Sidetrack Adv 1: The Undercity

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Introduction

An almost-fatal malfunction in the PCs' ship's hyperdrive strands the characters on the high tech world Leumond III for about 2 weeks. They find some time for R&R before duty calls them to an unlikely mission.

Progress, the AI taking care of the city of the same name has called for the help of CORE, because its subroutine responsible for the sewers has gone rogue. All calls have been ignored and a drone envoy has been gunned down by a security servoshell. The PCs are to sneak into the subsystem core, find out what is wrong and possibly fix the problem.

Leumond III

Leumond III is a civilised world that is a long time member of CORE and well known for its artists. The city of Progress covers the whole northern continent with its glistening white towers and floating parks (which look like green balls as they are suspended in zero-g fields). Above the centre of the city floats a dimly glowing sphere called "Brightness Sphere" which almost looks like a lesser sun but is connected to the ground by various cables, escalators, and lifts. While the sphere hovers about 300 m above the highest tower, it is safe to use the escalators because tractor fields keep people from falling. This sphere is where Progress, the central benevolent AI ruler, resides.

Setup

Meeting Progress

While the PCs wait for their ship to be repaired, they are sent a message by the local representative of CORE, Deidre Ghost, a rank 9 agent. They are ordered to go to the Brightness Sphere and meet Progress which is in dire need of help. Upon arriving, they will be ushered into a huge hall with robotic upper bodies covering the walls and about 5 servoshells in robes standing in the vast empty hall. Amidst the silence, there is only an echo of the PCs' steps and the humming sound of the odd servomotor.

Progress will address the PCs from many mouths, often starting a sentence with one drone and ending it with another one. It sounds like a worried mother that fears for her stray child.

What the PCs know

Progress informs the PCs that its subroutine responsible for the sewers has gone rogue. All calls have been ignored and a drone envoy has been gunned down by a security servoshell. The PCs are to sneak into the subsystem core, find out what is wrong, and possibly fix the problem. Should the problem be D'Vor related, they are to call for backup immediately.

The PCs are given a plan of the sewers, priority access to all lesser autofacs (allowing the manufacture of any everyday portable item as well as small arms), and information on the rogue system. The sewer subsystem controls 3 combat drones which normally patrol the sewer, 25 other servoshells taking care of maintenance work, and a system of nano-sized sensors spanning the whole sewer system. Since the sewers are fully automated, human access points are rare and it will take the PCs an hour or so to get to the physical location of the sewer subsystem software. Another problem is that the sewer map comes from the time of the original construction. However, the sewer subsystem has long since optimised the many tunnels to better

serve the needs of the city, further complicating the search for the core.

Back Story

A group of thrill seekers has rigged the AI to create a dangerous scenario for their "games". The "Red Queen Club" is a group of humans of various backgrounds but with a distinct liking for illegal firearms. If they can be apprehended and subjected to personality adjustment that would be a big victory but gunning them down is not an option unless in self-defence.

Encounters

The following encounters are likely to take place during this adventure, possibly in the order described here but maybe one or the other becomes obsolete due to the actions of the PCs.

Sewer Patrol

This encounter always occurs after some time in the sewers. On their way to the subsystem core, the PCs encounter one of the patrolling armed sewer security drones. The encounter takes place in several steps.

1. A notice check of 4 allows the PCs to hear that something is approaching. A MoS of 2 gives the general direction, otherwise the echoes confuse the PCs. They now have two rounds before the drone arrives.
2. Hiding is an option, especially in the sewage. This might help to avoid this conflict completely.
3. If the PCs start a fight, the drone will try to gun them down and will put the subsystem on alert unless somehow jammed. The sewer subsystem will then be able to track the PCs with the camera grid. (It did not do so before, because there is too much data to monitor the whole network all the time.)

Use the *generic sewer map* for this encounter.

The Subsystem Core

If the PCs have managed to attract attention, the encounter will be against prepared opponents, otherwise the opposition will be simple. Use the *sewer core map* for this encounter.

Opening the door to the sewer subsystem hardware requires a Technical Sciences (Electronics) check vs. 5, a MoF of 2 will cause the door to jam, requiring explosives to open it (difficulty 7, a MoF of 3 opens the door but also blows the stuff inside to smithereens).

Simple Opposition

The core will be guarded by a single combat drone which will be directly fed the input of the various nano cameras in the vicinity. During conflict the subsystem will spout mad pulp villain style taunts at the PCs.

Prepared Opponents

There is one drone standing at the ready and another one submerged in the sewer, in order to attack from behind. The third drone was destroyed by the Red Queen Club and is thus unavailable. 4 maintenance drones stand at the ready to ram and confuse the PCs. The AI will propose to surrender at first and then open a crossfire at the PCs.

Finding the Truth

The inside of the subsystem clearly shows tampering, some new components have been integrated and these have caused the subsystem to become homicidal. It is clearly of human making and comes from one of the autofacs in the upper quarters (although Fludo, one of the sample characters, will likely still believe it to be a D'Vor ruse, finding some "organic components" nobody else can see).

The PCs can either wait in the sewers for their opponents to show up or they can try to track down the club.

Showdown

The PCs can try to lure the saboteurs into the sewers with various strategies, such as pretending nothing has changed, altering the programming as to puzzle their opponents, or try to use the video footage stored in the systems data core to find out who invaded the subsystem (it was Davon Banray).

The place of the final showdown depends on where the PCs try to arrest the evildoers but will most likely result in a chase with the odd fire fight thrown in. This can either be in the sewers or in the upper levels (use the *balcony map* as initial set up and then become abstract for chase purposes as soon as one party leaves the map)

Chase in the Sewers

A chase in the sewers will likely trigger the following special events:

1. A jet stream of sewage comes down some side path, taking the hunter and the hunted with it. After 1d6 rounds, the stream ends and the hunted side has gained another 1d6 meters of head start.
2. A network of pipes crosses the tunnel, requiring an Athletics check of 4 in order not to stumble and lose half movement for that round. The pipes also provide excellent cover.

Chase in the Towers

1. A class of school kids with their nerdy teacher are on an excursion. Everybody is excited and happy before the chased criminal bursts through them, throwing some kids into the way of his pursuers (Athletics check of 4 or stumble over the kids, giving the hunted 1d6 m)
2. The hunted goes for a closing elevator which will give him three rounds of free moves, unless the PCs manage to enter it in the same round (i.e. manage to reduce the distance to 2m).

Red Queen Club

The Red Queen Club consists of 5 members, who all belong to the bored rich. For simplicity's sake their statistics are all the same, however, their personalities differ:

- **Surig Sagoto:** This weapon designer has an odd fascinations with raw firepower and has always wanted to try out his inventions, which caused him to found the hunters' club. He is rather shy and introverted but completely changes when on the hunt. Sagoto is small and skinny and has a bowl-like haircut.
- **Lydda Honest:** This wife of a senior architect of the central AI systems is rather bored with her life of luxury and just any thrill is welcome. Lydda has too much to lose and will probably fight anybody who finds out about her secret. She is tall and muscular but has broad hips. She wears her long black hair in a pony tail.
- **Davod Banray:** This CORE scientist is known by his friends as a fan of extreme sports and for his devil-may-care attitude but few would suspect him of being a member of an illegal organisation. He is the one who had the idea with the sewer system and also did the technical work. Banray is bald and has a stylish goatee.
- **Sarah Kontor:** This owner of a luxury night club in the upper reaches of Progress is more aggressive and ambitious than most humans. She is only happy when others are at her mercy.
- **Gilead Kontor:** The husband of Sarah is little more than a plaything to her and does everything she tells him. However, he is somewhat unhappy with the Red Queen Club and might be willing to surrender to the PCs.

Red Queen Club Member

Statistics

Agility	+2	App.	+1
Build	0	Crea.	0
Fitness	+2	Inf.	-3
Kno.	0	Per.	+1
Psyche	0	Will.	+1
Strength	+1	Health	+1
Stamina	30		
UD	5	AD	6

Skills

Name	Level	Cpx
Athletics	2	1
Combat Sense	2	2
Defence	3	1
Hand-to-Hand	1	1
Interrogation	1	1
Melee	2	1
Negotiation	1	1
Notice	2	1
Small Arms	3	2
Stealth	1	1
Streetwise	1	1
Quantek Interface	1	1

Equipment

- Duraplast Mail (AR: 24) hidden under coat

- Type A Force Shield Ring (+15 AR vs. one opponent)
- Chameleon Field Generator (+3 Stealth)
- Multi Blazer (Acc: 0, DM x25, BR 10m, ROF +2, Ammo 100, Wt 0.5kg)
- Gilead also carries a sonic stunner to use in self defence with a current power setting of 5 (Acc: 0, DM special, BR 10m, ROF +2, Ammo 30, Wt 0.5kg, chose a power setting (1-10), the target must make a BLD vs. power setting + margin of success and will be stunned for MoF rounds, a fumble renders him unconscious for several minutes).
- Banray has a pumped up Multi Blazer with only half the ammo but DM x35

Sewer Drone

Size	2
Movement	walk (3/5 MP, 30m/50m)
FTL	N/A
Manoeuvrability	-1
Armour	7/14/21
Crew	Computer 2 (Dumb 2)
Deployment Range	250 hrs.

Perks & Flaws: Searchlight (200m), 2 Battle Arms (Rating 2), Communications (-1, 5 km), Easy to Modify, Fire Resistant, Sensors (+0, 2km), Sensor Dependent, Vulnerable to Haywire

Name	Arc	Acc	DM	BR	ROF	Perks	Ammo
Minigun	F	0	x3	3	+2	Anti-Infantry	1000
Minigun	F	0	x3	3	+2	Anti-Infantry	1000

Variants: The worker version does not have weapons but can attack in melee with its manipulator arms (DM x3).

Sample Characters

Biff Raker

Biff joined CORE because he likes working with people and exchanging stories about past exploits. He is something of a braggart and self-proclaimed ladies' man but has a good heart and believes in the principles of the CORE.

Biff is small but muscle-packed, preferring sleeveless tight shirts and heavy boots as parts of his outfit. Well endowed with hair, he has an unkempt black mane and huge sideburns.

(30 CP, 50 SP)

Perks and Flaws

- Quirk: Cannot meet a woman without trying to hit on her (-1)
- Infamous: Biff's lack of style and respect are well known (-1)
- Rank: Biff is a CORE Agent of Rank 1 (2)

Statistics

Agility	+2	App.	+1
Build	0	Crea.	0
Fitness	+2	Inf.	-3
Kno.	0	Per.	+1
Psyche	0	Will.	+1
Strength	+1	Health	+1
Stamina	30		
UD	5	AD	6

Skills

Name	Level	Cpx
Athletics	2	1
Combat Sense	2	2
Defence	3	1
Hand-to-Hand	1	1
Interrogation	1	1
Melee	2	1
Negotiation	1	1
Notice	2	1
Small Arms	3	2
Stealth	1	1
Streetwise	1	1
Quantek Interface	1	1

Equipment

- Quantek Implant: Antigrav Matrix, fly 10m/round.
- Sleeveless Armoured Vest (Duraplast Mail AR: 24)
- Pulser Rifle (Acc +0, Dm x35, BR 100m, ROF 0, Ammo 50, Armour Piercing)
- Sliver Knife (Acc 0, DM AD+5)
- Shoulder Harness with Repeating Blaster (Skill 3, Acc 0, Dm x25, Br 35m, ROF +1, Ammo 500 (once per round may deal Dm x50 by using 20 rounds of ammo)
- 4 Pulser Rifle Spare Clips
- 2 Blaster Spare Clips

Gus Morgan

Gus is a good looking Hispanic human with very short hair and a gaunt face. He comes from an upper class family from the Seven Homeworlds and is known for both his manners and his snobby attitude towards those of lesser birth. Extremely cultivated, Gus is at home in the best restaurants and is well-versed in the vices of the rich. He is, however, not soft and is eager to prove it to any who would suggest otherwise. (30 CP, 50 SP)

Perks and Flaws

- Quirk: Looks down on those of lesser birth (-1)
- Heavy Sleeper (-2)
- Radiation Vulnerability (-2)
- Rank: Gus is a CORE Agent of Rank 1 (2)
- Wealthy (3): Gus can afford a luxurious lifestyle and access to the vices of the rich.

Statistics

Agility	+1	App.	+2
Build	+1	Crea.	0
Fitness	+1	Inf.	+1
Kno.	0	Per.	0
Psyche	0	Will.	0
Strength	+1	Health	+0
Stamina	30		
UD	6	AD	7

Skills

Name	Level	Cpx
Combat Sense	2	1
Defence	3	1
Hand-to-Hand	1	1
Etiquette	2	1
Melee	2	1
Negotiation	1	1
Notice	2	1
Small Arms	2	2
Stealth	2	1
Quantek Use	1	1

Equipment

- Quantek Armour Implant: 5 points.
- Duraplast Mail (AR: 24)
- Pulser Rifle (Acc +0, Dm x35, BR 100m, ROF 0, Ammo 50, Armour Piercing)
- Sliver Sword (Acc 0, DM AD+8)
- 4 Pulser Rifle Spare Clips
- Stealth Boots (+2 stealth)

Ligin Fludo

Ligin, a Cyren, is a young recruit to CORE. Having spent most of his time in the oceans of his home world as a student at the local academy of sciences, he is somewhat naive. His training focus was on science and Ligin is a specialist in chemistry, history, and technical sciences.

Like most members of his race, Fludo sees technology as a living thing and will often talk to machines (who, in the core universe are likely to talk back). He shares the pessimistic outlook of most of his race and sometimes has to be motivated to not fall into apathy.   (30 CP, 50 SP)

Perks and Flaws

- Belief: Fludo is convinced that the CORE Alliance will be wiped out by the D'Vor in the next 20 years or so (-1)
- Quirk: Sees a D'Vor agent behind almost everything and everyone (-1)
- Rank: Fludo is a CORE Agent of Rank 1 (2)
- Racial Perks: can swim at walking speed

Statistics

Agility	0	App.	+1
Build	0	Crea.	+2
Fitness	0	Inf.	+1
Kno.	+2	Per.	+1
Psyche	-3	Will.	0
Strength	+0	Health	-1
Stamina	20		
UD	3	AD	3

Skills

Name	Level	Cpx
Combat Sense	1	1
Defence	2	1
Demolition/Traps	2	1
Information Warfare	1	1
Medicine	2	1
Natural Science (Chemistry)	2	1
Notice	1	1
Small Arms	1	1
Social Sciences (History)	2	1
Technical Sciences (Electronics)	3	1
Technical Sciences (Computer)	2	2
Trivia	3	1

Equipment

- Duraplast Mail (AR: 24)
- Blazer Handgun (Acc 0, DM x25, Br 10m, ROF 0, Ammo 100, Wt 0.5)
- 4 Blazer Spare Clips
- First Aid Kit
- Orb (with a mentor personality type AI)

Mr. Marble

Mr. Marble is a relatively small Sanrok with a greenish marble-like hide and eyes which glow red in artificial light. He joined CORE out of his desire to do good.

Marble is a "by-the-rules" kind of person, feeling at unease with slight transgressions and getting very upset when laws are broken. He is somewhat uptight and touchy but a very reliable member of any team. His speciality is negotiations and bureaucratic work but he is also quite good in unarmed combat. (30 CP, 50 SP)

Perks and Flaws

- Code of Honour: Marble will not commit a crime or break any of the rules of CORE. (-2)
- Secret: Three years ago, Marble used a CORE autofac for private purposes after being pressured into it by his then-girlfriend. While this is a minor misdemeanour, he still feels guilty about it and tries to avoid using autofacs on official business (-2).
- Influence: Marble is well known for his adherence to the codes of CORE and is thus well-liked by his superiors in the hierarchy (+1 on INF).
- Rank: Marble is a CORE agent of rank 1 (2).
- Racial Perks: natural armour 5 points, can crawl at walking speed, can operate normally under up to 2g.

Statistics

Agility	0	App.	-1
Build	+2	Crea.	-1
Fitness	+1	Inf.	+2
Kno.	-1	Per.	+1
Psyche	-2	Will.	+1
Strength	+1	Health	+0
Stamina	35		
UD	9	AD	6

Skills

Name	Level	Cpx
Business (Sp: Bureaucracy)	2	1
Combat Sense	2	1
Defence	2	1
Etiquette	2	1
Hand-to-Hand	3	2
Investigation	1	1
Negotiation	3	1
Notice	2	1
Small Arms	1	1
Stealth	1	1

Equipment

- Datapad with CORE Agent Guidelines
- Duraplast Mail (AR: 24)
- Blazer Handgun (Acc 0, DM x25, Br 10m, ROF 0, Ammo 100, Wt 0.5)
- 2 Blazer Spare Clips
- Business Suit

Selik

Selic is, like all Murans, a mysterious being who is distrustful of others. While he seems selfish and arrogant, he is in reality insecure and trying to hide this behind a facade of superiority. Selik appears like all other Murans and when he speaks it sounds like a murmur of many children dominated by a single androgynous voice. He likes to wear black and has an impressive wardrobe that offers many daring cuts but only one colour. Others often wonder why Selik joined the ranks of the CORE agents. When asked he cites the moral obligation of a superior race but in reality it was more his wanderlust and curiosity. (30 CP, 50 SP)

Perks and Flaws

- Belief: All other races are inferior to the Muran and are trying to steal their secrets. (-1)
- Quirk: Selik is very fond of clothing and abhors those who have no personal style. (-1)
- Rank: Selik is a CORE Agent of Rank 1 (2)
- Racial Perks: low light vision

Statistics

Agility	0	App.	+1
Build	-3	Crea.	0
Fitness	0	Inf.	+1
Kno.	+1	Per.	+2
Psyche	+2	Will.	0
Strength	-1	Health	+0
Stamina	10		
UD	1	AD	1

Skills

Name	Level	Cpx
Combat Sense	3	1
Defence	2	1
Heavy Weapons	3	1
Information Warfare	1	1
Medicine	2	1
Notice	3	2
Quantek Interface	1	2
Small Arms	2	1
Stealth	1	1
Technical Sciences (Electronics)	2	1
Trivia	1	1

Equipment

- Quantek Implants: Armour (AR +10)
- Duraplast Mail (AR: 24)
- Energy Gatling Gun (Acc. 0, DM x30, BR 50m, ROF +4, Ammo 100, Wt. 10kg) with antigrav harness
- Blazer Handgun (Acc 0, DM x25, Br 10m, ROF 0, Ammo 100, Wt 0.5)
- 4 Blazer Spare Clips
- 1 Gatling Gun Clip
- First Aid Kit
- Orb (with a servant personality type AI)