

THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT



Just another Friday Night... Ralfie the fixer was feeling tense, this Deal would make him Big Time. Client pays 400 Grand in; Fixer pays 75 Grand out. Easy money. Bang on time the AV landed and out stepped the moneyman shadowed by an Op. built like a harbour wall.

Ralfie looked them over then spoke, "ey man. You've got the book. Gimme my money an' I'll split." He just kept telling himself to act cool; nine-tenths of all deals were nerve.

The moneyman's ice blue optics darted from Ralfie's forehead to the shadows. With the flick of a finger he signalled the Op. to close the contract. With two sharp cracks from the Hitter's Automag Ralfie was paid in full. His face froze in disbelief as he staggered back off the roof staring and pawing helplessly at the holes in his chest.

The AV jolted up and pulled a tight turn away from the crime into the night. Far down below...

▷ The Script

Howard Corbitt is a freelance accountant working in Night City who has a strong interest in occult and horror fiction. His interest includes a unique and rather large collection of novels in his study. A local fixer called Ralfie Spatz, who used Howard's services, was running a Grift on him after learning the value of the books. Ralfie has been arranging to sell a very old copy of 'The King In Yellow' to a corporate dealer called Mr. Johnson, who has largely similar tastes to Howard. Mr. Johnson thinks the book is from Ralfie's private collection and is unaware of Corbitt's existence. The deal is for Ralfie to be paid 400 thousand Eurodollars for the book, of which 75 thousand will go to Howard, who believes Ralfie is only taking a small cut. To

pacify Howard's concerns about the welfare of the book, Ralfie told him about the dealer and where he lives. Ralfie correctly assumed that although Howard would do some personal checking on Mr. Johnson's suitability, he would not visit him at his home. Fatally for Ralfie there were a few complications of which he was not aware. Mr. Johnson's son Edward was sick of seeing his father wasting his future inheritance on books and statuettes and hired a killer from The Twin Cities to kill both his father and the dealer. To fund this he has used the 400 thousand that he was given to buy the book, and, having seen how easily the Hitter wasted Ralfie, he's very confident of being the only Mr. Johnson tomorrow. Everything's as regular as clockwork, or it was until...

▷ Things That Go Bump

The PCs happen upon the double-cross when Ralfie falls dying from a roof far above onto one of them. This sudden and sharp introduction should drag the PCs into the dealings of the Fixer and the book. Ralfie is beyond repair, although he still causes d6 wounds to the unlucky PC he lands on (ignore armour). Ralfie's last words as he messily expires are: "Howard Corbitt".

▷ Get A Clue

The players will may (Streetwise 15) recognise the body as that of Ralfie the Fixer, if not they should discover this rather easily (he's carrying identification!) The two big holes in Ralfie make the cause of death obvious. Medically proficient characters examining the wounds will find a hand-made 44 shell lodged in a bone. With several days' analysis this can be found to have been made by a Solo working out of the St. Paul area. There is also a tape recording of the deal on Ralfie's corpse although this does not reveal

who his killers are. The PCs should be aware that finding Ralfie's killer will gain them Rep with Fixers on the street. The information and items on Ralfie give the PCs a good start at investigating his dealings and they should be able to make rapid progress.

Finding out whom Ralfie was working for is a good idea and this is best done from his office. There they find Ralfie's usual Fixer business and some useful local street information. There are also a few points of interest in Ralfie's accounts:

Ralfie was planning as if though he was about to get a cash injection of a few hundred thousand Euro. This would put Ralfie in the big league of local fixers. He had not arranged a loan with any loan sharks.

Awareness or Accounting 15 will alert the players to Howard Corbitt's name. A roll of over 20 hints at Howard as a connection to the cash injection. A file in the office on Howard gives some but not all the useful information from the section "Howard Who?".

Awareness 20 when investigating book and art deals will throw up the name of Mr. Johnson, a Heywood art collector.

Mr. Johnson is absolutely unknown to any street contacts the players have, although there is a file on him in Ralfie's office, Library Search 15 to find. It points a picture of a moderately rich individual interested in the bizarre and obscure. He appears to be legitimate with a large corporate company as backing. Ralfie's file cites his address as being just off 14th and Greenhill Avenue in Heywood. A Black file in his personal folder in the Company file details the transfer of 400 thousand Euro in cash to be paid to Ralfie the fixer. It does not say who is to hand over the money. The transfer is dated for last night.

Use the *Militech* file given in the *Cyberpunk rulebook* with 6 being

the Black Ops. file concerning Ralfie.

Differences are:

5 Black Ops. file is not present, 16 is Glue not Hellhound, 17 is Knockout not Brainwipe, Data Walls are at +4 not +5.

Should the Netrunner get sloppy have 4 Network Goons arrive at the party's location within d6 minutes of the blunder.)

The players will also be strongly pointed in the direction of Rodriguez - a local Fixer who is involved mainly in the loasthark business. He appears to have a tight grip on Ralfie's finances. Rodriguez is just a red herring who hangs out in a tough local bar near to the players' favorite hang-out.

The only clue to Ralfie's death is Howard Corbitt. Rodriguez can offer enticements to anyone finding information about the killer of Ralfie. Whether he keeps these promises is another matter.

Howard Who?

The PCs may try various ways of finding details about Howard Corbitt; there will be some useful information at Ralfie's office and in public records. Here is what there is to be found:

Corbitt is 36 years old and a registered type O+ blood donor. Delia is his second wife - his first died in a boating accident. A determined man, he often visits the Slums and Zones at night helping the poor (say, when did Ralfie get iced?). Smart Netrunners hacking the right systems will find that he spoilt his paper at the last local election. He also writes for Amnesty International. Wouldn't Howard just make the perfect serial killer suspect if you're already running that plotline? (If not, why not?).

Delia is a 25 year old Beauty Therapist. Strangely enough her brother is the near infamous Lieutenant Garrison of NCPD MaxTac, but the players do not need to know that. Neither has a criminal record, but resourceful characters should find photographs of them easily enough.

Their address is No. 57, 11th and Greenhill Avenue, Heywood; the telephone number is 666-662-1244. Delia is currently the only one in the house and won't talk to strangers over the phone; she just hangs up and goes to take a bath. If the players do not follow up on Howard have Rodriguez or a street contact suggest they talk to "that do-gooder accountant" (Corbitt). Corbitt has been seen with Ralfie quite recently.

Chez Corbitt

Heywood, where both Howard and Mr. Johnson live, hangs in the hazy smog south of Night City. Getting to Heywood is easy and uneventful if somewhat time consuming in the crawling Southbound traffic, although it is known for the occasional attempted carjacking to take place.

Heywood is an archetypal suburban corporate zone and most properties have twin garages and regulation green lawns. The one opposite number 57 has tiles of Adam and Eve above the car bays. A sporty red car sits idly in front of Adam. Corbitt's house, however, is a plain, but functional house set back from the road amid magnificently bright and heavily scented flower beds. It seems to have a humble life all to its own.

He's Not Home Right Now

Howard is not at home should the players call; although his ever-charming wife, Delia, is. An attractive blonde of slight but shapely build, Delia will explain that Howard is out collecting for charity a few blocks away. Delia will invite the characters in for a glass of home-made lemonade. Anyone searching about will find a study off the main hall, full of horror and occult novels. If anyone asks about Ralfie, Delia will tell them that he was selling a book for Howard to raise the money to buy their house from the bank. The price for the book was 75 thousand Eurodollars. If you are using ending 1 there may still be some books of minor power (Library Search 20) or (Expert: Occult 15) in the Study.

The impression Delia gives of Howard is a positive one, she believes that he is incapable of murder.

Astute players should discover that Ralfie was cheating Howard out of several hundred thousand Eurodollars. Delia is unaware of this. The unanswered question is how much did Howard suspect? Enough to kill Ralfie?

The Chase

The players should shortly come across Howard collecting money for charity. He is a few inches under six feet in height and is attired in immaculately pressed flannels and a white shirt. As Howard is sighted, he will run away from the PCs at pace. For while Howard is an approachable and gentle man he is somewhat nervous over the deal and fears a double cross by Mr. Johnson. With the party after him, he elects to confront the buyer and get his rightful share. Howard will outrun the party at least until they are within the house. Make imaginative use of locals, trees, walls, and lines of bushes to block attempts at stopping Howard. The chase will be short as Howard is soon at the rear wall of Mr. Johnson's property.

Howard leaps over the wall and disappears from view. The wall stretches out for a large distance in either direction along the road and the only choice to follow Howard is to leap over the wall. Everyone should reach the other side, although a roll of 15 or higher is required on Athletics to avoid the d6 points of damage the wall causes to poor climbers.

In My Secret Garden

Once over the wall the players will find themselves in an alien environment completely at odds with the passive suburbia outside. The area is full of twisted and gnarled old trees, bent and withered with age in the harshly dark light under their canopy. The ground is covered in a mixture of dark earthy soil and thick thorny branches. Very little light reaches here and the air smells foul. The PCs should want to get out of here quickly, but will find the climb back over the perimeter wall very difficult, as it is covered in sharp glass embedded in the concrete. There is a much smaller wall, which is Easy to climb, towards the house and it is over this that Howard has already disappeared. There is also another danger here that slow players will discover. The undergrowth is patrolled by several vicious guard dogs (see Devil Dogs From Hell). Use this encounter to get the PCs over the inner wall if they are being really slow, or you just want to play hardball. The dogs cannot jump over the wall but the gardener can let them out into the garden later through a small, wooden door set into the wall.

The House

The Johnson Manor is set into a finely sculpted garden of wildly beautiful flower banks and grassy hollows. It is a large house of some elegance and character in the classical style of the late 19th century.

The garden around the house is bounded by a wall some 10 feet in height. In these grounds there is a pavilion, a discreetly hidden servant's quarters, a maze and a greenhouse. This was in its prime two generations ago but has since fallen into disrepair.

Some descriptions of the main rooms of the house are given below. Feel free to come up with your own map and add more rooms as you see fit. In the House when the PCs arrive will be: Howard (who has entered through the conservatory), Mr. Johnson (in the Dining Room waiting for Edward's arrival), the Old Gardener (in the garden because someone has disturbed the dogs) and a few servants who can be heard walking about. The servants can be found in their quarters after any shooting starts.

The Conservatory

This room is split into two distinct parts by a marble stair and a wall of circulating air. The rearmost part of the room has a humid atmosphere and brightly coloured butterflies flit serenely through the air. The marble floor is littered with exotic plants of all natures; an average Botany roll indicates that most are carnivorous. Mr. Johnson likes to spend his idle time here

feeding moths to the plants, a jar of which can be easily found on a wooden bench nearby. The Old Gardener is very careful in this room, a particularly favoured plant of Mr. Johnson's withered and died some years ago and he has never been forgiven.

Up a short marble stair there is a sitting room that leads out to the hallway. Entering this area from the conservatory the players are swept with a wall of air, which keeps the atmosphere of the two areas separate. A solitary butterfly flits about this room indicating that the air wall has been recently disturbed.

The room itself is quiet and tidy with classical furniture covered in deep red leather and arranged around a disused great fireplace. The walls are adorned with sober paintings of previous owners of the house and a bust of Mr. Johnson's grandfather sits in the corner at the French windows leading out to the Terrace.

The Hall

This is a large open area leading to the front door, with a high domed ceiling below which the first floor walkway can be seen. The walls are lined with doors leading to the Games Room, Study, Front room, Dining Room, Sitting Room, and a closet. A rug lies symmetrically centered on the checked marble floor and a stairway leads up to the first floor and down to the cellar. A grandfather clock next to the stairwell passes time with a somber rhythm.

The Games Room

This is a large warm room built around a green cloth gaming table set upon a raised step. Elsewhere in the room there is game of chess in progress and an American Civil War wargame that has just ended in Confederate victory. Drawn on the gaming table in the centre of the room are some marks in white chalk. The meaning of these marks is up to the referee; they may have no significance at all.

The Library

The walls of this room are lined from floor to ceiling with books of all descriptions mostly collected by Mr. Johnson's grandfather. This is highly unusual as most information is kept on disc or chip, and the collection would be valuable to the right collector. This seems to be the friendliest room in the house and the one that is least used by Edward.

The Study

This is Mr. Johnson's private study where all his business records are kept. Both doors are locked mechanically and electronically although entry can be gained through a secret passage from the great fireplace in the sitting room. There is a panic button on the desk which dispatches a Solo team to the House, arriving in d3 minutes at the front door. They are led by Mr. Black, a Solo who does not like Edward (and will like the Hitter even less) and is winning the chess game in the games room against Mr. Johnson.

The Dining Room

A grand room centered around the large teak dining table. There is a hidden passage behind a bookcase that leads to a bedroom upstairs. The windows of the room look out across the front lawn.

The Main Bedroom

Where Mr. Johnson sleeps. The room is neat and tidy if rather plain, and one wall houses a large bookcase full of occult texts. The books here are much like Howard's but are generally rarer and more potent, if you believe in the occult. The other bedrooms on this floor are unoccupied. The one opposite the main bedroom is where the late Mrs. Johnson used to sleep and the secret passage from the dining room leads to the back of a wardrobe in that room.



▷ The Cellar

This room is found at the bottom of the stairwell. It's poorly lit and contains rack after rack of wine and provisions - chests of old memorabilia are also stacked here. The air here is heavily scented with earth and oak from the wine barrels. A secret passage at the back of the cellar leads to the maze and the pavilion.

The events of the last few nights will come to a head in the House with all the parties involved having their own agendas. Howard will at first be aggressive and confrontational to Mr. Johnson when he finds him, but will soon cool down and realise that Ralfie set him up. When Mr. Johnson is distracted by Howard, his son Edward will arrive with the Big Hitter, a chase will ensue about the House into which the players will stumble. The conclusion will be several groups sneaking through the rooms of the House trying to catch the others. It is possible that the gardener and the dogs might also become involved, as, perhaps, could the corporate hit team of Mr. Black. The PCs must be quite careful as they move about the house as they could well be mistaken for other people, after all no-one knows that they are in the building.

If events seem to be going badly for Edward he will try to make for the AV sitting on the back lawn near the pavilion. Edward is aware of the secret passage in the cellar to the pavilion but he has not told the Hitter of this.

▷ Ending the Scenario

It should be noted that the players should use their heads and talk to the NPCs; this will resolve the scenario far better than brawn and bullets. Several alternate resolutions are presented below, decide for yourself which ending is most applicable to your game.

- 1 The Book is a source of potent magical power.
- 2 Howard and Mr. Johnson are both killed by Edward, and the players may be blamed for their murders. Delia (and her brother) will want blood. Edward is a fearsome enemy.
- 3 Howard is killed but Mr. Johnson survives. Mr. Johnson will offer a large sum of money to Delia for the rest of Howard's collection. If Edward survives then he is in big trouble and will go to the chair for the murders of Ralfie and Howard.
- 4 Both Mr. Johnson and Howard survive. A friendship could develop here with Howard's financial problems being solved forever. Certainly the poor people of the city will benefit. Again, Edward won't like this ending.

▷ Explanation of Wounds

The number before the slash in the NPC box out is the number of wounds the NPC can take without being affected (usually equal to the Body stat.), wounds above this value result in mortal wounds. After the slash is the number of wounds after which they are dead, an R indicates that the referee decides when the NPC dies. This is to speed up book keeping when running combat.

Note: those NPCs that have no Initiative number just use their Reflexes.

▷ Equipment Note

.44 AutoMag Retread: P/+1/1/R/4d6(.44)/7/2/UR/50m.
A specialist remake of the original Automag. The Hitter has his smartchipped with an electronic griplock that allows his use only. All rounds for this gun must be hand made and are cased, unlike most ammunition. Lethal with or without ET enhancement (p.50 *Chromebook* : Damage 6d6). Cost is always high and depends on the weaponsmith manufacturing it.

▷ Non-Player Characters

Ralfie the Fixer

Two faced, sharp dressed, greedy streetdealer. Streetdeal was +12 - Quite dead.

Gear: key to his office, diary with his office address, personal ID and nine 20 dollar bills, tape recorder (still running), quality suit and spatz (stained). d6 damage to the character he falls on, ignore all amour.

Netwatch Goons

Faceless henchmen sent to warn Net hackers. Tactics are to subdue the criminals, remove any Netrunning equipment, issue a stern warning and fine, then leave. None of the Goons have a death wish so they avoid lethal confrontations. Will not kill.

Ref: 11, **Cool:** 8, **Move:** 8, **Body:** 8, **Initiative:** +15

Skills: Grapple: +20, Dodge: +16, Taser: +16: Stun Save, Grenades +16: 2 Stun and 2 Dazzle each.

Wounds: 8/12. **BTM:** -3 **Gear:** Armour 14 SP.

Delia Corbitt

Independent and caring, she likes plants, flowers and small children, though she has none of her own.

Attr: 9, **Emp:** 7, **Cool:** 8, **Move:** 7

Skills: Personal Grooming: +16, Seduction: +15, Athletics: +15

Notes: Orchid Perfume, Drop Dead Looks, Gear: Eurodyne T-shirt (not big enough), very old wedding ring.

Howard Corbitt

Intelligent, aware accountant who is unusually lucky (?). Sees himself as a crusader for the poor.

Ref: 6, **Move:** 10

Skills: Accounting: +14, Stock Market: +14, Expert: Occult +13

Gear: Grey flannels, white shirt, horn-rimmed spectacles, old amber medallion of unknown origin.

Devil Dogs From Hell

Dogs of death with the spirits of reincarnated Cyberpunk referees. It should be noted that only Mr Johnson and the Old Gardener are safe from the dogs.

Ref: 8, **Body:** 10, **Move:** 14

Skills: Leap Attack (this acts as a sweep attack): +15 (d3+2, ignoring armour), Maul: +15 (d6+2 AP), Dodge: +15, Stealth: +16

Wounds: 12 to kill. **BTM:** -4

Notes: Foaming, Snarling, Really vicious.

The Old Gardener

He can remember when the greenhouse was the jewel in the garden. Now he spends his time feeding the dogs, tending the flowers and looking out for intruders.

Ref: 4 **Move:** 4 **Cool:** 6

Skills: Spade +8 (2d6 AP), Dodge +7, Gardening +16

Wounds: 3/7. **BTM:** -1 **Notes:** Loyal, infirm.

Gear: dog whistle, pocket watch.

Mr. Johnson

A keen collector of occult artifacts, or is it more than that? He is highly perceptive and is aware of Edward's plans, but is waiting to see if the young boy has the ability to be the next Mr. Johnson. He is lonely man since his wife died and is looking for a companion who shares his interests.

Int: 10, **Cool:** 11, **Body:** 4

Skills: Persuasion: +14, Expert: Occult +18, Hide/Evade: +17

Wounds: 4/R. **BTM:** -1

Edward Johnson

Evil corporate, prepared to murder his way to the top. Has one personal trait very like one of the PCs (enemies are never far removed from the heroes in Cyberpunk)

Emp: 1, **Cool:** 9, **Ref:** 8, **Move:** 8

Will avoid fighting, but has Fists +12(d3), and if grappled Teeth +10(d3+1) and Save not to let go.

Wounds: 6/R **BTM:** -2

Gear: Skinweave Armour 12 SP, Dazzle grenade, Cellphone, Trauma Team Gold Cord, rich trinkets as desired.

The Big Hitter

Cool and Calculated, the Hitter plays a waiting game. Prepared to sell Edward to to save his own skin.

Ref: 13, **Cool:** 10, **Int:** 8, **Body:** 9, **Move:** 7

Initiative: +19 **Skills:** Automag +23 (4d6 AP), Karate +21: +7 damage: Strike/Kick/Block, Awareness +20, Dodge +19, Hide/Evade +14, Stealth +17 **Wounds:** 9/R. **BTM:** -3

Gear: Skinweave, Kerenzikov +, Boostmaster, Smartlink, Right Optic & Targeter/AntiDazzle/IR, CyberAudio & Level Damper, MagDuct Spots, Armoured Clothing, Armour 12 SP Head/ 16 SP Elsewhere.

Mr. Black and Black Ops. Solo Team

Use your hardest and most skilled Solo NPCs to represent these most professional bodyguards (Tales of The Forlorn Hope is a good recruiting zone). They are always at least two moves ahead of everyone else in the House. If things get bad for the PCs, these solos will soon sort it out. For Mr. Black, losing is not an option.