Wild Logic

Opening note:
Hugh Shoemacher is an artist, though the art he's devoted his life to isn't quite what one would call "popular". The overtly political and generally unusual nature of his art just hasn't any market, really. And it's not very good besides. But Hugh couldn't care less about all that. A true artist creates art for art's sake, and Hugh's rather obsessive about it.

Hugh's obsession has led him to make some rather poor choices over the years, though. He's not only homeless, unemployed and financially ruined, he has little moral compass anymore (or good judgment for that matter) in how he raises money to finance his projects. As such he's managed to make contact with a group of dubious men who, in exchange for his cortex hacking skills, supply him with a small cut from their resulting criminal enterprises.

Unfortunately for Hugh, his latest upgrades have prompted those men to muscle him aside in order to make use of his creations in ways he most certainly did not intend.

Hugh, you see, creates robots. Not especially practical robots but ones that this gang has found quite useful in their endeavors. Though intended as political caricatures and showpieces they nevertheless sport the armaments and general durability to smash through brick walls and terrify people. Which is quite handy for a band of bank robbers.

Background:
Six months ago an advanced logic program, still in development, went missing from the Foreigner Corporation's Cybernetic and Robotics Division research lab on Osiris. Stolen by an employee looking for an easy score, it fell into the hands of pirates near Beaumonde a month later. Following that it bounced from Sihnon to Newhall, finally landing in a pile of assorted pirate booty passed off to illicit brokers on Paquin. One of the dealers there actually managed to

realize what he had in his hands and was bold enough to contact the Foreigner Corporation in the attempt to sell it back. The Corporation naturally jumped at the chance, having invested millions already in the program. Unfortunately the broker in question was Hugh's cousin (who originally pointed out to the broker the complex program's potential value). But when Hugh realized his cousin intended to sell the program back to the Foreigner Corporation, he promptly stole a copy for his own use first.

Once the deal was made and the disk was back in the hands of its creators, it didn't take them long to figure out it had been copied. Unbeknownst to most, though Hugh should have known, disks such as those found in advanced corporate research labs are typically engineered in such a way that anything copied onto or even off of the disk is catalogued. So Foreigner Corporation sent some head hunters out looking for the culprit…and any rogue copies of their program.

Hugh meanwhile put his purloined program to good use beefing up his creations, lending them much greater character and animation. Thrilled with his success, he did something he normally didn't do. He showed them off to his friends.

His "friends" however were professional criminals, for whom he'd been hacking security feeds in order to aid them in their criminal enterprises (and put cash in his own pocket to finance his art). They immediately recognized how useful Hugh's bots would be in their work, cracked him on the head and tossed him in storage room. Now they're busy stirring up a whole mess of trouble with their new toys.

Hook:
There are a number of ways the player characters can get involved in the mess here. They can be hired by the insurance company for the bank that just got robbed, for example. Anyone

injured in the robbery or anyone owning property damaged in the assault may be able to field the finances to fund a bit of personal revenge. Perhaps someone in the crowd simply has a strong sense of duty to the community and hires them out to bring the robbers to justice. Another nice hook, and my personal preference, is that the sound beating the broker on Paquin took from the Foreigner Corporation's head hunters has prompted his business associates to look into the matter (hoping to cash in on any potential profit thereof). The GM is naturally free to hook them any way they like. In the end they should be shoved off in the general direction of finding Hugh Shoemacher and retrieving the stolen program.

Synopsis:

Opening Scene:

If the player characters have been hired by the broker's business associates then their employers will already have "interrogated" the broker in question and will be aware that his cousin, Hugh Shoemacher, likely took the copy of the program. Their interests then will be securing that copy (or making *another* copy) before the head hunters do and selling it to a rival corporation or interest. This then will be the instructions given to the player characters and it'll be up to them to track down this Hugh Shoemacher person.

If hired on by anyone else, they'll have to turn up clues at the scene of the latest robbery that lead them to Hackley, the robot parts dealer. This should lead them to Hugh in turn and it will then be up to them to track him down.

Act I:

In the first act, if the player characters are investigating the scene of the last bank robbery, discovering clues that lead them the Hugh's parts supplier. This leads them to Hugh Shoemacher, a steady customer of his.

If they're working for the broker's

associates they already have Hugh's name and have the parts supplier as a means to get a location on him. Interrogating the supplier should then pinpoint Hugh's new digs on the supposedly abandoned mining asteroid.

Act II:

In our second act the player characters have to get out to asteroid where Hugh is squatting, which proves a bit exciting when Hackley's men target them for a quick hit and run. Arriving at the mining asteroid they find it's apparently still in operation and even has a fully functioning dock. Unfortunately the miners are here illegally and prove a little difficult to approach. The player characters should eventually have a chance for a small amount of resupply and repair if they need it and maybe an opportunity to help the miners out with a little problem as well.

Act III:

With Hugh huddling in the bowels of the asteroid the player characters have to hike it down there, which naturally proves a bit treacherous since Hugh's been experimenting with some automated security there. And just to make matters worse, the head hunters who arrived just behind them are looking for Hugh as well. When they catch up to the player characters, they have no compunction with removing them as an obstacle.

Act IV:

After surviving the hike down through the tunnels of the asteroid and their run in with the corporate head hunters, the player characters arrive at Hugh's camp. Now they find themselves trapped between the bank robbers, Hugh' critters and the head hunters who're still smarting from the whuppin' they took earlier. Surviving long enough to rescue Hugh and seize the logic program and/or bank robbers naturally proves more difficult than expected.

Opening Scene: Hiring On

In our opening scene the player characters have either been contacted for the job of tracking down the program (or the bank robbers) or have come across the employment opportunity themselves. Here we allow them to be interviewed by their prospective employer and receive a briefing of sorts.

<u>Hired by broker's business associates</u>: In this case they've most likely been contacted by the "businessmen" themselves, presumably having made a name as folks that can be relied upon in matters of discretion. If the player characters have a steady contact who supplies them with jobs, he'll be acting as the middleman here. The information they'll start with in this scenario will be little more than the name of their target, Hugh Shoemacher, and his only known associate, Hackley Swain, his supplier. It will be up to the players to dig up any information on either man. Hugh's current location isn't known but it's assumed Hackley will be able to provide that with the proper "persuasion". Their job here is getting their hands on that program and turning it over to their employers.

<u>Hired on by other interests</u>: In this case the player characters have most likely been tapped by the bank's insurance company (we're assuming the Alliance doesn't insure banks on border or rim worlds) or some other party with much the same goal. As such it's an easy hook since they need only be in the area and look like a bunch of folks able to handle themselves. If there's a world or a particular town where they're already made heroes of themselves, all the better. Whoever is looking for agents to hunt down the robbers will naturally think of them first.

In this case the player characters will have to pick through the rubble themselves to discover clues. Bits and pieces of robot parts shot up during the bank robbery will lead them to Hackley Swain, who can in turn point them to Hugh Shoemacher. Their job here is tracking down the bank robbers and bringing them to justice. Or exacting justice, as the case may be.

Act I, Scene I: Scene of the Crime

If the player characters were hired on in response to the latest brazen bank robbery, their first logical stop will be visiting the scene of the crime in order to pick up clues. Otherwise, if they already have the name of Hugh Shoemaker's supplier we can skip on ahead to Act I, Scene II.

If you really want this scene plugged in though, I've placed the bank just down the street from Hackley's Junkyard. Folks in the area will still be in a bit of a tizzy after the recent robbery and stumbling across this very interesting occurrence shouldn't be hard for the players. Hackley himself may mention it, especially considering the possibility that robots were used, which will be of interest to him. He won't recognize the bots described nor will it occur to him that Hugh might have been involved, though. He hasn't shown much interest in Hugh's work, he just supplies the parts.

At the still smoldering bank they're likely to get some conflicting information depending on who they interview. The clerks at the bank and any witnesses to the attack will have slightly colored recollections involving the event, as gigantic robots tearing up the place was a fairly traumatic experience.

Interviewing bank clerks or customers present inside the bank when the robbery took place: (Hard Willpower +

Influence/Interrogation or other appropriate specialty)

Failure: The witness(es) don't recall much detail. Something knocked in the whole southern wall of the bank suddenly, followed by several huge, very frightening shapes barreling in and smashing up the place. They remember fire and a lot of very loud noises, some people running around screaming and some gunshots. At least, they think there may have been gunshots.

There may have been some hooded men with guns, too. They're not sure on that point but someone did rob the bank during all that, so it only makes sense. *(Any clerk will recall being suddenly confronted by a hooded robber demanding money, of course.)*

Success: Cutting through some of the fuzzier details it's clear several robots or large machines broke down the south wall of the bank. While these machines pushed in and smashed up the place, a small band of men wearing burlap hoods poured in behind them to confront the clerks and rob the bank. The nature of the machines is unclear but most or all of them made very loud, terrifying noises and they seem to have been fitted with small torches or flamethrowers of some sort.

Two of the bank employees came out of nowhere during the commotion to open fire on the robbers and the robots. One was killed and the other injured but the witnesses aren't sure who fired at who.

Outstanding Success: The robbers used roughly a dozen robots of varying sizes, all unusual in shape and function, to break through the wall of the bank. The robbers then took advantage of the chaos to rob the bank clerks while one of the larger bots broke through and snatched up the safe in the back room. The men all wore burlap hoods to protect their identities but the robots were unusual enough to be easily identifiable.

The larger one was humanoid, well over seven feet tall and painted black with red, glowing eyes. It seems to have had a torch of some kind in its "mouth" that shot fire whenever it made such blaring pronouncements as "Guilty!", "Overruled!" and "Contempt of Court!" It largely busied itself with pounding every flat surface it could find with a large, black hammer while making these loud pronouncements.

The mid-sized bot was fitted with huge, industrial-grade chainsaws where the forearms should be and was mounted on twin treads rather than legs. It's head was fitted with a black, cloth hood (which incidentally was set on fire by the larger bot in all the chaos) and loudly chanted, "Kill, kill, kill!" steadily throughout the fiasco. Though it chased patrons and clerks about, threatening them with the chainsaws, it never actually seemed to catch anyone or do any injury.

The bot that made off with the safe seems to have been fairly non-descript, though it had a brightly glowing, white neon five pointed star on the left side of it's chest plate. Interestingly, it bore a large, colorful sticker on it's hindquarters that read, "I heart the Alliance!" and a nametag below the neon star bearing the name, "Ben Dover".

The remaining bots all seem to have been small, child-like humanoids in shape, with featureless, bald heads. There were approximately a dozen of them and the noise they all seemed to be blaring from the speakers in their heads was, of all things, the sound of seagulls. They seemed to be broken or malfunctioning and ran willy-nilly all over the place, waving their arms over their heads and bumping into each other (and everyone else).

Picking through the rubble itself can turn up the bits and pieces shot off the 'bots by the security guards at the bank. The local law didn't investigate all that well and there's plenty of material evidence that wasn't recovered. Since the initial investigation has long since wrapped up, they probably won't be any

interference with the player characters stepping over the tape to pick through the debris.

Conducing a forensics sweep on the site: *(Hard Alertness + Perception/Investigation or Survival/Tracking)*
Success: An inspection of the site reveals footprints by all manner of folks running around all over the place. It was clearly a chaotic scene. Several of the tracks definitely aren't human though and there are even a set of tread marks running through the area. One of the larger set of prints runs straight through the bank room and are clearly heavier on the way back out, seeming to indicate whatever it was picked up something pretty darned heavy and made off with it. A smattering of blood here and there may have been from a gunfight though there's no telling who was shot or under what circumstances.
In the rubble you recover a small piece of machinery that doesn't appear to belong to anything here. There's a serial number and a bar code on it that might be traceable.
Extraordinary Success: All of the above information, including clear indications of a industrial sized chainsaw being put to work on some of the wood furnishings. Besides the completely demolished south wall, most of the counter and all of the furnishings in the lobby were smashed with something very large and blunt.
The aforementioned robot debris is recovered, as well as another piece still bearing a 10cr price sticker labeled "Hackley's Junkyard".

Examination of the parts can lead the player characters to Hackley Swain's Junkyard, once the serial numbers have been tracked down over the cortex.

Tracing the serial number and bar code over the cortex: *(Average Intelligence + Tech/Cortex or similar)*

Success: The serial number identifies the parts as belonging to a older model, mid-sized cargo mule. The bar code is registered through Hackley's Junkyard, located just up the street a few blocks from the bank.

A cortex run on "Hackley's Junkyard" should automatically point them right up the street, if their prior search on the bar code didn't run up that flag already. It's listed in the cortex version of the "yellow pages" regardless and is easy to find.

Act I, Scene II: Hackley's Junkyard

Hackley Swain not only runs the junkyard where Hugh got all his parts for his robots, he's a bit of robot hobbyist himself. Or at least he would be if he could find the time. Though it's an area he's interested in, he never actually gets around to putting anything together. As such, his office at the junkyard is littered with various 'bot hobbyist magazines, should the player characters take even a cursory look around. They won't find any robots on the grounds, though. Nor any indication that Hackley dabbles in such.

Hackley *does* dabble in fencing pirated ship parts and other technicals. As well as fielding his own unlicensed salvage crew. He even has a small ship stashed out in the junkyard in which he sometimes sends his three workers out on quick (and illegal) salvage jobs he picks up on.
Consequently, should the players so much as infer he might have something to do with the bank robbery, Hackley won't respond well. The attentions of local law enforcement are best avoided in his line of work. If the player characters prove themselves a possible threat to

his business, he'll do his best to bury them in the scrap out back and won't loose a night's sleep over it.

See the NPC section for stats on Hackley and his three (3) junkyard workers/ship crewmen. They'll be available to back him up, though he'll have to literally holler for them to come running. Most likely Hackley will smile amiably and try to herd the player characters out into the yard where his crew will be on hand before trying to take any violent action.

Otherwise, should the player character not show themselves as any kind of threat to Hackley's business ventures, he won't have a problem giving them Hugh's location. He'll expect some form of monetary remuneration for the information but doesn't feel any special loyalty to Hugh. He has other customers after all.
From him they'll find out that Hugh recently moved out to an old abandoned mining asteroid to continue some kind of crazy personal project involving robots or some such. He left the location with Hackley as he has a deal with him in the works concerning some mid-grade batteries and is awaiting contact concerning that. Other than that, Hackley is under the impression that Hugh completed the bulk of whatever that project was and simply doesn't require many spare parts these days. He hasn't heard from Hugh in about two months ago but doesn't seem concerned. Hugh was a bit of an oddball.

During the course of their conversation, Hackley will try to steer the subject over to the player characters and whether they have a ship of their own. Most of his customers do and it's really an old habit on his part. If they have a ship they most likely need spare parts or repair work done. Hackley wouldn't be in business long if he didn't seize every opportunity to make a sale.
If he's managed to establish that they do have a ship, even if they don't need

his services at all, it will occur to him that this small crew are headed out to Hugh's asteroid. Way out where there isn't much space traffic. Off the regular shipping lanes, as it were. And he'll figure his little ship, armed as it is, can probably take them.
Hackley may not be all that smart but he recognizes opportunity when it's dropped in his lap.

Act II, Scene I: Pirate Attack?

Once the player characters have gotten the information they came for (and especially if they managed to tick off Hackley in some way) he'll be out the back door of the office as soon as they leave to rouse his illegal salvage crew. They'll dust off and be out in the black before the players are and will sprint ahead to lie in wait for them. With a clear location to look for the players should head straight out to the general area where the asteroid should be to look for Hugh. Halfway there, once they've left the more heavily trafficked shipping lanes and such, Hackley's salvaged ship, The Junkyard Dog, pounces on them.

First the players have to know where they're going. With the designation number of the asteroid, it's a simple matter of running an Astrogation check to determine where it's supposed to be at the moment. Asteroids don't tend to stay in one place for very long, after all.

Determining the current location of the abandoned mining asteroid: *(Average Intelligence + Piloting/Astrogation)*

Failure results in the player character haring off in entirely the wrong direction. It's up to them to realize why the asteroid isn't there when they arrive. They will completely avoid the Junkyard Dog, though. And any course correction back to where the asteroid actually is will still bring

them the long way around, entirely avoiding the ambush.

Since Hackley's ship will be doing the pouncing, they have a first "free shot" that will likely amount to running straight at the player's ship to put themselves at skirmish range quickly. The players have a shot at spotting the ship before it does so, though. They make the check while the two ships are at capitol range, out of range of the Junkyard Dog's "craptech" 10-pound cannon.

Detecting a small transport sitting menacingly out in the black for no good reason: *(Average Alertness + Perception/appropriate sensor suite OR Average Alertness + Pilot/Sensors, depending on how you handle such checks)*
<u>Botch</u>: The Junkyard Dog not only doesn't so much as blip on the radar, it runs right up to skirmish range and opens fire, only *then* making its presence known. It gets a +4 bonus to the first Initiative roll as well while your players scramble about pulling their pants up.
<u>Failure</u>: The Junkyard Dog gets a free action to close in to skirmish range and shoot before the player characters spot it. Initiative is rolled normally thereafter. They really need to upgrade their sensor suite though.
<u>Success</u>: The players spot the Junkyard Dog while it's still sitting menacingly doing nothing. They're able to roll for Initiative if they want to take any action at this time but otherwise it's free to make the first move.
<u>Extraordinary Success</u>: The pilot/ship not only spots the Junkyard Dog out in the black before it closes in but they actually get the drop on *it* instead. The player character's ship gets a surprise "free action", if they like.

Now Hackley's crew aren't bloodthirsty killers but they're willing to kill to make a profit nonetheless. It simply won't occur to them to shoot to *kill*

first, though. For the first two or three turns of the fight they'll be making called shots, targeting engines in the attempt to cripple the player's ship and then parlay with the survivors. Once it becomes clear that strategy isn't working (their gunner just isn't that good) or the player characters look as if they might actually get away, then they'll start shooting to do some real damage.

As such, depending on the flying skill of the player's pilot and the grade of ship they're running, the player characters might just get away without being shot up too badly. If so, Hackley's crew simply barrels on ahead to the asteroid looking to pick up the fight again there.

If they're too slow to get away they're going to have big problems…at least until the Junkyard Dog runs out of ammo. Since they don't have that much to begin with it won't take long for them to. Hackley's crew will be at something of a loss for what to do if they fire their last shot and their victims are still running around. They'll chase them a while before giving up and slouching back home.

If the player's ship is armed however, it's a different story. Once they start shooting Hackley's crew will figure they've bitten off way more than they can chew. They high-tail it outta there if they can and beg for mercy if they can't. They certainly didn't expect anyone to actually shoot back at them.

See the NPC section for stats on the salvage ship, Junkyard Dog and its three-man crew.

Act II, Scene II: Squatters

Once they've arrived at the general location of the asteroid (and dealt with the salvagers if they're still chasing them), they find the supposedly abandoned mining station still operational. Lights are on at the dock

and there's even a couple of rickety transports sitting there.

Besides the larger more obvious dock with all the lights, there's another just a hundred meters or so off to the side. This one doesn't appear to be in use at all but if the player characters go there physically to check it out, there will be clear signs that it's seen a lot of activity recently. This is the dock and shaft Hugh's been using and leads directly down to his camp.

In both cases the docks consist of a simple landing pad ringed around a hub with several extended airlocks branching out like spokes. Two of those at the larger dock are occupied with some old, beat up looking transports while the other four are empty. The player characters can dock their ship at any of them easily enough. The smaller dock has only three airlock spokes and a much smaller docking pad surrounding it. Though the bank robber's ship is away at the moment, the robbers are already down in Hugh's camp, having come by to force him to repair the bots from the damage taken in the last job. Their ship is away fetching supplies and won't show up in the adventure.

Attempts to dock at the mining camp without first contacting them will not be challenged but the miners aren't about to open the inner doors without at least talking to whoever is so rude to do so. Contacting the mining camp is the obvious next step and the player characters quickly find they aren't very welcome.

Both mines were abandoned quite a while back and, should the player characters happen to look it up, listed as being tapped out. The miners here now were lucky enough to discover another (very small) vein of ore, though. So they're squatting illegally to dig it out, hoping the Corone Mining Consortium doesn't catch them at it. To that end, they don't want folks stopping by for a visit and certainly don't want it known they're actually mining here.

Any communication with the miners over the radio and they'll respond that they're just parked for some routine ship maintenance, thank the player characters for stopping to check on them and (very politely) tell them to go about their business.

Any mention of Hugh Shoemacher is another matter and the miners will dither a bit before granting them the go ahead to dock. Mainly they'll stall for time to try to cover up any obvious signs that they're doing anything but the aforementioned ship maintenance. Once they let them into the camp it will be pretty obvious what these folks are up to anyway. Everyone is dusty, there are tools hastily covered over with torn burlap tarps, large containers full of ore, etc.

Though the miners are very jumpy and scared spitless of getting caught mining illegally, they won't immediately plot to dump the player characters in a deep, dark mine shaft or anything. If they seem at all to be reasonable folk, they'll angle for assurances they won't rat them out and be happy enough with that. They also aren't the sort to be steamrolled either and will put up a good fight, given sufficient reason to. While they might begrudgingly pay a small bribe or something similar they won't suffer any abuse.

The mining camp has a decent supply of trade goods and spare parts as well, so if the player characters need to conduct repairs on their ship they should be able to find what they need here. There are even several decent mechanics on hand willing to hire out to do the work as well, if they require. Fuel and maintenance is also available, to essentially the same degree one would find at a cheap dock. The miners are fairly good folk, generally speaking, and fair in their dealings.

If the player characters actually managed to flub their interaction with the miners and find themselves on

their sore end, you might want to offer a way for them to make amends. After all, if the miners have decided to boot them back out into the black or otherwise don't trust them enough to let them run about on their own, they'll have a hard time getting to Hugh Shoemacher. The miners won't volunteer any information and, though his camp is right next door, they may never think to check down that shaft. In such a case, depending on the skills and equipment the player characters have brought with them, we can either have a few of the miners sporting significant injuries from a cave-in (requiring skilled medical treatment) or wipe out their algae tanks in a freak accident a few days before they arrive (given the player characters the opportunity to be generous and share nicely). Either should be enough to reset the miner's opinions of our heroes and give them a second chance at not being a bunch of schmucks.

What the miners know:
Once they've gotten on the miner's good sides and allayed any fears concerning their less than legal mining activities, the miners will point right over at the other old mining shaft when asked about Hugh Shoemacher. Hugh dropped in a few months ago with a whole mess of spare parts and several tons of junked machinery. He had apparently expected to find the asteroid completely abandoned and was looking for someplace quiet (and rent free) to set up shop. Once he scored a few points with the miners (by grumbling and giving them a few bits of junk for their generator) they didn't pay him any more mind. Some of the men even hiked over there to help him haul his several tons of junk down the hole to his camp, in exchange for a couple of cases of foodstuffs.
The miners will also freely volunteer that old Hugh has guests over there regularly enough to make everyone nervous. They don't seem the friendly sort so everyone turns off the lights

and largely makes themselves scarce when they drop in, hoping they won't come over for a visit. Thankfully they haven't taken an interest in the larger camp yet but they're all dreadfully sure it's only a matter of time before they come over to cause trouble. Beyond that they don't know much, taking pains not to get involved and certainly not to draw attention to themselves. Visitors make them nervous.

See NPC section for Miner stats. I recommend a total of 6 or 8 Miners, plus immediate family but place make the group as large as you like. The player shouldn't be going toe-to-toe with them anyway.

Act III, Scene I: Spelunkin'

Once the player characters get around to checking out the other hub they can dock there with no problem. The airlock isn't secured nor is the inner door. However, the elevator is apparently sitting at the bottom of the shaft and they'll have to recall it to make us of it. And unless they have a key, that ain't happening. Of course, they don't have the key.

Picking the lock on the old call switch: *(Average Agility + Covert/Open Locks)*

Bypassing the call switch altogether:
(Average Intelligence + Tech/Electronics OR Mechanic/Jury-Rigging)

Otherwise, it's a one mile weightless drift down to the bottom since there's no grav boot in the shaft. (But then there's the problem of figuring a way to get around the elevator that's in their way at the bottom.)
That changes once they get down to the tunnel below. Right outside the

elevator there's grav plating underfoot and they'll find themselves under full gravity again. At least mostly. The tunnel dips sharply in a few spots, prohibiting grav plating being put in place.

Naturally, Hugh set up the second of two security measures the bank robbers are now enjoying in one of those spots.

The tunnel itself is a comfortable 15' x 15' most of the time, with some cheap, energy efficient (in other words, very dim) lighting at odd intervals. Where there's grav plating the ground is relatively level and their footing sure. Where there's not it's another weightless drift from one side to the other, with a nice opportunity to bump your head on solid rock.

Knock, knock
The player characters hit their first obstacle about twenty meters up the tunnel. Here Hugh set up a simple wall spanning the width of the tunnel (minus about a foot-wide gap at the top between it and the ceiling of the tunnel). He installed a homemade keypad lock on the door and posted two large hazard signs he found laying around the mine reading:

"**Prohibited Area**
Restricted to hazard crews only"

"**Electrical Hazard**
Do Not Enter"

The keypad requires a ten digit pin number to bypass and the steel frame door is electrically charge so long as it's locked down. Once the pin is keyed in the door is powered off for about ten seconds, long enough to pass through safely, and then automatically locks down again.

Bypassing the keypad lock isn't difficult but doing so without getting shocked silly isn't. Considering the healthy electrical charge flowing through the thing, the player characters can actually hear the hum if they're paying attention.

Detecting the hum of electricity flowing through the door: *(Average Alertness + Perception/Hearing)*

Bypassing the keypad lock without getting shocked: *(Hard Agility + Tech/Electronics or Electrical)*

The player characters always have the option of simply breaking through the door, which is child's play if they have any sort of appropriate tools with which to do so. It really isn't all that tough at the various joints and hinges, even if it is steel framed. The actual electrical line running to it is on the other side so simply cutting off the power supply isn't an option until they actually get through it.
Regardless, I'd still call for a check of some kind to do anything of the sort without getting shocked, even if they take precautions. If they don't take precautions just go ahead and shock them silly. Because that'd be funny.

The door isn't designed to actually kill anyone, being intended more to discourage visitors than anything. But Hugh did tune it up a bit higher than he probably should have for that. It delivers 1d6 S damage to anyone coming in contact with it while it's active (1d2 S damage if wearing gloves or coming into contact with any other body part that's covered with clothing).

The Fed
One of Hugh's creations, rejected from a coveted spot among his preferred artworks, is The Fed *(see stats in the NPC section)*.
Not knowing what else to do with the thing once he'd completed it and loath to strip it for parts, he set it up here as his second deterrent to unwelcome visitors. It's the only one of his creations he's "whored out" as anything other than a glorious work of art. He really doesn't like it much.

The Fed sits dormant at the bottom of

a sharp, 20' down slope. The slope lacks any grav plating, allowing The Fed to fire with impunity on anyone trying to float down to its position. Immediately before the slope a very obvious video camera is bolted into the rock overhead and a homemade intercom has been fastened to the side wall. Visitors were initially expected to call in to Hugh's camp to announce themselves here but once he set up the electrified door back down the tunnel he ignores it. It's still active and the player characters can indeed contact Hugh's camp from here, but pushing the button and speaking into the intercom will simply alert the bandits that someone's coming down the tunnel. They won't even respond, other than taking up position to fire on whoever walks into camp next. The video monitor gave out almost right after Hugh installed it and he's never bothered to fix it, so the camera is useless despite being fully functional otherwise.

Below the camera an infrared sensor has been installed across the tunnel near the ground, set to activate The Fed and send him into "arrest mode". Hugh intended to install a remote trigger at his camp to deactivate it but, again, never got around to it. Rather he would simply issue a verbal command to "shut down" for a minute before he passed through. The bank robbers now do likewise, giving them time to get down to it and simply switch it on and off manually.
The player characters, once they get close enough, can easily spot the "on/off" switch atop the thing, right below the flashing red and blue light. Likewise anyone who, for whatever bizarre reason, shouts "shut down" at the Fed will be surprised to find that it does just that, for a full 60 seconds (*and* requiring the infrared sensor at the top of the slope to be tripped again before going back into "arrest mode").

Any player character searching the area in front of the sloping portion of the tunnel can spot the infrared sensor near the ground, but the intercom and camera will likely distract them from taking a closer look, thinking the hazard here is obvious.

Spotting the infrared sensor near the floor at the top of the slope: *(Hard Alertness + Perception/Sight)*

When the infrared sensor is tripped, The Fed goes into "arrest mode" and starts scanning for movement to fire on. As it lacks the advanced logic program it's siblings enjoy, it's reduced to merely detecting movement and shooting at whatever it lights on with it's built in laser sight (which it uses as a range finder for three dimensional targeting). It lacks the ability to discriminate so can easily be tricked into depleting it's ammo on a harmless target, for example. Likewise it fires each turn at the *closest* moving target, so waving a jacket in front of it (or better, tossing it over its sensors) is all it takes to walk past it safely.

Once active, The Fed announces its intention to start being a menace by blaring a loud, very obnoxious, police siren and lighting up the spinning red and blue police light mounted on it's back. Whenever it spots movement and lands it's laser sight on a target it blares the warning, "Police! Don't move!" But then fires immediately anyway with it's twin sonic stunners. It's polite enough to issue this warning immediately before each shot, though. It won't help in dodging the shot but it is entertaining.
Sitting directly at the bottom of the down slope and possessing a full-range motion sensor (housed atop the bubble of the spinning police light), it can "spot" anything moving down the tunnel as easily as anything on its own level. It's only blind below the level of the sensor itself, roughly up to two feet off the ground and out to twenty feet. It isn't programmed to move or

chase targets either so it stays right where it is, patiently waiting for something to wander into its field of fire and trigger its sensors.
Once its ammo is depleted it will continue to track targets, announce its intention to fire and simply "click" its now dead sonic stunners. Any targets that stop moving (having been knocked unconscious, for example) are ignored…until they stand or sit up and trigger its motion sensors again.
Should the fight go especially badly for the player characters they could well spend the new few hours being knocked out repeatedly by the stubborn Fed before getting wise and simply crawl away. But then it will simply shoot them once they range out farther than twenty feet and it spots them again.

Act III, Scene II: Head Hunters

Having found the tunnel to Hugh's camp, navigated the shaft down to it, passed through the electrified door and defeated The Fed, the player characters are now only fifty meters from the door to Hugh's camp. They can see it from where they stand, even.
Which sucks because this is probably where the Foreigner Corporation three-man head hunter team catches up with them.

Now if any player characters were left back on their ship for whatever reason to twiddle their thumbs while everyone else has fun, this is where they get some excitement. When the head hunters arrive in their ship their arrival will be pretty obvious. They don't exactly stealth into the place or anything. They'll open up communications with the miners, threaten to blow a hole in their little asteroid if they don't cooperate and will know right where Hugh Shoemacher can be found in less than

two minutes. At which time they'll hunker down right next to the player characters ship, dock on the airlock ring and hustle over to check them out.

If no one is aboard the player character's ship they'll leave it be once they've established that and hustle on down the shaft right behind the group. If there *is* anyone on board, they burn through the door and assault the ship, intent on stunning everyone aboard and tying them up before hustling down the shaft.

If the player characters down below have triggered The Fed and he's made all the noise he's programmed to, the head hunters will have heard the commotion from way back at the elevator shaft and know right where they are. By the time The Fed is dealt with they'll be hustling up right behind them to order them to disarm and lay down on the ground.
The head hunters don't take any chances, aren't very diplomatic and tend to shoot first, so if the player characters aren't immediately compliant they simply open fire. Since they first issue commands and *then* perform Covering actions on them, this should give the player characters time to open fire first if they like. Otherwise they'll begin at something of a disadvantage initially.

Should the player characters actually surrender and/or have their butts handed to them by the Head Hunters, they'll be bound with simple ziptie wrist restraints and sat firmly on the ground. The Head Hunters then proceed to burst into Hugh's camp and start shooting that place up as well, leaving them completely unattended outside to do whatever they like about the situation.
Inside Hugh's camp the head hunters will quickly get their own butts handed to them by the bandits since they expected to face only the opportunistic data thief, Hugh Shoemacher. They have no idea the place is being used as a base for interplanetary bank robbers. After about three minutes of

gunfire they come limping back out to regroup down the tunnel a ways.

Should the player characters somehow manage to avoid a gunfight right outside the door with the head hunters, they'll find them agreeable to working together to take down Hugh Shoemacher. Especially when they discover there are a band of hardened bank robbers inside rather than just a lone data thief. In the end all they really care about is recovering the program and insuring no one else has a copy. Depending on the player character's goals here that may or may not be a sticking point in the end.

Act IV, Scene I: Hugh's Art Studio

Whenever and however the player characters actually get through the door the likelihood that the bandits are unaware someone is barreling down the tunnel to come shoot at them is extremely slim. They'll be crouched down behind the heavy cover of Hugh's scattered crates of junk.

On the other hand, if they have somehow managed to get past The Fed without setting it off and dealt with the head hunters quietly, the bank robbers may well be lounging around inside without a care in the world.

Hugh's camp is a simple 100' x 100' roughly hemispherical cave, most of it carved right out of the rock. This is where the original mine tapped out and the area was later expanded to serve as a hub for future exploratory digs that never took place.
It currently hold dozens of crates of Hugh's junk scattered about randomly as well as hundreds of bit and pieces ranging from hand-sized to man-sized scattered about in between. The metal storage shed where Hugh is being kept prisoner is located on the far side of the camp, having originally been used to store chemicals and combustible liquids. This 10' x 20', one-door shack now holds only Hugh Shoemacher and a chemical toilet.
Hughes critters are lined up neatly along the wall to the left and are in clear evidence. An area immediately before them, roughly 30' in diameter, is the only spot cleared of junk in order for cots and such to be placed, making a temporary living space for the bank robbers.

And, no. The bank robbers haven't left all their loot laying around for the player characters to pick up and pocket later. It's back on their ship and won't be making an appearance in this adventure. No way we're handing them players an easy score like that, eh?

The bank robbers are confident enough in their abilities and the nice cover they enjoy to communicate a bit before shooting any intruders dead. They'll want to know who the player characters are and what the heck they're doing here, once they see they aren't federal marshals. More to the point, they'll want to know if federal marshals are coming or not. Beyond that they're quite happy to open fire at them and will do so as soon as their questions are answered (or the player characters open fire on them first). Negotiating with the bank robbers won't be very helpful unless they're somehow willing to come in and allow themselves to be shot. Likewise any communication from outside their field of fire that drags on too long will spur the bank robbers forward to assault the door and extend their field of fire out into the tunnel. They'll pursue down the tunnel too, if the player characters retreat, intent on killing them all before they get away.

Should gunplay erupt then the gunfight should go on for at least a turn or two, long enough for Hugh's critters to put their new logic programming to use and figure they're supposed to be in on the action.

Act IV, Scene II: Judge, Jury and Executioner

One of the interesting side effects of the upgrade from the logic program is the new ability Hugh's critters now have. They can learn. At least…a little bit. And not really all that well.
They *have* managed to pick up on the idea that gunfire goes hand in hand with their song and dance routine. So when gunplay breaks out between the bank robbers and the player characters, they spend a couple of turns mulling it over before deciding they're supposed to do their thing now.

For the Judge, that means running around, spouting fire and pronouncing everyone guilty and in contempt of court. Usually walking up right in front of them, blocking their field of view and making a couple of such pronouncements before moving on to someone else. Occasionally it pounds on something inanimate with its hammer a bit.
The Bailiff will lurch around looking for the safe it's supposed to pick up and make off with, but when it doesn't find one it opts to pick up a crate of junk instead. Then swing it around dangerously looking for wherever the heck it's supposed to put it.
The Executioner knows its part well and revs up its chainsaws to start chasing people around. It isn't programmed to harm anyone intentionally but that doesn't mean it won't lop off a couple of heads *unintentionally*. It might well run over a couple of people too, if they don't concentrate on getting out of the way.
The Jury robots will all simply start

blaring their seagull sounds, waving their arms around their heads and running about randomly, adding as much confusion as they can to the whole mess.

The resulting chaos, well orchestrated distraction and the glaring noises put out by Hugh's critters works great for the bank robbers when robbing a bank. Not so much right now, though. They'll be suffering a -1 step penalty to any action requiring concentration (including shooting and fighting) right along with the player characters. The Judge will likewise get in *their* way, The Executioner have *them* stepping and fetching out of its path and the Bailiff will be smacking *them* with his big box of junk. Just like the player characters.

And if the head hunters aren't standing with the player characters at the moment, but rather fled down the tunnel to regroup, they'll pop in around turn four or five…this time with gun, not stunners. And when confronted with the chaos in Hugh's camp, they simply opt to shoot everything and everyone until they run out of bullets or targets.

Bearing in mind the number of combatants we're dealing with here, the crazed robots running around interfering with everyone and all the medium and heavy cover available to all in this fight, it could go on for quite awhile.
Unless Jayne brought the grenades this time, so to speak.

Wrap Up: Rescuing Hugh

Assuming the player characters get out of that mess alive and all threats have been neutralized, finding Hugh locked up in the shed and getting his story out of him won't be difficult at all. Retrieving the data disk that he used

to upgrade his critters, or even just making a copy of it, won't be a sticking point either. And if his critters are still running around, they'll all respond to voice commands which he won't have a problem issuing.

Unless the player characters are intent on wiping the program out of his critter's memory as part of their job. In that case, he'll be issuing commands to beat the player characters around the head instead. Hugh Shoemacher is an artist, after all. And these are his masterpieces. You don't mess with art.

Non-Player Characters

Hugh Shoemacher
Underappreciated artiste

Agi d6	Str d4	Vit d6
Ale d6	Int d10	Wil d8

Init d6 + d6
LP: 14

Traits: Absent Minded d6, Attuned to Technology d6, Combat Paralysis d8, Devoted to a Cause d6, Hideout d6, Talented (Tech/Electronics, Tech/Robotics) d6, Unstable d10

Skills: Artistry d4, Athletics d2, Craft d4, Drive d6, Guns d2, Influence d6, Knowledge d6/Law d8/Philosophy d8/Politics d8, Mechanic d6/Construction d10/Mechanical Repairs d12, Perception d6, Science d6/Environmental Sciences d8, Tech d6/Computer Programming d10/Hacking d10/Create Technical Devices d10/Electronics d10/Jury-Riggin d8/Electrical Repair d8

Hugh is complete nuts. Firmly around the bend. Fell out of the crazy tree and hit every branch on the way down. He's completely convinced his wonderful works of art are an amazing, deeply stinging caricature of the Alliance's justice system, so humiliating that the entire organization would crumble to dust should they ever come to light. Luckily for them, he's completely uninterested in displaying them. Far too much work to do. They're not *quite* perfect. Not yet.

Hackley Swain
Junkyard manager/illegal salvage boss

Agi d6	Str d6	Vit d8
Ale d6	Int d4	Wil d8

Init d6 + d6
LP: 18

Baseball bat

Traits: Contacts d2, Greedy d8, Head for Numbers d6, Stingy d4, Tough d4

Skills: Athletics d4, Drive d6, Guns d6, Influence d6/Bartar d10/Persuasion d8, Knowledge d6/Appraisal d10/Sports d8, Mechanic d6/Customization d8/Mechanical Repairs d8, Melee Weapons d4, Perception d4, Tech d4, Unarmed Combat d6

Hackley Swain barely scratches out a living with his junkyard. Normally that'd be enough for him, being a simple man and all. But recently he's developed a taste for exotic entertainments. That there takes credits.
Hackley has since put a ever-burgeoning patch job on the old klunker out in the junkyard, found a few straggling junk workers with some rough ship skills and formed his own illegal salvage team. He hasn't quite refined the business to the point where it pays off its own expenses, but it's getting there. He just needs one good salvage job to get the numbers in the black.

Swain's crew
Three not-quite-professional salvagers

Agi d6	Str d8	Vit d8
Ale d6	Int d4	Wil d6

Init d6 + d6
LP: 14

Heavy Pistol
Lead pipe

Traits: Brawler d2, Overweight d4

Skills: Athletics d6, Drive d4, Guns d4, Mechanic d6, Melee Weapons d4, Perception d4, Unarmed Combat d6
Pilot: Pilot d6/Light Transports d8
Gunner: Guns d6
Sensor op/Navigator: Tech d6

The Junkyard Dog
Seriously crappy ship hammered together from junk parts

Agi d6	Str d6	Vit d6
Ale d4	Int d2	Wil d4

Init d6 + d4
LP: 10

One 10 pound craptech skirmish range cannon (d6); Ammo: 6 rounds

Traits: Gas Guzzler, Seen Better Days.

Skills: Athletics d4, Covert d2, Perception d2, Pilot d2
(skills listed assume that ship skills will only be used in computer automated actions - pilots, gunner's, etc. use their own skills)

The Bank Robbers
Scourge of the banking industry

Agi d8	Str d6	Vit d8
Ale d8	Int d6	Wil d6

Init d8 + d8
LP: 16

Heavy Pistol
Rifle or Shotgun

Traits: Criminal Past d6, Greedy d6, Steady Calm d8, Tough d4

Skills: Athletics d6, Discipline d4, Guns d6/Pistol d8/Rifle or Shotgun d8, Knowledge d4, Perception d4.

Though these guys are supposed to be professional bank robbers, they're only a step or so up from common thugs. The discovery of Hugh's critters were just the edge they needed to bring in the big bucks but they're just cannon fodder for our heroes here.

Miners
If you could dig with raw paranoia, it make their job a whole lot easier

Agi d6	Str d10	Vit d8
Ale d6	Int d6	Wil d6

Init d6 + d6
LP: 18

Pick axe (d6 W)

Traits: Tough d8, Brawler d4

Skills: Athletics d4, Guns d4, Mechanics d6/Mechanical Repair d10/Jury-Rigging d10, Melee Weapon d6/Pick Axe d8, Unarmed Combat d6/Brawling d10

Head Hunters
Second string troubleshooters

Agi d8	Str d6	Vit d6
Ale d8	Int d6	Wil d8

Init d8 + d8
LP: 14

Sonic Rifle
Stun Baton
Heavy Pistol
Mesh Armor
Mag Charge (3 each)

Traits: Contacts d4, Criminal Past d6, Greedy d4, Steady Calm d8

Skills: Artistry d6/Appraisal d8, Covert d6/Forgery d8/Open Locks d8/Sleight of Hand d8/Stealth d10, Drive d4, Guns d6, Influence d6/Interrogation d10, Melee Weapons d4, Perception d4, Performance d6/Acting d8, Unarmed Combat d6/Offensive Martial Arts d8

Hugh's Critters

The Judge
"Overruled!"

Agi d6	Str d12	Vit d10
Ale d6	Int d4	Wil d12

Init d6 + d6
LP: 22

Big, black gavel (d8 B)
Integral Flamethrower (d8 Fire, never *intentionally* used as a weapon)

Traits: Constructed d8, Hardy Constitution d6, Memorable d8, Nonhealing d12

Skills: Athletics d2, Discipline d6/Concentration d10/Intimidiation d12/Morale d12, Melee Weapons d6/Big Hammers d12, Unarmed Combat d2

The Jury (12)
"Rabble, rabble, rabble!"

Agi d6	Str d4	Vit d4
Ale d6	Int d4	Wil d12

Init d6 + d6
LP: 18

Traits: Constructed d8, Hardy Constitution d6, Memorable d8, Nonhealing d12

Skills: Athletics d2, Discipline d6/Concentration d10/Morale d12, Influence d6/Distraction d10, Melee Weapons d6/Big Hammers d12, Unarmed Combat d2

The Executioner
"Kill, kill, kill, kill!"

Agi d6	Str d10	Vit d10
Ale d6	Int d4	Wil d12

Init d6 + d6
LP: 22

Two Industrial Chainsaws (d10 W)

Traits: Constructed d8, Hardy Constitution d6, Memorable d8, Nonhealing d12, Two-Handed Fighting d4

Skills: Athletics d2, Discipline d6/Concentration d10/Intimidiation d12/Morale d12, Drive d6/Chasing d8, Melee Weapons d6/Industrial Chainsaws d12, Unarmed Combat d2

The Bailiff
Just looking for a safe to snatch

Agi d6	Str d12	Vit d10
Ale d6	Int d4	Wil d12

Init d6 + d6
LP: 22

Traits: Constructed d8, Hardy Constitution d6, Memorable d8, Nonhealing d12

Skills: Athletics d2, Discipline d6/Concentration d10/Morale d12, Unarmed Combat d6/Large, Box-shaped Blunt Objects d10/Brawling d10/Wrestling d10

The Fed
Hugh's reject

Agi d6	Str d8	Vit d8
Ale d6	Int d4	Wil d12

Init d6 + d6
LP: 20

Two integral, dual fire Stun Rifles (20 remaining shots each)

Traits: Constructed d8, Hardy Constitution d6, Memorable d8, Nonhealing d12

Skills: Athletics d2, Discipline d6/Concentration d10/Intimidiation d12/Morale d12, Guns d6/Sonic Rifle d10