

STAR*DRIVE SESSION SUMMARY 05/27/2011

Attendance

Bruce sits back and reflects upon his day so far. “I got up, found a place to get breakfast tacos within a mile of my apartment, got a character to Level 60 in WoW, spent some time re-reading *Glasshouse*, surely one of the creepiest posthuman science fiction novels around, and now I’m listening to pretentious gothic metal music with all my windows open so the neighbors can hear. Where could I possibly go from here?”

Chris offers, “You could stop woolgathering and pay attention to the game! And turn down that infernal racket!” *Chris* really enjoys the role of the crotchety old man, especially in contexts where nobody is likely to call Human Resources.

Ernest doesn’t get much of a charge from acting older than his age. In fact, much the reverse is true. Even beyond that, never once in his life has he worried about someone telling Human Resources about his behavior. His life must be truly beautiful.

Paul enters, burdened by books and junk food. He offers no comment, because he knows that his life is the most beautiful of all.

Patrick complains, “Hey! I have a pretty good life too! Certainly better than Mister Workaholic Wafer Jockey who’s writing all these things! If I had his life, I’d count myself lucky to tear my eyes out one by one!” Nobody hears his complaints, because he’s not at the session.

Tim just thinks about how refreshing it would be to have one of these intro pieces that actually reflected reality in any way whatsoever. But he knows that’s just not in the cards. And besides, he’s off at some kind of Burning Man-esque hippie gathering doing manning a show “right next to the orgy tent.” We would expect no less of him.

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Deal</i>	<i>Status</i>
Bruce	Lambert Fulson	Rigunmor Guido Free Agent	Present
Bruce	Taveer	Mechalus Concord Engineer Tech Op	Off Camera
Patrick	Martin St. John	Concord Naval Officer Tech Op	Absent
Patrick	Lenny	T’sa Ambassador Free Agent	Absent

<i>Player</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Deal</i>	<i>Status</i>
Chris	Ten-zil Kem	VoidCorp Ambassador Diplomat (TO)	Present
Chris	Drest Talorgin	Pict Warchief Combat Spec	Off Camera
Ernest	Markus Oroszlan	Warlion Bartender Combat Spec	Present
Ernest	Ken Takashi	Concord Naval Officer Diplomat (TO)	Off Camera
Tim	Gerard Peppin	Borealin Ambassador Mind Walker	Absent
Tim	Haggernak	Weren Concord Administrator Combat Spec	Absent

Movie Magic

The film star *Jack Everstar* is making a film titled *Chimes*, telling the story of the destruction of the original colony at Silver Bell by aliens. Production is underway down on Bluefall in the Aegis system. The characters come to know about this production when there is a huge explosion at one of the sets. Fortunately, Jack Everstar was sick that day so he wasn't at risk of being hurt, but the rumors fly wildly anyway. The journalist *Avatar* is particularly noted for starting stories with hard facts and then going off the rails into wild conspiracy theories, in this case that the ghosts of the dead Silver Bell colonists are showing their displeasure – they don't want their stories to be told! The characters are skeptical.

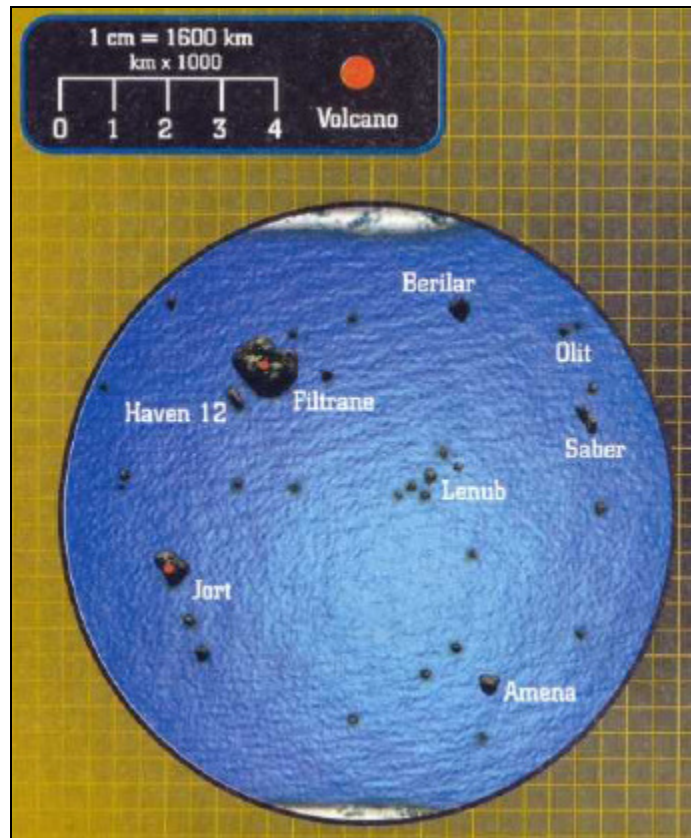
Various folks associated with the movie company indicate that they do not expect the destruction of the set will interfere with the production schedule: they will just adjust the schedule until the set can be reconstructed.

Markus Oroszlan, *Ten-zil Kem* and *Lambert Fulson* all find themselves drawn to this production: they want to ensure that the production runs without further violence, and besides, it's cool to hang out with movie stars. Markus decides that he would be a perfect military weapons and pyrotechnics expert, and can serve as security on the side. Ten-zil Kem could do work, but eventually decides just to go in as a film funding source as he loves hanging out with beautiful people like himself. Lambert Fulson wants to know why the others are so slow: he already controls the catering company. It turns out that in the late 23rd century science learned that water wasn't actually zero-calorie, so modern actors and actresses drink only holographic water. And besides, everyone needs to eat.

Markus and Ten-zil Kem are both famous in their own right – Markus for leading troops in battle, and Ten-zil Kem for being a high-profile socialite and all-around goofball. Markus persuades the production that he can train their personnel. Ten-zil Kem just shows up looking for drugs and... social interaction. Lambert Fulson really doesn't bring the same level of absolute fame to the table: his notoriety is more on the *Jersey Shore* scale.

On Location

The characters arrive on Bluefall to find that the citizens are celebrating and mourning in equal measure. Everyone is joyful because the Verge Alliance has managed a great victory, but sad because a lot of people died. Lambert Fulson is happy because he sees many opportunities for business (commemorative plates and coins, alien body part collectibles and so on), but sad because he must let it all pass by to solve a murder mystery. Markus Oroszlan is happy because he got a chance to shoot a lot of aliens, but sad because the sandwich on the flight down was really bad.



The Island of Filtrane on Bluefall

The characters board an airplane and travel to the Thuldan-controlled island of Filtrane, where *Chimes* is under production. Markus is happier: he sees a chance to get some good Thuldan grub, perhaps a spicy shredded horse-leather sandwich or other layered meat dish. The island is more like a subcontinent, measuring a thousand kilometers across. Most of it is uninhabited, with the nearest towns and cities some distance away. Following standard Thuldan practice, the colonists have exterminated all of the native Bluefall life on the island, replacing it with engineered lifeforms from Thuldan Prime. This leads to a certain amount of debate on whether the movie production is attracting hatred from either Thuldan eco-freaks (who feel that the production contaminates the purity of Filtrane's adjusted ecosystem by bringing in native life) or Bluefall ecological fanatics (who see it as an opportunity to fight against Thuldan ecological imperialism).

As the characters land they can see shooting under way: actors are fighting against an army of holographic clicks.

The Cast and Crew

Associate Producer *Hanna Zorel*, a stocky woman dressed in a mix of safari clothing and lingerie, greets the characters. The characters are slightly amazed by her sartorial choices, but she seems to think they are perfectly normal.

She starts by showing Markus Oroszlan the explosives lockers. She notes that there has already been material turned up missing there. The locks are biometric, tracking the genetic signatures of anyone entering the lockers. Thanks to the lock passage data there is a primary suspect: *Joseph Friddle*, currently held in a Thuldan detention cell. She indicates that "he hasn't been the same" since their breakup.

Ten-zil Kem doesn't believe the official theory at all. His theory is that the genetic locks were tampered with, clearly by an expert on Thuldan genetics, to conceal the identity of the real criminal.

Lights! Camera! Action!

Markus launches himself into his official work, setting up incredible explosions to destroy ships and installations and so on. Lambert hangs around the craft services truck,

gossiping with *Jame R. Preble*, the Craft Services Manager. He is incredibly charming. Jaime tells him everything: Everstar hired on *Ann Marie Valois* (mostly known just as “Ann Marie”) as a female lead after *Sara Caldwell* left the production. She previously appeared in Jack Everstar’s first film, *Children of Mars*. The two of them have a history together, and not a happy one: their torrid affair during the filming of *Children* exploded into public conflict. She is currently insisting that everyone on set eat vegetarian, and making a huge issue of the failing ecological balance of the planet. And then once she’s out of sight Everstar shows up and demands that the catering team service up a whole roasted sunsoarer, fins and all (a creature that looks like a cross between a vulture and a pterodactyl).

Lambert heads over to her trailer to ask her about what sort of vegetarian cuisine she would like to see. She tells him (through the door) to get lost. Lambert’s charm wins through, at least enough to get her to open the door. She’s wearing a dressing gown and even without makeup she is staggeringly beautiful. She is still, however, in an unbelievably foul mood. He tries offering her a sampling of vegetarian fritters, and lies about their calorie content (“They include drugs to keep them calorie free!”).

After that, the conversation rather does downhill. Lambert decides to rely upon Ten-zil Kem to seduce her after he’s gone.

Where Is My Medicine?

Ten-zil Kem walks around the set, subtly asking about possible places where he could find “his medicine”, looking for sources. Someone named *Mallory* who claims to be in charge of personal assistants is shocked that the great Ten-zil Kem doesn’t have a personal assistant. She assigns one to him right off: *Shirley Barrett*. Ten-zil explains his troubles to her, and she promptly works to get them resolved. She is young and adorable, with a pony tail and a sense of optimism not yet dimmed by reality. However, she is quite capable of finding sources for booze and drugs. She notes that Everstar has his own entourage that is quite capable of coming up with all of their needs without external assistance.

Shirley knows quite a bit about the production company. She doubts that Joseph Friddle was responsible for the bombing, picks out Hanna Zorel as being quite brilliant and the linchpin of the whole production, and knows of several other “accidents” prior to

the explosion. There was a landslide that destroyed an equipment truck, a flying line that snapped during a stunt sending a stuntman into a 100-meter plunge (he survived, thanks to an antigrav backup harness), and an event in which Sara Caldwell was trapped inside a burning building. It was after that incident that she quit the film and Ann Marie Valois came on board. Her departure meant that quite a few scenes needed to be re-shot, which did nothing for the production costs.

Jack Everstar is constantly accompanied by two men: *Dick Reid* (his manager) and *David Hudson* (his “entourage”). Ten-zil Kem seeks the two of them out. Dick recognizes him as having previously starred in a reality program in which he explained how he had slept with hundreds, possibly thousands, of women. Ten-zil Kem comments, “Well, that’s just because people want to be able to emulate their heroes.” Dick is not impressed. David is. The three of them make cloudy promises to party together sometime soon, then Ten-zil Kem heads off with Shirley in tow. He starts every sentence with “Surely,...” just to bug her. She warns him about how sleazy they both are, and refuses an invitation to the party on the grounds that she doesn’t feel like being raped today.

The Warlion Does Hollywood

Markus Oroszlan finishes his review of the property locker, then heads to the set to look for anything out of place. For example, he keeps a keen eye out for brown M&M’s on the craft services table. He does spot quite a few historical inaccuracies in the gear, though in other respects he is quite impressed with their efforts towards historical veracity: the production even managed to get hold of some (dead) click weapons to use as props. Most of the alien weapons are recent, from the just-prosecuted campaign, rather than from the original attack on Silver Bell. The holographic clicks are pretty close to reality, but Markus can easily tell the difference.

Markus then checks out Everstar himself. His character is a young man who wants to get married to a girl whose mother forbids the relationship. The mother tricks him into joining the Colonial Marines to keep him away from her daughter. Then when the aliens attack Silver Bell he bravely sacrifices himself so his beloved can escape, but she is captured by the aliens and her memories are erased so she cannot tell of his heroic deeds afterwards.

Markus finds Director *Ellis J. Williams* hard at work signing documents. He looks up with some surprise, “Ah, you’re our new security whatever-it-is. Glad to meet you! Hey, that’s some grip you’ve got there!” Markus indicates his desire to boost the historical accuracy of the film. The Director notes that when the production started he had some ex-Marines to provide technical advice, but most of them all re-enlisted when the war started up. He’s plenty happy to help out the war effort, especially if he’s able to stay out of the front lines.

It turns out that one of the significant challenges in the production is the lack of good historical documentation: nobody really knows what kind of I-krl forces were responsible for the destruction at Silver Bell, though it is a safe guess that the clicks were involved. Likewise, there are aspects of thaal biotechnology that are hard on the wardrobe department due to their mucus-intensive nature.

Story Meeting

The characters reconvene to discuss what might be going on. Their theories are all over the place: insurance fraud, a desire (by the producer?) to ensure that Jack Everstar goes out in a blaze of glory “at the top”, a rogue teln worm infestation, and so on. The most recent accident involved explosives, which speaks to a certain level of technical competence (and in turn suggests that random upset actresses are unlikely to be responsible).

Ten-zil Kem decides he’d like to see something about the budget of the film. He hacks into the records, then turns the results over to Lambert Fulson to analyze. They find an amazing amount of criminality going on, even considering that this is a film production. The folks who fund movies are often using them as a way to launder money or conceal other illicit activity. Even though the film has lost millions due to the accidents and other production problems (like losing Sara Caldwell), money just keeps on piling in. But overall, they don’t see anything that looks out of line considering the industry.

There were over 100 personal background checks done, particularly on the pyrotechnics and stunt people. A surprising number of them have criminal backgrounds, though for low-level stuff: driving to endanger, spontaneous brawling, public drunkenness, and so on.

Cast Party!

Ten-zil Kem and Markus Oroszlan organize a party for the crew. Markus Oroszlan hands 500 credits to Lambert Fulson and tells him to get some booze for a party. Lambert comes back with a ground car loaded with booze. Even Ten-zil Kem is dubious. “Aren’t there going to be any snacks? I like a bit of nutrition with my alcohol.” Lambert arranges a catering truck and some alternative staffing to provide food.

During the party, Ten-zil and Markus talk with the crew members responsible for dealing with the alien technology. They ask a lot of questions intended to pick out any alien items that might have included teln worms or anything else threatening. They determine that a lot of the alien items appearing in the film are carefully made forgeries. The originals they’re made from all sound fairly innocuous. A big-breasted sound effects girl, *Linda*, hangs off Markus’ arm and asks him to describe the sound of various alien weapons. “Well this is what dark plasma splashing off a bulkhead near you sounds like this...” We all get good and lit.

Jack Everstar’s After Party

When the cast party starts to wind down, that’s when the real party starts up at Jack Everstar’s offshore mansion. Ten-zil Kem has Shirley Barrett arrange an aircar for the characters. She recommends against taking a boat (and flying fairly high) to avoid the danger of sky fishers – huge aquatic angler-fish type predators that aren’t above picking off low-flying lift-belt users and small boats. Coincidentally, sky fisher is also on the menu for the event. We’ll just have to take our chances about possible mega-sharks. A buzzed Markus invites Linda along.

The skycar turns out to be built up as a replica of a 20th century Yellow Cab, complete with a chatty t’sa driver in a porkpie hat. It takes hours to fly to the Nub, an island mostly occupied by Regency fishing villages and Jack Everstar’s massive glass-and-plasteel mansion.

As the characters arrive, there is already a passed-out girl lying on the front lawn. As a courtesy, Ten-zil Kem rolls her over so she won’t choke on her own spew. It is clear that he’s quite expert at this maneuver.

Inside, the party is rolling. They have booze! They have girls! They have video games! Dick Reid and David Hudson are both there, and both quite medicated. Dick Reid shows Ten-zil Kem off to everyone, describing how awesome he is and how everyone wants to sleep with him. On the side, Dick asks, “You gotta show me your love secrets! I mean, there’s lots of good-looking girls here but usually they all just want to sleep with Jack! How do you do it, man?” Ten-zel reviews his “sexy-time” skill, and debates whether it should be categorized under Athletics or Acrobatics. He eventually decides on Acrobatics.

Lambert Fulson spends his time talking to various inebriated girls, explaining how he can get them whatever they need and suggesting that he can help turn them into actresses, albeit of a very specialized type (and not so much in the “community theater” sense).

This shark, swallow you whole

Markus Oroszlan chats with Jack Everstar, who promptly challenges him to a jetski race across psychic shark-infested waters. Markus accepts without a second thought, promptly removing his shirt to display the massive Legio IX tattoo on his chest.

The two of them board their jetskis, take a last shot of Space Jaegermeister for luck, and power out into the darkness. Markus’ race starts badly: he falls off the jetski right out of the gate. Everyone is expecting the race to be over, except that Jack wipes out and falls off a moment later. The two of them clamber back onto their jetskis as the Moore’s sharks circle in and launch psychic attacks at them.

Markus thunders to a tenuous lead, but then Everstar cuts beneath him in a turn and makes a clear lead straight to the finish line. Wroooooom!

Jack and Markus both stagger off their jetskis, woozy from the effects of the sharks’ psychic attacks. Dick Reid is there for them, injecting something into each of them that he claims, “Will keep you up all night, man! All night long!” Markus is just grateful that he didn’t die. He drags Linda the sound girl under the pier for some warlion style lovin’.

Ten-zil Kem asks some of the bystanders whose idea it was to do the race. He learns that it was Jack’s idea, and that he’s always pulling daredevil stunts like that.

When he walks back into the house, he finds Jack yelling into the phone at some restaurant employee, “I don’t care if you don’t deliver here, do you know who I am? I don’t have time to read your menu, just send me food for fifteen!”

An hour later, the head chef of a noted restaurant comes by with a “Predators of the Verge” dinner. The characters don’t spend too much time thinking about just how much this repast might have cost: every dish features the predators of a different world in the Verge.

Later in the evening, Ten-zil Kem decides that he should really try and arrange some kind of a three-way. Jack doesn’t seem interested in participating, so Kem settles for a couple of highly inebriated women with only a trace of disappointment.

The Next Morning

Most of the characters feel very fragile the next morning. Lambert Fulson in particular is in dire straits, apparently because he got roofied by one of the women he’d been chatting up. Ten-zil Kem spends the entire flight back whining about his head and trying to program the proper drug cocktail into his coffee. The sound girl he brought along is unconscious and drooling in the corner of the car.

What’s Eating Joseph Friddle?

The characters decide to try talking to the alleged “prime suspect,” Joseph Friddle. Ambassador Ten-zil Kem and Markus Oroszlan prevail upon the Thuldans authorities for access to Friddle in detention. They are successful in getting access: dead-faced guards lead them to a jail cell that confirms that the Thuldans do not believe in modern-style prisons.

Friddle is very glad to hear that the people at the movie production don’t believe he was responsible. He wishes that the characters would convince the Thuldans of that so they would let him go. He notes that all of the pyrotechnicians have access to the biometric locks, but he doesn’t think any of them would want to stage a damaging explosion on a set. Ten-zil Kem presents him with a list of all the pyrotechnician personnel and asks for opinions.

Friddle mentions in particular *Lewis Day*, one of the stuntmen. He was the stuntman involved in the safety-line break. Friddle thinks he’s a pretty nice guy, but

somewhat naïve. He clearly retains some hard feelings towards Hanna Zorel: one the one hand, she came back to him, desperate for his attention (and personal attributes) and then ditches him three months later claiming that he has no ambition. The characters try a couple of “crazy tests” on him, and he passes both of them.

Sara Caldwell's Story

Ten-zil Kem interviews ex-lead actress Sara Caldwell about her experience in the burning building and her departure from the film. She admits that she left the movie because so many things had gone wrong. She also explains that she got out of the burning building because one of the stuntmen got her out. To nobody's surprise, the stuntman was Lewis Day.

When she left *Chimes*, she wasn't too surprised that Ann Marie Valois got her part: Ann Marie had been advocating for a role in the film for weeks.

Ten-zil Kem thanks her, and suggests that she might be able to find some work by putting in an appearance on the *Lighthouse*.

The Mysterious Lewis Day

We decide to go talk to Lewis Day about his role in the on-set accidents. We find him in one of the temporary Quonset huts used for equipment storage. “Hey, guys! What's up?”

Ten-zil Kem leads the conversation, “We've got a few questions. You have some time?”

“Sure, not a problem.”

“When you do aerial work, do you always wear a grav vest? And check your own ropes?”

“I'm a bit sensitive about heights, so often. And checking your own gear is Stuntman 101! I don't know how that rope got so frayed.”

“Were you working with any other stuntmen on that trick?”

“Yeah, I was working with Robin McCue.”

“And we've heard that you saved Sara Caldwell from the burning building. How about that?”

“Say, are you some kind of undercover reporter? I mean, all I really did was open a door.”

Ten-zil Kem reassures him, “Oh no, I just love movies and I really like hearing these stories. And Lambert Fulson here, he likes hearing about these stories so he can fantasize about how to invest his money.”

Lambert Fulson tries to help out, “Oh yeah. I’m always thinking about the business angles. I’m thinking novelization here!”

Lewis Day is skeptical, “Aren’t you the guy who runs the food truck?”

The subject of the conversation turns towards Anne Marie Valois, for whom Lewis Day has only the highest of opinions. After a while, he indicates that he needs to go. He opens the door and exclaims in surprise. There are a half-dozen of the native pterodactyl-vultures outside. Markus Oroszlan pulls him back inside by the collar and closes the door.

Ten-zil Kem peers out the window. The pterodactyl-vultures are lurking around outside the trailer, apparently unwilling to leave. The characters inspect Lewis Day to see if he is carrying anything unusual that might be drawing the creatures to him. In particular, if he is carrying anything that Ann Marie Valois might have given him. They come up with nothing.

Markus Oroszlan sniffs, and determines with his heightened senses that someone sprayed the porch of the trailer with musk. Meanwhile, Lewis Day goes for the pyrotechnics locker. Markus’ plan is to set up some small explosives, rub them in musk, then toss them to the pterodactyl-vultures with a time-delay fuse. His plan is to upset the creatures enough to make them run off.

Brrrr

Lambert Fulson gets the job of patsy. The characters send word to Anne Marie’s trailer to tell her about the terrible pterodactyl-vulture attack. She seems quite concerned about the news, especially when she learns that he’s in very bad shape, but likely to survive, and may become conscious and start talking at any moment. Markus, Ten-zil, and Shirley work up Lambert to look like he’s been torn up by pterodactyl-vultures and put him in an infirmary bed with an IV hooked to him.

Anne Marie sneaks in to view Lambert Fulson, thinking that he is Lewis Day. She mourns, “If only you were braver.” She puts a pistol to his head.

At this point the other characters act. Markus Oroszlan emerges, “It’s all over, Valois!”

“Who are you guys?”

“CIB.”

“You don’t know what’s going on here!”

“Then why don’t you tell us?”

She explains that she is being blackmailed by Jack Everstar. Apparently he is a very, very bad man. He drugged her and her (then-underage) sister, made them do terrible things, and took pictures. This happened years ago, during the filming of *Children of Mars*. He had threatened to cut the photos into the final version of the movie. She destroyed the equipment truck to prevent that, but he had another copy.

She claims that she has also sent blackmail money to him. Ten-zil Kem, anticipating that this may all end up in a gunfight at Jack’s place, wants some hard evidence that her story is valid first.

Given suitable proof, the plan is to hold another degenerate party with Jack and then goad him into showing the video of Anne Marie Valois and her sister. But in the meantime, the characters flexcuff Anne Marie and sedate her courtesy of Ten-zil Kem and VoidCorp Pharma.

Wrap Party

It doesn’t take long to establish that Anne Marie really is turning large amounts of cash over to Jack. The party machine goes into gear: Ten-zil Kem starts telling Dick Reid and David Hudson about how great the last party was, and how they need to do something like that again, while Markus Oroszlan drops word to Jack on the idea of having a jetski rematch, and the characters get in touch with Bluefall Intelligence/CIB/other superspy *Angela Quinn* to see if she would be willing to infiltrate as an “entertainer” to provide some actual legal muscle.

This works perfectly – Jack and his entourage are apparently always willing to drink and act badly. Within 48 hours, everyone is back at Jack’s mansion trading

inappropriate stories about their past social lives. The topic goes to Anne Marie Valois, who apparently had a long-standing relationship with Jack back when they were younger (to Jack's claim). He claims that she was pretty freaky once upon a time.

The next shark race involves a dual ride – each racer must carry a barely clothed and frisky woman as a passenger. Losing her means losing the race. The second race is just as fast as the first – Jack wins again. Markus gives him his Glassmaker sword and asks him to kiss and tell about Anne Marie.

It takes some time, but Jack eventually gets around to boasting about filming Anne Marie and her sister. Markus takes the lead in trying to get Jack to produce some proof, with Lambert and Ten-zil Kem backing him up. It takes a few hours and quite a bit of liquor, but eventually Jack brings out a memory crystal and brings everyone to sit around his 2-meter TV screen. The film is every bit as tawdry as advertised: underage girls cavorting with Jack and each other. Angela Quinn produces a badge from somewhere (we aren't sure where) and takes him down. Dick and David are also arrested and carted along for interrogation.

And That's A Wrap!

After Angela Quinn leaves with Jack and his entourage, the characters continue the party. We trash the mansion deliberately as the party reaches a scarily epic level. We decide we shouldn't go after Anne Marie – even though she put some dangerous plans into action, no one got hurt, and everyone knows you have to give beautiful women a mulligan on a certain amount of psychotic activity. Ten-zil Kem considers how best to break this news to her.

Everyone gets 6 XP.