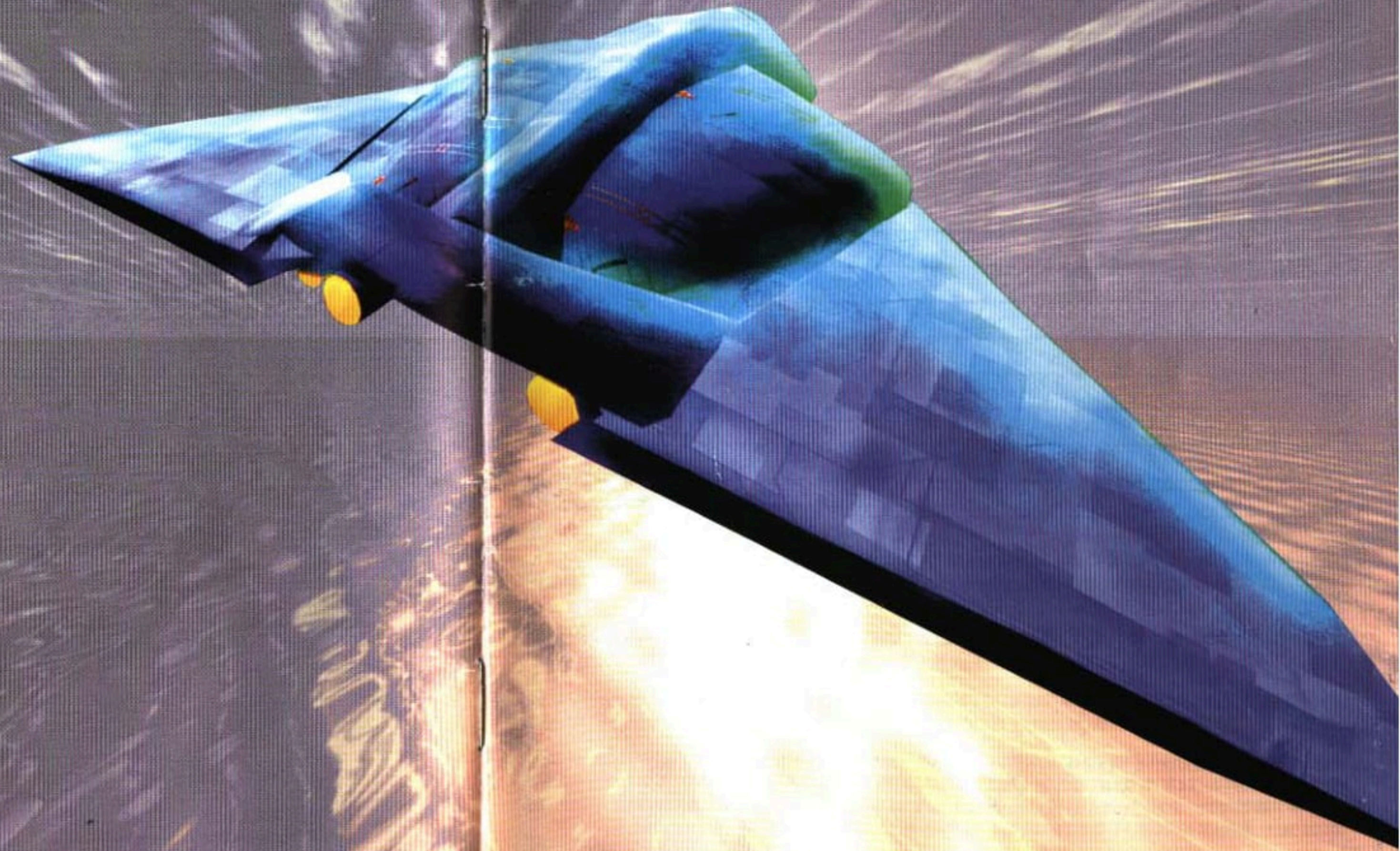


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MN-3DO-084-0

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BACKGROUND

Earth, 2027, five years after the global economic collapse. The fracturing of the world economy brings about swift changes in the global power structure. Now the Criminal Cartels struggle against the Free World Alliance (FWA) for control of the planet.

You control ZAK, an outlaw computer hacker with some very useful skills. Unfortunately, they do you little good while sitting in an FWA confinement cell, awaiting trial and sentencing for treason and espionage.

William Devlin, head of the FWA, gives you a choice. Work for the FWA on a covert mission, or sweat out whatever time you have left in your cell. Some choice...

THE MISSION

Devlin and the FWA have your mission planned. After being released from your confinement cell at the Pentagon, you are taken to a waiting hovercraft. From there you will be transported to the North Atlantic, where you will rendezvous with the Rig. The Rig is a mercenary operations base run by a man known only as Santos. The FWA has contracted with Santos to provide a jumping-off point for your trip to the Cyberia Complex.

Once on the Rig, your orders are straightforward; meet with Santos and take possession of a waiting TF-22 aircraft. The TF-22 has its autopilot set for the optimum route to the Cyberia Complex, as well as an onboard tactical computer for combat.

Once the TF-22 delivers you to the Cyberia Complex your orders are to infiltrate the base and find out just what the hell is going on...

ENTERING IDENTIFICATION

To enter a name, move the hand across the keyboard with the control pad. Then press "A" to enter the letter. Pressing "B" deletes the previous character.

DIFFICULTY

There are two difficulty parameters for a game of Cyberia. You can individually set the difficulty for the arcade portions of the game and the puzzle parts of the game (*BLADES*) as shown at right:



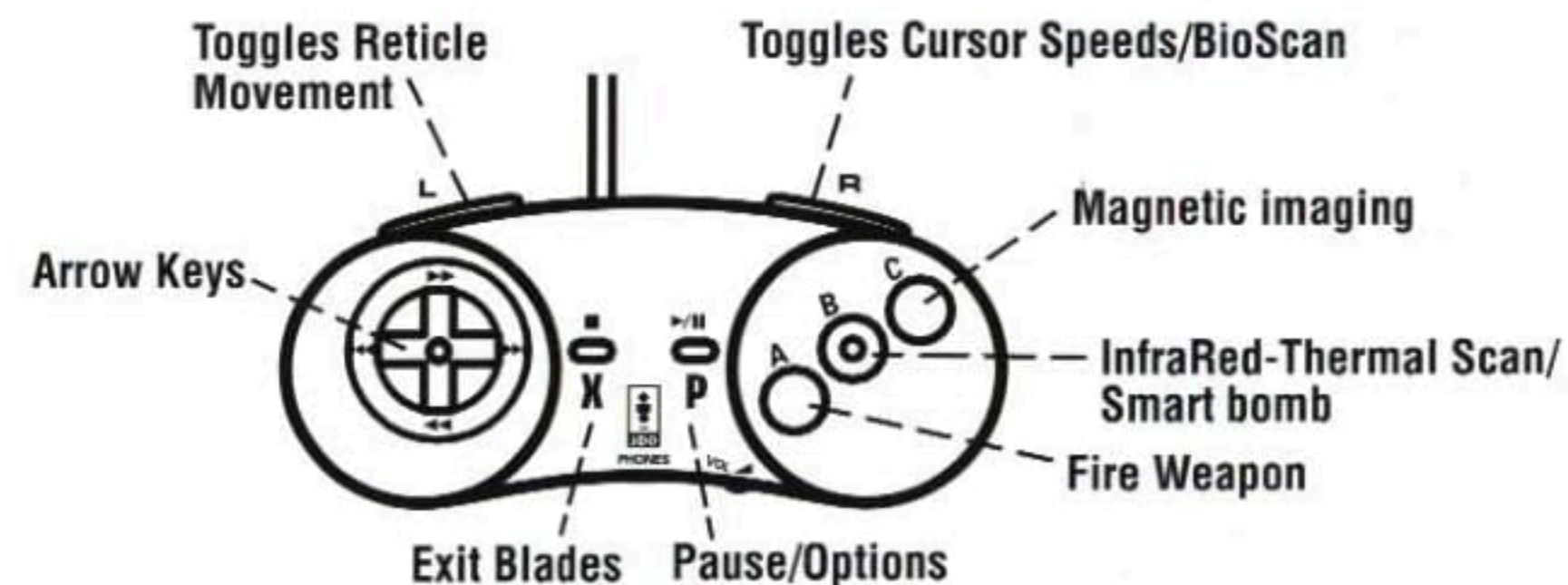
Difficulty can be set to Easy, Medium, or Difficult. Easy arcade and easy puzzle cannot be chosen together, because then the game would be too easy.

We highly encourage experienced gamers to choose the difficult levels, the medium and easy levels being especially designed for people who are not used to video games.

Difficulty cannot be changed once a game has been started.

WALKING

To control ZAK, use the arrow keys on your controller. Cyberia uses a nodal system for ZAK's movement. A node is a decision point, a place where you can change direction or perform an action. ZAK walks (and sometimes runs depending on the situation) from node to node. To move ZAK to the next node in the



direction he is facing, press the up (think of it as forward) arrow key. Pressing the left and right arrow keys will rotate ZAK while he is at a node, if any other paths are currently available to him.

Once you move ahead, ZAK will walk in that direction until he reaches the next node. However, while walking you can turn around 180 degrees and head back to the node you started at by pressing the down (backwards) arrow key. ZAK will automatically stop at the next node unless you hold down the up arrow key, in which case he will continue to walk forward.

Tip: Once you know your way around, you can walk and turn without interruption by keeping the up (forward) arrow key pressed and simultaneously holding down either the left or right direction key. Remember, this only works if there is a pathway available in the direction you wish to turn.

Note: Whenever ZAK stops at a node, it is highly recommended that you use your direction keys to discover all of the possible directions that ZAK can move.

TAKING ACTION

In some instances there will be an object or item of interest directly in front of ZAK. If you wish to explore/examine further, press the up (forward) direction key.

If a character confronts you with a verbal request, you have two options. You can comply with their request, or try to blast them with your arm-gun. The "A" button fires your weapon. Remember, you can only fire your weapon if there is someone to fire at.

While in combat, you aim your weapon by moving the direction keys toward your enemy and then pressing the "A" button to fire. In most cases, ZAK will be able to duck behind a wall or an object to avoid being hit. ZAK cannot fire while ducking for cover.

BLADES

ZAK wears BLADES: Bi-optic Low Amplitude Displayed Energy System. These special cybershades allow ZAK to perform three distinct functions that will help him complete his mission.

InfraRed/Thermal Scan - This scan will detect any emissions in the InfraRed spectrum, as well as traces of heat. This is a very sensitive scan, and the BLADES on-board computer will determine very accurate levels for any areas of InfraRed or Thermal energy it finds. This scan will also cause minor heat flux in the area being scanned. To activate this scan, press the "B" button.

Magnetic Resonance Imaging - This function allows you to "look through" an object, and can reveal important clues about how an item works. Activate by pressing the "C" button.

BioScan - This will scan the immediate area for traces of BioMass (organic matter). The BioScan has a very limited range. Press the "R" button to use the BioScan.

Each time you use one of the BLADES functions, it will begin to drain the built-in battery system. However, the system recharges quickly, so if you find yourself out of power and wanting to use the BLADES again, walk around to give time for the system to recharge. To exit BLADES press the "X" button.

MANIPULATION

In some instances you will need to press buttons or perform similar tasks. It will be clear when this is the case. You will see ZAK's hand in front of you on the screen. Use the arrow keys to position ZAK's hand, and press the "A" button to perform an action, such as pressing a button.

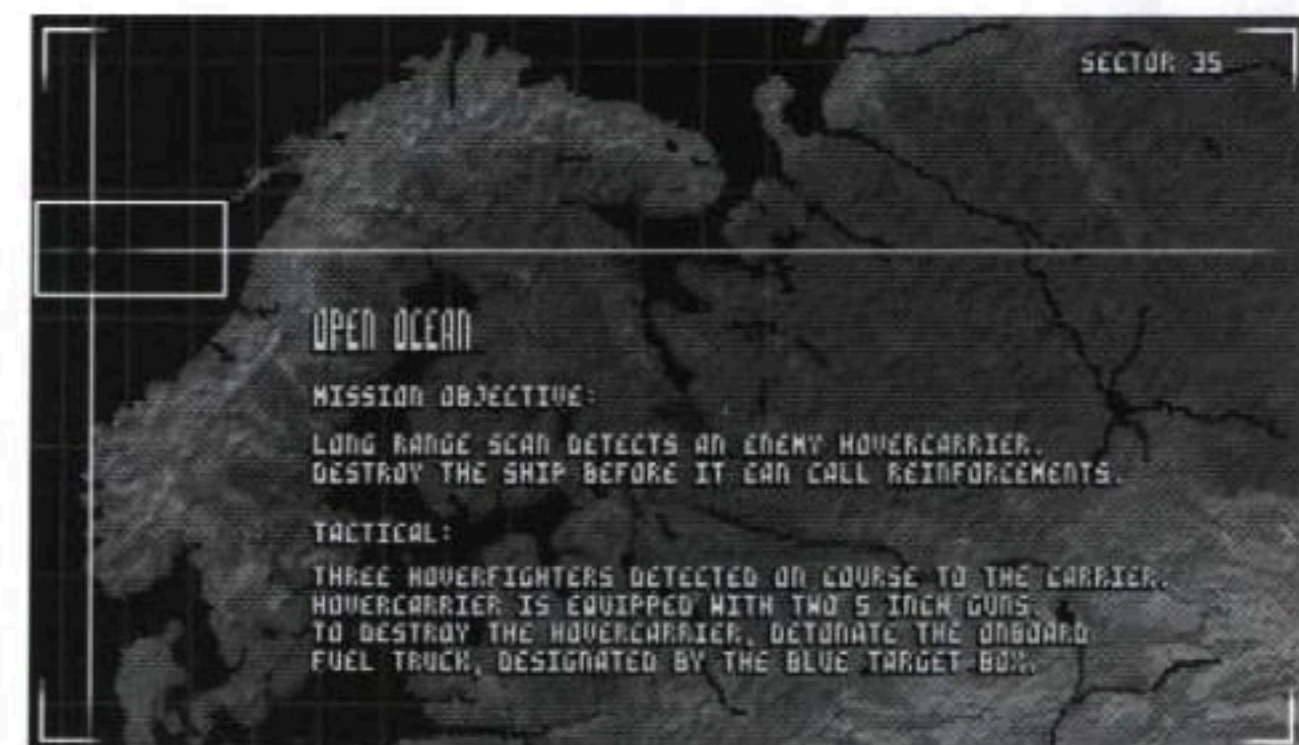
AIRBORNE

In order to reach the Cyberia Complex, ZAK will have to cruise the skies in the TF-22 TransFighter.



The TF-22 is equipped with AutoNav, a computer-controlled piloting and navigation system. However, this particular TF-22 has a weapons system glitch. You will have to fire the weapons manually.

The route to Cyberia will take you through seven hostile enemy sectors. Before entering a sector you will be shown a mission briefing, along with current tactical data essential to completing the mission.



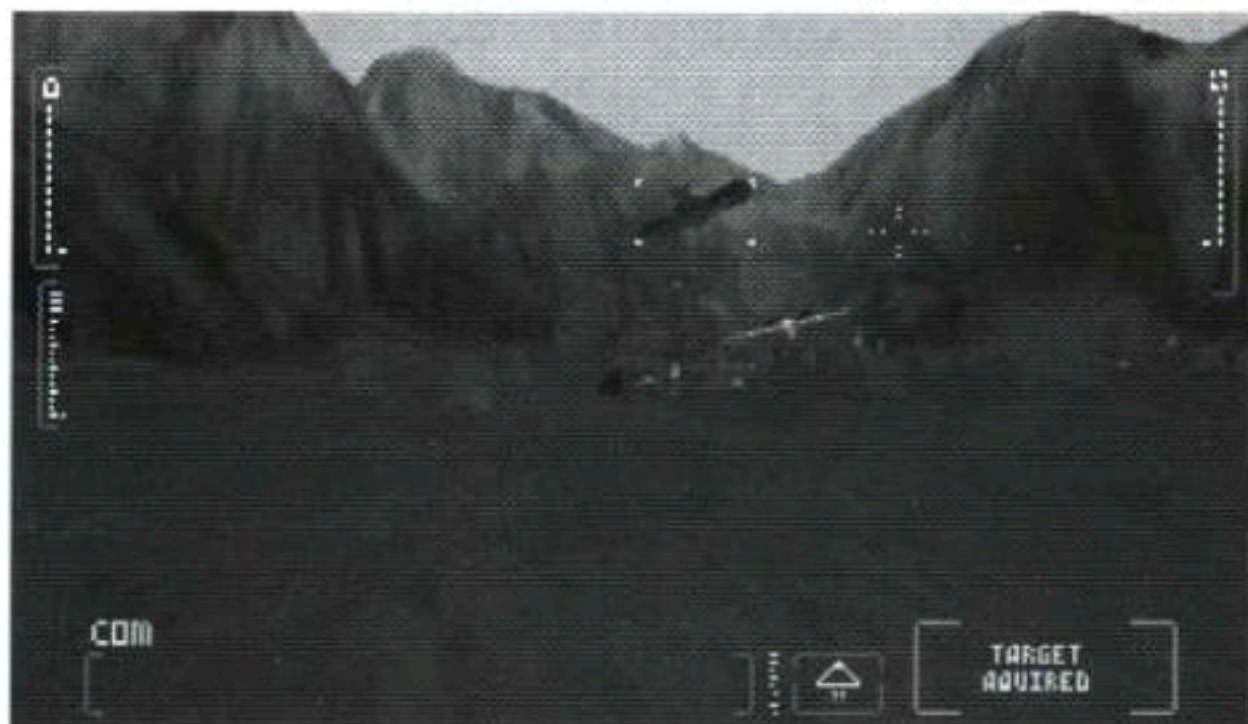
Each mission has a specific goal that must be accomplished, and the mission is not over until that goal is fulfilled. If you fail a mission, you will start over at the beginning.

You get a cockpit view of the approaching terrain and bogies. The computer will often verbally inform you when a target is acquired. You control the targeting

crosshair with your control pad. Press L-shift to switch between standard mode and aircraft mode. In aircraft mode, pushing "up" on the keypad will move the crosshair down; pushing "down" on the keypad will make the crosshair go up. In standard mode, pushing "up" on the keypad will cause the cursor to move up and pushing "down" on the keypad will move the cursor down. In both modes, left is left and right is right.

Fire the TransFighter's weapons by pressing the "A" button. The computer will box targets with horizontal brackets. It will often take more than one hit to destroy enemy targets. Enemy targets are bracketed with yellow brackets. Some targets require multiple hits to destroy. When you score a hit on such a target, the yellow box will change to a dark red. If you hit an enemy and the targeting box disappears, then the enemy has sustained critical damage and is no longer a threat.

During some missions there may be blue target boxes. Check the Mission Orders for specific information regarding blue target boxes. Your heads-up-display, or HUD, contains information about the status of your ship. The gauge at



the top right displays your Shield Levels. This gauge will fluctuate depending on the amount of enemy hits your ship takes. The gauge at top left shows the energy available to your firing control system. Shield and Weapon Systems automatically recharge when not in use. The gauge at middle left displays hull damage, and is not rechargeable during flight.

After each mission you will see a mission ratings screen informing you of how well you performed on the mission. The information also includes how much damage you sustained, as well as an overall mission performance rating.



Note: The TF-22 is equipped with internal repair capabilities, so after each mission your TransFighter will be restored to full operational capability for the next mission.

MILESTONES

As you progress through Cyberia, you will reach different milestones.

To load a game, press "P" to enter the menu system and choose Load.

You can resume the game from any milestone that you have passed. Milestones are graphically represented as shown below.



Milestones are shown in the order reached. The highlighted milestone will be in color. The last milestone that you passed will be at the bottom right. Move the highlight with the arrow keys.

Press the "A" button to resume a game from that point. If all of the milestones will not fit on one screen, the screen will automatically scroll when you press the arrow keys.

MENU SYSTEM

Press "P" (or Play/Pause) to enter the menu system. The menu system allows you to change the game parameters.

The main menu contains the following items:

Continue	Exits the menu and returns you to Cyberia.
Load	Load game (start at a milestone).
Help	Control help.
Quit	Exit Cyberia.

At the top of the menu is the volume control box. You can set the volume at four different levels from 0 (off) to 3.

ADDITIONAL CONTROLS

In Fighter Sequences, R-shift toggles through 3 cursor speeds.

In "Charlie" Sequence, "B" activates smart bomb.

JOYSTICK CALIBRATION

While pressing the leftmost button on the joystick, move the stick to its extremes.

17/05/27

Start from the beginning. That's the hard way, it's always easier to start from the end and back up, retreat, that's the easy way. But I don't do things the easy way, so I won't tell the story the easy way.

The beginning was about 2010, maybe earlier, I don't remember. I was born, and some people say they remember being born, but I don't. I was brought up, and I should remember more of that than I do now, never mind why, maybe I could explain, maybe later I will. There were apartments, schools, houses, people who called themselves aunts and uncles, people who didn't. There were people who might have been a family. They're the hardest to remember.

Some years back, couldn't be too many, how old am I, after all? I'm probably still a "teen-ager," what they said in the old videocassettes. Anyway, my memory starts to burn about then, scooting through dark alleys into abandoned basements. I can remember from then on. Probably be better if I remembered the first part and forgot the later years. Not my choice, though.

None of it is anything anyone would be glad to remember. I've done old videocassettes, even seen some library books. I'd be very glad for some of those memories, the lemonade under the shade trees, the ruby sunsets: so glad to see red in the west like rubies and not like blood. Nothing's glad any more. But I need to get back to my story.

We were in the basements, crawling the wires, grabbing tubes and boxes, hooking wires to boards, boards to wires, things to things. Some of us knew some things, others knew other things. Things. Grab a bill of lading from Taipei to San Francisco, grab a purchase order from Houston to San Francisco, land out with a wild shipment to our neighborhood. I got my BLADES that way. Grabbing things and landing them out. Grabbing the Third World and the First World. What were we, maybe the Sixth World? It worked for us, we were glad, Worlds One through Five or however many hadn't worked for us, we hadn't worked for them, finally we had a World that worked.

World Six worked fine for years, maybe three, maybe four. We got what

we wanted, got most of what we needed, didn't hurt anybody who couldn't take the hurt easy, we were sitting on top of the world, like the old songs say.

Strange, you think about it, I don't remember anybody else doing old songs, library books, only me. Course, Karo did wall hanging things, like frozen videos, called them "oil paintings," we couldn't see any oil on them, so maybe that was like me and the songs and the books. Then there was Arla, she did old music that didn't have songs in it. Zak, she said, you don't always have to sing along, you can let it go by itself. And we were all sitting on top of the world.

Except we weren't on the top, we were on the bottom, in the abandoned basements with the junction boxes, and we were shiny and glad, but the other worlds were big and mean, and the glad didn't last. I miss Arla, I hope she wasn't wrong, I guess I'll never know.

18/05/27

I looked over the words I cut last night, and I said "Zak, you're not blindingly cohesive." Not hard to understand, two days in the Pentagon, nothing to grab, wake up, eat, walk the corridors clockwise, eat, sleep or don't. While you can't sleep, there's the net to cut words into. First night, I wanted to break the net box, I wanted to break it all, but cooler heads prevailed. "Cooler heads prevailed." Where did I hear that? Some 20th-century videocassette, probably. There weren't any heads but my own, and that one wasn't so cool, but I must have had enough sense not to break the place I was going to spend the rest of my life.

My life. I cut the words last night, and they're cut and burned, and I can't get them back. So I'm cutting words for the ages, or at least for the FWA, the Free World Alliance, a name that might be made more accurate, and I'll try to make what I say understandable to young and old. "Young and old." Where did that come from? Burt Lancaster and Gina Lolla? Are there any circuses any more? Not in the corridors of the Pentagon.

But I'm cutting words, they used to call it "writing," for the ages. Maybe just for William Devlin, Mr Devlin, Sir, but I pretend the words will last, the

story goes pervasive, Century 21 meets Winnie The Pooh. Not Mr Toad, of course, Mr Devlin, perish forbid, oh no, Zak your tame Sixth Worlder is completely absolutely indubitably under your control, nothing will break, everything will be glad again. You know none of this can leak back to the Sixth World, maybe Seventh by now, or you wouldn't let me cut the words. They're for the ages.

19/05/27

Woke up early this morning, signed on, looked at the words I cut last night and the night before, what's happening to me? Try cutting some words before breakfast, might have half an hour.

My theory.

I feel fine, never better, no problems there, I could do pushups with my left hand while I'm cutting words with my right. Not likely for a net felon locked in the Pentagon to feel so good.

I think bizarro. I'm OK now, but the words I cut the last two nights were clearly not cool-headed. Not clear-headed.

Conclusion.

Dope. Kindly Mr Devlin and the Eff Wubble You A are building my body and breaking my brain. Steroids, hallucinogenics, wish I knew, old Karo could tell.

Karo. Karo would have the sense to say "Zak! You cut your nice theory flat into the net! For half an hour, you couldn't unhook your fingers from the part of your brain you found in the morning light??"

Right, Karo, you're right. Erase today, breakfast's coming.

<Block Begin> <Block End> <Delete>

[[Network Reinstate]]

20/05/27

Nothing tonight or last night. Waiting for more cooler heads to show up, then maybe we can all prevail. Like a tree that stands before the water. Where's Karo? Where's Arla? Daddy said a friend's better than a password. Hard to believe Daddy was right, even one time. But he held some good songs, on those big black vinyl disks. "Stone cold dead in the market." Daddy hit the streets, the market, the bricks, the riot cops. I hit the tunnels, the basements, the cables. Daddy, I still hold the songs. "Delia's gone. One more round." Arla's gone.

It's dope, yeah, it must be dope, but I miss the people, I miss Daddy, he's dead, I miss Karo and Arla, they're probably dead, but that won't keep me from missing them. And I miss my BLADES. Maybe more than the people, and that's a bizarro thought, but I MISS MY BLADES!

24/05/27

Sittin' down here in Pentagon Farm. No cooler heads here yet. Gettin' ready to break things here, boss. Only glad thing is I can still cut words. No no, they can't take that away from me, but they could, and I don't know why they don't. What do they, what does Mr Devlin, have me here for? What do they want me to do? "You got me doing what you wanna, Baby, Baby, what you want me to do?"

17/05/27**MEMO FAX**

From: W. A. Devlin

To: P. B. McGuire

Keep a watch on the new inmates, Pete. Nice job your team did on grabbing the little spiders. Karo the tarantula, Arla the black widow, and Zak, I don't know what the hell he is, but keep a close eye on that dude. And keep him healthy, in body if not in mind. Big plans coming down for Mister Z. Leave his net box open, but keep him away from real people for a week or two.

Probably be a good idea if you tore this memo up and ate it with your corn flakes, Pete. The Cartels don't need to see our cards face-up.

Thanks again,
Bill

19/05/27**MEMO FAX**

From: W. A. Devlin

To: P. B. McGuire

Got your request yesterday, Pete, and I want you to know I understand. Anyone would want to get back out in the field, slice the Cartels apart at the abdomen, God knows I would. If I had anyone I could trust like you, I'd pull you right off jail duty and send you out against the madmen in a minute. Meanwhile, you're the best we've got.

Pete, this technology FWA has here is what your spiders would call "bizarro." Fax in clear turns out to be better than scrambled telecon, at least from under these mountains that you don't need to know where they are.

Anyway, I should be back at the Pentagon in a week or so, and things will get back to normal. Or back to abnormal, the way we like them. Keep the tarantula and the black widow on ice. You wouldn't believe the number of plans the dwarves, the people under the mountains, have for them, and forget that I said that. And forget that I called them dwarves, too, and get rid of this memo. Hope your digestive system is as sturdy as ever.

By the way, Mister Z was almost "cohesive" this morning. Please advise the cooking staff. His body looks fine, his mind could stand a mild windstorm or two. You have a week or so to work on the Z project.

See you soon,
Bill Devlin

20/05/27**TELECON/Mask #2**

From: G. G. Torres

To: W. A. Devlin

"Bill? Bill. Como estas? Great! Called to make sure the transfighter's in place on the Rig."

"Muy bueno, compadre! No problem with Santos?"

"Well, hell. His pants get wet, he can send - what's she called?"

"Gia, that's right, hey, who'd bother with una rubia, anyway, so he should send her to Munich for a new pair of lederhosen. Four pair, what the hell, we're passing him more dinero than he can use for sweat-bands."

"No, wait. Uno momento, Guillermo. Paz. Paz, it's not su problema, amigo! We have a cowboy coming in, he'll fly the bird away, Santos won't even have to watch, you were never there, and some sunshiny day you might get another call in the hangar, another problem, another situation, something Bill can do for the Free World Alliance."

"Guillermo? Bill? Look, I have to go. I'll patch you to Tony, he's got things to do, you might help, amigo! Vaya con dios!"

25/05/27*V-Mail Transcript**From: W. A. Devlin**To: P. B. McGuire*

Hello, Pete, I'm back. Sorry I missed you, but the FW Air Force doesn't worry much about regular business hours.

I've been keeping an eye on the tapes of Zak and the two other spiders, and I can't find fault one with the way your team has done the job, Pete. I'm really impressed. I wasn't expecting Zak to be ready for Phase Two for another week, but you've got him ready for tomorrow. Today, probably, if I'd had an earlier flight.

So, therefore, Pete, tomorrow's the day. Shuffle Zak's schedule, exercise and meals at odd hours, but leave out the chemical additives. Then get him to my office at the end of the day. Make it 19:30. Release his BLADES to me ahead of time, and get me a plaspistol from stores to enhance the ambience.

Afterwards, we'll get you off guard duty and back in the field. Pete, you may be the only agent in the Force who'd give up the nice warm Pentagon for the frozen tundra. If not the only one, definitely the best.

See you tomorrow.

26/05/27**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

Devlin: [Gen. Wm. A. Devlin, FWA Security]:
Sit down, Zak. Make yourself comfortable. Pete, I think you can leave us to talk.

McGuire: [Maj. Peter B. McGuire, FWA Security]: Yes, sir. We'll be right out side.

Devlin: Thank you, Major. Now then, Zak, I can't really say that I hope you've had a pleasant stay in the Pentagon, because that isn't why we bring mega-grand larcenists and world-class saboteurs to the Pentagon. But I hope you've had time to think...

Zak: [Prisoner Zebulon Pike Kingston]: Think about the dope in the food, the water, the air? Yes, sir, Mr Devlin. Think about my heinous crimes and the crippling blows I've dealt the Free World Alliance? Oh yes, sir. Three minutes was plenty of time to think about them, wonder what they were, decide it didn't matter whether I did them or not, I was in the Pentagon already. Think about my missing friends? Either plenty of time or not nearly enough, 'cause all I did was think the same things over and over. Think about why I wasn't dead yet? No, Mr Devlin, sir. I haven't figured that out. Perhaps that is what you brought me here to explain. Sir.

Devlin: Nice little speech, Mr. Kingston. No, I'm sorry, "Nice little speech, Zak." Neither one of us would want to think I was interviewing your father, would we? And I'll pardon the one interruption, but just one. I'm sure you've missed the opportunity for conversation, and that's what I've brought you here for. Understood?

Zak: Right. It's your hall, you call the tunes.

Devlin: Remember, Zak, you're not your father. It is in your very best interest not to be your father. Now relax and listen carefully. I have two sets of questions for you. First, do you know how to

use a plaspistol, would you like to have your BLADES back, and do you want to be set free with a clean record? Second, would you like to go back to your cell, do you want your net box cut off, and how does lethal injection next Saturday sound?

Zak: Do I get a theme song while I'm thinking?

Devlin: No, I'll just count to 20. Rapidly. I never learned how to whistle.

Zak: OK. Shit, I hope I remember the questions. "Yes, yes, yes, no, no, I'd rather not." What do I win?

Devlin: The opportunity of a lifetime.

Zak: Twenty minutes ago, I didn't have a lifetime. Look, all this scintillating repartee has been a real gas, as many people who were not my father would have said, and I really don't have anything better to do, but I'm sure you're a busy man. A General and everything. As millions of people who were not my father would have said, let's cut to the chase.

Devlin: Zak, I like your style. A convicted felon, sure, but I have a limited circle of acquaintances. I work for them, they work for me, or I throw them in jail. In increasing order of competence, usually. First, we'll assume that you've sworn on everything that's holy to you and to your nearest and dearest that you'll never tell anything smarter than an azalea anything about this mission, "Cyberia."

Zak: I so swear, boss.

Devlin: And I believe you, Zak, because you're dead one way or another unless everything goes exactly right. This is a critical mission, and it all depends on you. Your next question is "Why me?"

Zak: Excuse me, General, but "why me?" And how long am I going to wait for the answer, while studiously ignoring the BLADES you just pulled out of the drawer?

Devlin: You're rushing the script, Zak. My next line is supposed to be: "I'll explain your importance shortly, but first I need to fill you in on the background."

Zak: Sure thing, boss. Those are my very own BLADES I'm ignoring, aren't they?

Devlin: Far, far away, in the frozen lands of deepest Siberia, a group of the greatest scientists and engineers in the world built a hidden facility and began a secret project, shortly before what I would lose any remaining shred of credibility if I called it the glorious founding of the Free World Alliance. The facility was completed and the brains moved in a couple of years before everything collapsed and we started up the FWA to save our First World Asses.

Zak: Oh, nice, General. Hadn't heard that one. You know what Karo and I decided "FWA" stands for?

Devlin: When you get back, if you get back, if you go in the first place, we can trade one-liners. And yes, they're your very own BLADES, and we'll get to that. Patience is one of the requirements for this mission. You're very fortunate that humility and submissiveness are not.

Zak: Patience? Sure, watch me. I'd be glad to sit here a long, long time before hearing "lethal injection" again. When do we get to "Why me?"

Devlin: The staff of this secret project included experts in cybernetics, frontliners in nanotechnology, and pioneers in gravitonics. They're still there, and still working on the project, as far as we know. We think they called it "Project Cyberia," so that's what we call it. Our guess is that they're developing a superweapon, something intelligent and mobile, probably highly intelligent and highly mobile. End of background. All together now...

Zak and Devlin: "Why me?"

Devlin: Guess?

Zak: Well, "Cyberia" sounds like something the FWA can't ignore, something they'd - excuse me, we'd - like to have control of, something they, we, definitely don't want under the control of a cartel in Khartoum or Bogota or, perish forbid, the Fujiyama. I

heard a lot of "think" and "guess" and "to our best knowledge" in the skillfully crafted and professionally delivered briefing. Guess on my side is, the FWA wants to take over but doesn't want to go in blind. Place could be abandoned, could have been destroyed, could be in full operation with doomsday machines poised - you like that "poised"? - to take over the world. Am I on track so far?

Devlin: Keep guessing.

Zak: The term that comes to mind is "point man." Actually, General, the term that first came to mind was "suicide mission."

Devlin: Or "lethal injection."

Zak: That too, so I quickly compromised on "point man." The BLADES were a clue, you have a way of focusing attention, but, of course, you're a general, and I'm only maybe the best BLADES-worker there is.

Devlin: There's someone in Italy, and maybe someone in Osaka, I hope the hell not, but go on.

Zak: Anyway, I'm the best BLADES-worker you've got, and you want someone to go out front, go in, look around, report back, let the FWA strike force know what they're in for. Can't do it without BLADES, can't do it without very good BLADES.

Devlin: You left out strength, reflexes, and dedication to the cause.

Zak: And I have strength and reflexes, and I don't like lethal injections.

Devlin: Close enough. We'll let the "two-out-of-three" line die with the 20th century. Take your BLADES, Zak. McGuire, come on in! We have our volunteer.

McGuire: Yes, sir. Good to have you with us, Mr. Kingston.

Devlin: Call him Zak, Pete. I have to run. Things to do, people to see, prisoners to torture, dinner to eat. There's no job like security chief for the whole free world.

McGuire: Yes, sir. I'll fill in Mr, er, Zak, on his duties.

26/05/27

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT, CONTINUED

Zak: Wait. You're the jailer, aren't you? Major McGuire, sir?

McGuire: I was. I'm not your jailer any more. Cool off a while. Put on your BLADES, check them out, wipe off the finger smudges, forget lethal injections, settle down. I need a few minutes to settle down, too. Close contact with Devlin always shakes me. BLADES feel OK?

Zak: Yeah. If I weren't such an impassive person, I'd say I was supremely glad to have them back. You work for Devlin, and he makes you shake?

McGuire: Did I say that? You know, I envy you BLADES-workers. They issued me a pair, but I just didn't have the talent. I could put them on, tweak the biofunction, see that there was a rabid Rottweiler leaping at my throat, this was in the simulation series, the training course, the easy stuff, but there was never a doubt in my mind that I'd be better off dealing with a rabid Rottweiler without dark glasses all over my face. BLADES are hard to use. I envy your talent, I don't envy your assignment, but here it is, Zak.

Zak: Fine. Tell me about it, and send me off on my wonderful adventure.

McGuire: As I intend to do. You've heard about the "Cyberia" installation, and you can - you'd better - read all we know about it on your chauffeured journey.

Zak: Chauffeured?

McGuire: Right. You'll be under cyber control all the way. Autopilot, auton-av, cyberized defenses, temperature, humidity, air pressure,

meals, everything. Except in-flight cocktails. You've been off drugs since breakfast.

Zak: Couldn't help but notice.

McGuire: Hope you don't miss 'em. Oh, I lied about "all the way." You'll be on your own on the Rig.

Zak: Well, of course, certainly. The Rig. The well-known Rig, a high spot of every journey into the heart of hostile territory. Major, what the hell is the Rig? And do you do briefings often?

McGuire: Yes, I do briefings a lot. More than I watch over punk felons, in fact. Generally, however, I give briefings to groups of enthusiastic young people who are more focused on promotions than lethal injections. Would you like to hear about the Rig now, Zak?

Zak: Oh, yes, Major. And please accept my apologies for the outburst, no doubt brought on by extreme agitation and my regrettable antisocial attitudes. Tell me about the Rig, please.

McGuire: Zak, someday I'll look back on all this and be very happy I never saw you again. "The Rig," as it is known, is an abandoned oil drilling rig off the coast of Norway. You will be taken there by hovercraft, and you will leave in a transfighter, both under complete cyber control.

Zak: Seems hardly worth mentioning. Some people might ask why I don't just grab a transfighter right here, go all the way, but I feel sure that the great strategic minds of the FWA would chuckle, nay, laugh, at such a puerile query. So tell me about the Rig. Really.

McGuire: Really? It really isn't abandoned, even though it doesn't really drill for oil any more. It's really owned, or occupied, by a character called Santos. Santos has really remodeled the Rig, so it's really difficult for uninvited guests to enter. Or leave. Santos is not really on our side. Or their side. We really had to pull strings

to make the Rig a safe staging area for this project. We really don't know how safe it is. You're really going to have to be on your toes.

Zak: OK, you know how to do a briefing. Really. You want to keep going, or should we cut to Q & A?

McGuire: Depends on which one gets me out of here and into a hot dinner quicker. Rocks. It'll happen anyway, so let's go ahead. Any questions, Zak?

Zak: A few. A lot of questions, the "Are you sure" kind, like "Are you sure of all this cyber control?", I won't bother asking, since the answer is most assuredly "Oh, yes, Zak, have faith in the FWA!" That gets me to the Rig, the very dangerous Rig, with my BLADES, my prison-issue clothes and my prison-issue haircut. My BLADES should tell me who or what is about to kill me and about to thwart the FWA. My bare hands would not be my weapon of choice to stop him, her, it or them. First question therefore is, I suppose, "Do I look like Bruce Lee?"

McGuire: No, you're taller. And your haircut's worse. But when you're on board the hovercraft, safely away from the Pentagon, a locked compartment will open, disgorging - I'll see your "puerile," and raise you a "disgorging" - disgorging not only a change of clothing but also a fully-loaded plaspistol and a disk of documentation on the people, places and things you'll need to know about. You'll have to live with the haircut. Read the disk. I'll answer your next seven questions. I'm going to dinner. Your flight's about to leave, and the armed personnel outside the door will escort you.

Zak: You mean this is goodbye?

McGuire: For now, for sure. If it all works out, we'll meet in Siberia and have a jolly sleigh-ride home. Good luck, Zak, and I hope to see you again. Not at close range.

FROM THE WASHINGTON (DC, USA) POST-AMERICAN, 21 AUGUST, 2018.



The Strange Story of BLADES

Niche Technology: One of an Occasional Series

The Bioptic Low Amplitude Displayed Energy System (BLADES) device, one of the first successful nanotechnological applications, is something to wonder at, and something to wonder about.

BLADES look like wrap-around sunglasses, and for most people, that's all they would be. Not the first step into an unimaginable future, but just a high-tech set of sunglasses, sturdy enough to protect against an errant elbow (remember Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's goggles?). For some people, wearing a high-tech look-at-me pair of armored sunshades is worth several thousand dollars. For most of us, we'll settle for over-the-counter nonprescription shades from the local discount mart, and wonder how BladeCo stays in business.

Just barely. BladeCo, the pioneer of commercial nanotechnology, bet its fortune, the capital of its closely-held stockholders, on BLADES. Nobody is working on BLADES 2; the remaining employees are busy on the next product, and the powers that be at BladeCo won't talk about the new project.

One of those powers, however, told your Post-American reporter about BLADES. She was wearing her own BLADES; I could tell that they did more than keep the glare out of her eyes.

P-A: BLADES were the first nanotech product on the market. What went wrong?

BladeCo: Nothing went wrong. Would you care to rephrase your question?

P-A: Were BLADES the success you had hoped for?

BladeCo: How many new companies have ever had the success they hoped

for? You could probably name two. If you're smarter than you look, you might name five. BladeCo is making it, we're still successful, and we have great hopes for the future.

P-A: Which we can't talk about now, of course. We're still interested in BLADES. What can you see through them?

BladeCo: More than most people, I admit. Our test audience was skewed. We're going to do better. But everybody in-house could use the BLADES, some of us very well, and we frankly disregarded the possibility that the mass of humanity would see BLADES as no more than decoration and sunscreen.

P-A: Tell me more about what you can use BLADES for.

BladeCo: Infra-red, of course. Anyone who can push a button and turn a dial can see in the dark. It's just sunglasses turned upside down or backwards. You understand? It turns the dark to light and the light to dark. It takes some getting used to, but anyone can do it. And there's communication. The BLADES can receive transmissions, like a fax or modem.

P-A: What else?

BladeCo: Well, now we start getting into the nanotech features. You can flip the BLADES into bioscan mode, which detects living organisms. I can, anyway, but probably you can't, unless you're a BLADES user. Are you?

P-A: No.

BladeCo: Well, that's the thing. It takes time and practice to get used to the BLADES, and it takes the BLADES time to get used to you. Most people don't have the patience, and a lot of people just don't have the talent. It's kind of like a K-9 officer and her dog learning to work together.

P-A: BLADES can sniff out drugs?

BladeCo: Maybe. That brings us to the final mode of the BLADES, the info-scan mode. It doesn't work at all for many people, for many more than we expected. For the people it does work for, it's always

different. Some can ID chairs, doorknobs, things they wouldn't need BLADES for. Others, the ones with the talent and dedication, can ID every part of a complicated machine. Or, as you say, get a chemical analysis of a medicine cabinet, once they and their BLADES have learned to work together.

And this is the story of BLADES. Designed to be an indispensable part of mankind's everyday existence, BLADES turned out to have a market of only the very few with the talent, skill and dedication to make them work.

After all, how many people are K-9 officers?

SUPERCARGO INFORMATION CARD FOR TRANSFIGHTER MODEL TF-22, PG. 1

Welcome aboard!

If this is your first trip aboard the FWA DLM Model TF-22, please take the time to read this card and make yourself familiar with the craft. If not, please refresh your memory. After all, very few people make a trip like this every day!

BEFORE READING FURTHER, YOUR SEAT HARNESS AND PROTECTIVE HELMET SHOULD BE IN PLACE AND SECURE.

The TF-22 craft is the culmination of FWA tactical air power. She clears the sky, and gets where she has to go. As a valued passenger, your destination is her destination.

The TF-22 is fully cyberdriven. From takeoff to landing, through climate control and cabin lighting to food service and beverage delivery, every detail has been foreseen by top FWA aero experts!

On normal cargo missions, the TF-22 has achieved an exceptional 92% success rate over the past three years. Even more effort is expended on passenger missions such as yours!

Arrival at your destination may require military activity. Please remain seated until the marked exit doors open. Please examine the diagrams to ascertain your position relative to the features of the craft.

Further information, advice and instructions will appear on your seatscreen (or BLADES, if you are so equipped) when the flight plan is established and the trip is under way.

Sit back, relax, and have a pleasant trip!

TRANSFIGHTER MODEL TF-22.
DO NOT REMOVE FROM AIRCRAFT.

IN EMERGENCY TURN TO THE OPPOSITE SIDE

SUPERCARGO INFORMATION CARD FOR TRANSFIGHTER MODEL TF-22, PG. 2

Emergency Instructions

PRESSURE LOSS:

Should hull integrity be breached, you will be immediately notified through seatscreen or **BLADES**. Simply close the faceplate on your protective helmet for atmospheric equalization through the facilities built into your seat and harness. The nanotechnological integrity modules of the TF-22 will alleviate the pressure loss in short order, and you will be advised when your helmet may be reopened.

EVACUATION:

In the very unlikely event of a forced landing of the TF-22 craft, the FWA expects its TF-22 passengers to react as the trained military personnel they are. Your seat is equipped to act as a flotation device. In a water landing, remove it from its base and put your arms through the attached straps. Examine the diagrams in the seat pocket to become familiar with your exit areas.

HOSTILE FIRE:

All TF-22 systems, including guidance, evasion, target acquisition are fully cyber driven. Instructions for manual overrides are provided to qualified passengers on a need-to-know basis.

TRANSFIGHTER MODEL TF-22.
DO NOT REMOVE FROM AIRCRAFT.

FROM KATRIN'S CATALOG OF HANDGUNS, 2017 ED.

Plaspistol:

Common name for a variety of handguns firing plasma pellets. Ammunition consists of stored electromagnetic energy, converted to ultra-high temperature plasma by patented processes involving ingestion of ambient atmosphere and highly-tooled barrel rifling.

- I. Model RC45QK Plasma Pistol: By far the most prevalent plaspistol, and the popular image of the law-enforcement weapon in the 21st century, as the Colt .45 revolver was in the 19th. A more accurate comparison would be to the 20th-century .45 automatic, a similarly high-powered and unwieldy weapon.

The RC45QK, like its predecessors, has three uses. All of them are more valuable to the police than to the military.

- I a. Intimidation. A guard armed with a killing gun inhibits criminal activity more than a guard with a popgun. Actual fire seldom employed.
- I b. Hot Target. When intelligence received identifies a miscreant beyond official doubt, and the opportunity comes to hand.
- I c. Wild Fire. Typically, police officer in distress. Fire until magazine empty and no alternatives remain.

The RC45QK has a top-mounted ammunition chamber, holding an RC45PA or equivalent energy cartridge, capable of powering up to 144 discharges.

FWA Classification: ■SECRET

Physical Specifications

The installation codenamed "Cyberia" is located in northeastern Siberia. The codename is clearly intended to be humorous, rather than secure. This is understandable: an indication that a facility is located in Siberia gives no information; no more than "Project Pacific Rim" or "Darkest Africa" would.

Nevertheless, FWA satellite surveillance has identified the installation with 98.2% certainty as a circular structure 50 meters in diameter located at latitude 55° N, longitude 59° E. The structure is elevated no more than a meter above the ambient terrain, but extends underground to an unascertainable depth. Density scans indicate that living and working areas are confined to the rim of the structure's circle.

Historical Intelligence

Project "Cyberia" appears to be one of the few remnants of the 20th-Century Second World. In the collapse of the Soviet Union, most of the powerful politicians and intelligentsia joined the Western and Pacific powers. Mavericks cast their fates with Third World nationalists. But some few refused to bow to the inevitable. Pride, greed, perhaps even idealism sent some of the most charismatic and brilliant underground, with plans to rise like a phoenix from their own ashes.

This is familiar FWA doctrine, of course, but in the case of "Cyberia," our best intelligence indicates that it is true. Former General Gregor Ivanovich Volgarin appears to have initiated the project, and to have overseen its construction and international recruitment before his arrest and execution. The mysterious disappearance of Nobel nominee Boris Alexeevich Kalnikov has not been resolved, but the evidence is not inconsistent with an underground Cyberia position.

Mr. Devlin, our sources have acquired several dossiers produced by the intelligence sources of various Cartels. We think they will be of interest.

DEVLIN, William Sorenson:

Born 28/08/1985, Sioux City, IA, U.S.A. to Elizabeth Ann Sorenson Devlin by Robert Alexander Devlin. B.A. University of Illinois 2007 (Poli. Sci.). M.B.A. Wharton 2011. Career public servant, employed by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, later by the F.W.A. Security Force, which he now heads. History of occasional part-time unofficial employment by the private sector. Unknown whether Devlin remains amenable to such employment. If so, it would be a very expensive contract.

KALNIKOV, Boris Alexeevich:

Born 03/03/1974, Moscow, U.S.S.R. B.S., M.S., University of Moscow. Ph.D. (Physics) University of California. Three-time Nobel nominee. Never politically active, but generally known to be a Marxist reactionary. Vanished from public view 2019. Rumored involvement with secret project in eastern Siberia.

KINGSTON, Marcus Antonius ("MAK"):

1977-2022. Entertainer, composer, radical activist. Lifelong obsession with the Seeger/Guthrie/Ledbetter tradition. Valuable collaborator on the occasions when our agendas intersected. Devoted father to his only known son, ZAK (q.v.), sometimes for months at a time.

KINGSTON, Zebulon Pike ("ZAK"):

Born ca. 2009, rural Colorado, U.S.A. to Barbara Feather (deceased 2011) by Marcus Antonius Kingston ("MAK"). Raised occasionally by father, primarily in foster homes. School reports show genuine, if erratic, brilliance. Vanished into underground cyber culture, most likely in Denver, in the disturbances of 2022.

Opinions differ, but the consensus is that Zak would be a valuable recruit, good for many years of service, if he is still alive and has not yet destroyed his brain.

SANTOS, Luis Arturo y Santurce:

Born 01/11/1989, Mexico, D.F., Mexico, as Luis Gomez, to Maria Gomez y Santurce, father unknown. Raised haphazardly on the streets of Mexico City by mother and maternal grandmother, Alicia Santurce y Luz, deceased 04/07/2011. Mother's whereabouts unknown, possibly Honduras or San Antonio, almost certainly of no interest to Santos himself.

As he grew up, and grew away from his family (no doubt to their great relief), young Luis began to show great talent both mechanically and in interpersonal relations. His mechanical talents evidenced themselves by the large number of previously locked bicycles, then motorcycles, then small but elegant imported cars he delivered to his mentors. His interpersonal skills became obvious as his mentors began to disappear and he began to deal directly with their superiors (yourselves included).

As he became a player in the game, Luis Gomez discarded his birth name and became known as "Santos," presumably because of his birth on All Saints' Day. Officially, he changed his name to "Luis Arturo Santos y Santurce" in several nations from Colombia to Norway.

Norway is of particular importance. Santos owns and operates an off-shore oil-rig facility in the Norwegian Sea, in or from which he can usually be contacted, by us or by various semi-governments or by wildcats.

SCARLATTI, Gia:

Born 17/04/2001, Torino, Italy. Attended University of Geneva. Lieutenant and probable intimate companion of Luis SANTOS (q.v.) since summer 2022.

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FRANCK DE GIROLAMI
Project Manager

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Interplay 17922 Fitch Avenue Irvine, CA 92714 Attn: Customer Service. Customer Service is available 24 hours a day through our Automated Customer Service system, with a Customer Service representative available during normal business hours at (714) 553-6678.

Hintline

If you need a hint about game play, you can call our hintline at 1-900-370-PLAY (1-900-451-6869 in Canada). For this service, the charge for the first minute is \$1.25; \$.75 for each additional minute. All hint questions must be directed to this "900" service. No hints will be given on our Customer Service lines. You must have a touchtone phone to use this service. The hintline is open 24 hours a day. All long distance charges are included in these prices. Callers under the age of 18 must get parental permission before calling the hintline. The hintline is only available in the U.S. Charges subject to change without notice.

Interplay 17922 Fitch Avenue Irvine, CA 92714 Attn: Customer Support. Or call (714) 553-6678, Monday through Friday.

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America Online: You can E-mail Interplay Customer Support at IPTTECH. To reach our Customer Support board in the Industry Connection, press CTRL-K for "Go To Keyword." Then type INTERPLAY in the Keyword window. In addition to reading and leaving messages, you can download fixes and demos from the "Software Libraries."

CompuServe: We are available for IBM and compatible on-line support. We are located in the Game Publishers B Forum, type GO GAMBUPUB at any "1" prompt. Then select "Section 4" for Interplay Productions. You can leave technical support questions there. You can also download fixes and demos from Library 4 in GAMBUPUB. The best place for game play hints about our games is in the GAMERS forum. If you are not already a CompuServe member, you can call CompuServe toll-free at 1-800-524-3388 and ask Representative #354 for a free introductory membership and a \$15 usage credit. For game play hints look in the Gamer's Forum (GO GAMERS). Besides technical support for Interplay products, CompuServe offers many other services, including communications, reference libraries, hardware and software support, travel, games and much more.

GEInie: We are located in the Games RoundTable by Scorpio, type M805;1 at any "?" prompt. Then select "Category 13" for Interplay Productions. Fixes and demos are available in the libraries.

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Internet: You can reach Interplay by sending Internet E-mail to "support@interplay.com". Many Interplay demos and patches are available at Internet FTP sites.

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Once again, Welcome!"

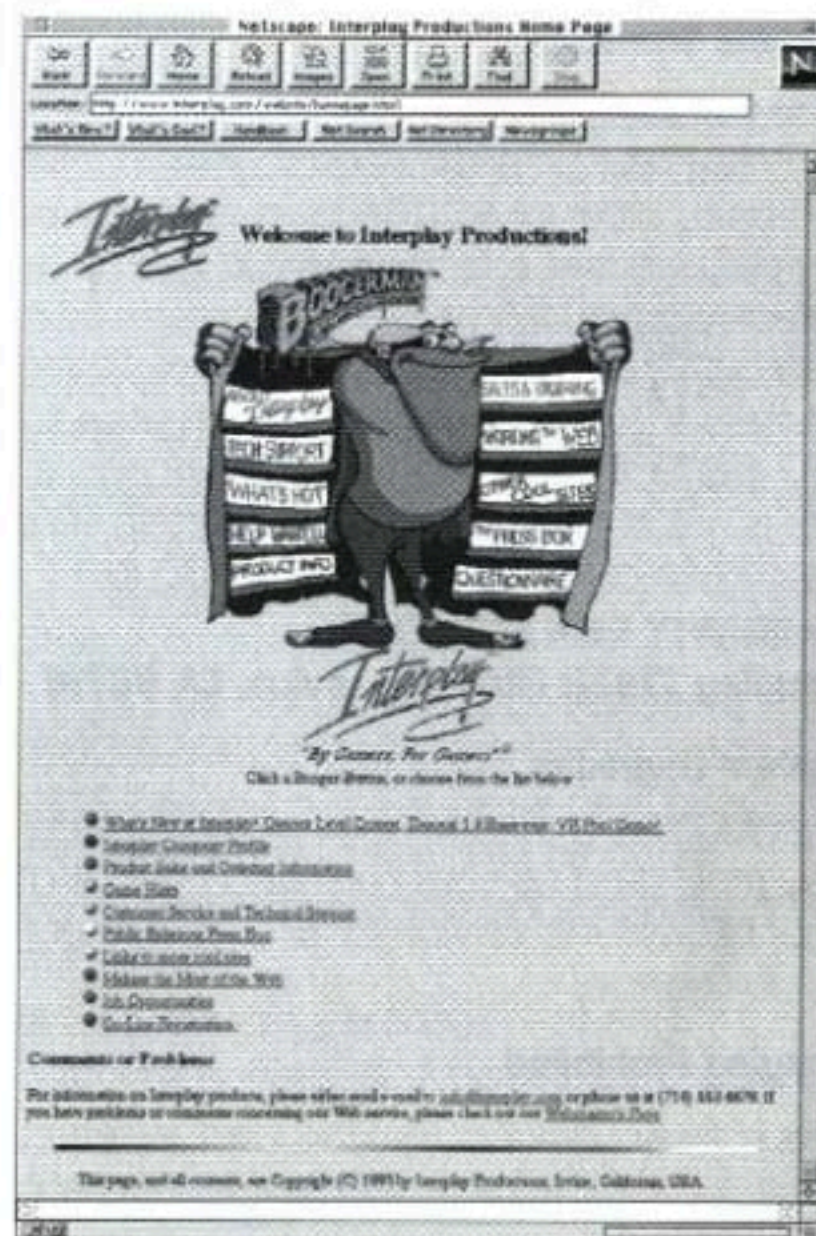
Brian Fargo

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