

This article originally appeared in [Pyramid #17](#)



Loving The Dead

*An adventure for Cyberpunk 2020, [GURPS Cyberpunk](#), and
Cyberspace*

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*Dirty rain pelts the windows. Yojimbo swallows the last of his
recaff, stares at his deck. The featureless plastic case is slick and
white, the color of a blank fax. He doesn't want to call her again.
But the memory of her eyes tugs at him. Those cool blue eyes,
like mountain lakes a thousand years old. His plugs ache to be
inputted. Ache with the emptiness.*

*The pain lifts his hand, grasps the cables. It draws them in and
locks them tight. Signals pour into him. The blood of the Net. He
closes his eyes and hits the switch.*

Behind the Scenes

Joseph Enrikesson was the advertising manager for TransTechnic, Inc. He got to his position mostly by convincing Important People that an ad manager was what the company needed. He didn't actually do much. Except spend TransTechnic's money on lavish cruises and executive dinner parties. He was very popular in the marketing world, and rubbed a lot of elbows. But when his subordinates made one too many mistakes,

those same people decided maybe they didn't need an ad manager after all. And Enrikesson was liquidated. Literally.

But he left behind a lot of financial wreckage. Among his many vices, Enrikesson enjoyed braindance. He spent a few million having a super-realistic Virtual Reality created in TransTechnic's mainframe. Even after his death, the program remained. No one knew it existed. Until one night, a hot-troded 'runner named Yojimbo busted in.

Interfacing the Party

The party should be good mix of netrunners and mercenaries. It doesn't really matter who the characters are, as long as they survive. A member of the group (pick one) has a long-lost friend, Yojimbo. The two of them went through hell and back together. A few years ago they parted ways (the specifics are up to you) and they haven't spoken since. At the start of the adventure, Yojimbo is drowning his sorrows at Skinner's when the characters stride in.

Yojimbo has a problem. He's fallen in love.

Skinner's

Read the following paragraph aloud to your players:

Skinner's is the place for cybertech chic. Every surface in here is stainless steel. Walls, floor, stools, tables . . . all coldly metallic. You walk in on the lower level, air conditioning blowing away the rotting night air outside.

Above you, a steel grille catwalk leads to private booths. There's an empty stretch at the bar, and that's where you drift to. You can see your face in the steel, see the Street-worn meat and the chrome that pokes out from beneath.



Sitting next to them is Yojimbo. He's been in here all evening. Even after popping a few Sober-Ups, he isn't quite himself. "Hey!" he sloshes, "Haven't seen you in years!" He offers to buy a round of drinks. "You can get anything liquid here, choomba. Coffee, real beer, anything. A friend of mine once drank a CHOOH₂ and nitric acid twister."

Yojimbo spends a while catching up with old times. Gloss over most of it, if you want. The players can try an average perception roll. Those who make it see beneath Yojimbo's cheer. Something haunts his eyes. But before they have a chance to figure out what, bad news shows up.

Bad news in this case being a three-man corporate hit team. At the bar, a corp sidles up next to Yojimbo. His short hair is slicked back to match his street-legal leisure suit. Any Solo who makes an Easy (10+) Combat Sense roll spots the smartgun snuggled up under his armpit. He orders a Gin and Synth, and knocks it over into Yojimbo's lap.

While Yojimbo swears and stands up, the Solo pulls his gun. Stats for the team are listed below.

Cyberpunk 2020

INT 5, REF 8, COOL 6, MA 7, BODY 8

Enhancements: Neural processor with smartgun link. Cyberoptic with Low-Lite and Anti-Dazzle.

Notable Skills: Combat Sense 5, Awareness/Notice 4, Karate 5, Handgun 7, SMG 7

Gear: Leisure suit (featured in every gangster movie you've ever seen). Medium armor jacket. The Solo at the bar packs a smartchipped Sternmeyer Type 35. The other two carry Minami-10 submachine guns.

GURPS Cyberpunk

ST 12, DX 13, IQ 11, HT 12

Enhancements: Polarization, Light Intensification and Interface Jack.

Notable Skills: Guns-15 and Karate-13.

Gear: Leisure suit (see above). Medium Monocrys jacket. The one at the bar carries an interfaced Needler. The other two have Machine Pistols.

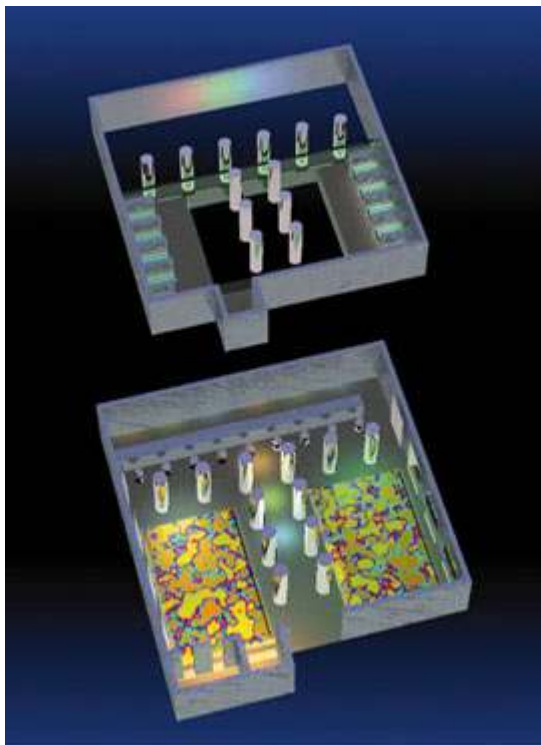
Cyberspace

The hit men are fourth level Killers. Hits: 50. (AT)DB: LBA(5). Fire: +45. Melee: +50.

Enhancements: Lowlight Mk10, Antiglare Mk10. DNI to brain.

Gear: Leisure suit (see above). LBA Extended Flak Vest. The one at the bar has a smart (+10) Mirage 10X pistol. The other two pack Mirage S10 Rapier SMGs.

After the first round of combat, the other two hit men appear. They're on the second level, on opposite sides of the catwalk (see the map). Their SMGs open up, scattering drinks and bodies everywhere.



Because everything in Skinner's is made of steel, there's some excellent cover for the characters. Yojimbo dives over the bar when the party takes out Mr. Smartgun ('cause otherwise this adventure would be pretty short). He stays there under cover while the other two hitmen try to kill him. The Solos on the catwalk will fade if they encounter too much resistance. There's a back door on the second level.

I Say Hey Man, Nice Shot

The smoke clears, and the characters are pretty angry about getting shot at. Yojimbo apologizes

profusely, once they're in a moving vehicle. Preferably heading far away from Skinner's. Read the following section aloud.

Yojimbo starts his story. "A couple months ago I got a gig to burn TransTechnic. The fortress was easy, just a code gate and some grey ICE. But while I was there, I stumbled into this secret downlink. Like, it wasn't on the directory at all. So after the run was over, I went back. And you would not believe what I found. A whole damn Virtual. Empty. Set up like one of those big white mansions from a few hundred years ago. Plantation, y'know? More real than life, and it was deserted. You could feel the breeze, man."

Yojimbo pauses to light a cigarette. His eyes narrow in the swirl of smoke. "So I stayed there a while, just checking everything out. It was like, so... so relaxing. I've never felt anything like it. There were fields and orchards, and just room after room of all this 19th-century stuff. So I kept coming back, and one day there was this lady there." He stops for a moment. Breathes out smoke.

"Her name's Abigail. She's the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. At first I thought, Whoah, this is some chilled construct. But there's more to her than that. She tries to play like she's just part of the program. So I play along. But you know what I think? I think she's another 'runner like me who busted in. And I gotta find her." Yojimbo looks intently in your eyes. His voice drops to a whisper. "TransTechnic's caught on to me. I don't know if she's still alive. I don't even know who she is. You have to help me find her."

Love doesn't carry much weight in the gritty future. Especially against corporate hit men. But Yojimbo offers to pay for their time (6,000 eb per character in **CP2020**, \$50,000 per character in [GURPS](#), \$12,000 per character in **Cyberspace**). It's everything he has at the moment, and he's willing to trade it all for finding Abigail.

But that won't be easy. Their only lead is buried somewhere in TransTechnic's computer.

The Mission

Back at Yojimbo's cluttered apartment, he stuffs his deck and some peripheral gear into a duffel bag. "Can't stay here," he says, "Got anywhere to chill?" If the characters are keeping watch, have them make a few Awareness/Notice rolls. The heat isn't coming (yet), but they don't know that. Tell them someone's watching from the corner. Maybe a black vehicle slinks past. Keep 'em paranoid.

Yojimbo's immediate plan is to get lost. TransTechnic knows his identity and wants him flatlined. Nothing a face change and some adjusted records won't fix. But in the meantime, he has to find Abigail.

And that means burning Trans-Technic again.

Silicon Decay

Abigail isn't human. She's an entire AI subroutine, complete with simulated feelings and fabricated memories. Abigail was created specifically to match Enrikesson's psych profile; a perfect companion. Set against a backdrop of virtual romance, she was designed to fall in love with the corporate executive.



But Yojimbo isn't Enrikesson, and he has a different personality. With all the ingredients of "love" in the air, Yojimbo has become snared in a reality that wasn't meant for him. Unrequited love in the cybernetic age.

The virtual is a super-realistic "building" occupying a huge chunk of memory (and worth millions). The reality itself is based around a three-story mansion set in 19th-century

South Carolina. It's chock full of objects and sensations. A sensualist's dream, built to be wandered through, to be experienced. There used to be roughly 30 rooms in the house itself, with another dozen areas outside (lake, garden, orchard, fields, etc).

The reality is squirreled away in normally unused memory. Without Enrikesson around, the memory space is being eaten up by other users. First the extra characters went, then some of the objects. Now entire rooms are being deleted.

When the party gets there, half the reality is completely gone. If they walk through the wrong door, they're back in the mainframe. And a prime target for the resident ICE.

Burning Transtechnic

The TT Data Fortress is set firmly in the downtown Net. The monolithic double-T icon has been scouted for years, but netrunners leave it alone. There isn't much worth stealing, and the ICE isn't tough enough to draw glory seekers.

Yojimbo has access codes to get into the virtual, so security wouldn't be a problem. But parts of the virtual have been erased and written over. Any time a character leaves the map, he is suddenly dumped into the TT mainframe. And that's where the ICE is. A lost netrunner can find his way back into the virtual. Roll Interface in *CP2020*, or Cyberdeck Operation in [*GURPS*](#) and *Cyberspace*.

The party begins in the Entrance Hall. After they've explored a room or two, a distorted woman's voice calls Yojimbo's name. It's Abigail. About to be deleted, the AI subroutine had enough vestiges of self-preservation to move into the CPU. Elements were lost in the transfer, and the remaining program is compressed in an unlabeled file. She doesn't have enough active programming to say more than, "Yojimbo? Help me . . ." No one can tell which direction her voice comes from.

Entrance Hall: Near the massive oak front door are divans and a pair of reading chairs. Sultry afternoon sunshine lights the room, setting the lace curtains aglow. There is an

open doorway to the left and right, and a wide carpeted stairway leads up. As the characters stand there, checking out their new surroundings, they feel a tremor. The whole scene flickers, shifts, colors running rancid like a dying TV. Then everything's fine. Yojimbo looks panicked. "What the frack's going on?" he whispers.

Dining Room: A luxurious bay window opens out on a green yard scattered with trees. The long formal table is set with a bountiful feast. Huge covered dishes contain steaming piles of roast duck, boiled ptarmigan eggs in paprika, and other Victorian delicacies. There is no trace of the servants or how the food got there. But the wine is chilled, and the food is very, very good. If the characters leave and return later, the table has been cleared and only a few sandwiches (packed in ice) remain.

Master Bedroom: Unlike the rest of the mansion (which is spotless), the master bedroom looks well inhabited. The sheets are tousled, clothes are strewn about (both men's and women's), and someone's been writing at the desk. Characters examining the desk find handwritten love notes. A half-finished glass of wine sits beside the inkwell. It isn't hard to realize what syrupy nonsense the notes are. An average perception roll reveals that the writer wasn't Yojimbo. And a difficult roll reveals clues bearing Enrikesson's name (stationery, cards, name tags in clothing). In fact, it was Enrikesson who spent so much time here.



Trophy Room: This room serves one purpose: ego stroking. Stuffed animals lurk about in every pose. Each bears a plaque (such as "White Tiger, killed on Safari near the Euphrates"). All over the room are the trophies and memorabilia of Joseph Enrikesson's fabricated lifestyle. At one end of the room is a larger-than-life painting of Enrikesson, with an engraving of his name. Anyone who makes an average perception roll spots Enrikesson's pompous biography: From TransTechnic to Tycoon. Skimming through it, the characters read the adventures of a nobleman from some unmentioned country who

commits dashing heroics in the face of direst danger, and eventually wins Abigail's hand in marriage.

Library: This dim room is home to thousands of books. Small tables (a few already stacked with tomes) are topped by elegant reading lamps. It's a difficult perception roll (or some other applicable skill - GM's option) to find a title that doesn't belong here: *Executive Route to Mainframe*. Pulling it off the shelf triggers a hidden switch. The bookcase slides aside to reveal a dark, cobwebbed secret passage. A few steps down the passage, a huge black wolf snaps and growls from the other side of a heavy iron portcullis. In *CP2020*, Hidden Virtue or SeeYa will reveal the iron portcullis as a STR 5 codegate, and the wolf as a Firestarter program. In [*GURPS*](#), Recon reveals a simple Password-13 and linked Flatline-15 variant. The Flatline won't kill the netrunner - just fry his deck. In *Cyberspace*, the gate is a Security Code (Rtg 5) covering a Scrambler (Rtg 10).

Speaking the access code ("Enrikesson") will open the gate and tame the wolf. The passageway leads to the TransTechnic CPU. It's a "safe" route - netrunners using this path are recognized by the CPU as an executive superuser.

Other rooms: The rest of the mansion is just bursting with paintings, staircases, closets full of Victorian clothes . . . use your imagination. The outside areas have been deleted. Any time a character leaves the map, he's immediately dumped into the CPU.

The Transtechnic CPU

Outside the virtual waits TT's central processing unit. Through the cyberdeck interface, the CPU appears as a cavernous open chamber lined with points of neon light (accessible files). The AI's haughty chrome face floats in the center. There's some interesting stuff drifting around.

ICE: Every second that a character is logged on as an unauthorized user, he risks being hit by ICE.

In [*GURPS*](#), there's a 1-in-6 chance each turn of encountering a Trace-

The TT mainframe contains free-roaming security programs.

15 and linked Sever-12.

In *CP2020*, roll 1d20 every turn to see what shows up:

- 1 - Stun
- 2 - Sword
- 3 - Firestarter
- 4 - Knockout
- 5 - Killer IV
- 6 - Poison Flatline
- 7 - TransTechnic employee, who may or may not spot the character
- 8-20 - Nothing

In *Cyberspace*, make an unmodified 1d100 roll:

- 01-05 - Data Screen
- 06-10 - Bouncer
- 11-15 - Scrambler
- 16-20 - Shocker
- 21-25 - Chaos
- 26-30 - Breeder
- 31-35 - TransTechnic employee, who may or may not spot the character
- 36+ - Nothing

AI: The Artificial Intelligence won't speak unless spoken to. Its booming voice will announce information: "File closed," or "Intruder alert." Otherwise, it's silent, absorbed in its own affairs. In [*GURPS*](#), it has an Intelligence of 15.

Building security: Here are the access codes to the building's security locks. Each type of code is listed under a separate file, and a skill roll is required to get each file. The files are: Exterior Doors, Elevator Over-Ride, Executive Offices and Tomb Access Elevator. There's also a link here to the elevator and security camera controls.

Virtual files: There's a file for each room. ENTRANCE.VRT, MSTRBEDR.VRT, ORCHARD.VRT, etc. There's also a database set aside from the rest: ABOUT ABIGAIL. Opening it, the characters find information detailing her clothing, mannerisms, and other features. It also contains a readout of Enrikesson's psych profile and the following note: "Abigail simulacrum created using compatible psych nodes. The

construct contains romance patterns from VoyeurWriter V4.2 tailored to the client's profile." Abigail's actual programming isn't here. It's in a hidden file (see below).

Abigail (Unlabeled): Until he figures it out, Yojimbo thinks Abigail is another netrunner. But here in the main CPU is her programming data. Abigail is crammed smack in the middle of the CPU's memory, just one file in thousands. How long does it take to find her? Imagine this: While you close your eyes, have a friend run into an office and hide this magazine somewhere in the filing cabinets. Now try to find it.

Here's where you (the referee) have a choice to make. If the party is light on firepower, you could let them find Abigail here and now. This puts a completely different spin on the game. They have Abigail's program; now what? They don't have a Virtual to run her in. An entire adventure could revolve around finding one, or somehow finding a way to dump her onto the Net . . .

But searching so much raw data for one unlabeled program is hopeless. More likely than not, they can't get to Abigail before the ICE hits. Make a hidden die roll every turn. No matter what the result, tell the searchers that they fail, and the ICE is coming. Punch out or fry.

The Real World

Back in the apartment, Yojimbo grins like a puppy. "Well, what's up?" he yips, pulling the cables from his wrists. "Did you find her?"

Now they have to break Yojimbo's heart. Abigail is just a construct, an illusion lost in TT's mainframe. The life fades from his eyes. He sits there, numb, not responding. Beyond pain. After a while he gets up and wanders over to his duffel bag. He comes back with a handful of debit cards. "Here," he says, handing the credits to the group leader.

If they have any compassion, the characters might try to refuse the money. But Yojimbo gets angry, even violent if he has to. A deal's a deal. Go ahead, play it up. Make 'em feel bad.

Because a few days later, Yojimbo comes back. He seems a lot better. "I've got an idea . . ." he says. He can't get in to see Abigail anymore. But he can get her out. He tells them about the Tombs. If they can break into the TransTechnic tower, they can steal the memory core that holds Enrikesson's virtual. Abigail can be with him forever.

The Tombs

Buried a mile and a half beneath Night City is the processing core for TransTechnic, Inc. When the corporate tower was built 20 years ago, decisions were made to ensure that the CPUs and supporting hardware would never be disturbed. They built the Tombs.

Isolated from the world, the computers are maintained by an army of AI-controlled remotes. The miniature robots scuttle among the data banks. They check circuits for integrity, replace worn components, and vacuum up what little dust accumulates in the 99.7% untainted air. Rebreathers are needed by humans. The air mix contains coolants and fumes which will incapacitate or kill the unprotected.

There's an access hatch in the tower's engineering sub-basement. Through that hatch is a restricted elevator, guarded by a high-powered security system. The elevator descends the full distance, all the way down into the computer core.



More Money?

Yojimbo can be talked into laying out some more cash. After all, tackling TT head-on wasn't part of the original deal. In *CP2020*, an Average (15+) Streetdeal roll sends him scurrying off. In [*GURPS*](#)

and *Cyberspace*, roll Streetwise. He reappears later with another 6,000 eb (in *CP2020* - \$50,000 in [GURPS](#) or \$12,000 in *Cyberspace*) per character. Don't ask where he got the money. He'd rather not think about it.

Grand Theft Cyber

The TransTechnic building is protected by a small security firm. All outside entrances are fitted with numeric keypad locks and security cameras. Inside, the party has a 1 in 6 chance of encountering a guard for every room or corridor they enter. The guards (60 total) are all in radio contact. As soon as a fire fight erupts, the whole building goes on alert.

Cyberpunk 2020

INT 4, REF 6, COOL 8, MA 5, BODY 6.

Enhancements: Cyberaudio with Radio Link. Biomonitor.

Notable Skills: Combat Sense 3, Laser 5.

Gear: Armor Jacket, Flak Pants. Militech Laser. Handcuffs.

[GURPS Cyberpunk](#)

ST 11, DX 13, IQ 10, HT 11

Enhancements: Radio Reception, Biomonitor, Cortex Bomb.

Notable Skills: Guns-14.

Gear: Combat Infantry Dress. Military Laser Carbine. Electronic handcuffs.

Cyberspace

The guards are third level Killers. Hits: 20. (AT)DB: ABS(0). Fire: +35.

Enhancements: Sonic Range (Modulated Frequency). Biostatus Monitor with external readout.

Gear: ABS Pliable Breastplate & Greaves. Mirage XR 32. Magnetic handcuffs.

The tower is 20 stories tall, with a basement and sub-basement. The top three floors are executive offices. They're secured by a mixture of thumb-print locks and retina scanners. Security passkeys can be taken from the guards' bodies, if necessary. They'll open everything except the Tomb Access Elevator.

1. Offices: These large areas are subdivided into warrens of cubicles. The partitions provide visual cover only. During the day, all the offices are bustling with corps. At night, only a handful of workaholics remain.

2. Security Desk: There's always a security guard stationed here (unless he's getting a cup of recaff). The desk monitors show views of every room on that floor. A little tampering can create some incredible havoc, anything from blank screens to circuit loops.

3. Elevators: Standard elevators will go from the basement to level 17, but won't go above or below that without security clearance.

4. Stairs: These run all the way from the first to 20th floors, but the top three floors have security systems.

5. Parking garage: TransTechnic executives have the privilege of parking here. The lighting is sparse and dim, and the security cameras can be avoided with a little stealth. But two live guards stand watch at the elevators. There's a ramp to the street, blocked by heavy clamshell doors more at home on a space station.

6. Storage: Shelving units here hold everything from spare computer parts to soap and mops. An unprotected air vent leads straight down into the sub-basement.

7. Sub-basement: This is basically one huge room with a few concrete walls to divide it up. Ranks of humming power converters and climate-control systems dominate the room.

8. Tomb access elevator: This restricted elevator is covered by a reinforced hatch set deeply into the wall. Inside, it takes a very difficult roll against an appropriate skill (GM's choice) to bypass the codelock and activate the elevator controls. Characters may roll once per turn. When they make the roll, the access hatch clamps shut and the elevator begins the 20 minute ride down into the Tombs.

9. Diagnostics: There's no internal lighting here. Just section after section of computer banks. The spherical chamber houses diagnostic screens and emergency systems. Walls, floor, ceiling are all covered by rows of blinking lights. It's like being in the world's largest shuttle cockpit. The elevator opens onto a walkway which extends left and right.

10. AI core: The walkway hugs the sides of this room. Suspended in the center is the stark pillar of the Artificial Intelligence mainframe. Security sensors pick up the characters. "<VERIFY IDENTITY PLEASE.>" a simulated voice commands. After a pause: "<YOU HAVE THIRTY SECONDS TO VERIFY IDENTITY.>" The AI will only be satisfied with a proper security code. If they're still in the room when the time's up, or if they touch anything before answering, the room's laser cuts them down. The laser attacks one target per round. In *CP2020*, roll 1d10: the laser hits on a 7 or less, doing 5d6 damage. In [GURPS](#), the AI is protected by a Defense Globe (skill 14) with a Laser Rifle. In *Cyberspace*: +30, Laser Mk3.

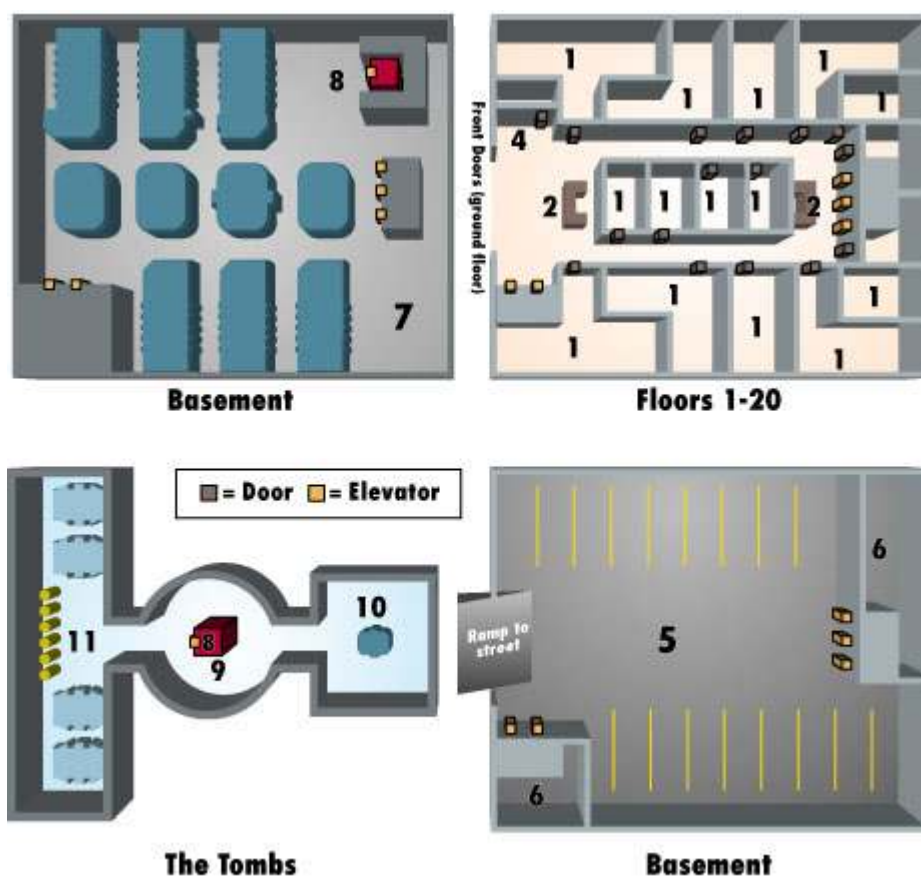
11. CPU and memory units: This is the meat of the computer system. It takes some work to locate which memory compartment holds the Virtual. Behind a wall panel, the unit they want is a bowling-ball-sized block of solid-state electronics. When they try to open the panel, a screen lights up. "<UNSCHEDULED MODIFICATIONS RESTRICTED. PLEASE IDENTIFY YOURSELF.>"

Uh, oh.

Unless they think fast, the AI will recognize them as intruders. The security remotes (1 to 3 per character) power up to attack. These small robots each have a targeting system and capacitor laser. In *CP2020*, a remote hits with a 5 or less on 1d10, doing 3d6 damage. There's a -5 penalty to hit the hubcap-sized remotes as they flit about the chamber. In [GURPS](#), the remotes are HT 4, PD 4, DR 10, and armed with a Laser Pistol (Skill 12). In *Cyberspace*: +20, Laser Mk1.

Any stray gunfire blows sparking electronics from the opposite wall. Red lights flash, alarms sound. Smoke floods the chamber.

And they still have to fight their way back out. At the referee's option, there is a back door. Half-way up the access elevator's shaft is an abandoned passage. It could lead anywhere: old railway tunnel, underground waste dump, utility duct, someone's basement . . .



Other Options

Force isn't the only answer, especially if the characters don't want to die young. The party could launch another assault against TT's computer via the net. With skill and a little luck, they might be able to download a copy of the Virtual onto their own decks. This requires attacking the data fortress from the outside. The specifics are left up to you; use the listed ICE as a guide.

And then there's the Dress Up Like Technicians And No One Will Notice Us approach. Instead of breaking in, the characters could bluff their way in. It would take a few Persuasion and Disguise rolls, but no one will question high-security techs. Suits are paid to mind their own business. The Tombs are scheduled for a manual inspection once every month. Usually, this involves a group of techs going down, glancing around, and coming back up. Maybe this month, the inspection is a little ahead of schedule . . .

As a final and more desperate option, Yojimbo knows a street doc who specializes in life support gear. If you like your cyberpunk dark and glittery, try this for a solution. They can smuggle Yojimbo down into the Tombs, plug him in, and hide his inert body in a ventilation shaft. Who knows how long he'll stay undiscovered, or even how long he'll live. But hey, there's a price you gotta pay for love.

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Article publication date: February 1, 1996

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