

MISSION BRIEFING Mission Synopsis

This synopsis is provided as an overview for TEACHERS. We advise teachers NOT to hand this out to the students prior to playing the adventure since much of the suspense will be eliminated.

The game begins at the headquarters for the Neuropolis Center for Disease Control (NCDC). Zack Laurer, head of the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) for Neuropolis, is attempting to contact the Reconstructors through the video screen, but communication is impaired by static interference. The player is requested to find a NET-Link and use it to communicate. When the player finds the NET-Link, an e-mail from Zack arrives with a coded message. The player decodes the message (“Twenty Hours Zoonoses Terror”) and learns that a terrorist organization is threatening a zoonotic attack sometime in the next twenty hours. Zack asks the player to learn as much as they can about zoonotic diseases, and then explore Neuropolis for any potential zoonotic outbreaks.

A search of NCDC Headquarters yields several different tools and clues. The player collects a BDR card that looks like it can be used for access somewhere and a remote control. When the player uses the remote control on the nearby TV screen, he/she sees two interesting broadcasts—one about a “Unification Rally” being held at Neuropolis University later today and a second about the record number of people expected to attend the tri-ball playoffs. The player also finds a database of zoonotic diseases and completes a short activity covering the ways of transmitting zoonotic diseases, the types of pathogens that cause them, and important reasons for the recent rise in zoonotic diseases. After completing this activity, the player learns about the Bio-Defense Research Facility (BDR), a place where scientists study dangerous diseases that could be used by terrorists.

The player travels to the BDR, but to gain access the building he/she must use the BDR keycard and complete an activity covering the six “Category A” pathogens. Inside the BDR the player talks with a scientist about some of the diseases she studies, learns about anthrax and the way it affects humans, finds a clue that the bioterrorist weapon may be aerosolized, and collects the Tyvek suit and biological sample kit to aid in the investigation. Lastly, the player uses a 3D map of the city to locate an ongoing zoonotic outbreak occurring at Neuropolis University.

At Neuropolis University, the player can visit with a local pet adoption organization. After assisting the students in learning how to properly and healthily care for their pets, the player can interview the president of the organization and get permission to collect blood samples from the students and the pets. The player can also visit the local “Planet Pizza” where all the students ate before becoming sick. The owner of the pizza place is at first reticent to talk, but opens up when the player finds a newspaper clipping about a previous terrorist attack on his business. When confronted with the evidence, the owner allows the player to take a sample of the food on his salad bar. The player also assists a young girl in the pizza parlor by fixing her animated storybook and learns about the importance of washing fruits and vegetables before they are consumed. Lastly, the player visits the stadium at the university and learns it is the site of the upcoming “Unification Rally”—a rally in support of unifying Neuropolis with surrounding cities to form a “city state.” It seems an organization called FLU (Fighting Lethal unity) is opposed to this idea—the student finds one of their flyers inside the control room of the stadium.

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After completing the various activities available at the University, the player receives a new e-mail from Zack with the latest mole message. The decoded message reads “Animal Warnings.” Zack interprets this message as referring to Animal Sentinels—animals that become sick with a zoonotic disease before humans do. He tells the player they’ve had a recent report of some sick cows at a local farm and requests he/she go investigate. At the farm the player encounters a local vet assisting with the investigation. The vet gives the player permission to take a blood sample from one of the sick cows.

At any point in the gameplay, the player can return to the BDR and test the samples at the BioSafety Level 4 laboratory (BSL4 lab). Entry to the BSL4 lab is ONLY granted if the player uses a sample on the autoclave next to the door. The first time the player tries to enter the BSL4, he/she must go through a short training exercise (during re-entry repeating this training is optional). The samples yield the following results:

- University Students – Positive for Salmonella
- Animals for Adoption – no contagion detected
- Salad Bar Sample – Positive for Salmonella
- Cow Blood – Positive for Anthrax

The player returns to the farm to inform the vet that her suspicions are correct—the sick cows are infected with anthrax. The vet begins to initiate emergency procedures, but before she leaves she asks the player to investigate some “strange sounds” she has been hearing in the barn. The player then finds a hidden door against the far wall. The player must complete a matching game covering various disease reservoirs before the door will open.

The door leads to the secret FLU lab hidden below the farmer’s barn. Inside the lab, the player discovers a short video on the use of plague as a bioterrorist weapon in the 1930’s and 40’s, when infected fleas were spread through the use of clay bombs. Inside the secret lab are several clay bombs, one of which has broken open and is leaking a white powder. The player can sample this powder for analysis in the BSL4 lab. The player also discovers a “Terrorist Remote Control,” a to-do list roughly outlining how the terrorist plan to use a naturally-occurring anthrax outbreak in cattle to infect people, and a copy of the FLU flyer initially found at the stadium in the university. Lastly, there are pictures of a blimp that is suspiciously identical to a blimp the player previously saw flying over the stadium in the university. Analysis of the white powder at the BSL4 lab reveals it is pure aerosolized anthrax.

At this point Alpha e-mails the player and explains that the twenty hours are up—he needs to know what organization is responsible for the terrorist threat, where they are going to attack, what disease they are planning to attack with, how they are going to spread it. When the player correctly answers these questions (FLU, the political rally, anthrax, and clay bombs, respectively) he/she is sent to the university stadium to neutralize the threat. At the stadium, the player uses the terrorist remote control on the FLU laptop computer. The player must “hack” the computer (answer a series of multiple choice questions covering the scientific content in the adventure) before the blimp can be safely landed. After the blimp lands, Zack and his CTU team show up to arrest the terrorists—but the blimp was unmanned! The terrorists escape to threaten Neuropolis another day, but Zack and the Reconstructors vow they will always be there to protect the city for all threats of infection disease.