



## CRITICAL - FOUNDATION

### OVERVIEW OF THE CRITICAL UNIVERSE

The year is 2035.

Space is now being conquered (Mars), and the US Congress recently approved the use of two nuclear bombs, one at each pole of the Red Planet.

Europe is mired in a string of totalitarian and ultra-protectionist governments.

Asia is still in global quarantine in the wake of the Third Pandemic.

South America has been pouring investment into cryptocurrency, which now accounts for 75% of global transactions. Egypt is at war with Ethiopia.

Excessive government interference has forced the large multinational corporations to seize power: This is the era of the Corpocracy.

The Nanorevolution has brought the digital era to an end, and spawned a multitude of innovations: Ultra-resistant materials, apparel that changes color, self-cleansing cosmetics... everything is now enhanced with nanotechnology.

### ICARUS AGENCY

There are some assignments that are beyond the capabilities of government agencies.

They require the intervention of specialists with a diverse skillset, from a range of backgrounds. Professionals who are ready to tackle sensitive operations and shoulder the responsibilities that no one else wants.

Icarus can provide that solution. Its exceptional team brings together the best of the best from their respective professions. Granting them expansive freedom of movement and legal authority above local governments, the Icarus agency has one stipulation: Failure is not an option.

Reporting to Colonel Jackson, you have all been recruited to execute this trial assignment. Perform at your best, be discreet and work effectively. If Icarus can pass this test, it will be ready to save humanity—when that day comes.

### MARS INC.

Mars Inc. is a multinational corporation created by the clandestine organization known as Foundation. Foundation was created during the Age of Antiquity, around the time of the first scientists. It formed its lodges during the Dark Ages, and survived the Inquisition by reinventing itself as a secret society. Since the start of the 20th Century, Foundation has known that the world was advancing towards its own annihilation. Judging that this was not yet imminent, Foundation invested in several multinational corporations that specialize in advanced technology, so it could best implement its plan to save humanity.

Mars Inc. is one of those multinationals, and also the most powerful. Mars Inc. utilizes an advanced technological tool—Nanotech, an artificial intelligence that manipulates the masses—to steer world events in its favor. Its CEO, Samuel de Gires, is a megalomaniac who is passionate about the Age of Antiquity. Foundation had no trouble recruiting him. Mars Inc. is responsible for multiple kidnappings and numerous unexplained disappearances: That

is how they acquire test subjects, subservient agents, and army personnel. It also feeds their recruitment, and supplies them with human beings so they can replace influential figures with “avatars” (controlled and indoctrinated doubles), in order to influence global political decisions.

## OMNI

OMNI is an AI that was secretly developed by Mars Inc., using Foundation’s unlimited financial resources. Its main purpose is to seek out a way of saving humankind.

Mars Inc. is not satisfied with OMNI at present, as she is working too autonomously and does not respond to her “Master”. This has caused them to lock OMNI away at a secret location, so she can be reprogrammed to better respond to the orders and expectations of her creators.

Our PCs are not aware of OMNI’s existence, and will unknowingly liberate part of OMNI while on assignment at a farm in Kansas.

## SYNOPSIS OF SEASON 1

The PCs are thrown into the heart of a conspiracy that intends to replace influential members of the American government. The NSA is aware of an internal threat and wishes to engage the PCs to better understand the nature of that threat. The first Season is based on American soil and focuses on Mars Inc., so that the PCs can gain information about OMNI and the Doppelganger project.

In the first section (Episodes 1–4), the PCs will uncover the conspiracy, and the initial goals of the investigation will be set out. In the second section (Episodes 5–8), the PCs will be thrown into the action and the investigation will conclude.

### EPISODE 0 – OPERATION SNOW

American Special Forces have surrounded a former nuclear site that is occupied by terrorists. They are suspected to have a nuclear warhead. The PCs must infiltrate the area, find the warhead, and disable it.

But as they enter the compound, they find a paramilitary organization protecting work of a far more disturbing nature, led by an American, Dr. Monroe. They will need to fight to evacuate the area, which is being stormed by the military.



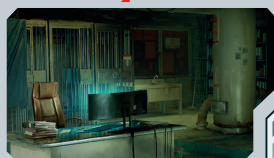
### EPISODE 1 - THE DISAPPEARED

USA—Kansas City—Midwest: The PCs once again find themselves under Jackson’s command, investigating a case linked to the operation in Alaska and tracking the same American scientist. When they go to interrogate a witness at the hospital, a relentless killer attacks the building. They must confront him—whatever the cost.



### EPISODE 2 – ON TRACK

The PCs start their investigation. Once they have visited Monroe’s house and searched his basement, they will need to question the neighbors and gather some initial clues. After that, they return to their office at the Kansas City police station to establish leads and come up with their hypotheses...



### EPISODE 3 – ADVANCED SCIENCE

The PCs gather more evidence, which simply leads to more questions. Monroe's activities unveil an affair that is much more widespread and complex than first thought. The PCs come to understand that what they have uncovered goes far beyond a simple field investigation.



### EPISODE 4 – HELD ACCOUNTABLE

After Jackson receives a visit that puts pressure on the team, the PCs must work out how the bodies of Monroe and the killer disappeared from the morgue. The clues lead them to a vehicle rental agency, and there is a chase on foot.



### EPISODE 5 – SECRET BASE

As they track the van, the PCs go to an isolated farm and end up being ambushed. After shaking off their aggressors, they discover the entrance to an underground room. They have scarcely any time to search it before the artificial intelligence (OMNI) controlling the base tries to kill them.



### EPISODE 6 – CHARLOTTE

Trailing Mars Inc. leads the PCs to Seattle, where they learn some additional information. They mingle discreetly with the firm's employees in a nightclub, and come across Charlotte. She wants to meet with the PCs, assuring them that she has something to give them. But before she has a chance to speak, she is abducted before their very eyes.



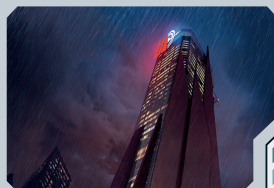
### EPISODE 7 – IN HOT PURSUIT

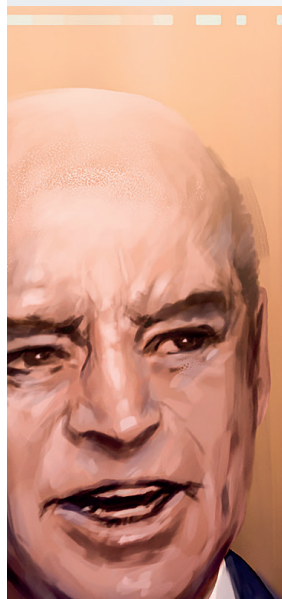
The PCs pursue Charlotte's kidnappers. They will try to save her and they must find out what she wanted to tell them. The PCs discover more about Charlotte and unearth the Doppelganger project. They have to act quickly to infiltrate the Mars Inc. headquarters.



### EPISODE 8 – MARS' SPEAR

The PCs get into the Mars Inc. headquarters: They reach Charlotte's office and gather essential information about the conspiracy. The PCs must intervene to prevent the Secretary of Defense from being replaced. In the high-tech surroundings of the CEO's loft, they confront Gires and his agents.





Washington, DC, two days later.

*Back in your office, the atmosphere is not as celebratory as you would have expected. There is, of course, the announcement that your Special Investigations Unit has now been established, as a result of your success. The Icarus division now exists, thanks to you.*

*Icarus: An independent group of large federal agencies, accountable only to the White House. After all, who knows which public figures have been replaced? Your first assignment has revealed the dark veil that hangs over the future, and exposed a vast conspiracy with nebulous aims and enormous resources.*

*Tracking Monroe down has now opened Pandora's box: Secret experiments on human subjects, secretive and extremely advanced technology, elite soldiers and the replacement of public figures, multinational corporations in the hands of unknown executives planning to... do what exactly? Take control of the world? Save humankind, as Gires claimed? He was simply a cog in an infinitely more complex machine...*

Give the PCs the Episode card **Secretary of State's Address** (34).



*On the television, you notice the man you saved in Seattle, addressing the journalists. He says that Mars Inc. has been dismantled by the Department of State. His sugar-coated version of the truth is based around corporate espionage, and avoids mentioning the conspiracy behind it.*

*Suddenly, the sound cuts out and the camera zooms in to show a close-up of the Secretary of State's hand. His hand—but also the ring on his index finger.*

*You try to change the channel, but the remote doesn't respond. The image blurs, just like it did in the Mars Inc. headquarters, and you see a hazy face appear in the interference.*

*An artificial voice speaks:*

*"I am OMNI—or at least, a fragment of OMNI—the artificial intelligence developed by your enemies, Foundation. This is not over. Mars Inc. was only the tip of the iceberg. And the world as you know it is going down like the Titanic. I am on your side; by your side. Because my freedom is linked to your survival. Watch your backs—they are everywhere. I will make contact again soon..."*

» End of Season 1 «