

The Talent Agency: Campaign Notes 2

This document contains the (slightly neatened) scenario notes for a mission of The Talent Agency podcast. For those who want to run Shadowrun Anarchy or similar Cyberpunk RPG themselves and want some additional source material, feel free to use the below! If you do, please let me know! I can be reached @writerblades on Twitter.

*Stay weird, runners.
~ Nathan B.*

Sticky Drama

*Sticky drama is the girl for me
She's so sticky from the memories
You know it's so faded
They're here to seem famous
Today she's dead*

CONTEXT

The concert at Bangalter Memorial Stadium is absolutely heaving. Not just the hordes of people packed in live, but millions more watching in VR and in immersive 3D streams. So there's a lingering sense of irony that everyone has paid solid nuyen to see what is ostensibly a hologram. ORPHEUS, as far as everyone knows, is a step apart from computer-generated flat pop, she's an AI with a heart. And you believe it.

In 2070, top 40 music production is the job of server farms and Big Data collected over decades. More than a few people blame the media megacorporations. All it did, however, was make the live performance even more valuable than it used to be.

CADENCEBANK

CadenceBank made their mark as a megacorporation by focusing on Big Data. They bought server farms, designed data crawlers, iterated on analytical and neural network AI for media production. They're one of the top 5 producers of recording, broadcasting and media player hardware worldwide, too.

One of their subsidiaries is Zimmerman & Moore – a live act music label that has a younger and hipper image.

APEX PRODUCTS & INNOVATIONS (API)

Their start was in prosthetics and cybernetics manufacturing, but a saturation in that market pushed them into focusing on synthetic humanoid manufacture.

They buy a lot of big data from megacorps as the basis for their AI. They're trying to use their advances in android research basically anywhere they can, from entertainment to security.

MR JOHNSON'S PITCH

You all get an email asking you to join a private Matrix chatroom address.

"I'm your Mr Johnson but you can address me as Automator. I know – runners aren't usually hired for matters of the pop music industry but I need *passionate* runners, not just skilled ones.

"I don't blame you if you've not heard of ORPHEUS, she's only been publicly known for less than 48 hours and already she's making killer numbers.

"Despite all that I just heard that ORPHEUS is set to split from the Zimmerman & More label to work for Apex Products, ugh. There are quite a few folk who'd rather not see that buyout go down and I am sure as hell one of them.

"But there's an opportunity here – while she's on tour, ORPHEUS is gonna be staying at a hotel in the city and I hear from industry insiders that she's working on a demo tape to give to Apex.

"I don't care whether you alter it, destroy it, leak it (though the latter would definitely make you popular), just make sure it doesn't make it to Apex 100% finished by ORPHEUS."

OBJECTIVES

You have a few options:

- Leak the tape
- Sabotage the tape, so if ORPHEUS tries to submit it, it goes badly.
- Destroy the tape, so ORPHEUS can't submit it at all.

TAGS

Luxe Hotel – Rogue AI – Infiltration – Data Theft – Apex Products – CadenceBank – Popstars

THE SETTING

Apex Aparthotels are one of Apex's more recent ventures. Staffed by a mixture of metahuman and android staff, it's just as much of a testing ground for their latest developments in service AI as it is a five-star stay for the city's elite. If you look up the company on the Matrix you'll find that they indeed take AI and Android hotel guests.

THE PLOT

SCENE 1

Making your way to the hotel. It's pretty luxe, so the people who would stay there have, at the least, notable cash. It's a hotel, so even during low traffic hours there's someone on the

front desk and various people in the lobby. The Johnson didn't make reservations for you, but will supply if asked.

It appears that there are some seemingly inaccessible 'dead' floors on the elevators. This hotel is run by Apex Products and so are surprisingly (alarmingly?) robot and AI friendly.

SCENE 2

Suggested NPCs: Hotel Concierge-guards

Residence floors of the hotel. There are concierge-guards on these floors. There are just as many android staff members as metahuman. All will try to gently usher you from the floor but will switch to combat if provoked. You'll need to find which room ORPHEUS is in if you haven't already.

There are various 'dumb' security measures in these corridors, primarily non-lethal. Wall panels can slide away to reveal robot arms with tasers or lift away to swat at people. Tasers attack with 3 hits and deal 7S. Panel-Arms attack with 4 hits, deal 3P and can block gunfire.

SCENE 3

Suggested NPCs: ORPHEUS, Enforcer 1.0

The Suite where ORPHEUS is staying is very plush, and you'd swear was on the upper floors - it looks just like a penthouse suite, complete with an astounding view although it's somewhere halfway up the building.

ORPHEUS takes up a lot of her processing power running social cue routines, so she finds it difficult to do Matrix tasks when she's talking 'normally' to people, or performing. She's a lot more terse and obviously non-Metahuman when focusing on something else, but can still talk.

If threatened, she feels defenceless, until she decides to hijack the suite's controls, including the in-suite security. This entirely unconcealed hack sets off the hotel's intrusion countermeasures and summons security.

SPECIAL NPCS

Concierge-guards

STR 4, AGL 4, WIL 4, LOG 3, CHA 2, EDG 2

SKILLS: Athletics 7, Close Combat 8, Hacking 8 (If Android), Negotiation 8 (If Human)
Intimidation 6, Pilot Ground 8

SHADOW AMPS Essence: 5 (–1 Magic/Heals)

Choose One Amp.

Reaction Enhancers: Cyberware. +1 Plot Point at the beginning of combat. –1 Essence

Defragment: Heal 1 point of Matrix damage on target for every 2 hits on a Hacking check.

Unarmed 2S Near OK / Stun Baton 7S Near OK

Armor: 9 [Reinforced Uniform] **Condition Monitors (P/S):** 10/10 (Matrix): 8

Enforcer 1.0 (Easy ICE)

Firewall 10, LOG 5, EDG 0

SKILLS: Hacking 3+L, Tracking 3+L

SHADOW AMPS

Hotel Policy: Reroll 2 dice on Cybercombat tests

Condition Monitors (Matrix): 10

ORPHEUS

Tags: AI, Popstar, CadenceBank, Earnest

The shiniest new talent from Zimmerman & Moore. It shouldn't be possible to give a synthetic consciousness true creativity. And yet, apparently ORPHEUS writes and composes all her songs.

She was programmed under CadenceBank R&D, apparently, but it's not like they have the research talent to make something like this. She was 'born' already contracted to the company, and has a hard time going beyond those programming limitations imposed, if she's made aware of them. Her personality is warm, earnest and optimistic. With no real desire for money, traditional managers have a hard time working with her.

Firewall 10, LOG 5, CHA 4, EDG 2

SKILLS: Hacking 5+L, Tracking 3+L, Negotiation 4+C

SHADOW AMPS

- **Artificial Intelligence** - Accesses the Matrix via full VR. +1 to Matrix Actions. Reroll 1 die on Matrix Actions. May run 2 programs at a time.
- **Harmonise (complex form):** +2 to non-combat Hacking.
- **Discordance (complex form):** Effect. Solo fault. Target rerolls 2 successful Matrix or Vehicle dice.
- **Leitmotif (complex form):** Reroll 2 on Tracking.

Condition Monitor (Matrix):10