



A Scenario for *Altered Carbon: The Role Playing Game*

Inspired by the Netflix Original series
based upon the novel by Richard K. Morgan

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BAY CITY... IT'S A GREAT PLACE, UNTIL YOU get to know it. The dirt under the Protectorate's fingernails; The codger with an old war wound and a story that everyone pretends to pay attention to. The one they've heard a thousand times, the details getting lost in the wall of sound. You can't even hear your own thoughts anymore. But something finally cut through the white noise.

The gods can bleed.

Laurens Bancroft was going away, God knows for how long. Slap on the wrist? Deletion? For 'Real Death'? Who the fuck knows. The future looks different when you're living in the clouds, even a future in storage. For all I know, Bancroft will be in a holoporn mansion for a century and will call it a punishment. For the grounders, it's hard to care. A death sentence for a meth would be living a day in our lives... And at the end of it all, we bury our dead, forget they existed and move on. Bay City Police Department was too busy congratulating itself to save face from the shitstorm of inquiries and investigations that were being made. The grounders too busy watching with a nauseous fixation on the glittering Aerium to hear the carefully crafted opinions of the meths about how

one of their own has fallen, whose real worry was what the demise of their biggest and brightest means for them. If Laurens could fall, who were they? Really, who cares what they think anyway? But us in the Twilight? We saw something different.

We saw the rats scurry to their dark corners, those people with things to hide took the chance to bolt when the eyes of the world were all on Suntouch House, only to catch a glimpse from a corner of their eyes that Head in the Clouds crashed into the sea. The beaches were covered with people for weeks, each hoping to carry off some pieces of the wreck that washed ashore, like a relic taken back from the Crusades. To the rest who ran away, each one took a piece of the story with them to keep it away from prying eyes; hiding it, hoping that it never sees the light of day. How do I know this? I'm the one paid to hide them. I'm the one who tells them what dark room will keep them safe and for how long. My clients are the gamut: Lowlifes, scumbags, family men, corporate stooges, yeah, even a meth or two. You don't believe me? What, do you want their names?

Sorry, that's strictly confidential.

WHAT IS BAY CITY CONFIDENTIAL?

BAY CITY CONFIDENTIAL TAKES PLACE A FEW months after the events of *Altered Carbon*. Laurens Bancroft has yet to be sentenced and his DHF remains in storage, his clones are taken into the custody of The Protectorate. Takashi Kovacs has left with his money and Lt. Ortega and Elias Ryker have been reunited and promptly took an extended vacation on their boat and haven't been heard from since... but this is not their story.

In the months that followed Bancroft's arrest, a firestorm of investigations broke out. The resources of The Bay City Police and The Protectorate, even CTAC were brought in to manage the simultaneous investigation into the Bancrofts, the incident at Head in the Clouds, and the internal investigation into corruption at Bay City Police Department. Amidst all this chaos, one person managed to slip away unnoticed... or rather, has gone missing: Captain Tanaka. In Captain Tanaka's absence, and with Lt. Ortega's and Kovacs' investigation revealing that Tanaka was in the pocket of Reileen Kawahara, The Bay City Council thought it best to hire from outside to replace him until the extent of the corruption could be determined. The Bay City Council insisted that The Protectorate get involved... and they did. The investigative arm of CTAC was mobilized and almost daily it seems, a new person from the precinct was disappeared under the suspicion of corruption.

In the public, all eyes were cast skyward towards the Aerium, even as something stirred among the grounders. Criminal syndicates are making their move to grab more territory as BCPD is in disarray and a wave of organic damage events is overwhelming what few officers the police have left that aren't under investigation.

THE SCENARIO

The important thing to remember for this story is that it is not one story, but three parts that might make an entire story if you so choose. As strange as this may sound, it is designed to encourage the imagination to draw the connections between what might otherwise be disparate events in the same story. This is not uncommon in the annals of noir storytelling. Where the protagonists are put in front of a baffling conundrum and, over time and through investigation, try to make sense of it. *Altered Carbon* itself is an example of this, where seemingly unrelated events actually converge in one colossal conspiracy with some of the most powerful and influential people alive.

What is presented here is a series of events, three parts organized however you wish for them to work but it will be the exploration of characters and the use of their resources, skill, and wits to see how they interact with the events as they unfold. In this sense, since it is character driven, the story may play out differently with multiple playthroughs and the sessions may take unexpected turns based on what the players wish to do. Considering that the use of “Influence Points” () are a crucial part of how the game works, this is not only expected, it is encouraged.

// GAMEMASTER'S NOTE

The structure of Bay City Confidential is nonlinear. Each of its three parts can be its own campaign, but doing parts in certain sequences will change the dynamic of the NPCs and the events that transpire (and possibly even the ending). How you organize this is up to you. You can even have a “pick two” approach where the players will have to decide what part of the story their characters take part in, and one part will have to remain unexplored. Either that, or a large party can be divided, but that has several logistical issues. How you run this story is, of course, ultimately up to you.

NOIR STORYTELLING, EXPANDED

The core rulebook for *Altered Carbon: The Role Playing Game* features a few tips on how to run a noir-style story that has layered conspiracies. That section (found in Chapter 7) would be a helpful read to get you in the proper mindset to run this kind of campaign. The most important thing to keep in mind is that the story absolutely does not need to make sense on its face. In fact, the pieces not fitting together quite right is what provides the dramatic tension of the story. The storytelling of noir has one large weakness for an untested or inexperienced storyteller in that the drama of the story is paper thin. The audience, your players, cannot feel like they are ever ahead of you in the story. The pieces not fitting together combined with the dogged insistence that there is some underlying truth that ties them together is a tremendous asset to a gamemaster, provided the players are willing to go along with it. If you, as a gamemaster are fortunate enough to have very insistent and creative players, they will likely draw a lot of conclusions on their own, and as a GM your role is simply to affirm or deny the truth of their conclusion.

This does not mean that the story is completely open ended and that you do not have to resolve any aspect of the story. The story evolves as more details come out and the conclusion is distilled out of the series of events that play out. Those things that remain unknown can remain mysteries that can themselves be looked into or they can dovetail back into the narrative in unexpected ways. The main purpose of Bay City Confidential is to provide some structure to an otherwise spiraling series of interwoven events that the player characters find themselves a part of.

Players looking for guidance as to how to create characters in this setting can be encouraged to leave a lot of their own character's past a mystery, as revealing details as they become relevant to the story can develop a character organically and reduce the stress of trying to come up with a compelling backstory. Again, the *Altered Carbon: The Role Playing Game* core rulebook has numerous "baggage" options to give some idea as to what the player can include, if they wanted to narrate their past as opposed to leaving it to chance based on their DHF age, as per normal character creation rules.

PREPARING FOR A SESSION

It might seem daunting to prepare the game for a non-linear structure, but it helps to know that all you need to do is fill in certain roles in the story. Oftentimes player choice will fill many of those needs. Those that don't feel the need can be displaced by nonplayer characters of a similar category or social standing. Consult the Cast Groupings section later in this chapter for what kind of groups all NPCs will fall into. Simply put, any character that is not chosen as a player character can be used as either antagonist, or foil as they are called, or a pure NPC option can fill any story need you have.

So, in order to facilitate this, the organizer of these games will need to fill in the following cast roster prioritizing player characters and then filling in the rest with the nonplayer characters provided here or ones of your own creation. This reference will be used throughout the game and across chapters, or can change from chapter to chapter if you wish.

NOTE // Characters are introduced from their respective points of view on this story. In this part, they're separate, even at odds, but as the story unfolds, the main goal of a GM is to find some gravitational threat or story that pulls these people together.

RUNNING A SESSION

There is a lot of flexibility about how a GM goes about running a session, but there is a significant benefit to the players to fully explore their options getting into character, and embracing the setting.

CAMPAIGN PROGRESS DICE

The use of Campaign Progress dice can be utilized in order to gauge not only the outcome, but the surrounding details. Depending upon how long you want to run the campaign, you generally want to roll one die per "Part" and the higher and greater the number of dice rolled, the greater the chaos the characters have caused and the harder it will be to operate clandestinely.

See the "Endings" section of the *Altered Carbon* Core Rulebook in order to see how to gauge the kinds of dice that need to be rolled.

There are many ways to handle campaign progress using Campaign Progress Dice, but in this situation, considering how open ended the structure is, it can still use a new dimension since this is a scripted scenario that stretches across multiple stories. There can be very specific things that are tied to the result of rolling Campaign Progress Dice for the part being played.