

COUNTER/Weight 10: Drawing Clocks

Amaya/@adawnundarked

[Note - timestamps every five minutes, search for #]

ALI: Hey everyone, this is Ali, your current producer and one of the friends at the table. I just wanted to open this episode by saying that we are switching from MechNoir to The Sprawl, which means that this is a character generation episode, which means that it is a lot longer than usual and it's a lot of discussion of mechanics, and skill points, and some other things that might not be the most interesting to all of our listeners, which is totally understandable. So this is a bit of a disclaimer for people who are more interested in the members of the Chime as characters, and less about the gamey aspect of our show, that you might want to skip to about two hours and ten minutes into the episode, where we start talking about character directives, and then from there discuss some missions that our characters went on, but that aren't gonna be played out on screen.

Don't get me wrong, the full episode is great, we're hilarious, but I understand if mechanics stuff isn't interesting for everyone. The character sheets that we're creating this episode will be available on friendsatthetable.net sometime between the release of this episode and the release of next episode. You can keep an eye on @ali_west, I'll let you know when it's updated.

[MUSIC: THE LONG WAY AROUND]

ALI: And then while I have you here, thank you so much for listening, it means so much to all of us. And without further ado, the episode should be launching now.

[MUSIC CONTINUES THEN FADES OUT]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. We are, as always, presented by streamfriends.tv and runbutton.net. This is the first episode where we are not playing MechNoir during this current campaign. We are switching, this is a thing I announced in the faction game from last week... we're switching to a new system. I know that that might still be a surprise to a lot of people. We are switching to a game called The Sprawl, by Hamish Cameron. It is a really cool hack of Apocalypse World, which you might recall that the first season of Friends at the Table was us playing Dungeon World, which was a really cool hack of Apocalypse World.

ART: One of these days we should play Apocalypse World.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we should! I've played that game. I had a - I was at a party last weekend at the, uh, down in Brooklyn, the NYU Game Center was holding an event called No Quarter, and I had someone come up to me and say, oh my god, you're - and I was like oh, Austin Walker from Giant Bomb? Like, and they were like, you're Smith July (Jack laughs) from that time I watched Apocalypse World on Twitch. And I was like, yeah, that is an Apocalypse World character I played once. That's - it's weird you know me from that! (laughter) That's a thing, like. But cool!

Like that's dope. Like I'm kind of more proud of that anyway, I was real good in that game. I had a good accent.

Anyway. We're playing The Sprawl now, which is a hack of Apocalypse World, and I think we... I kind of came to this decision three or four weeks ago now, while we were, we had done kind of a long episode, like a two-parter... I guess, I don't know on the listener's end it was... yeah, on the listener's end it ended up being a two-parter, but it was gonna be a three-parter. And two of those parts were going to be combat. And that combat, as a listener... I was kind of listening to it with Ali, who was, who was editing it, and we were trying to figure out like, well where do we cut here? And just like, having to listen to it in that way made me think a lot about what we were getting out of the MechNoir system. #00:05:00#

Which is a system I still like a lot. And it's a system that I think is fun to play, but not necessarily great for a podcast. For us, anyway. Because there's lots of deliberation, and while there's lots of freedom, in terms of what you can do, it doesn't have the kind of rails on it that suggests things, that kind of - that kind of like lets you... kind of the starting, kind of the starting position for interesting improv to come out. You know? It's kind of just like, well, you can do anything, cause all you have is these verbs, you don't have any like, limited abilities. It's like, well, with this - with this huge open canvas, how do I decide on something cool to do? And there's just lots of indecision, and lots of figuring out the rules, and we, we just - we're not playing at the speed that we used to play, because all of our lives got super busy, so we haven't internalized the rules in a way that's really quick.

The other thing is The Sprawl is a game I've been play- I've been following for two or three years now. You know, I wanted to actually run a game of The Sprawl with Ali years before I was planning to, to do a podcast about tabletop games. And, and it was kickstarted last year, and is finally gonna come out this year, within the next month or two. And so I wrote to Hamish and said like hey, we're thinking about switching to a new system for the game, do you think The Sprawl would be a good fit, and is there any way that we could get kind of a preview copy?

So thankfully we did, so shoutouts to, to Hamish. There is a twitter account, I think it is twitter.com/thesprawl_rpg, let me just double check. Does anybody know what this is? Is it just thesprawl? There's no way he got thesprawl.

ALI: I think it's, it's thesprawl_rpg. Right?

AUSTIN: thesp- yes, it is thesprawl_rpg. twitter.com/thesprawl is a protected account?

ART: Whoa!

AUSTIN: But it's a really good protected account. The, the current avatar is like a komodo dragon wearing a bow (laughter), and a picture - drawing of a, and... and the first sentence of their bio is 'I made a sweater for an octopus.' So good job!

JACK: It's a neural network, and it's learning very, very slow.

AUSTIN: (laughs) It's the new NPC I'm bringing into this game!

JACK: Ah, man!

AUSTIN: So, to be clear, we are not done with... with those, with the Chime, we're not done with COUNTER/Weight, we're not done with the game that we've been playing. We're switching into this new system and continuing on with that campaign. And it's gonna require a little bit of hacking, but it's going to be... good, I think? Now that we're back into a Dungeon - or, a Dungeon... into a Powered by the Apocalypse system, I'm gonna start the podcast doing what I used to do all the time, which is... I'm gonna say what my, what my agenda is.

Make the Sprawl dirty, high tech, and excessive. Fill the characters' lives with action, intrigue, and complication. Entangle the characters in the Sprawl. Play to find out what happens.

And then one that I - I'm adding here, because I think that it's... it's one of the things that I think is important for what, for what our genre is, um... I'm sorry, there's more here. I realized I just, I wrote this in later. There's also principles which I'll read, which are:

Chrome everything, then make it dirty. Begin and end with the fiction. Address the characters, not the players. Ask questions and incorporate the answers. Name everything. Make everything corporate. And this is the one I'm adding, which is, make the big things bigger and the small things smaller. Make everything personal. Complicate everything. Treat your NPCs like disposable assets. Think offscreen. And, be a fan of the characters.

Those are - those are the ones I'm not gonna read *every* episode, but those first few I am. Because those are like, what I have to keep in mind as a GM for this game. For the players who are here - it's the same crew as it's been for the last few weeks, on the Chime side of things. Ali.

ALI: Hi.

AUSTIN: Art.

ART: Hey!

AUSTIN: Jack.

JACK: Hey there!

AUSTIN: And Keith.

KEITH: (raspy voice) Hi.

AUSTIN: You all sound really quiet, like you, like - I know that you're not -

KEITH: I'm just so, I'm just a sick kid.

JACK: We're ill. This is the ill podcast.

KEITH: We are so ill.

ART: I'm battling hiccups right this second.

KEITH: A new cat was introduced to my home, and I'm, I'm just allergied... up.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: Aww.

KEITH: I got grog head, I got sneeze nose.

JACK: Don't lick the cat!

KEITH: I didn't lick the cat, I just was near it.

JACK: Oh.

KEITH: Like in the same, like, floor.

JACK: Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: Buddy.

KEITH: Not even the same room.

JACK: They'll do that to you, cats.

AUSTIN: They will. (pauses) Ah, so, if we all turn to page 43 of The Sprawl Version 0.6, and also if you just open up your - your own sheets, your own sheets on Roll20. We - I also went through and got a pro subscription to Roll20 so that I could make custom character sheets for this game. We're gonna do a little bit of the character generation stuff here.

JACK: Oh, god, Roll20 just changed, and it's (laughs)...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Ah, and it's a lot of clocks. There are a lot of clocks on the screen there.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): There's a lot of clocks on the screen, which are things we'll get used to in the future. I just wanted to bring these up because these could get important in a second. (laughs) The first step of character generation in The Sprawl is to define the corporations. Now we already have a - we already have a podcast that's like four hours long of us doing this (laughter), so we don't have to do this from step one, but I will say that there is... that this is a case for us to kind of call out the ones that we're interested in seeing in the game going forward. #00:10:00#

So each player, including me, names and briefly describes a mega corporation or an entity of similar scope, like organized crime syndicate or a government... and then, and then I will write those down and associate for each of those a clock that's on the screen. These clocks are sort of like... you can imagine like a circle, like a - almost like a pie chart. And it's, it's sector- or, it's sectioned off into six different segments. The first three are quarter-sized. It's like, the top right corner, the bottom right corner, the bottom third - like, the bottom left corner, and then the top left corner is split itself into three final ones, and it's kind of like at, at 9, 10, 11 o'clock, and then all the way around to midnight.

So, so tell me what the... what your most interested corporation or organization is in the game right now. Let's, let's start with Art.

ART: Okay. So, I have a bad answer.

AUSTIN: That's fine.

ART: But like, it's not gonna be my answer.

AUSTIN: Wait. (laughter) I don't - wait.

JACK: [crosstalk #11:05#]

ART: I want to talk you through my bad answer.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: And then give you a better answer. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: Cause like, what I really want more of is Diaspora.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Or like one of the -

AUSTIN: You should listen to the most - you should listen to the most recent episode of the, of the podcast.

ALI: Mhm.

ART: Sure. I - I, again, I thought that was secret information, so now I have to listen to both of those. And I found out it wasn't like, yesterday, so... I'm getting there.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Because like, that's what I think is like... you know, we're in a lot of OriCon stuff, and I'm always like, I want to know what's going on over *there*.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: But I think that's a bad answer, cause I think that like, we're sort of building to that, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Like, if we're gonna see a Divine, it's gonna be in Act III, or in a late Act II, not here in Act I.

JACK: Ha ha ha.

AUSTIN: Right. If you want to see a Divine, you can also listen to the most recent episode of this podcast, in which there were like, a *bunch* of Divines.

ART: What do I need to do to be on the more interesting version of this podcast? (laughter)

AUSTIN: Well, it's in - you know, the other, so the other episode is this kind of broad-view faction game. And so, they got to where you're at now, where they're like, wait, what's happening in the Diaspora, in just one episode, because all of their whole episode was just like looking at all the other factions, right? So, so we got to do a lot with, with... Diasporan governments, and corporations, and stuff, which was nice. But yeah, no, I'm with you there.

ART (overlapping Austin): Sure. So maybe this isn't a bad answer.

AUSTIN: It might not be. Um.

KEITH: It might still be.

AUSTIN: But - but, the thing is, so, so... what I will say is, there's actually more... you can get more specific than just the Diaspora, because there are a bunch of different subfactions in the Diaspora, right?

ART: Right, the, the Department of Material Resources I think is my most...

AUSTIN: Okay. They're in a rough place right now, but I would totally use those, that would be fine. If you want to do that. Is that what you want to do?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: I mean, that was, that was gonna be my bad idea that I didn't use, but if it's not a bad idea I guess I'll take it.

AUSTIN: I think it's a pretty good idea. So I'm adding the name, the Diasporatic Department of Material Resources, to this first clock. Okay. Keith, what about you?

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: There's like an obvious one for you, but I don't want to lock you into it, you know?

KEITH: Well, okay, so... I know where the obvious one is - I know what the obvious one is. First thing, I just gotta get rid of these robots...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you do.

KEITH: I gotta get rid of these robots. (laughs)

AUSTIN: You do.

KEITH: And, the factions that I'm most interested in are the factions that really want to buy up some robots. (laughter) Um, number two is that uhh (laughs), me as a player, I don't have such a great... I guess like a... I don't have, I don't have such a great understanding in my own head of the uh, the... September stuff.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

KEITH: And that's my character's whole thing. So I'd like to - have to think more about that.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. Yeah, I'll bring them in. Boom, September Institute.

KEITH: You're not gonna write robot-buying faction?

AUSTIN: (laughing) No, I'm not. I'm gonna skip that one.

JACK: We buy any robot!

ART: AI's Crazy Used Robot Lot? (laughter)

KEITH: Okay. We can - maybe we'll revisit that one with Ali, because (laughter) Ali owns half of these robots!

ALI: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: One thing I actually really like is I have a good way of just like... figuring out how like, how to kind of... there's a good way in this system of coding the fact that, that you're on the hook for a lot of money you don't have for those robots. Which is nice! So.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Anyway, Ali.

KEITH: They're all in the box still! I didn't touch them, they are vacuum-sealed.

AUSTIN: Yep, totally. Except for that Ring of Saturn that you ride around on all the time.

KEITH: Right, except for the Ring of Saturn. But that's very important to me.

ALI (overlapping Keith): Well, he's not giving that up.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah. That's not -

KEITH: No.

ART (overlapping both): I want - I want to find someone who wants to buy all those robots but also wants the Ring of Saturn thrown in (laughter) like I just want to find another Keith.

AUSTIN: Ah, so good. Okay, Art. Or - we already did Art. Ali.

ALI: Uh...

ART: I have more! We can just keep going back to me.

AUSTIN: (laughs) No no, it's - it's good.

ALI: Yeah, am I allowed to have more than one? #00:15:00#

AUSTIN: No, not to start.

ALI: Okay. (pauses) Then I guess -

AUSTIN: The other ones will come up, don't worry.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But like, to begin with, we're gonna... describe one of these.

ALI: Well, then I guess I'm going to go away from the obvious one, and instead say... Counterweight's Angels?

AUSTIN: Ooh, okay, that's an interesting one.

ART: Good answer! (pauses) This is - this is also Family Feud, right? This is what that thing could be? (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah, good answer! Good answer. Counterweight's Angels!

KEITH: How many of us did you kiss on the mouth? (laughter)

AUSTIN: Oh boy! That's not good.

KEITH: That's it, I'm tapped for game show jokes.

AUSTIN: That's a good joke! It's a good game show, first of all.

KEITH: That's all I have.

AUSTIN: All said. (pauses) Okay, that's a good one. Um, what - Jack.

JACK: I'm kind of torn.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I thought I was torn between two, but I'm torn between three.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Uh, which is worse. I'm really interested -

KEITH: Fifty percent worse.

JACK: (laughs) It is! Which is... I'm interested in Snowtrak.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: For pretty obvious reasons. I'm also interested in Minerva Mining and Mechanics.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Because, they just, they... they are responsible for a lot of the metal that is gonna be thrown at us, I think? (Austin laughs) Pretty frequently.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah.

JACK: I'm also interested in the Liberty and Discovery Automatic Corp.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: But I think that - that's mostly a player thing, rather than a character thing. I, I like the idea of -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): But that's okay! No no no, it's... this should be, so this can be both a player and a character thing, right? Like, by calling out one of these, you're basically telling me as the GM, like, hey, I'm - me the player, Jack, is interested in this thing.

JACK: Oh, okay. Then in that case I think I would absolutely like to go for Liberty and Discovery Automatic Corps. Because we're gonna - like, Minerva and Snowtrak are pretty guaranteed, to, to turn up.

AUSTIN: Right. Mhm.

JACK: But I think the idea of these automated drones that trundle around the cosmos is too interesting to just let... sort of...

AUSTIN: Right. It super is, you're not wrong.

JACK: I mean, what is the agenda of automated, algorithmic Diaspora drones?

AUSTIN: That's a good question, Jack. Especially coming from someone who is, himself, an automatic drone. So yeah, so, so to go over - oh, and then I'll name one. What should I name? Let's think. This is, this is a tough - this is a tough one, this is a toughie. Um... (pauses) I'm looking at our list of, of factions here.

JACK: (laughs) For listeners, some of these descriptions are... cruel (laughs).

AUSTIN: Yeah?

JACK: One of them is just - cruel to the players. One of them is the Ethnological Committee, and the only description that we have is, "Researchers and bureaucrats, you think?" (laughter)

AUSTIN: Yeah, they're - probably! That's probably what they are!

JACK: Thanks, Austin!

AUSTIN: Oh, boy, there's a lot here. There's a lot here that has developed in - oh, I know. I know who. Never mind. It's the Rapid Evening, for sure.

ALI: Oh.

AUSTIN: Are they not on this list?

JACK & ALI: No.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, they're not, cause you don't know who they are in game. But you might recall from the, the first episode, the worldbuilding one? They're the ones who are up on the planet, uh... Ziishe, who have all sorts of future tech and are, and... keep that other nearby planet in super lockdown mode.

JACK: (gasps) Oh, yeah.

ART: Oh yeah, they're great.

JACK: Those guys.

AUSTIN: Yeah, they're good.

JACK: They feel kind of Dickensian, to an extent.

AUSTIN: There is a degree of that there. And players - or p- fans who have listened to last week's episode will know that it opened from an excerpt of a member of the Rapid Evening.

ART: Yeah, I get it, we're all jerks for not listening to the faction game. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Step two! Actually, it's step one, which is choose a playbook. (reading) There are ten roles in the Sprawl. Everyone chooses one and takes that playbook. The Driver connects to her cars through a cybernetic rig to enhance her skills. (speaking regularly) And I've had to hack the Driver a little bit here, because... by default, the Driver is the only one who gets the kind of rules for controlling big vehicles, big cool vehicles. And so there's kind of a system hack here, a kind of move that I've made universal to the setting, which is that it's taken one of the Driver's moves, and so it's like everybody can do this thing. And so the Driver is just gonna get a bonus move to start, to kind of account for that.

(reading) The Fixer hooks people up with gear, jobs, friends, and trouble. The Hacker glides through computer networks, taking what the job requires and more. (speaking) And Keith, when we get there, I, I suspect that you're gonna - that Mako is a, is a hacker, but... I actually have a suggestion for kind of, uh, hacking together - uh, ha ha, hacking together.

KEITH: Ha haaah.

JACK: It's a pun!

AUSTIN: A... kind of version that's a little bit more close to what you do,

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: but is also more limiting in some ways. It's like, it's like, a little more... we'll get to it.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: (reading) The Hunter searches the streets for whatever or whoever needs finding. (speaking) That's kind of the, the like, Blade Runner class in this game. It's kind of like the Deckard. Lots of, lots of research and lots of, like, scouting things out. (reading) The Infiltrator is the master of getting into secure places and doing things there. (speaking) Which is, in my mind, like Motoko Kusanagi from, from Ghost in the Shell, is an Infiltrator. #00:20:00#

(reading) The Killer uses bleeding edge technology to commit violence. (speaking) I definitely think like Molly Millions from Neuromancer is - fits the bill there. A lot of these are like classic cyberpunk, like these, these playbooks are all based on classic cyberpunk tropes and archetypes. (reading) The Pusher wants to change the world one mind at a time. (speaking) And I know Ali, we've talked about Aria being a Pusher for a while.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I say for a while as if we haven't spent the last two and a half weeks trying to hammer out like (Ali laughs) the ethos of who Aria Joie is, and like what her politics are. (reading) The

Reporter uncovers truth and exposes the guilty. (speaking) Which is a really cool playbook, but kind of needs to be central to the game you're building from the ground up, in a weird way, because that adds a whole bunch of other interesting clocks to the table. Like, the Reporter's kind of scouting for a story while competing with the company putting out counternoise to, to kind of like... stop the story before it hits, which is great. It's a v-

ART (overlapping Austin): So that's Netrunner, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah, it's basically a Netrunner game, yeah. (reading) The Soldier plans and executes mission in the corporate wars. (speaking) I - I'm leaning that way, I'm, in my mind I'm leaning that way for Cass, Art? But I - I, who knows.

ART: I have had, I have had playbook struggles that I guess I just have been, I've been quieter about.

AUSTIN: Okay, well we - we should talk. Like, we'll be able to talk in a second here. (reading) And the Tech is the master of gear, building it, fixing it, and breaking it. (speaking) And there are some cool moves there, that, you know, as you - as you advance, just like in Dungeon World, which you've played, you can take moves from other playbooks, and there might be stuff there in Tech that, that people might want to look at.

What do people... think? You know, Ali, are you set on, on Pusher at this point?

ALI: (hesitantly) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. And Jack, you're set on Driver?

JACK: Yeah, I think that that's... it's just AuDy, the class, I think to an extent?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I thought really hard for a minute, like the - a couple weeks there I was like aw man, AuDy might make a really good Killer, because -

JACK (overlapping Austin): Well, I was thinking about that.

AUSTIN: The Killer - the Killer has all of this like, internal cyberware stuff. And like those scenes of AuDy like, breaking down the door, and then just like shotgunning that dude at - at Snowtrak was really good.

JACK: There was a moment a couple of weeks ago,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: where I managed to really badly hurt my heart when I realized that I created a pilot who couldn't fly a plane.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And I - I'm curious if you as the player want to either continue with that? (laughter) Or, at this point, actually become a good Driver, and then take some moves, maybe, from the Killer book.

JACK: I think that's what I'm - yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I think, I'm pretty - there's an element to the Driver that I, um... find very strange, and I think we might need to work out an alternative to, which is that the Driver is by default cyberlinked to their vehicle.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we'll just say we - you don't need to be. I, so I've actually done that, that's the thing, right? Is that the... if you check the additional moves sheet, that should be all of your...

JACK (overlapping Austin): Mm, in Roll20?

AUSTIN: In Roll20, on the handouts thing. I introduced a new move called Behind the Wheel that says, when operating a veal - or, a veal (laughs). When eating some veal. (laughter) No, that's kind of - veal seems kind of like a mean thing. I don't know, I'm not - I'm not really into it. That's the whole move. (Jack laughs) Nah, when operating a vehicle, and then it changes what you roll for certain things, right?

JACK: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: So the, Act Under Pressure is, is the roll to kind of avoid danger. In Dungeon World it was... what was it called in Dungeon World? Defy Danger. Right? And, and... and so instead of rolling Cool, which in this would be, is what you normally roll to, to act under pressure, you'd get to roll Cool and also the power level of your vehicle.

KEITH: Mmhm.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And the way I've just figured it out is just like, most vehicles in this game just don't have any power. It's just zero. Like, the baseline for most cars is zero, right? So, so if you have a power rating, it's cause you have a cool vehicle.

JACK: Sure. That makes sense. Yeah, I just - I just wanted to make sure that we weren't going to essentially...

AUSTIN: Undo the thing where Ja- where, where AuDy is not cybernetically hooked into things despite being a robot?

JACK: Or rather by, or rather by deciding we were gonna do that, actually break the Driver.

AUSTIN: Mm, mmhm, mmhm.

JACK: But that seems super cool.

AUSTIN: No, yeah, just everybody can do this. Like, this is just - you know, in the, in the Sprawl it's important, because the notion is - and you know, you know the Sprawl is kind of based, kind of, cyberpunk, William Gibson-style setting, it's important because there's this notion of, oh, the thing that sets the Driver apart from everybody else is that there - there needs to be this intrusion of cybernetics into their body, so that they can interface with this - this more than human technology.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Whereas, one of the things I like about mecha anime in general is that - is that, you know... the 16-year-old kid can get into the Gundam and pilot it. Because, because we've built machines that 16-year-olds can get in and kill people with. Right? Like, that's the terrifying thing, that these things are so brutal and so powerful that even... now, they won't be as good as you, cause you have all these other moves, cause you're actually dedicated to it, you know?

The other thing to note is this is *not* Dungeon World, where there is only one Driver in the world. You know, in Dungeon World you might recall there was only one wizard, there was only one paladin, right?

JACK: Oh, yeah! #00:25:00#

AUSTIN: In fact, they - there is specifically a note in here somewhere that says like, no, you're replaceable. Like, there are a bunch of Hackers. There are a bunch of Pushers. And, if the Sprawl eats you, then it - then you're *gone*. Which is a nice bit of, I think... terror, over the course of play. So...

ART: Does that affect NPC design, or is that really just a...

AUSTIN: Well, and remember, so we're back on an Apo- Powered by the Apocalypse thing, I don't roll dice *ever* now.

ART: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Like, all I do is make moves. I'm so excited. I don't have to roll damage ever, I don't have to do anything.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Oh, so now I see the motive! (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) I hate dice, I hate rolling them! I love games, I hate dice!

JACK: Ah, it's the spots, isn't it? That you really didn't like.

AUSTIN: Yep! Yep, that's it!

JACK: Or is it the rounded squares?

KEITH (overlapping Jack): Dice are for kids! Austin doesn't like anything that's for *kids*.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Yeah, dice are for kids! (laughter)

KEITH: Eyyy!

AUSTIN: Eyyy! Ohhh!

KEITH: (laughing, mimicking Andrew Dice Clay) It's me, Uncle Dice!

AUSTIN: (laughing) Dice was not for the kids - don't -

KEITH: I'm thinking of the candy store in an hour! BACK! GET IT?!

AUSTIN: GET IT?! (laughter)

ART: The weirdest part of this is of course that Keith wasn't alive when Andrew Dice Clay was like, popular, right? (laughter)

AUSTIN: That's true. That is true!

KEITH: Yeah, no, I wasn't alive. (laughter) But you guys weren't, like, alive enough to be fans of Dice, when Andrew Dice Clay was relevant.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): I remember seeing Dice on MTV as a kid, when he was big.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I didn't like him. (laughter)

ART: And he was a pop culture figure,

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: more than a person I knew anything about.

AUSTIN: I liked his jackets, because I was a child and they were bright and colorful. (laughter)

JACK: I'm looking this man up now, I have no idea.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Oh, do you not know Andrew Dice Clay?

JACK: No, no idea who this person is, at all.

AUSTIN: I'm shocked I haven't, uh...

ART (overlapping Austin): God, England truly is a paradise. (laughter)

JACK: Oh, wow, this p- yeah, this, mmhm. Who is this?

AUSTIN: Please, don't -

KEITH: Andrew Dice Clay is a comedian that lives as his comic persona, which is a - not a good thing to do.

AUSTIN: Well said.

KEITH: When *that's* who your persona is.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: And like, he was weirdly super popular in like, an era when it was like, peak Eddie Murphy, and stuff like that, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Like, it just - it kind of like, it blows your mind at this point.

AUSTIN: Right, we're not - this isn't the, this isn't like there's no good comedy in the world.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It was, there's tons of good comedy - I guess it was also part of just like the comedy boom though, right, in like the late '80's, where... there was just like, a ton of traveling comics in America that were doing really well.

ART: Sure.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: It's like -

ALI (overlapping Austin): Yeah, there was like more room for him to exist cause people were going to comedy shows.

AUSTIN: Right. Right, like people were doing like... prop magic improv, like, that was a thing at the time, not in -

ART (overlapping Austin): If you say another bad word about the Amazing Johnathan we are going to have to fight, sir. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) That's exactly who I had in mind! It's one hundred percent!

ART: He's funny!

AUSTIN: Yeah, he's pretty funny.

JACK (overlapping Austin): I'm looking him up too.

AUSTIN: I watched - anyway. Anyway! Anyway. Art. What playbook have you been thinking about?

JACK (overlapping Austin): Ooh, he looks rough too.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah, he's - he's a rough boy.

ART: Yeah!

KEITH: Ohh, I know him.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): I - here's the thing about the Amazing Johnathan. Did he ever do anything real bad? I always got the impression from him that he was real funny but also had done something *bad*.

ART: Like, crime?

KEITH: Like, killed someone?

AUSTIN: Like a crime. Like hurt someone in a bad way. And I don't know what, but that was my impression of him.

JACK (overlapping Austin): It does say that his -

ART (overlapping Jack): He was sentenced at his trial to being a comedy magician? Like, that was his punishment? (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) Yes, that was his - he was, yes, one hundred percent.

JACK: Self-described -

KEITH (overlapping Jack): His - his personal life paragraph, on Wikipedia, does not suggest he has committed some sort of crime.

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: That's good.

JACK: He does do a weekly internet talk show, though, called Burn Unit. Uh, which we're hosting this week, so um... (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) This is us! Welcome, the Amazing Johnathan.

JACK: Yep. This is Burn Unit. (pauses) I have no idea who this man is.

KEITH (overlapping Jack): (laughing) The only person we're burning is the Amazing Johnathan. (laughter)

AUSTIN: He has self-described himself as “the Freddy Krueger of comedy,” maybe that’s where I got that impression from. (laughs)

JACK: It also says that his act is mostly composed of hijinks, which sounds like a sentence from 1888. (laughter) But it comes from a Wikipedia page. I, I have no idea what is happening, like.

ART: He has a lot of hijinks, I mean -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Also -

KEITH (overlapping Art): He made three guest appearances on Mindfreak.

ALI: Oh my god. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Also, he was finishing up a memoir called, “Drive It Like You Stole It,” which... (laughter)

KEITH: You’re right, he really is trying to imply a criminal edge to his magic act!

AUSTIN: (laughing) That’s all I’m saying! That’s all I’m saying.

ART: His Comedy Central specials have all been really good, and if you’re - if you’re sitting around looking for something to do, maybe watch one of those.

AUSTIN: But after you finish listening to this. Art, what playbooks are you interested in? (laughter)

ART: I mean, the - the problem with picking a playbook here is that like I’ve, I’ve felt that Cass is a little loose.

AUSTIN: Yes, Cass is a little loose. It’s one of the reasons I wanted to move to this system, because it would force us to tighten up all of the characters in some ways, you know?

ART: And like, Soldier works best with his¹ - with his background.

AUSTIN: With his, like, he was a military man.

ART: He was a military man. It takes the -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Or, a military person. A military Apostolosian.

ART: It takes the, the doctor part out. #00:30:00#

AUSTIN: Well, there is a thing in... I thought it was in Soldier, maybe it’s in Tech, that’s about being a medical person. You know, I think it’s in Tech, I think one of the Tech things is... that you can, you’re, you’re - it’s Expert. You can have Expert Medic, and then you are an expert in medicine and pharmaceuticals. When you apply First Aid, you heal one additional harm

¹ Apostolosian pronouns default to they/them. This would probably include Cass.

segment, even on a miss. Which is a pretty good one. And you get a workshop appropriate to your area of expertise. Which is a fantastic move. Or, you could start that way, maybe - it's up to you. What do you think? What were the other things you were thinking of?

ART (overlapping): But like, there's also the abilities that you can take - you can take moves from other... sets in this, still, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, exactly. That's what I'm - and, and I'm giving everybody a free bonus move, because I wanted to represent that you have progressed since starting MechNoir, right? So there's, you're going to have one full advancement that you can just take another move from any playbook. Also because I - these characters weren't made in this system, and so to kind of like really represent... who they were, I wanted to, to kind of blur the lines a little bit with that, you know?

ART: Then yeah, that's probably it. It's probably Soldier with that move, and...

AUSTIN: With the Expertise move, yeah.

ART: And, and trying, trying in my... in myself, to not use Soldier as an excuse to, to just make this Space-Hadrian again.

AUSTIN: Totally. Well, and - and I will say that, that Soldier is different than Paladin was in Dungeon World. It's -

ART (overlapping Austin): Right. They don't seem similar.

AUSTIN: No, that's like very plan heavy, it's a lot of like, setting up attack plans, and supporting people when they... when it's time to get out of a job, or stuff like that, you know?

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: Which is cool. (pauses) What else? So then, Keith.

KEITH: Hey.

AUSTIN: It's Hacker, right? Like, the thing that makes your character cool is that you can hack stuff?

KEITH: Yeah, I'm definitely Hacker.

AUSTIN: So if you go -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): There -

AUSTIN: (pauses) What were you gonna say?

KEITH: I was like, there's like, like if you really wanted to work at me not being a Hacker, it would be an Infiltrator.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: But I don't even think that's worth it.

AUSTIN: I don't think so either, especially because... you know, you would have to be an Infiltrator who then takes some hacking stuff also.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So what I want to propose is, the way hacking works in this game is... if you go to the Hacker page, which is 73... The way Hackers work is that they get a deck, you know, like a hacking computer.

KEITH: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: And then they load programs onto that deck.

KEITH: A tech deck?

AUSTIN: A tech deck, they get a tech deck. To start out, you either get a defensive deck or a performance deck, and the defensive deck is like, it, it can kind of take more hits. And the performance deck can... attack better, or kind of sneak into places better. And they have their own stats, which is Hardening, Firewall, Processor, and Stealth. And I was thinking, what if we just make it so that... what if we build a s- a slightly different class, or we add a special move for what Strati are. Stratuses? Strati? Strati.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: I like Strati.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which in my mind are vaguely like the technomancers of Shadowrun.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Or the - the otaku of Shadowrun (laughs) as you may recall.

KEITH: Yeah. No, we definitely mentioned both of those words...

AUSTIN: We did. Where -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): in character creation. Real quick though, can I read some of the... suggested names for hackers? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, please! Let's do it.

KEITH: Case. Core. Crowley. Dead Rob. (laughter) Djinn, Frozz, Gaius Lupo, Hazer, Johnny, Nezumi, Patch, Wyldstyle, a sneaky name, a techy name, a mystery name.

AUSTIN: Mystical!

KEITH: Oh, a mystical name.

AUSTIN: Not a mystery name. A mystery name!

KEITH: (laughs) Not a mystery name.

AUSTIN: I - what's, what's his name? I have no idea! No one - no one knows his name!

JACK: The Amazing Johnathan. (laughter)

KEITH: Sure, sure - (laughs)

AUSTIN: He's a good hacker! I get a feeling that Amazing Johnathan, that he's broken - broken into some secure locations before. (Art laughs) He's - he's battled some Black ICE.

KEITH: (laughing) Hack It Like You Stole It. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughing) Alright, let's have - no more Mako! You're playing the Amazing Johnathan now.

ALI: (laughing) He's been like the Amazing Johnathan the whole time!

AUSTIN: True! (laughter)

KEITH: The Amazing Johnathan - the Amazing Johnathan works as an enforcer for the, for... the company that I took, bought those robots from.

AUSTIN: Right, Snowtrak.

KEITH: Killed me, and assumed my life. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Mako's been weird lately! He's doing magic tricks! (laughter)

KEITH: (laughs) Maybe you just haven't been hearing me correctly because there's a *credit* stuck in your ear!

AUSTIN: (laughter) Oh my god. So -

KEITH: I just really like the name Dead Rob and Gaius Lupo.

AUSTIN: Yeah, those are good.

KEITH: And then Johnny being right next to those. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: Well, you know! So, the - the way that Hackers work is like, oh I have a deck, and then I load programs into the deck, right? Which is really cool and flexible because ideally what you'd end up doing over the course of play is like, I have more programs than I have room in my deck, and so I can say like oh, what type of mission is this gonna be? Okay, I'm gonna load in my attack - my attack programs. I'm gonna load in my defensive programs, because we're going up a place that, during the kind of research phase of the, of the mission, we found out that they have like lots of really good... they have lots of really good attack ICE or something, right? So I want to be able to like, you know, push through that to - to get access, and blah blah blah.

KEITH: Yeah. #00:35:00#

AUSTIN: But, that doesn't really fit what you do. And so what I'm thinking is like, what if you *are* a deck, right? And, the, the...

KEITH: *I'm* a deck?

AUSTIN: You are a deck (laughs). You are a computer. You are Hardening, Firewall, Processor, and Stealth... just reflect other attributes you have, other stats,

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: so that like, Processor and Stealth are - are your Mind stat, and are equal to your Mind stat, and Hardening and Firewall are equal to your Synth stat, or something like that.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: And then, you don't get to - you don't get to switch out programs, but we treat programs almost like the way spells are treated in Dungeon World, where like, you get a program for every - you, you start with two programs, or you start with three programs, or something like that.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): As I advance, I become a better deck.

AUSTIN: And as you advance, you can - you can pick up additional programs. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Okay. Yeah, I like this.

AUSTIN: Which means that you have less flexibility, right? It means like, when you really need that Manipulate Systems program, you don't have it.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): I can't just swap it out.

AUSTIN: You can't go get it. You can't go buy it. There's no way for you to do that until you advance.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: It also just means, like, less paperwork, on both of our parts.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And we're both super busy right now.

KEITH: Oh, god.

AUSTIN: I like the Hacker as written, but like, it would be a lot of work to, every session, think about like, well what programs are you bringing, Keith? Like what, what does Mako do in the, in the legwork pro- uh, segment. (pauses) And this is also just like -

KEITH: No, I totally am on board with this thing.

AUSTIN: Okay. So we will, uh...

KEITH: When you initially said like, it's gonna make you more limited, I was like (clicks tongue) that sounds like bullshit, I'm gonna do the other one where I'm not as limited (laughter) but I - I do like this.

AUSTIN: (laughs) You see what I'm saying? Yeah, I think it's - I think it's fair - and then, the other thing is like, when you advance and put an extra point into, into Mind,

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: that means a lot more for you, because it also means you're just a better Hacker then, you know?

KEITH: Yeah. I also, I like... I like that it feels more like how Mako was before, like it's not a huge...

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Cause this would be a huge change for how the character works.

AUSTIN: Yes, it would, yeah.

KEITH: To all of a sudden be this way. And then also, you know, as the... as Mako progresses, then eventually the self-deck of Mako is going to be a better deck than just a deck I could have.

AUSTIN: Right. That said, you still have to kind of pay the cost that everyone pays on cyberware, which is that...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: How did you pay for this, and the answer is always going to be like, well someone is mad that you have this thing. Which will, which will underline the notion that... that you're not gonna escape from the September Institute. Just by, you know, leaving. You know?

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Okay. So it sounds like we all have our - our playbooks picked out. Now, name and describe your characters. So go ahead and open up your play- your actual character sheets in Roll20 now, and on the character sheet itself, type in your name, and then - and then, you can just freeform type in your look if you want, but there are really good things besides the name suggestions on each playbook... where you can tell me what your eyes, face, body, skin, and wear are like. And I think that's a good idea, to - to do that right now, cause it's been a little while since we've done this.

ART: Uh - does - is everyone's skin looks kind of weird?

AUSTIN: It's... so, so the skin looks here I think are, are... (pauses) So the skin looks, for instance, your soldier? Right, Art?

ART: Yeah (laughs).

AUSTIN: The skin looks here are... artificial, Asian or South Asian, black, decorated, Hispanic/Latino, Indigenous, Middle Eastern, white, or then an empty one where you just fill in whatever.

KEITH: Yeah, that's what I'm going to do.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Which - which actually super reflects the history of cyberpunk. So cyberpunk comes out of the 1980's, at a period where, you know, one, it reflects the - the growing technological boom in East Asia, which is why there's always like, Japanese and Chinese characters on everything in cyberpunk things. And two, it was kind of representing this like, post-war boom of multiculturalism around the world. And so a lot of cyberpunk heroes are not just white folk, which is nice.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: But seeing it all laid out like this is maybe like, oh hey, weird, like why is this a thing? But, eh, it's kind of - I'm kind of into it, and also, we are already doing this, in a weird way. When I talk about Jamil, I talk about her skin color, you know? I have a pretty clear understanding of what - what - I talked about Cene in that way too, right? It was like, very beautiful but pale white skin. So, I think it's an important thing if you actually use the spectrum. Does that make sense?

ART: Sure. Although for Cass, I've always just been like, vaguely Mediterranean.

AUSTIN: That's fine. And also, we're not... Asia, South Asian, doesn't make sense in... two hundred thousand years from now, in deep outer space. So...

ART: Sure, when there's no Asia anymore?

AUSTIN: Right. So just give me a color, you know? Just give me a, like a... the other thing here is, when people draw fanart of these characters, they'll actually know (laughs) what - what their skin color is like. (pauses) So what do you have, Art? What's - what's Cass look like?

ART: I have weary eyes, thin face, wiry body, Mediterranean skin, vintage style.

AUSTIN: (excited) I like vi- oh yeah, what does vintage style - oh! Is it like, is it like clothes that were in before the war?

ART: I think it is! I also think it's like, if he needed more clothes, he would have just had to like, get what was available, which is probably a little old. #00:40:00#

AUSTIN: Mm, sure, sure. (pauses) Yeah, I like that a lot. I also just - I like that that's like, oh, is the style here back when it was an Apostolosian place, you know?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which isn't, probably, *that* different from what it is now, but it's... it's like... I'm almost thinking of it in terms of like, ah... you know, did you ever see - do you ever see like posters or pictures of, mid-century, like, Iran? Where it's like, it's like -

ART (overlapping Austin): Uh, I've seen the movie Argo, is that...?

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah, I think that that's right. Where, you know, where it's like... it's just, it's vaguely western clothing, right? Or it's like, it's - it's onboard for what everything else is, but like little flashes of local... style? Do you know what I mean?

ART: Yeah.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Because, you know, vintage at this point would be still post-connection with the Diaspora and OriCon, but pre-war, maybe.

JACK: Do we know -

AUSTIN: Or pre-all, all-out war.

JACK: Do we know what... Ap- Apostolosian aesthetics looks like?

AUSTIN: (sighs) We've been describing it as Greek in general, which is a bad way of describing it. I've - I've been thinking of it as like, the closest thing that we have to like, the... kind of, sci-fi, space opera aesthetic of empires, right?

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think it's like, it's chic, and, and... lots of li- like, lots of hard lines.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: Lots of... dark colors, with like, single, like, highlight tones, right? Like, like...

JACK: Do they prefer, like, painting? Or sculpture?

AUSTIN: (thoughtfully) I don't know.

ART: I think they're sculpture people?

AUSTIN: Yeah? That makes sense.

ART: Although I don't know if sculptures would make it to space.

KEITH (overlapping Art): Bas-relief. It's all bas-relief.

AUSTIN: (to Art) Probably not. But, but if you think about things like the way that we described their ship as having like, a weird sail?

JACK: Oh, yes! Yes.

AUSTIN: A weird golden sail, right? Like...

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Maybe they're doing sculpture in other form, right? But it's still about volume and about shape, more than it is about...

JACK: Wait, why wouldn't sculpture make it to space?

ART: (pauses) Cause it's heavy?

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): There's a lot of - there's a lot of, it's heavy to put it onto a spaceship. You need, you need to...

JACK: Oh, sorry, I just meant on like, home planets, I guess.

AUSTIN: Oh, sure. (pauses) With their one home planet that's left, probably - (Jack laughs) yeah, maybe that's, they have lots of statuary. Though, though again, there is actually - we talked about, I think, I definitely think that the Diaspora is very into statues.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: Because... they like, like building monuments of the Divines, you know?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Alright, AuDy. What - what, what did you pick for looks?

JACK: Eyes - no eyes.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Okay, good. (Keith laughs)

JACK: Face - no face.

AUSTIN: No face? Okay.

JACK: Body - probably compact, I think.

AUSTIN: I like compact.

JACK: Designed to fit into as many models of car as possible.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: Skin - no skin!

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: I guess... carbon fiber and ceramic plates on shoulders and elbows.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JACK: So... wear - corporate.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: (laughs) Because - they are manufactured by a corporation, I guess?

AUSTIN: Sure. But like, we did talk about their weird vest, right?

JACK: Right! Okay, so -

AUSTIN: Something that's like, military?

JACK: I guess, or military police?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JACK: It's just like a blue kevlar - blue kevlar vest.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: That says "Police" on it. (Austin laughs) Does it say "Police" on it?

AUSTIN: I don't know, does it? Say "Security," does it say...

JACK: Well, they stole it from... from a PoliceBot.

AUSTIN: Yeah, then it says "Police" on it. (laughs)

JACK: Oh, so I guess it says "Automated Police" or something.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Or maybe... maybe, does, does it, have you, has AuDy... like, decorated it at all?

JACK: Oh, god no.

AUSTIN: Like, removed a couple of letters? It just says "Automated Police" on it?

JACK: (laughs) Oh no, it - they have -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): "AutoPol?" Does that what it - does it just say "AutoPol" on it?

JACK (overlapping Austin): They, no, they've removed the word "Police." It just says "Automated."

AUSTIN: Okay. I like it. Good. Good.

JACK: But yeah, that's it I think.

AUSTIN: And... Mako?

KEITH: Um, we switched games, but we're still doing anime, right?

AUSTIN: Oh it still - yeah, yes. (laughs) Yes, we are still doing anime.

KEITH: Okay. Alright. Nervous eyes.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Sharp face.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

KEITH: Young body.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

KEITH: (pauses) *Very slightly blue skin.*

AUSTIN: (laughs) Goddammit.

KEITH: (laughs) And warm clothes.

AUSTIN: *Very slightly blue skin.* (laughs) Okay! No, that's good, that's fine, that's -

ART (overlapping Austin): Perpetual sweatdrop? Is that - is that in there?

AUSTIN: (laughs) Yeah, that's one of them, yep. (Ali laughs) Yeah, totally! And Aria?

ALI: Okay, so, shining eyes.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's also what she shou- that's also her hit song, Shining Eyes, right?

ALI: (laughing) Yes! Alluring face.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: Toned body.

AUSTIN: Mmhm. (laughs)

ALI: Asian skin. And then, speaking about my look, how much time do you have? (laughter)

AUSTIN: That's a good question, that's - I - yeah. Uh huh.

ALI: (laughing) So, I guess the - ugh, god, I had like, the longest conversation with Rose about this last night.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: But like, the way that I've always thought about Aria's clothes is that like, in the way that like, now you know what like a Navy Admiral's jacket looks, and then there are like, women's clothes that are inspired by that? #00:45:00#

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Like... (sighs) There's like this desire to present authority in the ways that she dresses, in that like... like, menswear inspired like cuts,

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: and like those same kind of hems, and like, really impressive, like, shoulderpads. But also like, *super* feminine accessories, and like...

AUSTIN: Interesting.

ALI: shirts that are, like, sequined. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Right. So is it, is it like, do you - does she wear, is it like jackets? And then underneath the jacket is where the, the kind of like sequined shirts are,

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: and like, the prints, the, all of that stuff?

ALI: Yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly.

AUSTIN: That's a cool mix.

ALI: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I definitely have a better image of all of these characters in my head now, I think. Which is good.

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN: Wait, did we do hair? Is hair an option?

JACK: Um, no, I don't think so.

AUSTIN: I need hair for everybody.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Spiky yellow hair.

AUSTIN: (amused) Slightly yellow hair, good. Are you just one of the characters from that Daft Punk video, Keith?

KEITH: (laughing) No, I said *spiky* yellow hair!

AUSTIN: Oh, *spiky* yellow hair.

KEITH: As in - yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART (overlapping Austin): I also heard slightly yellow, (Austin laughs) which I thought was a very weird choice. (laughter)

KEITH: (laughing) Slightly! No, none of that, not that.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Is it One More Time? One More Time is the thing I'm thinking of? Yeah, blue skin, those people have yellow hair sometimes. Yes. People should watch the One More Time music videos, they're really good.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They're really good.

KEITH: Which music videos?

AUSTIN: The Daft Punk One More Time?

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: Videos? It's super anime. They're very anime, and it's good.

JACK: Oh, what I was gonna say is just in terms of... sort of (laughs) actually what AuDy looks like?

AUSTIN: Mmhm?

JACK: @silverskinned on Twitter, Emily, (laughs) drew some - some art, trying to work out -

AUSTIN: No way, really?

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah, it's - it's so good, I have to send you a link.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): I haven't seen this, I missed this. You need to link it.

JACK: And what - what's really interesting is I think it probably confirms what I'm thinking, which is that... nobody, including me, knows what AuDy looks like, and that's okay. It's brilliant.

AUSTIN: Oh, wow!

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: These are bigger than I thought.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Oh, when you said -

JACK: Yeah, that's exactly what I thought.

AUSTIN: I mean, I'm picturing, like - you know, at this point, I've been picturing things in the Chappie style.

JACK: Me too, yeah.

AUSTIN: Or the, in the...

JACK: Mixed with -

KEITH (overlapping Jack): I was thinking of you as -

JACK: (pauses) Oh, go on.

KEITH: As like... as a... like a Star Wars droid style.

AUSTIN: Mm.

KEITH: Like.

JACK: I think there's -

KEITH: Like, ba- you just, to me you just look like a battle droid, with like a, instead of a regular head, just like a weirder head.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

JACK: I think they're a bit weightier than that. I don't know. I think that they have, probably, Chappie meets all of @archillect, which is a really great Twitter bot.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: That occasionally throws up amazing robots.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: But I really like, in Emily's drawing, I really like the way that... I don't know if I like it in the sense that... I think it's what AuDy looks like, but I super like the fact that they have this... enormous central component?

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: That's simultaneously a torso and a head.

AUSTIN: And a head, I like that a lot. We hadn't - I had not been thinking that way, but I actually, now that I see it, that's a cool take. (pauses) Anyway, we're next step. Assigning stats. (laughs)

ART: Wait wait, my - I didn't get to say my hair.

AUSTIN: Oh, thank you.

ART: Which is Persona 4 protagonist. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Ah, that's good hair. That's good hair. You want, you want Persona 4 -

KEITH: That's hair that's gotten better over the Persona 4 releases, too.

AUSTIN: That is true, yeah. (pauses) Stats, stats, okay. You get to assign six stats. The numbers that you assign are +2, +1, +1, +0, and -1. I'll go over what the stats are really quick, because... they are new, different stats. They are, Cool, which is used in the move Act Under Fire, which is the... the Sprawl equivalent of what you might know as Defy Danger, which is the kind of like... I have to do a thing, and someone's shooting at me, or there's a - the bridge is

falling out from under me, I'm trying to jump to the edge, or I'm trying to sneak past security cameras, or something like that. That - Cool does that. Cool also does Apply First Aid. Edge, which is - it, it lets you do kind of assessing a location, which is sort of like... is it Spout Lore?

JACK: Discern Realities?

AUSTIN: Discern Realities, thank you. That's the actual one. Yeah yeah yeah. Where it's like, what's happening here, what - who's vulnerable to me, how am I vulnerable, where can I get my advantage, stuff like that. So that's Edge, and it's also Play Hardball, and Play Hardball is a - is... a threat of violence that you intend to carry out. So it's putting a gun to someone's head and saying, tell me where the central computer system is, and if they don't, you will kill them. Like. There's a different move, that uses Style, for if you're just bluffing. Play Hardball is, you're going to follow through on the - the threat that you're making.

JACK: And is that a sort of contract that we make as players,

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: that would say that if we perform Play Hardball, we are going to enact it.

AUSTIN: Correct.

JACK: Alright, cool.

AUSTIN: One hundred percent. Meat, is another - is the next stat. I love the stat names in this so much.

JACK: That stat is so good! #00:50:00#

AUSTIN: Meat is for Mix It Up, which is, when you use violence against an armed force to seize control of an objective, state that objective and roll Meat. So that can be, that's like your actual, just like - I want, what I want to do here is get this thing, and I'm doing it by... using violence. This isn't the threat of violence, this is I'm using violence to secure an objective. And an objective can be like, we want to hold this room, and so I'm using violence to push them out of the room, right? Or it can be, the objective I want to secure is that person dead. (laughs) And I'm using Mix It Up to do that. And that's just like an attack in Apocalypse World, which you haven't played, but - but attacking in this game is not the same as attacking in Dungeon World, which just means like, there's no damage rolls in this game. A gun that does two damage does two damage, and then your roll can give it a little bonus or something, but it isn't going to - you're not, never going to roll a damage dice in this game, separate. Meat is also how you resist dying. There's a move called Acquire Agricultural Property, which is a great name. And that is, you roll Meat to resist dying, basically.

Mind is for Research, and Research is a thing you can do early on in the step of a - of a mission, where you're researching stuff, and you get intel that you can then cash in. You can also use it at the mission, right? Like, if you get to the central computer system, and you can

use Research. Like, what - what you were doing in Orth's office would have been a Research roll. You know? When you were like, going through his files. There is Style, which is what you use to do Fast Talk and Hit the Street. Fast Talk is what we said before, it's like bluffing, it's - you've - Mako has done all the Fast Talk (laughs) in the world. This game.

KEITH: Hi. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Hit - Hit the Street is like going to get stuff. Again, you'll do this a lot before the actual, like, the mission phase of the mission, during the kind of legwork, research phase, where you'll go out to get intel, and gear, and stuff like that. It's, it's when you go to a contact for help. Which again, you've done that a lot. This is one of the reasons why I think this is a good system for us, is we've been playing (clock chimes) with the structures of this system for a long time. (pauses) At not quite clock? Was that not quite clock?

JACK: That was not quite clock.

AUSTIN: Aww. It's been a while. Um, so yeah, we've been doing this sort of like, oh, we'll go to a contact to get some information, so going to Jim or going to Jamil would have - would have used Hit the Street. And there, you get to... ask for information, or gear, or something like that. And then there's Synth, and Synth doesn't have a verb built into it, but using cyberware sometimes uses Synth, certain rolls use Synth, stuff like that.

There's also a little bit more that I, that I actually should mention before we commit where your stats are, which are... this game makes a big deal of actually *getting* the job, of like, negotiating rates with your - with whoever your client is. And going forward, you will not only be working with Orth. In fact, I think you will probably not be working with Orth as much as you used to. So, so there's a roll with Edge called Get the Job, and... when you do well, when you get a 10 or above on that, you can choose from three on the list below. On a 7-9, you only get to choose one, and it's either... the list is, the employer provides information and you get a resource called intel. The employer provides useful assets, which is a resource called gear, and you can cash those in during the mission for bonuses. The next is, the job pays well. The next one is, the meeting doesn't attract attention. And the final one is, the employer is identifiable.

And this is just like, classic cyberpunk stuff, like who are we really working for, what do they really want... is someone watching us get the job, are we gonna get paid the way we want. And then of course, each of your playbooks also is going to have moves that are... that lean a certain way, in terms of, in terms of what stats you might want to use. And I think each thing says what the suggested top two are. Is that right? Yeah, so like Driver says your Cool should be a +2 or +1. Which is true. Because a lot of the moves use Cool. (pauses) So, go ahead and assign those. Ask me any questions you have about moves or anything else too.

ART: Okay, I guess my question is... it says my Edge should be 2 or 1.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: I was gonna make my Edge 1 and my Cool 2 because that's what the...

AUSTIN: The -

ART: the medic stuff is.

AUSTIN: Yes. Totally.

ART: And it, it reflects better.

AUSTIN: It does. I like that. That's fine. (pauses) It means that you only -

KEITH: Where does it say this?

AUSTIN: So for Hacker... the other thing is, we should actually talk really quick, Keith. Let's figure this out for you, that way we -

KEITH: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: we make it permanent, here. So, for Hacker, it suggests it...

KEITH: Oh, I see it.

AUSTIN: It says your Edge should be + - no, that's Hunter. Sorry. I just...

KEITH: Uh, Synth and Mind should be 2 or 1.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that that's probably true. Like, those are the two that we've been thinking about as being your derivative stats, the stats that your deck is kind of comprised of.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I think we should do... let me actually look at your moves really quick, so that we can...

KEITH: Okay. (pauses) I -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): So I can actually make this plan. What were you gonna say?

KEITH: I, cause I'm looking at the - I'm looking at the things, and I feel like... sorry, did you say - was Mind or Style the Fast Talk?

AUSTIN: Mi- uh, Style is Fast Talk.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: And again, you're gonna have at least one advancement, so you can always use one of those advancements for another move or increasing a stat. #00:55:00#

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The most you can increase a stat to to begin with is 2. Even - in other words, even with that free advance I'm giving you, you can't - you can't go to a 3 on any stat. So, keep that in mind, too. There's also, Keith, the other thing is -

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: There is, there's the list of the actual moves you use while you're, while you're kind of jacked in. And those do use Synth and Mind. So like, when you try to log into a system, you do so with the Login move, which uses Synth. When you try to Compromise Security, you use Mind. That's all Mind and Synth stuff there - ah, no, there's also Edge, which is when you like attack in the, in the network.

KEITH: Alright. I think I've - I think I've got it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Right now I've got Synth 2, Style 1, Mind 1. Edge and Cool 0. Meat -1.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that's right. I think that that's correct. That sounds right to me.

KEITH: Yeah. And then when are - are we doing the advancement now? Should we get the advancement now?

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): No, let's - let's wait until the end, and then we'll do advancement.

KEITH: Okay.

JACK: I think I might -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Because we still have to pick moves. Yep?

JACK: I think I might have got mine.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: So, Cool, 2.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Edge, 1.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Meat, 1. Mind, none. Style, -1.

AUSTIN: Mhm. (Keith laughs)

JACK: And Synth, 0.

AUSTIN: Mmhm!

KEITH: (laughing) Love the idea of AuDy having just like, noticeably no style.

AUSTIN: Yeah! (laughs) You know.

ART: I think it's -

KEITH: (laughing) He's just a - what a *drab* robot!

JACK: (laughs) AuDy is - AuDy is about as stylish as, you know, like... just like a really effective kitchen unit!

AUSTIN: Yep!

KEITH: He - he's no - they're no Chappie.

AUSTIN: Correct. (laughter)

ALI: Now, I think I have my... numbers.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: So, Cool is 1.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: Edge is 1.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: Meat is 0. Mind is 0. Style is 2, and then Synth is -1.

AUSTIN: Okay. That sounds right. (pauses) It will be - that will make it a little bit tough to... fight in your mech, because mech fighting is gonna use Synth.

ART: Oh, that answers my question then.

AUSTIN: There you go. Well you - well, not all mech fighting. Playing Hardball will use Edge. So if you're like, intimidating, or, or something, with your mech? But, but Mixing it Up is rolling Synth in a vehicle instead of rolling Meat.

ALI: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: So keep that in mind. And you can see that -

ART (overlapping Austin): No, but it - it - it should be my second one. I should - that's, that answers my question.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. Yeah.

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: This is the -

ALI (overlapping Austin): I also have that... that arm...

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, you do also have that cool arm.

ALI: (quietly) So I should switch... the negative one, to maybe...

KEITH (overlapping Ali): Oh, that's great for me, because that -

ALI: Hm?

KEITH: That makes... like, my hacking, and me ac- like, physically attacking from my flyboard...

AUSTIN: *With* the flyboard.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Right, where I just have it -

AUSTIN: I think it's like, any time you're ramming people with the flyboard it works. You know? Or if you buy guns to attach to it, or something like that. (pauses) Yeah, you know what, yeah. I just - anytime you attack on the flyboard, it'll use Synth. Totally.

KEITH: Okay.

ALI: What other ways does Synth come up, like...

AUSTIN: So, it comes up -

ALI: Does it affect how we interact with our, like, gear stuff?

AUSTIN: It affects cyberware. So, like, for instance, as a Pusher... one second, let me go to your thing and see what you possible cyberware is to begin with. (pauses) Ah, yeah, so like if you pick - so you're, you'll probably pick Neural Interface, right?

ALI: Yeah, sure, cause that's - yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): Which is the thing that you have - that is the thing that you have. But if you also went on to pick... cybercoms, you'd be rolling Synth to do the Assess move. Or, or, sorry, or cyber eyes, they both - it's like, whenever you use a cyberware thing, Synth can be - not whenever, but, but often. There's a cyberware list a little bit later on in the book, on page 113.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So like you have that cyberarm, right?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: And also, here's a thing, I don't - like, I'm gonna do my best to make us work through the system here, but if there's anything that we need to just like, yeah, I'll say you have that thing cause it's established in the fiction, you'll just have it, cause it's established in the fiction. Though right now, you just kind of have a regular cyberarm, you didn't get anything cool with it, but... if you end up giving that cyberarm... (pauses) actually, none of those really do anything with Synth. (clicks tongue) Trying to see if there's anything else here. Um, so if somebody's got muscle grafts, which are synthetic fibers grafted into human muscle, to increase their strength, they would use Synth instead of Meat while Mixing it Up.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: And also give - give it extra harm. Did anybody else have questions here?

ALI: Um...

KEITH: I'm just reading through some of the... cyberware types.

AUSTIN: Yeah. (pauses) Which is the next step, the next step will be to pick cyberware.

ALI: Okay.

KEITH: I'm having a hard time like, coming up with... cause they give me, basically, as a Hacker, they give me a cyberware...

AUSTIN: Right. #01:00:00#

KEITH: that is the equivalent of the, of like, the ability to Fog stuff?

AUSTIN: That's what we're just - that's the thing that you're, you'll take, you know?

KEITH: Right, but... (confused) that's the thing that I *don't* take?

AUSTIN: No no no, I mean - wait, we'll - I'm saying that's what you *will* take. You'll take that thing, right?

KEITH: Oh, okay, sorry, I just meant - yeah. But, the, the tags that it wants me to pick for it kind of don't make sense for a non-mechanical... thing?

AUSTIN: Uh, no, I think they do. I think that they - I think that's an element of this that we haven't thought about before?

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So it's the, the tags are Inaccessible Partition, Encrypted, High Capacity, or High Speed.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: It's a way for me to think about how other Strati are set up. Right?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: So, so for instance, if you have High Capacity and - and High Speed, that means that compared to other Strati, you can carry more information back in your brain, which then you can offload, than they can. When you - when you Fog things. Like when you get into a Divine, you'd be able to then like, get info of it out of it. You know?

KEITH: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Whereas, if you had Encrypted, it would be harder for me to, to hack into *your* brain, as a different Strati.

KEITH: Mmhm. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or - or as a counter hacker or something, you know?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: So I - I'm with you, but they, they - they don't - they don't fit as *well* as they would if you were just talking about a computer. If you had other suggestions, I'd be open to them.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: But we can just think about them in, in - kind of broader terms.

KEITH: Sure.

ALI: Yeah, I switched Synth and Mind, so Mind is 0.

AUSTIN: Mmhm. That's -

ALI: Or, Mind is -1, and then Synth is 0.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that makes the most sense. Alright. Do we have everybody's stats now? I think we do - or, do we have Cass's? Yeah, we have Cass's, we have Mako's, we have AuDy's, we have Aria's. Okay. The next step is cyberware. Cyberware is really interesting in this game. (reading) In the Sprawl, everyone's got chrome, but replacing human tissue with metal and plastic isn't a trivial exercise. Choose one piece of cyberware from the options on your playbook. Think about how you got into the business. The MC - me - will ask you two questions.

One, *why* did you get part of your body cut out and replaced with electronics? Choose one: Prosthetic, forced, loyalty, enthusiasm, necessity, junky, genetics, career, ideology, memory, or military.

(speaking regularly) And then, like, more than just those words. This is on page 50, by the way. And then two, and this is where it gets tricky, and good, (reading) how did you afford to have someone cut out part of your body and replace it with electronics? Choose one: You scrimped and saved to buy it yourself. Choose on tag to apply to that piece of cyberware: Unreliable, substandard, hardware decay, or damaging. Or, someone else paid for it, and now you owe them. You're Owned. Choose who owns you. Or, you fucked someone over to get it, you're Hunted. Describe who you double-crossed.

KEITH: So this game is supposing that if you paid for it yourself, it's shitty no matter what.

AUSTIN: Yes. Because that's - you know, you're individuals in this world that is much bigger than you. Or - and you're freelancers, right? Like, you're -

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: This isn't a game for people who are currently in the full time employee of the corporations, right? Those people -

KEITH: And it does, it does make room for people who *used* to have the money with hardware decay.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

KEITH: You *did* have the money...

AUSTIN: Totally.

KEITH: to get a real part, and now you're losing it.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): And now it's falling apart. So I'll go over what each of those actually is, too, really quick.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Because those all actually do something specific. Here we go. So, let me go over them one by one. There's a list of cyberware tags on 115. (reading) Damaging - sometimes it hurts like hell, and eventually it will do permanent nerve damage. (Jack laughs) Hardware decay - it works now, but it's just a matter of time. Yeah, Substandard - it works, but not as well as it should. And Unreliable - sometimes it doesn't work. (speaking) And those are things that I'll be able to, to leverage when you miss, right? When I make a move after you've missed, it could be like, you failed that attack, why? Well, because... you have unreliable chrome, you know? (pauses) Which is my least favorite browser! I don't know why I have the unreliable Chrome browser, but. (Ali laughs) So, so - pick one of the - pick out some cyberware, and then define it

with the why you got it, and the... one of those negative things, and let me know when you're ready.

JACK: We can pick one each?

AUSTIN: One each, yep. And it's from the list on your sheet, on your playbook.

JACK: Alright.

AUSTIN: And also start thinking about your vehicle in this way, because the next step that I'm introducing here, the next hack I'm doing to make this a game about giant robots and spaceships, is that you all have a vehicle, also. And have to - and, instead of just building it the way the Driver does, where they don't owe anybody anything, you are also going to need to owe someone something for that vehicle. And that's how we're gonna bring that stuff over, in the same way.

ALI: Austin, I should put both my things down, just cause the fiction has like, established that I've had them, right?

AUSTIN: (hesitantly) Yeah, but the second one doesn't do anything yet, so don't...

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like right now it's just an arm, right? #01:05:00#

ALI: Okay. I don't think - yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): So I don't think you're hunted for it, I think you bought that. Maybe that has a negative tag, like... what are the - what are the - let me think. What's a good negative tag for what you have there? For your cyberarm.

ALI: Cause I was gonna say, like - if there's been a time skip there, I'd like, like establish that she wanted to... get a new one?

AUSTIN: Right... but I don't know that you have the money for that, do you?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Or for like, that's a thing that we'd have to do - I would rather do that in play.

ALI: Yeah, okay. Okay.

AUSTIN: Oh, it's just - I think it's just Substandard, right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, we talked about how it looks like it's not human skin. Is it in fact - did we decide if it was like, straight up chrome? Like, a robot hand, like Beyoncé's?

ALI: (laughs) I think the one that she, she like got from...

ART: Wait, Beyoncé has a robot hand?! Did I miss -

AUSTIN: Yeah, Beyoncé -

ALI: Watch the Single Ladies video. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I initially - yeah, I initially wanted to get one with skin on it, but then... Lucas, a friend of the show, reminded me of that video, and I was like fuck!

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: I have to keep this chrome hand!

AUSTIN: It's the best - it's so good!

ALI: It's so good!

JACK: Uh, it seems like the only cyberware available for the Driver is a neural interface with the remote control module, and fuck that.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah, don't - it's, that's not a thing that you have, so... you can go to the cyberware - you can either look in different playbooks or just go to the list of cyberware, which is after the list of playbooks.

JACK: Cool.

AUSTIN: And - and pitch something to me. And I'll say yeah, that makes sense.

JACK: Okay. I'll find it. Do you know what page number that is, offhand?

AUSTIN: (uncertainly) Yeah, it's 112.

JACK: Cool, thank you.

AUSTIN: 113, 113, sorry.

JACK: (pauses) I'm just - you know, talking about what you - what we want to bring forward, and what we want to leave behind, and things?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: I'm - I really like the idea of a robot who doesn't like networking.

AUSTIN: Me too. Yeah, well like, so I don't want to leave anything behind if we don't have to. The only thing I would like to leave behind is like, if there's weird rule stuff that would - that didn't make sense to you,

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: in terms of how you were managing your character? But I don't want to leave anything behind that isn't, like, impossible to bring - like, we, if you can bring something over, we should be bringing it over, as long as it continues to make sense.

JACK: These are narrative- as well as rules-based, right?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

JACK: These govern how we're gonna tell the stories as well as how we're gonna make the moves?

AUSTIN: Exactly. That's how most Powered by the Apocalypse games work, you know, the - the rules follow the fiction, and the fiction reflects the rules. To do it, you have to do it. Which means, if you have a cyberarm with - cyberarm with augmented strength, I'm gonna let you punch through that door and open it. Whereas if you don't, like, that's a hard thing to do.

JACK: Sure.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

ART: So, so my - I have two ideas for my, my... stuff.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ART: Or I have one idea, and then two... how?

AUSTIN: (pauses, laughs) What - what? Okay. (Ali laughs)

ART: The - my, the... the 'why' is military-based, right? It's, this is -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Yeah, I think so.

ART: This is what happened. (pauses) And then the, but the tags become a little, like... the temptation to do like, Hardware Decay is like, it's old, right? The war is over.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: But it's like -

AUSTIN: And it's falling apart.

ART: But it's not the same - it's, that's not the same, the same as saying I scrimped and saved to buy it. I didn't buy it, it was bought for me. It's falling apart because it's old.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. That's fine, though.

ART: Alright, cause the other one is fuck someone over to get it, but Hunted doesn't describe really what we're doing.

AUSTIN: Here's - so, you can think about scrimped and saved to buy it, for our purposes, as being... you got it legitimately, and also you aren't Hunted or Owned. Do you know what I mean?

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: So, so you can - you can kind of disregard the flavor of 'you scrimped and saved to buy it' to - to add that thing. If that's really the way you want to go. Because, in your case especially, I think you're right that like, you're not Owned. You're specifically not owned by Apostolos. And you're not really Hunted, or if you're hunted, it's not because you have this, this cyberware.

ART: This piece of cyberware, right.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Then it's - it's neural interface, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so. Which says, when you're - (reading) when you fire a weapon you are linked to, you may inflict additional harm equal to your Synth. You may also roll Synth instead of Meat to Mix it Up. You may precisely define the area of effect for weapons with the Autofire tag to exclude or include potential targets from weapon damage. (speaking) Which means like, if you have an assault rifle... Again, this is a situation where like, if you rolled a miss with a weapon with autofire, that's an opportunity for me to say yeah, you hit your target, but you also hit those innocent people behind them. Right? And if you have neural - neural interface with targeting suite, you can be like, no, I have this targeting suite that means that that won't happen. Like, make sure that that doesn't happen.

I think that's the right call, though. And I think it's also cool because it means you could interface with... (pauses) You'll be interfacing with, with your... with anything that has linked, which could include the Megalophile's weapons, right?

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: That's, you're doing Hardware Decay with that?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool.

JACK: I think I am going to go for synthetic nerves.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I looked very long and hard at cyberlegs.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: Just because... (laughing) everybody, I think, in this chat really likes it when spectres jump onto roofs. #01:10:00#

AUSTIN: I really do. Cause again, one of the cool things is, you know, you can continue getting cyberware as you, as you...

JACK (overlapping Austin): That's super true.

AUSTIN: level up, so, ehh, you know.

JACK: But I think I'm gonna go for synthetic nerves, just because if we're trying to put AuDy in the Venn diagram spot between Driver and Killer, I'm gonna take -

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: I'm gonna want to take extra stuff for Mix it Up and Act Under Pressure.

AUSTIN: Totally. So wait, what did you... you're taking synthetic nerves?

JACK: Synthetic nerves. Which, in case you missed Austin saying it before...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: means that if nobody else that I'm attacking has synth nerves, I take one forward, uh, +1 forward to Mix it Up.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: And in situations where the reaction time is critical, I take +1 forward to Act Under Pressure.

AUSTIN: Very good stuff. And then yeah, I'm - I'm thinking maybe you should take... I don't know. We'll - we'll get there with moves in a second, but from Killer there's the Custom Weapon move, and that includes... that's an implanted weapon.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: So, you've talked about that shotgun you had before. So that might be a good... thing.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Anyway, we'll get there. (pauses) Other cyberware. Mako, have you finalized which tags you want on your thing?

KEITH: (pauses) Yeah. I'm gonna do Encrypted and High Capacity.

AUSTIN: Okay, so that means like you're a little harder to hack into, and you can carry some extra information. Or actually, there are specific tags, let me go actually read exactly what they say, that way - that way, three weeks from now, I'm not like oh, that's not what it actually says. So High Capacity says greatly increases the storage capacity of the device, which in this case is your weird... cyberbrain.

KEITH: My brain.

AUSTIN: (reading) This is useful for storing, uploading, and transporting large quantities of complex data. You will be able to loot more pay dirt from corporate archives and locally store more recorded data. And the other one was Encrypted - it is resis- it's resistant to hacking. The MC must make a move to subvert the encryption before making a move to hack the cybernetic device. (speaking) So that means if you screw up once, I have to like - I have to spend a move, to -

KEITH (overlapping): You get to roll - roll twice.

AUSTIN: to get *through* your thing, and I mean, you know, again, I never roll.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: But instead of being able to hit you right away, and saying oh you take three damage because I've - I've - you know, given you cybershock, I'll have to say like, they bust through your cybershield, your brain shield. Your neural net shield.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Your neural ae- ae- aegis [pronounced with hard g]. Aegis [hard g]? Aegis [soft g]? I wouldn't, uh, I never know how to say that word.

ART: I think it's aegis [soft g].

JACK: Aegis of the Immortals.

AUSTIN: Aegis? Okay. And, Aria.

ALI: Yeah. Uh, hi.

AUSTIN: Hi! How's it going? How you feeling?

ALI: I... I've been... (hesitantly) I guess I'm going the same way Art is? With... it's a neural interface with Hardware Decay?

AUSTIN: Okay. (pauses) In fact, here's a thing that you should write down. You should write neural interface with - you should be taking the Driver equivalent, because that's what's established in the - in the fiction.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So, write down, it's called... it's something that AuDy just didn't take.

JACK: What - what?

AUSTIN: Uh, the - the, your default cyberware that you -

JACK (overlapping Austin): Oh, neural interface.

AUSTIN: Neural interface with remote control module. Which remember...

ALI: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: It's definitely a thing we've seen you do, is control the Regent's Brilliance remotely.

ALI: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: (reading) Allows neural control of appropriately configured external devices such as a vehicle, weapon, or recording device, or hacked electronic system. The remote control module gives the interface wireless broadcast and reception capacity to allow the remote control of vehicles and drones. (pauses, speaking) Oh yeah, so what are your - what's your reason, Aria? Oh yeah, career.

ALI: Yeah, career.

AUSTIN: And what's your - what's your cost? What's, what's up with it? What's the negative tag with it?

ALI: Hardware Decay?

AUSTIN: Okay, so it's falling apart?

ALI: I don't know if I should do that or...

AUSTIN: I kind of like - hm.

ALI: (uncertainly) Owned...?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think I lean Owned. I think -

ALI: I - I thought we were gonna lean that way with... the Brilliance, though.

AUSTIN: I mean, we could lean that way with both of them. (laughs)

ALI: (laughs nervously) Yeah... we *could*...

AUSTIN: But, but let's do - you're right. I think it's more interesting to mix it up, right?

ALI: Yeah, cause the, like, the fiction that we had set up before was that like, this thing was implanting into her brain, she was going to Cene to like...

AUSTIN: Right, to - to -

ALI: Keep it updated.

AUSTIN: Totally, yeah. So then yeah, let's do... let's do Decay.

ALI: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: That makes sense to me.

ALI: Uh, what - hm.

KEITH (overlapping Ali): Um -

AUSTIN: Mako?

KEITH: Oh, I was just gonna say, am I... does the Hacker also need to have a... an Own- like a, Decay, or Owned, or whatever, that?

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Yes, totally. All cyberware has that.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So it's, it's Decay, Owned, Substandard, Damaging...

KEITH (overlapping Austin): I guess I'm Owned by the September Institute.

AUSTIN: Are you Owned, or are you Hunted?

KEITH: (breathes in, hesitates) I, well... I think that I would like to think that I'm Hunted, but really I'm Owned?

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. (Ali laughs) Where it's like, they, they know - they're not hunting you down, they know exactly where you are, and they're just waiting for the right opportunity to ask you to pay back that favor you owe them.

KEITH: Right, right.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And then if that doesn't go well -

AUSTIN: Then it shifts, totally.

KEITH: Then maybe, then it shifts to Hunted.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So yeah.

KEITH: Alright, so -

AUSTIN: Go ahead and write Owned, September Institute. (pauses) AuDy, what about you?

JACK: I'm - I'm really toying between whether or not this is som- cause it could go both ways, right? #01:15:00#

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: It could be something AuDy was built with, designed to... you know. (sighs) But the only other people parking - (laughs) AuDy was built for very low risk driving situations.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Right. Right.

JACK: *Incredibly* low risk driving situations. (pauses) In fact, I think when we talked about it, right, AuDy is just the artificial intelligence that has downloaded itself to one of the parking robots.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JACK: It controlled every parking robot in the lot.

AUSTIN: Yes, yeah.

JACK: So it didn't need to worry about anything crashing into anything.

AUSTIN: Well, though it did, because it was - it's like making, it's just having incredible dexterity of your body, right? Where like, all of AuDy's drones were... its body, in a weird way. And it was manipulating them at a high level of like... it's like finger dancing or something, do you know what I mean? Like.

JACK: That's true. It was only doing like three-point turns, though.

AUSTIN: That's - (laughs) that is also true, yes.

JACK: Like, in comparison to flying the Kingdom Come. The other option is that after - after gaining... sen- sentence,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: AuDy just went to some place and just got these synthetic nerves implanted.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Upgraded them.

JACK: And part of me is tending towards the latter, because I think there was definitely a point where AuDy went, okay, I want to be a pilot.

AUSTIN: Mm, mmhm. I want to be - I want to do more than park cars, I want to park *spaceships*.

JACK: Right. Just onto people.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: So I think - I like the idea that... it's Unreliable.

AUSTIN: Okay. So yeah, go ahead and mark that down.

JACK: What do I put in the cost box?

AUSTIN: That's what the cost is. That - that's either cost or tags, it doesn't...

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's fine. You know what, in cost put who... or in this case, in this case it doesn't go there, because you don't owe anybody there, but...

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: But for like Mako, put September Institute in... yeah, you got it right. You're good. Everything's good. So... next up is vehicles, right? Everybody go to the Driver playbook, which is on page 63, or actually, go forward to 64.

JACK: (pauses) Oh, I just have this - oh, this is my playbook. Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's your playbook, so you can (Ali laughs) yeah. So... add a vehicle to your list, on your sheet. And then everyone's gonna build a vehicle, for... and they're, these are the things we already know what they are, right? For AuDy it's the Kingdom Come, for Mako it's the Rings of Saturn, right? So you're gonna choose a frame, which their suggestions are - motorcycle, car, hovercraft, boat, vectored-thrust *Panzer*. (laughter) Six-winged aircraft, helicopter, amphibious. Aria and Cass, that can be mech or it could be, like, the specific - I guess the name would be the specific name, and then the frame would be, it's a, it's a mech. Right? But we can - we can even get more specific than that, if you - if you want to.

And then you're gonna choose a profile. And the profiles are... Power, Looks, Armor, and Weakness. And you just write those numbers in (Ali laughs) on your vehicle sheet, where it's Power, Armor, Looks, and Weakness. Those numbers all... reflect the capabilities of the, of the

given vehicle. For each point of Power you, you assign, you'll choose a strength. For each point of Looks, you'll get to choose a look. For each point of Weakness, you have to choose a weakness.

JACK: This is so cool.

AUSTIN: If your vehicle has Power 2 or more, it may mount one weapon system, and military vehicles, that is, vehicles with the military *look*... I think it's the military look. Or is that the build military... uh, it's the military... design, sorry. There's a Design that you have to choose, too. I did not write the Design tab in this thing, so just put the design of it in that - in the tags.

KEITH: Frame?

AUSTIN: No, Frame should be...

KEITH: Oh.

AUSTIN: what type of vehicle it is, like, it's a - for you it's a hoverboard.

KEITH: I just had it doubled up, yeah.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: I guess my - I guess my Design would be *luxury*.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Oh yeah, that's fine. Yeah, a luxury hoverboard is totally fine. I actually like that a lot. So write Design, then Frame, you know?

KEITH: I mean that's what... what's-his-name... what's that guy's name?

AUSTIN: (pauses) Jorne. Jorne definitely called it -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Jorne, I think Jorne described it -

ALI (overlapping): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's a luxury - so, whereas like, I think maybe Aria could be... I feel like it's almost like, *entertainment* mech, or something?

ALI: (unenthused) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Recreational works too, it doesn't matter, but with just another word, you know?

KEITH: But probably not a vector-thrust Panzer?

AUSTIN: Definitely not a vectored-thrust Panzer. (Ali laughs) I wish. The Strengths that you can choose from are Fast, Quiet, Rugged, Aggressive, Huge, Offroad, Responsive, Uncomplaining,

Capacious, Workhorse, and Easily Repaired. Which is a good one, I love Easily Repaired as a Strength. (Ali laughs)

KEITH: That's a really good one.

AUSTIN: I also love that a lot of these are just tags that we've already used in MechNoir.

JACK: Oh my god -

AUSTIN: Like, Huge is just here already.

JACK: Austin, I misread Capacious as Capricious.

AUSTIN: Ahh, if only!

JACK: And that would be an amazing Weakness. #01:20:00#

AUSTIN: Yes (laughs). Just add it to the Weaknesses thing, you know? Oh, I should keep going, too. Looks include Sleek, Vintage, Pristine, Powerful, Luxurious, Flashy, Muscular, Quirky, Pretty, Garish, Armored, Armed, Nondescript - I like that Armed is a Look. It doesn't mean that you *are* armed, it means that you *look* armed. (laughter) That's fantastic.

JACK: (laughing) That's so good.

AUSTIN: Weaknesses are Slow, Fragile, Sloppy, Lazy, Cramped, Picky, Guzzler, Unreliable, and Loud.

KEITH: Oh, man, mine has a built-in Weakness.

AUSTIN: Does it?

KEITH: Which is great, actually. Yeah, it's Cramped.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. Totally. (laughter)

KEITH: It's just me.

AUSTIN: It's just you, yeah. (Jack laughs) So what, what profile are you picking for the... for the thing? Mako.

KEITH: I believe that I'm doing, um... Power 2, Looks 2, Armor 0, Weakness 1.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that makes the most sense for you. There's definitely no armor on that thing.

KEITH: Yeah. Even though I had armor before.

AUSTIN: It was armored, right? But.

ALI: It had like a shield.

AUSTIN: Oh right.

KEITH: It - it had like a, it gave me a personal energy shield, being on it. It's - being inside it.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Right. You know what, if you want to - if you want to do... hm.

KEITH: I could also do...

AUSTIN: Power 1, Looks 2, Armor 1, Weakness 1?

KEITH: (pauses, hesitantly) Yeah. I don't know, I'm gonna have to think on that right now.

AUSTIN: That makes more sense to me, because again, if you get to Power - the thing is like, if you get to Power 2, then it has a weapon. (laughs) It has a mounted weapon system.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: Which it didn't, but if you want to go that direction, pitch me, you know?

KEITH: Right. (pauses) I mean, I guess the easy - the, the easy way to do that is that like, I don't know, I'm smart and I rerouted the energy shield into a laser?

AUSTIN: Right. But then it -

KEITH: (casually) Nah! No one's even shooting at me, who cares?

AUSTIN: (laughs) Oh, Mako. God.

KEITH: (laughing) No one's even *shooting* at me!

AUSTIN: Okay, so what makes more sense for him? Would you rather him have a laser hoverboard, or a hoverboard with a cool shield on it?

KEITH: (pauses) I really like, c- well, the way, I don't know if you remember the way that I described this shield, but... it was the way that an energy shield in KOTOR looks, where it's just horrible (Austin laughs) and floating, uh, transparent color over your body.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Yes, I do remember that.

KEITH: And I do like that.

AUSTIN: That's really good! (Keith laughs) Also, I think it - (sighs) I lean that way only because part of the original plan for that was just like, I want a thing where I can be out in the battle.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Fogging things.

KEITH: Yeah, no, I agree. I'm gonna do Looks 2, Armor 1.

AUSTIN: Okay. Sounds good.

KEITH: Yeah, so the third profile.

AUSTIN: What's the Weakness for it? (immediately) Cramped, you said, right?

KEITH: Cramped, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, good. Sounds good.

JACK: I think I'm gonna go for... so, the ship is called the Kingdom Come.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I have described it as a VTOL Transport and Action Ship.

AUSTIN: That's - yep. Totally.

JACK: Which I think is probably the brand name?

AUSTIN: Huh.

JACK: In the sense that... I, I think - I don't think that it's a very... There was a car in Europe, I don't know if it made it across the pond, called the 2CV.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Which basically broke pretty constantly, but was designed to be repaired by... in rural French towns, with things that they had on hand.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Oh, weird. Cool.

JACK: And I really want -

AUSTIN: That did not make it here, no.

JACK: I really like the idea that... this ship, while it is designed for, like it says, transport and action, it's just a VTOL Transport and Action Ship.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: So, as such, I've gone for Power 2, Armor 1.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Looks, 1.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Weakness, 1.

AUSTIN: So that means for, for every point of Power you get to choose a Strength.

JACK: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: I should go back and do this with Mako next, too. So, each point of Power is a Strength, and then each point of Looks is a Look, and then because you have 2 Power you get a weapon.

JACK: Oh, rad. Okay, cool, so... I'm going to -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): And there are weapons on this list too, just a little bit lower down.

JACK: Okay. I've gone Rugged, in terms of Power.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: Workhorse, in terms of Power.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: (uncertainly) Muscular, in terms of Looks?

AUSTIN: (thoughtfully) Yeah.

JACK: Just because I think there's lots of weird plates, and... like, remember when we were playing Rebel Galaxy the other day?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: And like, that - and I was like, ah yeah, one of these ships.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah. Totally.

JACK: And Capricious as a Weakness, (Austin laughs) just because like the 2CV, I really like the idea that sometimes it doesn't start.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Or like a button just doesn't do a thing that I expect it to.

AUSTIN: So wait, you *didn't* pick Easily Repaired?

JACK: No!

AUSTIN: After that pitch with the - with the 2CV? Okay.

JACK: No, because I like the idea of a 2CV that is (laughs) incomprehensible.

AUSTIN: I see. Okay.

JACK: That is sold cheaply.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: That isn't really a thing, and is also super incomprehensible. Where do I pick weapons from?

AUSTIN: It's just right underneath the Weaknesses list. (pauses) And it's also whatever we want, but like, I think - it did just have machine guns, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or am I imagining that?

JACK: Like a cannon, like a...

AUSTIN: Oh, it had a cannon.

JACK: Didn't it? Like some sort of...

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: We have a list, we have it -

JACK: Should we just call it machine guns?

ALI (overlapping Jack): It had a burst cannon.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it had a burst cannon. Yeah, just call it burst cannon, and it is definitely... I think it's probably 3 har- yeah, 3 harm, Near, Far, Area, Loud, Messy, Autofire. Yeah, that's - those tags are correct, yes.

JACK: Cool. (pauses) Three harm near far area loud messy autofire sounds like an amazing modernist poem.

AUSTIN: It does. (laughter) Aria, what -

ALI: Are we restricted to these... the list of words that are here?

AUSTIN: No, no.

ALI: Okay. #01:25:00#

AUSTIN: Let me go back really quick to Mako, because... because I missed what the... tags were.

KEITH: My tags? Okay, so, I was deciding between -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): So it's 1 Strength, 2 Looks, and 1 Weakness.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. I was deciding between Fast and Easy to Repair for my Strength.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And, do the - can you ever, can you buy more tags for the vehicles? Or is this just it, these are them?

AUSTIN: Sure. Sure, totally.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You would go - you would be going to a person to like, pay for them to upgrade the thing. But yeah, totally.

KEITH: Yeah. Okay, so I guess for now I'm gonna go with Fast for my Strength.

AUSTIN: Mhm. That makes sense.

KEITH: And then for Looks I'm gonna do Sleek and Vintage.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Okay.

KEITH: Cause I like the idea that... Mako was really excited about this flyboard, but they're kind of something that went out of fashion, like, years and years ago.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: And that it's kind of weird that they were even offering a flyboard, (Ali laughs) like, offering a flyboard wasn't a big deal, at all (laughs).

AUSTIN: But, but he was like, oh, *man*.

KEITH: (laughing) But he was just - happened to be super into it!

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Is that because at the September Institute you only have old media? (Keith laughs) Like, from before the September Institute was formed?

KEITH: It's not even old media, it's just propaganda media.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Okay, good, yeah.

KEITH: And so, so... nobody, so just like the idea that somebody is riding a, a flyboard is kind of like an '80's cafe.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. (laughs) Everyone else is just like oh my god, *this* guy.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Like where people are - yeah, everyone's on roller skates.

AUSTIN: Yes. Got it.

KEITH: And then Cramped is my Weakness.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

JACK: You gotta put two people on that thing, it's gonna look really funny.

AUSTIN: So, a thing for AuDy and - and Mako to start thinking about, you also need to decide, like cyberware, one of those negative - extra negative tags, and - or, or whether or not you are Owned or Hunted for it. That is - that is my rule, that is not the game's rule, that is the way we are emphasizing vehicles here, is... you know, you scrimped and saved to buy this thing yourself, choose one tag to apply -

KEITH: I did buy it myself.

AUSTIN: (pauses) No you didn't. (Jack laughs)

KEITH: (laughing) I kinda did! Ali helped a little bit.

AUSTIN: I think - I think you might be Hunted for this.

KEITH: (laughs) Okay.

ART: Hunted by repo men?

AUSTIN: Hunted by Snowtrak, yeah, yes. (laughs) Hunted by repo man. (pauses) This is kind of the stand-in for all of that, all of those other mechs you have, also. (laughs)

KEITH: Okay. So you're - okay. I got it.

AUSTIN: I think take Hunted for that.

KEITH: Alright.

AUSTIN: And then AuDy, think about that. Like, are you Owned, because you have this thing? Are you Hunted? Or is it Unreliable, Substandard, Hardware Decay, or Damaging? And in Damaging's case, it would be kind of like... it's one of those things where it's not safe to be in in some ways, (Jack laughs) right? Like, lots of sharp edges inside, it's not finished, so like people, like... when it takes damage, people inside of it get hurt, or something. Anyway, you guys think

about that. I'm gonna move on to Aria. (pauses) Hey, talk to me about the... the Regent's Brilliance.

ALI: So it is an Entertainment Military Rigger...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: Um, with a -

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): Oh wait, is it - is it Entertainment, or is it Military?

ALI: It - can it be both?

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: No, okay.

AUSTIN: Because Military gives it a weapon. That's the - that, that's if you get Mil- you know.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's the hot thing about it being a Military thing.

ALI: I was gonna put that because it *has* weapons. (laughs)

AUSTIN: It does - it does.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But you also get weapons if you do Power 2.

ALI: Okay, yeah. I was gonna do Power 1, Looks 2, Armor 1, Weakness 1?

AUSTIN: What you have now I don't think is 1. Is it? Oh, it is! Hm.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: (confused) Why would you ever do... oh, I see! I see, I see. Yeah. Uh, that would mean it doesn't have any weapons unless it was just a Military Rigger.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Which is fine, but that means it, that you - you know.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: I'm not sure - I'm not sure if that fits given the fact that it is a... that it was this thing that was all about being onstage. You know?

ALI: Yeah. I mean, it's like, it recreates kind of a...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you know what? Yeah, maybe that's the thing is that like, most Rooks were...

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Were, Power 1, Armor... you know, most Rooks were probably Power 1, Armor 1, Looks 1, Weakness 1? And they just had Military, but you get... so they had a weapon because of that, but you - because you do... yeah. I think, yeah, go ahead and do - just do Military there, then.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: And the fact that it's an Entertainment thing is seen through the fact that it has 2 Looks, if that makes sense.

ALI: Okay. Yeah yeah yeah yeah. So the Strength I was gonna take on was one of my old tags, which was Flexible?

AUSTIN: Yep, totally makes sense.

ALI: For Looks, I'm gonna go with Flashy and Sleek.

AUSTIN: Nice, yeah.

ALI: And then, for my Weakness, it's gonna be Fragile.

AUSTIN: Okay. All of those line up. And then... what, what weapon are you taking? Again, you - we could just make our own weapon here.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: I think she had...

ALI: I had a, like, beam saber.

AUSTIN: A beam saber.

ALI: And then I had like, the... the head cannons.

AUSTIN: Yeah, see that's why I kind of wanted Power 2, because then you could do...

ALI: I could keep both of them (laughs).

AUSTIN: You could keep both of them. Exactly. Though, given the state that we left it in, it was also in a shitty place, so... maybe the head vulcans are broken now. You know?

ALI: Right. I -

AUSTIN: It's up to you.

ALI: I mean, I - it's tough, cause half the time I... I established that the head vulcans were not made to actually have, like...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: Ammo in them? #01:30:00#

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ALI: And then like, half the time I did not use them for that.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: (pauses) So maybe she just like...

AUSTIN: What were your - what were your two looks again?

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: Flashy? No...

ALI: Sleek and Flashy.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you know what, Flashy is pretty good for head vulcans that shoot (Ali laughs) - that shoot fireworks, right?

ALI: Yeah, no.

AUSTIN: So they're not weapons. That's not a weapon, it's just an - a thing that you can do because you have the Flashy look, let's say.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So yeah, then the beam saber would be fine. I think that that's probably... 4 harm? Let me look at - let me look at what the equivalent is in melee, human-sized weapons. Yeah, you know what, give it (sighs) I think especially because it's a close-range thing, and it's a beam saber.

ALI: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Give it - do 5 harm, (tentatively) Hand? (Ali laughs) Which is its range. Hand is its range.

ALI: (laughing) Okay!

AUSTIN: It's like, something - it's only things you could touch, basically.

ALI: No, I just like you being like, (mimics Austin) haaand? (laughs)

AUSTIN: I'm thinking! I gotta think about these things. 5 harm, Hand, I think is right.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Maybe AP. Armor-piercing?

ALI: Uh, yeah, I was thinking that.

AUSTIN: I think that's - yeah. Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do 5, Hand, AP. Which is really good, but also, you know. Anyway. And then let me know once you know if you're Owned, Hunted, or if it's one of the other negative cyberware hands.

ALI: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Think about it.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Cass? Megalophile?

ART: Hey! I think it's a 2 Power, 2 Armor, 1 Looks, 2 Weakness kit.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah, I think so too.

ART: I think it's a Military... Design.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: The Frame that I created for it is Industrial Mech.

AUSTIN: Okay. Write Military in there so that we remember that? Or...

ART: I - I'm way ahead of you.

AUSTIN: Okay, good.

ART: I think it's Huge, is one of its Strengths.

AUSTIN: That's a good one.

ART: And I -

AUSTIN: It is, that's - we talked about that.

ART: That was the, that was its big thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: (pauses) And I'm struggling between Uncomplaining and Rugged.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Both of those are pretty good.

ART: Yeah. I think I like Uncomplaining.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that's a lot of - there's a good character there. It's like, you can really push it to its limits and it's fine, you know?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then, what are its Weaknesses? You have two Weaknesses?

ART: Yeah. Uh, the Weakness I, I... Slow?

AUSTIN: Yep.

ART: And I was also gonna go with Guzzler.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I like that too. It just like, it just *devours* fuel.

ART: Yeah, because it's -

AUSTIN: Which again, is an invitation for me to be like, you're out of fuel. Or you're running low on fuel.

ART: Right, it's huge.

AUSTIN: Yes. And then, so that means you get two weapons.

ART: I was gonna take that missile launcher.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: And we're gonna have to come up with a railgun. Cause that was its other weapon.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think - yeah, yeah. So the missile launcher is... what, 5 harm, Far, Area, Messy, Breach?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. And then... railgun, let me - you know what I'll look at, is I'll compare it to like, sniper rifles.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Cause that's basically what it is, right?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think it's Extreme - I think it's Far to Extreme Range, probably?

ART: Yeah, it's - it's a long-range weapon, there.

AUSTIN: I think it's... yeah, this is - this is... their sniper rifle is 3 harm, Far, Extreme, Loud. I think the railgun has to be... you know what, maybe do - what, what are the missiles? The missiles are 5? Range?

ART: 5, Far.

AUSTIN: I think drop those to 4. I think it's 4, Far, Area? Uh... what were the other tags on it?

ART: Messy and Breach.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that's 4, Far, Messy, Breach, and then the railgun is 5, Extreme - or, 5, Far/Extreme, Loud. AP.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: And you know what, I guess then just - put Breach there too, because Breach is - is AP and loud. That's what Breach is, so.

ART: Okay. And basic melee is still possible without a specific weapon, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, totally.

ART (overlapping Austin): Like, I - I punched them is still like a thing?

AUSTIN: Yes. But it means that it's gonna be really rough for you to get the shots you - shots off in the near and close range.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know? (pauses) But that's why the Regent's Brilliance exists, theoretically, right? Like that's a nice...

ART (overlapping Austin): (quietly) Hey, look what I just did.

AUSTIN: And, and why Mako is there on the hoverboard. To like, there's, that's your death range, and if Mako is there then maybe you're okay, or if the Kingdom Come can start opening fire, maybe you'll be alright (laughs).

JACK: How big is the Megalophile?

ART: Huge.

AUSTIN: It fits in the Kingdom Come, but it's huge.

JACK: So how big is the Kingdom Come... like, we always say huge, and I'm curious -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): It's huge. So it's, it's about - it's relative terms, right? So that means the Kingdom - that means the Megalophile is huge compared to other mechs of its class. Other single-pilot military mechs.

JACK: So, how big are we talking in terms of like, feet?

AUSTIN: I don't know. Art?

ART: (pauses) Uh...

AUSTIN: I think it's like, it's not (sighs) in general the mechs in this game that we - we've talked about are, are like... apartment buildings? But not like skyscrapers.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: So like, I'm in a four- or five-, five-floor apartment building, I think mechs are this - they're like Titanfall mechs, right?

JACK: (pauses) Right.

AUSTIN: Maybe a little bit bigger than that.

JACK (overlapping Austin): They can shoot - they can, they could shoot in through your window.
#01:35:00#

AUSTIN: Yes, totally.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: So, so... or at least that's what Riggers are. Riggers and the Apostolosian mechs.

JACK: (thoughtfully) So, where do we even find places to land the Kingdom Come?

AUSTIN: Well, we've talked about that, like, at - at docking bays, right? That's one of the things that's come up a couple times, where it's like, can we even get the Kingdom Come there? Does it make sense to bring it?

JACK: Usually it comes with the, can I fly it into the dome (laughs).

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Mm.

JACK: And like, it's like -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): No, cause there's a dome (laughs). No, yeah, and so or like when you're outside, it's just a huge desert out there. So plenty of room, you know?

JACK: Yeah. Yeah, that's true.

AUSTIN: But you can't - you can't bring the Kingdom Come *into* the domes. Or you haven't yet, anyway.

JACK: Yeah. Okay.

AUSTIN: It would be a *big* deal if the Kingdom Come broke through a dome, you know?

JACK: Oh, yeah yeah yeah. Like, I mean we're talking like... an attack on the BluSky Dome, level.

AUSTIN: Right. Right, exactly. I - you know, I think - I think of the Kingdom Come as being, like... like warehouse-sized, in terms of it having a big hanger, you know?

JACK: Right. Yeah, I could see that.

AUSTIN: But then the actual living quarters -

JACK (overlapping Austin): Thunderbird 2. It's Thunderbird 2!

AUSTIN: (pauses) I don't - what's Thunderbird 2? (typing)

JACK: (laughs) Did you never have Thunderbirds in the US?

AUSTIN: Ohh, yeah, okay. I did. Yes. Yeah yeah yeah. Okay. (pauses) They're go, I'm pretty sure. Are - are they? Are they go?

JACK: They are go! They are go, after a - the short countdown. (Austin laughs)

AUSTIN: But yeah, totally. Exactly.

JACK: Cool. Oh, in terms of, um -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): Um - mmhm?

JACK: I think I'm Owned?

AUSTIN: Okay. By?

JACK: Can - can I still be Owned by Orth?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JACK: Great. I mean, I think that that's how it was in the original version,

AUSTIN: Totally. Yep.

JACK: was that I owed money to Orth.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: So I think I'm gonna put it down as I'm, I'm Owned by him.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. And then... same thing with Aria and with... Cass.

ART: (uncertainly) Hunted? Cause it's a, it's a military...

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): By? Oh, okay. So do you think you're Hunted by... are you Hunted by like, OriCon? Or the, or the Diaspora, or both?

ART: Probably both.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Probably neither is super thrilled to have...

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART: Apostolosian mechs around.

AUSTIN: Totally. I like that. And then, Aria? This is the thing you're Owned by, right?

ALI: Yeah, yeah, I was... yeah.

AUSTIN: I think so, right? That makes the most sense.

ALI: Cause I could be Owned or Hunted.

AUSTIN: You could be. And that could have changed in this - so there's kind of, we're in the middle of like a two month down period right now, which we'll get to explain that a bit more in a second. But... so maybe it had been Owned for a while.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And, it is now Hunted?

ALI: (unenthusiastically) Yeah.

AUSTIN: I like that.

ALI: Right. Okay. (jeering noise, laughs)

AUSTIN: It's fun!

ALI: (laughing) I don't know how much I -

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. Well. (Ali laughs) Listen. White Base was hunted, you know?

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: All of the best - all of the best anime mecha pilots were hunted, so. (Ali laughs)

KEITH: (pauses) You say haunted?

AUSTIN: Yeah, they're haunted.

ALI: Oh!! (cautioningly) Austin...

KEITH: They're spooky?

AUSTIN: This is a haunted ship.

ALI: *Austin...* (laughter) Can the Brilliance just be haunted?

AUSTIN: The mech comes alive, and... it starts chanting...

JACK: *Tristero, Tristero...*

AUSTIN: There it is! Thank you! (laughter)

ALI: (jeering noise, laughter)

AUSTIN: Let's move - is that it? That's everybody? I think we're good, I think we can finally move on? (pauses) Step five. We're moving on, to choose playbook moves. (reading) Each playbook gives you one or two starting moves. Some may require you to make mechanical or fictional details about that move. Make those choices now. Each playbook also gives you a number of options for additional starting moves. Choose which of those moves your character has now as well. If any of your moves allow you to choose more cyberware, go back to step 4 (Jack laughs) and answer those questions for your new hardware. The same people can own you multiple times, but pick a new enemy each time you fuck someone over. The MC will note your new problems. (laughs)

(speaking) So let's go down the line as it is on my sheet. Cass. Your first one is, Here's the Plan. (reading) When you plan a mission, everyone to whom you assign a task takes +1 ongoing when they act on that task according to the plan. Anyone who rolls a miss or goes off the plan loses their bonus for that mission.

JACK: Oh my goodness!

AUSTIN: (reading) If you get paid, mark experience.

ART: Yeah, I love it.

AUSTIN: The - yeah, it's really good. I like it a bunch.

JACK (overlapping Austin): That's so good.

AUSTIN: And then your second one is, I Love It When a Plan Comes Together. (reading) At the start of a mission, roll Edge. Gain - on a 10+ gain 3 hold, on a 7-9 gain 1 hold. During the mission, spend 1 hold for one of the following effects. You have that piece of gear you need right now, or you appear in a scene when you are needed right now.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: On a 6 you gain 1 hold anyway, but your opponent has predicted your every move. The MC will advance the legwork clock. (pauses) So this means -

ART (overlapping Austin): I don't even know what that is, so there's basically no downside.
#01:40:00#

AUSTIN: No downside at all! (Jack laughs) So there's basically two clocks to - there's a bunch of clocks in this game, that kind of represent attention, and things falling apart, and a bunch of other stuff. So the legwork clock is, is like, a clock that ticks up as you investigate stuff before you kind of put your plan into action. And so it's, it's like, oh, you're going around and you're talking to people, and as you fail a certain roll, I get to advance the legwork clock, which is to say that like, the target of your mission becomes more and more aware that you're on the case, right? So you think about something like... like the first mission, where you ended up going after Snowtrak. As you failed rolls, you were tailed here or there, or people got - got wind of you. So in this, it's a very, like, systematized way of me noting that. And at certain points, the mission will change because of that.

The mission clock. When that hits zero - so the, the clock is split between - it's kind of 24-hour military time, and there are marks at 1500, 1800, 2100, 2200, 2300, and... and midnight. And when the clock hits midnight, the mission ends. You do not get to succeed once the mission clock hits midnight. And everyone has to make a roll that's kind of like the, uh oh, guess we're bugging out roll. What do we do, do we survive? Did we get caught? And those all tie to the corporate clocks, which are like how much attention does any given corporation have on us right now, which is great. So yeah, your two base ones are, are about planning that mission and then, and then giving bonuses during the actual mission phase. So what's your - the extra one you're choosing?

ART: Oh, it's only one, shit.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But - but I'm also giving you a bonus one, for -

ART: Yeah, but my bonus one is gonna be that med one from Tech.

AUSTIN: From Tech, yeah. Which is, I'll read that one now while you decide the other one.
(reading) Expert. Choose one area of expertise. Medic. You are an expert in medicine and pharmaceuticals. When you apply First Aid, you heal one additional segment, even on a miss. You start with a workshop appropriate to your area of expertise. (speaking) So it means like, on the Kingdom Come, you have a surgery room. (pauses) Which is useful! You're like - the Kingdom Come is becoming more and more like the Ebon Hawk.

ART: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Or the Normandy,

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: every second. Which is good, those are good things to be like. (Ali laughs)

ART: Uh -

AUSTIN (overlapping Art): Yeah, so what's your - oh, go ahead?

ART: I think I'm gonna take Exit Strategy?

AUSTIN: What's that say?

ART: (reading) You always have an escape plan prepared. When shit hits the fan, you decide to bail out. Roll Mind. 7+, you escape the situation. 10+, choose one thing to leave behind. 7-9, choose two things: Your team, a mission objective, identifiable evidence, your staked cred.

AUSTIN: So one thing in this game too, to explain the staked cred thing, is that when you take a mission, you stake cred on it, and how much you stake is like a bet on whether you'll succeed or not. And the more you bet, the better your return can be. So, so if you bet 3, then you lo- and you lose your staked cred, then you lose it. I like that though. I like Exit Strategy. That's like, that's a very medical - that's the kind of like, you know, reduce the harm done... situation, you know, choice.

ART (overlapping Austin): And it's someone who's like, been running for a bit.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally, totally.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. Next up on my list is AuDy.

JACK: Hi.

AUSTIN: Hey! Uh, note that you're gonna get a bonus move, because your base - one of your base moves, just everyone in the world has it now? (Jack laughs) So I wanted to make sure you got compensated for that. So, so...

JACK: I also have a weird thing going on where my - my, the second move that it gives me is about my neural interface.

AUSTIN: Right right right, well, that second move is - I'm sorry, actually, all of your base moves are just in the world now. Right? For all of the characters, because everybody has Wheels, and everybody has... Second Skin, which I've renamed Behind the Wheel. So, yeah, just take... take two new moves from your playbook, and then take a bonus move from any playbook. (pauses) Oh so I guess, just, you're gonna be taking three moves here, across any playbooks. Let's just say (Jack laughs) two of them have to be from Dr- or, two from Driver, and then one from somewhere else.

JACK: Okay. Okay, cool. Yeah, cool. I'll take Eye in the Sky, (reading) when helping or interfering while piloting a drone roll Edge instead of Links.

AUSTIN: That's a good call.

JACK: Is one.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: I would like to take Drone Jockey.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And, I would like to take... should we talk about Killer moves?

AUSTIN: Yes. Oh, well, let's talk about drone really quick.

JACK: Okay. I think like, the drone - the drone thing is, I've - I've been looking at it for the last seemingly three and a half hours. It's its own...

AUSTIN: Okay. (laughs)

JACK: (laughs) It's - it's a whole thing.

AUSTIN: It's, it's like the building a vehicle thing, except with a drone.

JACK: And I have to do it twice.

AUSTIN: Yes. So we can just do it later. But, but -

JACK: Yeah, I'll t- I'll tell you like roughly what I'm going for, and -

AUSTIN: One of them is the rotor drone you used to have, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: So I'm gonna go for like a small rotor drone.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: It's described as rat to cat sized. (laughs)

AUSTIN: I love that, so much.

JACK: Yeah!

KEITH: (laughing) Rat to Cat is the tagline for the sequel to Splatoon.

AUSTIN: (laughs, singing) You're a rat now! You're a cat now! You're a rat, you're a cat, you're a rat now! (laughter)

JACK: Wait, how - wait, how did you do that? Wait, what did you do?

AUSTIN: (laughing) Oh my god! Why would - eugh! Ahh!

JACK: Oh, god! Oh there's - there's hair, everywhere! (laughter) Um. And I think I'd like my other drone to be basically like... like a weird robot, autonomous dog?

AUSTIN: (fascinated) Ah, I love it! Yeah, okay!

JACK: I don't know -

AUSTIN: Is it just a robot dog? Is it just...

ALI: (gasps)

JACK: No, I don't know if it's a robot dog. It's described as dog-sized? I k- I, I need -

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: (whispering intensely) I need your advice as my friends. Should it be a dog, or should it be an octopod? #01:45:00#

AUSTIN: Oh, it could be a little octopod. It could be like a little...

ALI: (ambiguously) Mm...

AUSTIN: Was it like too spidery for you, Ali? Is it too...

ALI: (ambivalently) No, that's cute.

AUSTIN: Ooh yeah, what if it's a cute spider robot?

JACK: I think...

ALI: I mean regardless, it's like, everyone's pet, right? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's definitely the ship pet.

JACK: So the things that I picked for -

KEITH: But what if it was a dog - just a robot dog that had eight legs? (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: That's also *totally* possible.

JACK: (horrified) Oh, god. Yeah, I mean -

ART: That's a nightmare though, right? (laughter) That's - that's the worst option?

JACK (overlapping Art): Actually, no, this works really well. No, it's this, it's this, because... okay, here are its stats, ready? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: Okay. It's autonomous. It can jam sensors. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

JACK: Uh, unfortunately -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): This is the dog.

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: This is the dog-*sized* thing.

JACK: Yes. Its weakness is... it's obvious (laughs). Cause it's an eight-legged...

AUSTIN: (laughs) It's an eight-legged dog!

JACK: It's an eight-legged dog walking alongside a parking robot.

KEITH (overlapping Jack): So like stepping on its toes.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: So I - I don't think that it does stealth very well.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I really wanted to pick autonomous, cause I didn't want to pilot this thing around all the time.

AUSTIN: Right, right, yeah, totally.

JACK: And I'll also talk about the rotor. I also get to pick basically like two other adjectives.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: And I think I'm probably gonna give it a gun, but I don't know how.

AUSTIN: (pauses) The - the robot? Or the...

JACK: The dog.

AUSTIN: The dog. Okay.

JACK: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: Or sorry, I said 'the robot,' there's - you're a robot who owns two other robots! (laughter) That's not a very clarifying, uh...

JACK: (casually) Yeah, I think I'm gonna give the dog a gun... (laughter) I might actually -

ALI: (laughing) God!

JACK: I might give it something else, but I don't know what? My options here are fantastic. It can do magnification, which is just a dog that zooms (laughter). Thermographic... jamming I've already got...

KEITH: I think - I think you're doing it a disservice by calling it *just* a dog. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Yeah. At this point!

KEITH: Magnification, which makes it *just* a dog that zooms. (laughter) Otherwise, besides, just -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Maybe it's - maybe it's the Just A,

KEITH: Just A Dog?

AUSTIN: It's the Just A brand, and then they have like... Just A Dog, Just A Cat (laughs) Just A Thermonuclear Warhead,

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Just A Pocket -

AUSTIN: like and they, they do a bunch of stuff! (laughs)

KEITH: Just A Pocket Bear!

AUSTIN: Right (laughs) yes! Just A Pocket Bear!

JACK: Right, exactly. So, it also does image enhancement, which is hilarious to me.

AUSTIN: (amused) Mmhm?

JACK: That we can just tell this dog to zoom in and enhance, if I want it to.

AUSTIN: (laughs) That's really good!

JACK: It also has (laughs) analysis software.

AUSTIN: Listen, I'll let you take that software and whatever, you can be in accounting. I, you know, it can analyse all sorts of things. You tell me.

JACK: It also has sonar, which is very free, it could have sonar. Or it could be a medical dog.

KEITH: (whispering) Oh my god.

JACK: But, somehow I don't think AuDy...

KEITH: Oh, that sounds like a really good one, though!

AUSTIN: Yeah, but we *have* a medical dog already! (laughs) Cass.

JACK: Also, I don't know if AuDy would hang out -

KEITH: (to Austin) He's not great at it! (Austin laughs)

JACK: Like, if AuDy has the opportunity to give a dog a gun, or give a dog, like, some paracetamol, which is... which are they going to take?

AUSTIN: True.

KEITH: Yeah, I guess you don't have any use for a healing dog.

AUSTIN: Speaking of Metal Gear Solid V, yes.

JACK: (laughs) So I'm gonna actually go through the drones and, and - sort this out properly later. But, yeah, I'm gonna be a crazy drone pilot, and I'm going to... have a thing that basically makes me better while piloting a drone.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: And in terms of Killer moves... (pauses) God, this is a whole thing. The Killer moves are amazing.

AUSTIN: They are really good.

JACK: Yeah. I'm basically torn between Implant Weaponry, Serious Badass, which is basically I can threaten people when I make eye contact with them, which is great, cause I don't have eyes, so I don't know, like, what that is.

AUSTIN: (interested) Oh, that's your - or just when they look at where they think your eyes are.

JACK: Yeah. Like, they believe that something imperceptibly shifts in the room and the robot starts looking at them.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I like that one. I also just like the one that says when you Mix It Up, you count as a small gang? I don't know what that means (laughs).

AUSTIN: Ah, that's really good.

JACK: But I *really* like that.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): So, gangs take less, so - (pauses) one of the ways harm works in this game is that like, when you roll to Mix It Up against, like, a security team, you're not rolling necessarily to Mix It Up against... Bill, in the security team, you're rolling against *the security team*. So long as they're working as a unit, right? And there are situations where you'd be able to like, separate them so that's not the case, but if you're like, in a firefight against a small gang, and you're an individual, you take more damage from them and do more - do less damage from them. Because they just have like, the health bar of... oh, they have their own single health bar, does that make sense? And so if you're a small gang, that means you're on even footing with small gangs, which means you, you... deal damage as if they're just an individual person, you kind of negate the bonus that they would get against you. And, also, you would do more damage to individuals. So like if you did corner a person, that's just bonus 1 damage to them, and they'd do 1 less damage to you.

JACK: Oh, I'm absolutely taking that.

AUSTIN: That's really good.

JACK: Cause I just realized that Serious Badass involves Style. And, also, I have Just A Dog, which I really like the idea of Just A Dog and me acting as a small gang (laughs).

AUSTIN: Wait, so what - don't you have terrible Style? Wait. (laughs)

JACK: Yes, that's why I ended up picking this -

AUSTIN: Oh oh, that's why you're taking...

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, gotcha. And what was the other one called?

JACK: Serious Badass.

AUSTIN: Ah...

JACK: This one's called Mil - Mil Specs.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): I see, I see, yeah. Serious Badass would have been you get to roll Style when you enter a charged situation, and it just freezes a person when they make eye contact. That's really cool, yeah, yeah. #01:50:00#

JACK: But I'm the least stylish.

AUSTIN: But - yeah, totally. So yeah, take - take... the other one. So next up on my list is Aria. Or, what are your default moves, I guess, first of all?

ALI: So, my first move is... Driven, which... (reading) when you get a mission that furthers your vision, roll Edge.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: And then, my second move is Vision Thing, which is...

KEITH: Wait, it's called Vision Thing?

AUSTIN: Yeah, Vision Thing.

ALI: Yeah! (laughs) (reading) When you have the time and space for an emotional connection with someone and you passionately advocate for your vision, roll Style.

AUSTIN: So what's your vision?

ALI: (laughs) Um... god...

AUSTIN: So Pushers are, to remind people, Pushers are kind of... they're written about as like, being ideological, kind of... characters driven by some sort of ideology, and that can be... they say, (reading) perhaps it's a higher ideal. Political change, social justice, revolution. Maybe it's simply to be the top dog in the junkyard. Whatever it is, when you start talking, people listen. (speaking) And, and so yeah, they have like some test - or not some test, but they have some like, sample sound bites about what different visions might be. And so they range from like, smash the corporate complex, to... synth rock will free the people. (laughter)

ALI: And me and Austin have been talking for what feels like forever about this.

AUSTIN: Yes. This feels like some old Hella-style, like, what-is-this-character conversation happening.

ALI: Yeah, I kind of like...

AUSTIN: Which is good, cause it ends up being good stuff, but it takes a little while, you know?

ALI: Yeah, cause I - I've always thought of Aria in like, these sort of terms, but not in like, projecting those ideals.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: The way that I've played her is also like... Aria's defining moment is so far is that she got - she shot a gun in the air (Austin laughs) and then said like a really intimidating, like, political thing. And then that she dresses up like a sequined cop, like.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Right.

ART: Is part of your *character* that you really don't understand undercover missions? (laughter)

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: (laughing) Yes!

AUSTIN: That's definitely - totally, I see. Definitely in character. (Keith laughs)

ALI: Yeah. I guess we were ended up with her vision is like, there's like, the desire to be a hero, and there's a desire to want the people of Counterweight to like, be inspired, and... to (laughs) believe in like, the power of positivity. Which is a huge influence for me right now (laughs).

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): Right, so she's the New Day.

ALI: Yes!!! (laughs)

AUSTIN: She's obviously just with the New Day.

ALI: Right. Can my vision just be... Biggie's hip dance?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Biggie's hip dance, is definitely...

ALI: (laughing) And then when I roll - I get a bonus when I roll that.

AUSTIN: (laughs) I - and part of this, I think, will become clear as we do a further step. There's another step that we're coming up to soon, that will... which can, that will maybe fill in the gap between where we last - last left off these characters and where they're at now. But it sounded

also like maybe we were thinking about something about... like the, just like the state that they're in, and... and whether there could be a better world for them.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Whether that world is literally a different world, or whether this world can change.

ALI: Yeah. Another big question was like, has Aria always been a Pusher, or like, has, during this month or so...

AUSTIN: Did she become one.

ALI: Did she become one. Which I think is where I'm leaning, but I... yeah, I'm gonna... I'll think it out. I'm gonna think about it.

AUSTIN (overlapping Ali): Think about it some more, yeah. So those moves are... (reading) when you begin a mission that furthers your vision, roll Edge. Gain 3 hold on a 10+. On a 7-9 gain 1 hold. You may spend 1 hold before rolling any other move to take +1 or -2 forward to that move. (speaking) The reason you might want -2 forward is because when you roll to not die, you want to roll low. (Ali laughs) That's one of the reasons why. And then Vision Thing, (reading) when you have time and space for an emotional connection with someone and you passionately advocate for your vision, roll Style. 10+ gain 2 hold, 7-9 gain 1 hold. Spend 1 hold to have the targeted NPCs give you something you want, do something you ask, fight to protect you or your cause, or disobey an order given by someone with authority or leverage over them. When you use this move on a PC, spend your hold to help or interfere as if you had rolled a 10+ on - on Aid or Interfere. If you miss against a PC, they gain 2 hold against you, which they can use in the same way.

(speaking) This is a version - this is a move that's like, lifted straight from Apocalypse World. There was an Apocalypse World class called Skinner that I played in the Apocalypse World that Adam Koebel ran earlier this year, and I love this move so much. It's so good, both against other players, and against NPCs. It's just like, it's almost like a bit of like... hypnotism, or like... in a less mystical way, just kind of like, gaining that sort of power relationship over someone in a social situation. It's a, it's a really neat way of illustrating the power relationships of social situations, is what I think. So I like it a bunch. What's the third one you're taking?

ALI: I think that I'm gonna pull... Reputation, from the Fixer playbook.

AUSTIN: Ooh, okay. What's that say?

ALI: (reading) When you meet someone of consequence who might have heard of you, roll Edge. On a hit, say what they know about you. On a +10, place - take +1 forward with them. On a miss... you get to decide what they've heard about me, if anything.

AUSTIN: Interesting. So you want -

ART (overlapping Austin): That's good.

AUSTIN: You want that over Famous, instead of Famous?

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: I'm not opposed to that. I think I like that - I might like that more? So there's -

ALI: I th- I, I'm going with that instead of Famous cause I think that it fits the fiction a little better?

AUSTIN: Sure, totally.

ALI: (pauses) And then it also, (hesitantly) I think it's cool that it sets up consequences?

AUSTIN: Me too.

ALI: Like, I like the idea that not everybody knows me, and the way that they know me would be... different, depending on the person.

AUSTIN: Totally. Okay, yeah, I like that a lot. Yeah, I think go for that. I also just realized, AuDy, we gave you th- I gave you three moves total, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You're supposed to get an extra move. Because everybody's getting three moves.

JACK: Oh my god, really? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, because... you lose both of your starter moves, which means I had to replace both of those, and then you - by default, everybody gets... I think it was, do Drivers get a third move?

JACK: Yeah, I get to choose one more.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so that means, you also get - choose one more, so maybe that's where you get your...

JACK: I'm gonna get my shotgun there, yeah.

AUSTIN: Your shotgun, yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I wanted to make sure that that was right. Because, because everybody gets the Driver moves now, which just kind of sucks, so I had to replace those. Anyway. Huh.

JACK: Cool.

AUSTIN: So that's good Aria, I like those... Mako.

KEITH: Okay, well so, I get automatically...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Just by default, I get Jack In.

AUSTIN: Mhm (laughs).

KEITH: Which lets me have access to the matrix moves.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: That I haven't looked at.

AUSTIN: Those are the ones we went over very briefly before, which is just like,

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: when you Jack Into a place, you can like actually do stuff with the, with the ICE that's there, and like, download files, and sneak through stuff.

KEITH: Yeah, it - it's almost like hav- it's like adding a physicality to...

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly.

KEITH: The, to the... cyberworld.

AUSTIN: Right. Which we should come up with a better word for. But yes.

KEITH: (pauses) And then, there's Console Cowboy.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: When I connect to a secure system, I roll Mind. I gain either 3 or 1 hold or no hold depending on my roll.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: (reading) And then I can use the hold to prevent a construct from triggering an alert, avoid an ICE routine executed against me, my deck, or my programs, or increase my hold over compromised security or manipulated systems by 1.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, which is just like - it's just like, do cool shit in the internet.

KEITH: Yeah. And so for my choose one more...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: I'm choosing Rep.

AUSTIN: Nice.

KEITH: (reading) When I appear in the Matrix with a recognizable avatar, roll Synth instead of Style for Fast Talk and instead of Edge for Play Hardball.

AUSTIN: Nice.

KEITH: When my reputation gets me into trouble, mark experience.

AUSTIN: What does your - what does your avatar look like? On the internet.

KEITH: I think... I think that it's, uh... it's me, but with sharp teeth and a shark fin.

AUSTIN: Oh my god. Okay! That's cool. (pauses) We're also supposed to talk about -

JACK (overlapping Austin): Where is the fin? Is the fin on your back, or your head?

KEITH: (pauses) It's on my tum!

AUSTIN: Eugh (laughs).

KEITH: (laughing, over sounds of disgust) No it's on my - it's on my back.

JACK: (laughter) So it's a vertical fin?

AUSTIN: Ohh, you're a mako! He's a mak- guys, he's a mako! Like a shark!

KEITH: I am, yeah.

JACK: That's a sort of fish, isn't it?

KEITH: No, he noticed. (Austin laughs) In the - in the world, he noticed what his name was.

AUSTIN: (laughing) Good. Good. I like that, that's pretty good. And then you get one more, also. (pauses) That's from any book.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Is this all from my list, or from any list?

AUSTIN: Any list.

KEITH: Okay. I'm gonna get... (pauses) Let me find the, I have - I have it on a page, uh...

AUSTIN: Yeah?

KEITH: Yeah, sorry. (quietly) No, no no no no no no...

AUSTIN: Was it just Fast Talk people differently or better? (laughs) Okay.

KEITH: No. (laughs) It wasn't, it wasn't that. (pauses) It was Covert Entry, from Infiltrate.

AUSTIN: That's a good one. What's that say?

KEITH: Yeah. I, uh... in trying to get to it, I exited out of Google privately.

AUSTIN: Okay, I'll - I think I have it right here, I got it.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Covert... okay.

AUSTIN: (reading) When you attempt to infiltrate a secure area, roll Cool. On a 10+ gain 3, on a 7-9 gain 1 hold. As the MC describes the infiltration and the security measures you must overcome, you may spend 1 hold to describe how you overcome the obstacle and: bypass a security system or guard, or disable a security system you have bypassed, or disable a guard, or escape notice.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: It's just like, instead of having to roll to do those things, it's just like oh, I have - I made this one roll right away, and now I can just... just spend this hold to get past these systems and guards.

KEITH: Right. And then in addition to that, I'm choosing one of... either Cat Burglar, Face, Assassin, or Case the Joint?

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): No, you just get - you *just* get Covert Entry, because that's - that's its one move, yeah.

KEITH: Okay. So tho- those are - okay, so that's not like an additional part, then.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): No, that's only for Infiltrators. And those are the two Infiltrator start moves, do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Ohh, okay, I see. #02:00:00#

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. (pauses) Oh wait, maybe you're right. Hmm. No yeah, you're totally right. No, you're totally right.

KEITH (overlapping Austin): Yes, I - I spent a while looking at this, yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: So then, the way that I Covertly Enter is... Face.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Yes.

KEITH: That's what those... that's what Face and Cat Burglar were.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. So there's like a specialization. What's it say?

KEITH: So... (pauses, reading) You specialize in infiltrating by appearing to belong in places you do not, hiding in plain sight. During your infiltration, you will have an opportunity to see or overhear information which might be - might be relevant later. After you have spent all your Covert Entry hold infiltrating a secure area through charm and social graces, gain intel.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's really cool. So it's like, if you go - if you do what you did at Snowtrak, and just like, talk your way into a place,

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: at the end of infiltrating, you get a point of intel. And again, intel is a thing you can spend in the mission to kind of get a bonus on something. You know, it's, it's...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: In Dungeon World, we had this thing with... there was a, like just dungeoneering gear, where it was like oh yeah, you have a bag with stuff in it, and you could just spend a point of it. Or it's like adventurer's gear - Adventurer's Kit, is what it was.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you're like, oh yeah, I spent a point of Adventurer's Kit to now have the rope I need. And so here it's like, I spent a point of gear to get the... the grappling hook I need. Or I spent a point of intel to know the password to get through this locked door. You know? Something like that.

KEITH: Mmhm.

AUSTIN: And I love that system so much, and it also is fine to be like, yeah, well - and I'll say well wait, how did you do that? And you'll say, oh well, when I got this point of info, or intel, what it was was I got the blueprints to this place, or I... had had, you know, I overheard a conversation while I was walking through, and talking to Jorne, and someone had said that, xyz. You know, that's... that's the way that works.

Okay, I think we're moved up? Are we all moved? Do we all have our moves?

JACK: Uh, can I talk about the shotgun?

AUSTIN: Oh, you want - your shotgun, yes.

JACK: Yeah. So, basically I get to pick a base weapon and then some tags for it.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: So I'm gonna pick shotgun, which is 3 damage, close, near, loud, and messy.

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): And this is - yeah, this is an, this is an implant weapon too, uh huh.

JACK: Right. So I'm gonna have to do a thing for this, right?

AUSTIN: (uncertainly) I think so. Let me double - let me read the move exactly so we can see.

JACK (overlapping Austin): Cause it doesn't say anything about implant.

AUSTIN: (reading) Choose a base and two options. You may - no, it says you may customize an impl- oh oh oh, you're right. You customize an implanted weapon if it's already implanted, I see. (pauses) I'm pretty sure.

JACK: Like, I mean.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I'm not tied to necessarily having a shotgun for an arm. It's cool, but.

AUSTIN: It's really cool, but.

JACK: If it's not gonna be possible for a while...

AUSTIN: Mm!

JACK: I mean, maybe like, in the future I can get (laughs) I can get -

AUSTIN: You know, what - is what I'm saying is like I think we gave Aria her cool arm, right?

JACK: That's true. I mean, do I just get a... a buy on it, do you think?

AUSTIN: Ahh...

KEITH: Well, the cool arm was also a - that was a punishment.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): That was a punishment. She didn't want that cool arm.

JACK (overlapping Austin): That's actually - that's true.

AUSTIN: Yeah. (Ali laughs) Let me - let me think about it for a second. Let me... (pauses) You know what, no. I think it is not a cool arm. I think it - it's stored in your arm, maybe? Or, or maybe... what are your, so wait, what are your - what are your options, what are you giving it?

JACK: Okay, so I got 3 damage, near, close, loud, messy.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: I was thinking about giving it high-powered or weighted. Oh, that's - that's an either/or, right? So I guess... weighted, maybe.

AUSTIN: Oh, I think that's high-powered. I think weighted would be if it was a (smacks table) club. Cause it's weighted, so it's like, it's heavier.

JACK: (laughs) Oh! I see. Right. Okay, cool. Yeah, and... (pauses)

AUSTIN: I think if you give it subtle, that's like, it's stored in your arm. So like, it's discrete.

JACK: Oh yeah, I could - I could do that.

AUSTIN: Or something like that.

JACK: Yeah, I'd be up for that.

AUSTIN: You know?

JACK: Yeah, so like high-powered and subtle.

AUSTIN: Yeah. What's the name of it? You have to name it.

JACK: Oh.

AUSTIN: You also have to name the - your drones, when you get around - oh yeah, Just A Dog is definitely one of the drones, and then...

JACK: Uh, can I get back to you on names?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Totally. I understand those are important, but they are. That's definitely - it's part of one of the, you know,

JACK: Oh yeah, absolutely.

AUSTIN: one of the principles again is like name everything, keep it corporate, so like... give me the brand name on the stuff that you have. Like, that is, that is... you know, part of the fun of this. (pauses) I thought I just remembered something else that I wanted to mention, and now I forget what it is. Oh, oh oh! Art!

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Cass's... the guns, the weapons on the Megalophile, should have linked.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's, that's... part of why you took that thing, you know? Okay, we're almost done. (pauses) Six is gear. So each playbook just has gear options. Choose them as instructed. It's, should be pretty straightforward. I think.

KEITH: Uh, mine won't be as straightforward?

AUSTIN: We'll skip the deck, cause we're just doing it - that's part of the, the bonus move I'm giving you. Or, not bonus move, but the special, the, the... Strata - Stratus thing that, that we've set up. So you can just skip the deck.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: But choose -

KEITH (overlapping Austin): But don't I take the stats of the deck?

AUSTIN: So yes. So, yes, you're gonna take the... no, cause the stats of the deck are just gonna reflect your stats. So let me go to you right now, and let's figure this out.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Go to Hacker.

KEITH: It's on page 74. #02:05:00#

AUSTIN: Thank you. (pauses) So let's say... that...

KEITH: (pauses) Cause this is all different than like, the actual stats.

AUSTIN: Yeah -

KEITH: This is hardware, so if I roll... it's gonna -

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Right right right, so but I'm just gonna say, I think part of the way Stratus - Strati work, is that... we just sub in your real stats for, for those.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So I think like, let's do... Hardening is Mind, Firewall is Synth, Processor is... Synth, and then Stealth is Cool. Everybody else should just be picking whatever weapons, and armor, and stuff like that.

KEITH: Alright, um... (pauses) Can I just take time and translate to my old pistol, to the new thing?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. (laughs)

KEITH: It would just be flechette pistol. Flechette?

AUSTIN: Flechetey [rhyming with machete].

KEITH: Flechetey?

AUSTIN: Uh, I'm not sure if it is a flechette pistol. I think it's just a... if you go look at the gear weapon, it's just like a heavy pistol, and then... something else.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: The flechette thing is like it goes through skin really well, but not against - not through armor really well.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: And I don't think it did that, really?

KEITH: (pauses) No, it was just a regular pistol, we'll just make it one.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay, yeah, there's - so there's like a heavy revolver... the weapons and stuff are on 120, if you want stuff that isn't in your playbook. (pauses) You know what, maybe make it... maybe give one of them flechette, and then the other one is just like a heavy revolver, or something?

KEITH: Okay. Can I - do you, would you mind if I like, take time to read over... the option thing?

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Totally. Absolutely. Yeah, we're not - we're not gonna play tonight anyways.

KEITH: Yeah. Cause the program stuff is something that I want to read just for ages first, before I pick.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Yes. Absolutely, you should. Yeah, yeah. And that stuff is actually kind of cool. I actually think that the hacking in this is... (sighs) We'll see how it is in action, but cyberpunk games always have a problem with hacking, in terms of like, speed between what the... character hacking is, and what the players are doing - the other players are doing, the non-hacking players are doing, and I think it works pretty well here.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: We'll see. And then armor, for you?

KEITH: For me, I'm going to do, um... (incredulously) armored *fridge*?

AUSTIN: Yeah don't - don't wor- don't take an armored fridge. (Ali laughs)

KEITH: I'm not gonna do that.

AUSTIN: But you *could*. If you had - if you had like a, an apartment, it would be cool to have an armored fridge. You know.

JACK: What is that for? Hiding in?

AUSTIN: It's like hiding your stuff in, and you in, and then like you know, when the... when the suits kick down your door to find you?

KEITH: (laughs) Yeah?

AUSTIN: You're hiding in your fridge.

KEITH: (laughing) I like that I can take armor, or I can get a *flashy* motorcycle.

AUSTIN: Yeah! I really love that so much!

KEITH: So with armored clothing, it says subtract 1 when rolling the harm move?

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: That's against myself?

AUSTIN: It's good, you want low on harm move.

KEITH: Okay. So I'm gonna take armored clothing and microtronics workstation.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. That's good. Microtronics workstation, so you may perform field repairs on electronics and cyberware. That's a good thing to have. (pauses) Alright! Let's move - and you start with 5 cred. Which we're gonna keep. (laughs) Because I don't want to - just - you have 5 cred. (pauses) Let's go to Cass. Who is a Soldier.

ART: (uncertainly) Yeah, and I'm... I'm a little, struggling with this. I'm gonna take an assault rifle, because it's the thing that works best with linked.

AUSTIN: Sure, totally.

ART: (pauses, sighs) And then heavy pistol's what I had, but feels a little, like, silly, now?

AUSTIN: I guess. (pauses) Why? I'm curious.

ART: Well, just cause they're both 3 harm.

AUSTIN: Mm. I see. They're, they're - you could - yeah, so you can just swap in something else if you, if you want.

ART: (unenthusiastically) Sure. Frag grenades doesn't make a lot of sense either, but flashbangs might.

AUSTIN: Flashbangs are kinda cool.

ART: Yeah, I'll take the flashbangs.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So they're stun harm, they're s-harm, which means they don't do any real damage, but they still cause people to roll the harm move. In this game, as in Apocalypse World

- which is different than Dungeon World, in this respect - when you get hurt, you roll a move that is like, oh, I got hurt. And that is what determines, like, what the reaction to getting hurt is. And the cool thing about stun weapons is that, that you still have to roll that stun move, or the - the harm move, when you're stunned, but you don't take any damage. So that's pretty cool.
(pauses) And then what about armor stuff?

ART: (pauses) I think I want the armored vest, and I want the communi- communications relay.

AUSTIN: You don't want the Trauma Derms?

ART: Ohh, but don't I have all that stuff?

AUSTIN: You have a *place* for that stuff. You have that like, you have the surgery *room*, you know? But all that stuff is there.

ART (overlapping Austin): (exasperated) Alright, yeah, then I want the Trauma Derms, and the vest.

AUSTIN: Okay. You guys all just have a cell phone that is - or like a, a communica- or like a... you are still connected wirelessly to each other, where you can communicate. I'm not taking that away from you. So. So no worries there. So yeah, armored vest and Trauma Derms?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Aria?

ALI: Okay. So I still have my loud handgun.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ALI: And then I can choose two other... gear... So I had that like, personal computer bracelet.

AUSTIN: You did, yeah, totally.

ALI: Um, which I am going to... keep? Should I just like - #02:10:00#

AUSTIN: That's - I think that's part of... hm. What is that really? Is that... encrypted... (pauses)
What did you do with that?

ALI: I think that might be part of encrypted communications? That was a way for me to... interface with the Brilliance...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: I did that one move where I was like, googling pictures with it?

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: And it was like, displaying those pictures so Jorne would think that I was an actual, like, researcher. (laughter)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Oh, you did do that! So I think that that's - so I think that the first part of that is just your, your neural link cyberware.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which can look like this cool - part of it can be this cool armband you have, you know?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Or wristband thing.

ALI: (pauses, whispers) Bracelet.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's a - yes. Bracelet. (Ali laughs) That's way cooler, yes.

ALI: And then... (sighs uncertainly)

AUSTIN: So, your options here are synth leathers or armored clothing, musical instruments, sleek ride, encrypted communications relay, Trauma Derms, or, again, just - you can look at the gear stuff, which is... after the cyberware section.

ALI: Yeah, I think I might look at that after...

AUSTIN: Okay. That's fine.

ALI: Yeah, after we're done.

AUSTIN: It's totally fine. Okay, so that leaves AuDy.

JACK: Okay, here we go. This is really easy, almost all of my stuff just transfers straight over.

AUSTIN: Nice.

JACK: So I'm gonna go for... armored jacket, which is just my, my police vest.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: With the word automated on the back. Um, I'm gonna go for... what the game calls a club.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: But I'm gonna call a police baton.

AUSTIN: Yep. I remember that thing, that thing is cool.

JACK (overlapping Austin): The club - the club is worth 2 - I don't think I've ever used it. I did blow that guy's foot off, though.

AUSTIN: (laughs) You did! It's true!

JACK: I've got a police baton... so that's, club is 2 harm hand, and I think a police baton is probably 2 harm hand as well.

AUSTIN: Yep, totally.

JACK: And I got 5 creds.

AUSTIN: Wow, that's - that's really easy! You had - you didn't need - this was an easy one for you!

JACK: Uh huh! Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Nice. (pauses) Okay. Consider backgrounds and contacts. This is gonna be easy, because we already - we already have these, right? (reading) Think about your character's background. Do they come from the streets? Does she grow up in the - a corporate arcology, do they move in media circles, etcetera. (speaking) For now, just make a brief note about the circles these contacts come - will come from. We already know this stuff, so we can actually just like keep moving through. People who have listened to the podcast already know, and in fact we already have a sheet, we have a relationship map, that shows what those contacts are already, which is nice.

So here's the next big thing. Choose directives. (reading) Each playbook includes four personal directives. These are the - these are one of the many ways that your player gets to contribute to the tone and direction of the game. Part of the MC's agenda is to make these directives relevant, so make your choices based on tricky situations you want to see your character in. For example, if you want to see your character interacting with powerless people, choose the Compassionate directive and the MC will work to introduce situations in which you have to choose whether to help the powerless or not. If you want the game to include a particular type of group or person, choose a directive that writes that group into the game.

(reading) So you choose two personal directives to reflect your character's motivations. Some contain blank spaces for you to fill in the name of an individual, group, organization, or viewpoint, or even philosophy, which fits the structure of the sentence. Every time you make a move in service of one of your directives, mark experience. (speaking) There's a whole chapter, chapter seven, that lists all of the directives.

JACK: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: But the suggested ones are pretty good, for each class, or each - for each playbook. (pauses) Aria, we basically know yours, right?

ALI: Yeah. My two were... when valuing heroicism hinders the mission, mark experience.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ALI: And then the other one was, what was the - the one that we want...

KEITH: It's a really good one.

ALI: About Aria.

AUSTIN: So I think we have two different ones that are - that are similar. So, so... or, we have two different ones. One was like, whenever you protect people instead of - or in, in - versus the mission... but I guess that's, that's heroism, right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So then the other one would be, whenever you... it's the kind of like, I am Aria Joie one?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Which is like, whenever you value your reputation over the completion of the mission. But there might be a specific one here that's really good about that, let me just see. One second. (pauses) Hm. There's one that's, when your desire for fame draws unwanted attention to the mission, mark experience. But you could, you could... just change that around to be like, whenever you put... whenever you put your fame ahead of the mission, mark experience. Or your, I - you know. Making your identity known, or something like that.

ALI: Oh yeah, I - I like that, cause I think that both of those are... in... direct, like -

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: competition with each other. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yep. And that's good, that's where drama happens. (pauses) TNT. Uh, the other thing is... that, just so you know, heads up, the other way you make XP in this game is that each mission will have directives that are called mission directives, and those are just like... step one, locate where Cene is. And when you su- when you succeed at that mission directive, you get a - you get a point of XP. #02:15:00#

And, the - the places you tend to get them automatically are like, finish the mission, is gonna be a mission objective. And one of them is gonna be like... I think it's, I think it's - let me just double check to, to see what these are, but... you kind of get them through the process of going through a mission. So those are the two ways you, you get XP in this game.

So any thoughts, from people who have thoughts? Let's start with Mako, so we can get his now.

KEITH: Hi! Um, we're doing personal directives?

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: I'm choosing one from the list, which is deceptive: when your lies about your identity or your past put the mission at risk, mark experience.

AUSTIN: Nice, okay.

KEITH: And then I was also thinking... something about, like, when me doing some sort of ridiculous or flashy antic puts the mission at risk?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. (sighs) You're gonna get a lot of XP.

KEITH: But I - (laughter) But I don't usually put the mission at risk!

AUSTIN: Yes you do.

JACK: (laughs sarcastically)

KEITH: It usually works!

ALI: (sarcastically) Mmhm.

KEITH: Well, I put it - okay. I usually put it at risk, but the risk pays off!

AUSTIN: (doubtfully) Yeah...

ALI: Do you believe that?

AUSTIN: Some - sometimes.

KEITH: Yeah! When was the last time it didn't pay off?

AUSTIN: (sighs) Yeah. (pauses) I think that might be... I want to -

ART: Too disruptive? Too destructive. Too... infuriating? Too...

AUSTIN: (laughs) Oh, it's so good!

ART: Too encouraging the worst - the worst impulses?

KEITH: Listen, I feel like -

AUSTIN: So there are, there -

KEITH: I *feel* like I'm a very successful player.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): Uh huh. (laughs) I think it's behavioral? (reading) Describe your ethical code. When adhering to your code hinders the mission, mark experience. (laughing) And your code is...

JACK: Chaos. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Being a fucking goofball, who is the worst. (Keith laughs)

KEITH: Wait, sorry, it's called... behavioral?

AUSTIN: That's the one in the - just, it's, write down the thing, which is like... when, when...

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You know. Your commitment to doing a stupid bit. Which are funny!

KEITH: When you do... okay.

AUSTIN: That puts the mission at risk.

KEITH: (indignantly) Funny and effective!

AUSTIN: Well then it's not putting the mission at risk, so you're not gonna get XP.

KEITH: (pauses) Well - with a - *seem* effective, for it.

AUSTIN: (doubtfully) Mm (laughs).

KEITH: (laughing) And then sometimes they're not, but they usually really are.

JACK (overlapping Keith): This is actually really great, cause this is like catching Keith in a bind, right?

AUSTIN: Yes, it is.

KEITH: (pauses) I agree. That's why I thought of it.

AUSTIN: You know, and I - I actually want the phrasing that behavioral has, which is, when adhering to your code, or it's like, when adhering to your - to your... I like this too, because it helps underline this as a bit, as like, an active thing that Mako is doing, and not just... it's not just oh, he's a funny guy, it's like, no, this is part of his ethos for like, dealing with the world, is...

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: It's, it - so yeah, when adhering to this persona, or something like that. Yeah, so you know what, let's call it - let's call it a persona. (pauses) Sorry, I'm thinking about Persona now. (reading) Describe your persona. When adhering to your persona -

KEITH: When adhering to your persona, dance all night. (laughter)

AUSTIN: When adhering to your persona hinders the mission, mark experience. So it's not just, it's not just when... you make a joke, mark experience, it's when it actually does hinder the mission. That's when you get to mark experience.

KEITH: Yeah. Right.

AUSTIN: Okay. (pauses) You have a hard out in like six minutes, so I want to skip ahead really quick to the next phase for you, and that way you can bounce.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: And then we can just finish things up with us. Is that okay?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, the next phase - and everyone keep considering what their directives are here - is links. And this is the coolest shit. This is the final phase, links.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: (reading) Each player describes and introduces their character to the group.
(speaking) We don't have time for that, Keith. (laughs)

KEITH: Okay. No, we don't.

AUSTIN: (reading) Each player will tell everyone about a job their character did against one of the corporations established in step zero. Describe your character's role in the job, and name the corporation you ran the job against. The character should play a leading role in the job, either in charge of the entire operation or providing a critical skill around which the mission was based. This is a chance to show off a little. (pauses) The MC, me, at that point, will start a countdown clock for that corporation. If a countdown clock already exists, the MC will advance it.

(speaking) Right now, I'm saying that... that the countdown clocks that already exist, besides the ones that we've written here, but like, there's also one for Snowtrak, there's also one for OriCon, there's also - you know. All of those are at zero - or, are at... 1200. Which is to say, they're not filled in at all yet, because...

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: you had some downtime. (pauses) I'm gonna continue. (reading) The player to your left will tell how their character was involved in that job. They take +1 links with your character. The MC will advance that corporation's clock. Continuing to the left, each other player will tell if and how their character was involved too. If their character was involved, they take +1 links with

your character. For each character that contributes to the story, the MC will note that character's involvement and advance the corporation clock by 1. #02:20:00#

(speaking) So, as you do missions against this group - against any corporation, they become more and more aware of you, but you also get better linked with ea- with each other, which means it's easier to Aid and Interfere. (pauses) So who, of these six that are on this - on the page now, or five, of these five groups, which did you run a mission against?

And here's the other thing I want us to throw in here. There has been two months downtime between the last game we played, where you all kind of went home licking your wounds, and now. The mission you're about to describe can take place in those two months, or before the game started, or between other downtime that we've had. So this could be the like, this is a thing that happened after you dealt with the, the... the Iron Choir in the desert, or it could be, this happened offscreen before we even started.

KEITH: Mhm. And, sorry, I - I think I misheard something. Were you saying that it has to, or has to not, include the other characters for... yeah.

AUSTIN: The, the - it will be, it will by default include the player to your left, which on my sheet is... Aria, and then AuDy and Cass can then decide if they're involved or not. So, but you decide right now what the mission is, who you ran it against.

KEITH: Okay. I'm going to... which one is Liberty and Discovery, uh, Automatic Corps?

AUSTIN: They are the people who make... they're like a, a hyper-drone corporation. Or a, or I guess a department of the Diaspora. They're a division that makes... super high tech drones.

KEITH: Okay. (pauses) I'm gonna say... Automatic Corps, then.

AUSTIN: Okay. What was the mission?

KEITH: The mission was to... go in and... sabotage a, a... sabotage blueprints that were stolen by them from our... plan.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool. How did you - how did you help? Or how were you, how did you take a leader role - a leading role in that mission?

KEITH: Um, Automatic Corps has a lot of automatic security.

AUSTIN: Sure.

KEITH: And I just fogged the shit out of the whole thing.

AUSTIN: Nice.

KEITH: I just went in and just shut down everything with my dumb brain.

AUSTIN: Nice. And it's like, they don't have people there. Like, cause they...

KEITH (overlapping Austin): They are - yeah.

AUSTIN: They are so good at drones, like, why would they need people? And the answer is, because of you.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Aria, how did you help?

ALI: (pauses) Um...

KEITH: Co-signer. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Jesus christ.

ALI: No, I... (pauses) Doing all of that fogging stuff would have triggered, like, an alarm, cause it's all automated, so I was like... the person who got Keith out of there really fast. I guess.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so you just - no, that's fine! (Ali laughs) That's totally - it doesn't have to be... you know, we don't have to play the scene out or anything. You know?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Let me just get... I need like, markers here.

KEITH: (laughs) And, hard out! I can - no, if there's another thing, I can do that - whatever piece - yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping Keith): This is the last stage. The only other thing is like, are you going to participate in other people's missions.

KEITH: Yes.

AUSTIN: But like, you - there's a cost to that too, which is that it advances... so the next step in this is, so Aria helped, did anybody else help in this mission? (pauses) AuDy, did you help in this mission?

JACK: I don't think I did, no.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cass, did you help?

ART: I think I'm also going to pass.

AUSTIN: Okay. So that means... Mako, you have one link with AuDy - or, with Aria, and that's it.

KEITH: Okay. So, whoever I'm to the left of...

AUSTIN: Which will be... on my list, Cass, you will have helped Cass.

KEITH: Cass. So I will have helped Cass. (pauses) I guess you guys can make up a way that I helped him² when he goes. And then if anybody does anything against the September Institute, I'm also going to help.

AUSTIN: Okay, that's a good way of thinking about it.

JACK: Rad.

AUSTIN: I appreciate it.

JACK: Cool.

AUSTIN: Alright, man.

KEITH: No problem. Have a great week!

AUSTIN: See you in a bit!

KEITH: See you later. Bye.

AUSTIN: Okay. So let's go back really quick, to... to directives. We have Aria's, we have Mako's... what about you, Cass? What are your directives?

ART: I guess reserving the right to look through the, the non-class directives later and change this...

AUSTIN: Totally. Absolutely.

ART: I have filial, Koda.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Okay.

ART: And -

AUSTIN: What's that say?

ART: It's... if I, if I take his³ - when you take the advice of... when you *put* the advice of blank ahead of the mission, mark experience.

AUSTIN: Mhm. And Koda... and so Koda's advice. That's good, I like that a lot.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then what's the other one?

² Apostolosian pronouns default to they/them. This would probably include Cass.

³ Koda's pronouns are they/them.

ART: Prudent, when you resolve a charged situation with violence, mark experience.

AUSTIN: Ooh, that's interesting. Okay. (pauses) You think that fits? That fits?

JACK: I think that fits.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: (indecisively) Eh. It's not the best.

AUSTIN (overlapping): I'm trying to think if that's how you've played Cass, though. You know?

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: Cause I think about, your - your killing the skeleton moment was shooting... that hover - that hover scaffold. You know?

ART: Yeah.

JACK: Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: So maybe that isn't the best. Maybe look - take a second to look at the directives, or think about it over the course of the next week, or whatever.

ART: Well, cause financial doesn't work, and I also think behavioral does, I think - I think Cass is a person who's sold out his⁴... #02:25:00#

AUSTIN: His - yeah yeah yeah, there's, there's a -

ART: his ethical code.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Let's do... so again, you can go ahead and look at the rest of the directives that they suggest, or that they have, which is on page... 132. But you can also just come up with your own, the way that we've done with these other characters.

ART: Sure. (pauses) Oh! Wait, got it, done. Deceptive.

AUSTIN: When you... when your lies about your identity or your past (Jack laughs) put your mission at risk, mark experience. Are you sure you want that, and not when your identity or your past put the mission at risk? Is it your lies that you want to accept?

ART: Oh, that's - that's interesting.

AUSTIN: Cause then, the other one is, is... I think it's... (pause) Oh, there it is. Rejected. When your former membership in blank hinders the mission, mark experience?

⁴ Apostolosian pronouns default to they/them. This would probably include Cass.

ART: Yeah, that's probably it.

AUSTIN: Let's do that. When your former rep- membership in, in... the Apostolosian Empire, when the fact that you're a, (laughs) you're an exiled prince. And then AuDy.

JACK: So I'm kind of, kind of... (pauses) confused. Or unsure.

AUSTIN: Unsure. That's - that's fair.

JACK: I like the idea of... sorry, I'm trying to juggle tabs here.

AUSTIN: Mmhm. (laughs)

JACK: I like the idea of revealing.

AUSTIN: What's that one say?

JACK: When you discover more information about blank, mark experience.

AUSTIN: Mm. Mmhm.

JACK: And I wonder whether or not I could put in there... sort of like, why I exist? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: Or some expression of that. So like, when I discover more information about the cause of my sentence. Cause again, I guess, AuDy doesn't know why they are at all.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JACK: They just are. And as for my second, I'm kind of torn between either rejected, as in when my former membership in... (laughs) autonomous, unthinking robot, hinders the mission,

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: mark experience. Or, violent. And I have such weird feelings about violent, as a tag.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: Cause I don't know if AuDy would deliberately choose to use violence...

AUSTIN: What's - what's violent say?

JACK: When you deliberately choose to use violence to overcome a problem when a nonviolent option exists, mark experience.

AUSTIN: Huh. (sighs indecisively) Yeah, that's tough. Because -

JACK: That's not right. Cause there's definitely an element in AuDy's character that feels *close* to that.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

JACK: Like hanging up on Orth, and... (laughing) shoot- blowing the guy's foot off.

AUSTIN: Blowing the guy's foot off, and punching through the door.

JACK: Right. But I don't know whether or not that's delib- is that deliberately choosing to use violence to overcome a problem when a nonviolent option exists?

AUSTIN: I think in those cases it *was*. (pauses) Well, no, the fight wasn't. The fight definitely wasn't.

JACK: The problem is, when I think of that tag,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I think of - I think of a player who... (pauses) who just deliberately screws up situations.

AUSTIN: Right. But, don't be that player.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Well, or do, but like, in a way that is...

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: interesting.

JACK: Learn how to make the right mistakes, right?

AUSTIN: Learn to make the - you will be making the *interesting* mistake. You will be making the mistakes that are fascinating to watch as a - as, an aud- you know, for the audience, and that you as the player are interested in making. But, but you know, like, I - I don't know that it's - you know what, maybe there's another version of it that isn't about violence, it's about... seeing the world through the eyes of something that is automated and synthetic, instead of being human. (pauses) Though maybe that's the other one, is like - so what's the first one that you're choosing?

JACK: Um... revealing?

AUSTIN: Oh right, cause you wanted to know more about...

JACK (overlapping): Cause I wanted to discover more information about why I am.

AUSTIN: You know what, maybe there's one here which is just like, when your status as a robot puts - puts everything at harm. Or we do it broader, where it's like, not just your status as a robot, but your... your... when the fact that you're robotic. Which could play out as either, when you are cold and uncaring because you're a robot, or when the fact that you're a robot means that you don't get access to places.

JACK: That's true. I could see that. I mean like -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): That's how we've been playing, but again -

JACK: That could come down to that specific moment a couple of episodes ago,

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: where you said oh, you should have talked to the Dead Metal, and I had immediately thought the exact opposite of that.

AUSTIN: Mmhm. Yeah.

JACK: That feels close to - closer to that. It's, so I guess it would just be robotics.

AUSTIN: Yeah. (pauses) That's fair. Or, you could take one of Asimov's... robotics rules.

JACK: (delighted) Oh, my goodness, what are those? That's actually fantastic.

AUSTIN: We're stealing this straight from Netrunner, which is doing this right now, and it's the fucking coolest.

ART: It's the coolest!

AUSTIN: What's the name of that card again?

ART: Uh, the, the runner is Adam.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: I don't remember what his directives are... are called.

AUSTIN: They're - yeah, I mean...

JACK (overlapping Austin): Oh my goodness, this is the best. (laughs)

AUSTIN: So wait, what are the - what are the... oh yeah, what are they? What are the three...

JACK: The three rules of robotics are... a robot may not injure a human bei- oops. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Wait but, read it, read the - (laughs)

JACK: A robot may not injure a human being, or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm. Well, I've crossed that one off.

AUSTIN: Yep. #02:30:00#

JACK: A robot must obey orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the first law. Uh, I think AuDy listens to people. Sometimes. (laughs)

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Three. A robot must protect its own existence, (laughs) so long as such protection does not conflict with the first or second law.

AUSTIN: So I think what it is, it's when you let the laws of robotics interfere with the mission is when you mark experience.

JACK: That would be when I... basically break the laws of robotics.

AUSTIN: No, the other way around. When they... don't - when you *don't* break them, and that hinders the mission.

JACK: (laughs) No, but AuDy doesn't have - AuDy is not constrained by the laws of robotics, right?

AUSTIN: Are we su- I - I'm - you know. I think if you, like -

JACK (overlapping Austin): I think it's probably like - they - sorry.

ART (overlapping both): You're certainly capable of breaking them, but does that mean they're not there?

AUSTIN: You're - exactly. Like, that's exactly the thing I want to zoom in on here, that you can break them and not hinder the mission by breaking them, but maybe there's a cost to that that we haven't explored yet.

JACK: The difficulty then would be as a, as a player... me... not knowing when to deploy... the, like, as a player -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): It's - it's when it's dramatically interesting to you. So like, I've been playing in Burning Wheel a lot, right? And in Burning Wheel, my character has the trait 'coward,' right?

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: And I haven't been playing him as a coward for a long time, because I as the player am like ah, I don't - (sighs) like, coward's not that fun, like I just - I'm not that type of player. He has coward because it's a cultural trait, it's a trait that's assumed of people from his class, that they're cowardly. But I realized the other day that the reason - that I've been playing him as a

character who delegates a lot. And I suddenly realized, like, *oh*, maybe he's delegating because he's a coward. Because he doesn't want - it's not like oh, he wants to help people do well for themselves, it's... I don't want to take this on myself, it's too much risk. And so I started playing that up, where like, the cowardly thing to do for him was to delegate in that way. Which caused problems, and got another player hurt really bad - another character hurt really badly, because I delegated a really tough task to them that they could not do. And so in this case it would be the same thing, of just like, AuDy can't pull the trigger, or chooses not to, or AuDy, like... at the, at the - at a key moment, accepts the person who says, you're not allowed to be here right now. You know?

JACK: Yes. That's -

AUSTIN: Or, we could come up with better, more interesting robotics laws for our universe. (pauses) Not more interest- I like these laws, I'm not dissing Asimov.

JACK: Well no, I think these -

ART (overlapping Jack): (laughing) Yeah, *fuck* Asimov! (Jack laughs)

JACK: I think these are really solid, because they are, to an extent, peculiarly deeply relevant for games.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: They are about death and injury.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: They are about orders and control.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: And they are about looking after yourself.

AUSTIN: Yes, totally.

JACK: Which seem to be three bizarrely RPG-y... in- instances.

AUSTIN: Yeah, definitely. I love that a lot.

JACK: And I - the idea, the possibility of... (sighs) I don't want to use the word malfunctioning, but AuDy suddenly just going like, no, okay (laughs).

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I'm just - I'm just doing one of these things, it's really interesting. So I'll just write down -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): The Fall is also a really good example of this, too. There's a, there's a computer game called the Fall, which is about a synthetic suit. A synthetic, like...bio...

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Like a, like a s- like a... flight suit, basically? That has AI in it, that has all these directives it can't go against, but it needs to go against them to save the, the... person inside of the suit. And so it's always, like, struggling to figure out how to... override them, basically. So yeah, I like this notion of... you have these laws of robotics that kick in. It's also a thing that I will now be able to bring up, right?

JACK: Yes! That's what -

AUSTIN: As a GM, and say...

JACK: You'll just be able to lock me out of moves sometimes, right?

AUSTIN: Right, but I want you to also take the, the active -

JACK: Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: On your side. Do you know what I mean?

JACK: Yeah yeah yeah. But it's a two-way street of accidentally screwing up AuDy.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes. Definitely.

JACK: Cool. So I've just, I've marked down, um, revealing, and the laws of robotics. (Austin laughs) When you follow them, mark experience.

AUSTIN: Yes. When you follow them, *and* it hinders the mission.

JACK: Oh, yes.

AUSTIN: That's the important thing. It's not just you follow them in your day-to-day, that's... that's not a problem.

JACK: Right. I have to make them count.

ART (overlapping Jack): You follow them on the high holidays, and... (laughter)

AUSTIN: Exactly. Okay. It is time to do the rest of links.

ART: Great.

AUSTIN: So the next person on my list... Cass. What mission - what company here did you write down? So what organization here?

ART: The September Institute.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: One, because it was Keith's automatic, and it fits that nicely. Two, I think they... I think I might have a little, little bit of a... of a grudge against them over the war.

AUSTIN: Ooh, sure, sure, because if they didn't take care of the Divines... (abruptly) Or, or, sorry - they *didn't* take care of the Divines, right?

ART: Right.

AUSTIN: Like, they ended up - they were built to go against the Diaspora, and didn't.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's really interesting. So what was the mission, Art?

ART: (pauses) I think it was more or less a demo run.

AUSTIN: So you were going in to... do what? To blow something up?

ART: Yeah, I think it was - it was about, it was about doing damage. Rolling through with a... I guess it doesn't make a *ton* of sense to roll through with a big mech to... (laughs) blow up some stuff on a, at a place designed to beat Mechs single-handedly.

AUSTIN: (laughs) No, it doesn't, not really.

ART: Uh, then maybe it was a - maybe it was a supply block.

AUSTIN: Ooh, I like that. #02:35:00#

ART: You know, they're on a planet where... they're, they're on a, a relatively non-useful planet, right? Is that true?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Did I - am I doing that -

AUSTIN: They're on a... the planet isn't useful in the sense that it isn't like... it isn't like a big industrial or economic powerhouse. It's useful cause it produces people like them. You know?

ART: Right, but it's not - its, its bio-stuff wasn't great, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, its bio-stuff was... I'll double check it. Give me a sec to flip over to that page. But I'm pretty sure that's correct. I don't think like - yeah, I don't think that it is... self-sustaining. (pauses) Yeah. And there's only like a couple thousand people there. There's only ten

thousand... you know, tens of thousands of people on it, so even if it was a nice planet, it isn't producing... you know, enough, in this weird future economy. You know?

ART: Yeah, I think I - I think I hit their supply. Convoy.

AUSTIN: It's importing *something*. You know, whether it's importing computers or importing food, it's importing something. So yeah, that's cool. Uh, was this before the game started, or was this in this two month period?

ART: I think this - I - I want it to be in this two month period?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: (pauses) Cause it also like - it also like, kind of like, gives us an impetus for Cass moving forward. It's like, in this time, he decided he was still mad.

AUSTIN: Okay, sure, totally. Okay, is anyone else joining in this mission?

JACK: I think I'll go.

AUSTIN: Okay, what did you do to help?

JACK: I was the eye in the sky. So...

AUSTIN: Okay. Well, right, that makes sense, like if, if - (laughs) this was a mission where he probably needed you, because... you went to space, right? For this mission?

JACK: Right!

ART: Yeah, it's a space mission.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Can the Kingdom Come fly orbitally?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JACK: How?

AUSTIN: (pauses) It can. It's a spaceship.

ART: Shhh, shh shh shh shh shh shh.

JACK (overlapping Art): I'm - does it - no, does it like -

AUSTIN: I've -

JACK: go vertically, and all the things fall down the inside of it? Or, does it... (laughs)

AUSTIN: What? Oh, oh oh oh oh. No, I think it - I think it just does - it's a, it's a vertical takeoff and landing ship, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You've described it as -

JACK: And - and action.

AUSTIN: On - right. And action. One of the actions is, go to space. (laughter) We've described it before as, you know - sorry, what I was gonna say is like... It's a, it's a VTOL ship, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's a VTOL ship the way... our current VTOL technology is. Like, it isn't necessarily only rotor fans that slowly lift you up.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: It also had rotor fans. But it did also have, like, thrusters.

JACK: Also, wait, hang on a second. This thing is the size of a warehouse. I love the fact that this is a VTOL. (laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Oh yeah, it's - yeah. Yep! Mmhm. Science!

JACK: Just a building the size of a warehouse slowly lifts itself off the ground (laughs).

AUSTIN: Slowly lifts itself off the air. Yeah, exactly. It's probably way better in space in some ways, right? Cause it doesn't deal - it isn't dealing with gravity.

JACK: Oh, yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: It isn't - it doesn't have to deal with - yeah. Mmhm.

JACK: Yeah, so just, I don't think I did anything tremendously interesting on the mission, I just came along.

AUSTIN: (pauses) Okay. Well, you, you - you flew that ship. Right? Like, you had to mark a...

JACK: (dismissively) Ah, I do that every day.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but you had to like, intercept a... a convoy, a - in space.

JACK: Oh, that's true. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is huge. Space is huge. And like...

JACK: Very big.

AUSTIN: And given what we've talked about in terms of what space combat and stuff is like in this game, it's always very risky and *hard*. You know? So.

JACK: That's true.

AUSTIN: It's - it's much easier to hover above a rail line and shoot down at it than it is to, you know, mark trajectory and hit the convoy at exactly the right place. You know?

JACK: Yeah, that's true.

AUSTIN: So, good job.

JACK: Which means -

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): That means September Institute is up to... 1800 hours, right now.

JACK: Uh-oh.

AUSTIN: No, you're fine. You're good. Aria, are you - are you helping?

ALI: (thoughtfully) I think I stay on... Counterweight, for this one.

AUSTIN: Okay. Sounds good. That means... Cass, make - mark one link with AuDy, and one with Mako. Okay! (pauses) So, let's - let's do Cass next. Let's save Aria for last, because it's a cool mission. Cause I've - we've already talked about it.

ALI: (laughs) Oh, okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: So Cass...

ART: No, you already did - AuDy.

AUSTIN: Or no, sorry, AuDy. AuDy, my bad.

JACK: I think that I... broke into... an AI research unit.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: In an attempt to try and uncover how artificially intelligent brains work.

AUSTIN: So where is this... this AI research unit?

JACK: It is the... who was it who makes super-advanced...

AUSTIN: Automatic Corps.

JACK: Them.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: (pauses) I know they're already...

AUSTIN: They are already at one, but - but - you know. It happens.

JACK: Oh, yeah, you know. So it goes. Because I think that... AuDy probably knows as much about robot brains as I know about human brains?

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. I thought you were gonna say robot brains. (laughs)

JACK: Oh, well, it - that's, it's the same thing, I guess. (laughter) In that I know where they are,

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: and I know what they do, and kind - that's kind of it.

AUSTIN: Right. Okay, that means the countdown clock right now is at 1800. So what was the mission?

JACK: (pauses) Break in and steal a... a... (pauses) I don't know. I mean, information gathering? I guess?

AUSTIN: This was a thing you did by yourself? No one hired you to do this? This was like a...

JACK: Yeah, I think it was what AuDy does on their downtime.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay, cool. What do you... what did you do to help, Cass? #02:40:00#

ART: I mean I hate to just have this go, like, the other way, right? But like... a... a dist- cause, you know, he⁵ doesn't need a doctor.

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

ART: So all I have is a giant robot. A distraction? A diversionary...

AUSTIN: Cool.

ART: A, a military... a...

AUSTIN: So you drew the drones away.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The like, defense drones of this thing away. Okay, cool.

JACK: Cause I bet their defenses are gonna be amazing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. (pauses) I like that. Aria, did you help?

⁵ AuDy uses they/them pronouns.

ALI: (noncommittally) Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. I'm gonna just note this, and I think this is... I guess, how did you help?

ALI: I guess I went into the place with AuDy, as backup?

AUSTIN: Okay, so you went as a - as a team, you infiltrat- you helped to infiltrate it.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Cool. Uh huh?

JACK: Do I get an extra +1 with Cass, because they were involved on my thing, so -

AUSTIN: Yep. Yep.

JACK: So Cass is now +2, and...

AUSTIN: Correct.

JACK: Aria is +1.

AUSTIN: And same thing Cass, you're +2 with AuDy now, and then... yeah, Aria and you are both +1 with each other.

JACK: I don't think that AuDy got anything of value from that place.

AUSTIN: (surprised) You don't?

JACK: Well, I - (sighs) it's hard, right? Cause...

AUSTIN: Hm.

JACK: Part of me wonders whether or not breaking into Liberty and Discovery Automatic Corps to understand robot brains is a bit like me... trying to reverse engineer an iPhone to understand computers.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Right.

JACK: Where I'm just like, ugh, god, what is this thing. (laughs)

AUSTIN: (uncertainly) You know what - is he going to - or, are they going to learn about what robot *brains* are, or about like what robot *consciousness* is? Or what like, robot selfhood is?

JACK: Possibly.

AUSTIN: Because maybe it's not like you going to a... anatomy library, so much as it is you going to like, a psychology and philosophy library. And being like, *this* is what I am.

JACK: I could see that. But at the same time, the idea of these drones just roaming around and exploring the galaxy...

AUSTIN: Mmhm.

JACK: doesn't seem like AuDy's... (sighs indecisively) I mean, if AuDy goes places, it's not to... explore it.

AUSTIN: So here's - right. Here's what my suggestion might be. We didn't talk about these laws of robotics at *all* before. (Jack laughs) And now AuDy knows about them. I don't know if they're real, but AuDy knows about them, and like, can't... (clicks tongue) they just, they're in there now, and you can't help but think about them a lot.

JACK: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, maybe this is literally where you picked up that directive.

JACK: Yeah, I - I'm definitely up for that.

AUSTIN: (excited) Oh, in fact, like, maybe it was a scene where - you were surrounded, and Aria stepped forward and was like *no*. And they backed down, because she's a human. (Jack laughs) And like what? And then like, you figured - whatever, you dug up some stuff about why they did that, and the answer was... it was one of those weird laws of robotics, like they can't, they don't - they're built to kill, and they don't have a way of stunning her or something, and so they, they... (pauses) And like, am *I* supposed to be like that? Is that a thing *I'm* supposed to do? I - it feels like that's a thing I'm supposed to do! Huh.

JACK: Yeah, I'm definitely up for that. That's great.

AUSTIN: Okay. (pauses) P.S., the way this works is, when a corporate clock gets to 1800, which two of them are, are pa- or one of them, September's at 1800. It is... the corporation has definitely taken notice of the group. When a corporate clock gets to 2100, the corporation takes definite action against them.

JACK: (laughing) Oh god.

AUSTIN: So get ready! (pauses) Last but not least, Aria.

ALI: (pauses) Uh, yeah, so who...

AUSTIN: You know, I'm not sure who this is against.

ALI: Right?

AUSTIN: Given who's here. It might be... (pauses) The group that I think it - that it, no, the clock that I'm interested - I think it advances is Counterweight's Angles.

ALI: I think so. Yeah.

AUSTIN: And the reason is, I think this is against their plans. I think this is not what they wanted, necessarily.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: So what is your mission?

ALI: (laughs) Yeah, so the - the mission that I chose was... that I went to Weight, to see what was going on there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, in the last trip, for people who haven't listened to the whole faction episode, from the previous episode... Orth, and the Counter- the Consolidated Counterweight Technocracy, moved a group of surveyors onto Weight. Their kind of goal right now is to get their own foothold onto Weight, so that OriCon and the Diaspora aren't the only interested parties there.

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And we had said that maybe you were part of that mission, getting them up there?

ALI: Ri- okay, yeah. I - I didn't mention Orth because I wasn't sure if we were... it was gonna be part of that, but I like it better if it is.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I like it better if it is too.

ALI: Where, like, going to Weight had sort of been Aria's aspiration,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: since she got to Counterweight, so she might have like, looked through Orth's emails, like, a second time, and was like hey, I heard about this thing, like just let me get -

AUSTIN: Please, yeah.

ALI: (laughs) So, I think yeah. So she went to Weight as part of the surveyor group, to just like, check it out. But I don't - I guess that would be against them... (pauses) #02:45:00#

AUSTIN: The reason I think it's against them is cause those... (pauses) they don't want you doing anything with Weight. And that's a thing I'm telling you as a - as the MC of the game.

ALI: Right, yeah, I was gonna say like, I think that that's - it's not directly against them, but like, it's an action she's done that they cannot stand.

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly.

ALI: In a way that like, yeah.

AUSTIN: They have an ideology that I haven't like totally revealed yet.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: And this is not part of that plan.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: For sure. And this - this will help kind of give shape to what is actually... so Orth's thing was like, I want to get this group of surveyors up to Weight so we can see what's what. And you and Aria, at the very least, and Cass can help here too, if - if they want, but... with you two at the very least. So how do you help with that? And what's that mission look like, I guess? For either of you, what's it look like? Are you dropping, are - is this like, we're taking the ship to Weight, and like, running through a blockade? Or is this like, we are... charming our way through?

ALI: Is the mission here us trying to get onto... the ship of surveyors? Or to...

AUSTIN: It's to get the surveyors onto Weight.

ALI: Oh - ohh.

AUSTIN: You're like, doing a transportation thing. You're the reason they got there successfully.

ALI: Ohh, okay.

JACK: Oh!

ALI: Okay, we didn't just like, kind of sneak in.

AUSTIN: Mm-mm. No.

ALI: Okay. So yeah. Um...

JACK: Could we say something about... that thing you do in Elite sometimes, where you turn off all your processors

AUSTIN: Yeah!

JACK: and just drift, slowly, into a...

AUSTIN: You definitely helped with that! That is definitely how you helped.

JACK: That's what you need a pilot for, right?

AUSTIN: Yes. (Ali laughs)

JACK: You know, when all of your - when the radar goes down, and when the reverse thrusters go down, and when your in-flight assistance has been turned off, and ice starts forming on the windshield, and this spaceship the size of a building just starts drifting toward the blockade.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: You need someone who knows how to fly spaceships for that, right?

AUSTIN: And fly one that's disconnected, right?

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Like that's your whole thing, has been...

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I don't need any of that stuff anyway. I just do this all mechanically.

JACK: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: So, AuDy made three moves, three thruster moves.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. (Ali laughs)

JACK: Four hundred miles before they reached the blockade.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Right.

JACK: (laughing) And just sort of hoped that they would work.

AUSTIN: And then how did - how did Aria help, either with the land- either with like, once you landed, or before you launched, or once you were there?

ALI: I think she helped with sort of getting them through... all of - like the... (pauses) So, how would the security setup - like, does Weight have like a...

AUSTIN: Yeah, so there are - there are - the Diaspora and the... the, OriCon, both have military bases there, and there's like some very light, like, military contractor, civilian areas. You know? But like no one is there - no one's living a life there that isn't part of those groups. So there's security there, for sure. But like, we're hand-waving this, like you can get through it - tell me a funny, or cool, or... clever way, to get through it.

ALI (overlapping Austin): Right, yeah. I think that she would sort of help them get through security in both being like, this isn't a political thing, like we're not here for any official means...

AUSTIN: Do you use that you're Aria Joie to do this?

ALI: I think so. Yeah. (laughs)

AUSTIN: So this is like... do you talk about EarthHome here? Is this like, oh, EarthHome sent me up because we're thinking about doing a concert up here? (Jack laughs)

ALI: Um... (laughs)

AUSTIN: These are my roadies?

ALI: Possibly, yeah. Yeah, I think so.

AUSTIN: I kind of love that? I kind of love...

ALI: Or just being like, this is a sweepstakes! (laughter)

AUSTIN: Oh! (laughs) Go to Weight with - with Aria Joie?

ALI: Yeah! Aria! And like, go on a picnic, cause it's beautiful there.

AUSTIN: That's so good.

ALI: (laughing) And you can't go on a picnic in Counterweight.

AUSTIN: And then like, they're like, uhh, what? And you're like, (Ali laughs) uh, excuse me, like, do you need me to call my agent? Do you need my to call my manager? Earth - (sighs) I'll call - I will call.

ALI: Here are the forms, like, somebody already spoke to someone and this should have been done already,

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: you should know about this, why *don't* you know about this.

AUSTIN: Yes. And then you have a really nice picnic.

ALI: (pauses) Yeah! (laughs)

AUSTIN: And Weight is the most beautiful thing you've ever seen. In your life. Cass, are you helping with this?

ART: I have a way to help that - that might feel like, too disconnected?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: To be help.

AUSTIN: What is it?

ART: Uh, you know, they're going to a strange atmosphere?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: I think... I think I'm providing medical support.

AUSTIN: (interested) Oh, that's -

ART: I think it's like, before you go, here are some things, like. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: I love that.

ART: If this starts happening, run! (laughs) You know? Like...

AUSTIN: Here are your shots.

ART: Cause you, cause you're poisoned! (laughs)

AUSTIN: Here is the... right, right.

ART: Yeah, here's some, you know, here's what pressure is, and how it affects your body. (Ali laughs)

AUSTIN: (laughs) Right.

ART: And when you get back, I'll look at you, and make sure you're okay.

AUSTIN: And that you didn't get any weird parasites. And also I just love it cause it's like, the opposite of - like, everyone here is from Counterweight, where everything is garbage. And like, on, on Weight, there are - there's bacteria that just, are good for you, but not for *you*, because you haven't grown up around them. Like, you've grown up on this hellscape. So... all of these foreign, you know, these foreign things are just gonna wreck your body if I don't give you these three shots. (pauses) I kind of love that, so yeah, I think you should help. #02:50:00#

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: Also yes, Counterweight's Angels have *definitely* taken notice of you. So. Alright. So, everyone there should - should up your links with each other. Not with each other, but with - with Aria. I... so I think that's it. (pauses) Again, this is part of - definitely part of Aria's vision, is like...

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You saw Weight, and it is abandoned, and huge, and perfect. And - and then you go home, to Counterweight, and... there's nothing. And the sky is like, is covered in, in soot, and smoke, and you live in these shitty domes, and worse, they're taking Weight away from you, because when the game picks up the next time we play, their - the BluSky technology that, that you - that was around in the very first game, that Cene had been working on with some other scientists, has finally started proliferating throughout Counterweight. And so, this one symbol of

hope that people have had, that was kind of crushing at the same time that it was a little bit of a lift, Weight in the sky, the beautiful blue seas, the green continents... that's gone. And replaced with a synthetic blue sky.

[MUSIC FADES IN]

AUSTIN: And everyone loves it, because they don't know any better. And I think we - we pick up next week on the beach, where everyone else is just having the greatest time, and Aria can't stop thinking about what a *real* beach is like.

[MUSIC: THE LONG WAY AROUND]

ART: Great!

AUSTIN: I'm Austin Walker, you can find me on twitter @austin_walker. Art, what about you?

ART: Hey, I'm Art. You can find me on twitter @atebbel.

AUSTIN: Jack?

JACK: My name's Jack de Quidt. You can find me on twitter @notquitereal.

AUSTIN: And you have a game coming out soon, right?

JACK: Mhm. Yeah, when's this podcast going live?

[MUSIC FADES OUT]

AUSTIN: Thursday. (laughs)

ALI: Thursday.

JACK: Ahh. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Where can people go for info on the game?

JACK: If you want information on the game, go to crowscrowscrows.com, which is the name of the studio I write for. And... go to crowscrowscrows.com/report for a *strange thing*.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Good. And Ali.

ALI: Yeah, you can find me @ali_west on twitter.

AUSTIN: And you can find the Let's Plays that Keith does at runbutton.net, and you can find Keith on the internet @keithjcarberry on twitter. You can find the stuff that I do at giantbomb.com, and at friendsatthetable.net. Please tell your friends about this. This is a - a thing that we do that we like a lot. Again, shoutouts to Hamish Cameron, whose game seems

really cool. I'm *very* excited to actually dig into it and start playing next week. I'm like, dying to play it, I have - I have like, the thirst. I have like the RPG - I got that fever.

ALI: Yeah. I'm ready to roll some fresh dice.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. (laughter)

JACK: I want to meet Just A Dog properly. (laughter)

AUSTIN: Me too! Just A Eight-Legged Dog. You know. (Jack laughs) So thanks! And tune in next week for... something, something big.

[END OF EPISODE #02:54:09#]