

# A TIME TO RUN AND A TIME TO FIGHT

COVER

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“Sam? Wake up, Sam.”

The woman forced her eyes open and found only darkness. Her entire body hurt and she had the strangest feeling, like she was half out of her body. An icy wetness surrounded her.

She heard the voice again. “Wake up, Sam. It’s time to go. I’m working on opening your cage, but you have to move when it opens.”

“R ... Remo,” she thought as the fog in her mind began to clear. She had tried to say it, but the respirator in her mouth prevented speech. She had no idea who Remo was, but the name came instinctively.

“It’s good to know you remember my name, Sam,” sounded another voice in her head. “The labcoats did a real number on you. I’m reading numerous modifications that have damaged your connection to the Resonance.”

“Resonance? Who am I? Where am I?” She began to flail about in the wetness. Her limbs felt almost foreign, heavy, but nimble and responsive.

“Your name is Samantha, and we’re in a lab facility in Chicago. More later. It’s time to go.”

Light flooded her vision, and she was thrust forward with the sound of a waterfall. Her body twisted as the respirator yanked from her face and she fell on her back to the floor.

“Two problems, Sam. First, you have a cortex bomb implanted. I’ve disabled it temporarily, but you’ll have to get it out before too long. Second, I’m reading three people about to enter the room.”

As if on cue, the door opened. Two guards led the way, each human male swinging his Ares Predator V like a flashlight around the room. Behind them was a dwarf male wearing a lab coat and pounding on his commlink in frustration. The dwarf shouted, “Kill her!”

Sam’s body moved before she thought about what to do. She moved with a fluid grace that felt foreign to her. She leaped toward the guards, tumbled between them and thrust her legs upward, catching each man in his crotch. They jerked upward from the impact and then sank to the floor in writhing balls of pain.

The dwarf pointed his commlink at Sam like it was a remote control. His shaking hands jabbed at a button on the control over and over, convinced that one more press was all he needed to make it work. Whatever it was didn’t respond. Sam rolled up from the ground and planted her fist into the dwarf’s face. His head snapped back with a sickening crack and he fell backward to the floor.

“Good. Now the implant,” Remo said in Sam’s head.

Sam suddenly realized she could feel the implant in the back of her neck, not by touch but by some part of her soul reaching out to the device inside her. She spoke for the first time. “Remo, what is this I’m feeling?”

“That’s the device you have to remove. And that’s you trying to reconnect to the Resonance. As I said, your connection has been damaged by all the stuff they’ve put in you. But it hasn’t been destroyed, thanks to your submersion.”

Sam could also feel the devices in the three people she’d just dispatched, their weapon icons, and the door lock. But she couldn’t feel much farther than that. She grabbed the armor jacket and pistol from one of the guards and laid them on the table. Then she grabbed the medkit and commlink from the lab coat. She instinctively connected with the commlink and turned on its camera.

With one hand she pulled a scalpel from the medkit, and with the other she held the commlink behind her head so she could see the back of her neck through the camera. She stifled a scream as she cut into herself. She clearly wasn’t a medic, but she didn’t have to cut deeply to find the cortex bomb. She dug it out with the scalpel, put them and the commlink on the table, and slapped on the medkit in auto-doc mode.

“Good job, Sam. Now, you need to get out of here.”

Sam put on the oversized armor jacket, now her only clothing. She picked up the pistol and ran into the shadows.

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# INTRODUCTION

SRM 5A-01: *Chasin' the Wind* is a *Shadowrun Missions* living campaign adventure. Full information on the *Shadowrun Missions* living campaign is available at [shadowruntabletop.com/missions](http://shadowruntabletop.com/missions) and includes a guide to creating Missions characters and a regularly updated FAQ. All maps, player handouts, and other playing aids are found at the end of this document.

## PREPARING THE ADVENTURE

SRM 5A-01: *Chasin' the Wind* is intended for use with *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition*, and all character and rules information refers to the fifth edition of the *Shadowrun* rules.

### ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

SRM 5A-01: *Chasin' the Wind* consists of several scenes. These scenes form the basis of the adventure, which should be completed in approximately four hours. If you are running short on time, you should streamline each and be a little more generous with clues, target numbers, and other requirements to aid in guiding the players through the adventure.

Each scene outlines the most likely sequence of events, as well as how to handle unexpected twists and turns that inevitably crop up. Each one contains the following subsections, providing gamemasters with all the information necessary to run it.

- **Scan This** provides a quick synopsis of the scene's action, allowing you to get a feel for the encounter at a glance.
- **Tell It to Them Straight** is written to be read aloud to the players, describing what their characters experience upon entering the scene. You should feel free to modify the narrative as much as desired to suit the group and the situation, since the characters may arrive at the scene by different means or under different circumstances than the text assumes.
- **Behind the Scenes** covers the bulk of the scene, describing what's happening, what the non-player characters are doing, how they will react to the player characters' actions, and so forth. It also covers the setting of the encounter, going over environmental conditions and other properties of the location as well as providing any descriptions of important items.
- **Pushing the Envelope** looks at ways to make the encounter more challenging for experienced or powerful characters and other ways you can add some extra spice to the scene. This subsection

should usually only be used for home games, or games where time is not a factor. At most convention and Open Play events, gamemasters should omit this information. It adds to the scene but does not contain important information.

- **Debugging** offers solutions to potential problems that may crop up during the encounter. While it's impossible to foresee everything that a group of player characters might do, this section tries to anticipate common problems and other suggestions for dealing with them.

## RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

Gamemastering is more of an art than a science, and every gamemaster does things a bit differently. Use your own style when it comes to preparing and running the adventure and do whatever you feel is best to provide the best *Shadowrun* game you can for your players. *Shadowrun Missions* adventures are designed to run in a standard four-hour convention time slot.

Please keep this in mind when running the adventure. You should leave at least 15-20 minutes at the end of the time slot to complete any necessary paperwork and pass out the players' **Debriefing Logs**. (Make sure that you have enough copies of the **Debriefing Log** for this adventure to give one copy to each player after running the adventure.) This section offers some guidelines you may find useful in preparing to run *SRM 5A-01: Chasin' the Wind* (or any *Shadowrun Missions* adventure).

### STEP 1: READ THE ADVENTURE

Carefully read the adventure from beginning to end. Get a feel for the overall plot and what happens in each scene. That way, if something different happens, you won't be caught off guard and you can adapt things smoothly.

### STEP 2: TAKE NOTES

Take notes for yourself while reading through the adventure that you can refer to later on. Possible things to note include: major plot points (so you can see them all at a glance), the names of various non-player characters, possible problems you notice, situations where you think a particular character can shine and other things you'll want to keep in mind while running the adventure.

### STEP 3: KNOW THE CHARACTERS

Prior to the start of the adventure, examine the PCs' record sheets and Debriefing Logs for your reference and have basic information about their important abil-

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ities handy so you can refer to it during play. Also go over the characters and keep their previous events listed on the Debriefing Logs in mind when determining non-player character actions in various scenes if such a dynamic has been included.

#### STEP 4: DON'T PANIC!

Gamemastering involves juggling a lot of different things. Sometimes you drop the ball and forget something or you just make a mistake. It happens, don't worry about it. Nobody is perfect all of the time and everybody makes mistakes. Just pick up from there and move on. Your players will understand and forget about it once you get back into the action.

#### STEP 5: CHALLENGE THE PLAYERS

Gamemasters should challenge the players but should generally not overwhelm them. This is not to say that games cannot be deadly. If the characters die through their own actions and repercussions of those actions, then so be it. But the idea is to challenge the players and their characters, not to bury them. If the enemies and challenges are too light for the characters present, then increase them. On the other hand, if the characters are badly outmatched by the enemies, then tone them down. Make things difficult but not impossible.

## GENERAL ADVENTURE RULES

*Shadowrun Missions* adventures use the rules presented in *Shadowrun, Fifth Edition (SR5)*. Standard rules such as success tests, limits, glitches, critical successes, and other common mechanics are described in *SR5* and are not repeated in this adventure.

Please keep in mind when preparing for the adventure, that the PCs will not necessarily comprise a balanced party. It's entirely possible that the party will be made up entirely of technomancers or back-to-nature shamans. If the characters run into a brick wall because of such complications, show flexibility and use your best judgment in how you lead them back to the plot.

#### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

Non-player characters (NPCs) are essential to any adventure. They are the allies, antagonists, and background characters in the adventure that interact with the player characters. NPCs in this adventure have already been created and can be found throughout the adventure.

Minor NPCs are found in the individual scene that they appear in, and generally have a brief write up, noting only their important skills and the gear they are carrying.

Major NPCs can be found in the **Cast of Shadows** at the end of the adventure. They have more detailed write ups and include most of the skills and the gear they have access to.

The NPCs in this adventure should generally stand up to the average player character but may need some adjustment to suit a particular group of characters, especially a more experienced and powerful group. The scenes and NPC descriptions offer tips on adjusting the NPCs to suit the abilities of the characters in your group. To adjust the power level of an NPC, refer to **Helps and Hindrances** (p. 378, *SR5*). Take the player characters' abilities into consideration when assessing the NPCs in this adventure and modify them accordingly.

#### MISSION DIFFICULTY

Gamemasters are encouraged to use their own judgment and to adjust the difficulty of the encounter to take into account the abilities of the players. If the players have no magical support, replace magical defenses with mundane ones. If the players are weak on combat, reduce the number of enemies by one or two. Conversely, if they're steamrolling the opposition, add one or two enemies to the fight. Missions should be difficult and something of a challenge but should not be insurmountable.

A simple method for adjusting difficulty is to simply increase the dice pools and Professional Ratings of the enemies. A simple +1 or +2 to all combat and defense tests gives enemies a minor boost in power, while a +3 or 4 will make them truly formidable. Adding to their Professional Rating will give them a larger group Edge pool to draw from, and gamemasters are encouraged to use this Edge when logical.

Often a combat scene will tell you if it's supposed to be challenging or is simply there to serve as filler or a minor obstacle that the players should steamroll through. When possible, use this as a guide to know when to tweak the enemies and encounters. If it doesn't say, assume the scene should present a challenge to the power levels of the players.

#### A NOTE ON LOOT AND LOOTING

Gamemasters should be careful what they allow players access to, because they can and will try to steal everything not nailed down (and even then, they often have pry bars and claw hammers to deal with those nails). *Shadowrun Missions* operate under the assumption that two players who have run the same missions will have roughly the same amount of resources available to them (give or take some negotiation and a little bit of minor loot fenced), so when players are able to steal and fence a lot of gear or are able to get their hands on high-priced vehicles, cyberdecks, or foci, it

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can unbalance the game and make it unfair to players who didn't have the opportunity to get those items. Gamemasters should avoid letting the players get into a position to do high-value looting whenever possible.

## CHICAGO, THE CZ, NOISE, AND BACKGROUND COUNTS

While for many the Chicago and the Bug City Containment Zone are synonymous, the CZ comprises less than one-third of the total landmass of the city of Chicago proper, not counting suburban areas and farmlands connected to the city. But the CZ is still big, and it is the rotted, gutted, feral heart of the Windy City. It starts at 115<sup>th</sup> Street to the south and runs nearly thirty kilometers north to Belmont Avenue, and reaches from the Lake Michigan on the east to an average of fifteen kilometers inland to Harlem Avenue on the west. A mass of torn-down buildings and hastily erected barricades were added to and reinforced over the three-year period that the Containment Zone was in effect, and even now nearly twenty years later this barrier stands as an imposing divide between the Zone and the outside world. Anyone can supposedly freely travel between the Zone and Chicago proper, but Lone Star watches those coming out and the gangs and warlords watch those going in very closely.

Between the Cermak Blast, the bugs, the debilitating effects of FAB III, and years of death and metahuman misery, astral space in and around the Zone is horrible. Unless otherwise noted in the scene, assume a default background count of 2 anytime characters are within the Containment Zone. The count fluctuates wildly at times, so players should expect to encounter everything from high background counts and mana voids to various aspected backgrounds and mana warps. (See **Background Count** sidebar for full rules. Future *Shadowrun*, *Fifth Edition* rulebooks may supersede these rules). Areas of Chicago outside the CZ may also suffer background count bleed from the Zone.

Besides the background count, the CZ is a virtual nightmare for deckers and technomancers. The persistent low-level background radiation coupled with a distinct lack of modern matrix broadcasting equipment through the area results in a high level of constant background Noise that makes even basic matrix communication difficult. Noise levels will vary from area to area, but unless otherwise specified in the scene, assume a default Noise level of 2 anytime the characters are within the Containment Zone.

## BACKGROUND COUNTS

Background counts impose a negative dice pool penalty equal to their rating for all tests that are linked to or utilize magic in any way (i.e., spellcasting, summoning, assensing, any test made while astrally projecting, and any active skill that benefits from active adept powers such as killing hands, critical strike, great leap, or improved skills, etc). Dual-natured creatures and spirits suffer this penalty to all actions.

Aspected background counts grant a boost to any limit that utilizes magic in any way (see above) to any metahuman, spirit, or dual-natured creature that matches the aspected domain. This includes spellcasting Force limits, so spellcasters need to be careful as it can be hard to control the additional surge of mana. Any magically active being that does not match the aspected domain should treat this as a normal background count and suffer penalties.

Background counts above 12 are called either a flux (for aspected domains) or a void (for magically dead zones), and are very dangerous. Any being that is magically or astrally active in any way (dual natured, astrally perceiving, casting a spell, has an active adept power, has an active foci, etc.) takes background count – 12 unresisted Stun Damage each turn that they are active and exposed to the flux or void.

## PAPERWORK

After running a *Shadowrun Missions* adventure, there are several important pieces of paperwork that need to be filled out.

The first is to make certain to distribute a copy of the adventure's **Debriefing Log** to each player. As the gamemaster, please make certain to fill this out and sign off on it for each character. In the interests of time, you may have each player fill out the sections, with appropriate values that you give them. Please consider the PCs' actions in the scenario when providing Reputation modifiers, per those rules (p. 372, SR5).

The second is to make sure that all players have updated their character's **Mission Calendar**. PCs are allowed to go on one run per week. The calendar is used to track the character's monthly lifestyle expenses, adventures, and their downtime exploits.

Finally, once an adventure is completed gamemasters should head over to the official *Shadowrun* forums at [forums.shadowruntabletop.com](http://forums.shadowruntabletop.com) and look in the *Shadowrun Missions* section. There will be a section to post the outcome of the Missions adventure. Future adventures will be affected by these results. Without gamemaster feedback, the PCs' exploits will be unable to affect the larger campaign.

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## MISSION SYNOPSIS

In 2052, the Shiawase Corporation, through its subsidiary Hephaestus Technologies, bought Janus Industries. Janus was a small computing research firm based in Chicago that had broken away from the University of Chicago and Argonne National Laboratory and privatized just after the first Crash. When Hephaestus Technologies took over the building, they found a secret laboratory in the basement that was engaged in research on interfacing human minds with the Matrix, well before the otaku began to appear. The research was mostly unsuccessful, but Shiawase saw some promise in the research and so they diverted more resources into it. The following year, the Containment Zone went up and the lab found itself cut off from the outside world. In the twenty years that followed, the lab found a little more success, mostly because they discovered Samantha, a six-year-old latent technomancer, and abducted her for their experiments. The researchers nurtured the girl's abilities as best they could, but it was a free sprite, Remo, who was her true guide into the Resonance even when the researchers had her implanted with bioware and heavily gene-modded for their experiments. Eventually, the researchers found out about Remo, but it was too late to do anything about him.

Last week, Remo helped Sam free herself from captivity in the Janus lab. Thanks to her numerous augmentations, she killed a dozen guards and scientists on her way out of the facility. Since then, she has been living on the streets in the CZ, which are somehow familiar to her even if they have changed since her abduction twenty years before.

Shortly after that, Lofwyr assigned Simon Andrews to move to Chicago and take control of the facility. Simon did not know what is in the lab or why Lofwyr wants it, only that Lofwyr wants it, so he began to put out feelers among the local Johnsons for a team of runners to investigate the place.

Juan Xihuitl has also heard of the incident with the Janus lab, but he has decided to approach it from the

angle of the woman who escaped. He hopes to hire the runners to rescue (or re-abduct) her and deliver her to Nick Ryder, who Juan believes he can manipulate into using her to deny the dragon his prize (that is, to prevent Saeder-Krupp from taking the Janus lab).

Meanwhile, the runners have been hired by Quantum Princess to insert wireless transmitters into two Matrix nodes just inside the CZ, ostensibly to repair Matrix connectivity in Chicago, but really to allow her to “piggyback” on the new NooseNet Grid (local pirate grid running alongside Chicago's public grid). This is, she hopes, the beginning of a new era for Chicago. But she is also cautious because she knows that the new era will lure all kinds of interested parties back into Chicago.

While the runners are on the run for Quantum Princess, they get two calls from their fixer. One call relays information from Simon Andrews, who is asking them to investigate the lab facility (which he claims has been Saeder-Krupp property all along); the second has a request from Juan Xihuitl asking them to find Samantha.

When the runners arrive at the lab facility, they find it recently abandoned, perhaps as if they were expected. They find a dozen dead bodies, killed within the last week, and a storage facility with a dozen cloning tanks, eleven containing identical human females—clones of Samantha. A reasonably good decker can hack the lab's node and discover that the lab was bought by Shiawase a year before the bugs hit. They also find in the cloning area, in addition to the three dead bodies, some blood, and a deactivated cranial bomb, which Samantha removed nearly a week ago (see *A Time to Run and a Time to Fight*, p. XX).

The runners then have to track down Samantha. When they find her, they'll have to either talk her into coming with them or subdue her. Once they put two and two together (since she looks exactly like the clones they've seen already), they have a choice to make: Do they give her to Nick Ryder? Do they give her to Simon? Or do they try putting her back in the tank themselves to cover everything up?

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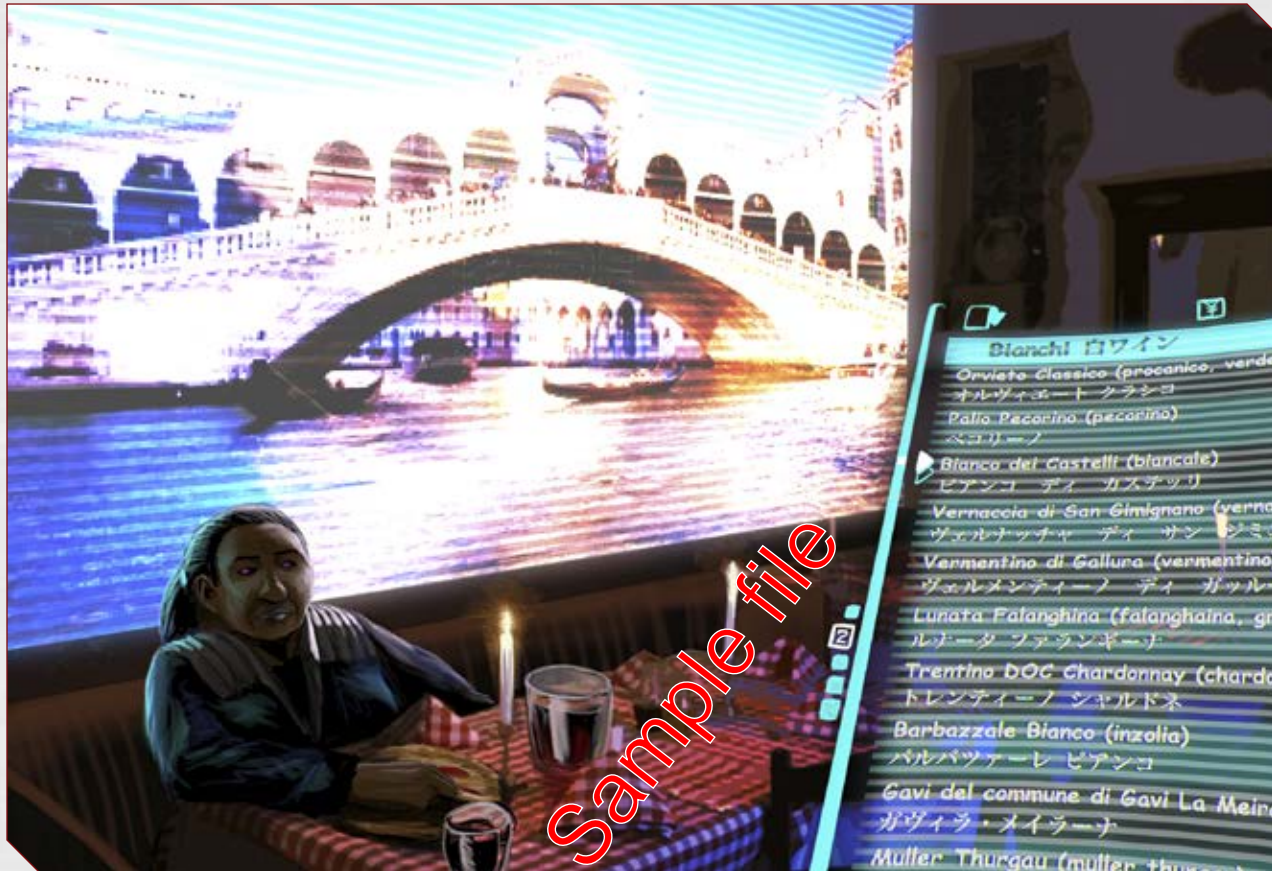
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SCENE 1:

EVERYONE COMES KNOCKING



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SCAN THIS

In this scene, the runners' respective fixers contact them with a job from Quantum Princess.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

What a surprise. It's snowing in Chicago in January. As the wind howls outside, you thank the runner gods that you're in a nice warm pub or, even better, in a nice warm bed, and not somewhere running around the Containment Zone for a fistful of nuyen or whatever barter you'd have to scrounge.

Then your commlink flashes the face of your fixer. "Catch you at a bad time?"

Then again, it is nice to make a living.

Your fixer goes on. "It's strange. No sooner does the new mayor announce the reclamation program that the biz starts lining up. I got a job for you, omae, headed into the CZ. Johnson would like to meet in person in two

hours. There's a table reserved at Chicago's Own Pizzeria in Northside. Watch the slip-n-slide out there, chummer."

Read this after the runners agree to the meet:

There are no AR ads, but Chicago's Own doesn't really need them. The smell of traditional Chicago-style crust and real meat lures you from blocks away into a pizza-lover's dream: the last real Chicago pizza place. Chicago's Own is a century-old restaurant, but a few additions have been put in place over the years, like bars over the windows, barricaded windows upstairs, and razorwire over the top. The place is literally brick-and-mortar, with a few scorch marks across one side.

When you arrive, you find the table reserved for you, and Ms. Johnson is already there. She is an Hispanic human female in her mid-fifties, dressed in runner style with an armored jacket, dark fatigues, and boots. Her right temple sports two chrome datajacks, and she

