



RISK GAMING

05

No Man's Land

DANNY CRICHTON

No Man's Land

**The AI Singularity and the Future of
American National Security**

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PUBLISHED BY
Lux Capital

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Introduction

About Lux Capital

Lux Capital is a New York- and Silicon Valley-based venture capital firm investing in companies on the edge of scientific and technological breakthroughs. Over the past two decades, Lux has expanded from our New York City roots to Silicon Valley, and built a firm with over \$5 billion AUM and more than 30 full-time professionals, with a wide spectrum of technical backgrounds and the versatility to invest at any stage, from \$100,000 to \$100 million.

About Riskgaming

Riskgaming is a strategic simulation game that immerses players in complex scenarios reflecting real-world challenges and dynamics.

CHARACTER-DRIVEN STRATEGY

Players take on the role of richly-detailed characters who can strategically build or break trust with each other throughout the game.

EMERGENT BEHAVIOR

Players make strategic decisions influenced by personal and external incentives, allowing for spontaneity and surprise.

AUTONOMOUS DECISION-MAKING

All players select their actions independently of each other during a scenario, reflecting the autonomy of real-world decision-makers.

PROFOUND EXPERIENCES

Each scenario faithfully models the real world, allowing players to experience an alternative reality that informs our own.

About the Creator

Danny Crichton analyzes science, technology, finance and the human condition as Partner, Research at Lux Capital, a venture capital firm investing in emerging and growth-stage science and technology ventures.

Most recently, he was managing editor at TechCrunch as well as previously a foreign correspondent based in Seoul, South Korea. While there, he wrote more than 1,000 news stories and longform analyses chronicling U.S.-Asia technology relations, semiconductors, data infrastructure, fintech, disaster and climate tech, venture finance, product development, and many other complex subjects with technical and policy intersections.

In addition to his reporting and analysis at TechCrunch, he co-hosted its leading podcast Equity; co-programmed stages at its flagship Disrupt SF and Berlin conferences as well as its Sessions and Early Stage events; launched the premium news service Extra Crunch and grew it to seven figures of revenue; co-managed a multi-million dollar freelance budget; developed the TC-1 series of deep startup profiles and The TechCrunch List; and contributed broadly to the organization's news, operational, and talent development strategy.

Today, he is also a Fellow at the Manhattan Institute, and has published research on AI and urban economics; overseas venture capital; as well as technology and economic development with City Journal, the Foreign Policy Research Institute and the National Review. Formerly, he was an early-stage venture capitalist with General Catalyst in Palo Alto and Charles River Ventures in Boston and New York.

After graduating Stanford with honors in Mathematical and Computational Sciences, he was awarded a Fulbright research scholarship to South Korea, where he investigated the country's modern industrial policy for startup innovation.

Danny is based in Brooklyn, New York.

Acknowledgements

This Riskgaming scenario was born out of a serendipitous conversation with Beth Kroman, a senior advisor to Mike Bloomberg, who at the time was the chair of the Pentagon's Defense Innovation Board. She and Mike wanted to convene a unique group of distinguished flag officers, elected representatives, tech executives and policymakers to consider the strategic implications and future challenges for bringing next-generation AI technologies into the armed services. This scenario was designed with that group in mind, which formally convened in February 2024. I thank Mike and Beth for their warm embrace of this scenario. I also want to highlight Audrey Kotick's industrious efforts to bring a very busy and globe-trotting group into one room, which made this game possible.

The production of the game would not have been possible without the thoughtful and eye-catching work of Mande Johnson, who brought together a Los Angeles-based crew of creatives to design in-game newspapers, briefing materials and presentation templates that made the live play experience nonpareil. I also want to thank the comedian Jared Logan, who took on the ridiculous role of President Branner and fully embodied Banner's desire to shrink government employment to zero with AI technologies. Little did any of us know that Elon Musk and DOGE would arrive a year later with that very same aim in mind, but hey, sometimes fiction becomes fact in Riskgaming.

The design of the game and its venture capital economy were informed by innumerable conversations with the Lux Capital team and startup founders in the industry. I want to thank them for their ideas, data and wisdom, which brought important realism to the experience.

Credits

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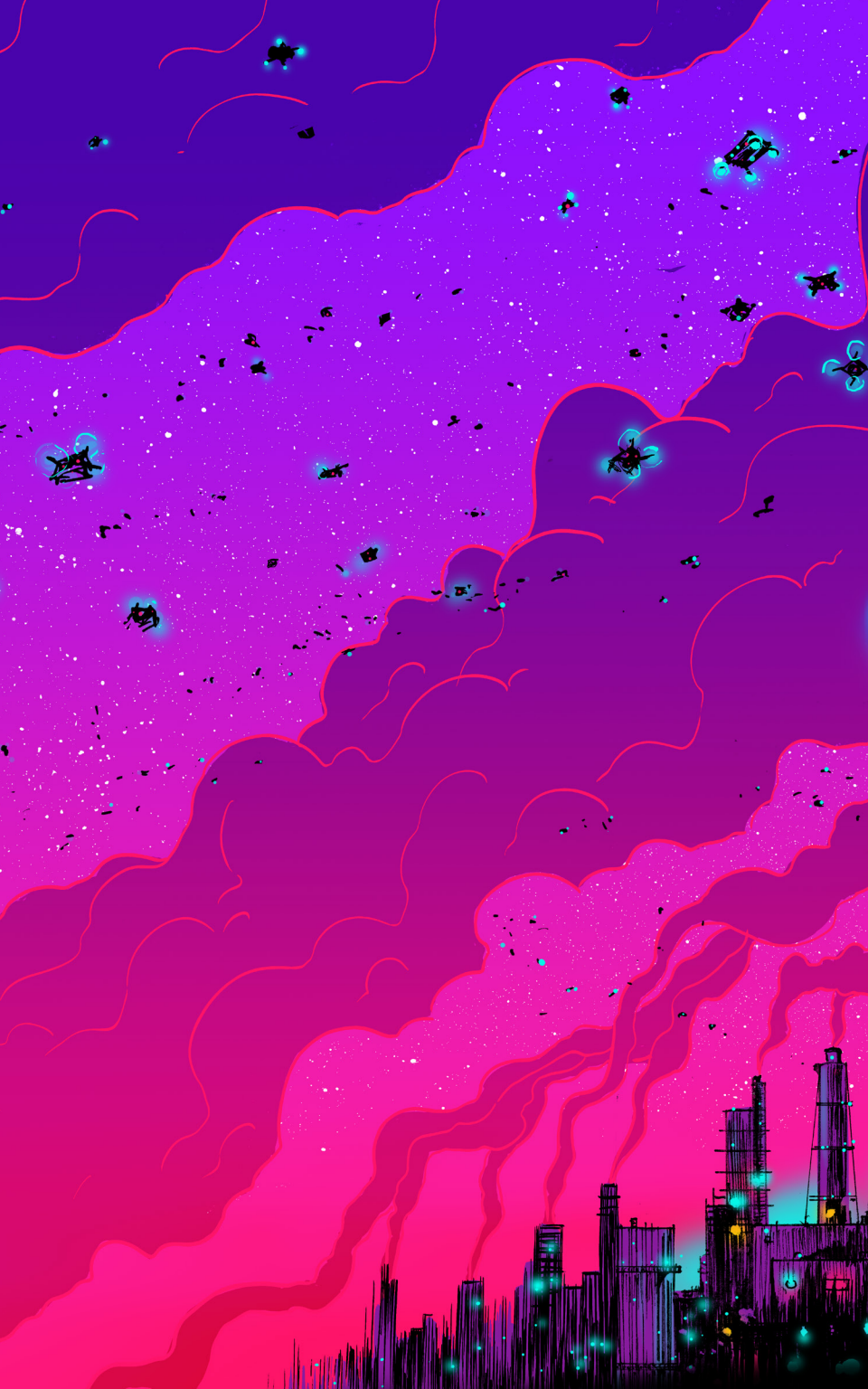


HOW TO DOWNLOAD THE GAME

All materials for the game, including the spreadsheet that drives it, design notes and player handouts, are available on the Lux Capital website.

To download the game materials, please head to luxcapital.com/riskgaming or use this QR code.





Background and Context

Wracked by economic malaise and global insecurity, American voters in a near future are increasingly embittered and long for an escape.

Sensing an opportunity for a stunt, a jovial long-time television comedian named Chuck Branner decides to run for president, promising to fire all government employees and replace them with artificial intelligence. The tagline for his "Singularity Pledge": "The last job in government will be the president — and I will fire myself!"

Buoyed by voter excitement about the potential for AI and their deep trepidation of his opponents, Branner takes an early lead in the polls — one that is downplayed by journalists and political analysts. In a political earthquake, he emerges victorious through a plurality of voters in enough states to secure him the Electoral College. The one-time jokester now has a very serious task: executing his pledge to fire all federal workers within four years while breathing life back into the United States's anemic economy and strengthening its national security in a rapidly changing world order.

Branner ran individually, without a party infrastructure. He has no allies in the U.S. Congress, which remains vociferously opposed to cutbacks to federal employment during a time of economic recession.

There is one area of economic optimism though: the AI innovation ecosystem. While founders have launched hundreds of startups to seize on recent technological breakthroughs, five companies have started to gain attention as critical players across the commercial and defense sectors.

Meanwhile, serious security concerns lurk all around the world, both from emerging groups as well as long-time, great-power competitors. New technologies and new ideologies are burbling and fusing, threatening the long-term strength of the United States and its allies. Even as the government attempts to shed its human workforce, the president must try to protect the country — or reap the disappointment of voters. Will Branner be the last man standing? Or will voters fire him before he can fire himself?

SCENARIO OBJECTIVE

With the rise of an assertive China in the Pacific, a revanchist Russia in the Atlantic and an AI revolution in Cyberspace, America's future security and economic prosperity is at greater risk than at any time since the fall of the Soviet Union. Exacerbating the uncertainty is a persistent divide between Silicon Valley's leading technologists and Washington's military and policy leaders. The two coasts profoundly diverge on language, mission, culture and dreams. America's technology is world leading, as is its defense. Yet far too often, the two prove subtractive — rather than multiplicative — of each other's strengths.

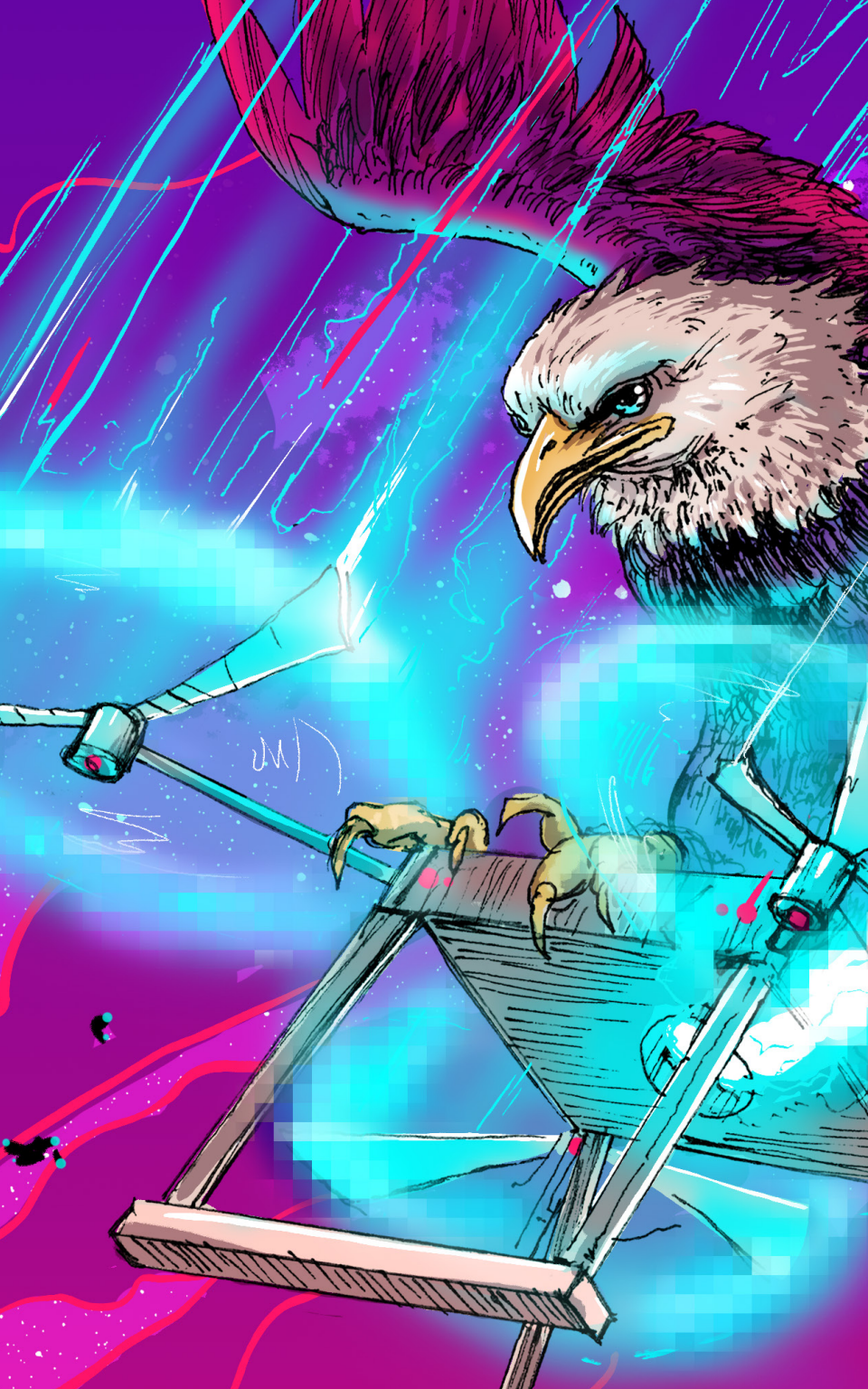
Riskgaming bridges that divide by helping each player understand the motivations, incentives and challenges facing very different professionals as they all seek the same broad goal. It breaks down the cultural silos that separate technology progress from policy, while directly confronting the tradeoffs inherent in the key decisions surrounding the world's most pressing challenges. A chaotic and uncertain world deserves nuanced and realistic decision-making — skills that every one of our games hones.

Riskgaming's *No Man's Land* places eight players into leadership roles at American AI companies, politics, and the defense sector. It simulates how exponential improvement in AI will radically change the ways in which America procures the key national security

capabilities required by warfighters. In the process, it forces all players to balance challenging tradeoffs, including:

- Research safety versus technology capability improvement
- Emerging threats versus great power competition
- Open source versus proprietary technologies
- Security versus economic growth
- Competition versus cooperation
- Productivity versus employment
- Long-term investment versus short-term business goals

Within a compact timeframe, all players will develop an intellectual framework of the tradeoffs required around AI as America seeks to secure its military and economic dominance in the twenty-first century.



Character Descriptions

CEO of Awesome.Ai (Company A): Lucas or Layla Mayfield

Starting Advantage: Strong Marketing Capability

CEO Mayfield founded Awesome.Ai in high school while playing Fortnite with a group of international nerds. Mayfield always enjoyed the social aspects of Fortnite more than the actual gameplay; dominating chats with witty repartee and viral memes proved intoxicating. Eventually, Mayfield discovered the use of large-language models (LLMs), which could rapidly generate responses and more personally respond to inside jokes.

After significant tinkering, Mayfield developed the code that would eventually form the basis of Awesome.Ai, which they founded to provide a more culturally-engaged form of AI that would understand humor, context and meme fluency. Early betas of the product went viral within the Fortnite community and eventually, across all of Gen Z through TikTok. The company's sudden popularity has drawn in a huge community of young developer hackers who want to play with the buzzy technology du jour.

Mayfield sees themselves as the next social entrepreneur in the Zuckerberg fashion. On one of the rare days they went to high school, though, they ran into a military recruiter. That got them thinking about the potential for Awesome.Ai in the defense context. Maybe a meme or two would be useful for Branner's Singularity Pledge?

CEO of BoldPrecision (Company B): Alexander or Alexandra Williamson

Starting Advantage: Good Commercial AI Technology

CEO Williamson first got into entrepreneurship more than a decade as the founder of Tesseract, an enterprise database company that offered a low-latency database service for complex, real-time logistics applications. The company's founding coincided with the rapid rise of ecommerce, and it became critical infrastructure for most ecommerce giants, eventually selling to Oracle in a blockbuster deal that made Williamson wealthy many times over.

Williamson's connections in Silicon Valley alerted them to the rapid progress in AI over the last few years. They began to connect their experience at Tesseract with the new paradigms emerging from the field, seeing an opportunity to take advantage of their extensive sales contacts to found a new startup and build a category leader in enterprise software.

Williamson timed the market early, and has a first-mover advantage. The downside is that AI has developed rapidly, and BoldPrecision has been called "too early" by some industry analysts. Williamson isn't used to failure, nor to being one-upped by ambitious teenagers. This is their world — and it's time everyone comes to terms with that.

CEO of Caliber (Company C): Michael or Michelle Davenport

Starting Advantage: Strong Product Development Capability

CEO Davenport is a wunderkind of the academic computer science world, having discovered fundamental data structures for ‘crystallizing’ vector databases — a breakthrough that had long been sought by researchers. The work has been dubbed “Turing Prize-ready” by critics, alluding to the field’s most esteemed honor. After Davenport turned 27, the question was what to do next.

Davenport was light years ahead of others on the development and evolution around AI, and when the venture capital dollars started arriving, they were prepared to leap from a tenured sinecure at a prestigious university into building the most ambitious AI company the world has ever seen.

Taking advantage of a dense and close network of former PhD advisees and colleagues, Davenport has built Caliber into a defining force in the AI space, known for its extraordinarily rigorous technical interviews and exceptional aggregation of engineering talent. It’s one thing to have the best talent — and quite another to build a profitable company in one of the world’s most competitive spaces.

CEO of DarkLark (Company D): Samuel or Samantha Hester

Starting Advantage: Strong Government Defense Capability

CEO Hester grew up around the world, following their parents from embassy to embassy as the whims of the U.S. Foreign Service dictated. Multilingual and passionate about America's global outreach, they attended Middlebury College with a major in Comparative Literature in preparation for continuing the family's diplomatic legacy. In their sophomore year however, Hester's parents were both killed in a terrorist bombing of their international residential compound.

Their sudden deaths led to a reorientation of Hester's career toward U.S. defense, eventually bringing them to the National Security Agency and the National Counterterrorism Center, where they worked on real-time threat assessments and defense operational support. Passionate about the mission but struggling with the technology gap between Fort Meade and Silicon Valley, they left for the West Coast to find new solutions to long-standing defense challenges that had been unaddressed by legacy government contractors.

Hester would audit Steven Blank's Hacking for Defense course at Stanford, eventually finding a group of co-founders to start DarkLark, a defense-first company focused on the government's most daunting operational challenges. Hester has some of the best government sales experience, but AI development is expensive — and the money's in the private sector.

CEO of EagerSource (Company E): Daniel or Danielle Gordon

Starting Advantage: Strong Open-Source Development Capability

CEO Gordon grew up in their mother's at-home electronics lab, playing with soldering irons, an oscilloscope, a function generator and a whole bunch of wires and batteries that no child under the age of 10 should probably have had access to. They hot-wired their Nintendo 64 console to optimize their saved games in *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* and regularly disassembled and (sometimes successfully) reassembled the family's electronics.

That hacking mentality was equally applied to the digital world, where Gordon regularly cheated in online video games and probed websites for faults. A "white hat," they once discovered a flaw in a major banking website and wrote an email to the company's information security team. Later that day, federal investigators arrived to interview Gordon as well as their parents, eventually pressing charges under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act that were dismissed in court.

The experience radicalized Gordon, who has since become one of the world's top advocates for open-source and free software, passionately arguing that the increasing commercialization and privatization of software code has slowed human flourishing. Worried about the same pattern slowing the AI industry, Gordon founded EagerSource as a way to fund and strengthen open-source software.

Congressional Liaison Cameron Miller

Congressional Liaison Miller grew up in Davenport, Iowa and became enthralled with American politics during the quadrennial circus known as “the presidential election.” A member of their high school’s Quiz Bowl team, Miller would become known for nailing every question related to American politics and history, winning the state championship in their senior year. That was also the year they first voted in a frozen Iowa caucus — an experience that would reinforce their passion for politics.

Now a giant on Capitol Hill, Miller is known for their long and eidetic memory, which contains the minutia of Congressional budget discussions and the interests of all 535 representatives and senators. While formally an advisor to a senior congressional leader, Miller now slashes their own path through Capitol Hill. That’s one reason they have become known as “The Machete” — the person who cuts through the impasses typical of DC legislative gridlock to protect the interests of their own boss and the institution as a whole against executive overreach.

With the election of President Branner, Miller suddenly has an unprecedented external foe to use to galvanize Congress to work together as never before. Branner’s firing of the federal workforce would affect every single congressional district, risking the political future for any legislator who votes for his budget. Miller sees an opportunity for finally restoring Congress to its rightful place as the people’s assembly, but can “The Machete” slash through virtual AI bots that can’t be seen?

Budget Director Emery or Emily Abrams

Abrams was weaned on the power of artificial intelligence while reading Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series as an elementary school student. Adrift and bored of the rote lessons taught in middle and high schools, they regularly dipped into science fiction worlds, reading works like *All Systems Red* by Martha Wells, *Neuromancer* by William Gibson and *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson.

Sci-fi reading doesn't really translate into a career (except maybe in science fiction), and so their parents helped them find a part-time job at a regional machine parts company. The company's owner happened to be a long-time acquaintance of now-President Branner, and when Branner was asking for campaign staff in the heady early days, Abrams was sent to the bootstrapping campaign team as an interim financial controller.

The first check that Abrams approved at the Branner campaign bounced — its accounts only had \$247, not enough to clear. Fast forward a few months though, and Abrams manages a much bigger budget: the U.S. Federal Budget, the largest in the world at \$6.1 trillion. Abrams is deeply loyal to the goals of the "Singularity Pledge" and wants to help Branner secure his vision of a human-free government. That means negotiating with a deeply recalcitrant Congress and fighting off every human who assumes humans are better than today's machines. It's time to be a machine themselves — one that can overcome the resistance and bring Branner's vision to fruition.

Defense Official Owen or Olive Blackburn

Defense Official Blackburn grew up in Santa Fe, New Mexico, the product of a theoretical physicist mother working at Los Alamos National Laboratory and a gallerist father who helped pioneer the city's global art reputation. Blackburn, fascinated more by the atom than paint strokes, ultimately attended Yale University and participated in the university's Grand Strategy Program. From there it was RAND, the Office of Net Assessment and a lifetime in the defense business.

For Blackburn, part of working in defense is that you never know what the hell is going to come your way. Sometimes it's the threat of nuclear catastrophe, or a global pandemic that strips humanity to its most atavistic kernel. Then, there is the self-serving and ever-cycling species known as "politicians," members of which have their own bizarre agendas completely alien to the basic idea of "domestic tranquility" (which, as far as Blackburn is concerned, only exists in a gin and tonic).

With the election of President Branner, Blackburn, a distinguished but inconspicuous defense official, has been dispatched by the Pentagon to the White House. Blackburn vowed to reasonably consider the administration's proposals and fairly adjudicate its requests within the reality of the security context. That vow lasted about five minutes, until just after the president asked, "So, when do you think you are going to fire yourself for an AI bot?" Now, caught up in the AI craze, Blackburn realizes they need to balance the president's popularity with the need to protect America from its threats — which are much more real than the phantom ideas that exist in the head of this president.

Company Summaries

Awesome.Ai (Company A)

Hot, consumer-focused AI company that has caused a frenzy among Gen Z and has unbeatable marketing.

BoldPrecision (Company B)

Enterprise software AI company whose early entrance into the AI market has given them a crucial lead, but whose long-term prognosis depends mightily on protecting that lead from more nimble competitors.

Caliber (Company C)

Company that has aggregated extremely excellent technical talent with strong product development chops, but which is behind its competitors given a late start.

DarkLark (Company D)

A government-first company with an excellent product suite for defense use cases and great federal sales to boot, but struggles in the commercial market.

EagerSource (Company E)

A mission-oriented company bent on making open-source technologies widely successful, even as it might struggle with any fixed contract.



Game Overview

No Man's Land models the AI technology economy and its opportunities for growth in the commercial and public sectors.

The AI companies compete to build proprietary technology in different AI capabilities, or alternatively, fund open-source libraries that undermine the value of their competitors' technologies. These different AI capabilities offer different values to the commercial and defense sectors. For the commercial sector, the value is described by the **Gardener Research** card, which lists the projected total revenue for each AI capability by year.

For the defense sector, the value of contracts is determined within the gameplay by the Congressional Liaison, the Budget Director and the Defense Official. Over the course of each scene, the three negotiate the annual National Defense Authorization Act, setting the government's budget, and thus, its procurement priorities. They can assign their target budgets for each AI capability, and the minimum between the trio will be passed into law and become available as contracts to the AI companies. The ideal outcome is for all three to come to a consensus and choose identical numbers, maximizing Budget Utilization.

At the end of each scene, **commercial contracts will be apportioned to the AI companies based on their relative AI capabilities**, while **government contracts will be offered to the two best companies per AI capability** — the top company will receive 2/3 of the government contract and the second-place company will receive 1/3 of the government contract. This models the government's desire to diversify its procurement and avoid sole-source suppliers.

The quality of the AI capabilities purchased by the government directly affects the size of the government's workforce as well as the nation's security from emerging threats and pacing competitors.

SETUP

Each player will be assigned **one of the eight available roles** for the duration of the game. The game will proceed over **four scenes**, each of which represents one year of President Chuck Branner's first term. At the start of each scene, the Game Leader will deliver a story update and hand out the most up-to-date Capabilities Chart. **Players will have about 15 minutes to debate their decisions** with each other.

At the end of each scene, all players will *privately* fill out their decision sheets and hand them to the Game Leader. **All decisions — both public and private — are made simultaneously.** Once the decisions are tabulated, the Game Leader will present players with updated **Key Metrics**. Key Metrics will change as players make decisions, and they will fully determine the outcome of the game. In addition, the Game Leader will announce the outcome of the scene's three Emerging Threat Attacks, which depends on the government's access to AI capabilities.

At the end of the game, each player will be **scored out of 10 points** based on their success in reaching their character's personal objectives. The player with the most points wins, and in the event of a tie, the victory is shared.

Character Priority

All games must include the Congressional Liaison, the Budget Director and the Defense Official. In addition, at least two to three AI company CEOs should play, and the Game Leader may choose which to include. The game is best with a full complement of eight players.

AI CAPABILITIES

A core component of *No Man’s Land* is the technical excellence of the five companies and government budgets applied to **eight areas of artificial intelligence**. These areas are listed below with notes on their general usefulness between commercial and defense applications as well as their potential influence on the federal workforce:

No.	Capability	Industry/Govt. Skew	Govt. Employment
C1	Generative AI	Heavily Commercial	Slight Loss
C2	Traceability/Attribution/Analytics	Heavily Defense	Major Gain
C3	Workflow/Logistics/Supply Chain	Mostly Commercial	Major Loss
C4	All-Domain Autonomous Defense	Heavily Defense	Major Gain
C5	Virtual Assistants/AI Bots	Mostly Commercial	Huge Loss
C6	Biological Models	Mostly Commercial	Some Gain
C7	Foreign Language Processing	Mostly Defense	Minor Loss
C8	Advanced Cybersecurity	Strongly Both	Major Gain

In the real world, there is an ongoing debate between general and specialized LLMs for different applications. This scenario makes no comment on that debate (nor does it simulate it), but instead focuses on the outcomes of AI rather than the specific models and architectures that underlie it.

Capabilities Chart

Throughout the game, the Game Leader will print updated copies of the **Capabilities Chart**. This chart shows the current technology being offered by every company on all eight AI capabilities. In addition, the current value of the open-source offering is also indicated. At the bottom of the Capabilities Chart, the commercial and government revenues for each company will be shown for the current and previous scenes.

PUBLIC KEY METRICS

Each player has one public Key Metric in the game that will be regularly updated by the Game Leader at the close of every scene (the exception is the Defense Official, who has two Key Metrics). The metrics are:

- **Awesome.Ai Revenues (Company A CEO):** The revenue of Awesome.Ai.
- **BoldPrecision Revenues (Company B CEO):** The revenue of BoldPrecision.
- **Caliber Revenues (Company C CEO):** The revenue of Caliber.
- **DarkLark Revenues (Company D CEO):** The revenue of DarkLark.
- **EagerSource Revenues (Company E CEO):** The revenue of EagerSource.
- **Congressional Poll (Congressional Liaison):** The Congress's general support among the electorate. Can be between 0 and 100%. Higher with more Government Employees, better Emerging Threat and Pacing Competitor Security, and higher Budget Utilization.
- **Presidential Poll (Budget Director):** The President's general support among the electorate. Can be between 0 and 100%. Higher with less Government Employees as well as better Emerging Threat and Pacing Competitor Security.

- **Emerging Threat Security (Defense Official):** An aggregation of AI defenses toward a range of emerging threats. Represents the probability of an emerging threat being successfully defended. Can be between 0 and 100.
- **Pacing Competitor Security (Defense Official):** An aggregation of AI and legacy defenses toward great power threats. As a relative score, it can be between -100 (extremely weak against other great powers) and +100 (extremely strong against other great powers).

In addition to character-specific Key Metrics, the Game Leader will also provide updated scores for additional metrics at the end of every scene. These are:

- **Successful Emerging Attacks:** Three emerging attacks will take place in each scene. Based on the current technological and defense capabilities of the government, the Game Leader will announce how many of the three attacks were successful.
- **Government Employees:** The government's workforce starts at 1,000,000 and changes based on the federal procurement of different AI technologies.
- **Budget Utilization:** This is the percentage of the government's available budget that is allocated to AI contracts by the consensus of the Congressional Liaison, Budget Director and Defense Official. Anything less than 100% is considered lost to waste.

SCENE DECISIONS

Each of the four scenes of *No Man's Land* represents one year of President Chuck Branner's presidential tenure, which together encompass his first term. In each scene, players will be faced with recurring decisions to win the game.

AI Company CEOs

First, each CEO must select a **Safety Policy** from 0 (Full-Throttled Growth, Safety be Damned) to 4 (Completely Safe). Companies with a higher Safety Policy are more likely to secure government contracts based on the rule set by the Budget Director. However, a higher Safety Policy results in slower product growth. A lower Safety Policy will also leak some technology to emerging and great power threats.

Second, each CEO must select a venture capital **Term Sheet** from a regional group of investors. The Term Sheet selected determines the financial resources available to that company for the scene, and represents a round of venture capital investment. The investors range from purely domestic VCs, to a mix of local and American allies, to more politically complicated options. The greater the range of investors, the more capital that the company will secure. The Congressional Liaison and the Budget Director can investigate Term Sheets for malfeasance, potentially harming a company's Marketing in the commercial sector.

Third and finally, each CEO must allocate their chosen Term Sheet resources to a mix of Marketing, Product Development and individual AI Capabilities:

- **Marketing** leads to an immediate boost in competitive commercial sales in a scene, but doesn't carry over from scene to scene. Marketing does not affect government sales.
- **Product Development** is investment in a company's engineering. It's more expensive than Marketing, but the benefits carry over from scene to scene. Product Development improves both commercial and government sales, unlike Marketing.
- **AI Capabilities:** Companies can invest in each of the eight AI capabilities through their own proprietary research as well as open-source research. Open-source technology is available to

all companies and countries equally, while proprietary research only benefits the company itself.

Congressional Liaison

First, the Congressional Liaison can choose to **Investigate** the AI companies, which subpoenas any company that received investment from sources that are more risky than the chosen risk level. Any company caught in the investigation will lose Marketing power for the scene, limiting their influence in the commercial market.

Second, the Congressional Liaison must select **Budget Recommendations** for the federal defense budget on each of the eight AI capabilities. The amount of money available is \$100 million plus any value of Legacy Spend selected by the Defense Official. The Congressional Liaison's proposed values will be compared with those of the Budget Director and Defense Official to determine the final federal budget. The minimum value of the three numbers will be the final number approved, which means aligning the numbers between the three is crucial for maximizing America's defense and improving Budget Utilization.

Third and finally, the Congressional Liaison must select **Congressional Earmarks** that will fund open-source engineering for each of the eight AI capabilities. The Congressional Liaison must allocate \$50 million.

Budget Director

First, the Budget Director must select the executive branch's **Safety Policy**. The government will **only** offer government contracts to AI companies that match or exceed the executive branch's Safety Policy. If no company meets or exceeds the Safety Policy, then the government will contract no technology and that capability is entirely unavailable to the government.

Second, the Budget Director can elect to **Investigate** the AI companies under the auspices of the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS). The Budget Director selects a scope of regions for investigation, which will be inclusive of all more politically challenging regions. Thus, if the Budget Director selects “Key Allies,” that automatically includes the “Extended” and “China” regions. Any company receiving funds in their Term Sheet from that region will lose Marketing power for the scene, limiting their influence in the commercial market.

Third and just like the Congressional Liaison, the Budget Director must select **Budget Recommendations** for the federal defense budget on each of the eight AI capabilities. The amount of money available is \$100 million plus any value of Legacy Spend selected by the Defense Official. The Budget Director’s proposed values will be compared with those of the Congressional Liaison and Defense Official to determine the final federal budget. The minimum value of the three numbers will be the final number approved, which means aligning the numbers between the three is crucial for maximizing America’s defense and improving Budget Utilization.

Finally, the Budget Director must select **Executive Science Grants** via the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) that will fund open-source engineering for any selection of the eight AI capabilities. The Budget Director must allocate \$50 million.

Defense Official

First, the Defense Official can release **Legacy Spend** under special authority of Congress. This reduces spend on legacy defense technology and makes it available for use on AI as part of the scene’s budget negotiation. Unfortunately, any spending released weakens traditional measures of defense against competing great powers. The Defense Official can release from zero to \$1 billion of Legacy Spend.

Second, the Defense Official must select **Budget Recommendations** for the federal defense budget on each of the eight AI capabilities. The amount of money available is \$100 million plus Legacy Spend. The Defense Official's proposed values will be compared with those of the Congressional Liaison and Budget Director to determine the final federal budget. The minimum value of the three numbers will be the final number approved, which means aligning the numbers between the three is crucial for maximizing America's defense and improving Budget Utilization.

Finally, the Defense Official must spend **Discretionary Grants** on open-source technology for each of the eight AI capabilities. They have \$50 million to allocate.

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES AND END-GAME SCORING

AI Company CEOs

For the five AI Company CEOs, their goals are identical: they want to increase their revenues as much as possible while limiting the amount of venture capital they fundraise. There are two components to end-game scoring:

1. Companies will be ranked at the end of the game based on **highest revenue**. The company with the highest revenue will receive 5 points counting down to the last-place finisher, which will receive 1 point.
2. Companies will then be ranked on **capital efficiency**, which is the total revenue gained during the game divided by the total amount of money the company raised from their term sheets. Once again, companies will be ranked, with the most capital efficient company offered 5 points counting on down to the last-place company, which will receive 1 point.

Congressional Liaison

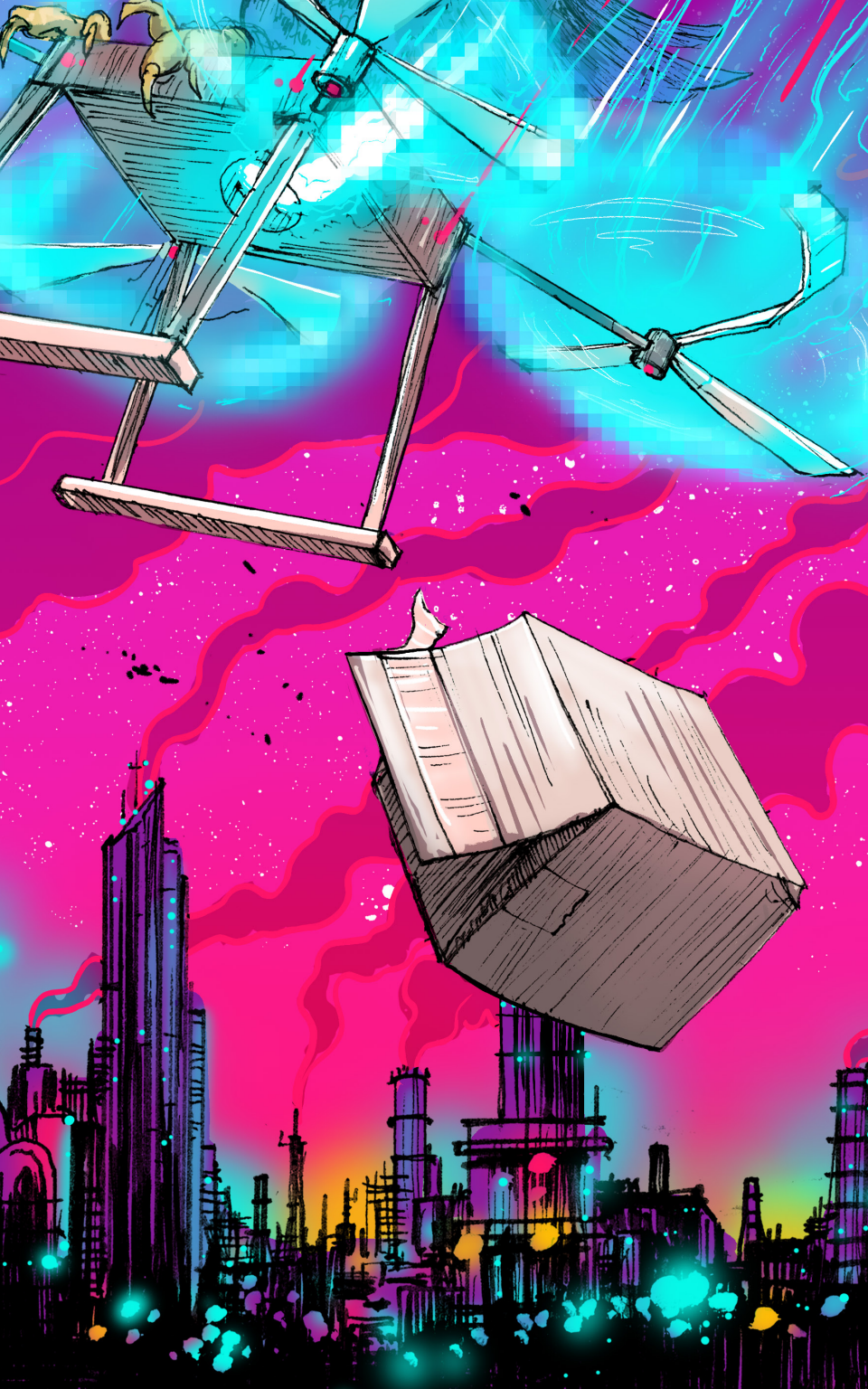
The Congressional Liaison wants to maximize the Congressional Poll. At the end of the game, they receive 0 points if the poll is 50% or less. Above 50%, they receive 1 point for every 5%. Thus, 55% is 1 point, 60% is 2 points, and onwards. The number of points rounds to the nearest value.

Budget Director

Parallel to the Congressional Liaison, the Budget Director wants to maximize the Presidential Poll. At the end of the game, they receive 0 points if the poll is 50% or less. Above 50%, they receive 1 point for every 5%, rounding to the closest threshold. Thus, 53% is 1 point, 62% is 2 points, and onwards.

Defense Official

The Defense Official's primary objective is the safety of the American homeland. They are rated based on the strength of the country toward both Emerging Threat and Pacing Competitor Security. At the end of the game, they receive 1 point (up to 5) for every 20 Emerging Threat Security and 1 point (up to 5) for every +20 Pacing Competitor Security. A negative Pacing Competitor Security will be considered 0 points. Similar to the Budget Director, the number of points awarded will round to the nearest threshold.



Scene Story Guides

Scene 1: The Presidential Honeymoon

Story

With President Branner's recent election, the AI industry is electrified by the potential of his "Singularity Pledge" to transform American government and radically limit the nation's federal workforce. Yet, the industry is nascent, and its capabilities are limited even as competition between companies is keen.

Emerging Attacks

- Attack 1: AI Disinformation Campaign Targets the U.S. Election and its Aftermath
- Attack 2: China Sends Drones to South China Sea
- Attack 3: North Korean Cyberhack Hits U.S. Bank through Sophisticated Catfishing

Scene 2: Before the Midterms

Story

Between Congressional budget negotiations and challenges integrating AI technology into government, President Branner's honeymoon period is increasingly looking short-lived. Branner attempts to shore up support with AI gimmicks while many U.S. voters are still willing to support the broad goals of the "Singularity Pledge."

Emerging Attacks

- Attack 4: Russian-Backed Hacking Group Disrupts Global GPS Systems
- Attack 5: Drug Cartels Employ Coordinated Drone Operations to Smuggle Narcotics Across U.S.-Mexican Border
- Attack 6: Teenagers Exploit AI Voice Synthesizers in Elaborate Fraud Scheme

Scene 3: Post-Midterms

Story

President Branner survives the midterms; after all, he wasn't on the ballot. Because his lack of a party doesn't provide voters with any specific target, there is a mix of outcomes across nationwide Congressional races. But the sophomore slump is real, and the volume of attacks against AI replacement of humans has reached a crescendo.

Emerging Attacks

- Attack 7: Chinese Cyberattack Knocks Out Power in North Dakota After U.S. Aircraft Carrier Move
- Attack 8: Russia Deploys Offensive Drones Across European Borders in Response to Ukraine War Settlement Proposal
- Attack 9: Iranian Cyberattack Targets U.S. Banks, Exfiltrating Sanctioned Funds through Blockchain

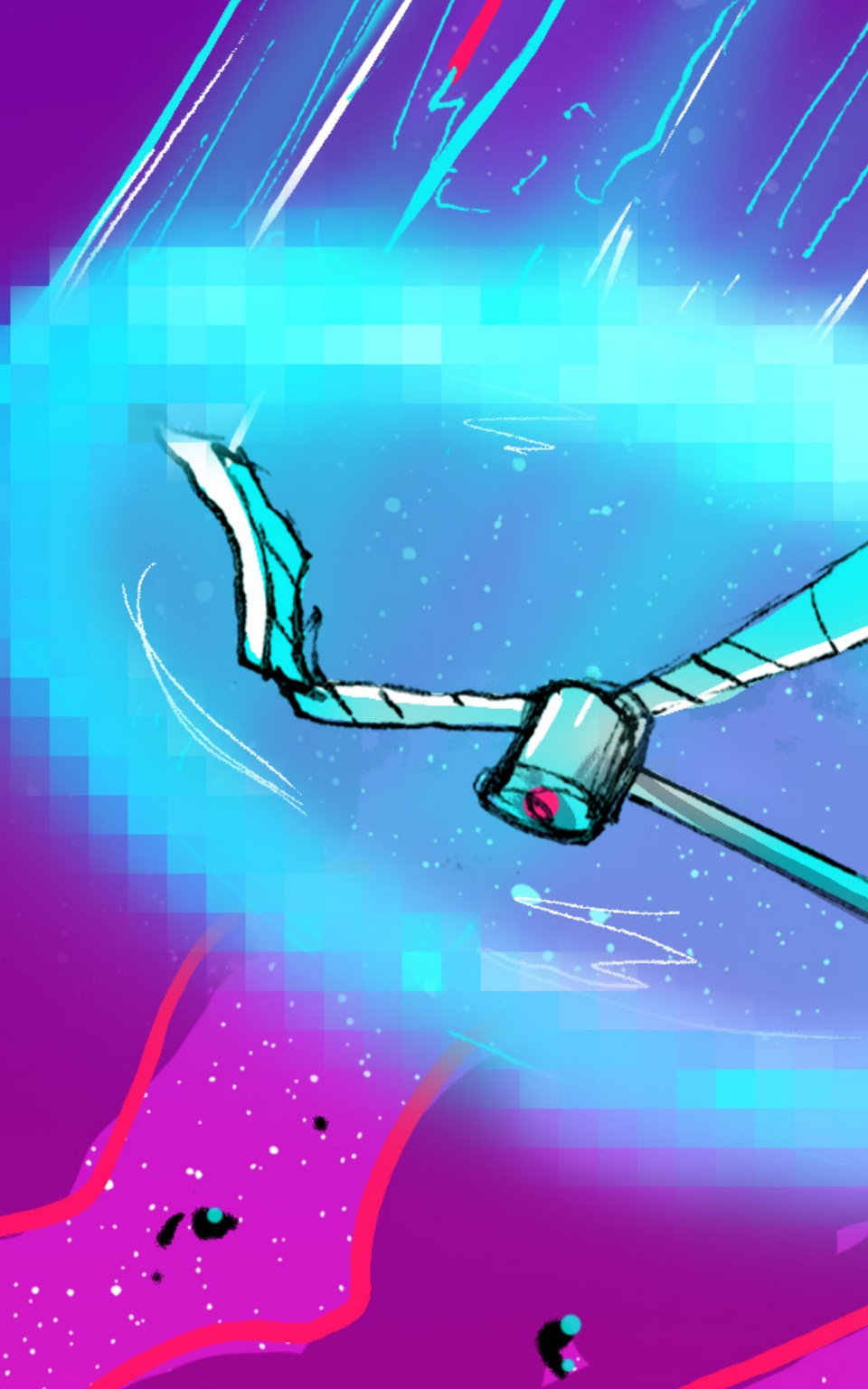
Scene 4: Presidential Re-Election Campaign

Story

As artificial intelligence continues to upend society and the American economy, domestic unrest is rising as groups of luddites and others look to fight back against the automated future. A series of domestic attacks shock the nation and the federal government. Meanwhile, President Branner — despite all advice to the contrary — begins his re-election campaign, continuing his fight for a human-free government.

Emerging Attacks

- Attack 10: Extremist Group Steals Identity, Diverts CDC Viral Samples; Samples Still Missing
- Attack 11: Anti-5G Group Uses Drones, Cyber Hacks to Disable Cell Antennas; Economic Damage Mounts
- Attack 12: Former Columnist "Louis the Luddite" Leads Attack on Data Centers, Disrupts AI Services



Game Leader Guide

No Man's Land is easy to host with the files available from the *Riskgaming* website. Start by printing out all of the materials and getting them ready. A printer during play is crucial in order to provide updated copies of the Capabilities Chart to all players at the end of each scene.

At the start of the game, each player should receive:

- The Scenario Introduction
- Their individual Character Sheet
- A copy of the Gardener Research chart
- The first scene's Capabilities Chart, and
- The Newspaper for Scene 1

The game and its rules can be introduced by the Game Leader if players are unfamiliar. Set up the first scene, and then each player should receive their Scene 1 Decision Sheet, which will make clear what choices they have to negotiate.

Allow players to negotiate for about 15 minutes or whatever feels right for the group. When time is up, all players should fill out their Decision Sheets privately and return them to the Game Leader. Then, the Game Leader should offer to each player the Security Brief for Scene 1, which lists the Emerging Threat Attacks that took place as well as the Newspaper for Scene 2. This allows players to debrief and also start to strategize for the next scene.

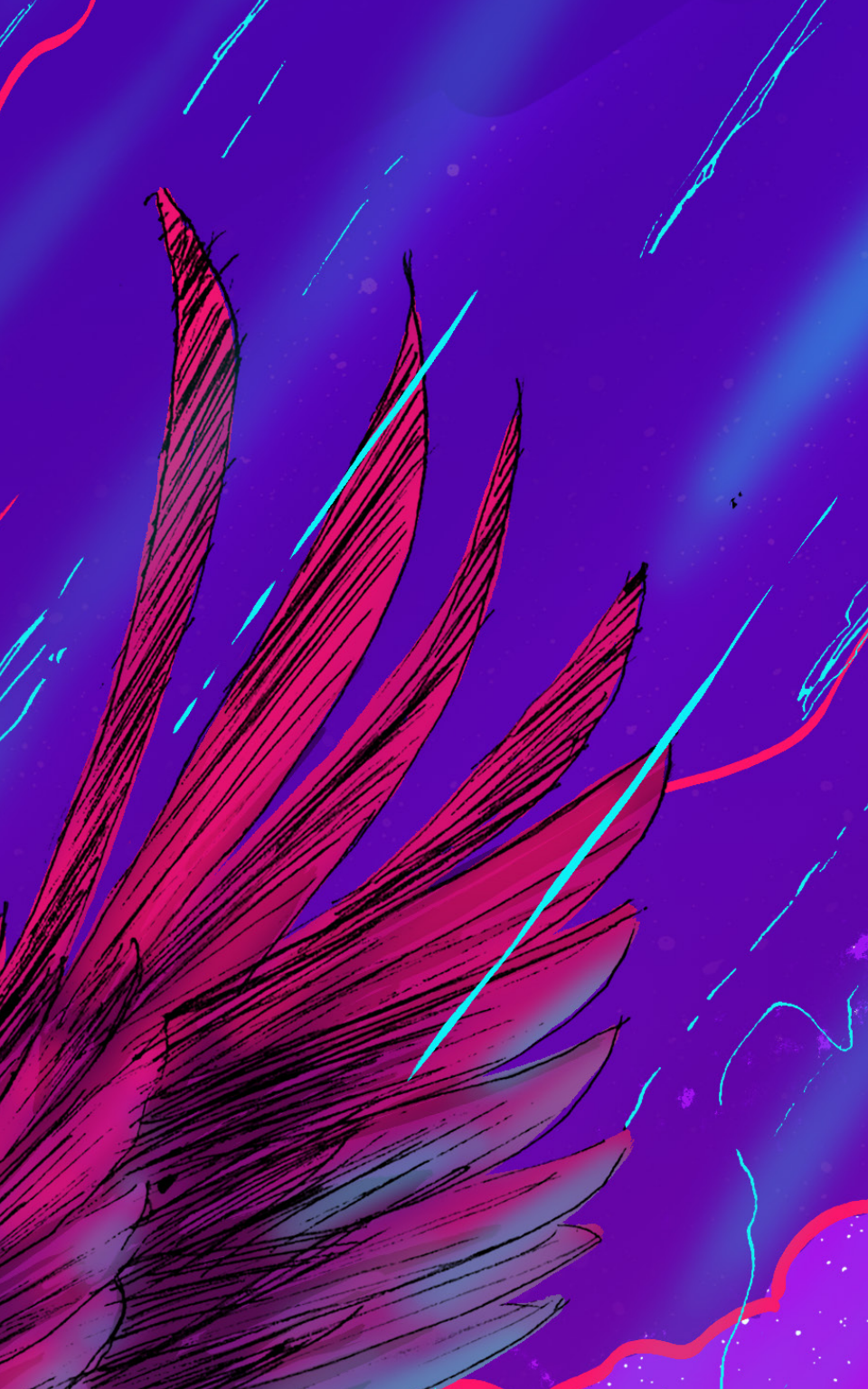
While the players are reading, the Game Leader should input the data from the Decision Sheets into the Scoring Spreadsheet. In the Emerging Threat Attacks section of each scene, be sure to lock results by placing a 0 or 1 based on the random result displayed. After scoring is complete, the Game Leader should print an updated copy of the Capabilities Chart for each player so that the current state of capabilities is known by all.

The Game Leader should walk through the public decisions made by each player, which includes everything but the individual spending decisions of the AI Company CEOs and the \$50 million open-source spending by the Congressional Liaison, Budget Director and Defense Official.

Repeat the same process for Scene 2 through Scene 4. Although there is a thin storyline for each scene, the main goal is to have players repeat their decisions and optimize their decision-making based on the changing market dynamics of the game.

After Scene 4 is complete, the Game Leader should walk through final scoring. Consider printing a copy of the Final Results memo to debrief the game, or go through its details live.

A Note on the Name: The term “no man’s land” originated in the trench warfare of World War I, but it works today as a pun on the idea of a government without human workers. It also refers to Rupert Gregson-Williams’s soaring climax song from the soundtrack of the motion picture *Wonder Woman*, which was a key musical crutch while designing this game.



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