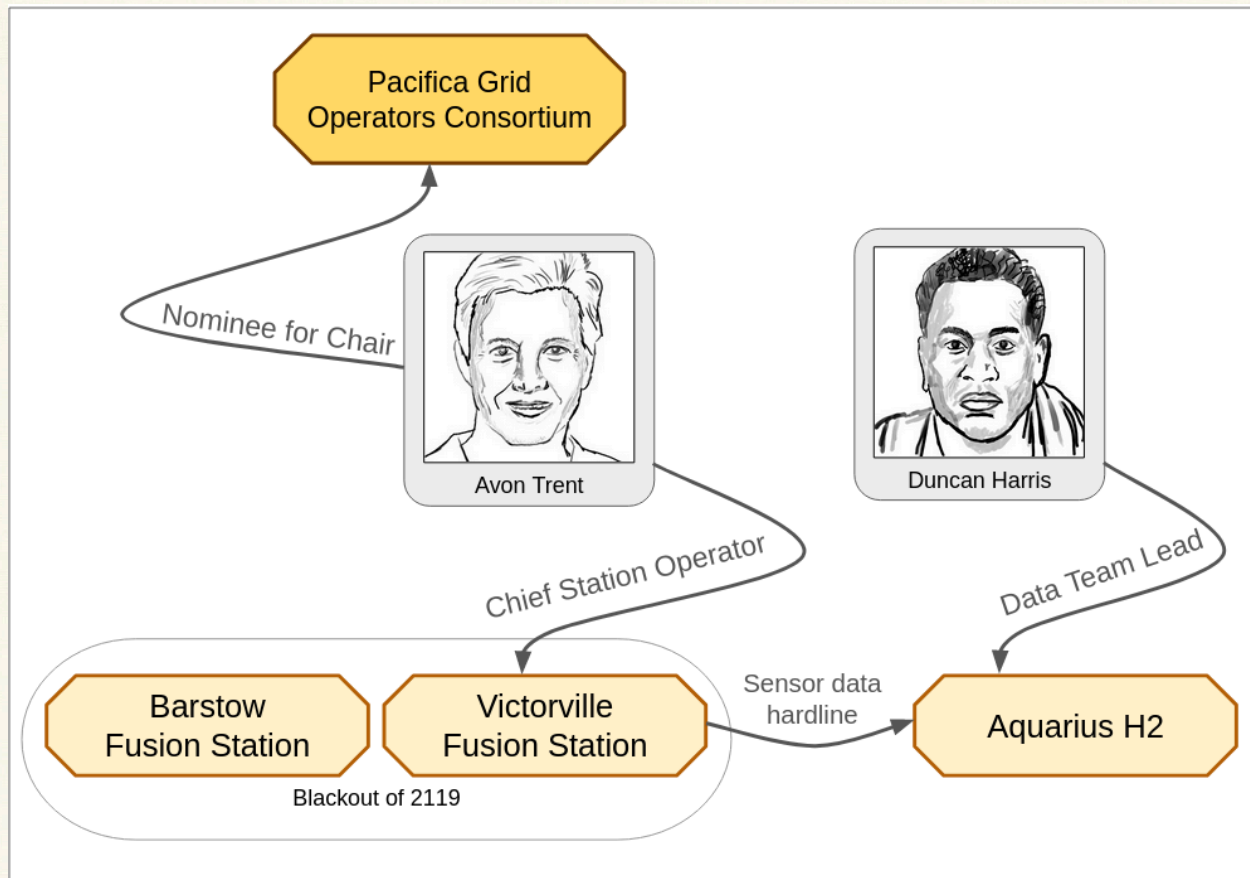
Education Elemental Midweight Synth Calibration Course, 2107

Associations Elemental Motors Support Network; Auxiliary Crisis Response Vehicle Network, SoCal

Community Tomatillo (Guardian, human); Liba (Friend, canine); Rudy (Digital assistant, synth);

Handouts

Diagram of relevant parties



Duncan Harris' wife's contact information

Duncan Harris

Virtual: 4.BR.33@SBLA

Office: Aquarius H2, Building 3 10614 Bear Valley Road, Victorville, 92301

Home: Walnut Village Complex, Tower 2, Lvl 5; 2580 Del Rosa Ave., San Bernardino, 92336

Duncan Harris' wife's contact information

Rita Harris

Virtual: 434.DM@SBLA

Data backup location [Physical Address]

CalTech campus, Pasadena, 91106, Frautschi Hall, 550 Hill Street, Level -1.

Session Running

Establishment

Before starting

Consider informing players that they can get XP for asking other character's what they've been up to lately, and for being able to provide good answers to these sorts of questions. Provide around 1-5 XP for players based on the quality of their roleplay in this kind of intra-character small talk.

Starting

It's 1:05 PM on Monday, May 22nd, 2124. It's 20 °C (which is 75 °F) and expected to get up to 80°F. What are each of you wearing?

The moon is $\frac{3}{4}$ full and waxing, and will rise at 2 PM, an hour from now. Sunset is at 8 PM.

If playing without planned context

The players start in an apartment in Silverfeather Tower in East LA belonging to any of the players. Ask one to volunteer or pick one.

Inform the players that they've got a cyberspace meeting, and whenever they want to step in to put on a VR visor or activate whatever device they use for entering cyberspace.

Describing the physical experience of entering VR

The standard visor looks like thin ski goggles and simulates sight, sound, smell, and acceleration. It will start by simulating the room they're in when they don the goggles, and will populate the virtual environment with the people and things in biospace to mitigate the risk of anyone walking into anyone or anything in the room. If players are looking for a hand-holding experience, use this to help them picture what the experience of logging into cyberspace feels like.

Some players (especially experienced roleplayers) may already have imagined how their character interacts with cyberspace, such as using AR contacts in a dark room. In this case, this is an opportunity to invite them to share that.

You're all physically in <the host's> lounge in the Silverwing Tower in East LA. When you enter VR, you see a virtual reconstruction of the physical space you're in.

<The host> gestures to manifest a lightly glowing wood orb in front of them. They rap a knuckle on it twice to let Tomatillo know that you're waiting to be let in and it turns to glass. A moment later, Tomatillo's head and shoulders extend out of the orb. "Hey, c'mon in." Tomatillo retreats back in. When each of you are ready, bring the orb toward your forehead to enter Tomatillos' secure cyberspace meeting room.

[After each one touches the orb to their forehead] _____, as you bring the orb to your face, you can see the meeting room on the other side, and as your face passes through its surface, the environment expands from a projection on the inside of the orb to the space around you. To the rest of you, _____ fades and dissolves, then as a wisp of steam curls into the orb like a djinn entering a lamp. Once they do, the orb remains hovering where they last held it. You can gesture at it to call it towards you and do the same.

If playing with some established context

Ask the players to explain where they are in biospace. They may be all together, all apart, or some gathered and others alone. Describe them donning their gear and requesting entrance to Tomatillo's meeting room as appropriate.

Briefing

A player's apartment in East LA/Tomatillo's cybermeeting space

Tomatillo welcomes the players. Have players roll for [Observation + Situational Awareness or Detection & Analysis] to determine the characters' level of engagement and describe the room: The space resembles a sunny patio, and Tomatillo is sitting on a bench. To their side is their dog companion, Liba. They thank the players for coming and explain their needs.

The Grid Operators Consortium Chair Elections

Tomatillo asks if they've been following the Pacifica Grid Operators Consortium chair election roll [Knowledge + Law & Crime or Physics & Engineering].

Avon Trent – known as PoweRmaker across the Fediverse – is currently leading the election for chair of the Grid Operators Consortium. With four days in the voting period remaining they hold the most votes after collapsing the rankings (see *Government and Democracy* in manual for details). Like many auditors, Tomatillo has been analyzing Tomatillo's background. And like many of them, they've been reviewing the Inland Empire blackout of 2119.

The Inland Empire Blackout of 2119

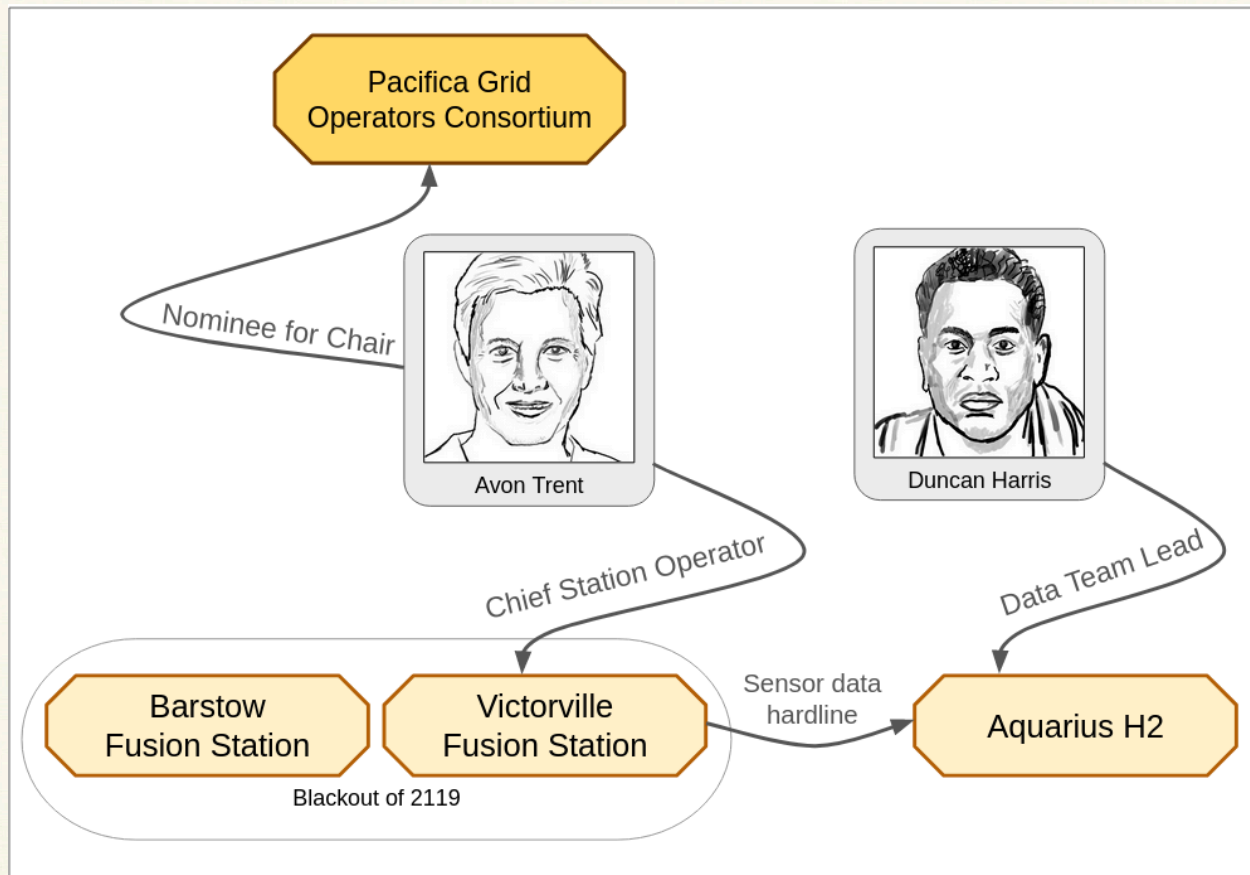
Ask players if their characters have any connection to the practice of herbalism or agriculture, and if so what. Based on their answers, have them roll for [Knowledge + Community Contact] with a bonus of 1 to 4 points. Share with anyone who passes (or the highest scoring if no one does) the character bio for Dana Pigeon. Explain that they remember the blackout because Dana was a leader in these fields and died of heat stroke during the blackout.

Have players roll [Knowledge + History & Geography or Physics & Engineering]. Based on their score, share parts of the following with them as a recollection, and the remainder through Tomatillo.

Five years earlier, on August 19th, 2119 a battery station suffered heat-related failure during peak usage under the weight of a heatwave. The Bakersfield fusion station attempted to ramp-up production to cover the demand for nine minutes, but was unable to weather it. The overdraw forced an emergency shutdown to protect the station hardware from overloading. The shutdown plunged 90,000 people into a 6 hour blackout during 113°F/45°C temperatures. Twenty-three deaths were attributed to the blackout.

At the time of the blackout PoweRmaker was the station chief and shift operator of the nearby Victorville fusion station, and their performance leading up to the blackout has been heavily scrutinized. The data all imply that the Victorville station did that could've been expected of it, but wasn't able to relieve the load that forced the Bakersfield Station offline. The outcome, however, was that Bakersfield was shut down for four weeks. That year became the first year that Victorville Station took Bakersfield's spot as the highest producing station in the region, which it has held every year since. PoweRmaker's position on the Grid Operators Consortium board was built on the prestige of Victorville Station, and it's based on their reputation for effectively managing Victorville Station that they are now set to become the highest serving regulator over the flow of electricity across the west coast of North America.

[Toss in Knowledge checks as feels fitting to tell some of this to players directly and explain which parts they know and which parts Tomatillo is telling them]



Aquarius H2 and the Missing Data

Four days ago, Tomatillo had the idea to cross-reference the records of Victorville Station's output with readings from the Aquarius H2 hydrogen plant next door. Aquarius has a direct hardline to most of Victorville station's sensors, and Tomatillo thought they might find something that had been missed. They requested the data from the head of Aquarius' data group, **Duncan Harris**.

Tomatillo explains that Harris told Tomatillo that despite his earlier agreement, he wouldn't be able to supply the requested records. Harris said over a text message that he'd tried to access the data, but that he encountered a data log failure, and the failure had affected their backups too.

Tomatillo says that it makes no sense that Aquarius wouldn't be able to access some basic archival records. They're not sure what is going on, but Harris will only meet in biospace, and Tomatillo is currently in a secret and distant location in their camper van trying to rake through other files. This is why they reached out to the players' characters. They would like the players to go talk to Duncan and find out why he can't or won't supply these files.

"I need you to do whatever you can to get this data before the voting period closes. I don't have any evidence that there's anything hot in these files aside from their wildly suspicious inaccessibility. But I need your help just to lay these suspicions to rest. Any questions?"

Summary of Key Info

Based on the players' questions and rolls give them appropriate information and character handouts. The players should know:

- **Who PowerMaker is:** a board member of the national grid operators network and candidate set to be elected as its chair.
- **What Tomatillo wants:** a dataset containing the raw sensor readings from the Victorville Fusion Station as collected by the neighboring Aquarius H2 hydrogen plant.
- **Who Duncan Harris is:** lead of the Aquarius H2 data group.
- **What their next step is:** meet with Harris to ask why he can't fulfill the request.

They may learn during their briefing that Duncan Harris isn't "facing" people in videochat, which proves meaningful later.

When the players are satisfied, they can leave by summoning another glowing orb and touching it to their head, bringing them back to the room they were in previously (or anywhere else).

They can also just take off their headset or sign off. Doing so is odd behavior and somewhat bad mannered, like climbing out the nearest window instead of leaving through the front door.

Calling Harris

The obvious next step when setting up a business meeting should be picking up the phone and making an appointment. However in unfamiliar situations, some players occasionally lack this presence of mind. GMs are encouraged to respond in whatever way makes the most sense for their table:

Option A: Tell the players – either through Tomatillo or as the GM – to call Harris and set up an appointment. The reason to do this is because this story is designed like a video game tutorial level in order to allow players to focus their full attention on listening and learning about the game’s world and mechanics. For players that are clearly looking for assistance in getting their bearings, telling them clearly how one would approach this situation is helping them learn social conventions in the game world.

Option B: Have Tomatillo ask the players to meet with Harris and then share the handout with Harris’ contact info, which includes his virtual address, his office address, and his home address. Then let the players decide what to do with it. If they have the common sense to call, they will enjoy not being led on a short leash. And if they don’t, they’ll learn how the world works when they get to the hydrogen plan and discover that Harris isn’t there, or they get to his home and irritate him by arriving uninvited.

Both options are fine, so long as the GM knows the preferences and tendencies of their table.

Calling Duncan Harris

One of the players’ apartments in the Silverwing tower in East LA

If the players are physically gathered in the same location, they talk there. Otherwise, they relocate to a player’s private meeting space. Let them discuss what they know and how they want to proceed. If the players call Harris his virtual twin picks up. It looks like Harris, but with silver, pupiless eyes. The virtual twin introduces themselves and explains that Harris is not taking face calls right now, and is screening audio calls.

Roll for [Charisma + Charm or Intimidation]. Harris’ virtual assistant tells them that if they want to talk, Harris will speak with them if they meet him in person before 4 PM.

The assistant gives them his address – San Bernardino, Walnut Village Complex 92336-3245, Tower 2, Lvl 5, Unit 1. – and tells them to **call or message him when they’re at the door rather than ringing the bell.**

Let the characters know that they can take the indigo line from East LA to the Walnut Village Complex from the station adjoined to the Silverfeather by a skybridge on level 2.

Transit

Silverfeather Tower -> Walnut Village Complex

Leaving from wherever the players are

It's 2 PM when the players leave to see Duncan Harris.

Players are advised to take a train, though they can borrow a vehicle from the building's vehicle pool if they wish. The trip is 60 miles and takes ~45 minutes however they travel (from East LA).

If leaving from the Silverfeather: *The lobby occupies two levels in a large, airy room. The first floor is occupied by a community kitchen and cafe with a small stage, couches, and chairs around tables. Mama Ravi and Jupa Ravi (49 and 16) are filling up water bottles on their way out to an ultimate frisbee matchup, and Mr. Goa is reading the neighborhood post on a couch. It's a short walk from the mezzanine over a skybridge to a train station. The vehicle pool is in an underground garage.*

Arriving at Duncan Harris' neighborhood complex

Once they reach San Bernardino they make their way from the station or wherever they park into the Walnut Village Complex.

The complex consists of buildings ranging from two story structures with large parks on top to a few eight-story towers topped with greenhouses, which is where Duncan Harris is. The ground level is a mix of desert, garden space, and an outdoor mall.

Based on their observation rolls, players may receive a notice in the general broadcast channel that a large game of laser tag is currently in progress in the area, and/or they may notice various people in athletic gear carrying bright orange rifles taking up strategic locations along rooftop parks, balconies, and corridors. When they reach Harris' building a synth doorman instructs them that elevator A will take them to level 5.

Other possibilities

If the characters go to Aquarius H2, a receptionist will tell them that Harris is off-site and ask if they have made an appointment with Harris. They may politely remind the characters that as a hydrogen plant, they require visitors to have a host when they come on site.

"No, you can't come inside. We make hydrogen. It's kinda dangerous. There's all kinds of rules against letting people in off the street."

If they go to Harris' house, the contact card doesn't describe what unit Harris is in, and the floor has four units. Let players be confused. They may call at this point, or find Harris' unit from a directory and then ring the bell, irritating Harris when they wake up Abby.

Talking with Duncan Harris

Harris' home office in San Bernardino in the Walnut Village complex

Entering Harris' apartment

When leaving the elevator there are four apartments on the floor, and Harris is in unit 1. If they call, the virtual assistant informs them that Harris is coming, and Harris opens the door and lets them in.

If they press the buzzer a person they don't recognize gets the door and invites them, then Harris jogs up to them carrying a crying baby, annoyed that they pressed the buzzer. This gives them a disadvantage of 2 on charisma checks.

In the main room of Harris' spacious condo a group of three are watching a basketball game on a large wall display. Harris is wearing athletic shorts with the logo of the San Bernardino Scarabs and a loose brown silk robe around a baby sling in which a baby is gawking at the world around them.

Harris invites them to follow him into his home office, and he closes the door. Roll for [Charisma + Charm or Intimidation].

The baby fusses and Harris offers them a breast to suckle. He then explains – quietly but matter-of-factly that he offered to speak with them to make sure that they and Tomatillo don't get the wrong idea and think that he's covering anything up. He explains that he's sorry that they couldn't talk in cyberspace, but Abby hates when he takes face calls or wears a visor.

"It's a little old-fashioned, but my daddy always says 'You can be in C-space OR B-space: no such thing as 'AND'."

In any case, he says that something like this deserves in-person face-to-face discussion, and asks what Tomatillo has told them so far.

Harris explains the problem

Once they've explained what they want, Harris explains why he can't deliver it. He tried, and as soon as he submitted the data transfer disclosure to the data management system someone came in and wiped a big chunk of the archival records. When he attempted to restore it from backup, the backup was wiped too. Allow the players to ask questions and make rolls to get more info out of him.

When pressed, he admits that there is an auxiliary backup. However **it's not safe to access it until the system has been secured**. He interpreted the fact that the hackers didn't touch the first backup until he tried to access it as a clear message to leave things be if he doesn't want more data erased. He points out that there's a lot of work that he needs to do reviewing the attack and re-securing the system before he should be accessing anything.

Additionally, the auxiliary backup is air gapped. **It's way across town**, in the unnetworked storage of a third-party partner. So he or someone else needs to recover it, and there's no way to do so without letting the data management group – as well as their adversary – know that he's trying to get it. His plan is to wait until his post-hack audit is done, well after the nomination vote for chair is over, then quietly reach out to his contacts at the third-party partner organization and arrange to pick up the backup before he submits any requests to the data management system. He hopes that if he doesn't make waves he won't lose the last store of the data permanently. The players then need to persuade him to let them recover it. Use charisma checks as appropriate.

“Look, I support what you and Tomatillo are trying to do. Believe me, it freaks me out to think that PoweRmaker might be hiding anything, and that they might go to such lengths to cover it. But you’ve gotta understand that I’ve got a lot on the line, and this has not been a good week. I’ve got data that might be permanently lost. I’ve got hackers in my system. I might’ve already pissed off the incoming head of the Grid Consortium at the same time the Aquarius board and members are going to be wondering how I let a fuc- an eff-up like this happen. On top of that, Annie just started teething. And now it feels like you and Tomatillo are really ho-gung on getting me to grab a hot kettle after I’ve already been burned.”

“You’ve gotta accept that the smart thing – the thing that fulfills my sworn obligation to maintain Aquarius’ data security – is to just lay low for a few days. If something is in there, Tomatillo can still pick a fight with PoweRmaker after the vote closes. But I don’t want to be anywhere near it.”

Planning the data pick-up

Through persuasion, Harris will agree to Tomatillo's request if the players can go position themselves to recover the data as soon as the data transfer request is submitted. They plan for the players to meet with Harris' contact as soon as he gives them the go-signal. He tells them that the auxiliary backup is in a nucleic acid storage archive in the **CalTech Center for Optimal Distribution of Power office in Pasadena**. He says it'll take him some time to arrange for someone to escort them in, so they should head there and message his wife that “their table at Rosario's is now ready” when they're outside. He then writes out his wife's digital address and the physical address of the CODP office on a notepad and peels off the square and hands it to them.

Give the players these handouts:

- Rita Harris audio/text address
- CODP physical address: Frautschi Hall, 550 Hill Street, Level -1, Pasadena, 91106,

He instructs them that as soon as they have the nucleic acid drive to take it somewhere secure and then make a voice call to him with an update. He then tosses a spit cloth over his shoulder and moves Annie to burp her and asks them to repeat the plan back to him. He nods and tells them to get in position and message Rita. Annie burps up and Harris tells her soothingly that it feels better when you get things out.

Transit

Walnut Village Complex -> Caltech campus

It's 3:30 when they leave Harris' house. They can take the Indigo-to-Cyan line to Caltech from the same station as before. They may see a handful of players wearing violet ribbons around their upper arms guarding a pen containing a handful of people wearing Turquoise ribbons tied around their upper arms.

The train speeds past the afternoon landscape, joining up to a longer train for most of the trip before separating again as the train approaches Pasadena. It slows and crowds move off as others enter from the other side, depositing the players 400 m from Frautschi Hall

Retrieving the Backup

Frautschi Hall, Caltech campus, Pasadena

Getting in Position

You arrive outside Frautschi hall around 4:20 and begin to wait in an adjacent park dotted by students relaxing, reading, and laughing. ... In one corner of the pavilion, a DJ is spinning classical music. Small groups sitting at outdoor tables eat, talk, and schmooze. A modest handful cluster in the open center of the tables, dancing to the music. ...

Scoring suggestion: ["This DJ" by Warren G](#)

A food cart is selling burmese food at a recommended price of 8 heart reacts. Ask the players when they last ate. They might have on the train rides.

Tomatillo messages the group asking for an update. They ask the players to message them as soon as they've got the drive, at which point they'll message them with a location to meet up in person. Players can roll for charisma to attempt to learn the meeting spot immediately.

The Go Signal

When the players are ready and message Rita Harris:

She gives a thumbs up react. Five minutes pass. (Let players react to the wait for a minute.)

After another five minutes, <the person who sent the message> gets a one-time-viewable text message from Rita: "Meet Uthra Jefferies in the lobby (Text address embedded)".

The lobby is a tasteful mid-size space with benches along the walls. Uthra is waiting when they enter. Ask the players if they have their ID's publicly broadcasting or not. If they do, she greets them immediately, otherwise she asks them if they're looking for anyone, and then to identify themselves.

They are escorted down one level by Uthra, who leads them through two hallways and into an archive room within the office of the Center for Optimal Distribution of Power. The office

has three other people currently working in various offices. If players need names for these characters they are Jerry, Donna, and Tom.

These character names are taken from the NBC comedy “Parks & Rec”. If looking for opportunities for roleplay, feel free to model these characters after their namesakes and involve them more fully in the scene.

Uthra takes a few minutes to find the right drawer, then withdraws a small orange plastic tube the size of a AAA battery. She reads it, and scans a barcode on it, and having collected the nucleic acid drive hands it over to whatever player is nearest. At that moment, whoever rolled the highest for situational awareness when entering the lobby becomes aware of heavy footsteps outside.

Making players negotiate for the data drive

GMs can choose whether to have the Crusaders arrive before or after Uthra hands off the data drive. If they arrive after, players only need to fight to escape. If they arrive before, the players will have to convince Uthra to give them the drive, and if they fail they'll need to steal it off the crusaders. Choose the option that suits how linear you want the story to be.

Confronting The Crusaders

When the players step out of the room they see the four Crusaders in white tactical gear. The Crusaders are a team of dim unaffiliated protectors, duped into recovering the drive for the mysterious adversary. They explain that they were sent by Duncan Harris to recover this drive by any means necessary, and to look out for imposters pretending to be his couriers, which is why they broke their way in. They insist that it be given to them, and when denied draw microdarters and threaten to take the drive if it is not relinquished.

If they are challenged for their authenticity they will face call Harris and invite everyone present into the face call. What looks like Harris will appear, affirming their claims. Uthra is confused. Roll for [Charisma + Will] or another relevant check to convince Uthra. Add +4 advantage if the players point out that Harris isn't currently making face calls. Jerry, Donna, and Tom look on but do not get involved.

(Bigsby Styles) “Hand it over, or I’ll be forced to take it! Lives are in the balance! I assume?” [Looks at “Duncan Harris”]. (Fake Duncan Harris) [Clearly improvising badly] “Uh, yes! Lives! In the balance! Get it!!”

If the players convince Uthra, she sends them a subvocalized message that there are gliders on level 9 that can take them wherever they need to go, and to look for Maurice Cloud-Therapy. This should earn ~ 4 XP. If the players are very successful at negotiation they can convince up to two of the Crusaders not to fight, but eventually at least two will attempt to take the drive by force. **Have players roll for initiative.**

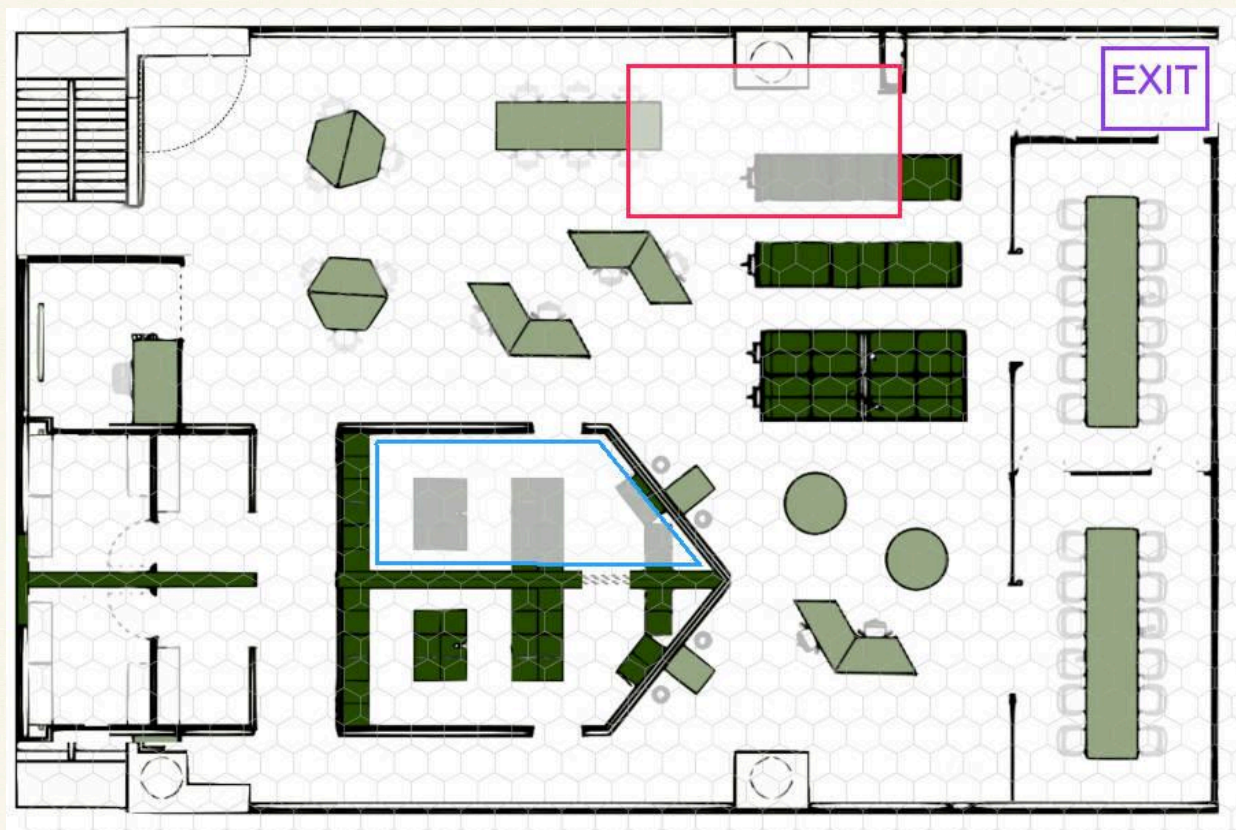
Jerry: “Donna, do something!” Donna: “Hemulin! Drop a beat!”

Scoring suggestion: [“Dare to be Stupid”, covered by The Cybertronic Spree](#)

Faceoff against the Crusaders

Center for Optimal Dist. of Power office

Characters	HP	Armor	Speed	Attacks
Bigsby Styles (Red star)	22	1	22	Punch Club Microdarter
Yusa Kravitz (Yellow X)	22	1	22	Punch Club Microdarter
Filigree Larson (Blue stripe)	22	1	22	Punch Club Microdarter
Michaela Wayne (Green bar)	22	1	22	Punch Club Microdarter



Difficulty Adjustment

This setup is designed for even combat against four players with 2 pts in combat. To reduce difficulty for fewer players, reduce the number of adversaries to match the number of players. To reduce difficulty overall, lower HP to 20, armor to 0, and/or speed to 18. To increase difficulty, increase armor to 2 and/or speed to 24. For even greater difficulty, reverse the starting positions of the players and adversaries and require the players to defeat the adversaries to recover the drive.

Setup

Players should start within the records room in the blue region with Uthra. The Crusaders should start in the fuschia region. The primary win condition is to reach the exit with the drive, which is worth 6 XP for each player. Players can obtain additional XP for strong performance in combat.

Players can attempt Charisma checks to encourage the attackers to stand down, whether based on intimidation or convincing them that they're being manipulated.

- Checks should be at a disadvantage of 4 for Green & Blue and of 8 for Red & Yellow.
- Add the difference in a character's HP and that of their target of persuasion as an advantage to their checks to persuade them to stand down.

Conclusion

The players win by escaping through the exit. This does not require that they restrain or discourage all their attackers, though if they do not then they will leave while being pursued by any attackers who remain active.

If the players fail to retain the drive, the GM can let the adversaries escape with the drive and then reveal that Uthra gave them a decoy in order to allow the players to complete the mission.

Transit

Frautschi Hall air garage -> Joshua Tree International Park

Immediately after the fight

The players find themselves in the hallway. If they subdued all adversaries, there is no pursuit. If they fled without subduing them all, they are being pursued.

Uthra announces that she's called the Pasadena Protector League, who will be there in a few minutes to deal with the Crusaders. Players should now contact Tomatillo. Tomatillo sends coordinates located within a remote sector of Joshua Tree International Park. Roll for [Knowledge + History & Geography] to recognize the area. The players should then head for the air garage, either based on Uthra's advice or the advice of their virtual assistants.

If they head for another mode of travel, at some point they should get in touch with Tomatillo, who gives them his coordinates and tells them to fly to them as soon as possible.

If Uthra told Maurice to expect them, Maurice does. Otherwise, they will need to persuade the gliders to assist.

Meeting up with the Gliders

It's 5:40 PM when you reach the air garage. A stranger is stowing an ultralight and paying you little attention. A set of ultralights matching the name Uthra mentioned message you in your info displays. 'Hey! Uthra told us to queue for takeoff! The pre-flight checklist is already done! Get in!'

The ultralights are named Maurice Cloud-Therapy, Purple Pasadena Peahen, and Cogsworth, and each can seat two. They're part of the Pasadena Flyers Society, along with Uthra. Instruct the players to issue the coordinates if they wish, or they can choose to plot the location and fly manually without telling the ultralights [roll for Charisma + Piloting to convince the ultralights]. The ultralights explain that they've got 150 miles of range. Have one player roll 2d10 for the wind speed in km/hr and another for directionality (2 - 10: blowing east, 11 - 20: blowing west).

"Ready?" (Wait for players to confirm) "3... 2... 1!" You feel the firm pressure of the magnetic accelerator launching the gliders in quick succession. Soon you're heading west, in the direction of the shadows creeping along the ground far below. The moon is a hands-width above the treeline and three-quarters full in the clear blue sky. A sky bus and a balloon are passing far to your starboard, and a few evening flyers and some hobby drones are enjoying themselves a few hundred meters off to your port side, but the sky is otherwise wide open as you glide past a set of traffic kites with the soft noise of the electric propeller behind you. Your flight is (80 - 120 minutes, depending on wind). Do any of you have anything you'd like to do to pass the time? (Let them describe) Okay. Eventually buildings give way to a less adulterated landscape. You pass over a cauldron of bats beginning to feed as you reach Tomatillo's location [Roll for situational awareness to see who spots Tomatillo's van first]. You come down for a gentle landing in a wide stretch of desert and Tomatillo and Liba jog out to greet you.

Conclusion

Joshua Tree International Park

The players meet with Tomatillo, who helps them stow the gliders and mount them on a roof rack before plopping down on a small padded bench inside Winnie.

"Alright, I'm reading the data. Rudy, as soon as sequencing finishes upload to the Auditor Cloud vault."

Tomatillo asks the group how it went. Let them recount the events of the day.

"Shiiiiiz, that's wild. Alright, sequencing and upload is complete. Rudy? Send Harris a link with my thanks. Also, ask my moms if they'd make a batch of tamales for me to take over when I get back. Now let's cross-reference what's in it with the publicly available files from Victorville Station. It'll take a few minutes. Any of you want anything to drink?"

Tomatillo: "Rudy, you can speak through the speakers, I'm whitelisting everyone present to whatever you find." Rudy: "Alright. I found 18 datasets which appear to reflect information of potential interest. The first one on the list shows the auxiliary coupling cooling system temperature and power consumption."

You all get an invitation to share Tomatillo's display. (If accepted) a set of files appear on a virtual holographic whiteboard.

(T:) *"Whoa... bring up the recommended specs for their couplings and their cooling system. Yeah... am I reading this right? It looks like excess cooling, right?"* (R:) *"Indeed. It does appear that they were maintaining temperature on the auxiliary couplings."* (T:) *"What's the consumption on that? In percent of output?"* (R:) *"It appears to be a 0.5% power draw." "Oh shiz... that looks like a smoking gun."*

Allow the players to ask questions and roll for wisdom. They learn that the data shows an extremely wasteful choice to direct power to cooling systems that weren't in use as though they weren't in a power shortage. This strongly implies that Powermaker either withheld capacity to deliberately overtax the Bakersfield Fusion Station or committed massive malpractice. Tomatillo does some quick analysis and then forwards it on to the public auditors forum.

(T:) *"Should we message Harris? It's already out in the world, and this is going to be top of feed news in a few minutes. He's going to start getting a lot of calls."*

Have the players message Harris over text and explain.

(Harris:) *"Well how about that? Let me and the team start reviewing and putting out some statements."*

If there's a problem, they'll find it. But this data seems to explain why someone was desperate to keep it hidden, and it's very likely that Powermaker's election will now fail. It's possible that they could face criminal consequences for the loss of light caused.

A moment later, Harris posts a short public message that says, "The Aquarius H2 data team has become aware of a recent upload on the auditor forums. We will release our insights and answer questions once we've reviewed the contents. In the meantime, checksums are attached to confirm the validity of these records." Below, there is also a self-reply: "Also, if this was unclear before: this is why you don't fuck with with Aquarious H2 data group." He then sends everyone on the team a private message. "Thanks big folks. Truly. Lmk if there's ever anything I can do for you."

Tomatillo tells Rudy to hold any non-urgent messages for the next forty minutes and begins prepping a fire to cook. Liba begins requesting jerky frantically using a barker (a button communicator for non-verbal parahumans). Tomatillo goes to get jerky, some beers, and a bit of hash oil, and offers it to the players as they set up the fire to make dinner. The first stars are coming out, and one of the orbital cities (Logon Kee, perhaps?) is glinting. Light music can be heard starting at a neighboring campground a few dozen meters away. The players are free to enjoy themselves and set up somewhere to sleep at their leisure until they're ready to settle in for the night. For tomorrow is another day.

Then give out XP, and figure out what comes next!

Scoring suggestion: [*"Fine", by Lemon Demon*](#)

Suggested Follow-up

We haven't written a follow-up to this story, because its primary purpose is to serve as a stand-alone introduction for people seeking a demonstration of how to play. But if players have a strong positive reaction and express a desire to continue with this storyline, this story leaves plenty of possibilities for what happens next.

Presumably, Powermaker would immediately lose the election for chair. They and their supporters would likely demand an investigation into the claims. The consortium would find itself tasked with responding to a grave scandal in the midst of a transition in leadership. The Victorville Fusion Station collective would hold an immediate discussion on whether to suspend Powermaker and how to investigate the claims as well. Would these groups cooperate on a single investigation? Multiple separate ones? What would be the immediate public sentiment?

Meanwhile, the person or persons responsible for attempting to suppress the sensor log data that Tomatillo found have yet to be held accountable. The obvious suspect is Powermaker. But is there proof? And who else could've been involved?

Here's a plot hook we might suggest:

Powermaker concedes that they – in an act of terrible judgment which they've long regretted – hesitated to provide the full assistance that they could have before the blackout. They insist that they only expected to bruise a rival, not cause the kind of damage that occurred. Powermaker insists that they immediately reformed themselves after witnessing the unintended harm of their error. Furthermore, they insist that they had NOTHING to do with the plot to bury the data, and offer their full assistance to find the culprits and begin restoring their now disgraced name. So the search begins: Harris and a team of experts begin a forensic analysis of the hack. The Crusaders answer questions about how they were contacted by a deepfake of Harris. And Powermaker opens up their little black book to help figure out who else would've wanted that data hidden (or pretends to, if they're just trying to throw the hunt off of their tracks...).