

This is a script sample written by Allie Bustion for a cyberpunk noir single player roleplaying game taking inspiration from Harebrained Schemes' *Shadowrun* titles, ZA/UM's *Disco Elysium*, and countless other isometric RPGs as well as Bioware's *Mass Effect* conversation system. The setting is Metropolis, a domed mega-city with a social structure built on one's reputation and standing, and SouMet, the mirror city beneath it.

**1 INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON**

**1**

The windows are covered with a thin film of grime and smoke, the artificial light they let in mimicking the afternoon light of the world above. At the slab of a desk sits CHIEF VALAREO, the head of the private detective agency dealing in rumors as social currency.

CHIEF VALAREO

You're still pretty green so we're goin' easy on ya. Basic case, track an' prove, should be some nobody on the ground floors upstairs.

Choice 1: Ask for more info; repeatable.

MAIN CHARACTER

Give me the details one more time. Wouldn't want to leave mud tracks on my first real case.

CHIEF VALAREO

{Like I said, should be a milk run:|Alright, one more run through:|C'mon kid, open your ears:| (sighs) Maybe you should be writing this down:} chase but don't touch the target, a Delilah Carazine. Does a 9 to 5 as a freelance secretary for the mid to high floor types and moonlights as a singer on the same levels. Public records say it's making her a good bit of cred too. Shouldn't be too hard to find. Client says she's either got something on whoever it is she works for or, well...

MAIN CHARACTER

Yeah, yeah, I get it. Femme fatale type thing.

CHIEF VALAREO

(snorts and coughs)  
 You just hope she's nothing like the  
 vids and I'll hope you wrap this one  
 up quick so I can put you on  
 something with some real grit. You  
 need connects to get in somewhere,  
 you talk to Hartley. You'll be owing  
 them one though.

Choice 2: Agree and proceed; ends conversation.

MAIN CHARACTER  
 Got it, Chief. Quick chase, don't  
 get caught out.

CHIEF VALAREO  
 (serious)  
 And make sure you keep your own  
 boots clean on this one. We don't  
 make the mud, we don't sling it, and  
 we sure as hell don't clean it up;  
 we just show the clients where it is  
 and let them deal with it. *Entendue?*

MAIN CHARACTER  
 Yeah, I got it. I'll come back in  
 without even a speck of dust on me.

CHIEF VALAREO  
 You'd better. You find yourself  
 needing some connects upstairs,  
 Hartley will probably help you for a  
 favor.

**2 INT. OPEN PLAN OFFICE - AFTERNOON**

**2**

Though this office space technically has an open plan, it still feels cramped somehow like too much is trying to happen at the same time in one place. Rolling boards with old-fashioned pins-and-strings are set up next to floating holo-displays are next to multi-screen setups are next to massive piles of paper and notebooks. Coffee cups are strewn everywhere. Only one desk has minimal people hanging around it.

HARTLEY  
 (bored and aloof)  
 Oh, good, yet another *peti-bebe* for  
 me to fill in everything they never  
 learned before this very moment.

MAIN CHARACTER  
 Not... not everything...

HARTLEY  
It's enough, trust me.

MAIN CHARACTER  
(sarcastic)  
Gee, thanks.

The following are dialogue options to learn more about parts of the city structure, which should also feed into lore about the city and society itself as well as introduce colloquialisms and jargon.

Option 1: Learn about the upper city (and SouMet); repeatable.

MAIN CHARACTER  
What can you tell me about upstairs?

HARTLEY  
(laughing)  
First of all, no one up there calls it upstairs so make sure you don't say that or you'll give yourself away.

MAIN CHARACTER  
Okay, noted. Anything else.

HARTLEY  
You'll want the proper French up there. Closer to the dome, more proper you'll need to be. They'll clock you as a SouMet 'zen or even a *cherch-merc* fast otherwise. You gotta get at least a few questions in before needing to pay people off.

HARTLEY  
Anything else while I'm here?

Option 2: Learn about how to get into the middle floors (and thus about fashion-as-status and the stratification of society); repeatable.

MAIN CHARACTER  
So what about the mid floors, they're not that different from down here, right?

HARTLEY  
Uhhh, *oui*, it is. Very different. You'll need new clothes, for one thing. You'll need to talk like them. You'll need to move like them

eventually but I hope you're smart enough to figure that out on your own. Otherwise, you'll read like the help at best... or a mercenary.

MAIN CHARACTER

But... aren't we--

HARTLEY

Yeah, but you don't say it out loud. Especially not that high up. No one wants to know their secrets aren't safe. And, up there? They care about it. A lot.

HARTLEY

Still need more lessons on not getting made?

Option 2a: Ask for help looking the part; unlocked through Option 2; one-time; gives access to a tailor.

MAIN CHARACTER

So... about--

HARTLEY

You need a tailor, yeah?

MAIN CHARACTER

Is it that obvious?

HARTLEY

You must not pay for an apartment with mirrors. Here, take this card. She's ground level, just barely upstairs, but she's good. Just prefers the cheaper rent. The business from down here doesn't hurt either. She'll even let you do a payment plan.

MAIN CHARACTER

I can--

HARTLEY

You can't, trust me.

Option 3: Learn about the penthouse and top floors (and how impenetrable they are as symbols of the upper levels of society); repeatable.

MAIN CHARACTER

What if I need to head up higher than the mid floors?

HARTLEY

*Malchanceuax*. No one's going to let you up that far, not anyone with access and certainly not the security they've got all around. You'd have better luck leaving the dome and surviving.

MAIN CHARACTER

But what if I need to?

HARTLEY

Then you'd better pray someone can smuggle you through.

HARTLEY

Right, anything else? I've got my own cases, you know.

Ending the conversation.

MAIN CHARACTER

I guess that's it.

HARTLEY

Good, I'll let you know exactly how much you owe me when it's time to pay up. Don't worry, it's never creds.

MAIN CHARACTER

That... kind of worries me more.

HARTLEY

You really are learning.

PLAYER is free to explore, return to repeating conversations, talk to MINOR NPCs, or leave to go to another area.