

'THE UNDERGROUND HAS A LIFE ALL OF ITS OWN AND NEEDS TO BE FED. IT SPAWNS TECH, DRUGS, ANYTHING ILLEGAL, SEX, VIOLENCE, AND A ROMANCE ALL OF ITS OWN. LINKS ARE INTRICATE AND PEOPLE ARE BUT CIPHERS, UNTRACEABLE SHADOWS WITH NO LAST NAMES, DEFINED BY THEIR MOBILE NUMBER OR NODE ADDRESS. THE UNDERGROUND CAN RECOIL AND GO INTO HIDING EVER SO QUICKLY, AS LINKS ARE ELECTRONIC OR THROUGH LOCAL HAUNTS. BARS CAN EMPTY AND PHONES BE UNTOUCHABLE IN AN INSTANT.'

ANONYMOUS, 2020

'THE BLACK CLINICS OF CHIBA ARE IN TOKYO. DEVELOPMENTAL WORK, NANOTECH, BIOWARE AND NEO-ORGANIC CYBERWARE ARE THE BIG MOVERS, AND THE AI LABS IN SHINJUKU ARE WORKING HARD ON THE LATEST 'IDORU' AND NON-LINEAR CHAOTIC LEARNING AI'S. IF THERE WERE GOGGLES THAT MEASURED TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS LIKE THERMO, THEN TOKYO WOULD BE WHITE-HOT.'

KIMI KATSUGEN, VIRTUAL NET REPORTER, 2022

THE PLAYERS

Yama | Bosozoku pretty boy, live fast die young. Wannabe star

Bashi | Grappler, disenfranchised, growing out of the fad.

Helena | Tek-grrl. Net-babe. DJ/mixer for Yama.

Slide | Frontman, manager, fast-talker, gossipman. Favors on a shoelace.

FUN AND GAMES BEFORE THE BIZ

Starts with the rave - badly - had to pay to get in, Yama and Helena are meant to have a slot in a couple of hours, because Slide's DJ buddy said he would get them a slot, but it doesn't look good. Slide will have to schmooze his way to getting them some time, because Yama and Helena need this gig. Bashi gets accosted a few times by people who recognize him as Sumiyashi. It's very annoying.

Drugs aplenty. Yama's got assorted 'phets from his Boso buddies, Helena - liquid acid, Slide - MDMAcaps, and a friend slips him some raw opium. Bashi's clean but open to options. They run into friends and stuff. Hopefully Helena and Yama do their gig. Bashi could be pressed into security - as Yama is pretty sexy, and the mix is pretty good.

Bonding stuff. All hours of the morn.. Slide gets the call around midday during comedown. Mr. Go wants you for a job. *Be at the Kafka Klub, zero hour.*

WHERE DO WE GO TONIGHT?

Kafka Club: Upstairs. Bad Franz Kafka theme. Everything slightly off-kilter. Actually designed to make you feel slightly uncomfortable. Cockroach stools, movement in the corner of your eye, bas-relief roaches in the wall - wings spread to reveal portal where Mr. Go entertains. Booths also.

The Pissoir: Upstairs. Industrial melt-down. Raw concrete, broken beams, dripping water, sparking wires, puddles of urine epoxied over and kept. UV lights and flickering halogen. Barely a week old.

The Cavern: Downstairs. Epoxy rock walls, curving ceilings, dripping stalactites, chopped stalagmites as tables, dank yet cozy. Boso hangout.

Johnny Mnem's: Downstairs. Chrome and silver, mirrors and cheesy props. Speared fake cyber-dolphin over the bar. Robo-waiters on ceiling rails provide table service. Has food. 3 weeks old and going strong.

LiquidSkin: On-street. Identical, narrow, long twin bars, divided by a massive fish tank stocked with exotic sea fish. To get from one side to the other you have to walk out on the street and into the other side. 2 weeks old. Used to be a noodle shop.

WHERE CAN WE MEET?:

St Vitus Noodles
Crazy Ape Sushi
Rabbit Rabbit (salad bar)
Happy Man Shop
Two-For-One
Teppanyaki Terror
Live Nudes (food, with a big neon sign...).

A MACGUFFIN CALLED AGRIPPA

The characters get hired as go-between data-jockeys. A big-time fix and his netboy are doing an intercept to steal some intense new transforming 'viral' nanotech. It is a sex-change nano, doing a complete sex change on any host body (human, that is) and changing the DNA so radically that it becomes untraceable. Massive for fashion, crime and the confused. The nano at this time is highly experimental and puts the subject under for two weeks while it works it's magic. It will also work on chimps and other primates, if they wish to test it.

PRECIS:

The crew will be asked to set up in a love hotel, with a netrunner, tech and at least a solo, ready to receive a LARGE data packet which they must then download to an 'Agrippa', a WORO storage device. Write once, read once. And if the clients receive an empty medium, then they know what's going on. With download technology this hot, obviously the software going onto it is even hotter. Basically the datapak will be the complete design plans and manufacture notes for the Teschen Metamorph nano-virus; ready to go into production.

The orders are: Be in place for the dump to go through, do NOT intercept (Mr Go says: 'they'll know' - which they won't but Go says this as a threat), pack up quick, throw the Agrippa out the window to your friendly waiting Bosozoku, who will catch it and go to Shinjuku station to place the device in a locker for someone to pick up. Then post the key to a pre-determined address (some post box in another district). The team will have to supply most of the gear except for the Agrippa and interface.

The job will pay fifty large euro. Up to ten grand in expenses. Expenses may include encryption gear, netstuff, wages for the Bozo and/or the 'runner, solo, fees for the hotel. The exact room and hotel is defined, so booking early might be a boon, otherwise they could frag the entire thing. No failures are acceptable. By the way, the Agrippa *will* survive being dropped, but not soaked.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING TO HAPPEN: Well, if the characters are any sort of good c-punks, they will make a copy of this hot shit, and get the Agrippa analysed. For fifty large the incentive is there to do the job properly. Drop some big names that only one character knows; for clout. However their curiosity is definitely going to be piqued by the odd method in which this data is being transferred. They will realize that they are part of the line, and in as much trouble as any link in the chain if they are targeted.

They are hired at the Kafka Klub by Mr Go, (the big-time fix-man) who will at least hint that there are OS customers involved. Mr Go owns the Kafka and is constantly surrounded by Tokyo meatboys; he doesn't go down easily.

About 2-3 minutes after the Bozo takes off with the Agrippa, somebody will get a call- the Kafka has been hit by some serious operators. It's still happening but Tokyo AD Police are on their way with ACPA and legged vehicles. Big-time smoke billowing from the club and weapons fire still echoing. Slide's acquaintance can show him the action on a vidphone from a building across the street.

If the team doesn't get the idea to move out of the Hotel now, they had better soon. Somebody spots two brown vans pulling into the carpark, with the obligatory tinted windows. A lot of nondescript men in loose silk suits get out, shades and mastoid commos. If this happens, the only way out is via the roof... going down to meet these people would be suicide.

Any which way they get out (supposing they do), Mr Go is going to be uncontactable- try in a coma and being shipped off to Switzerland for both safety and professional care. Most of his staff are dead but for his trusted bodyguards; who are going with him. The Kafka is trashed

and anybody checking screamsheets or keeping up with the rumour mill will also find out about another similar firefight that occurred at a private house just outside Tokyo.

If the team catches the Boso in time, they can avoid placing the Agrippa in the locker. However they have not been paid yet and placing the device is probably in their best interests. They may then deliberate in posting the key; wisest choice here is to make a copy and hopefully the characters will know someone who can do this. Watching the locker to find out who picks up the Agrippa is a very good idea, and they may put someone on surveillance, or get behind some good tech and whack a flat-cam somewhere in the station.

**** The station.** If they put surveillance on the station, the locker will be ominously quiet. Nobody will touch it and masses of humanity will pass by in mute ignorance. The cold steel door will remain unopened. With flatcam, nothing will be apparent, but if there is someone down there on post, they will notice the *other* pair watching the locker to see who goes for the Agrippa. These two are respectively a prowler and a solo, ready to apprehend or follow the first person to grab the Agrippa. More on this later...

**** The Residence.** Amongst the high-walled mansions of the upper district is the other place that was hit at the same time as the Kafka Klub. Depending on how fast they get down there to check, they could chance upon the chaos when the Fire Department and the AD Police descend upon the residence. Fire trucks, legged cop vehicles and Arasaka ACPA cluster inside and outside the high gates, and uniformed police control the crowds that begin to mill about. Smoke billows from a number of spots inside the mansion.

If later, there will be a diminished presence; a police line and a trio of police with one car patrolling the crime scene. They will still not let anyone in of course, but by now the alarm has been disabled and the wall could be scaled. Depending, once more, on their alacrity, there may be forensics teams and/or investigators checking out the scene; nasty for anybody climbing in a window or slipping in the back way.

MOTIVES AND NAMES

Who does the nano belong to: Teschen Biotech, Belgium. Big-time nano and they beat Chiba to it.

Who wants the nano: EVERYBODY. Biotechnica, No-Ahme Caldwell, Revolution Genetics. However it is a Chiba-based nanotech firm who wants it, by the name of Miniature Machinations, or some unpronounceable Jap name. These guys are hot hot hot, doing some crazy work, but they got wind of this development by Teschen and had to have it.

Who contacted who: A researcher in Teschen decided to make it big, and contacted Machinations to arrange a deal. Machinations then used their sister company (part of a Zaibatsu) named KulteK Gnosis to extract him from the Teschen site in Belgium. They used two Angels to make the work look Euro; as Machinations designs a lot of the good orbital nano and has good relations with the Inner Circle.

Once extracted, the researcher 'Kris Heinneman', outlined a backdoor entry into the Teschen system with passwords stolen from another employee. Machinations then contacted Mr Go's organization to organize the data rape. Mr Go instigated the cut-out with the PC's so as to insulate himself from the dealings. One of Machination's people was to pick up the Agrippa once it was placed in the locker.

HOWEVER: Teschen has known what was going on from the start. They had been monitoring Heinneman after a suspect psych-profile six months ago, and watched the entire proceedings between Heinneman and Machinations. They were thrown by the Angels doing the extract and watched other orbital firms very closely during this period. When Mr Go's Netrunner made a poke at the Teschen site, their fears were confirmed. Teschen inserted a few teams of Cybercircle solos into Tokyo ready to strike, and readied lawyers for the suit against Machinations once the steal went through.

IT GETS BETTER: Mr Go ain't stupid. He realized the value of this particular piece of nano and got in touch with the Russian Mob, the Kombinat. His plan was to sell to the Russky boys and blame it on the cut-out team. The Russkies inhabited the mansion that got hit, and Teschen traced them the moment Mr Go's boy wonder linked them, ready to receive the download. The strike teams moved in to intercept. The PC's saving grace was that they only came on-line at the exact moment that the nano data was transmitted.

Neither Teschen, the Kombinat or Machination themselves knew about the cut-outs, which is handy. However, they do know that the data was downloaded, and transmitted to the hotel. It doesn't matter whether the Agrippa is in the locker or not. The Cybercircle boys will be watching the locker to see if anyone puts anything in, or takes anything out.

WHAT TESCHEN PLANNED: Not this situation, at least. Teschen understood (as did most of the other operators) that the datapak was going to the Kafka Klub and the residence in the suburbs. At this stage Teschen (or at least TB's people in Tokyo) knew that Go would divert the pack to an outside source- the mansion, and the Teschen reps and team had this covered.

Once the download had been finished, Teschen was to descend upon the sites and recover their gear. Go would spill all and they would link the mansion to Machinations, and all of Teschen Biotech's gun lawyer team was to instantly begin litigation; the main aim to sue the FUCK through Machinations for even daring to try this crap.

PROBLEM BEING; THE PC'S

Teschen are in somewhat of a bind. Since Machinations have had no contact with the Agrippa or the datapak, Mr. Go has been evacuated and the fact that the mansion belonged to the Russian Kombinat and not Machinations as formerly assumed; this means that the Teschen lawyers are unable to begin litigation. Miniature Machinations are in the interesting position of knowing exactly where their copy of the nano is, but are unable to get it. Besides, if they grab it, Teschen will pounce, and the people at Machinations are probably smart enough to realise that the jig is up and Teschen are watching them.

Teschen would really like to get their copy of the nano back. Machinations would also love a copy, but not while Teschen are breathing down their backs. Machination's hands are tied at this moment, unless the blame is transferred or Teschen go down. Suffice to say the word will get around and most of the other biotech firms would LOVE to get this too. And finally, the Kombinat would like to know what the FUCK happened, how Mr Go. stiffed them and where the copy they paid half for, actually IS? (Since their boys were wasted by Teschen solos out in the burbs and the download was recovered).

PUNKS WITH GUNS AND A BIT OF CYBER

Where to from here? There are two possible situations that will have arisen out of this clusterfuck. Either the PC's have a copy of the nano, or the only copy is on the Agrippa.

Let's deal with the latter situation, which deals with the fact that the players are idiots:

The shortest possible scenario is that 'Team Retard' has dropped the Agrippa and sent the key, which puts them right out of the chain. The Teschen heavies might catch them to rough them up some, but with nothing, you get nothing. They could get a stack of solos and some cutting equipment to go and salvage the Agrippa, barreling into Shinjuku to make a snatch and grab, but then monkeys could fly out of my arse, too. The Teschen solos are fine marksmen. If they come up with some mind-blowing plan that makes me shake my head and laugh maniacally, then perhaps they might even get to touch the cool gloss surface of the Agrippa once more. Before being blown mercilessly away.....

Second option: They placed the Agrippa, they have the key. Slightly better circumstances than 'Team Retard'. The option is there to walk right up to the locker, open it up, grab the Agrippa and get a frag-flechette round in the back of the head. I will stress at this point that there is no

'back way' into the lockers, they are backed up against a concrete slab and the lady's toilets are behind them. Depending on how soon they get the hare-brained idea to steal the Agrippa back, there may be more than two Teschen beefboys at Shinjuku.

The key word here is 'Distraction'. Somehow getting both or all of the Teschen boys away from the locker. A few days, perhaps even 12 hours after the 'events', Machinations will put a suprally-biowared freak down there in the subway to see what happens, and to *get the fucking Agrippa*'. Basically I will stock this poor soul with so much bio that he needs to eat six bricks of calcium tabs every hour to keep the nano-fuckers from eating him.

If the team can spot the party-goers at Shinjuku, playing them off against one another is a top plan. Dropping a fake copy of the Agrippa into the mix somewhere could prove a premier distraction - the second MacGuffin. Kind of an Indiana Jones swap. This part, the recovery of the Agrippa, could be achieved in any manner of interesting and role-play-worthy ways that are too numerous to cover.

So onto the possible result: Either they don't get the Agrippa and wind up injured, dead or incarcerated, or they DO get the Agrippa and wind up injured, minus one character or by some horrible mistake on the GM's part, intact and uninjured. The problem here is tipping off both Teschen and Machinations as to who now has the copy. Names and faces become liabilities.

Suffice to say, the 'Idiot' path should be a nasty obstacle, especially with the hardware that is hanging around the Shinjuku locker for expressly that purpose- find and stop the Agrippa-nappers.

SELL IT TO MEEE, PURRED THE ZAIBATSU

Here we reach the situation of the true cyberpunk. Holding onto volatile technology with the option of grand moula, with little or no idea of who the fuck to sell to.... Or what to do at all..

In fact if the players are smart - the Agrippa itself may not have much to with the situation. Now they bounce b/w dealmaker and heavy; those who will pay for the nano, and those who will kill them for it.

In fact just about every other schmo they talk to will lead with a similar question; 'Who have you talked to so far?' as every player in this sordid game is ultra-paranoid.

Machinations wants it.
Teschen wants it back.
The Kombinat want it, or their money back.

...and every other biotech firm in the known universe.

YAMA

Humanity is like billions of stars, flaring and dying in a sped-up story of the universe. Some stars flare brighter, the after-image lingers, burned into the retina of the subconscious, ingrained in pop culture or legend. That will be you. Live fast, die young, leave a good-looking idoru.

Right now you're doing the background work, the misspent youth. You can't fake this stuff anymore. That's why almost every night will see you on your vintage Kawasaki, all chrome and halogen, you wrapped in scarred vat-grown leather and steel, neon flaring off your shiny exterior. Everything is image, even the tousled hair that cost a fortune to get it looking as if you don't give a fuck. But it's worth the effort.

Bosozoku. You ride with others, fell in with a loose group with just enough attitude and brawn to hold their own. You flit between them and your future - Helena, your deck pilot, and Slide, your man with all the connections, and the empty Bashi, who you see as your bodyguard. Because you, Yama, are gonna be a star. Those gorgeous androgyne looks, the boso fetish, your howling, cursing, soothing, growling voice in front of Helena's mix.. it works - or it will eventually.

But right now you're just getting your hands dirty. It's all good material. And fuck.... it's fun.

REF:8 INT:8 COOL:9 TECH:4 MOVE:8 LUCK:5 BODY:8 EMP:8 ATT:9

GEAR

Kawasaki Falcon Retro 300cc Hydroburner
Biker leathers (designer pre-stressed, AV3)
Colt Python .45 (under the seat)
Cigarettes&Zippo

CYBER

Skinweave (AV1)
Rewired Hair DNA (casually tousled, helmet-resistant)

SKILLZ

Hellraisin': 14
Combat: 13
Motorcycle: 15
Persuade/Fast Talk: 11
Human Perception: 10
Streetwise: 13
Basic Tek: 8
Wardrobe&Style: 13
Awareness: 14

BASHI

It used to be all so thrilling. So fulfilling, like a destiny and homage and future all in one. Surrounded by people who supported you, encouraged you. Until you realized you were becoming more a man, less a boy. Priorities began to shift.

You are a real-life replica of Beta Sumiyashi , one of the Five Fingers of Professor Golden, from the GoldenFingers franchise/series/movie/virtual/game/empire. Trained in the deadly arts, able to belch flame and see through walls, a mighty warrior. A fictitious character.

Well. You've done your best to wipe away whoever you used to be. And become Sumiyashi. It used to be such a lofty ambition, but as complications with extreme cybermods claimed some of your Grappler gang, rash decisions to fight, psychosis and rich parents reclaiming their lost children pared away the original five and the host of other characters you hung with, you began to realise that this truly was, just a phase.

Now you are empty. You don't know who you are. Or where you are meant to go. You hang with the others - no-nonsense Helena, poser Yama, and the savvy Slide, because they accept what is behind those violet eyes, not the face or clothes. And perhaps you can catch their drive for something new, something of their own devising.

REF:9/10 INT:6 COOL:8 TECH:5 MOVE:7 LUCK:6 BODY:8/10 EMP:7 ATT:8

GEAR

Beta Sumiyashi outfit (blue gi, dusty and mud-spattered)
Steel nunchaku
Bag of marbles
Smoke bombs (5):

CYBER

Hardwired - +1 Ref
Muscle and Bone lacing - +2 Body
Nano-optical upgrade (Thermograph)
Flamer Implant (Kendachi Dragon effects)

SKILLZ

Kata: 16
Combat: 14
Strength Feat: 15
Intimidate: 12
Awareness: 11
Stealth: 14
Pop Culture: 11
Perform: 12
First Aid: 10

HELENA

It's nice to be in on the scene. It's nice to walk through a crowd and be recognised. Fame, even with all its trappings and failings, is an addictive drug. So is the money that invariably goes with it. But it's something you're going to have to work hard to get.

That feeling of a job well done - with an audience of one to a thousand, it's always better with an audience. You're a junky for it. And you're a junky for anything with a current, just about. It's gotta be fast, slick and digital - holocube memory, superconducting processors, silver finish, big knobs, fat sliders. Cyberdecks, Mixing Decks, Smartdecks, old Technics turntables.. You love tech because it's so logical, so dependable. It's committed to a task, yet you can bend it to your own will. Now if only you could find a partner like that.

Yama is gonna burn out too fast, and besides, you don't want to complicate things between you, the mixer, and him, the artist. Bashi is still a mixed-up kid, part man/part fantasy, looking for direction, and Slide - well... there's just too much history there. You need to trust him to get your career off the ground, not be the love of your life.

These punks are your family right now, your party animals, partners in whatever venture is going to pay off somehow next...

REF:7 INT:8 COOL:7 TECH:9 MOVE:7 LUCK:2 BODY:6 EMP:6 ATT:7

GEAR

Tote bag with; asst. clothes, personal items, cables, also;
Asst. tools and parts, holocubes, dataspikes, mono-tanto blade.
Techscanner
Streettech 'Burst' self-defense article.

CYBER

Neural Processor w/ Machine/Tech, Cyber, Vehicle Links
2x Interface Plugs
Internal Wetdrive
Chip Processor

SKILLZ

Tek: 16
Combat: 10
Streetwise: 13
Perform: 10
Awareness: 14
Hide/Evade: 12
Dance: 13
Stealth: 12
Remote Ops: 14

SLIDE

'It ain't *what* you know....' and you know the rest by heart. Favors are a currency, and the man on top is that man who can value them properly. Favors, barter, gentlemen's agreements, they go back to old Nippon, word as honor. Blessed indeed is the man who knows two people in need of each other's talents, resources or knowledge, the man who can put them together and thence gain his own favors from each of them.

This is you. Fluttering at the edges of the Yak, solid edgerunner acquaintances, diving into the net for liaison, bar-hopping and spreading good cheer, sympathy or rumour, free drinks or small favors, you keep abreast of the news, and keep an eye out for yourself, and your crew.

Options are open. The crew are multi-talented, young twenty-somethings on the cusp of either big-time or blowout. And they're fun. Sure there are ronin and solos who you could manage, but they're nowhere near as interesting as Yama, the wannabe star/wanted Bosozoku rebel, Helena, tek-grrl, digital jockey, no-nonsense net babe.. and the disillusioned Bashi, sculpted and cybered, hiding behind the fictitious identity of a manga character.

Somehow your crew is more than just an asset. They are your only real friends.

REF:6 INT:9 COOL:10 TECH:3 MOVE:8 LUCK:4 BODY:6 EMP:9 ATT:6

GEAR

Designer handphone, fully tricked out w/electronics.
Cigarette case w/hidden compartment (with drugs)
Long satin-lined coat w/kevlar weave (AV1)
'Drug-a-thug'TM. (Sleep)

CYBER

Forked tongue implant (+3 to talk-related fixing)
Audio w/ VSA, Scanner, Bug Detector, Tight-beam link.

SKILLZ

Fixin': 16
Combat: 9
Interrogation: 15
Awareness: 14
Hide/Evade: 13
Driving: 9
Photo&Film: 8
Shadow/Track: 14
Stealth: 11