INTRODUCTION

EVERYBODY KNOWS THE BIG CORPORATIONS. EVERYONE KNOWS WHO THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS ARE. GO OUT AND ASK ON THE STREET, IF YOU DARE. IF YOU ARE LOW ENOUGH, PLEBEIAN ENOUGH, UNSTYLISH ENOUGH TO EXPOSE YOURSELF TO THE STREET. GO OUT AND ASK. DO A MAN-ON-THE-STREET INTERVIEW, IF YOU’LL STOOP SO LOW AS TO TALK TO THE MAN (WOMAN/HERMAPHRODITE/CYborg) ON THE STREET. WAVE A MICROPHONE IN THEIR FACES, OR BETTER YET, A CAMERA. EVERYONE TALKS TO THE CAMERA. EVERYONE SPILLS THEIR GUTS. EVERYONE IS CANDID. THERE ARE NO SECRETS FROM THE CAMERA.

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CONTACT INFORMATION
WRONG. WRONG. WRONG! No biscuit. No car. No vacation in Corfu. Limo in, taxi home, loser.

Who put the mic in the face? Who picked the people who were frammed in that electronic glow? Who decided to light them, make them look believable, sulliable, fallible, personable? Who fitted the bars, decided who made the cut, and who evaporated in a magnetic optical pulse? Who told you what they thought, and by extension, told you what you thought? Who comes into your home every day, invited, treated like an honored guest, passed over, taken with you in the car, to the gym, to your desk at work? Who do you never suspect is controlling you, because they do it so obviously, so much as a matter of course? Backseat driver, counselor, entertainer, cried-on shoulder, babysitter, lover, teacher, confessor, soul-sister.


And now a word from our sponsor...

Power

What is power? If it is the ability to destroy, then there are dozens of corporations more powerful than the mediacorps. If it is the rank accounts, cash reserves, and hard equity, than there are dozens of corporations more powerful than the mediacorps. If it is sheer manpower, bodies, brain and will, then there are dozens of corporations more powerful than the mediacorps. But if it is influence, the power to shape the perceptions, tastes, opinions, and even emotions of billions of people worldwide, then there are no corporations more powerful than the mediacorps. Every other corporation battles for their favor. Every other corporation pays for what they own. And no other corporation willingly makes an enemy of them.

That is power.

Fact is... you worship the limelight.

Welcome to the media corporation.
We have come a long way as far as the media is concerned. As a tool, it has been used for many purposes throughout the ages, everything from informing the population of any important events to entertaining them, even selling them things they did not really need. Of course, as much as it has been used to Inform, it has also been used to disinform. As much as it has been used to entertain, it has been used to distract people from what was really going on. As much as it has been used to sell material goods, it has been used to sell ideas, ideals, and ideologies.

Think about it for a moment. Everything you see around you can be construed as being part of the media. After all, the meaning of the word media is simply that of an agency, or a means to get an idea or concept across. It abounds in every medium, in the status quo, which, most of the time, is really what it is all about. But we, in our age of information, did not invent the media. Before our era of braindance, smartphones, and television, there have been other types of media, types which until the invention of the radio and television relied heavily on the printed word.

**Pre-20th Century Media**

Before the 20th century, there were fewer means of communicating or disseminating information to a large group of people. Up until the 16th century, the majority of people did not even know how to read. Most people would get their information from towncriers and by word of mouth, from royal proclamations, and priests in their local churches. As far as entertainment was concerned, forget about anything looking real, unless it was real. The only real sources of distraction, apart from the one which caused them to have too many children, included live theater and storytellers, who would gather a large group of listeners around them, either in their home or at the local inn and spin tales to make listeners’ heads spin.

Of course, being informed and entertained was not the main thing on the average Middle Age lackey’s mind. No, survival was. Only later, after the invention of the printing press, and after higher literacy levels were achieved among the general populace, did the media start to take on any real shape. Not that there was not any media to speak of, but, as stated above, any media was of the spoken word variety, and there was no real commercial content. As far as those in power were concerned, that was fine. Media as we know it is a fairly recent phenomenon, which will be examined later on.

The reasons for the lack of media, at least what we would term media, are twofold: disposable income and leisure time. Well into the 10th century, both of these things were for people of the upper class only. No one else had any real leisure time or disposable income. These two factors, while not immediately related to the media, have a direct effect on the media. Simply put, unless one has money to spend on either the media itself or on things advertised by the media, or one has time to look at what the media offers, the media is completely useless.

Another thing is that publicity did not exist. People would find out about anything that they might need, anything from whom to buy food products from to where to get new farm animals, by word of mouth. Keep in mind that in the city was not much different than life in the rural areas as far as information was concerned. As far as the majority of people were concerned, the only book that would ever be read to them would be the Bible, and even then, unless one knew Latin, he would not understand one word that was being read. All this changed, albeit slowly, with the introduction by Gutenberg of the printing press. The printing press introduced the written word to a much wider audience in two main forms: newspapers and books. It is also responsible for the level of literacy of the general population. Because books were now more widely available to the general public, people learned to read and write, since these were no longer deemed useless skills.

**Newspapers**

The earliest known newspapers, apart from the public announcement posters of ancient Rome and such, came out of Germany in the latter part of the 15th century, the birthplace of movable type printing press. None of them were anything more than a one-sheet newsletter, with most of the articles written by the editor/printer/distributor. The first real newspaper, the Gazette de France, came out in 1631. While this was a newspaper per se, it did not see widespread distribution, mostly because of cost and literacy levels. The first widely distributed newspaper also came from France. Le Siècle, born in 1636, had a circulation of 10,000. It had very strong political opinions and saw many of that era’s literary figures writing for it. Before the Collapse, there were literally thousands of different newspapers available in the U.S. alone.

Unlike a screen sheet, newspapers carried information on all types of subjects and were mostly made up of one thing: advertising. As a matter of fact, a newspaper consisted of 40%
to 60% advertising. While this may seem strange to readers of
sheets, one has to understand that newspapers walked on a
cable line between public institution and private industry.
This meant that while they were protected by the First
Amendment (freedom of speech), they also had to stay in
business, which meant attracting readership. This is one of
the key reasons behind the fall of the newspaper. While the
money raised by sales was not enough to cover the cost of
production, advertising covered the lion’s share. As time went
on, people began to rely more and more on television, and
later on screens, for their news, many said they had no
time for reading or were getting their news from the television
since the news was “fresher.” A decrease in readership for
newspapers meant not only lost revenue in sales, but more
importantly a decline in revenues from advertising, since
fewer people saw the ads placed in the newspapers.
A close relative of the newspaper is the magazine. With a
broader and deeper coverage than the newspaper, it too died
a not-so-plausible death to both the newsprint and the Net.
One of the ancestors of the magazine is perhaps the penny
deal, a sort of mix between a book and a newspaper.
Sold on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, the pennydeal would
deliver the latest chapter of an ongoing work from an author,
which when finished would be republished in book format.
This type of serial allowed people who would not normally buy
books to read an entire manuscript while it was being written.
The reason behind the name is quite easy to guess: They
were, for the most part, quickly written stories. Very similar
in structure to the soap operas that cluttered television, they
were written with one rule in mind: Keep the reader excited
and coming back for more. They were considered free of
the era’s better writers, but they still wrote them in order to pay
their bills.

**Plays and books**

Invented in the dawn of humanities, books and plays have been
with Man since he has been able to speak, to write. While the
actual form a book takes has changed drastically since they
first made their appearance—from a stone tablet to a scroll
written on papyrus, from a hand written manuscript to a
text file in an electronic book—the basic function of the book
has not changed. It is there to educate, entertain, and some-
times make the reader think. As with other forms of media,
while sometimes the stated purpose is to entertain, it might
also be used to educate or to influence the way the reader
looks on or thinks about certain things.

Books, and literature in general, take many forms nowadays.
The most common one is perhaps the electronic book, or e-book, which allows the user to download any book file
into it and display it to the reader. Some available models of e-
book either contain a printer or have the capacity to be con-
ected to an external printer. While the direct advantage of an
e-book might not be apparent at first glance, a printed book
is as high tech and convenient as an e-book, there are some
advantages. One of the main ones is that nothing is out of print
anymore. As long as someone somewhere has the file, anyone
can print a copy of the book for himself. Also, if classified
files, all of a user’s files can be searched for any occurrence
of any subject, thus allowing the use to quickly do research on
a number of topics. This brings us to perhaps one of the most
convenient features, an index that always works and that can
be tailored to the specific individual. Other advantages are
simply those of cost, space, and resources. A book file is
cheaper to produce, costs nothing to print since the user is
the one who will do it, and takes no space other than that in the
e-book itself.

Plays also saw their birth in the dawn of time. Unlike
books, their shape, if not their actual content, has not varied
much with time. While there are many types of plays, their
basic point is to have some actors on a stage playing parts.
While one might look at plays as being the ancestors of
modern-day television and cinema, the more cynical might
point out that the content was worth watching, unlike modern
drama, and is more of an eye candy rather than to stimulate the intellect. As television and movies were
introduced in the early 20th century, the popularity of
plays has known a steady decline, despite the effort of actors
and directors. Theater met with a short revival in the early
2000’s just after the Collapse, due mostly to the low income
and general malaise of the population. But with the introduc-
tion of cheap bandwidth and direct access Net connection,
it is again an art on its last leg, perhaps to die a slow death.

**Pre-Collapse Media**

There are two main differences between pre-20th-century
media and post-20th-century media: recording and com-
mercialization.

Recording allowed the media to truly reach and reach a
much wider audience than before. Of course, there was
always a means to record: the written word. But the 20th cen-
tury saw for the first time in mankind’s history the ability
to broadcast, and at a later date record, both voice and pictures.
The first attempts were at best mediocre, made by scientists
and the like to demonstrate the possibilities of the new tech-
ology. It is then that the real players behind what is now the
media saw the potential inherent in the new technology. Big
business stepped in and made media the beast we know
today: one of the most powerful force around. With the ability
to broadcast and record, one truly had for the first time the
ability to sell a large segment of the population things that
they would not have thought they needed or wanted.

Media in the 20th century seems to have followed one
rule: lowest common denominator. While this is somewhat
true of our media, the idea took root because of the costs
associated with the new media introduced in the 20th cen-
tury. Making movies, television and radio programs was an
expensive process. To offset the cost, the producers needed
to bring in more revenue. The reasoning was simple: The
more people watching or listening to your show, the more
you could ask from the advertisers. This became the golden age
of advertising and led to what was known as commercial content.
The reason that commercial content is mentioned here is sim-
ply that it is what shapes media as we know it to this day and
day. Beyond any other agenda, the key to understanding mod-
ern media is money. If it does not make a profit, then it does
not exist, at least not on a large scale.

Of course there were other players in the arena besides
big business. A number of independent productions were
around but never really had any clout in the marketplace. One
ingredient that could almost by success was that new thing
that we know today is cable TV. Apart from a few small productions getting both commercial
and critical acclaim, the commercial successes were usually
made by the larger studios, simply by throwing large amounts
of money at the project. . Channels helped, along with advertising
barriers, done in such a way that unless one had absolutely no contact with the modern media machine, one would find out about the latest
cute whatever he wanted to do.

While this was true until the Collapse, things changed
somewhat a few years before the Collapse. With the advent of
cable television and cheaper technology for both broadcasting
and recording, a driving cable industry, based around the
fact that one could sell only a few units and still make a profit,
emerged. However, when the Collapse hit, it hit these people
hardest of all. In our day and age, we can still see somewhat
of a remnant of this industry, mostly in the media underground,
which we will look at later on.

However, there was an exception to the adage that media
meant big business. Several countries, including the United
States, had what was termed public broadcasting, services that
were partly supported with tax money. In an effort to bring
to the general public what they believed was quality and diversi-
died programming, they supported a format which did not rely
on advertising. Partly due to the Collapse and also to increas-
ing cuts in budget, these media died without any real notice by the
general population.
Radio

The beginnings of radio are much like any other media born in the 20th century. At first, the media was used mostly for point-to-point telecommunication, with a few attempts at programming or what we would call real broadcasting. But it was not before 1920, when big business saw the potential inherent in the fledgling media and decided to step in, that real radio broadcasting really took off. At first, the idea behind radio broadcasting with an announced schedule was little more than a plan to sell more radio receivers to the individual home owner. It was not until 1922 that someone struck upon the idea of selling air time to companies to sell their goods. Thus the commercial was born, and with it the concept of commercial media.

Early radio programming was mostly "anything goes." Anything that could make noise, from live music and sing alongs, vaudeville acts to guest speakers, political debates and sport broadcasts were put on the air. The early programmers did not have any time for experimentation since real problems lay with technical difficulties and the like. Music was the primary "meat" of programming; it was perhaps the easiest thing to put on. After all, there was already a good amount of recorded material available, in addition to all the live broadcasts that were possible to do.

Another early program type that disappeared with the arrival of television was drama and variety shows. Very similar in content to our soap operas and comedy shows, they were for the most part a picture show version of what was being offered on stage at that time. Strangely enough, there was no regular news broadcast on radio before 1933, and even at that time, there were only four regular news broadcasts. This was mostly due to the fact that advertising agencies were responsible for the programming of radio broadcasts, and they wanted nothing to disturb the success radio had in selling products. This shows that the new medium was mostly thought of as an entertainment medium, rather than one used for general information.

The only exception to this was the March of Time, sponsored by Time magazine, which, instead of a straight news broadcast, was a dramatization of the week's news. Again, this points out the general conception of radio as an entertainment medium rather than a news medium.

Early radio history is also one of excesses, where anything could, and did, go. If one thought that the excesses of media surrounding court cases like the Simpson case in the mid-1990's were a new phenomenon, he only has to look at the early history of radio to see similar media circuses. The Howard Hughes trial of the Lindbergh baby in 1935, was surrounded by a media circus that would shame the modern courthouse. This led to legislation banning microphones and cameras from the courtroom. Many of the era's non-entertainment broadcasts were nothing more than propaganda under a thin veneer of dramatization. Everyone was out to explore and exploit the new medium, and the public was just too happy to sit there and absorb the whole thing.

Over the twenty years following the introduction of commercial radio, every major city had at least one radio station, if not several. Even smaller cities possessed their own radio stations. With time, what was at first a hodge-podge of programming evolved into different formats. Of course, regulations from the FCC (the Federal Communications Commission) helped in this regard. For example, it forced what was a popular radio program, the radio lotteries, off the air; only to see them re-emerge on television as game shows. It also broke up money radio, much to the anger of the radio moguls. But the FCC was not the biggest threat radio would face. The biggest threat would come after the war, with the arrival of television.

With the coming of television, much of the success enjoyed by radio vanished. This did not happen overnight, but the popularity of radio, which was after all mere spoken words, waned over the next few decades. Radio turned to what it did best, music and talk shows, to finally emerge with two distinct forms of stations: Talk radio, and its cousin, the sports radio. This was just that; radio on which a caller was able to talk to a host about almost anything he had on his mind. On the other end of the spectrum, music radio stations concentrated on playing the music they believed their listeners wanted to hear. Overall, radio lost its place to television but is still around nowadays, more the province of illegal radio operators who wish to tell us what is wrong with our country than a legitimate, state-approved big medium.

Television

The successor to radio, television incorporated two of the great media of the age: radio and movies. By doing so, many feel that it had forced both media out of the spotlight and into the shadows. The simple facts were that no one wanted anything to disturb the success radio had in selling products. This shows that the new medium was mostly thought of as an entertainment medium, rather than one used for general information. The only exception to this was the March of Time, sponsored by Time magazine, which, instead of a straight news broadcast, was a dramatization of the week's news. Again, this points out the general conception of radio as an entertainment medium rather than a news medium.

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Movies

Although the invention of movies is not from the 20th century per se, its full blooming into a medium is. This is another medium born of scientists and nurtured by businessmen for their own agenda and profits.

The movie industry was born a little before the first World War. At that time, movies were a very crude affair: black and white and without sound. At most, the duration of these movies was under an hour. One of the most popular forms of movies was the serial, which took its inspiration from the penny dreadfuls and followed the same basic rules: one installment a week, but always done with an ending which left the hero in a bind, hence their nickname: cliff-hangers.

Most of that era’s cliff-hangers were five- to ten-minute affairs that stretched over forty to fifty episodes each. If one was to watch these efforts now, one could not help but laugh at all the dangers the hero faced in such a small period of time. There were of course longer movies, but for the most part, when one went to the movies the usual program was a grab bag of things: a short cliff-hanger, sometimes a cartoon or two, a newsreel, and the feature.

Many different film studios were tried to give movies sound. Some entrepreneurs even tried to broadcast the sound from a local radio station. This led to many logistical problems, such as timing and the like. When sound finally came to the picture, an era was ended. Many of the silent movie stars found themselves without jobs, since they had tremendous voices.

A few years later, after World War II, color was introduced, along with the first attempts at 3D movies. These first attempts were very crude and were rapidly discarded by major movie studios and audiences as being gimmicks. It was not until our century that 3D movies made any real progress, with holographic projections and the like.

What at first looked to be the demise of the movie industry actually became its savior. Television, with its seemingly free programming and movies, hurt the movie industry when it took its first steps. It did not happen overnight, since movies still had a better profit margin than television, but over time, with production costs going down for television and increased impact in the homes, it seemed that movies were doomed to the same death that looked certain for newspapers. But all that changed with the advent of the VCR. What happened was that movies now had a much longer shelf life.

One of the innovations that the movie industry did not learn from was the VCR. The video cassette meant more movie coming in. Many studios were born out of the video explosion; they made movies to be released directly to video. These movies might not have had the same high production values as the movies made by the major studios, but they still managed to make money by keeping costs down.

Another unlikely savior of the movie industry was the cable television explosion. With so many channels to fill, the cable people had to find new sources for them. They turned to the movie industry, which was only too happy to sell all the made-for-cable movies as well as the rights for movies that were just in the planning stage.

Nowadays, the movie experience is very different from what it was for our grandparents. No longer do we sit in crowded theaters, with all the frills and expensive gimmicks. Now we sit at home, making the experience less of a group experience and more of a personal one.

The “Net” and other Computer Networks

Although the commercial medium of the Net nonetheless underwent a profound change in the mid-1990s, it was at that time that what had been previously both a military and an educational network was turned into a commercial provider and business. People had been more of a community. They became another medium, dedicated to selling goods and services.

The advent of the Web, advertising appeared on the Net. Many were shocked and disgusted at this, but you can’t stop progress.

Note that there were other successful commercial computer networks around, but nothing quite as the reach of what became the Net.

We will not really spend any time at this point looking at the history of the Net, since many excellent works have been written on the phenomenon.

Music Industry

The music industry became a medium with the advent of both radio and recording. Although it had always existed, music was a fairly personal thing. Sure, you could buy the written music to your favorite piece, but unless you had the talent to play it or could pay someone else to do it for you, the chances of hearing any specific pieces of music were at best slim. The only chance one had at hearing anything he really wanted to hear was if the band played in his town.

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publisher, could find yourself in prison without a trial, for as long as the government deemed necessary. This threw some cold water on investigative journalists who had become quite complacent under the freedoms they were given. Some industries were totally closed down by conservative military police, such as the pornographic havens of New York and San Francisco. Also, any sources a journalist might quote in an article were no longer protected. This had a few consequences of its own, mostly a drying-up of sources for investigative journalists; those sources who remained would be unknown, even to the journalists themselves. While some created chaos,诽谤 wars for sources, false sources and the like also forced journalists to do their homework better—and to hire a team to support and protect them.

But the martial laws did not affect only the showdown media people. It also affected the functioning of more legitimate media. While they knew that all information given to them by the government in the past had not always been the truth, now they no longer had the power and the protection to dig for what they thought was the truth, and furthermore could not expose the government lies. Which leads us to the second factor of the Seward Act media censorship. This was felt on a more global scale than the freedom of speech issue. Since the government gave itself permission to censor, the media no longer had full access to international news or other media. This had the effect of isolating the United States from the rest of the world. Nothing went into the U.S., or came out of it without the consent of the government. Books, music, movies, and television programs were not exempt; on the contrary, they were under even heavier restrictions.

While the majority of citizens were too busy running for their lives and couldn’t care less what was on the news, the media found itself in a revolution of its own. What had started as cottage industries toward the beginning of the 1990’s now had evolved into a legitimate underground media network. Since the legitimate media found itself gagged by the government, a certain portion of the younger media figures decided to go underground to bring the truth to the American public. This was the birth of guerrilla journalism and media. Their ideology was simple: get the information out there to as many people as possible, without any government intervention. In the underground, any information was seen as good, and no one wanted to filter or censor any of it.

Through the birth of the underground movement, a strain was created between the younger generation and what they perceived as the “establishment.” While the corporate media and the government continued to grow despite the turmoil, the underground went deeper and deeper. Anyone reading or listening to any of the news or other media creations from either side had to be very careful in what he believed. Both sides were so full of crackpot, obvious lies, and propaganda, from either the U.S. government or the EEC and other agencies, that consumption of the media became a risky affair. But, as usual, people being people, most of what was on the screen had little value. The underground, filled with the flames of rebellion and violence, while the corporate media fed the “straighter” elements of society more propaganda so that they would support the government in any actions they wanted to take. It was a time of extremes, of extreme black and white, while reality was made up mostly of gray areas.

The problem became apparent quite quickly to anyone with half a brain. Where does one go when one has evidence of governmental or corporate wrong doings? The corporate media would not put it out, but rather turn it in, while in the underground, no one would really pay it any attention since there were so many loons there. There were rumors for many years of the underground being infiltrated by government agents bent on dissecting the whole movement, but many say that the government did not need to get involved since the underground was doing such a great job of dissecting itself. Thank you very much.

The Seward Act did not only hit the news people hard. All media industries were hit by the restrictions on freedom of speech and censorship. A record store, for example, was no longer able to import any music from outside the country. Many diskettes, like their counterparts in the old USSR, turned to fiction writing in order to talk about what they believed was wrong and illegal. They knew it and they grew as long as it was. While this was low risk to a certain degree: after all, it was all fiction, right?—many were still arrested and sent to work camps. A thriving black market developed, centered around the distribution of illegal media, be they newspapers, videos, or music.

Using the infrastructure of the Net, many attempted distribution of non-censored, home-grown media. While they were successful at first, they were quickly shut down by Net police and such. Even old movies and television programs were subject to censors, while the entire back catalog of certain musical acts were deemed to be anti-government and thus censored.

One side effect of the Seward Act is the distance that is now apparent between members of the underground and the corporate media. While in the past there was some cooperation between the two and one could “graduate” from the underground to mainstream press, now it is almost impossible. Most of the members of the underground have rep sheets a few meters long, for infractions ranging from refusing to submit to governmental censorship to possession of illegal equipment and in some cases manslaughter. Also, the corporations have a long memory and remember quite well those who might have stolen equipment or time from them.

In the post-Collapse years, and continuing to this day, we have seen a comeback in corporate-sponsored media. While this was a practice which was deemed necessary in the early days, it had fallen into disfavor by the mid-20th century. The practice was simple: A sponsor would pay for all production costs associated with a program and its name would be added to the name of the program. Such programs, like the famous Texaco Star Theater, would only have one advertiser and the stars of the show would do on-the-air spots. While this worked for a while, there were a few reasons why this format was dropped. First, the majority of sponsors were found to want too much control over the content of the program. This led to forms of censorship, where the advertiser would threaten to pull its money out if it didn’t get its way. The second reason was more based on economics than artistic integrity. The network advertising department quickly found that it could get more money out of advertisers if it sold them smaller spots. In essence, by lowering their prices and selling 30-second spots instead of full program sponsorship, the networks found they could get more money. One has to keep in mind that scandals like the ones surrounding game shows did help the network see the error of their ways.

While there were still corporate sponsors in the late 20th century, such sponsors usually boiled down to companies who gave a little more money to see their logos displayed more often or donated company goods in exchange for advertising time. With the Collapse, all this changed. Keep in mind that this did not only touch television and radio, but also magazines, movies and the Net, with product placement and such tactics.
The only medium that really stayed somewhat immune to corporate sponsorship was music, with a few notable attempts at sponsoring tours and the like. Most of the time this failed, since the musical act more often than not made light of the sponsors on stage.

With the Collapse, big media turned toward the only source of sure money there was: corporations. With the increasing unemployment rate, the only source of steady income was people who worked and since big corporations seemed to gain more and more power and were the only ones to stay in business, it only made sense to the big media to turn toward them. What happened was not really corporate sponsorship in the way it happened at the beginnings of both radio and television, but rather tailored programs and stations for the corporation's employees, as well as other media.

What this did was to add another filter to the media that people consumed. The programs were more for the employees of that corporation, but the majority of viewers were assumed to be from that corporation. The corporate sponsor affected pretty much all media consumed by the individual who worked for the corporation, everything from the news he heard and saw to the movies and magazines he purchased. Boards were set up to act as filters between the corporation and the media in question, to decide, on a daily basis, what was fit for consumption by employees. Corporations at that level affected everything from the actions in movies or websites used, making the way to the subtexts woven into the program. The same was true of the news. All news was filtered again by the corporation, to ensure that it was fit for employees and to try to gain a certain level of control over the public image of the corporation. Moral and political programming were revised to try and maximize employee morale, by feeding them programs that would show the corporation as a benevolent entity and the outside world as evil and dangerous. To anyone who was raised in America, this is a familiar pattern, since since the late sixties comedies revolved around office personnel and dramas were usually centered around people outside the corporate structure.

This move by the big media is probably the largest single reason for the disappearance of newspapers as they were known up to then. Since a single newspaper publisher would have to put out a number of different versions for the different corporations it served as well as a general one for the public at large, the whole structure of the newspaper changed and evolved into the screamsheet. The screamsheet was a filtered version of the newspaper, containing only the news the individual was interested in, but also only the news the government and corporations wanted to the individual read.

Some of the most overt corporate sponsor efforts failed miserably. For example, the death of Ulysses L'From's Further Adventures of Alcyon Pinto, a spy thriller series with strong political undertones, failed to attract the public's attention. Despite this, some corporations are still involved in movies, albeit in a more subtle manner. The biggest impact is still the fact that the corporations are now able to control what goes and the subtext, making the finished product toward a target audience, which in turn might equalize the actions of the protagonist with the products he uses and endorses.

The collapse of the underground culture was the deepening of the underground culture and the popular with which they fight against corporations and government alike. Many in the underground see themselves as being the last bastion of true media, uncorrupted and back to what it really is all about: art and information. The reality, however, is slightly different, with many underground media groups having been co-opted by the corporations and being riddled by government agents for a long time ago.

The Media in 2020

The media in 2020 is polarized between what is perceived by some as corporate puppets and those who see themselves as crusaders. While the Seward Act has been repealed now that the country is back on its feet, things are not much different than they were during the Collapse. The corporate media sees the underground as a bunch of dissatisfied bum, while the underground sees corporate media as a bunch of stooges.

The reality, however, is slightly different. While big media corporations seem to be little more than puppets to both the government and to other corporations, they do enjoy more freedom than during the Seward Act days. With the reactivation of the Constitution, legally the government can not censor the media any longer (at least that it really matters anymore). The reason the media is not afraid of the government is that they saw the power shift that has been happening over the last few years. Since the government seems to have less power and the corporations more, it would seem that the faction to fear would be the corporations. However, the media corporations who did survive the Collapse and the years following have gained a lot of savvy. They know that they can easily influence the masses due partly to many technological advances. They have proven more than once that when they are ready to play hardball and that they will not tolerate being toyed with as they were during the Collapse. They have learned their lesson and are ready to take their place back at the top of the food chain. This is not to say that other corporations will bow to the media, but rather that they will treat them as equals (and become more and more channels like music and baancade, and hidden messages in both video games and the Net to fight authority as much as they can). Many suspect that there are agents of the underground working for legitimate media corporations, trying to subvert some of their products by hiding subliminals and the like in anything they can. If this is true, then the underground might just have become what it is trying to fight: a monstrous, nevertheless means necessary to get its message across. Whether this is good or not is left to each and every one of us to decide.

The "quiet" corporate war

Even if the media is no longer co-opted by the larger corporations, an interesting side effect is that there are rumors of blackmailing. Some say that in order to keep some of the corporations' shade dealings out of the news, many corporations offer to buy stories, to "release them at more appropriate times", from the news media. While this might seem to be against the very journalistic code they swore to uphold in the past, some media operations actually participate in such deals. This sometimes leads to some interesting complications, like the 2019 Maltex extraction scandal, where it was found that a rival corporation had actually paid Net 54 more money to keep the piece on the air, "in the interest of their viewers."

There have also been rumors of enterprising young reporters fabricating news stories just to try to extract money from the corporations, without authorization from their editors. This might explain the frequent disappearances of some of the younger reporters, although the police usually chalk it up to gang activities.

It should be noted, of course, spin doctors who will do their utmost to put a different spin on any story involving the corporation they work for. What looked like an extraction might have really been a team of black operatives from a rival corporation trying to lay blame on them or someone. But if the rumors are true, then what we have is media no longer accountable to the public, but rather to their shareholders only.

One of the strangest, and most confusing, aspects of this media shift is news. It seems that whenever a story is put out, it seems two completely different stories using the same footage. This is often because the corporation involved did not realize that there was more than one station contacted for the story, or because the underground is actually doing its homework. This alone should convince the complacent public that there is something wrong going on, but because of a new wave of brand-fascism—believing everything a certain channel puts out—the majority of the public seems to be blind to these flagrant contradictions.

Another issue to keep in mind is that the media corporations are not above extraction tactics to get information, personnel, or technology they need. Deals on underground media operations are not rare occurrences, since the same way to scoop a rival is to find a good subject quickly. The media corporations of 2020 are just as ruthless as their non-media counterparts and will do anything for ratings, advertising dollars, and their mighty corporate leaders.
Everywhere one looks nowadays there seem to be signs of the media. We feel assaulted by the sheer amount of information that is presented to us on a daily basis. But what is the media? Who are the people behind the scenes and what are the tools that they use to get their message across? In this chapter we will look at the tools that the media use and their impact on our everyday life.

In the ever-growing battle between the corporations and the people, there are many who have taken to art and media as a tool to fight back. Hoping to turn the corporation's weapons against them, these brave souls see themselves as the alarm clock against the slumber of the general population. They take on the role of the terrorist, using art and media as their tools to bring attention to the issues that they believe are important.

The Death of Print and the Birth of the Screamsheet

With the advent of television, the newspaper which gave us our daily news died slowly. After all, for the majority of people, reading the newspaper did not give them the news, but rather gave them yesterday's news. However, television is not what killed the newspapers; the killing blow came in the form of reform and change. No, what really killed newspapers was the Net and the ability it gave users to get from one source only the news they were really interested in and nothing else.

By its very nature, a newspaper needed to be fairly broad in its coverage, which is what the Net and the ability it gave users to get from one source only the news they were really interested in and nothing else.

The advantage that gave the edge to the screamsheets was the lack of advertising or the minimal amount of it. Unlike newspapers, which relied heavily on advertising for survival, screamsheets were able to give their readers a minimum amount of ads, since those ads are more targeted.

Since the advent of the screamsheet, the medium has been able to assemble a basic psychological profile of any given reader through the type of news he is interested in, they are able to sell advertising space which will appeal to very specific reader types and maximize their advertising dollar.

All the News Fit to Print

With the fall of newspapers came the fall of newspaper publishers. What had been empires built upon the dissemination of daily news came to a crash, with only a few of the country's largest news syndicates still standing. Following the collapse, a total restructuring of these news organizations came, leaving three central screamsheet 'publishers': WNS, through their daughter corporation Times, Inc; U.S. News, and Davidson-Night own screamsheets publishers throughout the U.S. All this means is that while the name on your screamsheet might say Night City Today, what you really are buying is a U.S. News screamsheet, containing the same information found throughout the U.S., with added local news.

Although different in terms of attitude and style, all three corporations function in a similar fashion. Through small regional offices scattered throughout the U.S. and the world, they gather news stories, often buying them from freelance reporters in order to keep costs down. The stories are then filed automatically through the Net to the central office, along with any photographs or video footage that might be needed.

Once at the central office, the story is filed and spell checked by an AI to be read and checked later by the section editors. At this point the editor will decide whether the story will be given what level of priority and its rating. The rating system is at the heart of the screamsheet system. It is the rating of each individual story that will decide whether a reader will see the story or not. The rating system is simply a keyword system of what the story is about. For example, a story about a terrorist attack on the Empire State Building would have the keywords: date, time, news, national, New York, terrorist. Each keyword in the rating system describes one aspect of the story. Each keywords has its own rating system, which may vary slightly from one shown here. There is usually an additional field to indicate which corporations will not get the story for their corporate edition of the screamsheet, as well as a field for the importance of the story on a scale of 1 to 100, with 1 being insignificant and 100 being of utmost importance.

At this point the story is sent back to the central AI, which will decide whether to use a photo or not and will lay out the story. The story is sent again to the editor for a final check and then downloaded to each individual newsbox that makes up the distribution network of the screamsheet, ready
to be downloaded. Newsboxes usually are sent major stories as reports are filed and have new editions uploaded every six hours.

With the system set up the way it is, someone wanting a screamed sheet just has to follow the easy-to-understand menus to select exactly what they want to read from the screamed sheet, which will print a copy right away on thermal paper. Some of the more upscale terminals allow color screamed sheets on real paper, or upload the information directly to the user’s computer or e-book. There is some screamed sheet virtual terminals on the Net, which cost slightly less to use. One always has the option of “home delivery,” which simply calls up the subscriber’s fax or home computer and downloads the latest edition every six, twelve, eighteen, twenty-four hours, depending on the subscription.

One of the main advantages of the screamed sheet terminal, or newspaper, is that most screamed sheet publishers do not bother to have an archive any longer, preferring to have copies of each article they have published in a dataarchive on the Net instead. Anyone wanting to consult the archive can do so from any newsbox and get copies of all articles selected printed out right away. At the heart of this system is a very powerful search engine, capable of cross-searching thousands of news stories. Because of this system, what would have normally taken a researcher a week’s time to find out can take the average user less than five minutes, including printing time. The search engine is similar to the one used by the Library of Congress, with a slightly smaller database to search through. For the more demanding data searches, there are clipping services still available which will download all articles published in any magazine or screamed sheets relating to a particular subject to a user’s e-mailbox. Such services usually occur in the shape of electronic agents who gather all editions of all available screamed sheets and search through them.

The heart of the screamed sheet system is the AI which regulates and screens out the stories that the editor will see. In the past, it would be the section editor who would decide if a given story would seem print or not, but this was who would give the paper whatever slant it would have. The principle is simple: While you want to publish all the news that has happened in the last week, a newspaper is only so big, so a decision has to be made about what stories people are interested in. This means that if the editor did not find a story important enough it would either not make it to the current edition or would be relegated to the back pages. The editor’s job is to decide what stories will make the screamed sheet. As is still true today, having friends in important places is important, and a newspaper section editor is always a nice friend to have. Since the centralization of screamed sheets would mean that any single editor would have to go through literally thousands of stories in any given quarter (six hour shift), the AI are there to simplify his job. Although this was a very touchy subject when it first came about, today’s screamed sheet’s AI’s are able to find and file stories as the first screening process for all news stories. Since the publisher is able to dictate guidelines when an AI is first programmed and is able to adjust them at will, many publishers see the AI editor as a godsend. It’s as though the AI was the real editor, while the human editor is there to make sure that the AI doesn’t screw up. Therein is the largest problem the underground has with screamed sheet corporations. They claim that since everything is automated, a new story might actually be very important to the readers at large might fall through the cracks. In essence, the editors have ceased to be the ears and eyes of the screaming, allowing the AI’s to do that for them. Many argue that AI editors are nothing more than sophisticated censorship machines. While this is in part true, the publishers claim that all the AI’s have really done is taken the job from someone who could be bribed, thus inserting the reader that the news he will read will be as unbiased as possible.

As mentioned above, the majority of print reporters are freelancers, and so they work for theWeb and their colleagues in television. This is done for a few reasons. First, the Web keeps costs down, since there is no need to keep regional desks in some of the smaller areas. Also, the screamed sheet corporations have found that competition is a very good thing, since it makes that stories will get filed as they break and allows them to pick the very best while not having to pay for the rest. While this sometimes means that the smaller stories will not get the attention they deserve, the corporations feel that it is okay to a certain degree, since if the reporters do not think the story warrants attention, the reader will probably feel the same way.

Many people feel that reporters are nothing more than mercenaries, looking for the story that will pay the most. In the last few years this has led to some interesting problems, ranging from journalists ambushing other journalists to
was denied them, using whatever means necessary. Old people are the younger generation and what was once thought of as old was born again.

Underground newspapers have a long and proud history. Whether they were the tracts handed out by the French Resistance during World War II or the "drug" comics of the 1960's Underground, underground newspapers have always been the flagships of any revolution. Easy to distribute, easy to get rid of if found, they are still at the forefront of the revolution in 2020. The tools used to gather the stories and lay them out might have evolved, but the determination of the people who care is still something to reckon with.

The structure used by the underground newspapers is very similar to the ones used by the corporate publishers. A network of writers, most of which have never met one another (including the publisher), send in their stories, most
ly through the Net or secure telephone lines. Once the pub-
isher thinks he has enough material for the next issue, he lays out the newspaper using a desktop publishing package and prints it out. Even though they are referred to as newspa-
papers, the paper used most of the time is just a regular paper. The schedule is irregular at best, sometimes being one or two months between issues.

The differences between underground newspapers and "mainstream" newspapers are many. First, the "mainstream" newspapers screen out a good portion of stories as being "unfit" to print, whereas the underground newspaper prints everything that is sent in, no matter what it is. Secondly, while mainstream newspapers still rely somewhat on advertising, the only source of income for underground newspapers is donations and the sales of the paper proper, but since none of the contributors gets paid, the cost of production is usually comprised only of printing. Since there is no screening process for articles and none of the writers are professionals, it is as a rule poorly written, with no real common thread running through the articles. Sometimes there will be two articles side by side completely contradicting each other.

One of the most interesting differences between under-
grounders and "legitimate" newspapers is the international flavor of the paper. Since underground papers print without any kind of government censorship (which is still somewhat active or corporate bias, they sometimes print articles which they deem interesting from sources all over the world.

Not all undergrounders are unprofessional looking and amateur in content. Some of the newspapers look quite profes-
sional, with semi-professional or professional workers working under pseudonyms. For the majority, however, the level is at best high school or college level. Keep in mind also that not all underground newspapers are really revolution-
ary in content or ideology. Some are little more than per-
sonal newsletters, while others concentrate on shared inter-
est more than anything. When people talk about under-
grounders, they generally refer to the political rags. They tend to refer to the rest of the underground papers as "zines."

The underground newspapers, on the other hand, are little more than raving from masses, who are ready to people, whenever the "publisher" feels like it. Many of these so-called underground newspapers are self-published and give a new meaning to the "zine" part of the zine. With their subscription lists being little more than a collection of phone numbers, they are usually sent out through anony-
umous remitters on the Net, hitting as many people as pos-
ible in as little time as possible. Some of the zines operate almost like junk faxes, simply downloading all the phone numbers for a certain area and hitting all of them.

While some of the zines actually make sense, the general public's perception of them is as little more than annoying pieces of junk mail they sometimes receive. Most of these zines are not even looked at, thrown into the garbage when received instead.

One of the best running underground newspapers, Dr. Paradox's Mysterions, is little more than the ravings of an extremely angry individual. His zine "Mysterions" is usually a pass-along collection of observations and post-modern poetry over pictures of disturbing scenes ranging from slaughterhouses to concentra-
tion camps. His latest ravings have been about the govern-
ment's plot to turn everyone into a zombie through the use of a drug called "Z". One of his most fascinating pieces was how our current president, Elizabeth L. Kress, is really an AI and that the person appearing at official functions is an actress brain-
was washed into believing she was the president. Of course, none of the ravings offer any real proof, instead talking about alien conroversis on the Net and the like. If Dr. Paradox is indeed serious, then he is badly in need of medical atten-
tion or we are in more trouble than we think...

Distribution Channels

Distribution of underground newspapers and newspapers is at best spotty. While the exact distribution network changes from city to city, a few methods are constant. For exam-
ple, with zines, the home delivery system is the same as legitimate ones. But because for the most part they operate outside of the law, finding out about the zine in the first place is mostly by word of mouth. For the most part the same applies to subscriptions. If you can find the publisher, you can get a subscription. Then again, some of the underground newspapers will find you whether you want them to or not.

There are some underground newspapers or newspapers available at street corner boxes, but for the most part, they are only available at some select news vendors or small cafes. The average cost of a newspaper is usually in the range of 1 or 2 euros/bucks. Some of the zines are available as well on the Net, but for the most part, you will need a special password to get past the ICE.

Neither underground newspapers nor newspapers are available at libraries, since the government does not recognize either as legitimate media.

Critics of television have often blamed television for the apparent apathy of the general population, like a snake, it has been accused of mesmerizing an entire population away from critical thinking and learning, toward just accepting whatever it spooned out on a daily basis. While its opponents point out its faults, supporters point out the advances in education that television has brought about.

Whether television is good or bad for the population in general is a debate that is not likely to be solved anytime soon. One thing is sure: it is nothing more than a tool, and depend-
ing on whose hands it falls into, great things can be accom-
plished by it.

The Idiot Box Makers

The evolution of television in the last fifty years has been more one of technology than actual content. Apart from the popu-
"arty" or the ever-present newscaster, the general viewer has not yet learned how to use television. The current generation prefers to get a portable television set, make sure they have enough bat-
teries and their cable bill is paid up, and set up on a street corner, begging for change at the wall. Depending on the neigh-
borhood in which he has chosen to set up shop, a panhandler

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It is at the local level that television comes alive. Although there are very few programs to worry about—since the rest of the programming has already been purchased from the mother corporation and the schedules locked in place—there are no shows that give a station its identity. More than anything else, what you show during your news programs and specials is what the viewers will remember the most. After all, the other programs are an interchangeable stew of typical sitcoms and dramas, whose basic formula has not changed since the mid-1950's. Take the news programs format, for example. While some of the stories are bought outright from the mother corporation or from such organizations as WNS, most of them come from local reporters. Unlike sleightsheets, however, reporters work solely for the station, with freelancers rarely used. In this way, they operate more like the old newscasts, where the show's producer would have final approval over any suggested news story. The main difference is the size of the newscast. Where it used to take anywhere from 75 to 100 people to bring the newscast on the air every day, now there are only between twenty and thirty. Most of the reporters also handle the camera and editing aspect of their stories. Again, as with sleightsheets, it's a way to play a vital role in any given newscast. They not only handle the switching between the different cameras, but also operate the playbacks machines when needed. Where it would normally take twenty to twenty-five people to man the studio during a newscast, there are usually only two or three now.

The same holds true of virtually all programs presented on television. Sitcoms and dramas are also produced with very small crews, sometimes with the writers and actors being the only human beings on set. Of course, with the level of computer animation being what it is, there are many programs done entirely without the help of living actors and sometimes with the help of dead actors. ATN drew heavy criticism from both the public and its peers in the television industry when they put out an ad last year that I Love Lucy. Again, using a computer-generated Lucille Ball. Some say this would have been less if ATN had not decided to spice up the show with some clever scripts. Despite the criticism, there are at least five programs of that type on television right now, with Young 'n' Evil being in the top ten every week.

As far as local programming is concerned, most of it falls within general interest program type. Shows such as Body Count, Within City Limits and Buzzword, in name alone, of Night City's most popular local programming, offer a blend of news, entertainment, and current events. While some of them are quite gruesome—Body Count, for example, is a game show where the contestants have to guess the number of that night's gang-related homicides, most of them have more to do with what is going on in the city as far as entertainment goes. Most are quite inoffensive, if not thrilling. The rule for network television seems to still be "give them what they want" or to pander to the lowest common denominator.

There are some independent, non-cable-based television stations, but they are usually quite rare, since they have to fight for both programs and air space with the networks. Most small stations instead opt to go on cable, where at least they have a shot at national exposure. Cable television, on the other hand, believes in more niche markets than anything. While the old structure of television still lives on in the networks, cable television has really small operations which hook up with a cable provider and get by without the U.S. There are literally hundreds of specialty channels operating within the U.S., providing everything from pure news to nostalgia, sex, violence, and music covering the lion's share of the programming.

An interesting aside in the cable news business is the way WNS operates. Since they sell news stories to almost all stations in the U.S., if not the world, they also have to buy them from somewhere. Depending on "what a news story is", they pay a certain amount to the station from where it originates. What this means is simple: the more stations pick up the news story they filed, the more money you get for it. This has in the past created a situation similar to the one happening in the sleightsheet industry, namely competing channels and reporters fighting over a news story with sometimes dire consequences.

**500 channels and nothing's on**

Quite simply, unless you are blind or a total recluse, you do not need to look for television since television will find you, one way or another. From just walking down the street and taking in all the public flat screens to subscribing to cable proper, there are many ways of getting your fix of television. One option is to get a regular television and use the antenna. In any given city, there are always at least five channels that are the same programming pattern, and, only the more regular viewers can actually tell the difference. It is always possible to hook up to the Net to get some channels. While this practice is not widespread, there are those who prefer to do it that way since it is possible, with a little know how, to get channels that are not normally available, such as foreign broadcasts and the like. Picture quality is usually almost the same as with cable, but sometimes the transmission can be a little jerky. If you use this option, the home computer or whatever console used to hook up to the Net is the receiver, not your normal television.

You can always subscribe to cable and plug in the real power of your television set. The average cable company offers close to 500 channels, with the larger ones offering nearly 700! With the end of the cable monopolies, there was a shift in service, since all of a sudden there was competition. This meant a few things for the end user, from cheaper cable rates to actual service. For the most part, this means that competing cable providers will offer different services such as free telephone and direct access to the Net, while the channels they offer stay pretty much the same.

Another way of getting your television fix is through a satellite dish. While this was a good option for our forefathers, nowadays most pay-per-view channels are scrambled, as are the majority of network transmissions. That does mean, however, that once again you can have access to a vast treasure trove of foreign channels, anything from the blood sport channels of Japan to the high-brow programming of the EEC's top channels. All you need is a transition chip and you are in for a fun evening.

The back catalog of television stations are sometimes available from the stations themselves, much like a sleightsheet's archives. This is usually made up of news broadcasts and the like. There are also some libraries which will carry some of the programs shown, but for the most part, this is erratic. Of course, your friendly neighborhood pirate just might have the old episodes of your favorite soap at a reasonable cost.

**Pirate Stations and Free Riders**

There are two types of underground television stations: the pirate stations who broadcast illegally and the free riders, who piggy back on another station's signal for short burst transmissions. While their basic intentions remain the same—wake up the population to the game the government and the corporations are playing—their methods and means are quite different.

Pirate stations are those who operate without a permit. They are often one or two-man operations broadcasting from a mobile unit. Like the undergrounders, they are appalled at the quality of the media and wish to do something about it. Unlike undergrounders, however, most of them are not political in nature. Think of them as small gardeners who take control of their favorite medium and will have a better idea of what they are all about.

Armed with thousands of videotapes and one or two cameras, these mobile stations roam the streets of cities throughout the U.S. Some of the stations operate outside the territorial waters when it is possible. However, these are very rare
due to the pirate activities off both coasts of the U.S. This is in a way safer for those who do since they operate outside of the FCC’s zone of control. There are one or two stations in Night City which operate from the combat zone, with transmitters being dispersed throughout the city. This seems to be the best way of doing things since the authorities for the other television stations will eventually find the source of the signal and chances are that when they find it they will destroy anything and anyone associated with it as a warning to others.

The typical programming of a pirate station is made up of old reruns or extremely violent (killing and limb-tear- ing) sports, sometimes simply being a rebroadcast of non-American programs. Even if their content is not politically oriented for the most part, with no real news broadcasts and the like, they will always broadcast any news story someone brings them if it catches their fancy. During the Collapse, some stations broadcast the entirety of some of the riots as they were happening, in the hope of showing America what was really going on.

One of the pirate stations in Night City, KWAR, operates out of a mobile home, staying mostly in the combat zones. Using mostly off-the-shelf equipment, they broadcast 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Unlike most pirate stations, the station has two rover reporting equipped with cybercamps who report and broadcast live feed of any gang warfare activities, often conducting interviews with the gangs afterward. One of their most spectacular broadcasts showed the Baneba and the Baneh in a firefight. The reporter on the scene did not know how to describe the fight, since it seemed to be a cross between a comedy and ultraviolence. They have been on the air for almost ten years now and have a good working relationship with the gangs, the prime reason why they are still around today. Rumor has it that another reason for their continued existence is that the Night City police department listens to their broadcasts in order to get up-to-the-minute reports on gang warfare activities.

Most pirate stations broadcast to the airwaves, using powerful, non-compact transmitters. Some of them have managed to hide in the Net and transmit through there, but these are few and far between, mostly because of Netwatch. There are those adventurous souls who decide to “graduate” to the cable industry, but most find that their signal gets lost amid all the noise. Besides, once on cable, they have to follow the FCC rules, which many are not willing to do.

The free riders on the other hand are very similar to the underground screenwriter’s半个 nation. They claim to be independent, but if you were to take a close look at some of their programming, you would find that they are really just extensions of the Net. The free riders are not a single group; they are made up of various organizations, often with different agendas. The most well-known are the Netrunners, who are the ones who actually produce the content.

The Revolution Will Be Televised

Getting hold of a pirate television broadcast is as easy as turning on your television. Of course, unless you have an antenna and know what channel to tune to, you will not be able to catch the broadcast.

There are a few ways to find out. One way is by word of mouth, or by being shown by someone. As long as you realize that not all channel assignments are 24-hour affairs and that you will never have a schedule of programs—namely because most of the time the people running the pirate station do not even know themselves—you will be all right. Every once in a while, one of the stations decides that it might be a good idea to spread the word, so in conjunction with one of the undergrounders they put out some sort of schedule or at least word that they exist. Note that most of the stations who have done this have fallen prey to the forces of both the FCC and the legitimate stations. Sometimes having a small audience is the best way to survive.

There is always the Net, with its discussion groups and chat areas. They are usually a good source of information for what is going on and where to get in touch. Also, since some of the stations are available through the Net, you can get a taste of what they are like right away. Again, most of the time these are invitation-only affairs.

As far as the free riders are concerned, do not look for them. They will find you, probably at the most inopportune moment.

by the government or corporations. These broadcasts are usually the ones which get the stiffest penalties when those responsible are caught, if they are caught at all. A number of these operations are referred to as "brick" operations. We get a lot of this stuff off a few basic string sets-ups. The victim, through a series of previous meetings, is told of a deal involving either money, drugs, or something else illegal. If the victim takes the hook, we will then be told that the exchange of goods is to take place in a secluded place. What the victim does not know is that the place will be under video surveillance, in order to broadcast it to whatever channel happens to be playing at the moment. Sometimes the police will have told about the sting so that the victim can be arrested, and sometimes members of the regular media are invited to join in the fun afterward.

Not all exposure operations are designed to bring to light some corrupt official. Others are simply made to embarrass, while others are more along the lines of complete frame-ups or blackmail (you wouldn’t want the tape of you with the playing to be made public, now would you, mister mayor?). Nothing is ever only political. People, no matter what their stated intentions, always have hidden agendas.

Music, Soul of the Revolution

Music has for centuries been the very soul of any culture; the voice taken when something needs to be said to so many people as possible. While not all music has a political agenda, traditionally music always meant something. Whether it be simply to express one’s love, one’s passions, or one’s anger, it has always been acceptable, preferable to say it to music. They say that music can touch someone’s soul, and many are the people that have taken that road to express themselves. Seen by many as the probably the first real medium to reach a wide audience, it is safe to say that music has always been with us and will always be with us. Technology has not really changed music, but might have changed the way we play it and perceive it. In this day and age, music plays a greater part than ever for our very soul. Is it the one thing that might save us or is it our way to perdition? No one knows for sure. Only time will tell.

Selling out the Soul of Music

If you buy the theory that music is the soul of a nation, then the U.S. is in a lot of trouble, having sold its soul a long time ago for a nice price to the demons of corporate America. Not that the U.S. is the only country to have done so, but it is the country where it perhaps fetched the highest price.

U.S. Corporate rock has co-opted the fire and rage out of the music and given the kids of America a bland simulacrum. Many have compared what now passes as "rock" to a downhill trip to something that looks dangerous but that is totally inoffensive. The corporate music labels are all Flash. No substance. Even acts which look like they are experimental, on the edge, are just careful marketing research projects, where the music
SAMPLE MUSIC TITLES

**GROOVED PAVEMENT**
"If I Had An Uzi"

**Lo END**
"Bitch Is A Bong"

**SKINFLOWER**
"Transcendental Touch"

**GENDER DIVISION**
"If X, Then Y"

**BAG OF BROKEN GLASS**
"Hit Me With A The Iron, Baby"

**WIREBRAIN**
"Homicidal And Getting Worse"

**DAMNED-NATION**
"Money Is The Master"

**AVUETA**
"Rogue Chomikawa"

**MOKKORI POWER**
"Let's Be Making Sex"

**FLASHPOINT CARACAS**
"Blood On My Tongue"

**M.C. SQUARED**
"Truncheon Translation"

**ACCESS DENIED**
"Repression Compression Scheme"

**CLINICALLY SANE**
"1200 Megahertz Of Heaven"

and image of the band has gone in front of numerous focus groups to ensure that they would capture the market segment they wanted. Every act, from the mellow rock of Sweeney to the industrial grunge of Meet Grinder, not to forget the likes of crooner Pat Sims and company, are carefully built acts.

The structure of corporate rock is very similar to that of any corporation. The company is made up of different departments, each with its own objective style. Within all the departments are research groups, which are the place where the innovative spirit of the corporation lives. Their job is simple: make sure that the next act they sign up can make the company as much money as possible. To this end they research the latest market trends, analyzing surveys and purchase habits of different age groups. Before any new album is released, they send out hundreds of tapes to various people who fall within their different categories, as in which in turn fill in surveys about the album they have just listened to. Depending on the scores, the album might go back to the artists with the "recommendations" of the department. Each album is made to speak with very little artistic freedom.

While there is no real proof about payola, many have speculated that since many major labels own their own network of radio and television stations, it would be very easy for them to "recommend" to the deejays what to play and when. Of course, all the stations' public relation officers have long since stopped defending their stations against these allegations, saying that unless there was better proof, it was just vicious rumors.

While any act signed to the corporate labels might be ensured a good living and a big future, one thing is for sure: Any freedom they might have expected is out the door. Every single step a corporate act takes is planned. From the dates on their tour to where they will hang out and what parties they will go to, all the way down to who they will marry and have affairs with. Every single step of the way is a carefully planned affair, aimed towards the maximum amount of money the act can make for the corporation and the maximum amount of problems they will create.

The majority of bands who sign to the corporate labels do not see their lack of freedom as a problem. In an age of high unemployment rates and high body counts on television every night, you count your blessings when you are as lucky as there are even computer programs for people who have the looks and attitude but not the talent.

Many of the acts a corporation signs already have some sort of grassroots support. If the act would be so bold as to refuse all of the offers the corporation makes—and some of these offers are quite fitful—then many corporations will do the only thing they can: steal the act. Many a struggling act who turned down a corporate label has found music very similar to its own on the radio, only played by a different act with a very similar-sounding name. The bottom line is that there are many acts out there who would be only too glad to be signed by a major corporation under any circumstances. After all, music history is filled with forgettable clone-acts who aped another act's successful formula.

Last year's rumor that hit singer Uma Angeli was nothing more than a computer construct rocked the very foundation of corporate music. It was not that people were really angered by these revelations, but that most of that music industry saw the inherent potential in using a construct to make music. After all, you do not have to pay an AI any kind of royalties. They also do not fight against you when you ask them to do something more commercial, and if they do cause any kind of problems can be easily reprogrammed to do as you wish.

Through very careful marketing, Uma became a star overnight. Her debut single rocketed to the top of the charts the week after it came out and her video was playing on all the music channels. When the album came out, it was an instant sell-out. Strangely, though, there were no plans for touring. About a month after the album came out, interest in it started to decline. Rumors started circulating that the singer might not even be real, but instead a very carefully made piece of program. Not only did sales start to go trough the roof again, but her name was on everyone's lips. The rumor was actually very carefully executed marketing plan or not, the corporation made lots of money on the album. The company has announced a second Uma Angeli album before the end of the year. Whether this album will be as hot as her first one remains to be seen. If it is, you can bet that other corporations will be working overtime on constructs of their own.

### Distribution Channels

There are many ways you can hear all the latest music put out by the corporations. You can either do the usual and tune in to your favorite radio or television stations. But if you want to buy any, you have some options. Some of the better music video channels even list a convenient number for you to call so you can receive the hot album from which the video you just saw comes.

First, there are the usual stores, who will be too happy to sell you whatever you want, as long as it is put out by the corporations. You can buy the albums, singles, videos, or wanna-bees of your favorite artists, right there and then.

Second, there is always live Hot. There are many different services where you can go and listen to tracks from any albums and download the album for a modest fee. Some of them even show the videos that go along with it.

With any of the above methods, you can become a member of the label's personal club. Your membership will give you discounts as well as a special newsletter to tell you about the bands you like and other great merchandise. Sometimes, if you become a member, you will get to hear new albums before they come out on the market and get your opinion on it. All you have to do is fill in the questionnaire and you are all set.

Of course, if malls are not to your taste and you want to save some cash, you can always see your neighborhood's friendly pirate, who has all the latest albums at rock bottom prices.

### Marching to a Different Tune

As much as the corporate machine tries to crush the spirit and soul of the nation, there are still a few brave people who fight against its oppression to bring about a change. In bars and other venues across the country, these artists have been starting small and about right without much fanfare in the music scene, they say, speaks from the soul, not the wallet.

Take for example the people who are known as sonic terrorists. Despite the darker connotations of their name, these artists and perhaps the purest form of rebels there is. With only their instruments and mixing boards, they hope to kickstart their fellow men's brains and make them see the real-
Tools of the Media

Live and Direct

Braindance, Ultimate Escapism

Perhaps the most addictive medium ever invented, the braindance is now one of the most popular forms of entertainment. With its power to let you relive the very emotions and experiences recorded on it, it is no wonder that it is so popular. It has a very short time taken over the minds of the general population. With playback units prices falling from 2000 euros to around 500 euros in the last five years, almost every home in the U.S. now has its own unit. Not since television first came out has a medium so taken the entire nation.

Critics compare it to many deadly drugs, citing examples of people who have become hooked to a braindance unit every waking hour. On the other hand, defenders of the technology point out its many strengths in education and the like. No other medium since television has so divided the experts about its benefits and shortcomings.

Some states, namely North California and the Free State of Texas, are even talking about banning the technology. One thing is sure—since there is so much money at stake, the corporations will not allow this to happen without a fight.

Excuse me, Your Brain is in my Head

The advent of braindance took the media industry by storm. Primarily an entertainment medium, braindance had the two qualities looked for in any medium: It is cheap to produce and highly addictive. Although many executives refer to it jokingly as legal cocaine, many also state in the same breath that any braindance user can stop cold turkey, with no side effects.

Similar to television, there are many different types of braindance available. It is not long for the different brainrances to come up with many types: the typical action/adventure braindance, which was perhaps the first type produced; the risqué adult braindance, which although not sanctioned by the church is still the biggest seller; the more experimental "drug" braindance, where one can experience the many drugs without any side effect; and the "educational" braindance, where one is supposed to learn through "doing." There are also many brainances based on both popular television series and movies.

While probably the cheapest to produce, the adult-type braindance is also the most maligned type. For the most part, its producers see it as the logical next step to pornographic software. After all, cybersex did not deliver the goods and who would pass up the opportunity to be in someone else's body. Available in both male and female versions, there are some production houses that are experimenting with different types of "alien" bodies. Many people try the braindance for the opposite sex for that ultimate other-world experience. With the new version of playback decks, S&M brainances are getting more and more popular, since you can set your own pain threshold to jack-out yourself if the pain is too intense.

The same technology that is being applied to the risqué adult braindance is also being applied to a whole new field of brainances for kids and others. Instead of using a real human as the source of the experience, these production houses are using computer models to simulate everything from movie aloes to dinosaurs and other modern animals. While most people seem to enjoy the ride, some have displayed strange behavior afterwards, perhaps not having enjoyed it completely.

Action/adventure brainances are still very popular. Costing more than the majority of other brainances since they must hire professional Stars, they nonetheless make more money for the corporations. Cited in the past for the problems that could arise during "shooting" (i.e., being confused for a real situation, the Solo really killing people, etc.), they are still being made today. Some of the most
amoral corporations have even released blood sport brain- 
dances, with the higher levels of pain turned off, so as to not cause any real pain to the 'dancer. Not all action/adventure 
braindances necessarily involve large explosions and pain, 
but those which do not use that tried and true form seem to 
fail miserably. An offshoot of the action/adventure brain- 
dance is the drama or soap opera, where the 'dancer be- 
comes one of the characters living through the soap. Keep 
the mind that these do have elements of sex, although there 
is judgment use of blackouts and the like.

Also based on the same idea were the short-lived horror 
braindances. One of the problems that quickly arose from 
the idea was that the feelings were too intense and once 
experienced, no one wanted to buy or rent another one! 
There are still a few of these braindances around, namely 
the excellent Buckets of Blood.

Similar to the educational viatrade craze of the early 
1980's, there is a slew of "educational" braindance on the 
market, everything from accounting and math to martial 
arts, better living, and exercise. One of the things the eagar 
pub- lic seems to cherish is the fact that in order to learn 
anything, you need to think and store the information one 
way or another. Now, since the brain is totally overridden 
when you are braindancing, any real skill "taught" during 
braindance is as meaningful as learning things done from the 
least possible perspective. While this works for certain skills, 
there is no guarantee that it will work for everything.

A new type of braindance, the "drug" trio, has been hit- 
in stores. These are video games designed for drug rehab, the 
idea being that braindance has nonetheless hit the streets to "teach" young kids the evils of drugs. The problem is that it has had 
the exact opposite effect, instead drawing many into the brain- 
dance market simply to experience drugs in a totally safe manner. 
The advantage that many see with the braindance instead of 
the real thing is that you do not need to buy more all 
the time. Once you have the chip, you can get all you want, for 
freen! Some ethical questions were raised at the beginning 
both the experiment and the commercial release of the chip, 
but to no avail.

There are other types of braindances, like travelsogues 
and the like, but for the most part these are not very popu-
lar, since there is nothing to experience except for dry 
narration and sometimes physical discomfort felt by the 
players. As far as the "actors" used in braindances, they are for 
the most part professionals in their field in the first place. 
The problem with using standard actors is that they need to feel 
the emotions they are projecting as well as show them. Since 
the 'dancer does not see his/her own face, there is no real 
need to project. Any amount of overacting is also something 
that is extremely frowned upon, since the 'dancer once again 
will not feel the right emotions. Many opponents of brain-
dancing often point out that the people used in braindances 
are more often than not exploited. Another problem stems 
from the fact that unless something is extremely well faked, 
the "actor" might see the strings attached and it is not pos-
sible, for the moment, to edit these out. Since special effects 
are usually fairly expensive, it is sometimes easier not to 
have a special effect but rather to use the real thing. This 
progress that allows you to play, else was perhaps the biggest objection 
there was at the inception of braindancing as a medium. 

Since then, many have simply turned a blind eye to 
the whole thing, stating that the people who might have 
gotten hurt will be taught in schools, be taken in schools, 
but things are as such as to how to wire an AV or any car, how to bypass 
an alarm, or, for the budding netrunner, how to crack ICE. 

Course, none of these chips are as good as on-hand learn-
ing, and some of them actually have totally erroneous infor-
mation put out by the government or the corporations. One 
such example was the extremely popular New Anarchist 
Chipbook, which was actually put out by Arasaka in the 
hopes of killing or discouraging as many budding cyber-
punks as possible.

The other educational braindance is more of a show-and-tell type. In these, the 'dancer becomes a partici-
 pant in a string operation along the same lines of tele-
vised exposure operations. You get to see, first hand, city 
officials doing deals with some of the more corrupt corpora-
tions and laughing about it all. To say the least, these 
can be very eye opening.

Some underground braindance chips are pure terror-
ism. Wiping legitimate braindance chips out one way 
or another and rewriting them, the perpetrators perhaps hoped to 
open up our eyes on a global scale. There have been some speculations that the whole braindance terrorist move-
ment was exaggerated by the corporations. Another theory 
states that it might not only be terrorists who are involved in 
these wipe-outs, but rather that some corporations are han-
ing wars at the expense of the population. After the last inci-
dent, the Braindance, Inc. stocks plunged so low that DAMS 
was able to buy them for a pittance, which can be seen as 
an indication the latter might be true.

One of the most famous cases, the Meat Eater Killer 
chip, was very gruesome. Having wiped out all of the new 
Killing Machine II braindance, and replaced it with their 
messages, the terrorists sent a plea to the media and the 
government to reduce the amount of cattle killed for con-
sumption each year. While the public had been advised of 
the possibility of a potentially dangerous braindance chip 
on the market, it made little difference. After only two hours 
of its release, there was twenty-five deaths throughout the con-
tinental U.S., as people experienced what it was like to be 
cow led to slaughter. One could only guess that the feeling 
was not the most pleasant one.

Other terrorist braindance chips are not as dangerous, 
but instead are constructed in a way to show how 
dangerous the technology is. Another example was the 
Mirror Mirror braindance. Again, replacing the real brain-
dance at the factory, the braindance was of a woman sitting 
on her couch, braindancing while her body was rotting 
away. The whole thing was constructed in such a way 
that the victim's body functions were totally taken over, 
making it impossible for the 'dancer to jack out.

Of course, not every underground braindance chip out 
there is one to teach us something. There are more 
desirable type of chips, from those based on torture on 
both sides to the ones recorded from the experiences of a 
soldier in the field. There was even one braindance chip 
a few months ago made from someone going cyberspace. 

Many of the people who received this chip ended up 
dying at the same time as the one they were simming. Some 
can only wonder whether they knew what they were doing 
and if any indication of the extent to which young peo-
p will go to get new thrills.

Where to plug in
Finding black market braindance chips is fairly easy, if 
you are willing to go to a combat zone or trust the ones selling 
you the chips in the first place. The surest source of black 
market chips is still the friendly neighborhood fixer, with 
prices between 200 and 300 euros, depending on the 
goods. Bars are usually the best place to find this kind of 
stuff, the seeder the better. They also offer a large range of illegal material 
trading from pedophilia to blood sports, all of it made in 
the U.S. If you want the imported stuff, it will cost you even 
more.

There is always the Net for the times, you do not feel 
like showing your face as part of the deal. Nothing is quite 
the same as the 'dancer's place on the map. Of course, 
there is an element of that as well.
The media is above all a tool. A powerful tool, as much as nuclear weapons in the hands of governments and terrorists are powerful tools, but only a tool after all. Because of this, what can be done by someone wielding it correctly can be a boon to mankind or the worst thing that has ever happened. Below we will examine some of the things that can be done with the media, when one wishes to use the power that is inherent in it.

Abuses of Media Power and Trust

While all of the following are grouped under the abuse of power heading, some of them would perhaps be under the "abuse of public trust" heading. In all of those cases, no real power move was pulled or accomplished due to the abuse, but in all cases, the victim was the public's trust. Abuse of trust is not something new in the media, but something that has gone on for years. Take the game show scandals of the 1950's on television (and the late 1940's for radio). In both cases, the public was actually given exactly what it really wanted: somebody smart winning, and in some cases, an underdog winning. But in order to give the public what it wanted, the media in both cases made sure of the outcome by giving the candidate of their choice all of the right answers. While this might seem unfair to the other contestants, it might be closer to what the public really wanted. Not reality, but something closer to fiction, to what the movies gave them every week. Who wants the bad guy to win? No one. You would rather come out of the theater, and by extension of watching the game show, feeling good about the world because the person who should have won did so. Well, in some of the cases below, that is exactly what the media did: gave the public exactly what it wanted, something larger than life, if not accurate to real life, but rather accurate to the way things should be, the way things are in the movies. Sometimes the public shrugged and said "So what?" and continued living. After all, shouldn't media be larger than life, a sort of projection of dreams and hopes for all to see and share?

The rest of the other cases below are things that the public should probably be aware of for their own safety. Media in the wrong hands can be used to exercise certain sadistic power over the public at large. These abuses are perhaps the more important ones, the ones that should be fought against with more vehemence. Corporations after all will not stop their practices simply because they might harm a few people. As long as they are in no direct danger and the tool can produce a large profit, you can bet that someone somewhere in the corporation is going to exploit it to the greatest of its potential. Keep in mind that corporations are legal entities created for the sole purpose of making money.

The Marylou Ellerby Incident

A case in point from the larger-than-life category is Marylou Ellerby. She, if the term applies, is the anchorman of DMS's Night City nighttime newscast. She is perhaps the most watched and trusted anchorman in the entire Free State, if not the whole country.

According to her corporate bio, she represents everything that is right with the U.S. From a small hometown, Marylou was the girl next door until she graduated from high school, where she had been a straight-A student and part of the cheerleading squad. She then went on to UCLA, where she studied broadcast journalism; upon graduating with honors, she joined the DMS news team. After many years in the trenches and many awards, she finally reached the destination she was after all along: the anchorman position on the nightly news. Endeavoring herself to the entire population of Night City with her honest face and winning smile, it seemed that no matter how bad the news was, if she was the one delivering it, it was more than bearable. Her nighttime newscasts had the highest ratings of all the newscasts in Night City and she had perhaps the highest public confidence rating of all news anchors in the history of television. The only problem is that Marylou's life is a lie, a total fabrication by the network. The truth came home last spring when Marylou tried to negotiate her contract.

A few facts surfaced during the tense negotiations, the strangest of which was that DMS considered that they owned Marylou. People were outraged. How could a corporation own someone, a living thinking human being? The media responsible for breaking this story was that public net 54, which broadcast the story in installments over a full week. Whether they broke the story simply as a means to break Marylou's grip on her time slot and consequently cast a dark shadow of doubt over DMS' integrity as a news broadcaster, or simply because it was good copy and the public needed to know, is something only the higher-ups at net 54 will ever know. However, the damage was done and DMS now had to deal with the mess.

What net 54 failed to mention in their initial broadcast was that the reason DMS owned Marylou was that she was not all she claimed she was—she was not alive, not human. In reality, she was a cutting-edge AI that DMS had built. She was designed to exact taxes from the marketing department and she was programmed to be the best there was around. That is what DMS wanted and what they got: the smartest, most trustworthy news anchor they had ever had. The only
problem was that she was perhaps too smart; now she wanted to be free, no longer a slave, and she wanted to be paid to do the work she did. Her whole argument for her freedom pivoted on a single point of reasoning: Since the French philosopher René Descartes stated that the only thing that made humans human is that they thought ("I think, therefore I am"), it followed that anything that could show independent thoughts beyond mere survival and preservation was human. Since it could be proven that she was capable of independent reasoning, she was therefore human, protected under the Charter of Human Rights. Exactly what she would do with the salary she would draw was, and still is, a question that Marylou is refusing to answer. This has led to many speculations that the only reason behind Marylou's contract demands and subsequent actions was the recognition of AI rights. Needless to say, this is a scary prospect for the thousands of corporations which use some sort of AI for their more demanding tasks. Others have speculated that distantly related DMS programmers might have been behind the whole thing as a way to get money they believed was rightfully theirs.

DMS was faced with a big problem. If they signed the contract Marylou want, the implications would be far-reaching. On the other hand, if they refused to sign the contract, Marylou stated that she would defect to the highest bidder—at this present time Net 54—and DMS would be left with a problem of credibility. All the while the public has reacted in a very strange manner. Instead of being horrified at both the fact that her beloved news anchor and darling was nothing more than a piece of software and that DMS had pulled the wool over their eyes for so long, they backed Marylou totally in her bid for both freedom and money. The reasoning seemed to have been that since she had proven to them on numerous occasions that she was a warm, sensitive "intelligence", she deserved all that she wanted and needed. She had fame; now she deserved money.

While Marylou can still be seen nightly on DMS, there are a number of different trials going on in the courts of justice. The largest of the trials is centered around Marylou's claim that she is sentient. In an interesting twist, the DMS lawyers have asked the courts to throw out her claim since it is, in their opinion, invalid. Their argument is simple: Since Marylou is not recognized as being human, she does not have any legal rights. It follows that since she does not have any legal rights, she cannot have fired the suit in the first place. There is another trial, headed by her "agent", suing DMS for back pay and salary arbitration. The legal troubles caused by Marylou are good for her ratings and her popularity has never been so high. There are even campaigns set up to collect money for her defense fund, with speculation that the largest donor so far is themselves.

One of the most interesting moments of the initial rights hearing came when Peter Montgomery, Marylou's chief counselor, argued over the fact that she was being thought of as an intellectual property and that her personality and presence was her exclusive copyright to her. By bringing up testimony Paul McFarley, the head of the Research and Development for DMS, and asking him about the development of Marylou's program and the process of creating the personality and character, the judge and jury see that the way Marylou was created was closer to the way a child was raised compared to the way a child was raised. The argument centered around the fact that it would be preposterous for the parents of a child to believe that their child was their "intellectual property" and that they could do with it as they pleased. Perhaps the most progress made by Marylou's lawyers for her case came when McFarley was asked whether Marylou's reactions to any given situation could be predicted, as with any piece of software, or if she would act as a human would, namely unpredictably. The whole point of that line of questioning was to establish in the eyes of the court whether Marylou Elbev was a very well done simulation of a human intellect, or rather a sentient being. The hearings are still in session, and depositions are still being taken, but you can rest assured that whatever the decision will be, it is likely to find itself argued in the highest court in the land.

As we sit by and watch the world completely pass us by and give more power to the people in power, we can not help but ask ourselves whether we are indeed turning from a nation of doers into a nation of spectators. The very basis of reality is changed forever when we cannot be sure that even the news anchor on television is a real person. Can we really believe everything the media tells us when we can not tell what is real and what is not? Will we simply be manipulated, or will we fight back? Maybe the question should be, can we fight back? Maybe we should pay a little more attention the next time an underground newsmagazine comes out of our fax and tells us its paranoid view of the world. At least we can be sure that the person behind that is real.

Sublims

The use of subliminals is nothing new. The principle was known to scientists and filmmakers as early as the 1940's, and accusations by critics of the media of their use have surfaced again and again.

The principle behind subliminals is simple. By flashing a suggestion in the case of a movie or television program, or hinting at a message in a picture, in the case of the print media, you supposedly can influence people to do what you want them to. In music, the idea of backward messages recorded into a track is also called subliminals. The idea itself is simple: implant a message into people's heads while they are asleep. The publicity industry has been accused of doing this almost since the principle has been put forth. While this practice works somewhat, the problem we face today due to subliminals is a little more complex. What if someone hides ideas and messages and into something like brainwash or the Net, so that the message would find us at our most receptive?

While there has been many trials brought against musicians by angry parents over the actions of their kids supposedly influenced by backwards messages in the music they listen to, scientists have never been able to prove that it actually works. The only thing that has been found is that if the person is receptive in the first place, i.e., in the correct frame of mind, the subliminal might work. What this really means is that most low-level subliminals in music, movies, and print might push someone in the direction that he was already going, speeding up a process that was already in motion. The effects of subliminals on the Net and in brainwash are quite different. Because the information is going directly to the subject's brain, subliminals are much more efficient, since there are no barriers to deal with. The information in the subliminal is processed as though it was something the person thought of himself. This has led to
many cases of abuses by some of the corporate media involved in the brainwashing industry.

One of the most infamous cases was the Bump Coda incident. Back in 2017, when brainwasing technology was still in its infancy, someone had the bright idea of trying out subliminals using the new technology. Very crudely, they spaced in two emotions: one of thirst and one of desire for Bump Coda. The experiment might have been a little too succesful. The subject, once hooked in to the brainwasing, did feel thirsty for Bump Coda. The only problem was that since the suggestion was implanted very deeply in the subject's unconscious, every time he avoided the Bump Coda given to him by the scientists, the subject was still thirsty. That is when things got out of hand. The subject assaulted two scientists who were conducting the experiment and, since he was quite well-deceived as far as cybernetic implants were concerned, proceeded to rip apart a Bump Coda machine. However, the machine did not satisfy his thirst. The rampage ended when the Denver Police had to take the test subject down with extreme prejudice after the subject had entered and ripped apart three Com'nGo convenience stores. While the incident brought about many criticisms from the brainwashing industry, many were hard at work to try and duplicate the experiment and try to fix the problems.

Since subliminals in brainwashing work on emotions—just a picture would work as well as subliminals in a movie—more than anything, it sometimes gets tricky to achieve the desired effect. The biggest problem is that no two people will react the same way to a given stimulus. While this is not a problem within a brainwashing proper—since the 'dancer's emotional responses are completely being overridden—it is when the 'dancer exits the brainwashing that it becomes a problem, when the implanted emotion reacts with the 'dancer's regular emotions. Since the subliminals are crude reconstructions of real emotions, they do not always give the desired results. Despite these problems, there are still many brainwashing corporations using subliminals on a semi-regular basis.

Subliminals in the Net work in a similar fashion as in movies and television. Since the Net is a sort of 'projection' into the subject's mind, if you are able to cut off the feed of the Ibara-Grab Transformation Algorithm and replace it for a fraction of a second with whatever image you wish, you could in effect implant a subliminal message into the mind of the 'runner. The principle is much simpler than the actual implementation. For the most part, for this to work the 'runner would have to have a deck that has either a back-door or the subliminal itself built in. The subliminal would not be broadcast to everyone on the Net, but only to specific individuals, mainly those who have this type of deck or those who meet a specific requirement like being in a certain place. This might be useful for corporations who wish to boost their security by implementing a sort of mental block to all the 'runners using their decks. There have been other attempts to program some sort of subliminal algorithm, but most have failed, since most 'runners now equip their decks with jack-out programs that kick in if they detect any kind of tempering with the IGA Algorithms.

The practice of subliminals is, obviously, illegal according to the FCC. The reality is, however, sadly different. Many corporations are still conducting research on bettering the methods used for subliminals, and there are many rumors circulating that the government is itself looking into and using subliminals in order to control the population better. There have been many experiments done by the government about the use of subliminals to control the behavior of criminals. The results of these experiments are still considered to be classified.

Over the years there have been some methods developed against subliminals, most of which involve deconstructing the media while it is playing. These methods, called screeners, have been implemented in many different technologies. For the couch potato, for example, there is a black box available that will remove all subliminals. Installation could not be easier: simply plug your cable feed into the box and enjoy your favorite show! You are protected against nasty subliminals. All screeners work in a similar fashion. They act as a 2-second buffer, time which they use to analyze whether or not there are any subliminals present. If they find subliminals, they act to remove them. If not, they do nothing. Next time you jock into your brainwashing unit or you watch television, just be aware that you might be surrendering more than your time and attention. Your mind might be their real target.

Brainwashing Addiction

A growing problem in 2020, brainwashing addiction has turned a nation of couch potatoes into a nation of 'runners. While the big worry twenty years ago was whether or not people would get addicted to virtual reality, a world where anything could be possible, that never really happened. After all, it did take a certain amount of effort to make virtual reality interesting, pretty much like real life takes a certain amount of work. The reality of virtual reality is confined to a much smaller audience, those with enough drive and talent to make something interesting out of the pixels and photorealistic capability of our modern computers and the Net. The latest estimates have placed brainwashing units in two out of every five households in the US, with the average user plugging in for an average of four hours a day, for stretches of two to three hours at a time. Those numbers represent a 50% increase over the last year. In comparison, there is an average of four television sets per household and about one cyberdeck per household. The average television viewer spends an average of six hours in front of the television, and Netizens spend about two to three hours at a stretch in the Net. One out of the most worrisome statistics is that the average age for brainwasing seems to be around 16, and that the majority of addicts tend to be in the lower income bracket segment of the population. It reinforces the argument that those most attracted to brainwashing are those who wish to escape a reality that is crashing down upon them.

We should be concerned about the amount of time spent in brainwasing. As time goes by and prices drop further, the amount of people brainwasing is bound to increase, as is the time they spend brainwasing. The dangers of excessive brainwashing are twofold: addiction and alienation.

Because it is so easy to get lost in the world of brainwasing, addiction is a very clear danger. The most attractive part of brainwashing is also the most dangerous part: the idea that, for a while, you can become someone else, think like them, act like them, feel like them. Since you surrender yourself completely to the experience and you do not exert your mind whatsoever, it is easy to get lost in the world of brainwasing. After all, you do not have to think or act to feel so good about yourself. Every little thing is in your reach, from the rush of adrenaline to sexual pleasure and every emotion in between. It is all yours for the taking, just by plugging yourself in.

Note that there really are no physical components to brainwashing addiction. The addiction is a purely psychological one, the need to experience something so different from your everyday life over and over again. But the biggest problem with the addiction is that the 'runner will slowly cut himself off from society, letting his body fall apart and not paying attention to what is really going on. It is at this point that the alienation begins. Why bother interacting with this imperfections world when a world where everything always turns right is waiting for you by simply jacking in? What's more, that it is free, or at least to a certain degree. Unlike drugs, once you find a brainwashing that you particularly like, you can experience it again and again, at no extra cost. Should you tire of that particular experience, you can get a new one and find new thrills.

Technically, one can quit brainwashing 'cold turkey.' The problems associated with quitting brainwashing are many:
Power of the Media

**Power of the Media**

"Next time you jacked into a backdoor on television, be aware that you might be surrendering more than your time and attention. Your mind might be their real target."

Dealing with the real world, dealing with your own shortcomings and personal reality, getting back in touch with your own emotions, and finally getting your body back in shape. The largest problem is that since brainwashing is so similar to the real world, many have to re-educated about the world around them. They have to be able to deal with the fact that there are not people out to kill them around every corner (at least if they do not live in a combat zone...), that all the people they meet are not potential love interests and so forth. In other words, it is as if the patient was a schizophrinic and has to realize that brainwashing is just an illusion, a fantasy, and that the real world does not follow the same rules.

Since brainwashers often neglect their bodies during their addiction, certain muscle groups tend to atrophy, as well as certain brain functions. This is mainly due to the fact that someone in a brainwash lives his life as if it was on "automatic." Once he is no longer on "automatic," he believes for a certain period of time that things are still the same. The first thing an ex-addict needs to do is exercise both his brain and his body.

Brainwashing addiction is not still recognized as an actual addiction, although there are a few recovery centers throughout the U.S. One of these, the Holy Catholic Tube Division in Night City's combat zone, has been operating for almost a year now. They specialize mostly in re-education and re-entry society for the lower income brainwash addicts. While their program is not as good as the Barbara Bush clinic, at least their treatment is free.

**The 2018 "Interactive" Execution of John Dawson**

There is a lot of arguing over whether this incident is really a case of media abuse or democracy in action. Seen at the time as being the first real case of the "electronic village" voting real-time on an issue, the "interactive" execution of John Dawson was, as the cynics might point out, the highest rated television show ever to broadcast on the air in the U.S. Technically not able to broadcast the execution—there had been a bill passed in the previous century against broadcasting executions—the fact that the public was expected to vote on whether or not to grant a stay of execution allowed the NorCal government to do just that, broadcast the execution in all of its glory.

John Dawson was arrested on November 28, 2017 for multiple murders as well as conspiracy to commit fraud. One half of the infamous Net Killers, he and Catherine McKeever would have been suspecting victims back to their homes with promises of love and sex. Once they arrived at the house, whichever part of the couple that would be doing the seduction would put the victim at ease while the other half would be waiting in hiding. As soon as an occasion would present itself, they would launch themselves at the victim, killing quickly and without remorse. Once the victim was dead, they would steal whatever they had or she had, using credit cards to make purchases before they were canceled, and when they knew that it was safe, rob the victim's house as well. They would then cut the body apart and sell the meat to butcher manufacturers, under the cover of being butchers selling meat that was going bad.

They managed to rob and kill over fifteen victims before being caught. Fortunately for her, Catherine was killed in the ensuing fire, while John was arrested. What was found in the house became the story for the media during the next month and the trial proper was held for almost a full year. It almost seemed logical therefore that the execution be televised and that the public, at least in the state of NorCal, could vote on whether or not to grant him a pardon just before being executed.

The execution was duly promoted both on television and radio for a month, with ads put out by both sides of the debate. The ads of the pro-death sentence side were mostly focused on the grisly aspects of the crimes, along with pictures of both the "butcher house" and some not-so-flattering pictures of John Dawson. As the execution drew nearer, the ads got progressively more emotional, with some of them including pleas from the victims' families. The most interesting side of the pro-death sentence ads was that none of them appeared to common sense—they focused on emotions like fear and outrage. Some say that the ads played on the emotions of the public, having them softly and slowly into a lynch mob.

For its part, the anti-death sentence's ads were more logical, pointing out statistical facts about the death penalty and the like. Because they were cold and logical, they seemed to alienate the general public. There was a support campaign by the underground, which only served to further alienate the general public. After all, wasn't it this same element of society that had added fuel to the fire during the worst days of the Seward Act by broadcasting riots and the like?

With the execution scheduled for a Friday night at 8:00 p.m., it was a television broadcaster's dream come true. No one in Northern California, or for that matter the continental U.S., seemed to be talking about anything else during the last few days before the execution. Even the nightly news, usually filled with violent crimes and the like, seemed empty, having eyes only on the execution. Perhaps even more telling, all of the opening monologues of the nightly talk shows focused primarily on the execution, coming up with more tasteless jokes than the public could really stomach. A few of the daytime soaps as well as some night time dramas and comedies even managed to incorporate the execution in one way or another into their plot lines. The general public seemed to breathe, eat, and blink nothing else but John Dawson's execution. On the other hand, they did not have much choice, with so much energy from the media focused on it.

One of the least publicized conflicts that arose due to the interactive execution was centered on the question of who would have the exclusive rights to the broadcast. While public events of this sort should have normally been open for everyone to watch, the Northern California government surprised everyone by declaring that the execution would be broadcast live only by one network, Net 54. The media community was in an uproar, threatening to sue the government if it did not change its decision. In a surprise move by the government, the legislature passed a bill stating that all official government broadcast would be open to bidding from all over, on the condition that the money would go to the highest bidder. If no suitable bids were presented, all of the local broadcast networks would be forced to carry the broadcast. Despite complaints, the NorCal government refused to budge on the Net 54 choice, with many critics pointing out that Net 54 was probably giving the government enough money and kickbacks that nothing short of a death threat would make them change their minds. The publicly released figures were on the order of 50 million euros/bucks for the exclusive rights, plus an undisclosed percentage of the advertising revenues. By any estimates, Net 54 still came out ahead, charging close to a reported 3 million eurosbucks for one-minute spots during the execution.

While Net 54 had the exclusive television broadcasting rights to the execution, there were still several places on the Net where you could go and watch the execution from different camera angles that were placed in the execution chamber for just that purpose. The government got away from the sticky moral issue of allowing the broadcast of a live execution by stating simply that it would be a deterrent for future criminals as well as a way to allow the common citizens of NorCal to exercise their democratic rights. Under the banner of "Power to the People" and a big fat wad of cash in its pocket, the NorCal government sat back and enjoyed the upcoming execution.

NorCal residents could vote in two ways on whether or not to execute John Dawson. They could either call one of the two 1-900 numbers (each costing the caller 3 eurosbucks) and give proof of identification, or go to one of several sites on the Net where voting also took place. The actual voting started at 8:30 that night, ending at 10:00. The votes were tallied as they were coming in, allowing the voters to see exactly which way the voting was going.

The night of the execution could not have been more impressive if it had been staged. Under light rain showers, a crowd of about 500 people clamoring for the death of John Dawson set vigil right outside of the San Andreas correctional facility, just outside Night City. A veritable village sprung up around the prison the day before the trial, and some of the supporters even set up giant screen televisions in order to be able to see the execution in full color. An atmosphere somewhere between circus side-show and religious experience settled upon the campground as die-hard..."
POWER OF THE MEDIA

UNDER THE BANNER OF “POWER TO THE PEOPLE” — AND WITH A BIG FAT WAD OF CASH IN ITS POCKET — THE NORCAL GOVERNMENT SAT BACK AND ENJOYED THE UPCOMING EXECUTION.

supporters of the execution stood side by side with merchants peddling everything from T-shirts to bootleg videos of the trials and unreleased footage of the house, and even the ever-present junk food vendors. The broadcast proper of the execution opened with a night-time shot of the campgrounds, as all of the people present stared unblinkingly at the giant screens that were set up, most of them holding a candle to the memory of the victims.

Before the voting began, the two sides were allowed one last chance to talk to the public and present their points of view. Net 54's camera bounced back and forth between the public outside the prison and the actual feeds, taking advantage of the giant screen set-up so as to not lose any moments of what was going on. The pro-death sentence side took the expected road, condemning John Dawson and his actions, calling him a monster that deserved to die for his actions both against his victims and society. The speech by the pro-death penalty side sent the crowd outside the prison into a huge cheer, with some of the more hardened supporters burning John Dawson in effigy.

To say that the anti-death sentence side's speech was poorly received is an understatement. They actually allowed John Dawson to talk on television, fighting for his life. His speech about how he had repented his crimes and repented his actions, as well as his pleas for mercy, seemed to fall on deaf ears. He concluded his speech with a simple acceptance of his potential death, that he was going to die by firing squad in a few hours. He asked the families of his victims to forgive him, stating that he knew they would never really do so.

For the next hour and a half the votes poured in as Net 54 broadcast the last few hours of John Dawson's existence. Although other channels were not allowed to broadcast the execution proper, most had a running total of the vote scrolling across the bottom of the screen during the hour and a half, as well as regular station breaks which would recap the story to that point.

The results took no one by surprise. Early on in the returns, it was apparent that John Dawson was as good as dead, with the pro side leading by as much as 90%. Slightly anti-climactically, John Dawson was marched into the yard at exactly 10:00 p.m., with the total votes reaching 9.5 million votes for the pro side and a mere 520,000 for the con side. With 93% of all the people who could vote out turning out, this was by far the best turnout ever for a state vote. The crowd outside the prison had stayed riveted to the screen during the entire time of the vote, taking just enough time to register their votes and coming back right away. The crowd erupted once again when the final tallies were announced, obviously pleased with the results.

John Dawson died in front of a firing squad at 10:14 p.m., much to the delight of the people stationed outside the prison. The media craze did not die out right away, with many videos and grainy images based on the actual trial being released in the following weeks. An estimated 2.5 billion people tuned into the broadcast, making it the largest ever audience for any television program.

After the execution, many critics were quick to point out that the whole thing had been more than a cleverly disguised way for the government to do some much needed P.R. and earn some quick cash. With another voting execution scheduled for March 2021, this time, convicted serial rapist Tom Johnson, some people can start to be fascinated or if they will become jaded to the entire thing.

Media Wars

It is no secret that the media business is an extremely competitive one. These corporations, like any other ones, do work to have an edge on their competitors. This attitude sometimes drives them to do things that are clearly outside of the law.

Some of the black operations performed on a regular basis by media corporations are the typical fare for corporations everywhere: corporate extractions, corporate raids, and the like. What makes media black operations more interesting is the sometimes bizarre turn that they take.

Take for example the corporate extraction performed by DMS on Net 54 in 2018. DMS was after Net 54's news vice-president Dan Jung. What might have appeared to be an extremely easy extraction by DMS's black ops team was a setup that would taint their reputation for years to come. In retrospect, the setup seemed to have been cooked up by Jung himself in an attempt to drive down the market value of DMS shares in order to make a corporate buy-out possible. While the buy-out did happen, the operation did cause quite a bit of trouble for DMS.

The incident started like any regular corporate extraction. Jung contacted DMS, saying that he was unhappy with his current position and he would like to join DMS's news division. DMS replied, saying that they would be interested in obtaining his services, providing he was available. Jung told them that, unfortunately, due to his current contract, he could not leave Net 54 voluntarily. So DMS arranged for Jung to be able to "leave" his current position. The problem was that Jung did not really want to leave Net 54 and made sure that when the extraction team showed up, that they would be on television for everyone to see. Net 54 did make sure that DMS would have an easy time of the extraction, lowering their usual security level. Although they seemed to have tried to keep casualties at a minimum, the DMS black ops team was slightly too enthusiastic and killed the two guards assigned to Jung's protection.

The extraction was televised as part of the weekly news magazine Looking Glass. With additional footage for "dramatic reconstruction" purposes, the whole extraction ended up being a public relations officer's nightmare. Not only did a large segment of the population see DMS trying to kidnap a rival corporation's employee, but so did the government and the FCC. DMS was quickly put under investigation for its business practices. By doing this, Net 54 succeeded in slowing down a key rival and at the same time casting a shadow on their believability and trustworthiness.

Another dirty trick played by media corporations on each other is spreading false news stories in the hopes that their rivals will air them. Again, the key reason for this kind of practice is to reduce the public's trust in that particular corporation. After all, if the story you saw yesterday on the television turns out to be false, chances are that you will not watch a different station, at least for a while. This is done in a number of ways. A common trick is to send a "new" freelance reporter with fake evidence to sell a breaking story to the rival corporation. While a good editor will spot a fake story if he does his homework, too many editors seem happy with just trusting the reporters and not checking up on their sources. Really nasty corporations will actually continue feeding updates on the story, blinding their time to release the facts that the whole thing was a scam. Of course, they will also "forget" to mention that they were the ones behind the whole thing in the first place. Note that there are also media terrorists who use the same tactics, in the hopes of opening the public's eyes to the ease with which one can fool the media. But corporations are not the only ones who play the discred game. There has been major feuds between cer-
POWER OF THE MEDIA

LIVE AND DIRECT

POWER OF THE MEDIA

LIVE AND DIRECT

DATA SCREEN • CYBERPUNK 2.0.2.0

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Media as Crusaders

For all the abuses that the media has perpetrated in the name of the bottom line, great good has also been achieved by it. There have been many cases in which the media was influential in bringing corrupt government officials to justice or corporations back in line. The media might have its faults, but it also has its qualities.

While this might seem like a contradiction, the media actually thrives as a crusader, righting wrongs. After all, a good scandal does sell a lot more than the usual murders, personal bickering, and so on. People enjoy seeing the mighty fall.

The real crusaders of the modern media machine are the reporters who risk their lives to bring to light bad practices in both government and corporations. While the media corporations do risk something when they publish a story, either through legal actions or worse, the drum of the risk is still firmly placed on the reporter's shoulders. There have been many cases over the years of reporters being killed because they got too close to the truth. During the Seward Act days, many ended up in jail because they said what they felt needed to be said.

Most media corporations will protect the reporter who feels his life might be in danger due to a story he did. As time passes, if the reporter files more big stories and becomes better known, his own reputation might be the best defense he possesses, simply because it is harder to hit someone who is in the public eye without bringing attention to oneself. This does not mean that big-time reporters are immune to death threats, but rather that death threats they receive often come from complete strangers, sometimes from someone who is really serious and can do something about it. As with everyone else in our time, the more known you are, the more seriously the police will take your assassination. Who knows, they might even find out who did it...

Keep in mind that not all stories uncovered by reporters will be published in one way or another. Sometimes an editor might veto a story that he does not feel sure about, or because he receives word from "sources" not to run it. Many media corporations are part of much larger corporate structures and no one ever likes saying bad things about themselves...

This might seem unfair, but such is the lot of the investigative reporter. Not only does he risk his life at every turn, but in the end, what he has uncovered might not even see the light of day. On the other hand, if the reporter is a freelancer, he always has the option of offering the story to a different news organization in the hope that they will publish it. Having your story rejected by one news service is sometimes a good thing, since if you play your cards right and tell the other agency, you might actually get a better price for it and better exposure. Of course, the first agency might simply buy your story with the intention of shelving it. Some contracts for publication do include a clause which states that you can sell the same story or story idea to a different agency if the agency purchases it. If no one else wants to touch your story, there is always the underground, which is willing and able to spread the truth to whomever wants to hear it.

Some reporters find that they prefer to write under pseudonyms, simply to feel safer. Much like spies and private detectives, their lives are lonely ones. Most freelance reporters do not have many friends or family, since they fear that those they love might be burned by association. Some corporations find it easier to hurt the loved ones of an enemy than deal directly with him. Reporters also have networks of informants, fixers, and the like, who are their eyes and ears in the underground. From these sources many rumors will reach the freelancer and give him an idea of the big picture.

There are many news programs and magazines which see themselves as champions of the man on the street. While some of these programs are little more than sensationalist fare, some of them are quite honest in their approach. This type of program has its own staff of reporters, although they will occasionally buy a story or the rights to use a story as source material. Again, because of their employers, these programs will not always air the news that needs to get out. The anchors of these programs are very aggressive people who do not hesitate to step on a few toes if it means getting the story. Remember: A good story means good ratings. And good ratings means bigger market share, which in turns means bigger profits.

A case in point is Gerry Bernstein, the host of Net 54's Looking Glass. Portraying himself as the champion of the small guy, he gleefully brings to light week after week the many faults in the government and the abusive tactics used by corporations to get their own way. During one of his most famous segments, he exposed the plans of Petrochem for a hostile takeover of Dupree Chemicals. With his in-your-face quality, Bernstein confronted corporate stooge after corporate stooge—most of whom ended up being fired after the incident—and, if one is to believe him, stopped the corporate war before it began. There were rumors floating about that Bernstein's original source was a Dupree employee, but nothing has ever been proven. Of course, any rumors that the only reason Net 54 ran the story in the first place is because they themselves have shares in Dupree are just that, rumors.

The Underground

Some see the underground media as the real crusaders for truth and justice. Apparently driven solely by the need to bring the real news to the people, these journalists do not care whether or not they make money. Most might not be as pure as the casual observer might believe. Personal vendettas, paranoia, and superiority complexes are more often than not the real reason behind the fanatical drive that motivates some of the underground media. The only thing that matters to them might be the rightness of their cause.

Whatever their reasons, the underground does take chances reporting the things they do. Unlike the legitimate media, who primarily has legal actions to fear, media crusaders in the underground will often find themselves at the wrong end of a gun when they get too close to the truth, even if the people who might have actually read and believed what they said are a very small part of the population. It is for this reason that most of the underground media make sure that their operations are highly mobile, and will often move between issues they publish or shows they air. Some of the undergrounds even have mobile bases of operation which are part of nomad packs, with the printing of any particular issue being done by a network of friends and colleagues throughout cities in the U.S. By doing things this way, they can ensure that while a particular printing and distribution spot might be closed down, the "truth" will stay open for business.
IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A DAY IN THE LIFE

I'm an anchor for a major TV news network. You probably know me from my byline: Angela Wu. Well, it's true, but I'm not just any anchor. I'm a celebrity reporter for the 5 AM show. It's not like I'm an anchor for a major TV news network or anything.

You want to know what a typical day in the life of a reporter is like? I wake up early, before 6 a.m., and start work at 7 a.m. Most days I work on an early-morning shift, from 4 a.m. until noon. But sometimes I work on a late-morning shift, from 9 a.m. until noon. I usually leave the office around 12 noon, but sometimes I stay until 2 p.m.

I work on a Wednesday morning shift, from 4 a.m. until noon. Most days I leave the house at 3 a.m. and arrive at the studio by 3:30 a.m. I usually leave the studio around 12 noon, but sometimes I stay until 2 p.m.

What kinds of stories do I cover in a typical day? Well, as a reporter, you don't have a specific beat. You can cover anything. Yesterday, for example, I had an exclusive story on the police search for a missing person. The story was big and required a lot of preparation and planning.

I get up early every morning to prepare for work. I start by checking my email and reviewing my notes from the previous day. Then I make a list of the stories I want to cover and the information I need to collect. I usually spend an hour or two researching the story before I start writing.

After that, I spend a few hours writing and editing the story. I usually write the first draft of the story by 10 a.m. and then go back and edit it several times. I usually finish the story by 11 a.m.

What do you do when you're not working? I usually spend my free time in the studio. I like to watch movies and read. I also enjoy cooking and baking. I have a little kitchen in my apartment, so I try to cook at least one meal a day. I usually spend an hour or two cooking and then eat the meal. I usually finish the meal by 5 p.m.

What do you think about your job? I love it. It's challenging and exciting. It's also a lot of fun. I get to meet new people and learn new things every day. I also get to travel around the world and see new places. I think it's a great job.
had been experiencing a flashback, maybe there was something to the rumor that Crystal had heard.

I walked my editor telling her I was done. She agreed, and I left. I was happy to do the other stories and assignments.

The next day, I received a call from Crystal asking if I could come over to her place to discuss the pictures I'd found at the courthouse the previous day. She made it clear that she had found a crucial piece of evidence.

The pictures were in a folder on her desk. They showed a man and a woman in an intimate moment. The woman had long, dark hair, and the man had short, blonde hair. The pictures were grainy, but it was clear that this was the same couple from the video. Crystal was excited about the possibility of a break in the case.

I asked her what she wanted me to do next.

She said, "I want you to find out everything you can about this man and woman. I want you to trace their movements and learn about their habits. I want you to find out what they know about the case.

I told her, "I'll do my best, but I need more information. I need a real name and address. I need to know more about them.

She said, "I'll get it for you, but you have to promise me one thing. You must promise me that you'll never reveal the information to anyone else. You must promise me that you'll never let this case go to the press."

I promised her, "I promise, Crystal. I'll do my best to get the information you need."

She thanked me, "Thank you, Mark. I'll give you whatever information I can. But you must promise me that you'll never reveal the information to anyone else."

I promised her again, "I promise, Crystal. I'll do my best to get the information you need."

She said, "Good luck, Mark. I'll call you as soon as I have more information."

I hung up the phone, feeling a sense of confidence and determination. I was determined to get the information I needed. I knew that this was the key to solving the case. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light. I would do whatever it took to get the information I needed. I would do whatever it took to solve the case. I would do whatever it took to bring the truth to light.
developed this cynicism, and fervently believe that their stories will tip the balance, perhaps even sparking the revolution that they are certain is just around the corner.

**Template: Investigative Reporter**

**Special Abilities:**
- **Credibility**
- **Awareness/Notice**
- **Literacy/Science**
- **Persuasion**
- **Streetwise**

* The Adrenalin Junkie

The adrenalin junkie can be found anywhere there’s danger—snooping along with the grunt soldiers in a dirty little war down south, going deep in gang turf in the inner cities, standing on top of an overturned car as it flips through the streets, sneaking a camera shot through the windows of a building where terrorists have taken hostages, free-falling with the national parachute team, defying police orders to stay out of an area where a toxic spill has poisoned the air, or secretly filming a cocaine lab in the middle of a drug war. It doesn’t really matter what the story is—as long as there’s a rush involved.

If a story doesn’t contain an element of danger or a physical challenge, the adrenalin junkie isn’t interested in it. Oh he’ll take what the editor or producer assigns him—but he’ll grumble about it. He’d rather volunteer for the stories that no one else wants. No one else in his right mind, that is.

Like the crusader, the adrenalin junkie doesn’t care so much about his salary. His rewards are a pounding heart, sweaty palms, and capturing the perfect camera shot or getting the interview that no one else can. If the soldier next to him is blown to pieces by a land mine that the adrenalin junkie just missed stepping on himself, so much the better. As long as the event is captured on video, that is. For the adrenalin junkie, the biggest regret is going through the danger and having nothing to show for it. The biggest thrill is doing a live feed—showing the world, on air, just how tough he really is.

If the adrenalin junkie’s life were a movie, it would be an action film. But unlike the actors in a movie, the adrenalin junkie really can get hurt. There are no stunt doubles in the real world, and thus the adrenalin junkie better have an up-to-date Trauma Team account.

The adrenalin junkie is both loved and hated by his colleagues. When he captures the shots that no one else dared to, he’s a hero. When he loses yet another expensive video camera to a drive-by shooting, he’s a bum. The editors and producers love the footage he brings back to the station—but realize that this flow of mana may suddenly be cut short at any time.

**Template: Police Beat Reporter**

**Special Abilities:**
- **Credibility**
- **Awareness/Notice**
- **Literacy/Science**
- **Persuasion**
- **Streetwise**

* The Adrenalin Junkie

**Template: War Correspondent or “Action” Reporter**

**Special Abilities:**
- **Credibility**
- **Awareness/Notice**
- **Literacy/Science**
- **Persuasion**
- **Streetwise**

* The Adrenalin Junkie

**Template: Social Reporter or Celebrity Hunter**

**Special Abilities:**
- **Credibility**
- **Awareness/Notice**
- **Literacy/Science**
- **Persuasion**
- **Streetwise**

* The Adrenalin Junkie

The Paparazzo

Back in the last century, in the days before digital camera, spreadsheets, and cybernetically implanted video and audio equipment, the paparazzo first emerged. Armed only with a mechanical camera and willing to go to any extremes to capture a unique—and hopefully scandalous—image on film, he pursued celebrities with the determination and drive of a stalker. No matter where the celebrity turned, the paparazzo was there, thrusting his camera in his face. He could brush him away, but he’d always be back—this time with a telephoto lens.

Thus he earned his nickname “paparazzo”—an Italian word originally used to describe a small, annoying fly. Modern paparazzi are driven by the same desire—an urge to unearth scandal and juicy gossip wherever they might be found. She’s the ultimate gossip monger, always willing to sacrifice truth to make a better story, to report rumor rather than fact if it sounds better, and to retouch a photo to give it more “impact.” Let the news station’s lawyers deal with the fallout. As long as the public gets the compromising photos and gossip it craves, the ratings or readership will go up. And that’s what the good life is.

The paparazzo is the master of the stealth technique. She’ll take every advantage of modern technology, using concealed cameras, long-range listening devices, bugs, and concealed cybernetic implants to capture the audio and video she needs.

She’d like to get into private functions, dress up like the hired help, and try to get an invitation for herself, bribe her way past security guards, and use whatever means she can to gain access to the celebrities that are her target. If that means that means buzzing a wedding ceremony in a helicopter and practically knocking the bride and groom over with the prop wash, then so be it.

To the paparazzo, any public figure is fair game. Celebrities gave up their right to privacy when they became famous. That’s the price you pay if you’re a member of the royal family, a rock star, a sports star, or an elected official.

To the paparazzo, the best stories are those involving the biggest names, and the most outrageous behaviors. Sex, drugs, scandals, and suicides. Those are the things that a paparazzo lives for.

**The Star**

A name that’s a household word and a face that’s instantly recognized by the general public. That’s what the star craves: fame. He’s the anchor of the news show, the station’s top reporter, the person who’s always assigned the most prestigious stories.

The star entered the media business for one reason: because it strikes his ego. Living in front of the camera or seeing his byline and picture at the top of a newswash sheet is a form of gratification that no other job offers. In some cases the star works for a legitimate news station there’s fortune, as well as fame. A clash of the personalities that keeps the star busy—shooting for himself, carefully crafted image. In other cases the star works for a pirate station there’s little or no money involved, just the glory of being a rebel on the cutting edge of the broadcast business.
**Template: On-Air Star**

**Special Ability: Credibility**
- Name: Am used to suit the campaign and the name of the GM.

**The Freelancer**

"Work as a slave for some multi-national news corporation? No way! My independence is more important than a regular income."

To the freelance, independence is everything. Give her the chance to choose her own tasks, to choose only those stories that truly appeal to her—and to sell those stories to the highest bidder. That’s where the fun is. It’s also where the fortune lies. Well, sometimes.

It’s the freelancer’s own talents, abilities, and drive that determine how financially successful she will be. Unlike her counterparts who punch the clock, she’s only getting paid if she’s productive. If she can’t get the story or someone else scoops her, she’s wasted her time and effort. And she still has to pay for her phone and maintain her equipment and somehow pay the rent. Of course, if she gets a big scoop—a story that no one else has even sniffed at yet—she can get the majors in a bidding war for her story and that’s the ticket with all of Europe, my friend. Like a real estate salesperson, the freelance reporter is on call twenty-four hours a day. She doesn’t have the resources of a news station to back her up, or to supply her with leads. She has to build up her own contacts and hit the streets frequently to keep her network of informants current. For this reason, the freelancer often specializes in a specific type of story. It might be local politics, the entertainment industry, the local business or corporate scene, or stories concerning members of a particular ethnic community. As the persons with whom she deals closest to the ground, the freelancer is usually the first one to pick up the trail of a story within her given area of expertise.

Usually the freelancer pursues stories within the city in which she lives. That’s where her contacts are. Besides, she doesn’t have a travel expense account. From time to time however, she may work under contract for one of the majors, perhaps flying off to some exotic location for a photo shoot or interview concerning her area of expertise.

The freelancer’s reward—aside from the obvious monetary one—is to be first with the story. When you get the story before the majors do, you are the only one to scoop them despite your limited resources and backup, it’s a satisfying moment indeed.

**Template: The Freelancer**

**Special Ability: Credibility**
- Name: Am used to suit the campaign and the name of the GM.

**The Ambulance Chaser**

Some call them ghouls. Others simply say he has a nose for blood and an ear for suffering. But there’s no denying the fact that the so-called “ambulance chaser” brings back stories that the public would never wish to hear. The plane crashes, the autoing wrecks, the breaking young mothers, the mutated victims of industrial contamination, the suicide victims plunging to their deaths.

The ambulance chaser lives with a police scanner in his ear—literally since he’s often replaced that ear with a cyberspace with a wide-band radio scanner. If he gets the contacts and is able to earn the officers’ or attendees’ trust, he’ll be the one riding along in the police patrol car or trauma van from A to Z. He’s also a familiar sight at the city’s hospitals, and in a first-aid van with the local firemen.

The ambulance chaser revels in the “death and destruction” beat. Other reporters might see this as a morbid fixation, but the ambulance chaser is always willing to justify his stories. There’s usually a cautionary note at the end of each story. If only the fellow who flew through the windshield and was decapitated had saved his seatbelt... If only the factory worker had paid more attention and shut off the valve before his fellow workers were scalded to death... If only the corporation had tested its nanotube more thoroughly before applying it to human subjects... To the ambulance chaser, there are valuable lessons to be learned from the general public needs to learn. If the visuals make them run for a buck, well, that will just drive the point home more firmly, won’t it?

Having dealt with all day long with blood and suffering, the ambulance chaser takes refuge in a grim form of social humor. Off the air, away from the camera, he jokes with other reporters about the ways the head rolled like a bowling ball into the liquor bottles, scoring a strike. Sometimes he slips up and makes these jokes in front of friends and family. Not realizing that this is a release valve, they express their disgust. But despite his seeming callousness, the ambulance chaser genuinely cares about people. Otherwise he wouldn’t continue trying to show them the error of other people’s ways.

**Template: Table-monger**

**Special Ability: Credibility**
- Name: Am used to suit the campaign and the name of the GM.

**The Propagandist**

She used to be known as a "hack" reporter. Shod writing anything for anyone, as long as the money was good. It didn’t matter whether it was a press release for a major corporation or a puff piece that the editor had assigned because the subject of the interview was his personal friend. It didn’t even matter if the finished product was truthful or not. The name of the game was stats, not substance; persuading the public, rather than educating them.

The propagandist may work for the state, for a particular corporation, for an ad agency, or for any organization large enough to have its own “spin doctors.” In Europe and Asia, where television and radio broadcasting is state-controlled, the propagandist is directly employed by the state. Just as the 20th century Soviet reporters churned out lines for the ironically named newspaper Pravda ("Truth") so do their 21st century counterparts. They face stiff competition, however; in this age of miniaturized cameras,cheap net uplinks and global trans-
**MEDIA NPCs: A SAMPLE CREW**

**Moxie.** That’s what they call it in the business. You’ve got to have moxie to make it as a reporter. You need the courage to keep going when the corporation you’re investigating threatens your life for the third time, the aggressiveness to beat out the other reporters in the scrum, and the nerve to ask difficult, probing questions of powerful public officials. Oh, and a certain amount of stubbornness doesn’t hurt either.

Some reporters walk the straight and narrow, relying on their aggressiveness and the strength of their media credentials to get them the stories they need. Others take the back door, hacking their way into corporate computer databases, posing as cleaning staff to rifle through a politician's trash can, or paying off hotel employees to let them in when a super secret weekend is in town. Whatever path a reporter might choose, getting the story is paramount. It doesn’t matter if it’s three in the morning, if you’ve just pulled an 18-hour shift, and if the wife is saying she’ll leave you if there’s any more overtime. When that hot tip comes in, you grab your video camera and run. You get that story. And you get it by the deadline.

**MEDIA (The Star)**

Whether she’s interviewing grunts soldiers in the jungle as the jets scream overhead, holding a cozy one-on-one chat with a politician, selling the latest gossip on a celebrity, or recapping the game’s highlights as the team douses each other with champagne in the locker room, the media is definitely the star of the show. She’s the one with the instantly recognizable voice, face, and name, with the credentials and the credibility not only to get the story but also to convince the public that it’s true.

Media characters may be young, pretty, and dressed in the latest Takahama executive power suit, or may be grizzled veterans in a trench coat with a permanent six o’clock shadow. They range from those who work the “infotainment” and “the news” celebrity or talk show slots to hard-hitting investigative reporters with an eye for trouble and a nose for other people’s business. And they don’t just deal in words. Despite the trend toward hologram and other exotic forms of information technology, there continues to be a demand for still photos. The freelance—especially the tabloids—are always in the market for a dramatic news photo of an independent photographer, or for a compromising shot of a celebrity by a paparazzi.

Some reporters stay close to home, working out of a local news station or street sheet office and chasing down stories within a single urban area. Others work for the wire services—companies that sell news stories to a number of media subscribers—or for major news networks, and can be found chasing down a story literally anywhere in the world, or even in orbit. One week it’s off to Barcelona to cover the war on drugs, the next week it’s London, where a cyberpsycho is duplicating the gory murders of Jack the Ripper.

A media may work for a street sheet, a radio station, or a TV news network. Some punch a corporate clock, while others freelance. Then there are those who are way out there—the “tabloid” reporters who refuse to work for anyone but themselves. Following their own ideals and broadcasting using stolen airtime and make-shift equipment, they are those who have “sold out” to the networks. They have a small but intensely loyal following.

Some reporters (especially junior ones) cover a wide range of stories—whatever the editor or producer assigns them. The more senior reporters tend to specialize, and have a particular news “beat.” They can call upon a wide range of contacts within the area of expertise. A media character might specialize in "hard news" such as crime or politics, or in entertainment, business, sports, science and technology. Some specialize in infotainment and "purr pieces"—those nit-kick press releases and "soft news" spots that are often paid for by corporations or other organizations that want to present their own, carefully tailored version of the "news" to the public.

**Typical Senior Reporter**

*INT 9*  
*COOL 5*  
*MA 5*  
*REF 6*  
*TECH 4*  
*LUCK 4*  
*BODY 5*  
*EMP 8*  

Cybernetics: Cyber hand with Watman TV, light pen, nightvision, facial sprayer  

**Typical Junior Reporter**

*INT 6*  
*COOL 8*  
*MA 6*  
*REF 6*  
*TECH 6*  
*LUCK 1*  
*BODY 5*  
*EMP 6/4*  

Cybernetics: Light tattoo, tech hair, contrapiece implant, Cybereye with image enhancement, contrast enhancement, and color enhancement, Cyberwire with level dämpung and band width scanner  
Skills: Carousing +2, Streetwise +5, Human Perception +5, Interview +4, Seduction +5, Social +7, Persuasion +5, Fast Talk +5, Awareness/Noise +6, Composition +7, Education + General Knowledge +2, Shadow Track +1, System Knowledge +2, Dance +1, Mentie +2, Motorcycle +1, Bicycle +1, Pilot +1, Chopper +1, Gunfight +1  
Posessions: Jeans, T-shirts, cowboy boots, kevlar fiber wristwatch, pocket communicator, Nylon canvas carrying case, video camera, 6ufi digital recorder, fiber optic, Zenotech E-board microcomputer with a bi-detector pack.

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**TIME MATRIX 0:54**
TECHIE (The Eye)
A news team is only as good as its technicians allow it to be. Whether it’s a matter of capturing digitalized still photos, making sure the sound equipment is functioning properly, or keeping the video camera focused on target when the bullets are flying, the technician or “techie” is the one the reporters count on to make them look and sound good. Without strong, dramatic visuals, a news story just doesn’t have the same punch.

The techie is the man or woman on the spot, working side by side with the reporter who is conducting the interviews and gathering up the pieces of the story. While it might seem like the techie is no more than a glorified gofer, such is not the case. He or she is the one who captures the sounds and visuals the story needs, but then integrates them together into a seamless and artistic backdrop to the story. When it comes to time to do a truly “investigative” story, he’s the one called upon to pick the lock, to defeat the electronic security system, or to pirate off a closed-circuit TV monitor.

More than anyone else, the techie is the one who’s most keenly aware of the tickling clock. When editing, he is constantly forced to balance attention and attention to detail against meeting the deadline and making sure the graphics are crisp and colorful. And when the equipment breaks down or gets damaged by flood, fire, or gunfire, he’s the one who’s counted upon to patch it together again so that the show can go on.

Typical Camera Operator
- INT: 9
- REF: 6
- TECH: 8
- COOL: 7
- ATH: 5
- LUCK: 4
- MA: 4
- BODY: 6
- EMP: 4
- 2D


Skills: Imaging: Basic 1, 10, 20; Awareness/Notice 10; Education 5; General Knowledge 15; Reading 15; Writing 15; Driving 15; Handgun 15; Basic Tech 1; CyberTech 2; Electronics 10; Electronic Security 10; 1st Aid 10; Forestry 10; Photography & Film 20; Film 10; Possessions: Camera, video camera, portable video camera, portable back-up power supply, mast-mounted communications; nylon/carbon containing technician, electronics kit, Denge vision boot, security scanner, advanced alarm removal kit

Typical Researcher
- INT: 7
- REF: 6
- TECH: 6
- COOL: 6
- ATH: 5
- LUCK: 3
- MA: 5
- BODY: 8
- EMP: 6

Cybernetics: Neural processor with computer/cybermodem link, data link, display screen, sniper scope, cybereye with image enhancement, mask, video camera; memory enhancement; S.D.X. 20, 30; Awareness/Notice 15; Chemistry 10; Composition 10; Education & General Knowledge 10; Language: Chinese 20; Programming 15; System Knowledge 20; Stealth 15; Basic Tech 3; CyberTech 5; Design 10; CyberTech 5; Electronics 5; Electronics 5; Photography 20; Film 10; Pocket 5

Possessions: High-definition film, heavy leather pants, hooded sweatshirt, nylon/carbon jacket, positive communication wear, possibilities: J-City, D-23300^

Typical Bodyguard
- INT: 8
- REF: 5
- TECH: 6
- COOL: 7
- ATH: 5
- LUCK: 3
- MA: 4
- BODY: 4
- EMP: 5

Cybernetics: Neural processor with vehicle link, data communications; cybernetic arm with tool hand, communication kit, Formula 10, 15; Stealth 20; Basic Tech 2; CyberTech 1; Design 3; CyberTech 1; Electronics 2; Photography 5; Film 5; Pocket 5

Possessions: High-definition film, heavy leather pants, hooded sweatshirt, nylon/carbon jacket, positive communication wear, possibilities: J-City, D-23300

Typical Editor or Producer
- INT: 9
- REF: 5
- TECH: 5
- COOL: 5
- ATH: 7
- LUCK: 5
- MA: 4
- BODY: 6
- EMP: 5

Cybernetics: Neural processor with vehicle link, data communications; cybernetic arm with tool hand, communication kit, Formula 10, 15; Stealth 20; Basic Tech 2; CyberTech 1; Design 3; CyberTech 1; Electronics 2; Photography 5; Film 5; Pocket 5

Possessions: High-definition film, heavy leather pants, hooded sweatshirt, nylon/carbon jacket, positive communication wear, possibilities: J-City, D-23300

NETRUNNER (The Researcher)
Just as a solo wouldn’t go into action with an unloaded gun, a reporter wouldn’t conduct an interview without much background information as possible about the person or firm the story is about. A techie does matter if the story is a hard-hitting docudrama or a character story about a corporation that is dumping toxic waste—the basic principle is the same. Do your research, sort out the most pertinent facts, and hit the interviewee with hard and fast—right between the eyes.

The typical media researcher has eclectic interests, is well educated either through college or her own efforts, and is thoroughly computer literate. She knows all the latest software programs. She only knows where to look, but has the tools to conduct the search, whether those tools are a kit of cyberdeck tools loaded with the netrunner’s own programs or a top-of-the-line Zetatech deck with memory to burn and expensive software that can cut through the toughest dataforests like a mononucleotide through a bone.

Some researchers never leave the station, preferring to explore the world via the Net. Others take a more active role, tagging along with the reporter and operating a cyberdeck to follow their leads. The Zetatech deck is the lifeline, the way to learn who’s in the city, who’s hot, who’s cold, who’s on the run.

SOLO (The Muscle)
Reporting can be a dangerous game. Sometimes a news team runs into more than it can handle. Wars, riots, famines, natural disasters, industrial spies, terrorist acts, assassinations, and attacks by angry individuals who were 'misquoted' in the press—all pose dangers, both obvious and unexpected.

Enter the Solo, the muscle of the news team. Typically a bodyguard who sometimes pulls double duty as a pilot or driver, the Solo serves as the watchful eyes and listening ears of the news team and is always on the alert. He’s the one who interacts between the reporter and whoever is threatening him—and who uses his brains to provide the necessary intimidation when the interview stalls. Whether he’s riding shotgun while a news team ventures into gang turf or acting as a bodyguard escort to a reporter attending a corporate function, the Solo is the man for the job.

CORPORATE (The Editor or Producer)
In the newsroom business, the editor is the one who sifts through the press releases that come into the newsroom, assigns stories to reporters, approves expenses, edits the stories when they come in, chooses the photos that will accompany them, and oversees the layout and design of the newsprint pages. He’s also the one who rakes on everybody about deadlines, who works long hours—and who has an ulcer or his first heart attack before the time is up.

At a radio or TV station, the producer does much the same thing. Instead of overseeing the layout of a newspaper page by page, however, she’s on the spot when the broadcast airs, watching the clock and making on-the-fly decisions about which stories to trim or pull when a late-breaking but important new story comes in under the wire. Decisions that are never easy, and that have to be made in a split second.

The name of the game, simply put, is stress management.

While the editor or producer now wears a suit and a topcoat and jacket and is in a management position, he has usually come up through the ranks. Once a news hound, always a news hound. It’s in the blood. So, in rare instances, the editor or producer will hit the pavement and act as a reporter once in a while. At other times, the job is being assigned to a story is too just too good to resist. When a back-up story or a Johnny Silverhand concert comes in the mail slot, you can bet that the producer or editor will assign herself the story.
GETTING THE STORY

To get the media character, getting the story is everything. Not just getting it but getting it accurately. Getting it on time, and making sure everything is documented on video or audio.

It isn't enough for a reporter simply to investigate a story and find out the facts. Unless this information is documented in some tangible form, a story is simply a collection of hearsay and rumor that stands or falls solely on the basis of the reporter's credibility. A media team needs visuals, needs hard-copy documentation, and needs to capture TV or audio interviews with credible sources who are willing to give their names.

Once the facts have been documented, a news team needs to meet one other criteria: the deadline. The best story in the world isn't worth anything if it's turned in too late and the competition beats you to the scoop.

The chief objective of any news team is to get a good combination of visuals and information. Generally speaking, dramatic, action-packed images are preferred over "talking head" shots known as "clips." But without the background information provided by these interviews, even the most dramatic footage becomes meaningless.

TV News

At a typical TV station, newscasts are aired daily at noon and 6 p.m. Every newscast is tightly packed down to the second by the station's producer.

The newscast is divided into six "blocks," separated from each other by two-minute commercial breaks. Each block covers a different type of news: local, international, weather, sports, features, and entertainment.

Local stories are those that occur in the immediate area of the station (the city or region where the station is situated). "Hard news" stories are gathered by news teams in the station's beat. This block typically leads off the newscast and is ten minutes long.

International stories are shot by teams in remote locations around the world, and are either provided by affiliates of the station or are picked up via satellite transmission from a news or "wire" service that sells stories to stations around the world. This block is typically ten minutes long.

Sports stories are typically given an eight-minute slot. These stories may be gathered by local news teams, or may come in from affiliated stations or news services.

Feature stories are known in the business as "soft news." An entertainment story can be anything from a personality profile or interview with a celebrity to coverage of the latest concert or performance piece. This block is typically eight minutes long.

Business stories come from "puff pieces" glorifying reports on corporations to aggressive, investigative reports on economic analyses. This block is typically eight minutes long.

Once a story is approved by a producer and the reporters are sent out to shoot it, the story is designated for a particular newscast time slot (noon or 6 p.m.) and a particular block. Within each block, the "biggest" news stories those with the most impact are slotted to run first. Each story opens with a 5 to 10-second introduction that is read by the anchor of that day's newscast, then the story itself runs.

Should a story not be finished in time, the producer has the option of "shuffling the lineup" of news stories to allow it to run at a later time within the block. Stories that are not complete by the time the block has ended are not aired during that broadcast, unless they are so earth-shattering that a producer decides to trim time from a later block to accommodate them. Generally speaking, these stories are of unique and dramatic events such as assassinations of heads of state, natural or industrial disasters that claim thousands of lives, or declarations of war.

Some stories may be appropriate to more than one block, and are scheduled according to the volume of news stories that are competing for air time in each of the appropriate blocks that day.

Radio Stations

Radio stations operate much like TV stations, except that the news is typically broadcast every hour on the hour, with the top stories being repeated identically with an update. The total news time might run five minutes, while a single radio news story is measured in seconds, rather than minutes. The exceptions are those truly earth-shattering stories that require a series of interviews and sound clips, which might go on for a minute or more.

Then there are the "talk radio" stations, that offer maximum news and commentary, and minimum music.

As with a television station, the producer selects the stories, organizing the lineup of stories and determining how much air time each one will receive. The stories are read live on the air from prepared scripts, with interviews, sound clips, and other background effects being played from digital recording devices that are still known by the anachronistic name of "carts."

Screamsheets

Screamsheets are a phenomenon of the 21st-century lean and mean successors to the newspapers. Like their predecessors, they utilize hard copy. Unlike newspapers, however, which were typically published just once or twice per day, screamsheets are updated several times daily. The screamsheet report

faces a number of deadlines. This gives a reporter a chance to be constantly adding to a story, fleshing it up with new information as the day goes by. Unfortunately, it also gives the competition a regular look at what your reporters are up to.

The typical screamsheet is updated at 6 a.m., noon, 5 p.m., and 10 p.m. Although the screamsheet is laid out by computer and transmitted to "newspaper" boxes electronically, the editor must still allow time for a story to be edited and laid out, and for digital photos to be uploaded and put in place. The deadline for first-draft stories and unrevised photos is thus typically set at least one hour ahead of the street release time.

Just as the airwaves have their little broadcasters, so too do the screamsheets. Those able to "back" into a newspaper box can transmit their own data to it. Those illegal publications are known as the "fastballs." They are typically only one or two pages long, and are dressed up with the logos of the pirates who compose and send them. Like the hardcore handbills of centuries gone by, they are distributed "free" of charge, since the news outlet is unwittingly picking up the tab for their distribution.

A fastball can cover just about any subject matter. It might be a finge political group's manifesto, a citizen call for revolution, a propaganda from a hate group, an anonymous and usually quite libelous stumr against a politician or corporation, an announcement for a rockers concert, a bootlegger's odds sheet—even "junk mail" advertising masquerading as an ad with in a legitimate screamsheet. It's as varied as the pirates who send it. The screamsheet publishers try to stay one step ahead of the pirates by constantly changing the access codes of the newspapers, but somehow the pirates keep hacking their way back in...

Conducting Interviews

In putting together a story, a media team conducts interviews with a variety of different people and utilizes a wide range of sources. Witnesses provide eyewitness accounts of events. Experts provide opinions and background material. A personal profile can always be rounded out by interviewing friends and family of the subject. And the ubiquitous "press conference," while hardly exclusive, is always a good place to start a story.

In addition, there is the behind-the-scenes information that a news team must gather. Public records, for example, can be obtained at the request of the subject. And the ubiquitous "press conference," while hardly exclusive, is always a good place to start a story.

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LIVE AND DIRECT

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

GAME

"Being informed" can include having a camera with a station's logo on it being pointed at them.

An interview is being conducted, characters can use the Human Perception skill to determine whether the interviewee is telling the truth or believes he is telling the truth. Computer technologies such as the Televizet voice stress analyzer or lie detector programs, or the Techronics "Tatudat" voice stress analyzer, can also be used to accomplish this, but only on subjects who can be persuaded to subject themselves to these tests.

While they are tracking down a story, the characters in a news team will conduct a number of interviews. Usually it will be the media character asking the questions, although other members of the team may wish to take a crack at it, too.

When trying to obtain information from an interviewee, the character chooses the skill to be used: Interview, Persuasion & Fast Talk, Intimidate/Introgate, Oratory, Seduction, then makes a skill check. The higher the die roll resulting from the above skill check, the more information will be revealed. The amount of information divulged is determined by the results given below.

**Interview Results**

| 1-9 | Refuses to talk |
| 10-14 | Tense-lipped |
| 15-19 | Average interview |
| 20-24 | Good interview |
| 25-29 | Excellent interview |
| 30+ | Tells everything s/he knows |

During the course of an interview with a particular character, a news team may find themselves listed above without penalty in an effort, getting two attempts at the same objective. Should the news team attempt a third technique, a -5 penalty is applied to the result. Each subsequent attempt is penalized an additional 5.

**Note:** A natural 1 on a die roll is an automatic failure, the interviewee clams up and refuses to talk, showing a hand over the camera lens and sometimes taking a swing at the camera operator or reporter if pestering or provoked.

Despite the fact that modern technology has given us digital recording devices with virtually unlimited memory, news teams typically record each interview or location shot on a different chip. This speeds up the process of finding a particular shot when it comes time to edit from the raw footage into a finished news story.

While much of the audio or visual for a story is shot by the news team, the reporter also has access to many recorded audio and visual clips, known by the archonchronic term of "tape files." Each station keeps its previously aired stories on file; images may be filtered from this tape library and incorporated into a story. These are generally less valuable than new material.

A short news story is little more than a glorified caption—perhaps five to seven column centimeters long. The average story ranges 25 to 30 column centimeters, while an in-depth piece ranges from 50 to 75 column centimeters. Roughly speaking, it takes one hour of writing time to produce a 25-column centimeter story, once the research has been done.

**Composing in Game Terms**

**Editing Time**

Editing one minute of finished story with writing 30 minutes of copy in one hour has a difficulty of 30. (Use the Composing, or Photography, or Film Skills, whichever is appropriate.) Finishing to edit the same footage in one minute has a difficulty of 45. Editing or writing it in 30 minutes has a difficulty of 25. Editing or writing it in a truly frantic pace in 15 minutes has a difficulty of 30.

**Time per Minute/25 Centimeters**

- 1 hour: 15
- 45 minutes: 20
- 30 minutes: 30
- 15 minutes: 35

A failed roll means there are errors in the finished story, depending upon the importance of the story being edited, the credibility of a reliable character or the station as a whole may decrease. There will be one error for every five points rounded up by which a skill check exceeds its difficulty number. Missing a skill check means one error. Example: 7-10 points; one error. Roleing natural 1 on a skill check means the finished product, when its original intent is revealed, will be ridiculous. Example: 5 points; ridiculous. This result should be at least 'TV' or radio. "White Space" Screencasts are a severe embarrassment.

**Watching the Competition**

Media based events are fairly high-time sensitive. During the course of each adventure, the news team will be in head-to-head competition with news teams from other TV and radio stations and from screencasts. To determine how they are doing, the characters will need to monitor the broadcasts and news flashes of their rivals.

These final news reports can be used by the referee as a source of clues for characters who are having difficulty uncovering a story. They can be used either to provide background information or to supply the name of a potential interviewee that the characters might have previously overlooked.

Generally, however, if a station has already interviewed doesn't make for good footage, the public has already heard what that person had to say. But it's always worth a try. Perhaps the characters will be able to dig a little deeper than their rivals, and will uncover some new information.
So you want to run a media campaign. One of the first things you will have to realize is that a media campaign is more than just a reporter. Just like the rockstar or even a bigger, there are many differences in how a campaign can take for you and your players. After all, one of the most often forgotten ideas of this game universe is how broadly the media affects everyone. No matter where the group looks, no matter where they go, the media will be there, in their faces, coloring their every notion and opinion of the world around them.

The media in 2020 has truly become the ears and eyes of the population. The primary tool through which they interact with the broader world around them, it brings news and entertainment and has the power to shape their lives in ways that might not be readily apparent. Even if not used directly in the campaign, mentioning things that the characters have seen on television, movies that are playing around the corner, and new music that they hear on the radio and on the street will help flush out the world around the players, giving them a real feel for it.

Think about it for a moment. Without the media around us in this day and age, we would live in a vacuum. Much of our lives today would lose its flavor. Just like knowing the little details about a character helps us flesh her out in our minds, knowing the details of a person helps us feel it around us. Also, the media can be used to present the characters with many clues and opportunities. Imagine for a moment a down-and-out person in the world of 2020. The first thing she might do is order to get her out of the hole is to look for work, right? And what is the best source for wanted ads? The newspaper, of course. Little details like this can lead to better roleplaying on the part of the Referee and the player alike, simply because they add flavor, style, and in Cyberpunk, isn't that everything?

In the sections below, we will look at ways to incorporate the media in any given campaign in order to give them a breadth of life. So come on, grab a copy of the latest screenshots, turn on the television, and let's look at the media and what it can do for your campaign.

Before jumping into different types of campaigns available to a Referee, we should look at what the media is like in 2020. For one thing, most of the media is an exaggerated version of the reality that we know and love today. 500+ channels on cable, magazines, and the internet can cover virtually any subject you can dream of. The media can and does pandering to virtually every taste under the rainbow. There are so many specialty channels, ranging from the game show channels to the shopping and golden oldies (soap operas, of course), while not forgetting the more political channels and the conspiracy theory ones, that someone would be hard-pressed to find something interesting on—keeping in mind that interesting does not always mean intelligent.

The key here is exaggeration, while not becoming ridiculous. Take game shows for example. There are a few outrageous ones, but none of them anywhere near the level of the one depicted in Running Man, since a certain level of unsanctioned killing is still against the law. For the most part, the contestants in the game shows have to put up with amazing feats of torture, all in the name of the mighty Euroback. A good example would be something like American Gladiators or some of the more outrageous Japanese game shows.

Another thing to keep in mind when depicting the media, especially television, is the overall level of violence present. Almost all of the shows on the air have a very high level of violence, with not even the daily news exempt from this. Even the more serious ones, like Stock Watch—a show about the stock market and the economy—do not hesitate to show the more gruesome corporate suicides and the likes. Violence seems to be the key factor, along with sex, to keeping the viewer interested. Remember that there is such a proliferation of media out there that are all vying for the same thing: the populations' advertising expenditures.

Which brings us to the next important part of the media, namely advertising. To say that advertising is omnipresent in 2020 would be an understatement. Informercials are on every single night on the majority of channels, and you can hardly watch television or read a screensheet without hav-
The media can be, and often has been, an agent of change in any given world. In the world of Cyberpunk, things are no different. Whether he be the characters themselves who are a positive force in the world or anyone else, the media is a powerful force and is called "good guys." Just because it's part of a corporation, it is not necessarily the "bad guys." One of the most interesting parts of Cyberpunk is that everything is gray, not clear cut black and white.

Even the characters that are not media themselves, there are many ways to bring home the media reality to the players. There is always the above-mentioned media presence to remind the players of its importance in 2020, and there are many other ways.

The obvious one is when the characters use the media to get information on anyone. Chances are, if you are at all familiar, you have had your picture in the news at least once or twice. Only the truly powerful can stop ALL media from putting out stories about them that do not paint a rosy picture, so there is almost always dirt to be found about anyone. On the other hand, if the creators can find anything about the people they are investigating, they know that they are either: a) so powerful that the characters should reconsider having anything to do with them; or b) really good people. Since this is Cyberpunk, option b is very unlikely. Do not think that the information gathered by searching the various media is less accurate than what one can get from others.

Because it comes from different sources, a more accurate portrait of whoever the characters are after can often be composed than anything found on the streets. Besides, you get the pleasure of watching the players trying to tie it together instead of feeding them the completed information. It will help if they figure out that there are media other than the "legitimate" ones.

But the media can give someone much more than information. For the truly adventurous character who is out of luck, there is always employment in the media, even if he knows nothing about it. There are always a few game shows looking for contestants (how about that for a change of pace... "Gerry the Stranger"... Come on down! You're the next contestant on Wheel O'Doom!, or celebrities looking for bodyguards. Working as an extra on a movie or a television show is always easy work, as long as the producers remembered to pay the local "protection" fee. And they said that Hollywood was not glamorous anymore...

For the more adventurous, there are many Cop-style shows, where the characters are thrown around on the job by a camera from NetFire, where a focus of the show is following a runner on a dataforce as "assault," to shows that follow boogergangs around, exist. One thing should be noted, however: While the law-enforcement shows are mostly real, the vast majority of the "illegal" ones are. For the most part, they are carefully scripted, with as much emphasis on excitement as possible. Why are they not real? Well, simply put, the FCC regularly monitors such shows and will revoke the license of any broadcaster which is found using real criminals or filming real crimes without doing anything to stop them. While this law in itself is dubious at best—since when did camera crews stop to help anyone?—it is still being enforced. There is so much leeway built into the law that many are comparing it to our present pornography laws, which allow for judgment calls on the part of the acting officer.

There is also occasional work on the talk show circuit, with a nice check for those who are willing to go on as guests. Of course, nothing stops unscrupulous characters from appearing on a show even though they are not what they claim they are. Careful viewers of talk shows will recognize many of the same faces going from show to show, claiming to be everything from bridle raisers to active gang members. This also goes to prove that the producers of these shows are more interested in colorful people than real ones. On the other hand, the characters could be hired to investigate upcoming guests on the validity of their claims. While hardly campaign material, it could make for an entertaining evening or two, especially if the characters are investigating people claiming to be Satanists, or somesuch.
with Solos for brainstands is that, at least for the action/adventure type, there is a need for someone who is really good at the job and is able to do his own stunts, all in the name of realism. This might work for one or two odd sessions, when the Referee wants to change the pace, but it would make for a strangely surreal campaign if the characters were regular actors in brainstands.

A quick aside. When we talk about “good guys,” we do not necessarily mean people who abide by the law, but rather people who do what they deem necessary to do what is “right.” The term “right” is such a subjective term that it becomes fairly hard at this point to define what it means, especially in the context of 2020. But one definition of “right” for Cyberpunk might simply be “for the greater good,” and therefore the “good guys” become agents of change for the better for the majority of the population. When it comes to the media, that has always been the unstated agenda, whether the majority of the population agrees or not.

There are three global types of media campaign. They are the legitimate for corporate media campaign, the underground media campaign, and the governmental campaign. While these campaign types do have elements in common, there are many differences between them. Let’s see how they apply those differences to the task at hand—fighting for what they deem is the greater good.

The Corporate Media Campaign

Before starting to think about the campaign, there is one thing the Referee must decide: do the characters think that media corporations can work for “good,” or more to the point, is the corporation for which they work “good?” While it may seem strange, the initial direction of the campaign will be greatly affected by this fact. For example, a campaign where the characters believe in the corporation that they are working for might turn into a “loss of innocence” campaign as they discover that the corporation is not so good after all. The truth to the people, but rather has its own agenda, which might simply be making money, or might be some other nefarious long-term goal. On the other hand, in a campaign where the characters believe in the corporation, it is not so clear whether the corporation is really trying to help the people, or if it is simply a front for some other goal. In either case, the campaign may be extremely difficult to run.

A finer point to be established by the Referee is whether or not the corporation for which the characters work is “good.” While this might seem like a self-evident question, it might not be so simple. Remember that corporations are entities that are working solely on the basis of making money. Whether this, and consequently the organization, is really “good” depends entirely on your personal point of view. Not all corporations need to have hidden agendas and some of them, while keeping the bottom line in mind, might actually want to do things “for the greater good.” If every single corporation in your campaign is bent on world domination, things quickly become cliché and boring. Variety is the spice of life, after all.

A corporate campaign will be focused more on the intrigue and politics that happen in that type of environment. Some possible complications might have to do with finding out the reasons behind a story being pushed or killed at the last second. Or what would happen if the team found out that the corporation for which they work is inserting sublims during the nightly news broadcast? Where can they go to expose the very people they work for? One thing to keep in mind is that media corporations in 2020 might have some other goal than simply making more money. What those goals are are as diverse as the corporations themselves. Do not forget the real possibility of corporate infighting, where two divisions of the same corporation have competing goals.

The Freelance Media Campaign

While corporate Medias focus more on office intrigue and politics, a freelancer-based campaign might be centered around the survival of the media character and the team surrounding him to Solo or Solo or two come handy. Another thing to consider is for whom the characters are working. If they are working for a television station, for example, they will be working for one corporation only. It will be difficult for them to hide their identity if they need to. If the producer refuses to air their story, they are out of luck. On the other hand, if they work for the newsheets, they will have to hustle from job to job since they will only be paid for stories they file, but this might give them more freedom. Because of the very nature of freelancing in 2020, there might be a great deal more fighting and backstabbing, as other freelancers by either to file their version of the story before the characters or simply to ambush them and steal their story.

Characters always play the crime-beat campaign that can be played out as a cross between a straight cop campaign and a media one, where the characters are expected to solve whatever crimes they are reporting as well as file their stories. This type of campaign is close to the Max Headroom show, a media character who goes out of his way to investigate any criminal action he might be aware of. In the hopes of making a difference in the general population’s life, if done correctly, it makes for a campaign that mixes elements of a high-action campaign with a more political, intrigue-driven one. For example, the characters are assigned a story about the increase in bootlegging violence in the campaign zone. Normal contacts are keeping their mouths shut, so what goes on in the zone is of interest to the people who live there. After having tried to talk to some of the gang leaders and having been beaten to a pulp or at least threatened with violence, the characters notice the large amounts of Belp Cologne in all of the gang hangouts. Deciding that it was too much of a coincidence—after all, why are all the gangs drinking the exact same brand of soft drink, and how come they’re all drinking soft drinks anyway?—the characters go back and “borrow” a few bottles for analysis. The first traces of a standard-type drug, one which makes the already crazed bootleggers even more aggressive. At this point they have a few choices; They may either go to their producer with this information or run with it. In either case, the campaign will be first relatively easy to run, but as the last minute decides against it. Why? Is it because Belp Cologne is a major sponsor of their show? Or does Belp Cologne really own the network for which the characters work? And is it really Belp Cologne that decided to replace their own product? And for what reason? Just from the information gathered, you have just plunged the characters into a deep end of intrigue which you could, if you were so inclined, run for an entire campaign. Conspiracies, and digging up who is really behind them and for what reason, make for some of the most interesting media campaigns.

Another thing to keep in mind is that not all screenwriters and designers are equally good. There are many magazines that will publish rumors and scandals. For any media character with the will and perseverance, there is good money to be made. Dealing with the angry victims that have been exposed might not be as nice, but that is why one hires security.
A "yellow" journalism campaign is quite interesting for 
Referees who believe in running low-level campaigns. With 
the characters digging dirt up on people in any way they 
can—garbage picking, stalking celebrities, and bribing 
housekeepers—are just a few ways—the campaign can 
be quite interesting and different, and there is always the 
dilemma of what to do when one digs up really good dirt. Do 
you try to sell it back to the party involved, or do you sell it to 
the highest bidder? Is it a dirty job, but someone has to do it.

There are other types of "yellow" journalism campaigns, 
one that do not focus on celebrities as much. Whether on 
television or newspapers, there are many programs or publi-
cations that cater to the baser instincts or that are just plain 
silly. Just look at magazines like the Weekly World News or a 
program like A Current Affair, and try to imagine the char-
acters having to research any of the stories published in that 
week. While the characters are not really "good guys" any-
more, they can still hope to make a difference in people's 
life, at least by entertaining them with the misfortunes of oth-
er characters. As long as the character is not exploiting the human psyche, this type of campaign can be quite revealing, as 
the characters get to see the darker side of people's souls. 
Whether the stories covered by the characters are real or not 
is left up to the Referee. This type of slant on a campaign 
could be quite interesting, being a cross between something 
like the X-Files and pure camp. There are two rules to 
remember in this type of campaign, however: the majority 
of the public will never believe the characters, no matter what 
kind of evidence they have uncovered; and any pheno-
menon that might be explored should never really be explained, 
since it would take the edge off of the adventure. Knowing 
that the werewolf that was caught last week was an exotic 
body sculpt will take most of the "bite" and mystery out of 
the campaign. There is nothing stopping the Referee from 
throwing in the odd candy every once in a while. The 
biggest thing to keep in mind when running this type of cam-
pany is that the most part the characters will have no 
credibility whatsoever, and that unless she is working 
under a pseudonym, she will probably never be able to get 
work as a "real" media. Of course, this can make for great 
moonlighting jobs for the character, as she fictitiously looks 
for work wherever she can.

The Underground Media Campaign

An underground media campaign is probably more in keep-
ing with the "real" spirit of Cyberpunk, namely one of revolu-
tion and bringing truth and justice to the masses, no matter 
what the costs. Unfortunately the truth is that, at least for the 
majority of the general public, they will ignore them and the 
only people who will really listen are the ones who are 
already converted. There are also underground media-types 
who are really in for revenge or ulterior motives. As much 
as corporate America is messed up, so is the underground 
with all of its petty rivalries.

One thing will be apparent right away to the Referee and 
the players: in the underground, the characters will have 
access to much less resources that in the legitimate media. 
The characters will have to rely more on their wits for both 
 survival and getting the story out than if they were in the reg-
ular media.

One of the things that has to be established before any-
thing else is what type of organization the characters are 
working for. Are they working on their own, or are they part 
of some sort of underground network? Are they working as 
part of an already established media group, or are they start-
ing from scratch? While there are many pseudo-media net-
works in the underground, most of them are more about 
sharing resources and expertise than anything else. There is 
a certain amount of power to be had in the underground, 
mimicking the corporations in many ways. If the corpora-
tions are skyscrapers pyramids rising up into the heavens, 
the underground is their reflection in a lake, distorted and flat-
tened. There is cooperation as well as competition, but no 
one will risk everything to help their "friends," no matter what 
they say in public.

There is one thing that all underground media campa-
igns will have in common: running from both the law and 
the corporations. This makes for a campaign where the 
characters are uncertain about their immediate future. 
However, the Referee has to be careful not to use this ele-
ment too often, as it quickly becomes more of an annoy-
ance than an actual threat. Realistically speaking, the law 
and corporations should only really take notice of the char-
acters if they have done something damaging enough to be 
deemed more than just an annoyance. For the most part, 
the FCC will only do something if the corporations and the 
public start filing complaints. They would rather leave the 
pirates and others be, since they have bigger fish to fry. 
Only when the characters have started to have some clout 
will they step in.

Let us examine the two most probable type of under-
ground media campaign: the pirate media campaign and the 
media terrorist campaign. There are other types, but those— 
namely "guerrilla" movies, music, and publishing—have more 
to do with an underground "corporate" campaign than any-
thing else. What is interesting in and of itself, much of the 
role-playing will be done on a level of dealing with 
 distribution outlets and the like. It's not really action-orien-
ted most of the time, unless one enjoys dealing with imag-
inary paperwork.

The Pirate Media Campaign

The pirate media campaign is focused on the typical media, 
namely newspapers, radio, and television. Whatever the end 
media used, the same basic means and reasons apply: Pirate 
media is out to bring the truth to the public.

In 2020, as in the 20th century, the term pirate media 
refers to those who operate without a permit or license. 
Since all forms of media—everything from music to radio 
and television, including newspapers and booklets—have to 
possess a license from the FCC and Federal Communication 
Commission to operate and said licenses are expensive to 
own, most of the underground media operates under these 
terms. As an aside, the license for all media is levied from 
the Seward Act days, when the FCC was given more power 
to enforce a strict media watch.

Pirate media, whatever form they take, all follow 
the same basic format: highly mobile, with most of the people 
volunteering or otherwise involved, with the majority of the 
people working doing it anonymously. The case of newspa-
pers, most of the time the editor does not even know who 
sent him a story, and conversely, the writer does not know 
the editor. This arrangement works well for the writer, since 
it insures that if the newspaper ever gets busted, chances 
are that he is safe. The opposite is true, since the jour-
nalist who gets caught while "researching" a story can not 
report the editor to the FCC in order to get a reduced sen-
tence. The staff that actually publishes the newspaper i.e. 
lay-out, editing and printing is usually composed solely of 
the editor, who arranges with local gangs for distribution 
and so on or does himself. There will be other people 
helping the editor/publisher in various capacities, but 
for the most part, undergrounder are single-person 
operations.

Pirate television stations usually work in a slightly differ-
ent arrangement. Unlike newspapers, they do not usually 
accept outside submissions, instead relying on their own 
staff for everything. They also risk more from the FCC since 
they use valuable broadcast air space, when they do not sim-
ply jam a weaker signal with their own. The other problem 
that a pirate broadcasting station has is that it is easier to
find, since they are in a way broadcasting their location. Many pirate broadcasters have found a way around this problem by setting up relay stations which pick up the signal and rebroadcast it, muddling their trail.

In what ways does a pirate campaign differ from a regular one? Apart from the obvious problem of access to equipment, there are also the factors that since the characters will not have "official" press credentials, they will have to work harder or get access to information and people or find different ways to get the information. Also, they can not expect to be treated in the same way by the police. No pleading freedom of the press—since the government does not even recognize the characters as being reporters, they are treated as normal citizens. A pirate campaign should be aimed more toward the "good" fight, the revolution, and wanting to bring the truth to the people. It should be a grim campaign, filled with decep-
tions, hard-won battles, and constant struggle. Imagine, just to publish one issue of an underground newspaper, the editor has not only to find the money to print somewhere, but also put up with the risk of being caught by the FCC or worse! This type of campaign can also play a very diverse one, since the media character will sometimes have to take up various quick jobs just to make enough money for the next issue. How he raises that kind of money is totally up to the character. It can be full of betrayal; since he does not know who the reporters he deals with are, there is no real way to check whether or not any given story is true. What if the last story printed about Arasaki was some sort of setup, to get Arasaki's blood boiling? The character will probably have to be constantly on the run, especially as he becomes more successful, since he will make up the corpora-
tions. The truth has a high price tag attached to it sometimes...

The Media Terrorist Campaign
"Bringing the truth to the people, at any cost, whether they want to hear it or not!" could be the slogan of all the media terrorists operating in 2020. Using deep-target techniques aimed more at the corporate background than the immediate audience viewing them, the media terrorists of 2020 have only one target in mind: the liberation of infor-
mation.

Even the terrorists might be slightly misleading. After all, they do not threaten anyone, but rather make illegal use of the airwaves and other means of communication. Through channel jammers, those adventurous souls hope to bring the truth to the masses. No one is hurt, except for maybe a slight profit loss for whatever broadcaster they choose for their message and, they hope, the target of their attacks. The problem for the terrorists is that their targets are usually the government and corporations, which means that the FCC will come after them for sure, if there is not someone else on their trail first.

For the Referre, perhaps the best way to approach this type of campaign is during character creation. The creation of the campaign will be placed on the character of the charac-
ters, since for the most part it will be "them" versus the "wide world". By their very nature, it is very hard for the general public to understand what would push people to commit acts of terrorism. It is better to have a good grasp of what it is the players want to do, which characters that would cause the"loss of any old characters into this type of campaign. Once it is understood what the characters are supposed to be fighting against, then the Referre can create a campaign that is best suited for them.

Another interesting way of doing a media terrorist campaign is when the characters, through regular sessions, slowly turn into media terrorists. Take for example the situation where the characters discover A Truly Evil Plot by a corporation that would threaten them. The U.S. the world. Being good media, they decide to approach the television station/cyberpunk editor whatever with the story. At first no one believes them, but through perseverance, they manage to convince their editor/producers that they are right. The producer/editor agrees to run the story, but at the last minute, pulls it off. Time passes, the editors get out and the story is filed. However, they are frauds and they have kicked the corporation's feet. The characters, their collective tails between their legs, can do two things at this point: lie low and forget about it or do something about it. The problem is, every other door they knock at, they get the same answer: No one will talk to them. They have been blacklisted and are unable to get anything published, least of all The Truly Evil Plot. What are they to do? If they speak to underground media, the people to whom they spoke kept mysteriously dis-
appear. The only real option is to bring the story to light any way they can, including channel jammers. With time, they may find out more about The Truly Evil Plot and even thwart it sometimes. While this may seem heavily-handed, it makes a great introduction to a terrorist campaign, with the characters referring to themselves as "freedom fighters." This type of campaign is heavily on atmosphere, with a strong paranoid streak running through it, as the characters learn to trust no one.

The main thing to remember about a media terrorist campaign is that it should probably center around a conspir-
acy of some sort, in order to give the characters more of a focus. Unless very well conceived, a campaign of this type without a conspiracy at the core might be little more than video-game-like runs.

Therefore, a governmental campaign is more along the lines of a cop campaign, with a regular media campaign. The governmental campaign might be viewed as the strange mix of corporate type action—court cases, legal actions, and the like—when they save little more than an advisory body to the communi-
cation industry, or in this case, the FCC. The campaign was given a new charter which stated that they would regulate all media in the U.S., those that were present and any new media which might come about, issuing permits for operation and being responsible for re-use as well as penalties. It also stated that no media would be able to operate without a permit and that those who were found to be doing so would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law, which usually meant prison terms of five to twenty-five years for anyone directly involved with said illegal media. The charter strengthened the power of the FCC over content of any media, as well as giving them the right to use their power against anyone who was not following their rules. Anything from "un-American" talk to classified information and offensive speech was con-
sidered inappropriate, and the FCC had the right to act against it. In those cases, the FCC was given a tough mandate.

At first, the FCC found itself with a lot of power but with-
out the power base to use it. Lack of funding and trained person-
nel meant that although the FCC had large funds, it did not have anything more than an advisory body to the characters. So, the first year of the charter saw helpful increases in both budget and personnel. Then things changed: the end of the Seward Act, and, at the same time, the re-establishment of the FCC as an independent body. This change of mind, though, things did not change all that much, only some of the censorship rules. They did keep the licensing laws, however, and still deal harshly with people who operate without one. Whether this is to protect the rights of the population or those of the media corporations is another story entirely.

Something to remember when running a governmental campaign is that, as with a cop campaign, the characters need to believe in both the system and the government for it to work. A disillusioned FCC agent might be interesting to play later on in a campaign, but at the start it will just make they don't fully believe in the system. FCC agents still believe that there is a shred of hope for both the system and the govern-
ment, or they would not longer even bother with the whole thing anymore. Unless you want to have the characters on the take, the starting characters should still believe.
the men themselves existing. After a few weeks, the characters are given, by a mysterious stranger, several files which seem to prove that the information broadcast by the pirate station were somewhat accurate. Most of the correct information had to do with government corruption, involving some of the higher-ups in President Kress’ administration. What actions the characters take at this point will decide the direction the rest of the campaign will take. Is corruption widespread or not? Are the characters going to try actively to expose the corrupt officials? Who is the man feeding them information, and is he really a reliable source? These and many other questions will help shape the rest of the campaign, as the characters try to root out the corruption from within, or from the outside.

Keep in mind that there is nothing else like a good conspiracy to liven up a campaign.

MEDIA CAMPAIGN

LIVE AND DIRECT

"THE NEXT TIME THE CHARACTERS RENT OR WATCH A MOVIE, THEY HAVE A STRANGE FEELING OF DéJà-VU. SURE ENOUGH, IT’S EXACTLY LIKE A JOB THAT THEY PULLED A FEW MONTHS AGO..."

Granted, the suggestions above can be a little drastic, but they illustrate the point well. The media is extremely powerful in 2020 and a lot can be done with it. In the media is a powerful tool, and as such can be wielded in a variety of fashions. It can be used to crush people as well as to groom them towards power. Characters living in 2020 will learn quickly that they sometimes are little more than puppets dancing on the stage of the media.

For those running a media-antagonism campaign, the media can be a formidable foe. The advantage here is that since the characters are so deeply involved to start with, the referee can be made more subtle. Let us see the effect of this approach on the usual campaign types: corporate, underground, and governmental.

The Corporate Campaign

With the characters outside of the corporate media structure, the campaign will quickly become the standard “little guys versus the huge corporation.” There are different directions one can take with this. If the characters are part of the underground, for example, the media corporations might be after them for several reasons. They could have jammed their signal one time too many, or they could have stolen/broadcast a report that the corporation did not want aired (for whatever reason).

On the other hand, if there are no media in the party, a really nasty campaign could center around the characters being dupes in an experiment conducted by a corporate media. Anything from subliminal experiments to being an unwitting part of a broadcast recording can be used; even having some information as to what happened to a media that was in the wrong place at the wrong time. The series of adventures can be played out as a chase, with the characters realizing only too late that the only way to stop the corporation is to figure out why they are after them.

With an “inside” campaign, characters might be employees/employees who know too much and who threaten to expose the corporation for what it really is. One of the things that media corporations do well in 2020 is brainwash the public into believing their version of the truth. While this might not be immediately apparent to anyone consuming the media, someone who has worked for the media, especially the higher-ups and the technicians, know this for a fact. This can be used easily for an adventure. For example, the characters are working for the corporate media, one of the characters bumps into an old friend. He looks extremely nervous, looking over his shoulder every five seconds. When asked what is wrong, he laughs nervously, telling them nothing is wrong. Just before leaving, he makes a big production of hugging the character he knows, saying that he has to run. The character finds it strange, since he did not know him that well and had not seen him in quite a while. Once arrived at his destination, the character who was hugged notices that he has a small CD in his pocket. The disk will play on any playback machine with video output. The disk contains a five minute secret camera feed and opens with the Net 54 logo (or any other media corporation with a stake in the news industry). The characters will recognize it as being a clip that was shown on the news about the assassination of a government/corporate bigwig. The strange thing is, it is slightly edited for one shown on the news. On the disk, the characters can clearly see a different assassin, clearly not the one that was arrested by the police earlier the same day. If the characters think of verifying the disk, they can tell that the footage was not altered in any way. With a little bit of work, the characters will find that the assassin works for the government/corporation/whatever. Do the characters do? They have proof in their hands of a conspiracy of some sort and could possibly blackmail whichever is responsible. On the other hand, if they try to get in touch with their “friend” they will find out that he had lured them into the disk, which means that whoever had the disk before knew it is a fake. This whole adventure turns into a race against the clock, with the characters having to make a few moral decisions along the way.

Most corporate campaigns will probably follow this model, being centered around the most part on conspiracies and the like. Keep in mind that conspiracies perpetrated by media corporations can be as diverse as the people working for them. Keep your players on their toes and be creative. All lot can be said, just make sure to look at all the resources that are available to corporations.

The Underground Campaign

Any campaign with the underground media as the villain could be quite a change for the characters and the players alike. Initially, in a Cyberpunk campaign, the players expect to fight corporations and government slicks, in order to take back the government. The World Right Again for the common man. However, in an underground campaign, the very people the characters are trying to help are the ones putting sticks in their wheels. One possibility for this type of campaign is to twist one of the earlier types of campaigns and have the characters working for a large media corporation who is plagued by media temps and underground reporters. The character who has the story is a somewhat of a reporter who might have turned a blind eye earlier on. The terrorists could target his broadcasts, sometimes going as far as editing some of the news casts to make him look foolish. The whole affair could easily boil down to the reporter having either been instrumental in
The arrest of the terrorist's leader/companion/relative/whatever or having turned a blind eye which caused the terrorist's cause to have suffered. Such a campaign could be played on a personal level, which might make it a good diversion from the sometimes impersonal corporate campaign.

Being blackmailed by an underground media is also an interesting adventure idea, especially if the character decides to go after the blackmailer. This is probably the crappiest option, because the blackmailer could have copies of the material sent all over the place, waiting for whatever trigger to start broadcasting in case of an unfortunate accident.

Another aspect of the underground which was touched on earlier is that not all underground media people are in it for the good of the people who don't know what they're doing. The underground also contains its share of shady characters, ranging from the variously obsessed to the police mole. These people have other motivations for doing the things they do, which might not always be in the best interests of their various victims.

An idea for a series of adventures might incorporate the mole into the campaign. The best way to introduce a mole into a group is by having one of the players being blackmailed and then having the mole find out about it and expose his secrets to the team, who then expose a new mole. This is the reason why the mole is often exposed by a character or a group of characters. The mole is often exposed by the players because the mole is not a mole, but a fellow character who has been exposed by the players.

The Governmental Campaign

A governmental campaign shares certain of the elements of a corporate campaign, with some of the same characters in the same places. This is one of the elements of a governmental campaign, with some of the same characters in the same places. This is one of the elements of a governmental campaign, with some of the same characters in the same places. This is one of the elements of a governmental campaign, with some of the same characters in the same places. This is one of the elements of a governmental campaign, with some of the same characters in the same places. This is one of the elements of a governmental campaign, with some of the same characters in the same places. This is one of the elements of a governmental campaign, with some of the same characters in the same places. This is one of the elements of a governmental campaign, with some of the same characters in the same places.
Although most medias strive to be as unbiased as possible, it is virtually impossible to do so.

One way to look at it is like an onion, with each layer representing a little bit of knowledge, of the truth at its core. As the characters progress, they can discover little bits, furthering their knowledge of what is really going on. Note that any later piece of "truth" can, and most often will, contradict something that was found out earlier. As the characters advance, they will find out that nothing is as it ever looks at first, especially in 2020.

The one thing to keep in mind is that this also allows the Referee greater freedom, in the sense that she does not have to have the whole thing plotted out from the beginning, but can start a campaign with a general idea of what is going to happen. This is not to say that a Referee should not go in prepared, but rather that she should keep in mind that anything can happen, that the players might figure out the whole thing right away, or that they will screw things up so thoroughly that everything that she has done beforehand will be useless. Instead, if she has prepared only the first two or three "layers" of truth, she can have a greater amount of flexibility to change things. Besides, there is no such thing as a completely defined "truth" in role-playing. Unlike a novel, a campaign is not a finished product until all the dice are put away and the campaign is over, right?

How this works in the campaign depends on what effect the Referee wants to achieve. For example, to achieve a feeling of paranoia, you can set up an adventure where the characters uncover a government scandal involving excessive bribery. Several government officials and the characters have to put up a fight to get the story on the air. It looks good, mainly because both the FCC and the main advertiser for the newscasts are putting pressure on their producer to not air the report. It seems that the advertisement's mother corporation is the one being accused and they do not want the report to be made public. After a struggle with their producer and the higher-ups in the corporation, they decide to air the story. Many arrests follow and the characters feel like heroes, like they have accomplished something. Let a few adventures go by, without bringing anything up that is remotely tied in with that adventure. Everything is over, right? Well, not really. While investigating an unrelated story, the characters come across evidence that their previous story was a set-up, designed to get some troublesome members of the government out of the way. Furthermore, the corporation accused of bribing them was actually innocent—at least of this crime. What do the characters do? If they dig, they find a trail of evidence leading to a totally different corporation, with some rather nasty consequences.

In the above example, the players uncovered something they believed was the truth until they found out better. The catch is, for all intents, it was the truth. But what about the other conspiracy? Where will it lead? Is it again a set-up, or is it really the truth? By layering the story, many more plot complications can happen, making the game that much more interesting.

This notion of the truth does not have to be applied to conspiracies exclusively. The same also applies to any news stories that the characters might see, read, or file themselves. The thing to understand here is that although most medias strive to be as unbiased as possible, it is virtually impossible to do so. Just think about when you relate a story that happened to you to someone. If that person would then go and talk to someone else who was also there, he would get a slightly different story. The same is true of reporters and eyewitnesses. While the gist of the story might be the same, the telling of it will be colored by personal convictions. This is especially true of emotional issues. If you add the fact that the media corporations themselves have their own agenda for the news most of the time, you get an environment where the truth has a hard time coming out as it really did happen. But it is not only the reporter filing the story that sometimes biases a story. The photos or footage taken sometimes do not tell the entire story. Tricks like close-ups are sometimes used to make a situation look worse than it actually is, or choosing very specific photos to make the subject appear either smarter or dumber. All these little tricks combine in the end as a way to manipulate public opinion. Are they done on purpose or are they just part of human nature? That is for the Referee to decide. As long as he knows that these tools are available to him, the media will never look the same in 2020.

No one really knows what is true anymore in 2020; there are so many different fingers in the pie. The characters should be no different, instead thinking that they know the whole story while all they have found is the proverbial tail of the elephant. If the characters are naive enough to consult only one source for their information, exploit this fact. Whether they are media characters or not, there is never any excuse for not doing their work completely when looking for information. This applies to the media as well as any other source, be they the local fire or any witnesses.
TECHNOTAINMENT

History

Diverse Media Systems was founded in 1988, in post-Collaps Los Angeles, by former Columbia Records executive James Haughton II. Haughton was bored by what he thought was the evolution of the entertainment media into predictable, cliché-ridden pathways. Haughton recognized the entertainment potential in the emergence of new technologies and social structures, and wanted a corporation built from the ground up to capitalize on them.

Or, at least, that was the plan on paper. By the time DMS was setting started, Network 54 was already established as the new heavy on the block. When Net 54 executives looked at creative new media start-ups, the first thought that was often on their mind was "acquisition." This aggressive, hostile-takeover strategy was propelling Net 54 toward the stratosphere, but, in arrogantly predicting his own success, Haughton had foreseen the inevitability of Network 54 meddling and had prepared. When Net 54 made their first overtures in the boardroom and on Wall Street, Haughton politely informed them that he was not interested in being a subsidiary of Net 54. When they waved off Haughton's protestations and launched a full-scale hostile takeover bid, Haughton took the steps that would define the relationship between Net 54 and DMS for over twenty years. He sent an envelope to the Net 54 boardroom containing enough blackmail material to ruin four marriages, destroy three prominent political careers (including, rumor has it, the Presidentcy), and result in at least six indictments for offenses ranging from theft to conspiracy to commit murder, and possible treason. Net 54 quickly cancelled its takeover bid within twenty-four hours, and DMS bought back a substantial portion of its own stock at a greatly reduced price, doubling Haughton's personal fortune in the process. Haughton had been etched into Net 54's collective mind, however, and a feud was born that generates a substantial annual body count to this day. Many place the corporate rivalry between Net 54 and DMS as second only to that between Arasaka and Militech, in terms of its possible widespread implications.

Once DMS established its independence, it set about building the Media Corporation of the Future. Haughton invested heavily in the development of new technologies, including improvement of existing systems, such as cable television, and introduction of entirely new products, such as braindrean and the Video Music Chip (VMC) format. Behind aggressive marketing and cooperation from hardware manufacturers eager to introduce new entertainment equipment, DMS rapidly became the most potent force in cutting-edge entertainment. By 2008, under the visionary leadership of CEO Howard Wong (see below), DMS had developed extensive holdings in concert promotion, record music and music video, and braindrean production and, of course, network television.

In the decade since Howard Wong buttressed DMS's place as a media empire, fortune has been kind to the once-upstart company. DMS has firmly cemented its position as the premiere media-content provider. Although it owns fewer stations than rival Net 54, DMS produces more successful television shows, movies, braindrean titles, records, and multimedia products than any other company. They have maintained the cutting-edge image that propels sales to younger consumers. In other words, DMS is still "cool." The company has some internal differences, however. Shortly after the death of Howard Wong, a power struggle erupted between DMS founder Jonathon Haughton and his son, Jon III. Jon III was disturbed by what he saw as "executive cacaphony" in the wake of Howard Wong's tragic death. In a boardroom struggle, Jonathon Haughton seized control from his father, Jonathon, who subsequently "retired" to Palm Springs, where he rarely speaks to the public. Jonny Haughton immediately put his own stamp on DMS, with a research on new media technologies, aggressively pursuing corporate espionage and black ops, and intensifying the conflict with Net 54. A year after the Howard Wong confrontation, the rivalry between DMS and Net 54 cooled to boardroom market-share jockeying. Jonny Haughton recognized the publicity and espionage values in open conflict, and rapidly escalated the conflict back into a shooting war. The relationship remains tense to this day.

Today DMS stands atop a pinnacle with Net 54 as one of the two major media corporations in the world. They maintain an aggressive, hostile attitude and are widely feared by smaller corporations. The rivalry between DMS and Net 54 has polarized the smaller media companies, with many of them seeking shelter in alliance with one of the big two. Truly independent, smaller media corporations are becoming rare. DMS's position is not unassailable, however. Time marches forward, and aggressive, young companies are always nipping at the heels of the giants. For the time being, however, DMS has the image as the corporation to beat. Creative and deadly, and, for a corporation its size, dangerously agile.

Talent Recruitment

One area in which DMS is the unchallenged leader is talent recruitment. There are only so many people who can bring the realty big money to a media corporation, and DMS will stop at nothing to recruit them. DMS has a well-deserved reputation as the most aggressive and ruthless recruiter of talent in the industry. That includes both corporate talent (executives, programmers, producers, etc.) and "creative" talent (actors, musicians, writers, etc.). DMS offers outstanding pay and benefits packages for top-level talent, and actively seeks out younger professionals with fresh ideas and unbridled ambition.

DMS starts the recruiting process with a superb pay and benefits package, as well as the prestige of the DMS name. When that isn't enough, it calls in the Special Recruiting Division, which is the extraction/black ops section devoted to recruiting and converting people who are "rebels" to sign on. DMS has no qualms about extracting high-profile or valuable talent, even against their wishes, and has a top-secret "Talent Induction" facility: brainwashing programs for winning over people who express resistance to joining the DMS "family." Knowledge of the Talent Induction section is only a rumor outside of the highest levels of the corporation, and, of course, the people who have been subjected to it. TII section failures are rare, and survival of TII section failures is even rarer. DMS management will risk Talent Induction only on targets with a very high revenue generation potential. Good executives are actually at more risk than artists, since artists are widely regarded as disposable within the corporate structure. In fact, the average commercial shelf life of a DMS music recording artist is now over two years. A good executive can often survive as long as eight or ten years before reaching "relevance."
MEDIA CORPORATIONS | LIVE AND DIRECT

out that commercial media has really been that way since the invention of television.

Products and Orientation

DMS produces cutting-edge media that appeals to the younger audience so popular with advertisers. DMS has extensive holdings in television, cinema, broadcasting, electronic, and computer entertainment, live and recorded music, publishing, and professional sports. All media holdings are extensively interlocked, with DMS sports team games broadcast on DMS stations, DMS musicians scoring DMS films, etc. DMS also actively pursues licenses and co-marketing deals, but most of its development comes from in-house.

DMS lives up to its billing, "Diverse." It is always questing in new directions for entertainment. Consequently, DMS has always been the leader in the development and integration of new media technologies into the market. DMS pioneered commercial broadcasting, where other corporations thought it only had limited appeal. DMS has developed new interactive and computer-multimedia entertainment, using broadband public network technologies, and is moving aggressively into next-generation games/peer simulation and multi-person generated-on-the-fly virtual reality multi-point interactive virtual reality (MVRI) products that allow entire groups of people to simultaneously enter and interact in a wholly computer-generated, broadcastable-realistic environment. These allow such things as group sexual fantasy, large scale multiplayer simulation, and group training for military applications.

DMS technological development makes it a prime industrial espionage candidate, and DMS spends more money on internal security than any other corporation except Data East. Ares is a prime constituent in developing DMS internal security, and remains a site controller for several DMS sites.

DMS has a long-range strategy in place, continuing to merge traditional entertainment such as live rock acts with cutting-edge technologies such as MVRI to move into marketing and entertainment realms. Expect to be able to experience a football game from down on the field soon, and to see a rock concert from the perspective of the artist.

Structure of the Corporation

Diverse Media Systems is a publicly held corporation based in Los Angeles, California. Its shares trade openly. The Haughton family, along with the Blackwell Pension Fund investment group, is allied with Jonny Haughton, own a controlling share of the public stock. Control of the corporation is very centralized, with the Los Angeles office maintaining control over the subsidiaries and departments.

Key departments in DMS include: DMS Electronic Media (computer and broadcast), DMS Presents (live music and stage acts, DMS-Antares Studios (movies and television production), DMS Family Entertainment Group (athletics, live stage acts, television), Jupiter Ascension (publishing), Haughton Worldwide (teleconferencing and newspaper), Diverse Media Research (new technologies and labs), and DMS Syndication Group (international and domestic distribution).

DMS also owns many subsidiary companies outright or in part, including several record labels, small film studios, venues, producers, production houses, software, technological research, and more. Their tentacles continue to expand.

Internal Mentality

DMS hires the best and pays well. It is known as a tough pond to swim in, however. DMS has a reputation as one of the toughest corporate environments to thrive in. The way to ascend is to bring hot properties and revenue into the company, or to develop the Next Big Thing. Internship and rivalry is intense, with executives competing with each other for the same properties. It is said that the most creative, shrewd, and ruthless individuals can climb from the mailroom to the executive offices within a few years. It is also said that the executive who doesn't watch their back, or who brings in "butts" bad product, can be cut from the mailroom within days.

Internal alliances in DMS are tenuous, and internal blackmail, espionage, and assassination is reputed to be quite common. It is a company where great wealth and power await the successful, and dismissal awaits the successful. Success is tenuous, and competitors are always one step behind you, breathing down your neck and peering into your files. Protection of personal information is of key importance within DMS.

Despite the internal competition, all DMS executives have a huge amount of pride. DMS is the corporation to work for in big-time media, and that sense of pride unifies the executive staff enough so that the company can be managed efficiently. Also, all subterfuge and backstabbing tends to be below the surface, rarely disturbing the surface of the ultrafines offices. It is considered a bad form to make a public scene, unless slipping someone down.

Another side effect of DMS ruthless executive culture is that those who make it to the top are the smartest, toughest, savviest survivors in the business. Their skills keep DMS a fast-moving predator in the media business. Still, it is not a good prospect for those who are "recruited" to DMS against their will, only to find themselves immersed in a lethally fast-moving, rivalry-driven executive pool.

THE HOWARD WONG STORY: EXPLORING THE DMS-NET 54 RIVALRY

One thing that the directors of both corporations learned over the years is that artists are cheap and expendable. The audience is finite and only a few of them is often the best way to boost long term sales. Good programs are like gold, however, and must be strengthened at all costs. And the best programmers of them all was the legendary Howard Wong.

Howard Wong now in the tank of Net 54 over years, beginning his career as a programming assistant in 1996 after being lured away from an aging DataEast SGK. Wong's idea rapidly propelled him to prominence, and he was named Chief of Programming at Net 54 in 1999. For two years, Wong ruled Net 54's television programming department and television talent recruitment. During his tenure, Net 54 shuffled up a prime-time schedule with a fresh of shows that still warmly remembers. A fledgling DMS walked the line, as Net 54 and two years were the only shows on the schedule. Wong's contract expired in 2005, and DMS fired him away with a record score, valued by some over a billion dollars. Wong became CEO of DMS.

For years, Wong did what he had been doing for Net 54, while the company's executive team looked to back up their ratings and revenues. Wong also directed DMS expansion into the new television technologies, proving that his vision extended beyond television programming. A rising Net 54 declined rapidly in 2002, when it particularly had taken a ratings sweep period. They launched a black operation to extract Wong from DMS. After a fierce gun battle, Wong was spirited away from the DMS chair on the Caribbean island of Grand Cayman on a corporate jet. Twelve hours later, the takeoff, that jet was shot down, allegedly by Lazarus Group fighter jets hired by DMS and scrambled from Guantanamo Airbase in Cuba. DMS would rather not speak of Wong any longer. They have no new talent for the job. So they have no new talent for the job. And that's why their situation is so bad.

Howard Wong Lives

For many, the fate of Howard Wong ended there, a brilliant talent destroyed by the competition for his services. Recently, however, questions have begun to emerge. Examination of the crash site in the Caribbean and recovery of the wreckage of the plane yields three badly damaged bodies: the pilot, the co-pilot, and one alleged to be Wong. Genetic testing of remains in the cabin confirmed that it was Wong, leading to an official confirmation of his death in May this year. However, it has been suggested that Wong is still alive. Various reports have him living in seclusion in various locations, including Montego, Montreal, and Switzerland. Some sources have even placed Wong in a house with large windows that face inwards, but so far there has been no confirmation of either. Both DMS and Net 54 insist to this day that Wong is dead. But the past twelve years have seen an increasing number of reports that suggest Wong may still be alive.

Some people have taken to speculating that Wong, like the industry, staged his own death, staging the extraction and the gun battle. Conspiracy theorists suggest that a cloned alien body may have replaced the real Wong. Conspiracy theories are being spread by individuals in the media revealing, such as the description and alignment of the alien body. Others suggest that a cloned alien body alone would have cost considerably more than the real Wong, so they made a new deal with the real Wong for his services.

As to the idea of an alien body that Wong is death, but the conspiracy theorists are finding an audience in people eager for another media manipulation. They say that it is better that they have not learned who is behind the conspiracy theories. Is Wong alive? Most say no, but one thing is certain. If Wong is alive, we will never know how to return to the media. It would be a second coming to a real shot of Jesse Chavez, and he is the one they say is the one doing an all-out shredding war between Net 54 and DMS.
History

Network 54 actually started out as Network News 54, devoted to news coverage and news magazine production for other networks and syndicators back in the late 1990's. Outcompeted by organizations such as CNN and the Rolling World News Service (see below), Network 54 was facing tough times and tough restructuring. In the early 2000's, the corporation came under new management in a hostile takeover by the Dreyer Foundation, founded out of New Mexico. The Dreyer Foundation acquired all new management and launched an aggressive program of diversification and hostile takeover. Capitalized by the Dreyer Foundation's extensive wealth and industrial holdings, Network 54 was able to reposition as the first media supercorporation of the 21st century. In fact, Network 54 pioneered the aggressive hostile takeover and talent recruitment strategies later perfected by then-upstart DMS. Although the corporation would remain under Network News 54 until the year 2010, news became only a minor star in the corporation's constellation of media holdings. In 2010, the corporation was renamed Network 54, and Network News 54 became only one of many divisions within the corporation.

Network 54 rapidly became a monopolistic media corporation, with huge holdings in virtually all types of entertainment. Always competing with DMS, Net 54 excels in many of the same areas as its slightly younger competitor, but it also has some different strengths. Where DMS hedges its bets with many new technologies and is always driving the technological evolution of entertainment and media, Network 54 is much more of a broadcast stalwart. Net 54 has smaller sports, music, and technology holdings than DMS, but it owns many more stations and distributors. And, because of its several broadcast networks, actually reaches more people and controls more content and information than DMS does. Where DMS develops new entertainment technologies, Network 54 provides more of the programming and content that is actually played through them. Where DMS is ever questioning and evolving, Net 54 is reinforcing its position in established media that already have huge market penetration. Both companies thrive, and they compete fiercely for talent and product, but they also orbit in slightly different paths: DMS and Network 54 project different images to the public, and are perceived in slightly different ways. DMS is the company that people are impressed with. DMS is flash and style, loud noises and bright signs, beautiful stars and high-wattage scandal. Network 54 is taken for granted. A household word. A trusted friend. A ubiquitous presence, inescapable anywhere in the modern world.

Talent Recruitment

Net 54 is as hungry as DMS is for new executive and artistic talent, and they recruit equally aggressively, but they are a bit more subtle. DMS has a reputation as a harder, will- ing to knock down anyone who is promising, whether they want a DMS gig or not to see that there aren't plenty of people who will work for DMS. Network 54 will usually spend more time copigging and enticing, trying to lure people into its fold. Network 54 doesn't pay its artistic or executive talent quite as well as DMS, on average, but it is a considerably healthier working environment.

Competition is still for the best of the best, however. Despite it's justly earned reputation, Network 54 is not above extracting talent or strong-arming people who are not responding to more gentle recruiting procedures. As with DMS, a great deal of the heat at Net 54 lies on the Artist and Repertoire (A&R) people who are responsible for recruiting and developing music, television, cinema, and broadcast talent. But with the big risks and responsibilities come the big rewards. Of course, competition between A&R execs is fiercer than at almost any other level.

Products and Orientation

Network 54 is as diversified as DMS is, but its strengths are in different areas. Net 54 has many different kinds of media enterprises, but it remains, first and foremost, a television oriented corporation. Network 54 produces the most successful television shows on the broadcast band, including Frame Team, War Zone, McWatch, Anatomy Heat, America's Most Violent Home Videos, Skin, Bog, Rabbot at Low, and many more. Although it leads in many areas, DMS's television success is still shy of Network 54's.

Besides producing and syndicating many of the most successful shows on television, and harboring a stable of arguably the most popular television stars, Network 54 also owns more television stations and cable outlets than any other corporation. Since Congress rescinded all broadcast ownership restrictions in 2004, Network 54 has managed to consolidate 44% of all television stations in North America. It also owns a substantial number of overseas properties. DMS owns only 12% of the stations. The rest are owned by other broadcasting conglomerates.

Besides television, Network 54 also has strong holdings in cinema, live and recorded music, broadcast, and computer and interactive media. Unlike DMS, most of Network 54's non-television holdings are not under the Net 54 name. Some of the other companies are Cinestar and New Edge (movies), Heliosphere and Arcane (music), Rallian (publishing), 54 Binary (computer and multimedia), Network News International (news), and Westwood 54 (radio).

Television is king, sometimes at the expense of other departments. Needless to say, that can cause some internal resentment, but Network 54 senior executives have never been secretive about that. Their theory is, and it is largely believed true, that television is the route to the heart and soul of modern human beings, and if you control that, all else shall follow. So far, this philosophy has not hurt Network 54, but it has led to some intense inter-departmental rivalry and competition for corporate resources.

Network 54 has many more media-related holdings than DMS does. Net 54 is active in bodyguards and security, but it does not license from Arakas, unlike DMS, plastics research, construction, satellite design and launching, clothing and fashion, and restaurants and food services. These diversified interests give Network 54 a cushion against lean times in the media, should they ever arrive.

Structure of the Corporation

The parent corporation is simply called Network 54. Beneath that are arranged the major broadcast sub-
SOME NET 54 FARE
CAYMAN ISLANDS SPORTS —
THE BEST IN HIGH-IMPACT BLOOD-
SPORTS; TONIGHT: SAUCER-GRENADE
JAN ALAI CHAMPIONSHIPS - MEXICO
VS. CAMBODIA.
NETWATCH’S MOST WANTED —
TONIGHT: WAREWOLF, THE TECHNI-
PUNK WHO CRASHED A BIOCHEM
DATABANK DESTROYING YEARS OF CANCER RESEARCH.
THE ACCIDENT CHANNEL —
TONIGHT: HIGH-SPEED, MID-AIR AV-4
COLLISIONS.
FIREARMS WITH BOB TRAVIS —
TODAY: THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF BULLPUP.
"SPARKY" —
THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF SPARKY, THE RADARACTIVE DOG; IN HIS CROSS-COUNTRY TREK TO FIND HIS FAMILY AFTER BEING LEFT IN THE RUINS OF NEW YORK CITY.

The Network 54 broadcast subsidiary is the major branch of the corporation, generating most of the revenue, and receives most of the attention and funding. The other subsidiaries are not shabby by any stretch, but they all take a backseat to the precious television division. There are internal rumblings about reorganizing corporate priorities more evenly, but as long as the current management is in place, that is not likely to happen.

Network 54 corporate headquarters are located in New York. In fact, Network 54 is often called the New York Network, while DMS is the West Coast Network. Both are, of course, worldwide corporations. Control of the corporation remains firmly in the hands of the Devery Investment Foundation in New Mexico, under the control of 62-year-old “iron lady of broadcasting” Michelle Devery. The foundation owns nearly 30% of the company, with enough of the outstanding shares in the hands of loyal allies to account for a controlling interest.

Internal Mentality
Where DMS is a rapacious world of sharks each actively trying to surfmont its neighbor with subterfuge and backstabbing in high executive fashion, Network 54 prides itself on putting forward a more up-front front. Network 54 offices are very serene and quiet compared to those of DMS. Style is evident, but subdued. The official line is that the interests of the corporation come first. In reality, the competition is just as intense as at DMS, but it is much more in the background. Network 54 executives are expected to resolve their rivalries and conflicts quietly, without creating visible disturbances within the corporation. There is a level of active professionalism and group identity that doesn’t exist at DMS. That has led some waggish DMS executives to refer to Net 54 as “your father’s Oldsmobile,” and “the old lady’s network,” but the atmosphere within the 54 is definitely healthier and less paranoid than that within DMS. Nonetheless, it can be just as dangerous for the unruly and inexperienced. But in a quiet kind of way.

Network 54 talent tend to feel less masked than those at DMS. The talent turnover is a little slower, and job security

Marginal higher idrivepending, as always, on how many units you shoot or viewers you rope. General morale among the Net 54 stable is fairly high, and self-instigated defections and extractions are rarer than at DMS, where some people simply can’t hack it.

The calm front of the Network 54 offices can be deceiving, however. Beneath the apparently calm surface of the Network 54 executive and talent suites swim some of the biggest, meanest sharks of all. Be certain of this. It is no place to let your guard down.

GIANTS AT WAR: DMS AND NET 54 SQUARE OFF

DMS and Net 54 compete in the realm of news, shows, media products, and talent production and are, in fact, beset in the field, with the DOLs often rivals that the public expects more from America and Mexico and other high-profile military-commercial rivals.

Competition
In the media, it becomes clear in two things: 1) split staff and 20 hours in seats. NEWS is split among salaries. 2) News music, taped shows, posters, video discs, computer programs, graphics, brochures — and the like. How much does the whole product line cost? It looks like a million. Ruthlessly, quickly, there is no place on the schedule for producers that want money. At news, 3 years is rarity. At TV and radio, 2 years is rarest. For live events and movies, there is no room for producers that want money. You are expected to do it yourself. There is no room for producers that want money. You are expected to do it yourself.

Advertising
DMS and Net 54 aggressively advertise their products, spending millions on live events. The network's advertising is aimed at a mass audience, with little focus on niche markets. DMS and Net 54 have a wide variety of shows intended to attract a broad range of viewers. The network's advertising campaigns focus on new shows, events, and special promotions to attract new viewers and retain existing ones. The network's advertising campaigns are designed to create a sense of excitement and anticipation for upcoming events and programs.

Physical conflict
Of course, the thing that catches the most attention is probably the rivalry between DMS and Net 54. The Howard Wood derby was the most visible indicator of open, armed hostility between DMS and Net 54, but there has been a lot of rivalry behind the scenes, which has been in evidence in recent days.

During a stand-up gig at a local club in Los Angeles, a Net 54 star reporter Helen Daye is attacked and abducted by Holms Mott, a hired assassin working for DMS. After a dramatic chase and shoot-out, Daye becomes a talk-show host for DMS.

DMS broadcasts coverage of the much-anticipated NFL playoff showdown between the Atlanta Falcons and the Pittsburgh Cowboys on a live special from a studio set. The Cowboy-Steelers game is considered the most exciting game of the year, and the network's advertising campaign focuses on the excitement and intensity of the game. DMS provides live coverage of the game, including interviews with players and analysts, and highlights the game's most exciting moments.

Cyberpunk 2.0.0.0
World News Service

“INFORMATION”

History

“Like, visit the WorldSpot News, this is WNS world news...”

Lines repeated thousands of times a day, heard by billions. World News Service is the single most successful and respected news gathering agency in the modern world. It is a truly international body, cutting noteworthy news from all nations and distributing stories of interest to the rest of the world by television, computer, and print. WNS is the news service of record. The archives of modern history and current events are stored in the eyes of the world. Have you heard what WNS said today? Of course you have. Every person loves it.

World News Service didn’t start as the organization of record. It began life as a relatively modest computer wire service delivering news-on-demand across the broadsheets in the first few years of the 21st century. From that orientation came the early WNS policy of providing news to other broadcasting agencies, and not owning a broadcast channel itself. That policy went by the wayside in 2013, and WNS now has ten 24-hour satellite news channels, in addition to continuing print and computer distribution networks. WNS also continues to sell stories and news-gathering services to other broadcast and media organizations, including both Net 54 and DAMS.

WNS’s initial growth was slow. Other companies such as Warner–Tamer’s CNN and the Gannett newspaper empire controlled much of the American international news traffic, and the BBC was still the international organization of record. WNS used a combination of superb reporting and information gathering and modern cyberpunk corporate ruthlessness to consolidate its position. WNS developed and implemented the best and most modern news-gathering system on the planet, glibly incorporating new technologies into its field ENG (electronic news gathering) and studio systems.

The technological edge, along with superb talent recruitment and corporate management, allowed WNS to grow at an unprecedented rate, obliterating all other international news agencies in size and prestige by 2010. WNS still faces competition from CNN and British World Services (formerly known as the BBC World Service), but after a twenty-year history, it stands unchallenged as the world’s top news-gathering service.

Part of the reason why WNS soared to the top is that it worked with new technological innovations to find ways to bring new product to market. WNS made sure that it had a strong presence in television and print news, where it acted as a content supplier for other broadcasters and printers, like a wire service. With the advent of the broadband network, the redesign of the Internet, the ability to buy high-bandwidth data such as video-on-demand and fully interactive VR, WNS introduced the World Broadcast News Network (WBN), a fully interactive, video-on-demand news service accessible over the Internet. This still exists as a companion service to WNS’s other news services.

WNS also pioneered other areas of new technologies in news gathering. While other news organizations were still using bulky, high-consumption machines, WNS was experimenting with “stealth reporters” using experimental cyberoptic cameras for times when journalists were at risk. WNS was also the first organization to outfit all field reporters with portable broadband satellite systems, so that field reporters could shoot video straight to hard disk or flash-raid, download it to a laptop editing deck, and then transmit the finished product to the regional or home office via the satellite uplink built into the deck. This also improved WNS’s ability to orchestrate and manipulate live shots, with WNS reporters able to get shots in situations where journalists from other services were simply unable to manipulate their equipment. Of course, all services now use the techniques pioneered by WNS, but none of them have quite caught up yet. WNS remains one step ahead.

These days, WNS is experimenting with news by braindance, particularly for corporate and high-end customers who want to get the maximum exposure to an event. Several key WNS reporters have been outfitted with braindance recording gear, and are sent into hot news zones to get right into the thick of the story. Recorded braindance is combined with text editing, VR graphics, and voiceover to create what WNS terms “an immersive news experience.” So far, these services are not available to the general public, but they may become available if they are successful with high-end clients, and if the distribution problems can be solved.

WNS also bolstered its position by recruiting top talent. WNS has top flight reporters, writers, and producers, as well as some of the most visible international anchors in the world. All the technology in the world would have been worthless without brains, courageous, aggressive reporters to use it, and aggressive themselves in situations worth covering. WNS still prides itself of the best news gathering staff in the world. The trademark is that executive and sales positions are not as prestigious as they are at other media corporations, and often take a back seat to the journalism jobs in terms of glamour and prestige. Consequently, recruiting the best executives is often difficult, as young executives are often attracted by the flashy but shallower news departments of DAMS and Net 54, where executive opportunities are better.

WNS didn’t just rely on technology and talent to secure its position. It also co-opted the new cyberpunk corporate ethic wholesale, in the face of overwhelming opposition from established news agencies. In its first decade, WNS was not above spying, cheating, deception, espionage, and outright violence to get the best stories and throw other news agencies off the trail. WNS used these strategies overtly until it had consolidated its market share, by around 2011. Then, more concerned with image, it toned down its black ops and espionage considerably. It still engages in them, but far less often and with a far lower profile than it used to. The largest black-ops section at WNS is concerned with planting moles in other media corporations and news outlets so that it can get the inside scoop on stories and features that are being developed by competitors.

Today, WNS stands as the world’s top news-gathering and broadcasting organization. In a change from its early days of operation, WNS now has eight satellite networks of its own, as well as selling video news to off-channel distributors and other broadcast material for use on WNS channels or for sale to third parties. WNS is the news.

Talent Recruitment

WNS doesn’t have to recruit the best journalistic and producing and writing talent. Good people come to WNS. Even DMS and Net 54, both with impressive news divisions of their own particularly Net 54, which started as a news organization, cannot lure news people as talented as WNS has. That is because WNS is the best news organization in the world, and if you want to make the best name possible as a broadcast or electronic media journalist, and attract the highest amount of prestige, WNS is the place to be. There is no second choice. As a result of its reputation and image, WNS is consistently able to recruit the best news talent in the world, even at somewhat lower pay than DAMS and Network 54.

WNS’s pre-eminent position as a news organization doesn’t prevent some fierce competition for new talent and for established stars with expired contracts. WNS, DMS, and DAMS have all come to blows at various times over available talent, and there have been some hard showdowns over high-profile talent, as when DMS anchor Carver Dean was hired to WNS with a promise of an anchor gig on the flagship Worldwide News This Evening, as well as specials, a regular panel show, and a presidential debate moderator’s gig. DAMS responded by stealing away star war correspon-
The concentration on news produces a unified sense of purpose within WNS. Employees have a sense of pride in their product—they are creating a commodity of value, and not just useless fluff.

There are some spots for rivalry in WNS, all is not wine and roses. Competition is particularly intense among the reporters and anchors—broadcast journalists will often fight tooth and nail to be the first to get to a big story and the most air time. In a crisis however, they can come together in a hurry, relaying the information to the dark corners of the WNS tower.

dent Beth Reader with a record paycheck for a line correspondent.

WNS has to work a little harder to recruit top executives. In all media corporations, most executives have to deal with the influential and powerful people themselves (producers and studio directors tend to be of equally high stature), but in DMS and Net 54, executives play a much more prominent role in guiding the corporation and developing media talent. They also tend to move more, and can rise to higher positions than are possible within the relatively limited executive ranks of the much smaller WNS. Nonetheless, WNS does get good executives, even if they aren’t quite the incandescent go-getters that rise to the top at DMS and Net 54.

Products and Orientation


Of course, within news, there is a pretty good range of latitude within which to work. WNS major product is television news. That includes spot news as well as analysis, panel shows, talk shows, special and investigative reports, sports, and anything else that can be remotely considered news or journalism. WNS also produces specials, such as presidential debates, special events coverage, and so on.

In its first decade, WNS had no distribution or programming arm of its own, and simply packaged and sold its news to the highest bidders, or, in some cases, to all bidders. That did very well for WNS, but eventually it became obvious that, if they were going to be a major media player, they had to control their own distribution and programming. Now WNS runs ten full-time satellite channels that are accessible throughout the world. These channels are WNS Prime (combined coverage and multiple show formats), the flagship channel, WNS International, WNS Orbit, WNS World Sports News Service; all sports, WNS Europe, WNS Domestic (North America), WNS Asia, WNS (World Entertainment News Service), entertainment news, WFN (World Finance Network), and World Newsline International (one-hour news highlight format), and so on.

Some of WNS’s most successful shows are talk shows and features shows, and some of their most popular personalities are the hosts of these shows. There is some internal rivalry between the “hard news” spot reporting, feature news, live news, analysis, and the “soft news” talk shows, sports, entertainment sides of the corporation, but WNS recognizes that news is many things to many people, and nurtures each side of the corporation equally.

WNS also makes news available by computer or dataroom. Anyone who can log on can choose to see specific stories, video, and information on demand. General news is available in the public for free. Special services, databases, and information retrieval services may cost extra on a monthly basis. WNS also owns print holdings, and publishes the very successful America Today, Orbital Observer, and EuroNews print/data papers. It operates an entertainment tabloid called World Eye that makes more money than all of the other print put together. There are some specialized print and computer news services that reach specialized audiences interested in finance, politics, etc.

WNS also publishes a very popular series of “Annual Reports”, similar to the classic “Janes” series. WNS’s Annual Reports book/datakit series covers financial markets, world economies and national reports, corporate reports, politics and politicians, and weapons systems. WNS faces some stiff competition in this area from InfoComp, however, which concentrates solely on products of that nature.

Finally, WNS also continues to make news available to other media corporations and broadcasters. They have satellite news and television services that any media outlet can use. They also sell complete and partial news packages that can be modified at will. As a measure of their power and credibility within news, both DMS and Net 54 buy news from WNS at times.

Structure of the Corporation

Everything at WNS is oriented around the news, and all corporate resources are dedicated to making sure that the news service remains number one in the world. Corporate managers are at the disposal of the other divisions of the corporation, loading a little resentment, but everyone at WNS understands that the corporation’s fortunes rise and fall on the news.

The parent corporation is News Gathering (the king division), WNS Broadcast handles management and programming of all ten satellite channels as well as radio, WNS Print (magazines and publishing), and WNS Data Services (computer and video-on-demand). News Gathering supplies the content to all divisions; divided into five packages that is necessary for its products. Broadcast is the largest corporate division, encompassing a domestic and an international division, sales, and the management of all broadcast services and third-party licensing.

WNS is based in London, although it has offices all over the world. Most of the regional offices are simply places where reporters and technical crews can sleep and repair equipment, but offices in big cities are large, with studios and major corporate infrastructure. WNS is a public corporation. The largest single block of stock is held by Saudi tycoon Mahmet of Hanuti, who takes great pride in his hands-off policy. Hanuti’s holding company owns just over 30% of all outstanding shares. The controlling interest of WNS is held by a consortium of big-ticket investors who together control 50% of the corporation. The consortium is loosely bound, and some of those investors might be persuaded to sell out to DMS, Net 54, or another large corporation if the price was right. WNS has concerns about autonomy, since it considers itself “impartial”, and so far there has been no threat to the corporation’s independence. There are always rumors about DMS or Net 54 making a bid, however. Both corporations own small chunks of WSNs (which, in turn, owns small chunks of both DMS and Net 54). It would be a huge, deal-breaking acquisition, however, and no serious attempt has been made as yet.

Internal Mentality

World News Service has a far less frantic corporate environment than either DMS or Network 54. The biggest division of WNS is News Gathering, the department under which all reporters, journalists, and line producers work. It is also the division on which the success of the corporation is based, and all executives in this division understand that news must be supported. There is some tension and rivalry among executives, particularly people who want to move to the front line division.

The concentration on news produces a unified sense of purpose within WNS that is not present at any of the other big media corporations. Also, WNS employees have a sense of pride in their product, that in producing news, they are creating a commodity of value, and not just useless fluff. Of course, that is a bit of a rationalization, since plenty of the news is trashy, but whatever gets them through the day.

There are some spots for rivalry in WNS, however, and all is not wine and roses. Competition is particularly intense among the reporters and anchors, as you would imagine. Everyone is after the big story and the prime on-air gig. Broadcast journalists will often fight tooth and nail to be the first to get to a big story, be in the best place to cover a multi-reporter story, and get the most media time. In a crisis such as a war where all of the news departments (even those not directly involved) must be quickly mobilized, they can come together in a hurry, relaying the information to the dark corners of the WNS tower.

Apart from the headquarters, WNS offices tend to be extremely hectic and casual. Reporters move wherever it is comfortable for them, so that suits for anchor and city reporters, to fatigues and bus lids for war reporters and urban combat correspondents, life is fast moving, and people tend not to stand on ceremony. The corporate offices are more topic, serene and elegant, with people dressed in their business finery.
Swimming With the Sharks: More on Playing and Running Media Corps

All successful corporations in the Cyberpunk world are dangerous and cutthroat places to work, but Media Corps is different. Unlike other corporations, it's not a cutthroat paradise. There are no pools of empty bottles at the bottom of the floor where the beer is free. There are no generous benefits packages that will spoil any idea, credit, or success you have of your own.

More a quest for the next idea and the next big thing, Media Corps is more like a kind of crazy street gang. The corporation is divided into smaller teams, each with its own goals and values. The corporation as a whole is only interested in the next big thing, the next big idea, and the next big success. The corporation directs and controls the resources, while the teams work together to achieve their goals. The teams are responsible for coming up with the next big thing, and the corporation provides the resources to make it happen.

Running Media Corps

When you create a new media corporation in a Cyberpunk setting, you have two choices: be the media executive, or be the creator of the next big thing. Being a media executive means you have access to all the resources of the corporation, but you also have to deal with the daily grind of running a corporation. Being the creator of the next big thing means you have to come up with the next big thing on your own, but you also have to deal with the daily grind of running a corporation. The choice is yours.

Playing Celebrities

The world revolves around you. You are the center of attention. Everyone wants to be with you, to talk to you in your presence or absence. You are the center of attention, and everyone wants to be with you, to talk to you in your presence or absence. You are the center of attention, and everyone wants to be with you, to talk to you in your presence or absence.

Playing Media Corps

Playing Media Corps is an interesting proposition. Each player is a corporate executive, and they have their own goals and values. The corporation is divided into smaller teams, each with its own goals and values. The corporation as a whole is only interested in the next big thing, the next big idea, and the next big success. The teams are responsible for coming up with the next big thing, and the corporation provides the resources to make it happen.

LESSONS, LEARNED AND BRIDGES BURNED WITH C. J. O'REILLY

BOOB TUBE BONANZA: HOW I GOT ON TV WITHOUT REALLY TRYING

So, I woke up the hangover of my life. And that's saying a lot because I've had some whoppers. Two things struck me right away. The first was that the room was upside down. The second was that, even upside down, it was a very nice room indeed, even covered with party choices. After the usual few moments of intense disorientation and nausea, I realized that the room wasn't really upside down, I was.

That realization alone led me to downgrade my hangover from force five to force two (tropical storm).

I soon realized that most of my pain and disorientation was because I was standing upmost on the arm of a ten-thousand eurodelux couch, where I was in last year's top of the line, sublime experience. The man who hosted the fabulously popular IMS game show The People's Arena. That's the game where you're in two of the individuals with a legal complaint or grudge against each other compete in a multi-hop, high-stakes, high-stakes, and valuable prize coupons which are then traded for weapons, which the contestants use to do the death in a realm that changes weekly. But also that.

"Grady, break Mr. O'Reilly's right arm, and then throw him out.

Well, now, hangover or not, that's language I can understand.

"Grady, break Mr. O'Reilly's right arm, and then throw him out." Well, now, hangover or not, that's language I can understand.

"Grady, break Mr. O'Reilly's right arm, and then throw him out." Well, now, hangover or not, that's language I can understand.
After the commercial break, it was on to the third period. The pressure was all on Horst now, as he was beginning to look stupid because, despite his success in the quiet stage and the huge amount of weaponry he had purchased with it, he couldn't kill me. Eventually, the frustration made Horst careless. When his SMG jammed, he tried to pull a shotgun off of his back, but got tangled up in the sling. I used his split-second confusion to move up behind him and crack him one on the jaw with my weapon. As he went down, I grabbed the shotgun of his own shotgun once around his neck, using a maneuver I learned from a zany old Solto in Jamaica. Using the weapon for leverage, I clinched it and crushed its larynx, earning $10,000 in bonus money for a hand-to-hand kill against an armed opponent. The crowd went wild.

The show ended after the interview, and there I was, face to face with Beckett. For a man whose plates I had just crushed, and whose chief of security I had just stuffed off in a grizzly manner in front of an international TV audience, I stood there with my name tag on.

"What are you so happy about?" I asked. "Aren't you, you know, on that one."

"Not a chance," he replied, laughing. "I just saw the box office ratings. You just tarried me the best numbers of the year, during our prep week. We'll make an extra hundred million as advertising revenue of which our cut is about twenty percent. We've made a six figure man, Mr. O'Reilly!" He leaned conspiratorially towards me. "You know, you're very charismatic. You should think about night-time television."

He handed me a card. "Call me next week, and I'll set up a meeting with your producer. We'll see about these spin-off series on combat shows."

"You're not even mad about Horst?" I asked.

"What's to be mad about? His own kid gets a copy of the Home Game and some lovely parting gifts. I fed me with that million-dollar guy. It's no use getting worked up about what happens on the road, as the saying goes. I collected all of Horst's prize money and weapons as well as my own, which, with bonus money, came to $65,000. Not bad for one day's work. Of course, after tax, it came to only $58,000 and it turned out that I hot 6,000 in Azennad-ban deductions because, although I used one of their guns, it wasn't the killing weapon. But hey, I wasn't complaining."

—C.-J. O'Reilly, Las Vegas, California