

WELL, I WON'T DO THAT AGAIN

Sarah leans back into the soft comfort of the real goose-down pillows with a smug smile on her face. It's certainly not because of the less-than-satisfying efforts of the man just starting to snore beside her. When her glance falls on him, it carries a hint of contempt, when she bothers to think of him at all. Her feigned rapture and bogus praise at the end of their rather lackluster and embarrassingly brief tryst was an acting job any trid star would be hard-pressed to match, and he ate it up with a spoon. Men could always be counted on to hear exactly what they wanted to.

As a lover—and she uses that term loosely, even in her own mind—Darryl Rose is a disappointment that she will be well rid of once he signs his little drug company over to her in the morning, making it a Renraku subsidiary. His little wife was more than welcome to have him all to herself again, though Sarah couldn't understand for the life of her why the woman would want the boringly average man. Hell, the only reason Sarah had given him the time of day, let alone the best sex he was ever going to see in his pathetic little life, was the thousands of square meters of real estate that his grandfather gave his life to turn into a profitable little company before the bugs and the bomb.

No, the real worth of the forgettable Mr. Rose is what he can give her and her superiors. His company is a good start. The original corporate headquarters in the old Containment Zone almost makes it worthwhile. But the research lab in that abandoned factory is the real prize.

It seems that late Paul Rose was as brilliant as his grandson is mediocre. He had personally researched many of the Awakened treatments that had turned his company into a huge success. The medicinal uses of deepweed can be profitable, and his refinements of psyche to produce fewer side effects are still the industry standard, but the real prize may very well still be waiting for her to claim.

It seems that Founder of Valley Rose Pharmaceuticals was fascinated by the possibilities of fluorescing astral bacteria. Maybe he was a genius, or maybe he was psychic, but it seems that, at least, according to his grandson, Paul Rose was researching a vaccine against FAB when the bugs appeared and the wall went up.

And if that research has any merit to it, Sarah would be willing to kiss the man sleeping next to her in his own version of blissful ignorance... and mean it.

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INTRODUCTION

SRM 5A-03: *Gone Long Gone* is a *Shadowrun Missions* living campaign adventure. Full information on the *Shadowrun Missions* living campaign is available at 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-03: *Gone Long Gone* 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-03: *Gone Long Gone* 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-03: *Gone Long Gone* (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 115th 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 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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Sarah Silverleaf has learned from the CEO of Valley Rose Pharmaceuticals (during her company's acquisition of Valley Rose) that the company had been researching a vaccine against FAB before the bugs arrived and everything went to hell. Darryl Rose is a bit timid in his business strategy, and he has moved the company's focus from Awakened diseases to addiction therapy and has not pursued his grandfather's old research. Sarah hires the shadowrunners to go fetch the information ostensibly needed to prove their claim of ownership on the old site, but she is really sending them after the research material so that Renraku can use it to find a way to keep their mages safe if the megacorp were to do something nasty, like secretly start mass-producing their own version of weaponized FAB-III.

Maggie Goldberg gets wind of what's going on when Sarah takes a meeting with her boss at MCT, Ito Takahara. Maggie has access to further information—that the Valley Rose research offices are inside the Cermak blast zone, and that some combination of the vaccine and the warped radiation changed the founder of Valley Rose into a toxic shaman. She is instructed to help the runners, and contacts them with an offer to sell the pay data to her instead so that neither corp gets their hands on something so wrong. She suggests they talk to Lothan the Wise to get the lay of the land in that slice of the old CZ.

Lothan knows the layout of where they're going, and

he tells them they'll never manage on their own. He has fought the Founder and claims to have won, but he lost an old focus of his. He'll give the runners whatever information he can if they agree to bring it back to him—assuming they survive.

On the way into the former CZ, the runners are ambushed by a local minor gang, whose leader is getting increasingly pissed that all these new people are coming into HIS neighborhood without even a by-your-leave and getting all involved in biz that he sees as rightfully his. A local who goes by the name of Goober sees it go down and offers to help the runners fix their vehicle in exchange for some barter they'll probably have on them, like extra clips of ammo. If they mention the job to him, he offers them some merchandise in exchange for one of the medical drones the gang is rumored to possess.

When they get to the research facility, it is close enough to the blast site that they have a limited time before they start feeling the effects of the radiation. There are scatters still living in the above-ground portions—a minor warlord and his gang, who run errands for the Founder. The medical drone Goober is looking for is upstairs with the warlord. The vaccine information is on a old node in the basement. It's disconnected and unanswered, but that's where the Founder calls home. We'll have Lothan's focus on him, but it is bound to him now. And he won't give up it or any other of his toys without a fight.

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SCENE 1:

PLANS LIKE THIS DON'T ALWAYS FAIL

SCAN THIS

The runners are introduced to Sarah Silverleaf and are given the details of what she claims is a simple data recovery job at the edge of the Cermak blast zone.

TELL IT TO THEM STRAIGHT

Daylight in Chicago is not much different than daylight anywhere else in the UCAS, if you ignore things like the broken skyline, the ever-present stench, and the lack of a decent soykaf. At least the overnight rains have kept the smog from being too bad.

Daylight is also a little earlier than you'd prefer your fixer to call you, but at least she waited until the hour had moved out of the "ungodly early" range and into merely "unpleasant."

"Quit your bellyaching, chummer," she says when you answer your commlink. "I got biz for you, and it's paying real, live cred. Simple data recovery, null persp. You'll meet your Ms. Johnson at the Gale Street Inn on North Milwaukee. Oh, and pack your iodine pills."

BEHIND THE SCENES

Sarah Silverleaf, who will always refer to herself as Ms. Johnson, is waiting for the team when they arrive, sipping on a glass of what appears to be white wine. She is obviously dressed to impress—or seduce—and will focus her attentions on winning over the member of the team most likely to find her attractive in order to distract him into taking the job without too many questions or negotiations. She will be as flirtatious and seductive as she needs to be to keep his attention without alienating the rest of the team.

The runners are encouraged to order a meal—on her—while they conduct negotiations. Sarah does not order anything and, if asked, explains that the inn has been known to serve real meat when it's available, and it doesn't agree with her system. She chose the restaurant specifically to put the runners at ease, assuming they will be much more pliable with some real food in their system.

Sarah explains that she wants the runners to retrieve some files from an offline node in a building inside the former CZ in order to demonstrate ownership of the building and its contents. The interests she represents have recently acquired the company that owns that property, and she wishes to ensure that her employers

get the full value for their nuyen. She offers the runners 5,000 nuyen (+ 500 nuyen for each successful net hit on a contested Negotiations Test, up to a maximum of 2,500 nuyen extra).

Once the runners agree to the job, she explains that the necessary data exists in an offline node that resides in the basement of the former Valley Rose Pharmaceuticals building on the corner of South Racine Avenue and West 20th Place. A successful Chicago Geography or Radiation Hotspots (2) Test allows the runners to recognize that the location is still within the radiation zone. Sarah tells the runners that she wants the node delivered to her intact. If asked, she tells the runners that her employers don't have an interest in any other equipment or souvenirs that may be in the building, and so the party is free to scavenge what they will. Her only concern is the node.

VALLEY ROSE PHARMACEUTICALS

VRP is a privately owned pharmaceutical company founded by Paul Rose in 2035, specializing in Awakened drugs and treatments for magical maladies. The corporate headquarters are currently located in Gary, Indiana. The original headquarters and R&D facility was at 2035 S Racine Ave. Paul always took a very personal interest in the research, frequently assisting the chemists at the R&D facility. He was working at the facility when the containment zone was erected in 2055 and, despite the best efforts of his son and acting CEO, Steven Rose, he was not able to convince Lone Star to allow the company to extract Paul. When the Cermak blast went off on October 1st of that year, the proximity of the facility to ground zero made it almost a certainty that none of the remaining employees survived. Steven ceased all further efforts to recover his father or the rest of their people and was confirmed as CEO in November of the same year.

The current CEO is Darryl Rose, grandson of the original founder. His father had started expanding the company's portfolio by branching out into other therapeutic areas, and Darryl has continued along that same business model until Renraku purchased the company earlier this year.

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