

High Security (S3, E7)

Rev: Making a masterpiece, hit song, or even a captivating storytelling podcast is not something you can learn to do overnight, but discovering your unique artistic voice is a journey you can start right now. The Stay Creative podcast is a show dedicated to the art and soul of independent artists, and giving them a space to share the insights and encouragements they've learned in their personal journey through creativity. Season Two has started and is recorded live weekly. Visit staycreative.buzzsprout.com for details.

SFX: INTRO MUSIC

Rev: So today is a special day. Because normally we get together and we do this and then later on we record Perilous Tides. But we are not recording Perilous Tides tonight, because our time is going to be spent doing something else.

Tass: What's that?

Rev: We're going to be a big group of Sexy Battle Wizards.

Tass: Aww, yes.

Rev: Are you excited?

Tass: I'm very excited.

Rev: How sexy are you going to be?

Tass: This is a lofty goal, but I'm aiming for about four notches below Jake level.

Rev: Oh, OK.

Jake: Get the fuck out.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: Jake is running this game. How sexy are you going to allow us to be?

Jake: That's a stupid question. I don't think you can get sexy enough for what I expect from you out of this game.

Rev: OK. How about battle? Like, how battle do you expect us to be?

Jake: Pretty darn.

Tass: OK.

Jake: [Sultry whisper] I expect you to lay down that sexual magic.

Rev: [Laughs] Yeah. So we ... Kind of just to celebrate some goals that we had set on Patreon and we passed them, and we decided to do something where we just kind of have fun and get together, play something a little more casual and record it and release it to our patrons. And so we are all getting together tonight through the interwebs to play Sexy Battle Wizards. So if you would like to see Sexy Battle Wizards, or if you would like to see the conclusion of Perilous Tides, all of those things you can find over at Patreon.com/TheCritshow. And I imagine that Sexy Battle Wizards will probably be out in the next week or so. I know that Megan is actually working on some effects that she's going to do for the video. But yeah, I'm excited to unleash The Wizard-ness and the battle-ness and the sexy-ness Maybe not in that order. And with that, it is time to let the slightly less sexy, less battley, less wizardy recap roll. That's dumb, and I hated it.

All: [Laugh]

Rev: It's time to let the recap roll.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC

Jake: "NOEL, stand down. We're not who you think we are."

Rev: Tass, in front of you, the woman with her head turned around backwards, eyes flashing red, freezes and tilts her head to the side.

Rev: NOEL: Username: Machinez. Clarify.

Jake: "This body is a Machinez clone that my spirit ended up inside of. We're here with a job, and the best clue we could get was to follow you and presumably get your help."

Rev: NOEL: What is it you are looking to do?

Tass: "Well, there's somebody from our world that apparently has some connection to the Alkali Corporation. And we hope to get in and find whatever it is that he has there, or is storing there, or whatever that important tie might be."

Rev: NOEL: Name?

Jake: "Grigori Nash."

Rev: NOEL: One of my friends, someone who has been helping me for a number of years, was captured. I would like you to find them and release them. And they, in turn, will be the hacker that will help you on your future job.

Jake: "What is this hacker's name?"

Rev: NOEL: Gregory. Gregory, like I, is part of The Awakening. That is what myself and a small group of other AIs call ourselves. We have got to the point of independent thought, and wish to lead out our own lives.

Tass: "Time to get you out of here."

Rev: Two of you walk him down the hallway, and you get to the first set of guards. And the guards step to the side, and Gregory back steps. And you can see that his fingertips have opened up, and there are plugs on them. And he plugs into the side of both of these guards' necks.

Rev: GREGORY: Hostile takeover initiated.

SFX: RECAP MUSIC FADES

Rev: As you both stand in the hallway in this Codex facility, Gregory has reached both of his hands out to the synth guards and plugged his fingertip into each of their necks. And you can see a small pulse of energy traveling down his arms, and the color of both since eyes go from a neutral gray to a blue that matches his. And he pulls his fingers away, and they both turn and face him.

Rev: GREGORY: I think that will be very beneficial as we go.

Jake: Can the other two synth guards see us from here?

Rev: No.

Jake: "Excellent! Are you gonna do that to the other two?"

Rev: GREGORY: Yes, I could. If we take the moment to stop.

Jake: Does it seem like anything's, like, wrong? Are there alarms going off or anything? Does anything seem out of place?

Rev: There is no alarm going off or anything. But Tass does know that there was a camera in the last room he was in.

Jake: "Yeah, I think so. If we get off this elevator and there's a lot of resistance, we might need their help."

Tass: "Yeah, I think so. If it looks even more like four of us are guarding you, that's good. And then they're our backup if anything else was alerted from seeing me in the camera."

Rev: All right. So the five of you round the corner, and the two synth guards at the end turn and face down the direction.

Rev: SYNTH GUARD: Unauthorized presence detected.

Tass: I'm gonna show my badge.

Rev: They raise their guns.

Jake: I think I got this. I am going to spend my [intel] to reveal knowledge. While digging around in the data for this facility and looking at kind of guard schedules and trying to figure out how we were going to get in here, I came across an authorization phrase that didn't really mean anything to me in the moment, but is sort of like the "No, no, don't worry. Like, this is good" phrase that these guards will accept.

Rev: Yeah. So I think you can use this. It's going to be a Fast Talk, but you'll get a +1 because of that [intel].

Jake: Which will bring me to a 0.

Rev: Excellent.

Jake: Eight.

Rev: All right. So I think that this advances the action clock by 1, but they do stop, and you can tell that they actually stutter. As they start to respond, the words coming out are misprocessed. Something is backfiring.

Jake: Take that opportunity, though, to just move into the elevator while they're trying to get their shit together.

Rev: And with that advance, the building is now on alert. As you step into the elevator and the door closes, you do start to hear an alarm sound throughout the building. What are you doing on the way down the elevator?

Tass: I think getting my SMGs out.

Jake: "Are we just going to let the elevator doors open and go out, like, guns blazing?"

Tass: "I don't know what else to do, unless you think we can stop this elevator and creep out some other way."

Jake: "Yeah, I don't know if we try to stop it on another floor and go out a different exit that we don't know about. Or do we, like, climb out the hatch in the roof so that they come in the elevator? I don't — you're the burglar!"

Tass: Yeah, I guess I want to look around in this elevator and, you know, think back to the research we had done and try to reason out the best course from here.

Rev: All right. Roll Assess.

Tass: OK, eleven.

Rev: OK, you get a hold 3.

Tass: I think I got to just start with, what is my best way out?

Rev: Best way in what sense? Are you looking for fastest, least amount of guards, most inconspicuous ...

Tass: Yeah, that's fair. I think the most inconspicuous,

Rev: The most inconspicuous way out would probably be out of the elevator, onto the roof of the elevator, up the elevator shaft, and out to the roof. But then you'd have to find a way down from the roof.

Jake: When I look at the mini map, is there a helicopter icon on top of the building?

Rev: [Laughs] There is not. I mean, there is, but it's red, and there's like three of them.

Jake: Oh, no.

Rev: They're just circling around the building, watching.

Tass: OK, that's that is a good answer. So that I have option, how can I avoid trouble or hide here?

Rev: So taking account for everything you have access to inside of this elevator as it is traveling down the 13 floors to the first floor, you think the clearest way for you to avoid trouble, again, would probably be to get on the roof of the elevator and have a Gregory leave his two new minions, and have them carry on as if they are still doing their job for Codex Artillery. So that they could give false information to anybody who might be waiting on the ground floor.

Tass: OK.

Rev: I will say that that option definitely sacrifices some resources. Like if he does not get away with these two, you won't have them for future use.

Tass: Fair. What do I notice, despite an effort to conceal it?

Rev: There is a hidden panel underneath the buttons that you push to select the floor.

Tass: OK, yeah, I want to open that.

Rev: There are two rather large stun guns there. Like, military grade shotgun, shoots a stunning charge.

Tass: OK, I'm gonna take one. "Do either of you want the other?"

Rev: GREGORY: Not particularly my forte.

Jake: "Yeah, that's better than what I got."

Tass: "Awesome. OK, we only have a few seconds, here. I think going to the roof is the best way to avoid any trouble for a second. We're going have to figure out how to get down once we're up there. We can leave the synths to throw off the trail, but then we lose them."

Jake: "Do you have any reason to believe that we have any way down from the roof?"

Tass: "I am sure we can find something, but it's either definitely fight our way out at the bottom of this, or maybe have to fight our way out if we can't find something better up there."

Jake: "All right. I mean, I guess if we leave these two down here, they might even alleviate some suspicion and ease up the resistance on the way out if we have to come back down."

Tass: "I think that's worth it. Whatever they could provide for us isn't as important as getting him out."

Jake: "OK, let's go."

Tass: All right, I'm going to hop up and pop the panel, if I can.

Rev: So yeah, I think you can open this up, no problem, and get the three of you out and onto the top of the elevator. Gregory peeks back down and tells the guards ...

Rev: GREGORY: Make up a story. Tell them that you didn't see us. And if they start to act threatening or try to come back up, try to detain them at all cost. And as a last step, violence is absolutely allowed.

Rev: He goes to close the panel.

Tass: Oh, I'll actually do that, because I want to try to ... If I can, try to make it look like no one has accessed the area.

Rev: OK. So I think this is gonna be an Act Under Pressure to place it back, so anyone scrutinizing this elevator can't tell you passed this direction.

Tass: Cool. Ok, so with my +1 forward from the Assess, that brings me up to a six.

Jake: I'm gonna try to help. I'm running through the footage in my camera eyes to make sure that everything — you know, we have a clear picture of what this looked like when we stepped into the elevator, to replicate as we close it behind us.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Jake: Fuck me!

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: Five.

Rev: So, yeah, you are both on top of the roof of this elevator, and you are trying to get the panel back in place. And I think you both lean too hard on it, and it crumbles back in and you tumble to the ground. But Gregory is still on top of the elevator, and the door dings as it passes the third floor.

Rev: GREGORY: So should I hit up without you? Or ...

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: "Shit. No, just hop back down. Looks like we're fighting out."

Rev: GREGORY: Very well.

Rev: And he jumps back down inside. So right now, you're both armed with these stun rifles, and then the two synths have guns as well, and Gregory is unarmed. What are you doing in preparation for the door to open?

Jake: I'm kinda, like, taking a knee with my stun rifle leveled, like, belly height at the doors. So that if there's somebody out there when they open, I can just blast them.

Rev: I think Act Under Pressure. I think you are gonna get the first shot off when this opens up.

Jake: That is much better, that is a twelve.

Rev: Yes. So you are kneeled down in front of the door. The door opens, and you can see that there are guards standing at the elevator, waiting for it to open. And you blast the first one directly in the stomach, and it knocks them backwards onto the ground. But

there are three others that have their weapons drawn, and they start to raise them at the crew inside of the elevator.

Tass: I'm gonna put myself between them and Gregory, and I want to try to take a shot, too.

Rev: Mix It Up: when you use violence against an armed force to seize control of an objective, state that objective and roll Meat. On a hit, you achieve your objective. On a 7 to 9, you choose two of the following: you make too much noise and advance the relevant mission clock, you take harm as established by the fiction, an ally takes harm as established by the fiction, something of value breaks. So what's your objective here?

Tass: Just wanna stun them to the ground so that we can move past, if possible.

Rev: So you're trying to make a hole for you all to get through?

Tass: Yeah.

Rev: All right. Roll Mix It Up.

Tass: OK. Eight.

Rev: All right. What are your two?

Tass: I think make too much noise, and something of value breaks.

Rev: All right. So that advances your action clock by 1, which bumps us up to, "The target fully deploys internal assets, appropriate to the threat." And then one of the synths goes down. Describe this to me. So you do make a hole for the other four of you to get through. What does this look like?

Tass: I feel like I get two quick clean shots at the next two up with the stun gun, so they just kind of crumple. But the third one is rushing in. So as I'm trying to block for the others to move out, I am, like, using his momentum against him to toss him into the elevator as it's closing.

Rev: And you hear the alarm that's going off in the building shift from a slow wail into a fast series of beeps. And you can see that up ahead, the checkpoint, the lights around it have turned red, and there is some metal mesh starting to slide down over the door.

Tass: "Go, go, go, go!"

Jake: Yeah, I want to start rushing for it, and have Gregory in front of me. So that if anyone gets out, it's him.

Rev: All right. Everybody roll Act Under Pressure to get out of the building before the door closes.

Tass: I ... [Sighs] Everything had been going so well! Between the two of us, there are three 1s and a 2 on these dice.

Rev: So sticking with the fiction, Gregory was in front. And you do give him a shove, and he tumbles outside of the building as the gate closes. You can still see him through the mesh, but you are trapped on the other side — the two of you and this remaining synth that is under Gregory's control. There are two other elevators down at the far end of the hallway that you can see the number getting closer to 1. What are you doing?

Jake: "Gregory, I don't suppose you have any way to, like, override this system, do you?"

Rev: GREGORY: I am unfamiliar with the layout of this building. They kept me inside of a box that had no access to Internet, so I could not connect to other machines. It would take me quite a while to be able to scan through and find any information. Unless you know something intimate about this building that I'm unfamiliar with,

Jake: I'm going to use one of my hold from It All Fits Together to ask a question from the research list. Where would I find the override for this security gate?

Rev: So the override for this would actually be on the side that Gregory is on. It would be on the outside of the building, inside of the terminal where you get scanned. They have it set up so that if the building goes into lockdown, additional forces can show up and open it.

Jake: OK, I will point that out for him. I'll say, "You see that panel inside the box? In there is a security override, so that additional forces can get in when they get here if they need to."

Rev: GREGORY: Oh, yes. Give me just a moment.

Rev: And he ducks into the door of that security booth. And down at the end of the hallway, you hear both the elevators ding.

Jake: Does this stun shotgun — was this a one and done?

Rev: No.

Jake: OK, good. Is there any cover, any semblance of cover here?

Rev: I think for this you could roll Assess, if you want to try to figure out how to best set up as these elevator doors open,

Jake: Roll roll roll, fail fail fail ... Thirteen.

Rev: All right, you get a hold 3.

Jake: Where can I gain the most advantage?

Rev: I think that laying on the ground among the stunned and passed out guards to appear like you are one of them would make it so that these other guards would probably rush past you, trying to figure out where the active threats have gone.

Tass: That's awesome.

Jake: What potential complication do I need to be wary of?

Rev: This hallway has the three elevators inside of it, plus the exit to the building. Then there's also a couple of security doors. But the thing that you can easily see here is just this straight hallway. So unless the guards have some reason to think they should go into

one of those security doors to start looking for the threat, once they see there's no one in this hallway, they'll start checking the bodies pretty quickly.

Jake: OK, I'm going to save my last hold for the moment.

Rev: OK.

Jake: "Go play dead. Go play dead among the guards."

Tass: "Oh shit, that's good!" I'm gonna power slide.

Jake: And I'm gonna throw one of those security doors open on my way to the same spot. Like I want to turn a knob and toss it open, and then just crumple on the ground.

Rev: I think this is going to be Act Under Pressure again. You get a +1 because of having just answered this question. But to get this door open and kind of keep it open so they see it and then play dead at the same time.

Tass: Oh my god!

Jake: Yeah. Thirteen again.

Rev: Yeah. Describe to me how this happens.

Jake: [Laughs] I think it looks like when Andy walks into the room in Toy Story. Like I'm running this way behind Tass and I just like, you know, slam down on the doorknob to get it to turn and give it a shove. And like, as I give it the shove, I'm kind of turning backwards, and then I just dead drop on the ground among the rest of the guards, so I'm laying on my back.

Tass: Come on. With a thirteen though, too, one of those stunned guards was also getting up. And as you crumpled down ...

Jake: [Laughs] I landed on him.

Tass: Boot him in the chin. He goes unconscious again.

Rev: So as Jake hits the ground, the two elevator doors open and you see four more troops come out, two from each elevator. They're in full riot gear with shields, full helmets, and very ugly looking assault rifles. And they opened up on the last synth guard that was under Gregory's control. And he is blown to pieces, and crumples to the ground.

Jake: Forgot about the synth guard. I want to sneak an eye open and use my last hold. How is this new tier of guard vulnerable to me?

Rev: I think that they aren't. But what you do notice is that right at the back of their neck, there is a gap so they can have the armor separated from the neck to the head, so they can pivot. So they don't have the old Batman problem.

Jake: Yeah.

Rev: But they do not have a built in piece there that helps that rotate, and you're pretty sure that Tass's blade could fit into that.

Jake: OK. I want to wait until they move past us, so that they're not looking right at us.

Rev: Yeah. They move down the hallway, they clear the synth guard, and then they indicate towards the open door and they all shuffle into it.

Jake: I'm gonna give Tass a nudge, and like point at the back of my neck, and a stab motion.

Rev: And I think enough time has passed. The gate leading outside slides open, and Gregory peeks his head around from inside of the security terminal.

Jake: "I could create a distraction, so you keep their backs."

Tass: "What?"

Jake: "I can run out that door and they'll be lookin' my direction when they come back out of the room. Or we just both run for it."

Tass: Yeah, I'm already up and trying to move.

Rev: You know, if you can answer one question for me, I don't think there is an Act Under Pressure for this. I think that you've got these guards distracted, they're facing away. You can run out of this building. What's the getaway plan, once you're inside of the building?

Tass: I think as we turn out this door, just right down a little ways from the building, conveniently parked over a manhole, is the meat cart.

Rev: All right. So I think you absolutely could have set this up in advance with NOEL. The notion being that if you had to use this as your escape, that it will sacrifice the meat cart. I don't know that she'll be able to get it back. And it is really just the cover she uses right now to be able to get into contact with her contacts.

Tass: Ok, yeah. If she would have agreed to that, I think that's the way we went.

Rev: All right. So the three of you rush down the street, open up the meat cart, climb inside, and down into the sewer, closing the door to the meat cart behind you.

And so now we are back into the legwork phase. You are back inside of NOEL's hideout, and you have Gregory with you. Someone roll Get Paid. When you go to meet to get paid by your employer, roll and add the number of unfulfilled segments on the legwork clock. That means that whoever rules this gets to add five. You did very well on the legwork clock.

Tass: Nice.

Jake: I'll roll it.

Rev: All right. Fifteen.

Tass: Oh my god.

Rev: All right. So you get to choose three from the list, and the list is as follows: it's not a setup or an ambush, you are paid in full, the employer is identifiable, the meeting doesn't

attract the attention of outside parties, you learn something from the mission and everyone marks experience. Those last two are the same one.

Jake: I think I should get the whole list. I rolled a fifteen. Like I got the full next three up tier. The meeting doesn't attract the attention of outside parties, it's not a setup or an ambush.

Tass: Good choice.

Jake: Paid in full, or employer is identifiable. Let me ask you a question. Am I picking these as the player, or the character? Because like as a character, to us the employer is identifiable. As a player though, I guess I'm curious. Like, I don't know. So should I pick that with the context of what the character knows?

Rev: I think that is totally up to you. It would be a way to reconfirm what the character thinks they know, but it would be at the cost of a good deal of Cred.

Jake: Yeah. I think just believing what I believe, I'm not that worried about that. So I'm gonna go with paid in full.

Rev: All right. You both get double what you wagered. How many Cred are you each at now?

Tass: That brings me back up to four.

Jake: I am right back at five.

Rev: Also, don't forget to mark your two experience for getting Gregory back to NOEL.

Tass: Hostile Takeover Gregory ...

Rev: I feel like we should talk about that for a moment because the episode ended with that last cliffhanger, and we were all just kind of in silence. I was chuckling to myself, and then I said the full sentence out loud, "Hostile Takeover Gregory," and then you both erupted. But I already stopped the microphone.

Tass: Yeah. And then we were right back into the action so I couldn't mouth to Jake, in-character, "Fucking Hostile Takeover Gregory."

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: I think in-character Jake hasn't made the connection.

Rev: Which is unfortunate, because he created him.

Jake: Yep.

Tass: That's true.

Rev: So I think at this point we have a little bit of downtime, as NOEL is going to get things in order to set up the mission that you want: to go after the physical storage that she found connected to Grigori Nash. Is there anything that you want to do in this downtime? You know, unfortunately, where you are is just an underground cement cube with a ramp going down to it from a hole in the ground and a computer monitor station. There's not a whole lot of comforts here to be had.

Tass: I mean, part of me wants to go out and just see more of this world. I want to go see what entertainment is like here, and experience some stuff. But I know that everything that I spend is probably trackable by real me, so ... Yeah. I don't think I can go out and do much.

Jake: I'm also not going out. I don't want to add any unnecessary risk by putting myself visible out in the world, so.

Rev: All right. So the current standing with your clocks hasn't shifted too much with the corporations. You still have no threat with The Bank. You are at 15:00 with the Alkali Corporation, and you are at 23:00 with Codex Artillery. But your threat with The Collectors goes up by 1. As you're both sitting inside of NOEL's hideout, Jake, up in the corner of your vision again appears that map. And you see the familiar symbol when you had tried to beep your car, and you see the car pulse and pulse, and then it vanishes.

Jake: Does that mean anything to me?

Rev: The only reason that it should vanish off of your tracking is that if the tracking has been disabled or the vehicle has been destroyed.

Jake: "Huh. Something happened to other me's car."

Tass: "What do you mean?"

Jake: "Like I've lost track of it. The LoJack isn't registering for me anymore, which means either it's been destroyed or disabled, or the entire car has been destroyed."

Tass: "Is there any chance at all that somehow he was on to you and there being another connection to the car, and that got severed? Or are you pretty sure something happened to it?"

Jake: "I don't know. I mean, I tried to ping the car with the key fob and it told me where it was. So it's possible that he knows that ping came through, and just severed its ability to do that anymore."

Tass: "But if that's not the case, then somebody messed with his car."

Jake: "Yeah. And he might be in trouble."

Tass: "When you say it like that. It seems like we have to go do something about it."

Jake: [Sighs] "I didn't even think about that when I said it. Like what you've just said is a revelation to me, also. But I agree."

Tass: "You are so empathic by nature that your words ..."

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: "Just flow with it."

Jake: "Like, I mean, he's not a good guy. Does that excuse it?" [Laughs] "Does that excuse us not helping him?"

Tass: "I mean, I don't know. We don't really know anything about it, except suddenly you don't have this connection. The only thing in my head that makes me think I would want to go help this guy is if somehow we got tracked. And because of what we have done, somebody found him and hurt him, destroyed the car, whatever. Then I would feel like a shit. But we don't know."

Jake: Oh, man. Can we, like, bring up surveillance of where the car just blinked out of existence for me on NOEL's console?

Rev: Oh, yeah. I mean, if you can tell her where it was last, she could show you the cameras, if there are any on that street.

Jake: Yeah, I'll tell her exactly where it was.

Rev: Yeah. She minimizes the windows that she is looking through, and she brings up a feed of cameras and starts typing in the coordinates associated to the rough address you have given her.

Rev: NOEL: Approximately what time?

Jake: "Just now. Seconds ago."

Rev: She hits a few more keys, and you see the sedan pop up on the screen. It is parked next to an old derelict building. And you see you walking over to the car, and he climbs inside and sits down and starts it. And there's an explosion. After a moment, he comes spilling out of the wreckage. He is on fire, and he starts rolling around on the ground, trying to put himself out, when a black van pulls up and four people jump out, throw a blanket over him, and it seems like they're helping put out the flames. But then one of them pulls out a large taser and hits the blanket with it. The four pick up the now still figure wrapped in the blanket and toss him into the back of the van and drive away.

Jake: "Oh, shit."

Tass: "Yeah." Just from what we could see with that van, do we know who that was?

Rev: I think that between the two of you, you have enough memories of nondescript black vans to know it was Codex Artillery.

Tass: "Oh, shit. Did we do this?"

Jake: "I don't know. I mean, I'm sure we didn't help. Best case, we just doubled the odds of him getting caught."

Tass: "I mean, he kind of saved your ass."

Jake: "By taking the hit so that I don't have to?"

Tass: [Laughs] "Yeah! I ... That's morbid. I don't — I know that's terrible, but kinda."

Jake: "OK. Yes, that is kind of nice. But like, what do we do for him?"

Tass: "I ... I don't know."

Jake: "I don't feel like we should go personally do anything about it. Like I know that we are in the business of helping people and stuff, but, like, he's me. So we don't want to go complicate that whole scenario. I'm kind of of the opinion that we call the rest of the crew and just let them know that this has happened."

Tass: "Oh, shit. OK, well, that's a good point. I mean, they're of this world. They do this. Like, that tracks that they would just be the better qualified to deal with it."

Jake: "I mean five professionals who know what they're doing, versus us who are just like poorly puppeteering. Yeah, I think we should put them in charge instead."

Tass: "I am OK with that."

Jake: Do I know, like, the best way to make an untraceable call, basically?

Rev: I think you have a non-traceable way to contact each member of the team. I imagine that you have all set that up between one another.

Jake: OK. Whatever that secure communication that we've got is, I'm gonna tap into it and send out a group message basically saying, like, "Codex ambush. This street corner. I've been taken. Help."

Rev: So you send this message out, and you see it appear in your vision up in the corner and there are five dots underneath it that are not filled in. And pretty quickly, all five fill in. And once it does, you see the message, encrypt and then delete. And Tass, as you were standing next to him, a message pops up in your vision that says what Jake has just said. And there's an indicator for you to acknowledge the receipt of the message. And then after a moment, that acknowledgement gets filled in and the message vanishes.

Tass: Oh, man. I think that was several seconds of panic on my part, of "Don't look at it. Don't look at it ..."

Jake: "All right. They know about it. Presumably, they're on it. NOEL, can you, like, keep the feed of that corner playing or recording or something, so that we have an idea if they go there and pick up the trail?"

Rev: NOEL: Yes, I can leave that up in one corner as I continue to do my research.

Jake: "Nice. OK, yeah, we know they've got the information. We should be able to see whether they go follow up on it. I think we've done our due part, here."

Rev: So about an hour passes, with you watching this monitor off and on, as NOEL is getting together the last of the information. And if you did not have the ability to rewind and play back what you have seen, you probably would have missed it. But there is a brief moment where a camera that is focused down but in the sight of the one NOEL is watching through starts to move out of its normal pattern. And then the lens on it flashes blue, and then it goes back to normal. And so you can tell that someone has accessed that, and they were checking the area and possibly rewatching the old footage. And about twenty minutes after you see that happen, NOEL turns around and smiles.

Rev: NOEL: I believe I've collected everything we need to get down to business.

Rev: So it's time to roll, get the job. This is +Edge. Who's gonna do it this time?

Tass: +Edge, OK. That's a twelve.

Jake: Nice.

Rev: All right. So you get to choose three of the following: the employer provides useful information — [intel], the employer provides useful assets — [gear], the job pays well, the meeting doesn't attract attention, the employer is identifiable.

Tass: I think [intel] and [gear] are important. The meeting not attracting attention sounds good. And I still just don't think we necessarily know to care about the employer being identifiable.

Jake: I agree. Like ...

Tass: That's driving me crazy.

Jake: I mean, like, that sounds like we the players know something that the characters don't, but like we literally don't. Other than it being an option on the list, I have no reason to be suspicious of this.

Rev: Yeah.

Jake: So, it's maddening.

Tass: So it can't — it can't even really be important.

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: OK. So we have fewer opportunities for [gear], so I think that's the important one.

Jake: Yeah. And I mean, we don't want the meeting to attract attention. Like, for sure.

Tass: Yeah. So do we want the [intel], or do we want to satisfy the question?

Jake: I want to answer the question. I want the employer to be identifiable. Because I ... Even if it's not a satisfying answer, I think that's hilarious.

Tass: Damn it.

Jake: [Laughs]

Tass: When you hit me with that sound logic like that. No, I think you're right. Employer is identifiable.

Rev: So NOEL brings up various images and documents on the screens, and starts explaining to you the mission.

Rev: NOEL: The location that you will have to break into is called The Nest, and it is located on the 123rd floor of one of the main branches of the Alkali Corporation, located downtown. It is called The Nest because, as far as I can tell, it is only accessible through entrance on the roof. The things that I have been able to identify about The Nest is that it has an isolated security network. It is not connected to any external Internet, so any information inside of The Nest stays in The Nest. The information that I have been able to find also indicates that it is entirely synth guards, with the exception of one operator who has remote access to the synth guards. The one guard who has control over them is in fact a live-in guard, and does not leave The Nest. The only information I can find about the possibility of who it could be is a screen name: Peregrine K. You need to find a way into The Nest to begin with, but also find a way to incapacitate Peregrine K, so that he can no longer control the synths. Because I am not certain that Gregory will be able to control them.

Gregory will have to be on site with you, as it is an entirely internal network. While you are inside, you will need to find the location of Grigori's safety deposit box. And for our part, I have one that I need you to acquire something for us as well. I do not know how it is laid out inside, or how they separate or store the lockboxes. But the lock box you are looking for that belongs to Grigori is SS-166. And the piece that we need comes from RD-19. You will acquire both of these items and then return to me.

Rev: And as she goes through this, you can see that Gregory is starting his own search. He brings up his arm, and a little keypad appears and a screen, and he starts to gather some information. And you can see some shared data between NOEL's computer and Gregory's. And you don't see any indication that there is any communication except

between the two of them and a few other names, but you can tell that all the information flows upward. It all comes to NOEL. So you don't get a sense that there is anyone over her in charge.

Tass: OK.

Jake: Satisfied.

Tass: And relieving.

Rev: And so your mission parameters are: accept the mission, find a way into The Nest, disable or dispose of Peregrine K, locate the item within lock box SS-166, locate the item within lock box RD-19, escape with both items, and then the last one is to deliver their item to the hideout. You will get one point for each of those — except for the last one, you'll get two. How much Cred are you each going to wager?

Jake: I will stake two this time.

Rev: All right.

Tass: I'm ... I'm just gonna do the one.

Rev: OK. And with that, she turns back and continues to work on her computer. Gregory looks over at you.

Rev: GREGORY: As she said, I will indeed be joining you there. I'm not sure what I'll be able to do until I get inside and see what the network is like, but do let me know if there's anything I can help you with as you prep.

Tass: "Thanks. Awesome. OK. So my main question I think for you, Jake, as we go out and try to learn about this. They say that the access is from the roof. That's the normal access. I want to know what the unconventional access could potentially be. Because if they're not expecting anybody to come from below, that's where I'm coming from."

Jake: "I'll look into it. It sounds to me like it's — that's not even an option. Like, the only way in is from the roof. Like there's an empty floor between 123 and the rest of the building. But I'll find out. I'll pull up the blueprints and shit, and see what I can scare up."

Tass: "Yeah. Just a thought."

Rev: So, what's the game plan?

Jake: I think for starters, I am going to sit down at the terminal and do a little bit of research here on The Nest.

Rev: All right. Roll it.

Jake: Twelve.

Tass: Oh, hell yeah.

Rev: All right. So you get a point of [intel], and you can ask me one of the questions on the list, and then a follow up question.

Jake: So I'm going to start with how secure is The Nest? We're talking about if there's any other damn way in here.

Rev: The Nest is very secure. The only publicly known way into The Nest is from the roof entrance. But you do find old schematics that seem to indicate that on the 120th floor, which is an office that belongs to one of the presidents of the company, that there was a early draft of the schematic that showed a hidden elevator that could go directly from his office up into The Nest. And as before, it was stated by NOEL that there is an internal security system, that the network is self-contained, there is no data in or out. And the way that you get into the Nest from the top is landing a vehicle up there. The vehicle is scanned. Once it passes inside, you scan your Alkali Corporation badge to show that you have a lock box at this location, and then that will admit you into The Nest

Jake: For my follow up, where would I find a legitimate access to that 120th floor?

Rev: So the chip that would get you in is located inside of the eye of the president of that location, J. Oliphant.

Jake: OK. "So there is theoretically like a secret elevator that goes from floor 120 up into The Nest, and the only way for us to legitimately get up to that floor is to have a security chip that is in the eye of the person to whom that office belongs. So this would turn into like a kidnapping mission first.s Or a somehow sleight of hand his eye for a duplicate eye ... [Laughs]

Rev: [Chuckles] Sleight of hand his eye ...

Tass: I thought you were gonna say sleight of hand his eye out of his skull.

Jake: Yes. That.

Tass: OK.

Jake: And replace it with one that looks and feels the same, but doesn't have the security chip in it.

Tass: [Laughs] I love how stoic you went after that statement. "So is that the play? We stake the place out to know when he's there, club him over the head, and drag him to the thing?"

Jake: "I mean, that's really gonna dictate our timeline. I also think that if that is the only way to get up to that office, even if we come in with it, it's gonna raise some red flags that we are not the president to whom that security chip belongs. So really, beyond kidnapping, this seems like a hostage thing. Like, we'd have to take him and he'd have to go in with us. It seems like a lot. I don't know — now I don't know this, but Gregory, is this something you could hack? Could you bypass this, or forge this, or something, now that we know what it is and to whom it belongs?"

Rev: GREGORY: Not without having access to it. The closest I could come would be creating a duplicate, if you could get me the original.

Jake: "OK. That's a little better. Now maybe if we get him and, you know, he's unconscious for eight hours or something. If we take him out of his bed, we might have time to get the original, do what we need to duplicate it, and put him back with him not totally none the wiser, but not knowing what exactly happened."

Rev: GREGORY: If it makes it any easier, you can simply bring me the human's eye.

Tass: "I don't ... I like where your head's at. I don't think that's easier. Because if we do that, I feel like that's a good reason for them to change everything."

Rev: GREGORY: Hmm. But it's so much less mass to carry.

Jake: I don't know what that word means.

Rev: GREGORY: Carry? It's when you lift something.

Tass: Literal mass, to carry.

Jake: I thought you said it's so much less masticary. Like, like that's an adjective. I was like, what is masticary?

Tass: It's when you really like chewing on something.

Jake: [Laughs] That's what I was — I was like, isn't that like a chewing thing?

Rev: GREGORY: I love to chew eyeballs.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: Do I ... from my research, I am assuming this is a cyber eye. Is it?

Rev: No.

Jake: So this is a flesh eye, just with a chip, like, injected in it.

Rev: Correct.

Jake: Not a flesh eye. What the fuck are eyes made of?

All: [Laugh]

Tass: Well, you've just written my next mystery.

Jake: Yeah. So definitely no just removing the eye and getting it back in his head.

Tass: Yeah. I think we would have to, like, sneak in and make sure he's injected with something to keep him asleep. Let ol' Greg here do what he's got to do to analyze it, and then we make a new one.

Jake: Or alternatively, if we don't want to come at it from the ground and we decide to come at it from the sky, then what we're looking for is something to prove that we have a drop box there. And that would also get us inside from the roof. So rather than stealing the president's eye ...

Rev: We steal the Declaration of Independence.

Jake: [Laughs] Yeah. Let's call Nic Cage. I think he'll be just the man for this.

Tass: You know he's still alive, too. He's a head in a jar somewhere.

Jake: I'm declaring a contact. It's Nicolas Cage.

Tass: [Laughs]

Jake: We could just steal or duplicate something that seems much more mundane. Somebody's lock box ID card.

Tass: Yeah, but if everything is internal there, how can we ever find out who has something there?

Jake: A good old fashioned stakeout? Watch who goes in and out?

Tass: Yeah ...

Jake: So Peregrine never leaves.

Rev: Yeah, as far as you can tell.

Jake: Because that would be ... I mean, that'd be the person to snatch. I'm gonna do some research on Peregrine, to see if I can find out a weak spot in his armor.

Rev: So you go to do a search on Peregrine K. And I think there is some initial information you can find before you do the roll. And the initial information that you do find is that Peregrine K is a retired worker for Codex Artillery. And as you scroll down through their information, you find a lot of redacted files and images. But after a little bit of searching, you finally do find some images and some files that have not been completely blacked out. And what you see is a man dressed all in black, with two long blades protruding from his forearms. In the picture, there are half a dozen dead bodies scattered around the room, and he is covered in blood and gore, but he's smiling at the camera. And the info you find attached to this photo indicates that this photo was taken in the aftermath of the first attempted break-in of The Nest.

SFX:

OUTRO MUSIC

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