

***Neuromancer* Cheat Sheet**

A slightly disorganized, by-no-means-exhaustive guide to geography, technology, and characters in the William Gibson novel.

SPOILERS AHEAD

Geography

Japan

- Chiba City
 - Across the bay from Tokyo; separated from the port by Night City
 - High-tech playground, including black market for neurological enhancements
 - Architecture is primarily made up of arcologies
 - From <http://arcology.com> “An Arcology is based on Paolo Soleri's concept of the development of compact 3-D alternatives to existing urban sprawls, combining more efficient use of land and resources. In the future, mankind will be pressed closer and closer together in a vast urban sprawl. As society is deals with a rise in population and population density, while having to deliver a much more efficient use of resources, use of the arcology will become commonplace.”
 - Dave Seeley’s “Corporate Arcology”:
http://daveseeley.com/shop_folder/gamingoriginals_pages/ArcologyO.html
 - Unknown artist’s photomontage of an Arcology:
<http://members.iinet.net.au/~immersia/work/arcology.html>
- Night City / Ninsei
 - “an interzone” that separates Chiba City from the port of Tokyo Bay
 - anything goes – drugs, prostitution, violence, etc.
- Tokyo
 - Across the bay from Chiba City
 - Contrasts Chiba City / Night City
 - Case visits only once with Linda Lee, early in their relationship

The United States

- The Sprawl
 - *Neuromancer*, *Count Zero*, and *Mona Lisa Overdrive* are commonly referred to as “the sprawl trilogy.”
 - Also known as BAMA: Boston-Atlanta Metropolitan Axis
 - Cities have all merged together with no definable center
 - Case’s territory was originally Atlanta
 - Architecture composed primarily of geodesic domes
 - Generally credited to R. Buckminster Fuller, developed in the 1940’s, although there is evidence of earlier geodesic developments; Fuller introduced the concept into popular consciousness
 - Extraordinarily strong; high volume of enclosed volume to weight

- Currently, the largest geodesic dome environment is The Eden Project in Cornwall, England:
<http://www.cornwall365.co.uk/cornwall/places.27.Eden-Project.html>

Freeside

- Tourist playground, in orbit around Earth
- Developed and owned by Tessier-Ashpool S-A
- Gravity Well
 - The path taken to access Freeside
 - Departs from Paris' ORLY airport
- Also called "The Spindle"
 - From the OED, a spindle is "a slender rounded rod, usu. tapering at each end, used in hand-spinning to twist and wind thread from a mass of wool, flax, etc., held on a distaff, etc."
 - Also described as being "cigar shaped"
 - Gravity decreases at the tapered ends of the spindle
 - Villa Straylight is located in one end
- Villa Straylight
 - Mysterious, highly-guarded home of the Tessier-Ashpool Clan
 - Likened to a wasp's nest
- Zion
 - Peripherally attached to Freeside
 - Established by 5 Freeside workers who refused to return
 - Inhabited mainly by "rastafarians"

Other Locations

- Istanbul
 - Where the team meets Terzibashjian, who leads them to Peter Riviera
 - No domes or arcologies
 - Landscape dotted with cultural clutter – junkyards, etc.
- Paris
 - Molly takes Case shopping in Paris before they go to BAMA
 - Point of departure for trip to Freeside
- Russia
 - Haunts the book in many ways although the characters never go to Russia in the present of the narrative timeline.
 - Location of Operation Screaming Fist – Colonel Willis Corto and others were assigned the job of infiltrating Russian military ICE, using the world's first icebreaker program, Mole IX. The hack was attempted with multiple airborne teams that each included one cowboy, a joeboy (assistant), and a pilot in an aircraft. The Russian AI used EMP to deter the intruders and most of the U.S. soldiers were killed. Colonel Corto is the only survivor. It is later revealed that the U.S. government knew about the EMPs and went ahead with the mission anyway.

Technology

- Cyberspace / the matrix
 - The term “cyberspace” was coined by Gibson in the short story “Burning Chrome” in 1982
 - “a consensual hallucination”; “a graphic representation of data abstracted from the banks of every computer in the human system” (51)
 - think of it like a visualization of the internet
 - visit Cybergeography.org for interesting visualizations of cyberspace
- Jacking In / Out
 - Connecting and disconnecting from the matrix
 - Implies a much more embodied experience of cyberspace than simply connecting to the internet
- Shuriken
 - Throwing stars; not really technology but important thematically
- Fletchettes- flying dart / arrow
- deck – think of it as a computer, although it seems to have some fundamental differences from your basic desktop/laptop
- Hosaka / Ono Sendai – Case’s deck
- cowboy – a hacker
- simstim – neologism of simulation / stimulation
 - similar to VR except that it connects to your neurological system and you experience the physical sensations of the simstim actor
 - Tally Isham is a simstim star
- Meat – the body
- ICE – Intrusion Countermeasure Electronics
 - Think of it like a really effective, potentially lethal firewall
- Icebreaker
 - A program to get past ICE to the data that is being safeguarded; a virus
 - Mole IX is the first Icebreaker, used by Corto et. al. in Screaming Fist
 - The Kuang Grade Mark Eleven – brand new Chinese icebreaker; Case & Dixie will use to access Tessier-Ashpool; rather than punching through defenses, it mimics the ICE and slowly penetrates
- ROM Personality Matrix
 - A construct based upon the consciousness of an individual
 - McCoy Pauley / Dixie Flatline is a ROM personality matrix
- EMP – electromagnetic pulse
 - Used by ICE to deter intruders
 - During the war, the US government allowed Corto’s special forces team to jack in to a Russian defense system, despite the fact (because) that they knew the Russians would use EMP. Corto was the only one to make it out alive.
- Microsofts
 - Software programs / databases used by the Panther Moderns and other technophiles
 - The user must have their head surgically altered to create slots behind the ear. Microsofts are small cartridges inserted into the slots
- AI – artificial intelligence

- In the world of *Neuromancer*, they are used to safeguard information and to run operations
 - AIs control ICE
 - Wintermute can access the gardeners and microlights in Freeside
- Wintermute and Neuromancer are part of the same AI
- Microlights – planes; used in the Screaming Fist operation; drone microlights are used as surveillance / security devices in Freeside; they are designed to blend with the artificial environment
- Meat-puppet – a prostitute whose consciousness is suppressed while her body is rented out.
- Puppet-house – brothel where meat-puppets are employed; The most expensive service of all is to rent an empty, private room.
- Turing Registry / Turing Police
 - Responsible for tracking / policing of Artificial Intelligence
 - Reference to Alan Turing. Turing was an early computer scientist, made famous for the “Turing test,” an experiment in which a person feeds written questions to 2 entities, one human, one computer, and tries to distinguish between them based upon their answers. Machines “pass” the Turing test if the human judge cannot distinguish between the human and computer operators.
- Chubb lock & key – an elaborate mechanical lock
 - If you attempt to open it with the wrong key, it become inoperable
 - More info here:
<http://www.localhistory.scit.wlv.ac.uk/Museum/locks/gazetteer/chubbs.htm>
- The Cores - Computer system that operates Straylight, often manipulated by Wintermute and Neuromancer

Characters

The Tiger Team

- Case – cowboy; resident of BAMA until he ripped off his employers; they punished him by using a neurotoxin that destroyed his ability to jack in. He spent 9 years in Chiba City looking for a cure before Armitage hired him. During this time, he developed an intense drug addiction.
- Molly – the original razorgirl; substantial genetic modifications: mirrored lenses inset into her eye sockets allowing her enhanced vision and digital readouts; retractable razors under her fingernails; enhanced reflexes, fletchettes, etc. Financed her surgeries through work as a meat-puppet, a prostitute whose consciousness is suppressed while her body is rented out
- Armitage – ex-special forces; hires Molly & Case to undertake a covert operation; he is the only one “in the know” regarding the details of their mission; we later find that Armitage was formerly known as Colonel Willis Corto and was the sole survivor of the Screaming Fist operation. He is returned from Russia with severe physical disabilities and is mentally unstable. Several high ranking officers are tried in connection with the failed operation and Corto is called upon to testify on their behalf. While he would prefer to appear in court in his grotesque state, the military insist on physically altering him into a more acceptable-looking body, i.e. the body he now wears as Armitage. After his involvement in the trial, Corto snaps and kills a man. On the run from the law, he runs

several questionable operations, including overseeing a heroine factory in Thailand. Years later, Corto has disappeared, but an unnamed man matching his physical description shows up in a French mental institution and is diagnosed with schizophrenia. He is then made part of an experiment to cure schizophrenia through the use of cybernetics. The program gave participants microcomputers and encouraged them to program them. This man is the only success in the entire program. It is later revealed that the only reason he was “cured” is that Wintermute re-built his personality into that of Armitage.

- Finn – a fence who does business out of Manhattan; he rents secure space in addition to selling stolen goods; Armitage hires him to take care of equipment on the mission. After trying several constructs, Wintermute ultimately adopts the visage of Finn in order to communicate with Case.
- McCoy Pauley – a.k.a. Dixie Flatline; one of Case’s mentors; a cowboy legend, he is famous for undergoing brain death 3 times in his career, thus the name “flatline.” He sells himself to Sense/Net and is being stored as a ROM personality construct when the events of the novel begin. Case and Molly’s first mission is to steal him from the Sense/Net archives.
- Peter Riviera – has had alterations so that he is able to make others see whatever he imagines; Armitage, Case, Molly, and Finn go to Turkey to “hire” Peter for their mission; he is persuaded to come along both through Molly’s threats and the promise that they will keep him continually supplied with drugs; an artist / performer who specializes in “dreaming real.”

Chiba city / Ninsei

- Ratz – Russian bartender; prosthetic arm, presumably from the Russian War; relishes being ugly in a world of ubiquitous beauty
- Lonny Zone – a pimp who works the same turf as Case
- Wage – Case’s drug supplier
- Julius Deane – an “importer/exporter”; 135 years old; “sexless and inhumanly patient”; Case considers him a friend; he had Linda Lee killed, possibility under contract from Wintermute
- Linda Lee – a young girl that Case meets in an arcade in Night City; he introduces her to drugs, she becomes an addict, and she subsequently dies as a result of stealing to feed her habit. Julius Deane ordered her killed and the order may have been under direction from Wintermute. Case is haunted by her death. Later, a construct of Linda appears on the beach during Case’s flatline.

The Sprawl

- McCoy Pauley – a.k.a. Dixie Flatline; see “tiger team” above;
- Bobby Quine – Case’s other mentor.
- Finn – see “tiger team” above.
- The Panther Moderns – a group of anarchists enlisted by Molly to help steal Dixie Flatline’s ROM construct; they are technofetishists, often loaded with microsofts, heavily surgically altered, and wear mimetic polycarbon suits to blend into their environment;
- Lupus Yonderboy – one of the Panther Moderns; does side work for Molly, including finding out who Armitage is working for and getting more info on him.

Istanbul

- Terzibashjian – a government informant; helps the team find Riviera; turns the team in to the Turing police after Molly blows off his fingers during Riviera's capture.
- Peter Riviera

Freeside

- Cath & Bruce – two young party-goers in Freeside; Cath meets Case out by the pool and introduces him to Bruce; Bruce supplies Case with a stimulant that can get past his surgical alterations in order to get him high
- The Villa Straylight
 - Lady 3Jane – Ashpool's daughter; bored by Straylight; likes to party; wrote a semiotic analysis of Villa Straylight, never finished it; presumably a 3rd version of the "original" Jane
 - Hideo – ninja protector of the Tessier-Ashpool clan; in Finn's story about a ninja retrieving a stolen cloisonné head, Hideo is believed to be the ninja;
 - Ashpool – resurrected member of the original Tessier-Ashpool clan; over 200 years old due to periods of cryogenic freezing;
 - Marie-France – Ashpool's wife and 3Jane's mother; she had a vision for the company/family in which individual consciousness is eliminated; she commissioned / arranged for Wintermute / Neuromancer; strangled by Ashpool because he feared her vision
 - Neuromancer – the second half of the Tessier-Ashpool AI; doesn't require a construct because he is "all personality";
 - 8Jean – another member of the Tessier-Ashpool clan; he is out of town on business while all of this is occurring.
- Zion
 - Aerol – one of the Zionites who helps Case; when he looks into the Matrix, he sees Babylon;
 - Maelcum – pilots the Marcus Garvey and is Case's companion through the operation
 - The Founders – workers who refused to return to Freeside and who "shunned the gravity well"; prematurely aged due to living in low gravity
 - General Girling – the commanding officer of operation Screaming Fist; trained and betrayed Corto; Wintermute uses his construct to control Armitage/Corto;