This is 2.1, A Netrunner Reboot Project Podcast. Episode 47, the events of June 6th through 16th.

Thank Hey, this is Remy. The title card of this week's episode is Witness Tampering, a Wayland double operation that comes in Double Time. And the flavor text about it says, now, let's talk about how little you remember of the events of June 6th through 16th.

I don't mention Witness Tampering because it's good, it's not bad, but just because it's a double, and it's part of the last datapack in the spin cycle, Double Time, which we are covering this time around for the Corp side. There was too much to say about the Corps when it comes to the spin cycle and Double Time. I could not fit it all into one episode.

So this episode, after covering some anonymous tip information about archetypes that are good in the game, we'll go through the buffs and nerfs that have been made to the cards in Double Time for the Corp. We'll then go into much greater detail about Caprice Nisei, a very important card in this pack. And then next week, we'll finish off by looking at some of the cycles that we have seen in this pack, as well as the ice changes.

And again, I don't usually like to break it across two episodes, but otherwise, it's just going to be too long.

Anonymous Tip, Archetype Tier List. So a few weeks ago, the big boy in the general channel just kinda out of nowhere dropped in this comment. And I'm going to share it without a whole lot of commentary.

Of course, I'm going to be making references here to different identities that we don't have in the 2.1 card pool. And some of them are maybe not as good as he says they are, because we don't have the entire card pool yet. But this is a sort of something to take a look at if you're wanting to explore a wider portion of the pool.

Here's what he said. If people are looking for what to play, new constructed league perhaps, I made some tier lists of where I think things are right now. Maybe you can look down the list and find some inspiration for something new to try.

So he has them sorted into S tier and also A, B, and C. S tier is top decks, no really bad matchups, always a good choice. Reliably dominate inferior decks that do not respect them.

A tier, very good decks, have some bad matchups, but overall a good choice unless the meta is very hostile. B, good decks, have a number of bad matchups, or are not very dominant versus the field, but can be a good meta call. C, mediocre, but respectable decks, do some good things, but lack the punch of stronger decks, may have a few atrocious matchups.

So the C tier decks that he mentions are Offbeat, Haas, BioRoid, Next Design, Stronger Together, etc. Industrial Genomics, from Ginteki, Argus, Security, and Titan Transnational, out of Wayland, these are all identities, and Tagless, Sansan, City Grid, NBN. B tier include Ginteki, Personal Evolution, Wayland, Midrange, which there's a pre-constructed deck that's building a better world.

That's the core identity that's midrange. Three Tempo decks, Gagarin, which is a Wayland ID, Near Earth Hub, which is one where an NBN ID we're getting soon, and Sol, S-O-L, Sol. That's not the whole name of it, but I can't remember the full name of the ID.

That's a very late pool NBN ID, as well as Rush Sizzler, which is a Booster ID. Those are all B-tier. A-tier decks include Echo Memvault's Fast Advance.

That is a Booster ID. Nisei Division, which is an ID we're getting in the very next deluxe box. Blue Sun, a Wayland ID coming in the next cycle.

Grendel, that would be your Super Modernism type. And NBN, The World Is Yours, Psychographics, which I have a lot of familiarity with. And then the S-tier decks are HB Fast Advance, with Next Ice or otherwise.

HB Glacier and Gentechi, Replicating Perfection. Interestingly, no, not the Fast Advance, but the Glacier and the RP both contain a card, a crucial card that we will be talking about, again, at length in a little bit. On the runner side, the C-tier decks are Gabe, Pawn Shop Haley, Haley comes in the fourth cycle, Dumble Fork, which really wants the Cutlery Suite from the third deluxe box, and Adam, one of the many factions that comes in the fourth deluxe box.

The B-tier decks are Magnum Opus Shapers, Dio, or is it Dio? I'm not sure. That's one of the new ID from the latest booster.

Ken Tenma comes in the next deluxe box. Prepaid Kate, Headlock Reina, Noise and The Horde, the Anarch ID from the latest booster. A-tier are Siphon Max.

That would be your Anatomy of Anarchy type deck. Reg Anarch, Wizard, Vowel, or Max, Valencia and Max, both coming in the third deluxe box. I'm not sure what makes a deck a Reg Anarch deck.

I would guess it's basically Data Sucker, Parasite, the Fixed Strength Breakers, and then go from there. Comet Chaos Theory, Comet, a console that comes on the fourth set. Exile, probably, possibly, maybe not just the pre-constructed version of Exile, but basically you can build in the 2.1 group.

And Slow Crim, using Leela Patel, who comes in the next deluxe. And then the S-Tier runners are Andy Sucker and Desperado Chaos Theory. So there are just a good rule of thumb.

If you're looking for something that's good, or just looking for something to have fun with, it can be good, a list of, a tier list there for archetypes. It's, I think it's pinned in the general channel on the Reboot Discords. You can go check it out there for yourself.

Satellite Uplink. Double Time for the Corp's. There are 11 cards in the Corp side, three from Jentecky and two each for Hasbiroid, NBN, Weyland, and the Neutrals.

Of these 11, eight receive adjustments. Six are buffs, and two are nerfs. Let's talk about the nerfs first.

Out of Jentecky, Caprice Nisei, a clone upgrade whose res cost has been increased from two to three. Her trash cost is one. She is for influence.

Whenever the runner passes all of the ice protecting this server, do a side game. If you win, end the run. Art here from Matt Zeilinger.

And the neutral agenda, NAPD Contract. It's a 4-2, although it's plus one to advance if you have, for each bad publicity you have, so one bad publicity makes it a 5-2. And the nerf is that it costs the runner, instead of four credits to steal it, three credits.

The six buffs are one, two, I'll just say all the ice, but it was just three of the ice. There's a lot of ice in this pack. First, out of Hasbioroid, Gyri Labyrinth.

Gyri, by the way, according to Miriam Webster, is, quote, a convoluted ridge between anatomical grooves, unquote. I imagine like a fingerprint, maybe, or maybe like the way a brain is laid out. Anyway, it's a code gate with a res cost that's been reduced from two to zero.

Strength two to influence the subroutine. The runner's maximum hand size is reduced by two until the beginning of the Corp's next turn. Art from Liga Smiljkalna.

For some reason, they've got the factions out of order in this pack. It goes from HB to NBN. It should go from HB to Ginteki to NBN because you know alphabetical order.

But anyway, NBN has Broadcast Square, an asset whose res cost has been reduced from two to zero. Trash cost is five. It's also three influence.

You can do a trace three to avoid taking bad publicity when otherwise you would have to. Also corporate shuffle, a double operation with a cost of zero. It's two influence.

You, when you play it, you shuffle all your cards from HQ into R&D, and then you draw, used to be you draw five cards. Now you draw six. For Ginteki, their two ice entrants in this pack are Shinobi, an illicit sentry whose res cost has been reduced from seven to six.

It's strength five, three influence. It's illicit, which means when you res it, you gain a bad publicity. The three subroutines are trace one for one net damage, trace two for two net damage, and trace three for three net damage and end the run.

Also buffed is Marker, a code gate with a res cost of zero and a strength that's been increased from three to six. It's one influence, and its sole subroutine says the next piece of ice encountered gains and end the run subroutine after all other subroutines for this run. Art from Ed Matinian.

And the final buff is the Wayland card, Witness Tampering, our title card, a double gray ops operation whose cost has been reduced from four to one. It is one influence and allows you to remove up to two bad publicity. The three unchanged cards in the pack are Haas Bioroid's Reclamation Order, a double operation that costs one, is two influence, and lets you pull back all copies of a card from Archives to HQ.

And the artwork here is from Emilio Rodriguez in a rare, non-architectural, sprawling campus skyscraper type piece of artwork, although again, as I've mentioned before, he's still one of my favorites. Wayland's Hive is also unchanged, a barrier with a res cost of five and a strength of three,

its two influence. It has five subroutines, each of which says End the Run, but for each agenda point you have scored as the Corp, it loses one of those subroutines.

Artwork from Ed Matinian. And the Neutral Ice Quandary, a code gate with a res cost of one and a strength of zero, has just the one subroutine that says End the Run, although the amazing flavor text says it wants to have two subroutines when it grows up. And of course, Quandary is just a smaller version of Enigma, both in the artwork and in its ability.

Well, there's some good cards here for the Corp. In the top 50 countdown, at number 60 was NAPD Contract. This is the top 50 countdown the big boy ran of all of the cards in FFG's Card Pool in Reboot.

At number 37 was Quandary, actually three positions higher than Enigma, which came in at number 40. And Caprice Nisei came in at number 2, behind only Jackson Howard. In the Reddit thread that provided at-a-glance reviews, good for Wayland is Hive, great for Ginteki is Caprice Nisei, and potentially useful for any Corp, Caprice Nisei, NAPD Contract, and Quandary.

Those same three cards that the big boy identified in his list. Let's look at the pre-constructed decks and see which of these cards made it in. Interestingly, through the entire spin cycle, only nine of the runner cards out of...

it's probably not 60, they're not split half and half, but it's probably something like 55 runner cards, maybe 53. Only nine made it into pre-constructed decks, but 28 different Corp cards from this cycle managed to do so. So this has been a good cycle for Corps.

And in this deck, four more. The three I just mentioned and also Witness Tampering, which has just one copy in the Building a Better World mid-range deck. Primarily for that, we're missing an economy card for which there are three copies.

It doesn't come into the last cycle before we can build that deck. Quandary shows up in four different decks as a one-of. Both HB pre-cons, the Fast Advance and the Glacier, and two of the Waylands.

Well, not both HB, but both HB engineering the future pre-cons, and two of the Waylands, the Rush and the Midrange. So it's interesting that you see it there as a Rush agenda, as a Rush ice, rather, a Midrange ice, and a Glacier ice. So Quandary just works.

Caprice Nisei lands in three different decks. It's a three-of in two Ginteki decks, Replicating Perfection, an S-tier deck, according to the big boy, and Nisei Division. Nisei Division is an identity that caters to PSY games.

And both of those will be much closer to complete very soon after we get the deluxe box coming up next. Caprice is also a two-of in HB Glacier, naturally. Caprice is important in Glacier.

Although we can't build that until we get the 3X ice that we're missing, Architect, and particularly the three-of upgrade Breaker Bay Grid, which doesn't come until the fourth cycle. Meanwhile, NAPD Contract lands in five different decks. One into a Jinteki deck and HB Glacier.

Also Next Rush. Also Dedicated Response Team Near Earth Hub. Each of those take one for their one, four, two probably.

But there's three of them in the HB Fast Advance deck, which aside from there's five different pieces of ice there that we don't have, otherwise the HB Fast Advance is pretty buildable for us.

The source, Corp nerfs in Double Time. Here's just a couple of quick comments on why the nerfs for those two cards, as provided by the big boy. NAPD contract, he says, this is another step to weaken defensive agendas.

No one ran fun 4-2s with exciting effects when NAPD was available. This change makes the decision closer, and makes running aggressively early a better strategy for the runner, because it's going to cost them a little bit less to grab that NAPD contract. And one credit can make a big difference.

And as for the Caprice-Nisei buff, the big boy says Caprice is essential for a healthy game, but using her in the early game to protect economy assets, like Sundew or Hasbioid campaigns, was a bit too strong. This makes that use case harder to pull off, because it costs more, so it's not good for protecting economy, and gives the runner more opportunity to attack the Caprice player economically. But I have some more to say about Caprice-Nisei, so let me spend an entire segment doing so.

Mandatory Upgrades, Caprice Nisei. Just one random comment to start with, conversation I picked up on from the General Channel in the Reboot Discord. The big boy says, generally speaking, you cannot afford snares and caprice in the same deck ever, along with stuff to make the snares matter.

I mean, you can put meme snares in big money replicating perfection and afford them, but they won't do anything. Muryu says, that is what fetal AI is for. The big boy said, yeah, RP plus snares is probably a nasty deck, but it's bad into every other matchup, other than criminal.

Well, he was in a conversation about using Adam actually, so maybe he just means Adam. But I think of Adam as like extreme criminal. Anyway, that's later.

We're not to him yet. Let me share now Fluffy1's review of Caprice Nisei, because we're gonna talk about, I guess maybe I should just, maybe I should just talk for a second about what Caprice Nisei is and does. So why is Caprice Nisei good?

Well, to simplify it, you put Caprice into a server as an upgrade, and you know, like with Ash, where you would put Ash into a server, and you can, if you have enough money, you can pay a trace that's so big that they can't access anything other than Ash. And so you can keep them away from your agenda for one run. They can trash the Ash and run back in, but again, if your server is good enough, they may not be able to do that.

So often Ash lets you protect an agenda long enough to score at the next turn. Well, Caprice is like that, except, I think, if anything, more effective. So it's a side game that you have to play.

In a side game, as you know, both players secretly spend 0, 1, or 2 credits. And then if they reveal a different number of credits, the Corp wins the side game, and the effect happens. If they spend the same number, the runner wins, and the effect does not happen.

So one way to think of it is that the basic math on it says that two times out of three, you're going to spend different amounts. So the Corp has twice as good a chance of winning the side game as the runner does. Now naturally, there are lots of other things that come into play.

The game state affects things. The card, the amount of money you have in your credit pool affects things.

You know, you can get a sense of what this person tends to want to bid. But generally speaking, Caprice ought to let you win a side game two times out of three. And it's so powerful because she just ends the run before the access happens, which means that unlike with Ash, who can keep you from accessing the agenda, but you can still trash the ash, Caprice keeps you from accessing the agenda and you can't still trash Caprice.

To have another crack at it, you have to run in again. So in that sense, if you can win the side game, she is very powerful. And because of the uncertainty of the side game and the fact that the runner is more likely to lose it, the runner is really disinclined to continue to run on Caprice, which makes her very strong.

There's my take on why Caprice is good. Now let me share the review of Fluffy1. He refers to Caprice as the best Jinteki card.

And again, the big boy agreed. As for the Jackson Howard, let me go more in-depth on this card since she deserves it. Caprice on the surface is an upgrade that has a 2 and 3 chance of ending the run for a small fee.

If she doesn't end the run, she usually dies without Ash in the same server to protect her. However, side games are complicated. I'm not going to tell you how to play them because I'm not good at them, says Fluffy1.

Playing against her as a criminal, though, bids Zero most of the time to deny Econ. If the Corp is broke, they can't really use her. Nisei Division can get around this by never losing on side games.

Nisei Division coming in the next box, as I said. With Breaker Bay Grid, you can insta-tax the runner. Bonus points if you stack an Ash and Red Herring so that if they beat the side game and Ash Trace, they can't steal or trash stuff without a big bank account.

So think about that, right? The Red Herrings is going to cost you five credits to steal an agenda in that server. The Ash, you've got to pay through that Trace and probably want to trash the Ash.

The Caprice, you have to have beaten the Caprice and then you want to trash Caprice. And then what if the agenda is like a fetal AI or something for an NAPD contract? They can get very expensive to run through the server, very expensive to get rid of the server.

I was just listening to an old episode of Run Last Click from this era. I think it was episode six. And they referred to, they were just developing the idea of a deck they called the Super Friends.

Although in their case, they were also throwing Director Haas in there. That's kind of funny. Anyway, back to Fluffy One's review.

Caprice single-handedly makes RP Glacier and ETF Glacier decks playable by making sure you don't automatically lose to a runner who gets a ton of money and just runs the remote when you put something in it, like Magnum Opus Kit, since they can burn large amounts of money only to lose the Cy game. You could build a runner deck that assembled enough money with breakers to reliably get through Caprice, but you would probably forfeit your entire matchup against fast advanced decks and asset spam. Also, you would probably just get baited by Jackson Howard to open a scoring window.

Decks that utilize Caprice, he then links to a couple of different ones. One uses Breaker Bay Grid to rez her for nothing. Another uses the Replicating Perfection ID to make sure the runner has less chances to win the Cy game each turn.

Another never loses money on Caprice, that would probably be your Nisei Division, and so can rush corporate wars and Nisei Mark IIs really fast. She's also good in industrial genomics and gives an example there. The cons...

Well, the main con he gives here is that Marcus Batty is another upgrade that comes along later, and there's a specific place that he calls a rig shooter deck would want him instead of Caprice. He also says Caprice is very expensive against a competent runner. Make sure your deck can afford her if you aren't Nisei Division.

And one trash cost is pitiful. Still, he rates her a 10 out of 10, saying the game literally does not work without this card, because only Blue Sun can do Glacier without her. So that aligns with the big boy's comment when he said that...

Oh, where I see it. Yeah, Caprice is essential for a healthy game. In his archetypes document, Big Boy lists six different Corp scoring methods.

They are Fast Advance, Never Advance, Tag Trace Pressure, Net Damage Kill Pressure, Upgrades, and Caprice. So she is her own type of scoring method, all on her own. As I mentioned before, three of the pre-constructed decks, HB Glacier, Nisei Division, and Classic RP use Caprice as their primary scoring method.

And while HB Glacier has upgrades as a secondary method and Never Advance as a backup method, for Jentecky, they are all in on Caprice. So in advance of this episode, I solicited some comments in the 2.1 channel on Discord. Caprice was quite divisive in the community when she was originally released.

A lot of people hated that she was in the game. She was not rescued from rotation when Fantasy Flight felt the need to reduce their card pool. And yet, Fluffy1 just said the game literally does not

work without this card, and the big boy said that she is Glacier's trump card when mentioning that she was the number two card of the entire pool.

So I asked for some feedback on this disparity. Oogan Ronan right away said Caprice is a card where you make them lose on centrals if they get it out on the remote. I was also asking, like, how do you play against it?

You siphon and multi-access to make them regret putting out the Caprice. I also think sometimes you just run the server with Caprice in it to try and one, force ice ress, two, try your luck at killing the Caprice with a Corp pass to spend more time setting up the server, time they can't afford to spend. The big boy said, I hated Caprice for a while, but then Kenny, Kenny, is it Deakins?

A Netrunner player that was prominent in the community a few years ago, Simon Moon is his normal username, told me that running centrals is the cool part of the game, and Caprice makes the remote kinda into another central. He also said, the best way to discover the weaknesses of Caprice is to jam her into a deck where she doesn't belong, and see what happens. Here's the main thing you learn.

Caprice is bad with binary ice, because once they can get in, they can run it over and over in one turn. This means to make her work, you need ice that costs money to beat. But it can't be super expensive ice because Caprice herself is expensive to use.

So you have to run taxing, but flawed ice, a lot of the time, is stuff that can be clicked through or is easily parasited. This makes you vulnerable early game. And Caprice is one to trash, so that vulnerability can be really dangerous.

Although without one to trash, GammaNet said, conveniently, this also means that with interns or archived memories, the runner basically tutors your Caprice, assuming you don't lose on accesses. Because they went and found it for you, you put it in your trash, and you can get it back out of the trash. Now, as a rebuttal to the Big Boy's thesis that the best way to discover her weaknesses is to put her in a deck where she doesn't belong and see what happens, Svenjaman said, or just play her and spend 36 precious credits while losing 12 consecutive Psy games, plus the Psy credits, 36 on 12 because she costs 3 to res.

Big Boy says, yeah, resing her and losing the first Psy game is game losing a lot of the time. It's a catastrophe on the level of resing a 7 cost ice and losing it to emergency shutdown or parasite. Gaminet said, but other times winning the one Psy game is game winning and often psychologically removes the server from existence.

Big Boy said, only if it's a decent server. Gaminet agreed. Pop up into Caprice will not save you.

The last thing I'd like to talk about with Caprice is the weird timing of when you can res her. Unlike most other upgrades, which can be resed in, you know, like right as the runner is approaching or getting ready to access cards in the server, Caprice has to be resed earlier due to the way it's phrased. There's a nice rundown on the various scenarios provided by Ali Amir, whose username was Irian Claws, which he provided right around the time of the release of this pack.

Here is that thread from BoardGameGeek. Caprice Nisei is a Jinteki upgrade from Double Time, the latest Android Netrunner data pack. She is a defensive upgrade that ends the run, conditioned on a PSI minigame.

The timing surrounding the Caprice Nisei trigger is a bit tricky. Here is a clarification of the card. In the ability text says, whenever the runner passes all of the ice protecting this server, you and the runner secretly spend zero credits, one credit or two credits, reveal spent credits.

If you and the runner spend a different number of credits, end of the run. He says the tricky line here is, whenever the runner passes all of the ice protecting this server, compare and contrast to red herrings and ash. Red herrings says, each time the runner accesses an agenda from this server.

And ash says, whenever there is a successful run on this server. And so now he refers to the timing chart. I tweaked the numbers here because FFG updated the timing chart later.

But I'll provide again a link to the timing chart for a run in the show notes. Caprice Nisei triggers at step 5. The runner approaches the attacked server.

Red Herrings triggers at step 5.5. Access cards. Ash triggers at step 5.4.

The run is successful. What does it all mean? One, if the server has no eyes on it, and the runner initiates a run on that server, there are no res windows before step 5.

In other words, if the server has no eyes, Caprice Nisei must be rezed before the runner initiates a run for her to trigger. Right, so you can't just go Caprice and an agenda, and the runner is like, I'm going to run that server. The moment they say, I'm going to run that server, there is no rez window for you to rez Caprice and for her to do her job.

Point two, if the server has at least one ice on it, there are no rez windows between steps 2.3, approached ice can be rezed, and step five, if the server has at least one ice, Caprice Nisei must be rezed along with the last piece of ice that the runner approaches for her to trigger. Even if the Corp does not want to rez that ice, they have time to rez just Caprice. This means that when the Corp rezes Caprice Nisei, the runner has time to choose not to break subroutines on that last piece of ice.

On the other hand, red herrings and ash can be rezed at step 5.3, regardless of the conditions above. They are not ice dependent. So he provides five possible scenarios.

One, Corp installs Caprice Nisei in a new remote. On the runner's turn, they run that remote. The Corp does not have time to rez Caprice Nisei before her trigger window, and the runner will access her.

Two, the runner runs a server with an unresed Caprice Nisei and a rezed wall of static. As the runner approaches the wall of static, the Corp rezes Caprice Nisei. That is step 2.3.

The Corp must rez Caprice Nisei before the runner encounters the ice or breaks any subroutines for her to trigger. Three, the runner plays inside job on a server with an unresed Caprice Nisei and a

rezed wall of static. Even though the ice will be bypassed, the Corp can still rez Caprice Nisei at step 2.3.

Wall of static is passed, and Caprice Nisei triggers. Bypass is a type of pass. Four, the runner runs a server with two unresed ice and an unresed Caprice Nisei.

The bottom ice is targeted by Femme Fatale. Corp rezes the first piece of ice, and the runner breaks it. Corp then chooses not to rez the second piece of ice, but does rez Caprice Nisei.

Once again, they have to make both of these decisions in the same step, the magical 2.3. Five, Corp has a remote with resed Caprice Nisei and resed ice wall. Archives is defended by an ice wall.

Runner runs Archives, breaks ice wall and uses Copycat to jump to the remote, since Copycat says the run continues as if you just passed the chosen piece of ice. Caprice Nisei triggers. Five, B, same scenario, but Caprice Nisei is unresed.

Runner runs Archives, breaks ice wall, and uses Copycat to jump to the remote, for past the magical 2.3, so the Corp does not have time to res Caprice Nisei before her trigger.

And he goes on to conclude this way. Enjoy your Caprice Nisei. And remember, she leads to an unsuccessful run, which means no virus counters on Hemridge, no money from dirty laundry, a tag from John Massanori, and that the Corp can now play a successful demonstration.

Huzzah! All right, so that's where we're going to have to stop for this week. We'll talk about the ice next week.

But for now, many of the cards discussed in this week's episode are linked in the show notes. Music is from Alexi Action. The website, which redirects you to the Reboot Project homepage, is netrunner2.1.com.

Please join the Reboot Discord server. Ask your questions, play your games. Of course, you'll play them actually at reteche.fun.

And feel free to contact me if you'd like. The Astroscript pilot program this time around is coming back out of the worlds of Android. As we get more into the network, part two of that big section of the book.

Thanks for listening, see you next week.

Keeping Connected. The network is nothing like the old internet. I hear that back when they only connected computers to one another, what was the point?

They had to have different chips and devices for all the different tasks they wanted to do, paying for goods, paying for transit, reading, listening to music, tracking their health, communicating with others and doing work. And those devices wouldn't even talk to each other half the time. I can't imagine having to lug that many things around with me every day.

No wonder they ditched the old system and started it all from scratch. I don't know what I'd do without my pad. I still like my classic wallet design with folding screens, even if I just use voice commands most of the time.

The celebs all have their pads as wearables, jewelry, wristlets and the like, with holographic vert displays. Most pads that are given out at baby showers are those large transplas screens that are virtually indestructible. But I've seen Corp execs carry similar, if sleeker, models between boardrooms.

A lot of people spend their time keeping track of all the latest features and toys and chase down the hottest pads to hit the market every couple of months. Others are happy with simply replacing the kind they grew up using when it breaks, even if it doesn't have all the bells and whistles as their friends' devices. I've read stories on FriendNet about major glitches plaguing the more complex models, and if it's beyond the capabilities of the pre-installed Secretary AI's capabilities, they give up trying to troubleshoot the device entirely and wait in line for hours to have a Megabyte expert take a look.

I don't blame them, though. Trying to manage daily life in a city as huge and complex as New Angeles without a working pad is practically a horror 3D come to life. How are you supposed to get around or keep up with the latest info or join the conversation?

I'd rather lock myself in my apartment at the Arcology for a week. At least then, I'd still be able to watch my favorite feeds and vid my friends.

Living Off the Grid. For some in New Angeles and around the world, the conveniences of modern life carry too great a cost in terms of their privacy and freedom. These men and women and rogue androids, these disenfrancistos and neoludites and off-gritters have forsaken their ID and, by extension, their place in society.

Perhaps they were not born with one to begin with, or they are not legally entitled to a unique identity at all. For those who willingly unplug from the network, they will never again be able to hold a steady on-the-books job. But nor will they ever have to give the government a share of their hard-earned money.

They'll have to scrounge for food and basic amenities but their cash won't go to line some risty's pocket. They won't have much in the way of choices, but they'll be able to choose for themselves what they want to consume without a nagging AI distracting them from the real issues. The off-gritter can see that the choice between two differently branded products is an illusion meant to mask the fact that the Corp's don't care which product one buys, so long as he buys, buys, buys.

The Neo-Luddite has to navigate the underlevels by his own wits, but at least he knows his every movement isn't being tracked and logged by the data centers at sync. An APD can't catch him if his face doesn't correlate with anyone in their facial recognition databases. The Feds can't press charges or serve an arrest warrant if he has no permanent address.

The wetwork team can't target his friends or loved ones if he has no circles on friendnet. He is invisible, untouchable. The De San Francisco can only communicate with her own voice in real time over short distances, but what she says can't be used to persecute her for her views or to promote a product without her consent.

She can't be silenced, except for the old-fashioned way. She isn't constantly hooked up to a device that tries to tell her what to think, what she should view, and what her friends think she should read, or even how she should feel. She is her own person, making her decisions without the assistance of a computer or the herd mentality.

She lives as humanity was meant to before the rise of technology.

Alex wakes up connected to the network. Her pad has been monitoring her sleep cycles, the average length of her morning routine, and the daily fluctuations in her morning commute to judge precisely when she needs to awaken and begin her day. On cue, the transplas of her bedroom windows lightens, and sunlight filters in to brighten the room.

A chime rings softly, growing louder until she awakens and gets out of bed. The shower automatically turns on and adjusts the temperature based on the indoor climate control settings. Her pad links to the shower wall to display her schedule, including travel times.

New alert, one of her interviewees has rescheduled the 1200-hour meeting to tomorrow, which will give her some extra time to grab some lunch today. Would she like to grab a quick bite at McKings, Mother Malloy's, or Teo Pepe's? Or would she prefer to arrange a delivery?

She knows she needs the exercise, so she grudgingly selects the image of the storefront and drags it to the empty block in her schedule. Her pad downloads an applicable coupon and stores it in her credit account for later use. The shower wall counts down the remaining time before the water turns off and loads the latest vids from her media feed subs.

Gemini Motors is debuting their newest model, the Australia LRM. She's been looking to score a good deal on a hopper of her own, and they have special promos for first-time hopper buyers. Harpsichord Studios is teasing Lethal Action 4.

Her boyfriend will no doubt want to see it soon. And the latest Ophelian single is trending among her friendnet circles. Would she like to listen?

She nods, and the upbeat song starts playing. She steps out of the shower, and the vert panes follow her to the mirror. She starts brushing her teeth.

A notification pops up on the glass. Sensors indicate she has the beginnings of a cavity, and she can schedule an appointment with the dentist to have it reversed next Monday at 0900 hours. She swipes the notification up to her schedule reel, and it confirms the appointment.

With another gesture, she pulls up the stats on her latest article. A 5% increase in views over yesterdays. Analysis indicates that expanded usage of the pronoun you is a statistically significant factor compared with her previous articles.

She sets down her toothbrush and reaches toward her styling cream dispenser, which has modulated the precise amount of serum for today's humidity levels and her desired hair volume. After quaffing her everyday style, Nobody's Enemy finishes playing and segues into Ophelia's previous album. Music off, she says, and the music decrescendos into silence as she walks to her closet.

While she gets dressed, her pad cycles through a custom newscast based on her previous searches. Considerable heat for today's forecast. Starscape Shopping is opening another dozen boutiques at Starport Kaguya.

And NBN is up 1.2% on the Nas X. Above her clothes rack, the estimated time until her next fashion delivery is displayed, along with the next scheduled cleaners pick up. As she's about to head out the door, her pad notifies her of a bad hopper accident that's snarling Skyway traffic in Rutherford.

It recommends she opt for the Metro instead. It begins guiding her to the closest TubeLev station. Everywhere she goes, shops and services spring up on her pad to tell her all about their new sales and product offerings, as well as which ones her friends have taken advantage of.

On the sidewalk, she amuses herself by browsing the virtual storefronts of her favorite brands. Her pad buys her Metro tickets in advance, tells the station she's paid, indicates which platform to find and which train to board, and alerts her to the location of the nearest coffee shop once she disembarks. She's a frequent Yucca Bean customer, so her pad queues up her usual order and pays once she enters the cafe, so it's just a matter of grabbing her drink from the Bioroidista when it's done.

She takes a sip and makes a face, her pad substituted fat-free cream. At the offices of New Dream Sparkle Magazine, the lighting and temperature of her cube is precisely regulated to help her focus. Her pad tells her how many cups of coffee she can drink and when for maximum energy.

It ticks down her to-do list and gives her a target completion time for each. As she finishes each task, it automatically alerts her co-workers so they can get started immediately on their own legs of the project. The mail demon scans all the messages going through the office and communicates to her pad exactly what she needs to know.

At the end of the day, her pad details how well she performed compared to other days and offers to schedule a meeting with her editor later this week to talk about using more use across the department. Based on her completion rate, her pad tells her how much time she has left on an article and moves deadlines accordingly, or tells her how much time she needs to stay late tonight and the next couple of nights to avoid moving deadlines. She pings her boyfriend, and her pad indicates that he's running late at work tonight, so she'll have some time to kill before their date in Laguna Velasco.

Her pad automatically adjusts their dinner reservation and offers dozens of options for her to occupy herself in the meantime. Did she know that her favorite chocolatier is having a sale for the next two hours only? Come and taste the latest lunar-grown chocolate-covered strawberries.

The image looks appetizing, and she checks her pad for her current metabolism rating. If she skips dessert at dinner, she can probably squeeze this in. Her pad recommends she schedule in additional workout time later this week.

She takes a slide walk down to a lower level of her work arcology and walks past the shop front on her way to Chocolatl Emporium. Her pad scrolls with the latest chatter from her friend NetCircles and a million other advertisements for things she wishes she had. As she passes Lakshmi Fashions, a new smart suit catches her eye, one that isn't owned by any of her friends, her pad notes.

Her finger wavers over the large buy button. The next moment, the pane flashes red. Network error, signal interrupted.

She taps the refresh button a couple of times, then looks around her. Everyone on the concourse stops and looks up. Someone is screaming.

Is there something wrong with your pad? Alex asks the closest person, and the man nods. He looks scared, pawing at the pad strapped to his wrist.

All the hollow screens in the plaza dissolve and then bloom back into life, showing a woman's smug face looking over them all. Good evening, New Angeles. My name is Smoke, and I'll be your host for The Forseeable.