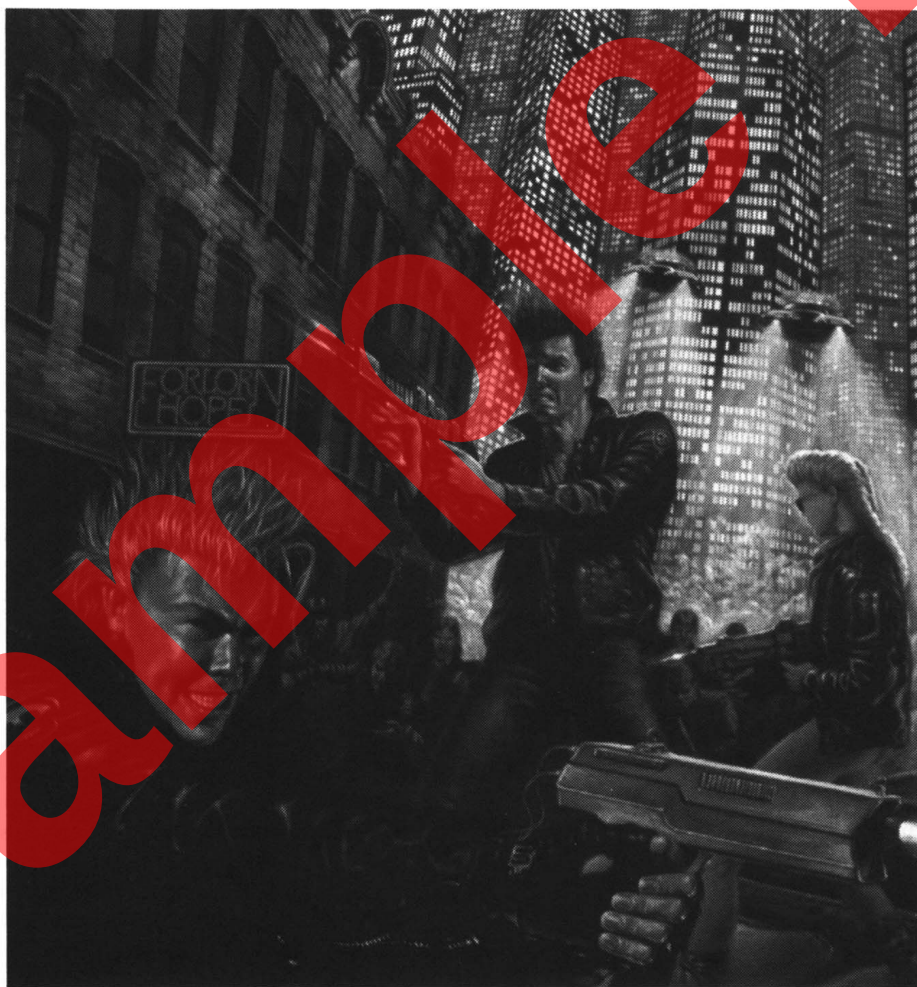




TALES OF THE FORLORN HOPE



EIGHT ADVENTURES FOR CYBERPUNK® • BY WILLIAM MOSS



INTRODUCTION

2002 The drug problem in the United States has grown to staggering proportions. Although their coca and marijuana crops have been destroyed by specially engineered viruses, the Drug Lords have endured. They have turned the resources of their plantations and empires toward the production of synthetic drugs, many of which are far deadlier than the natural ones they are replacing. Faced with an escalating problem, and political disaster, the U.S. Government struggles for a solution.

2003 The White House, firmly under the control of the Gang of Four, makes an ill-fated decision. All other measures have failed. In a final attempt to destroy the problem at the source American troops are deployed in Colombia, Panama, Northern Venezuela and Ecuador. Their orders are to destroy the plantations, estates, armies and manufacturing capabilities of the drug lords. The press refers to the fighting as the "Central American Action." The name is erroneous, as the bulk of the combat is actually taking place in the South American countries of Colombia and Venezuela.

2005 The fighting has escalated and U.S. forces have bogged down. Not only are they facing opposition from the tough and well-organized resources of the Drug Lords, but also from the national armies of the target countries. The Central American Action has become the Central American War. In America, popular sentiment against the war is rising. Not since Vietnam have U.S. forces been in combat for a continuous period longer than four months.

2007 Total cyberwar consumes southern Central America and northern South America. Regional destabilization caused by the fighting has spread the war north into Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras, and south into Peru and Northern Brazil. In this crucible, the original mission of interdicting the drug flow has become secondary. Survival is job one. Opposition to the war rages at home. Congress and the White House clash.

2010 The U.S. admits defeat after seven years of war. Weary and numb, the remaining Cybersoldiers are called home and the painful process of reintegration begins. An entire government is swept out of office in a fury of reform. Nothing was solved. One hundred and fifty thousand Americans are dead. Hundreds of thousands more are physically and emotionally scarred. No one who was there will ever be the same again.

2020 Welcome to the Forlorn Hope.

VETERANS OF THE CYBERWARS

Many American Solos cut their teeth as soldiers in the Central American Wars. They left the U.S. as many things; farm-boys and girls, fresh faced high school graduates, earnest college graduates, blue collar laborers and career soldiers. Upon returning home they found themselves a breed apart. Most had been in country at least two years, some as long as five or six. They were veterans of the toughest combat units; Rangers, SEALs, Green Berets and black ops groups so secret that they had no names. Their reactions had long since adapted to survival under combat conditions in the inhospitable mountains of Central and South America. Some suffered from the aftereffects of combat drugs. Many more had combat cyberware. While their comrades in arms readjusted to the drone of everyday life, these few struggled to find their niche. They were creatures of the edge, addicted to the adrenaline rush, with only one marketable skill. In the end, it was inevitable that they become Solos. And, it was only natural that they seek the company of their own kind.

Forlorn Hope is an adventure pack and source supplement based around a Night City club owned and run by South American veterans and frequented by Solos and Cyberpunks of various backgrounds. The supplement includes a description and history of the bar and detailed backgrounds of the staff and most interesting clients. The bar can serve as a backdrop for any number of adventures and makes a good hangout and rallying point for player characters who are tough enough to prove that they belong there. The people who patronize and work at the club form a useful pool of NPCs to draw from. Use them to cover for weaknesses in player character teams, or just to flesh out your adventures. Remember, if the NPCs seem powerful this is because they are primarily tools to keep adventures moving. If used wisely, they will add to the action without overshadowing the abilities of player characters. Remember also that most of the NPCs are older and more experienced than the average *Cyberpunk* characters.

This supplement contains eight short adventures, each designed to be completed in one play session. The adventures are not connected plot-wise, but each is based around a major NPC from the bar. There are detailed descriptions of all adventure-related NPCs. Feel free to improvise off of the adventures and adjust the power level to fit your group of players. The adventures are designed to be run in sequence, but this can be changed with minor modifications.

When running adventures from *Forlorn Hope*, or when using the bar in your adventures it is important to capture the atmosphere. The patrons of the bar are a close-knit group. Unfamiliar faces will be treated with distrust, reticence or outright hostility. New patrons must prove themselves in some way before they are accepted. But once accepted, a character will have few friends as loyal as those he or she makes at the Forlorn Hope. The first time your characters hang out at the bar, make sure they know that they are not part of the group. The first adventure or two will be their chance to earn the respect of the NPCs.

Now, relax and enjoy yourself as slightly gonzo Media C.J. O'Reilly takes you on a guided tour of the Forlorn Hope and its personalities!

Willam Moss

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TALES FROM THE FORLORN HOPE

C.J. O'Reilly

To C. J.
Date 8/2/20 Time 9 ☒ AM ☐ PM
WHILE YOU WERE OUT
M. John Freeman
of Forlorn Hope
Phone (1554) 4673
Area Code Number Extension
TELEPHONED ☒ **PLEASE CALL**
CALLED TO SEE YOU ☐ **WILL CALL AGAIN**
WANTS TO SEE YOU ☐ **URGENT**
☐ **RETURNED YOUR CALL**
Message Would like to see
rough draft of story.
Thnx.
(By the way - where were
you Tuesday night?)
Operator _____

AMPAD
EFFICIENCY*

REORDER
#23-006

Cathi,
Here's the draft
summe a call w/
changes photos
attached - C.J.

Solo of Fortune Special Editions.

Solo of Fortune Special Editions returns this quarter with more hard hitting reports on Solos in society. Roving freelance journalist C.J. O'Reilly has been prowling the West Coast for the last few weeks looking for interesting stories and locales. His travels recently took him to Night City, where he discovered an unusual club populated by an unusual cast of characters...

THE FORLORN HOPE—BACK FROM THE FAR SIDE OF CHAOS

Special to Solo Of Fortune By C.J. O'Reilly

-Night City



Everybody knows Night City. Spurred into life by the Central California corporate culture of the mid-nineties, it grew from a sleepy, seaside resort town into the United States' youngest metropolis in just twenty-five years. Once home to under thirty thousand people and several farms and ranches, the greater Night City area now boasts a population of over five million people and is one of North America's major corporate and industrial centers.

Night City's accelerated growth was catalyzed by world-famous developer Richard Knight. It was he who lured the mega-corps to the area with the promise of a new technological and business wonderland in the model of the Silicon Valley. Night also created the plan under which the city's growth and economy would be regulated. Night City was to be shaped into a perfect community; molded into an archetype of urban beauty and efficiency by the loving hands of an incorruptible administration, financed by development and corporate dollars. A showcase city for the world.

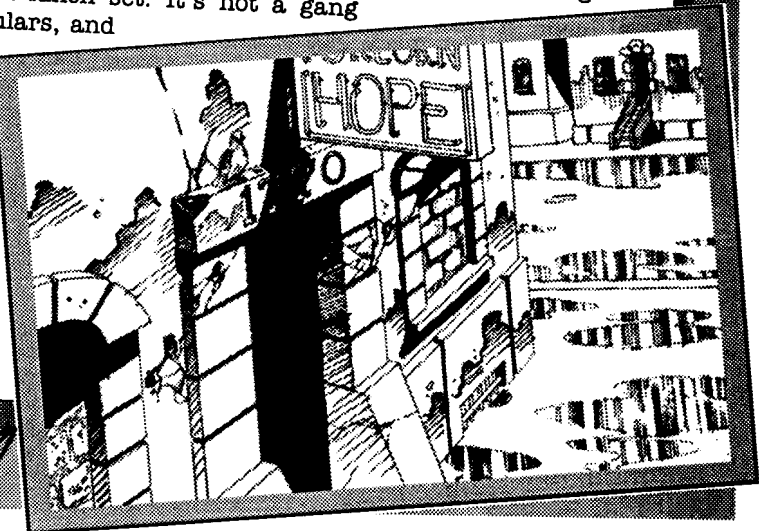
So sorry, Dick. You know what they say about the best laid plans of mice, men, and development tycoons (who are related to neither). The real Night City is a far cry from the idealized artist's renderings that still sit moldering on the walls of the administration building, next to the portraits of the "City Fathers" (most of whom committed incest with their creation, if you know what I mean). The result was a broke city run first by the mob and then by the corporations, with a corrupt and inept administration. Barely out of its infancy and already in decay.

But there is a good side to this story, hard as that may be to believe. With the death of Night City as the penultimate representation of the ideal American Society came space for those who live outside society. I'm not talking about criminals or gangs, I'm talking about Solos. I'm talking about you and me.

The Forlorn Hope

Just south of the Charter Hill area, near the waterfront, there is a district that has been around since the city was still called Del Coronado, long before the coming of Richard Night. Once it was a lavish tourist area, with Victorian hotels and a board-walk. Now it's given over mostly to warehouses and industrial sites. Tucked away in one corner, among the few remaining buildings from the previous era, there is a bar. It doesn't advertise, not even in the Yellow Pages. It doesn't attract kids or big-hairs. It isn't frequented by the corporate power-lunch set. It's not a gang hangout. It's a Solo bar. Its customers are all regulars, and they've all been to the edge . . . and beyond.

Like you and I, they seek the company of their own kind, in a place where the only code of behavior is their own. Where people understand why your eyes are always searching the room, never resting on one thing for more than a few seconds. Where people take the hardware for granted. Where people keep the stories inside the bar. Where people understand what you feel when you get a case of the shakes; they won't condescend or try to make you explain it. They



The Hope

put in sidebar →
already know the story, they've been there themselves. Just a nod, a pat on the back and another drink. You'll be there when it catches up with them. Where people understand. That's what the customers are looking for. And they've found it here. The neon above the door says "The Forlorn Hope."

The Forlorn Hope is something of a legend among Solos, Nomads, Netrunners, and other edge teasers. It's said that once you've been accepted here, you need never prove yourself again. I was intrigued by what I'd heard, and since I knew I was going to be passing through Night City on this tour, I thought I'd check it out.

The bar may not have an ad in the Yellow Pages, but it is listed in the phone directory. I gave it a call one evening and asked to speak to the proprietor. I was connected with a man who declined to give his name over the phone. I told him who I was, praying that my reputation would make an impression. Heck, everybody needs a little shameless ego gratification. No such luck. When I identified myself, the only response was a clipped "So?" Having crashed and burned with the BIG MEDIA PERSONALITY ploy, I opted instead for humility. I told the nameless man on the other end that I was touring the country for *Solo of Fortune* special editions, taking interesting stories as I could find them.

The Forlorn Hope had a reputation, and I was hoping I could do an article on the place and a few of its regulars. The man said that some of his customers were press-shy and might take a dim view of media exposure. Faced with rejection, I made my final ploy: the old wheedle and concession gambit. I said I would speak only to people who volunteered themselves. Photographs would be taken only with the approval of the management and the subjects. As a fellow veteran, I could understand the sensitivities of his customers. I suggested that he poll them to see what they felt about me dropping by. After some deliberation, he agreed to that proposal. He said he'd call me back.

I spent two hours sitting in my hotel room waiting for the call back. I was beginning to think that I'd been given the brushoff, when the phone finally buzzed. It was the man I'd spoken to. This time he identified himself as Dr. John Freeman, owner and manager of the bar. He said that several regulars had agreed to speak with me, and if it was okay with them, it was okay with him. He wanted to meet me personally first. He suggested that I come down to the bar that night and talk with him. If he liked what he heard, he would give me the run of the place for a couple of days. Not one to argue with an invitation, no matter how guarded, I agreed.

An hour later a taxi dropped me off at the address that Freeman had given. It turned out to be a big, old, four story Victorian hotel left over from the Del Coronado days. A neon sign over the wide, corner doorway gave the name: **Forlorn Hope**. Behind that, the faded remains of the previous sign were visible: Hotel Sierra. That made me laugh. Hotel Sierra . . . Sierra Hotel. I wondered if that was why Freeman chose this building. Music leaked out from behind the double doors. It would have been louder if the ground floor windows weren't bricked up. Only narrow slits remained. That was all right, there wasn't much left to see in that particular neighborhood. I pushed on through the doors.

It didn't take long for me to start feeling uncomfortable. The moment I walked through the door everyone looked at me. If I'd been a regular, I'm quite sure everyone would have gone back to their drinks and jokes. As an unfamiliar face, though, everyone continued to stare. Conversation didn't stop, but there was a noticeable drop in volume. At least the band didn't stop playing. I put on my best casual look and headed for the bar. The Forlorn Hope is in the grand lobby of the old Hotel Sierra, and the bar is where the reception desk once was, at the back of the room, diagonally opposite the front door. It took maybe thirty seconds for me to thread my way through the crowded tables across the room. It felt like a day and a half. As I passed each table, the people sitting there would grow silent, resuming their conversations only once I had passed.

At least I got a good look at the layout in my trek across the room. The lobby had been extensively remodeled to fit the bar. To the left, where once had been a grand staircase, there was a projecting stage just big enough to accommodate the band that was busy jamming away. Further left was a wide hallway leading to new stairs, the backstage area and a couple of restroom cubicles. A line of booths started in the corner and stretched toward the door. The wall to the right of the bar was almost completely lined with more booths. About twenty-five small tables dotted the floor, leaving only enough free space for a small dance-floor. It was impossible to tell what else occupied the upper levels, or lower, if any.

I reached the bar before dying of acute self-consciousness, but only barely. Behind the bar was a large woman dressed in a black outfit that clashed nicely with her shocking pink hair. I flagged her

Forlorn hope. 1539. [ad. Du. verloren hoop, lit. 'lost troop' (hoop = Heap). Cf. *enfants perdus*.] 1. Orig., a picked body of men, detached to the front to begin the attack. Now usually, a storming party. Also *transf.* and *fig.* 1572. b. pl. Reckless Bravos 1539. c. A desperate enterprise 1768. 2. With wordplay: A faint hope, a 'hope against hope' 1641.

The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles, third edition.