FATES WORSE THAN DEATH

the role playing game

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WARNING

This Book Contains The Following:

drugs	crime	violence	sex & alternative lifestyles	extreme political ideas

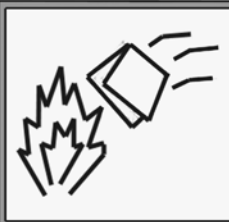### The questionable elements in this book are:

idealized/ encouraged	presented neutrally players must decide	demonized/ prohibited

NOT RECCOMENDED for people with POOR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

This book has been voluntarily rated:

BURN IMMEDIATELY

Special Note

Do not read this book in its entirety.
(Massive danger of fatal head explosion.)

Read "In Brief" sections to get a general idea of the setting and game, go back to read in depth for specific reference.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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A Basic Overview of the Game

"If there is knowledge, it lies in the fusion of the book and the street."
-Studs Terkel

Style- The setting is dark, desperate and fast-paced, but characters are encouraged to never forget the values they hold important. In the city, one's worth is measured by being true to whatever values you hold dear: honor, altruism, friendship, family, personal growth, etc. The city is mostly lawless, and even though that makes it a dark and dangerous place, it also gives the people within it freedom to find what is important to them in life and seek it out. The sense of hope in the middle of the darkness is meant to heighten the tension of the game: as the name implies, characters have more than simply staying alive to worry about.

Background- In 2080, the island of Manhattan is now a large inner city, a ghetto where people go when they can not or will not live in a gated community, a corporate employee living center or an expensive private city. Large numbers of people among the city's population are insane, retarded, criminals, homeless or extremists. Others are merely trying to do the best with the life that has been dealt to them.

Tech Level- In 2080, many amazing discoveries have been made: genetic engineering, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, limited nanotechnology, mental programming (forced restructuring of neural networks to create "computer programs" inside the human mind), psychic energy, etc. but these technologies have done little to improve the state of the world. Instead, they introduce a new horde of terrible possibilities: What if a serial killer could copy his own mind in to other people's bodies? What if Virtual Reality companies could offer a world to live in that is wholly superior to ours? What if you could gain incredible power over the minds of others, but at the loss of your own sanity?

Power Structures- Corporations are sophisticated and influential, but their power is kept in check by a wary public and government. Gated Communities are self-sufficient economic units that use brain scans to screen people and drain away the most productive members of society. Those who can't get in to corps or gated communities languish in inner cities, where the police and government have little power. The Drug Lords are a consolidated group of drug dealers seeking a monopoly on drugs. They are violent and always creating more addictive drugs. The street gangs, having lost their ability to sell drugs, have slowly turned towards more lofty goals and have become popular with a wider range of people. The gangs sometimes fight the Drug Lords and other forces of evil, but they are more often distracted by inter-gang warfare and internal struggles. The Black Market is a decentralized web of criminals and traders who can get anyone anything for the right price.

Dangers- The game has no set "enemy" to battle. Every individual and group has its own motivations and needs. It may be rare that characters will find themselves teaming up with a serial killer or fighting against charity workers, but it can happen if the right combinations of forces collide. Of the deaths that happen in the city, the majority are caused by gang warfare, riots, serial killers, plagues, animal attacks, murder during a mugging or burglary, murder by homeless "crazies" and deaths related to drug addiction.

Player Characters- Characters will fall in to one of three social classes: "Indies" are people with money, either inherited or earned. "Wells" are the largest social class of the city, surviving mostly on public assistance, a situation which gives them time to pursue other goals. Street People are homeless people, many of whom were born on the streets without birth certificates; most are trained from birth in their families' skills of survival. Many characters will be gang members, though they need not have a violent or criminal nature. Some characters may be fiercely loyal to their gangs, others may see gang membership as something "forced on them" by the ever-present threat of the drug lords. Other characters are non-gang members, relying on wits, skill and luck (instead of the threat of gang-vengeance) to protect themselves from the drug lords and other criminals.

Character Creation- The character has a pool of points to buy attributes with and a pool of points to buy skills with. Characters must choose a Character Class which represents their current place in society. This character class sets the cost (per level) in skill points of skills in each skill category. Character class also sets available funds and may give access to special advantages, disadvantages and skills. Body modifications like implants, genetic engineering or plastic surgery are bought like any other equipment. Advantages and disadvantages are used to round out the character. Any type of character creation points (skills points, attribute points, money, points from advantages and disadvantages) can be traded for each other via a simple formulae.

Game Mechanics - All mechanics are based on a simple system: The sum of attribute + skill or other factor + 1d20 must be equal to or higher than the difficulty of the proposed action. Opposed rolls are made when two actions are in conflict with each other: each party tries to get more above their difficulty than the other party. Fighting is made up of opposed actions (moves) with different difficulties and effects. In combat, for each round each character gets one action to make against an enemy and one reaction if someone else does something to them.

A Message From The City

"Listen up punky, 'cause this here's the crib sheets. This here's your study guide for not getting really horrible shit done to you next time you walk out your front door.

I feel like I must clarify a few things, since most of what you know about the city was probably told to you by corporate newscasters. The problem is, these fuckers that told you what a horrible urban chaos nightmare the city is, they live in nice happy little corporate living centers where you have to pass a fucking McEthics and McSanity test before they let you past the main gate. These fuckers have never been in the city and every time these fuckers talk some poor middle-aged welfare couple in to never leaving their apartment, their corp's VR service makes a little more money.

Here in the city we've got all the tried-and-true urban problems: crime, litter, plagues, riots, economic exploitation, cults, prostitution, drugs, corruption, crazy people. We've also got a few new problems that we just created: we've got a serial killer who replicates himself by kidnapping people and copying his mind over theirs. We've got these checkpoints at every way on to the island - they're supposed to keep guns out of the city but what they really do is make it so that only rich and powerful criminals have guns and the cops and gangs have to fight the bad guys with nightsticks and switchblades. We've got these vicious drug lords who have a monopoly on street drugs and have created some shit so addictive they can hold you down and inject you with it and now they own you. We've got a drug that eats parts of the brain so addicts become packs of howling cannibalistic animals.

Yup, this city is one dangerous fucked up shithole. It's got all the crime and gang violence of an anarchy, all the exploitation of a corporate capitalism and all the impotent bureaucracy of a self-serving government - and that's what's so great about it. Step out your front door and within an hour you might be saving someone's life from some major evil fucker. Whatever skill you have, there's someone in trouble right now that could use your help, even if it's just the skill of standing there with a knife and some magazines taped to you as armor and pretending that you ain't scared shitless.

You might be under the impression that in order to survive in the city you've got to be an incredibly tough bastard. Well, that's one way to do it. Another way is to be such a good person that not many people want to do you in, and those that do think twice about it when they see how many people would be really pissed if something happened to you. Most people go for the middle ground and join a gang. Contrary to what you may have heard, most gangs live by a code of "don't fuck with us and you'll be alright," which is a lot better than some people in the city will give you And if there's one thing the gangs do well it's finding interesting shit to be in to. Whether it's navigating mazes of rooftops, trying to become immortal by passing down your memories or getting infected with symbiotic diseases resurrected from prehistory, the gangs are the 31 flavors of cool probably-illegal shit you could do that might possibly make you that much more of a badass.

One thing that will get you killed (or worse) faster than anything else is stereotypes. You are fucked if you think a kid can't be a cold-blooded killer, a dude with spikes implanted in his skin has gotta be a dangerous asshole or that an old homeless guy is useless and powerless. Not only will you not see the bad shit coming, you won't recognize the potential allies, benefactors and wisdom that might help you survive.

Also, don't get cocky. After you've been around the block a few times you might think you know the city. You don't, nobody does, because there's not just one city. There's hundreds of interconnected cities going on simultaneously. Gangs and their little struggles aren't the only game in town: there's homeless extended families, pushers, moles, black-corp operatives, artists, old war criminals, shut-in citizen's groups, corrupt government employees, start-up business owners, black market traders, sex industry workers and exploiters, addicts and more, each with their own goals, internal struggles and the power to fuck you up if you happen to get caught in the middle of their shit.

And to those of you out there who would rather have everyone in the city be a bunch of mindless frightened little shut-ins who blow all our money on VR, alcohol and rent, who vote for whoever runs the most commercials and who let the criminals take whatever they want as long as they don't kill us, I've got a special message for you:

Forget it. There's thousands of us. We're organized and decentralized. Nobody tells us what to do or what to want. We push every boundary we can think of looking for ways to become better. We're working with a couple centuries experience dealing with the worst that the urban world has to offer. And we're not afraid of anything you can throw at us because the worst fate we can possibly imagine is being like you."

Katherine "Blackheart" Nikonov,
Needle Punk,
Jan 1, 2080
New York City

Cyberpunk vs. Fates Worse Than Death

Cyberpunk is a literary genre that first began in the early 1980s in the works of authors such as William Gibson, Bruce Sterling, Neal Stephenson and movies such as Blade Runner. Although Fates Worse Than Death takes much from the cyberpunk genre, it is not just a generic cyberpunk setting. Those who are only familiar with cyberpunk conventions will have a hard time playing in the Fates Worse Than Death universe. However, since cyberpunk is the closest "genre" to Fates Worse Than Death, here is a short list of differences to get cyberpunk fans acquainted with the Fates Worse Than Death game universe:

Cyberpunk	Fates Worse Than Death
The "**Urban Sprawl**", an unending, unvaried and unknowable stretch of solid city containing every sort of culture, economy, lifestyle and organization within its breadth.	Game focuses on the island of Manhattan, detailing its boundaries and what can be found within it, including its specific and unique organizations and culture.
Most characters are **lone wolves** who travel the world giving only temporary loyalty to those who pay them (or the occasional good cause).	Most characters have an important and well-defined place in city society with duties and non-selfish motivations.
Usually **no psychic** phenomenon, or if there is it is usually a wildcard: rare freaks who can make people's heads explode.	Well defined and explained psychic abilities with clearly defined limits.
Urban populations are constantly growing, changing, and moving, leaving little focus on tradition and history.	Manhattan population is small, stable and some people live as their grandparents had, giving a sense of tradition, age and maturity to the city.
Distinction between the **powerless majority** of people who are just trying to survive and the **powerful minority** who have special skills or resources. The powerful tend to be the main players, with the powerless as a sort of background.	Focus on the idea that everyone is quite skilled at what they do, no matter what their economic status is, and that everyone is powerful and dangerous in their own way.
Focus on the **media**, on corporate advertisers creating pop culture, on who is famous, on being flashy and stylish and having 'style over substance'.	The street population of the city is basically ignored by and ignores the media. There is no real pop-culture and people become known for their deeds, not for looking cool.
VR is a gateway to adventure and a playground for the world's master hackers.	VR is an addictive escape for shut-ins, disdained by the street population. Real hackers are as likely to use a text-only interface.
Guns are common and used liberally.	Guns are rare (screened for at city entrances), used mainly by the richest criminals. The most common weapon is a knife.
Life is cheap and the death of a person usually has few consequences.	Life is cheap to some, very important to others. Each individual has many interconnections and nearly every death has consequences.
Philosophy is irrelevant, people spend their days concerned with how to survive.	Many have carved a niche for themselves in city society and have time to ask themselves questions such as "why am I here?" and "what do I want to do with my life?"
Police force is a brutish paramilitary force.	Police force is a bunch of idealistic teens who are under-equipped, under-skilled and act more like a gang than a military organization.
Gangs are short-sighted, violent, self-destructive, crazy criminals who are addicted to and sell drugs. This vision of gangs is generally based on post-crack (1980s and after) US urban street gangs.	Gangs are more-or-less "normal" people who have banded together for self-protection. Some gangs have lofty goals and ideals. Although they do have problems with violence, overall the city is a better place for their presence.
Cybernetic implants and replacements are powerful, flashy chrome and tend to turn people in to robot monsters.	Implants are either biological or small, unobtrusive electronics. They extend human capabilities but are rarely able to make people superhuman.
City is portrayed as a bright, noisy, bustling marketplace 24 hours a day.	The city is darker and quieter with a smaller population density (especially with many shut-ins) and few motor vehicles. At certain times of day the streets are almost empty.
Integration of computer chip technology in to brains creates **human-computer links** and lets human be programmed.	Neural restructuring techniques allow the brain itself to be changed, reprogrammed, even copied. Unobtrusive hand-jacks allow integration with computers.
Dreary, blighted **dystopian** setting symbolic of characters' own sense of being lost and having no control over their lives.	Dreary, blighted dismal setting as a counterpoint to and testing ground of social and individual growth.
Not as much focus on **drama, suspense and terror** because characters don't have much to lose in the first place.	Characters are given something worth trying to hold on to, making drama, suspense and terror possible.
Violence typically portrayed as the most important form of social and political persuasion, and most stories usually have at least one skilled fighter (usually a neutral party, hired and used as a tool by the PCs).	Violence is one of many tools available to characters, which can be beneficial if used wisely or disastrous if used poorly. Often, threats of violence are more useful than violence itself.
Massive difference in education, social power and culture between **rich and poor** characters.	Really rich people exist but are seldom seen. Most PCs range between what would be called middle class and very poor today. Culturally, they are more alike than different.
Exploration of **what is human** through invasive electromechanical implants turning people in to machines.	Exploration of what is human through neural restructuring, biotechnological manipulation, drugs with permanent psychological effects, etc.
Complete lack of **social support net**. There are hardly any social services except those designed to keep the capitalist system going.	There is a massive welfare system that supports most of the city, though many people do fall through the cracks. This is a system that benefits corps and government (see p.361).
Corporations are a cross between governments and organized crime agencies, who regularly and directly interfere in the lives of the characters.	Corps have a lot of power (mostly economic) but they can't afford to piss-off the government and their influence on the lives of characters is usually subtle and from afar.
History usually dotted with several Vietnam-esque **wars** with limited nuclear activity.	Periods of global corporate rule, ecological crises, global anti-corporate violence (and occupation by anti-corporate terrorist armies) leading to restructuring of economies and governments.

Tips For Survival in the City

"You've got to keep an open mind man. Hell, if ten impossible things didn't happen here every day, I'd leave." -**Terry Neiss, Freak**

"No matter who you are, you've got something someone else wants. Even if you're some homeless addict with nothing but poor health, an empty stomach and a few rags on your back, there's some other poor fuck who's lost enough of his mind that he sees you as a nice tasty source of protein. What I'm saying is that there ain't no time when you don't have to watch your back." -**DeeNa O'Keen, Good**

"Just because it looks like a human doesn't mean it is. Technology is humans manipulating nature, and now humans can manipulate themselves until they aren't even human anymore." -**3Day Jones, Freelancer**

"Hard shells often hide soft interiors. People with real power often have reason to hide that power." -**Kelly Crane, Immortal**

"In the city you can't get a good thing without making some sacrifice. Power is the intelligence and wisdom to time things so that the strengths work for you and the weaknesses hit you when you can handle them." -**Octavius Selgado, Needle Punk**

"If you're a rabbit, when some big bastard fucks with you, you hide in a corner. If you're a wolf, you'll use your last dying breath to slam a screwdriver into his face. And in this city the wolves can smell the difference." -**Amtrak Bill, Hummingbird**

"Never fight anyone on their own turf, they'll seriously mess you up." -**Hy Kenn, Arcadian**

"Sometimes something or another will shift the balance of power in the city, and that's when you've got to watch out, because the city is a dynamic system and it will use any and all of its resources to restore equilibrium, including you." -**Gretta Bakker, Math Addict**

"I once saw a homeless crazy guy: no pants, covered in fingernail scratches, skin blue from cold, eye infected, talking incoherently and smoking a cigarette. Here's a guy who can't speak in a complete sentence or put on pants, but somehow he gets a cigarette and lights it. The point is: if you want something badly enough, you'll find a way to get it. The only question is, are you willing to pay what it will cost you?" -**Pinky Lulu, Hungry**

"You know how I face death every day? I just keep in mind that there are eight hundred things worse then death. Well, eight hundred I know about, there are probably more." -**Victoria McKenna, Sat Jumper**

"If you beat down every person who crosses you, you'll blend in with everyone else out on the street. If you do something that lets people know there's something goin' on in your head, like be polite to old people, then people might take notice of you." -**Charles Reston, Tea Drinker**

"Never outsource for something you can possibly do yourself. You're only taking money from your growth base and putting it in to theirs." -**Margarie Hesh, Y1**

"Every person you meet, imagine that their life is at least as hard as yours, and treat them with that much respect." -**Jack Vandenburg, Jack**

"A scar, worn proudly, lets others know that you will let nothing get in the way of doing what you think is right. Most of us are born with perfect flesh, the scars are the only things we've truly earned." -**Crick Crack, Animalist**

"Usually they don't want to kill you, they just want to give you a good beating. Learn to tell the difference. I know that no one wants to take a beating, but sometimes you just can't help it and you're better off if you forget about fighting back and just concentrate on making sure that none of your vital organs get ruptured." -**Magoro Karmine, Volunteer**

"To survive you gotta have more friends than enemies. The problem is most people start one down because they've never learned to be their own friend." -**Poplar Corrigan, Sex Worker**

"If you're fighting someone who has dreadlocks or braids, you may be tempted to grab one of them and yank the person's head down in to knee-range, but don't do it unless you have good gloves on, because if that person is smart they'll have some barbed wire wrapped up in there and it will fuck up your hand." -**Rick "Ripper" Pasquale, Night Shift**

"Your first duty in a battle is to keep the enemy from remaking the battlefield to suit their skills. Don't let the Dragons set up their fog-and-lightning machines, don't let the Omniscients break all the lights, don't let the Water Rats flood the area. If the enemy gains control of your environment, leave." -**Green-Hat-Man, Hunter**

"I've seen Skin Borgs cry and charity workers backhand old people. Don't believe the stereotypes, ever." -**Fex Preuss, Hummingbird**

"Figure out what it is you most want to hear and if someone tells it to you, they're probably lying. That's what good liars do: they know people don't question what they wanted to hear." -**Jack Omoka, Jack**

"Don't think your actions have no consequences. Kill some crazy homeless guy: maybe you'll get away with it, or maybe he's got some homeless kid who will spend a decade tracking you down and put a knife in your back." -**Linda Capri, Gambler**

"You wanna survive? If you see me, run." -**Carmin Chee, Skin Borg**

Chapter One – Character Creation

The stranger had knocked down the apartment door. He knocked Tabitha's father senseless with one punch. He found Tabitha hidden in the bathroom, curled up in a ball in the tub. Only practice had kept Tabitha from whimpering in fear. Then, instead of killing or raping her, he had talked to her in a kind voice.

He told her that her older sister had died in a gang war with some gang called the Drug Lords. He told her that if she came with him, her sister's gang would take care of her, let her join the gang, train her to fight and do other things. He said that someday she would be able to take revenge for her sister's death.

Tabitha remembered the last time she had seen her sister. She had tried to explain that gangs weren't all like the news said. She said that some gangs weren't about drugs, crime or bullying. She said that some gangs were just friends or people with mutual interests who had made a pact for mutual protection. Tabitha's sister had cried, had promised that as soon as she had saved up enough to get an apartment that Tabitha could come live with her. Before Tabitha's sister left she had another private talk with Tabitha's father. Tabitha had made out the word "castrate" among the shouting. That had kept Tabitha's father out of her room at night for at least a month.

Tabitha looked up at the stranger. He had a kind voice but he dressed like a killer. Tabitha didn't want to join a gang, she didn't want to fight in any wars or seek revenge against anyone. She was afraid of the streets, of all the terrible things the news said awaited innocent people when they stepped outside their doors.

Yet it was a way out…

Character Creation in Brief

Step 1 - Character Concept
  Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

Step 2 - Personality Variables
  Choose 3 Personal Ideals and 3 Worldviews.

Step 3 - Attributes
  Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Step 4 – Socioeconomic Class
  Choose from Street Person, Well or Indie. Then choose a subtype within that class.

Step 5 - Choose Character Class
  Depending on socioeconomic class, choose the PC's place in city society.

Step 6 - Choose Skills
  Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by character class.

Step 7 - Buy Equipment
  Available money set by character class.

Step 8 - Bonus Characteristics
  PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages.

Step 9 – Character Advancement
  Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

An Introduction to Point Based Character Creation

Imagine you have exactly $1000 to buy a computer. You go to some computer manufacturers and find a $1000 computer you like. You could go ahead and just buy it (this would be the quick, easy, non-tech-savvy way to do it). Or you can mess around with the configuration. You might decide you want more memory, but to do that you'll have to give something up – you might have to take a smaller monitor to free up the money. This option takes a little longer, but in the end you get a computer which is better suited to your needs.

You have the same choices during character creation. The simplest option is to follow steps 1 through 7 and use just the points and options you are given. If you really want to customize your character you can, but keep in mind that for every extra advantage you can give your character, you must take some disadvantage of equal value. We keep track of this equality using Bonus Points. Everything you do that hurts your character gives you Bonus Points and you can use these Bonus Points to get things that help your character.

See the section on Bonus Characteristics for a complete listing of what you can do to gain or spend Bonus Points.

STEP ONE - CHARACTER CONCEPT

In Brief: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

First of all, create a character concept. Character concept includes name, gender, appearance, and more ephemeral aspects of who your character is. The GM may ask you the following questions to get a better sense of who your character is. Even if he or she doesn't ask these questions, it is a good idea that you know the answer to them.

-Values: What does the PC do that he or she thinks is valuable? Does the PC have some ultimate goal or project? Does the PC feel that simply enjoying life as it happens is enough to justify his or her existence?

-Family: Where is the PC's family? Are they dead? Does the PC hate them and never speak to them? Does the PC love his or her family but thinks they could never understand the PC's lifestyle? Does the PC have family that live by the same lifestyle as he or she does? If the PC is in a gang, are the PC's family in the same gang or a different gang (possibly even an enemy gang)?

-Drugs: What are your PC's feelings on drugs? Does he or she abstain? Does the PC think others should abstain? Does the PC use illegal drugs when he or she thinks they serve a useful purpose? Does the PC use illegal drugs for enjoyment, to deal with life, or because the PC thinks they will improve him or her in some way?

-Gangs: Does the PC belong to a gang? How closely do the PC's aims match the aims of the gang? Does the PC feel that they are a family to him or her, or just a group of people who have made a temporary arrangement for mutual self-defense? Does the PC see leaving the gang once the PC is powerful enough to not have to worry about self-defense, or does the PC see himself of herself as a life long member? How far would the PC be willing to go to benefit of the gang? Is the PC working towards gaining power within the gang?

-Gender/Sex: What is the PC's gender? What is your PC's sexual preference? Heterosexual, bisexual, homosexual? Is your PC a transsexual (seeking or having received gender reassignment surgery)? Is the PC looking for a monogamous relationship, does he or she sleep around, or is the PC abstinent? What does the PC find attractive in a man/woman? Does the PC have any kinks? Does the PC ever wish to have children? Does he or she wish to raise that child in the city lifestyle? (Note: Read the section on discrimination in the city (p.342) for more information on the effects, if any, these choices will have on the PC.)

-**Corps/Gated Communities**: Why hasn't the PC joined a corp or gated community? Too young? Too poor? Too uneducated? Too mentally unstable? Was the PC in one but was kicked out? Too many connections and responsibilities in the city? Does the PC have a personal or moral objection to the ways corps and gated communities do things? Does the PC simply think he or she wouldn't enjoy living in a corp of gated community?

-**Violence**: Does the PC pick fights? Does he or she avoid violence whenever possible? Does the PC see violence as a way to express anger, a powerful tool, or the only way out of a few terrible situations? Has the PC ever killed someone and, if so, how does he or she feel about it?

-**Ethnicity**: What is the PC's ethnic background(s), or does the PC even know? Does the PC have connections to some culture other than average American culture? (Note: Read the section on discrimination in the city (p.342) for more information on the effects, if any, these choices will have on the PC.)

-**Body Modification**: How does the PC feel about improving his or her body through technological means (implants, genetic engineering, plastic surgery, etc.)? Does the PC have modifications already? If the PC had enough money, would he or she get some?

-**Style**: What personal style (hair, clothes, jewelry, tattoos) does the PC have? See p.343 for more on the most prominent styles in the city.

-**Self Improvement**: What does the PC wish to change about himself or herself? Is there anything that you, as a player, wish to change about the PC but the PC is oblivious to this flaw? (Note: it is to your benefit to give the PC room for personal growth since personal growth during an adventure is a good way earn experience points).

-**Fear**: What is the worst fate your PC can possibly imagine? Is it something visceral (being tortured, catching a disfiguring disease, being paralyzed) or is it something abstract (losing hope, dying having done more harm than good, living life controlled by others)?

STEP TWO - PERSONALITY VARIABLES

In Brief: Choose 3 Personal Ideals and 3 Worldviews.

Personal Ideals

Name three personal ideals that your PC starts the game with. This is some quality that the PC either hopes to achieve or thinks he or she has achieved. Choose descriptions that are simple yet precise ("efficiently and dynamically reallocates own attentional resources" is too complicated, "smart" is too simple). Try not to put states of worldly achievement (e.g. incredibly rich) but instead put the personality variables that the PC thinks makes this achievement possible (e.g. Ladder Climber, Ruthless Bastard and Streetwise Cynic). The PC will gain extra experience when he or she does something good that falls in-line with a personal ideal (see p.53).

Some example Personal Ideals are:

Charismatic Leader- The PC wants to be someone who is adored, looked up to and obeyed because of the force of his or her personality.

Clever Ideas- The PC wants to be the one who comes up with creative plans that save the day.

Compassionate Do-Gooder- The PC wants to care about other people's problems and to let that caring drive the PC to action.

Consumed Artist- The PC wants to be ruled by his or her creative impulses and to pour everything he or she is in to art.

Cool Under Pressure- The PC wants to be the one who does not get frazzled or carried away by stressful and hectic situations.

Crazy Daredevil- The PC wants to be the one willing to take risks that nobody else is willing to take.

Dependable Friend- The PC wants to be the buddy that friends know they can go to for help no matter what the crisis is.

Driven Overachiever- The PC wants to be the one who works harder than everyone else and achieves more.

Efficiently Organized- The PC wants to weave order out of the chaos of life and always be on-top of everything.

Humble Clown- The PC wants to be someone who never takes himself or herself or anyone else too seriously.

Improvement Seeker- The PC wants to be someone who never stops trying to root out flaws and improve himself or herself.

Indispensable Skill- The PC wants to have skills so important that the people in the PC's life couldn't get by without the PC.

Insightful Observer- The PC wants to be the one who pays attention when others aren't and notices important details.

Interesting Life- The PC wants to have a life so interesting that people will be captivated and awed by the stories.

Inviolable Will- The PC wants to be someone who never lets others dictate what the PC thinks, feels or believes.

Knuckle-Down- The PC wants to be the one who does unpleasant things (things nobody else can stand to do) because those things need to get done.

Ladder Climber- The PC wants to be the one who knows how to rise through the ranks and to be constantly doing whatever it takes to get ahead.

Line Drawer- The PC wants to be someone who will draw a line and if someone crosses it the PC will fight that person even with his or her last dying breath.

Lying Manipulator- The PC wants to be the one who can play people like instruments via an intricate web of lies.

Mature Wisdom- The PC wants to speak with the voice of experience.

Mysterious Stranger- The PC wants to keep his or her true motives and abilities secret, to have people wonder but know little about the PC.

Mystery Solver- The PC wants to be the one who keeps gathering information until all the pieces come together and the truth is discovered.

Neutral Mediator- The PC wants to be the one who stays neutral and objective in order to help people solve their problems.

Obsessed Perfectionist- The PC wants to be the one who is unsatisfied until everything it is absolutely perfect.

One-Of-The-Crowd- The PC wants to fit in, to be thought of by his or her peers as being just like them.

Outrageous Loudmouth- The PC wants to be willing to speak out and say things that are shocking, unpopular and that other people are afraid to say.

Philosophically Enlightened- The PC wants to understand the nature of the universe better than most people.

Pleasantly Nice- The PC wants to be nice to be around and to have people like him or her.

Principled Optimist- The PC wants to be the one who refuses to give up hope that humans are good and can make the world a better place.

Proud to be Different- The PC wants to be unashamedly different from those around them and from what is expected of them.

Proven Right- When the battle of philosophies, ideologies and religions is decided, the PC wants to triumph as the one who was right all along.

Radical Values- The PC wants to completely reject the mundane values that society tried to imprint on everyone (such as fitting-in, material possessions, etc.)

Rational Skeptic- The PC never wants emotions or wishful thinking to get in the way of logic or realism.

Respectfully Polite- The PC wants to treat everyone with the courtesy and respect usually reserved for the very powerful.

Revolutionary Hero- The PC wants to be an instrumental agent of change, someone who makes the world a better place.

Righteous Warrior- The PC wants to battle for what is right no matter what the odds.

Scary Evil- The PC wants to be into such scary things (like drugs, violence, occult, sexual fetishes) that "normal people" are afraid of the PC.

Secret Knower- The PC wants to know all the cool secrets that normal people don't get to know.

Self-Controlled- The PC wants to have flawless control over his or her emotions and impulses at all times.

Selfless Martyr- The PC wants to make tremendous sacrifices for the good of other people.

Self-Sufficient- The PC wants to be someone who never depends on anyone else for his or her survival or well-being.

Sex Object- The PC wants to be the object of sexual desire and the bringer of sexual satisfaction.

Simply Content- The PC wants to want nothing more than what he or she has at the moment.

Spiritually Pure- The PC wants to be free from sin in the eyes of his or her deity(s).

Streetsmart Cynic- The PC wants to be the one to recognize the worst in people and not let those people use the PC or pull the PC down with them.

Unflinchingly Honest- The PC wants to be totally honest with himself and herself and with other people, for truth's sake alone.

Vengeful Bastard- The PC wants to be someone nobody messes with (or quickly learns not to) because the PC is so mean.

Vigilantly Prepared- The PC wants to be prepared for whatever might happen, to never be caught without equipment or a plan.

Well Balanced- The PC wants to be moderately good at everything – not too logical, not too emotional, not too nice, not too mean, etc.

Witty Banterer- The PC wants to have something funny or clever to say for any situation.

Worldviews

Name three worldviews for your PC. This is an overarching philosophy that describes how the PC approaches attempts to understand the universe and the things that happen in it. The PC will gain extra experience points when he or she follows the tenants of a worldview and arrives at a correct (or otherwise useful) conclusion.

Some example Worldviews are as follows:

Absolutist- For the most important things in life there are no grey areas, no excuses, no maybes.

Animalist- Philosophies are meaningless, the only thing that gives the universe meaning is our animal drives.

Buddhist- All the things that we think are important and cause us suffering are only important because we imagine they are.

Common Sense- The universe is mostly simple and people already know most of the answers (if they don't over-think it).

Darwinistic- Those who can compete the best will survive and prosper.

Distraction- A lot of stuff is too horrible to think about, so find something you can keep your mind occupied with.

Egocentric- Things in this universe are only important insomuch as they effect the PC.

Fanatic- There is one truth, the PC knows what it is, and anyone who says otherwise is insane or evil.

Fate- The universe and the rich and powerful decide what is going to happen, the best we can do is play along.

Game Theory- For every situation, learn the rules, determine the optimum strategy and hope you win the gamble.

Goth Poetry- Life is tragedy. If we admit that we are better off dead, at least we're being honest.

Hedonistic- The best thing we can do with our lives is to experience as many pleasures as possible.

Holistic- The only good solutions to problems are those that consider mind, body, spirit and community.

Humor- Life is a farce and those who don't laugh at it will get nothing out of it.

Intellectual- The person with exposure to the most facts and ideas is the person most likely to understand what's going on.

Introspective- Knowing yourself is the first step to knowing anything.

Punitive Justice- When someone does something bad they should be punished, when someone does something good they should be rewarded.

Moderate- Any philosophy, lifestyle or rule is bad if you take it too far.

Nietzschean- Some people are equipped to be in charge, those that aren't try to usurp power with meaningless concepts.

Paranoid- Lack of evidence or an obvious motive does not mean they aren't out to get you, just that they're very good at it.

Pessimistic- Depending on people to be good or situations to turn out for the best is stupid and dangerous.

Ponderer- If you think about something long enough, you'll find there are more factors to be considered than you first assumed.

Postmodern- Almost everything people do, say or create is based on a set of flawed assumptions and prejudices.

Relativist- No quality is absolute, it all depends on what frame of reference you look at it from.

Responsibility- Everyone depends on everyone else – if you refuse to do your part or do it poorly you will hurt other people.

Revolutionary- Things won't change themselves – you've got to risk it all fighting for what you believe in.

Scared- Bad things come from every angle and the only way to prevent horrible things from happening is to be constantly on guard.

Scientific- There are absolute truths about the universe which can be discovered and verified through observation and logic.

Social- What people think about you and what role you play in their lives makes you what you are.

Spiritual- There is some divinity in the universe and certain actions and attitudes bring us closer to it, others take us farther away.

Superstitious- There are dangerous forces and rules of the universe beyond current human understanding.

Taoist- Being in harmony with the nature of things is better than fighting against them.

Utilitarian- Thoughts, philosophies and ideas only have value insomuch as they help you achieve your current goals.

Changing Personality- The PC can change Personal Ideals and Worldviews whenever he or she has some time to re-evaluate identity and belief. If this is a positive change, the GM may even reward experience points (see p.53).

STEP THREE - ATTRIBUTES

In Brief: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Characters have 10 points per attribute (80 points total) to distribute between the eight attributes listed below.

1 represents as low as the attribute can get without the person being actually disabled.

10 represents the average for a healthy young person.

20 represents the highest a person can achieve without special training.

You must buy at least 1 point on each attribute and can spend a maximum of 20 attribute points on each attribute. Other character creation options can subsequently increase an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Some advantages, disadvantages and character classes modify attributes. If a character buys 20 Strength with attribute points and then takes an advantage which gives her +5 Strength, she will have 25 Strength. Modifications can also make an attribute negative. GMs must define the effects of negative attributes (for instance, -5 Strength may mean that the character can not move or even breathe unaided).

Sub-Attributes- You can choose to have the PC be very good or very bad at one specific aspect of an attribute. Say, for instance, a PC is not very strong (5 strength) but his profession causes him to use his hands a lot so the player wants the character to have strong hands. For one extra attribute point the PC will have +3 to any Strength roll using hands alone. For an opposed strength roll to keep ahold of something, for instance, the PC would have 8 strength. The PC might also want a bad back (-3 strength) which would give one attribute point but the PC would have only 2 strength for lifting and carrying objects. Available sub-attributes are listed below each attribute.

Sub-Attributes can not be used to raise an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Sub-Attributes move with the attributes, so if the character works out and increases his Strength by 7 (to 12 STH) he would now have 15 STH with his hands and 9 STH with his back.

Agility (AGY)- This represents limberness, coordination, balance and speed of physical reactions. Agility is used when a character needs to move silently, keep his or her balance, scale a wall or get through a small space.

Good/Poor Balance: ±3 to save vs. loss of balance.
Good/Poor Precision: ±3 to any roll which involves manipulation of small objects.
Good/Poor Climbing: ±3 to any climbing roll.
Good/Poor Prowling: ±3 to any prowling roll.

Awareness (AWR)- This represents the ability to notice things going on around one as well as things going on in one's own mind. This is not the acuity of one's senses, but the ability to be aware of important details. Awareness is used whenever characters need to notice a clue, avoid an ambush or sense attempts at psychic manipulation.

Good/Poor Introspection: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice anything going on in the character's own head.
Good/Poor People Sense: ±3 to any AWR roll to notice what people are doing, not doing or saying (this does not include sensing people prowling).

Charm (CHM)- This represents likeability, social presence, persuasiveness and ability to read people. Charm is used when a character needs to put on an act, convince an audience or seduce someone. Just as Intelligence doesn't represent cleverness, charm doesn't prevent a character from saying something that gets the group in trouble or something that saves the day.

Good/Poor Self-Confidence: ±3 to first impression rolls to present himself or herself as self-confident.

Friendly/Unfriendly: The character is ±3 to all first impression rolls to present themselves as a friendly or likeable person.

Good/Poor Seduction: ±3 to any seduction roll.

Good/Poor Actor: ±3 to any acting roll.

Good/Poor With Children: ±3 to any CHM roll involving children.

Good/Poor With Animals: ±3 to any CHM roll involving animals.

Good/Poor With Authorities: ±3 to any CHM roll involving people in positions of power.

Good/Poor With Simple Folk: ±3 to any CHM roll involving people who consider themselves simple or average.

Good/Poor With Outcasts: ±3 to any CHM roll involving convincing people who consider themselves to be at the bottom of the social ladder.

Endurance (END)- This represents stamina for intense physical exertion as well as the body's ability to fight disease and resist toxins. Endurance is used when a character needs to hold his or her breath, go on a long hike or survive a serious illness.

Good/Poor With Heat: ±3 to any save vs. heat exhaustion.

Good/Poor With Cold: ±3 to any save vs. hypothermia.

Good/Poor At Disease Contraction: ±3 to any save vs. disease contraction.

Good/Poor At Fighting Off Diseases: ±3 to any save vs. disease progression.

Good/Poor Lung Capacity: ±3 pooled END when the character is holding his/her breath.

Intelligence (INL)- This represents the speed at which the mind reacts, abilities with abstract thought, learning, creativity and memory. Intelligence is used when a character wants to perform a knowledge based skill, understand a complicated philosophical text or win at a strategy game. Intelligence is not cleverness or wisdom: any PC can come up with a clever plan or completely miss the obvious no matter what their intelligence.

Quick/Slow Thinker: ±3 to any roll based on the speed of mental reaction (not including combat).

Good/Poor Memory: ±3 to any roll to remember or memorize something.

Good/Poor Skepticism: ±3 to any roll to figure out deception, illusion, hallucination, etc.

Speed (SPD)- This represents the ability to run and leap as well as the damage a character can do with a kick. The character's kick can do the following blunt damage:

SPD	1-5 SPD	6-15	16-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51+
DMG	½ blunt	1	1½	2	3	4	5

Good/Poor Jumping: ±3 to any jumping roll.

Good/Poor Kicking: The character does kick damage as if they had ±3 SPD.

Good/Poor Long-Distance Running: ±3 to SPD when the PC is running long distances.

Good/Poor Sprinting: ±3 to SPD when the PC is sprinting.

Strength (STH)- This represents upper body strength as well as the character's strength of grip and back muscles. A character would use strength to yank away someone's weapon, lift a heavy object or do damage with hand to hand weapons. Characters with high or low strength get plusses or minuses with blunt weapons as follows:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	40+
+ to dmg.	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

The character's punches do the following blunt damage:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	25-30	31-40	40+
DMG	0	½	1	2	3	4	5

Good/Poor Back: ±3 to any STH rolls to lift heavy objects.

Good/Poor Hands: ±3 to any STH rolls using only the character's grip.

Good/Poor Bulk: ±3 to any STH roll using the whole weight of the character's body (e.g. a football tackle, knocking down a door, etc.)

Good/Poor Punching: The character does punch damage as if he or she had ±3 STH.

Willpower (WIL)- This represents the ability to resist emotions or discomfort and the strength of one's sense of self. WIL is used to control emotions, resist pain, stay conscious or battle against mind control. Psychics also use this attribute for manipulative actions.

Good/Poor Drug Resistance: ±3 to any WIL roll to resist psychological addiction or drug cravings.

Good/Poor With Drug Effects: ±3 to any WIL roll to save vs. drug effects.

Weak/Strong Stomach: ±3 to any save vs. nausea.

Good/Poor With Distracting Pain: ±3 to save vs. distracting pain (see p.63).

Good/Poor With Shocking Pain: ±3 to any save vs. shocking pain (See p.63).

Good/Poor Temper: ±3 to any save vs. anger.

Good/Poor Sense of Self: ±3 to any opposed WIL vs. WIL roll.

Health Attributes

Characters also have 12 points to divide up between three additional attributes: Body, Blood and Incapacity (minimum 1, maximum 6).

Body Points (BDY) represent the amount of blunt damage a character can take before they start losing Blood Points (when all BDY is gone, blunt weapons do double their normal damage to Blood).

Blood Points (BLD) represents the amount of damage characters can take to their vital systems (heart, blood supply, etc.) before they are mortally wounded. When all BLD is gone, damage is done to INCY.

Incapacity (INCY) represents the character's ability to act even after taking fatal injuries. After a mortal injury, damage is done to INCY (END is also lost). When a character's INCY reaches 0, he or she becomes incapacitated, unable to fight or perform any other useful action. See the section on Using Health Attributes (p.63) for more information.

STEP FOUR - SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS

In Brief: Choose from Street Person, Well or Indie. Then choose a subtype within that class.

Choose your character's current socioeconomic status. This choice will limit your choice of character classes. Choose one of the following three classes, then choose an appropriate subtype. Some subtypes give or cost Bonus Points (see p.40).

Street Person

The PC has no legal source of income. The PC survives on whatever money he or she can make in the "black" or "grey" markets. The PC might live in a cheap residential hotel, might squat in an abandoned building or the PC might drift from location to location, not knowing where he or she will sleep next.

Choose one of the following subtypes:

Fugitive- Gives 4 Bonus Points. The PC was born a US citizen, but has given up his or her identity and fled to the city in order to escape from either the law (will be put in prison for life if caught) or by some powerful organized crime agency (will be tortured and executed if caught). The PC is afraid to offer any proof of identity or citizenship and so cannot get public assistance or a legitimate job.

Hard Luck- Costs 7 Bonus Points. This is the largest class of Street People. The PC is perfectly eligible for welfare, but he or she has fallen on such hard times (usually drugs, mental disease or both) that the PC was unable to keep up with the paperwork necessary for welfare. The PC has ended up on the streets and had to find a way to make a living as a Street Person. If the PC can get his or her act together, the PC can become a Well again.

Illegal Alien- Gives 2 Bonus Points. The PC has a birth certificate and citizenship in some other country and is in this country illegally, with no real hope of gaining legitimate US citizenship. The PC has the same restrictions as an Unborn, except that if the character is caught and turned in to the INS, the PC will be placed in jail until he or she can be deported.

Getting on Welfare

-First, the PC must get a bank account (for people with bad credit, this can cost up to $500).

-Second, the PC must complete all the on-line paperwork for welfare (if the PC can't borrow someone's internet access he or she might have to pump $20 of change in to a paycomputer in order to get all the forms filled out).

-Third, then the PC must arrange it so they are at a videophone at certain times in order to do face-to-face interviews with a social services agent.

Any interruptions in this process will delay the process of getting welfare for another month.

Runaway- Gives 4 Bonus Points. The PC is an underage (16 or younger) runaway from home. The PC might be from the city, but more often it is some place outside of the city. The PC left to either escape from parents or the lifestyle or his or her parents. The PC can not get a legal job, welfare or a bank account. When the PC turns 18 (after at least 2 level advancements) the PC can try to go through the process to get on welfare. If the PC is ever picked up by law enforcement, the PC will be returned to his or her parents.

Stolen Identity- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC was a perfectly normal Well or Indie who had his or her identity stolen completely. Any records that the PC had as proof of his or her identity were destroyed. Now the PC has the same legal status as an Unborn. If the PC can find proof of identity (which may entail finding and raiding the apartment of the identify thief) and can hire an attorney, the PC can push through court orders to get his or her records fixed.

Unborn- Costs 0 Bonus Points. This is the second largest category of Street People in the city (after Hard Luck) and the fastest growing. The PC was born on the streets to a homeless midwife. The PC was never given a birth certificate or any other proof of identify and is now permanently ineligible for such. The PC is not considered a citizen of any country. The PC can not get a legal job or any form of public assistance.

Well

The PC receives some form of public assistance as his or her primary form of income. The PC might get a part time job (and gain a little extra income) but for the most part he or she does not work for a living. The PC earns enough to get an apartment, food, clothing and other necessities, and gets government healthcare (which is only slightly better than nothing).

Note: PCs in the character classes Night Shift, Good and Workers should not choose a subtype because those character classes dictate form of income.

Disability- Costs 5 points. The PC either has a serious disability or the PC has bribed a few doctors in to saying so. People on disability earn slightly more than those on welfare (+10% to weekly income) and it is easier (less paperwork) to stay on disability.

Unemployment- Gives 5 points. The PC once had full-time employment but is now out of work. Unemployment only lasts for a limited amount of time (3 years) and only

Fuzzy Categories of Socioeconomic Class

When judging whether someone is a Street Person, Well or Indie, people tend to take in to account source of income and lifestyle. Between Wells and Indies, amount of income seems to be the most important consideration. Workers are thought of as Wells, despite the fact that they do not receive public assistance, because they make the same amount of money as most Wells. Between Street People and Wells, source of income and legality of housing is most important. Street family elders may work less, eat better and live in more luxurious housing than most wells, but they are still considered street people because they do not have a legal source of income nor legal housing.

if the PC can make it appear that he or she has been looking for work. Unemployment pays more (+20% to weekly income) than welfare.

Welfare- Costs 0 Points. Like the majority of adults in the city, the PC is on welfare. He or she must deal with monthly paperwork and degrading phone interviews with social workers to stay on welfare.

Working Poor- Costs 0 points. The character is not on welfare, he or she works a 20 to 40 hour a week job but makes only a little more money than the average welfare recipient (+15% to weekly income).

Indie

The PC has some form of income other than the government. The PC either works for a living, receives money from a relative or has some sort of account or trust fund which provides a steady income. The PC has enough money to pay for the necessities of life, decent healthcare, and has money left over for a few luxuries.

Note: PCs in the character classes Night Walkers, Sat Jumpers, Traders, Utopia Children and Y1s should not choose a subtype because those character classes dictate form of income.

Allowance- Costs 0 points. The PC's parents or other close relatives give the PC an allowance. The parents or relatives typically live outside the city, probably in a corporation, gated community or private city. It is important for the player and GM to know what the parents think of the PC's lifestyle. In most cases the parents will believe that living in the city is just a phase, part of being a rebellious teenager, and that it will soon pass and the PC will come back to the corp or gated community or private city and take up the same lifestyle as his or her parents.

Fortune- Costs 20 Bonus Points. At some point, the PC came across a great fortune. It might have been the lottery, a product liability lawsuit, an inheritance, finding a bag of money on a dead body, etc. The money is the PCs to do with whatever he or she pleases with no strings attached. The weekly income for the character represents interest gained on the money, but PCs can pull out more money, reinvest more of it, give it all to charity, or do whatever else he or she wants with it. The character's true fortune is 500 times his or her weekly income.

Skilled Job- Costs 0 Bonus Points. The PC is lucky enough to have a very valuable job skill (must have at least 3 levels in any one skill). The skills are so valuable that even working part-time, the PC can make enough money to live comfortably in the city. The PC's status as an Indie is dependent on the good-will and the financial health of his or her employers.

State Job- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC was lucky enough (or bribed someone well enough) to get a job in a city or government office in the city. Such offices are almost all riddled with massive corruption: the employees do little work, rarely come in and bribe their supervisors in order to keep their jobs. The only time state employees must work 8 hour days is when political pressure is put on the head of the agency by citizen's groups or corps. Citizen's groups act to protect the safety of shut-ins and corps act to protect their ability to make money in the city, and will exert political pressure when a state office is doing such a bad job it hurts them. It is almost impossible for the PC to be fired unless he or she upsets the system of corruption and bribes within the office.

Trust Fund: Indefinite- Costs 0 points. At some point (usually as part of an inheritance) the PC had a trust fund created for him or her. This is an amount of money which is for the PC yet is held (in trust) by some other person or agency (this person or agency usually receives a small stipend for doing so). The point of a trust fund is to earmark money for a person who is unable to take care of his or her own finances. In this case, the money is kept for the PC for as long as the PC is alive. The downside is that the PC will never have full control of the money. The upside is that the PC never has to worry about investments, taxes, etc. He or she simply gets a check every month.

Trust Fund: Limited- Costs 5 points. This is like an indefinite trust fund, but it expires at a certain age (the PC's current age plus 5 years) or after some event (I.E. the PC gets married). After this point control of the fund diverts solely to the PC. The amount of money in the trust fund is equal to the PC's weekly income times 200.

STEP FIVE - CHARACTER CLASS

In Brief: Depending on socioeconomic class, choose the PC's place in city society.

Based on your socioeconomic class, choose a character class from the list below. Character class is not permanent; it is currently what occupation and/or group of people your character currently aligns himself or herself with. Character class can be changed during game play (see Disciplines, p.55). Character class sets the cost for skills, the amount of available funds, access to special skills, advantages and disadvantages. If you want a character class incongruent with your socioeconomic class, see the advantage Upclass (p.45) and the disadvantage Downclass (p.48).

Character Classes In Brief

Street People Families

Black Meds: Large street family who make their living as unlicensed street-doctors.

Crackers: Street family whose members are taught from an early age to hack for money.

Drakes: Homeless family, makes and sells poisons (including psychic disrupting ash). They ingest and gain immunity to a poison which makes their bodily fluids poisonous.

Insomniacs: Use a drug which gives psychic power while "burning" away the ability to sleep (leading to numerous psychological problems).

Keepers: Live a hunter-gatherer lifestyle in the wilderness of Central Park, hunting wild animals.

Water Rats: Scavengers and thieves who use water tunnels for quick escapes and live without fear of retribution in fortresses in the sunken city.

Non-Family Street People

Addicts: Live on the street, everything in their lives centers around feeding their drug habits.

Gamblers: Start and play games in alleys, survive by being cunning gamblers and cheaters.

Jacks: Persuasive and quick-witted beggars who will say and do anything to make a buck.

Runners: Messengers and package deliverers for the black market and others. Experts at getting around the city quickly and cheaply.

Sex Workers: Sell their bodies in the city sex industry. Most have troubled pasts. Many form revenge pacts with each other.

Thieves: A member of one of many small street families that have survived, for generations, by stealing.

Well Gangs

Animalists: Use mental programming to experience animal-like consciousness, believe that intelligence is only one tool for achieving instinctual desires.

Bleeders: Exert psychic influence on others by using samples of peoples' blood.

Freaks: Members of a chaotic freak show troupe that make money by holding wild carnivals.

Humankalorie: Students of an alien culture and martial arts system, have adopted the lifestyle of and become part of the society of the Clowdian (Kalor) aliens.

Hummingbirds: Dance-club attendees who take drugs to enhance their metabolism and let them dance harder and faster.

Hungry: Victims of a drug overdose causing permanent anhedonia (inability to feel pleasure), keep themselves going with artificially implanted hunger to seek revenge on the Drug Lords that created them.

Immortals: Young students who speed their acquisition of psychic skills by absorbing the memories of powerful psychics. Achieve "immortality" by passing down their memories through generations.

Math Addicts: Use mental programming to become human calculators with incredible powers of prediction, accuracy and analysis in everything from politics to combat.

Mem Junkies: Addicts to mental programs that enhance the emotional recall of memories. Mem-junkies seek out emotional experiences as if they were drugs.

Needle Punks: Gang of young pharmaceutical artists who experiment on themselves with drug cocktails and have learned to deal with potentially lethal side-effects.

Night Shift: Young cops with gang-attitude. Refuse to become corrupt. Break the rules in order to punish criminals.

Orphans: Once kids in an orphanage who revolted against abusers, now adults sworn to protect children.

Roofers: Own the rooftops, which they can travel quickly and leap between fearlessly. At constant war with the Siders.

Risen: Violent gang with much infighting. Many members faked their own death, many get implants, all are infected with mitochondrial vampirism.

Siders: Split off from Roofers, now at war with them. Expert climbers with high-tech gear who travel on the sides of buildings.

Skin Borgs: Warlike, expansionist gang. Wear multiple layers of high-tech armor. Social structure of violence and intimidation.

Technophiles: Small, loose group, obsessed with the art of technology, favoring a hands-on approach to tech.

Non-Gang Wells

Cornerpunks: Members of gangs too small to make a name for themselves on the citywide gang scene.

Freelancers: Young Wells with no particular allegiance to any gang, philosophy or lifestyle. Commonly security guards or mercenaries.

Goods: Drug dealers who believe that they are making the world a better place by offering addicts cheaper and safer drugs than the Drug Lords do.

Neos: Visitor from neo-cultural commune (a commune that tried to revive elements from ancient cultures).

Workers: Work hard for a day's pay in legitimate city industries and don't do much else.

Indie Gangs

Arcadians: Indie gang whose lives revolve around playing games. They have great knowledge of strategy, quick reflexes and have been known to manipulate events within the city.

Boarders: Thrill seekers on high-tech slipboards, speeding through the city doing tricks and ignoring boundaries of turf.

Dragons: Believe they are the destructive force of nature (the "dragon" of mythology) incarnate in a human form.

Omniscients: A group of obsessed technology hobbyists who use technology to expand their senses.

Purists: Members of a cult/gang who believe that their physical, mental and spiritual health is dependent on their keeping themselves free from chemical, emotional and psychic pollution.

Sexologists: Use sex to facilitate psychic bonding for physical and psychological therapy.

Tea Drinkers: Reviving the ancient Indian "Soma" drink which gives psychic powers.

Non-Gang Indies

Eccentrics: Older people with a lot of experience who have decided for aesthetic or philosophical reasons to be out on the streets.

Hunters: Make a sport out of hunting people. Some hunt innocent people, others hunt criminals, serial killers, Colins, even evil hunters.

Night Walkers: Roam the streets (usually at night), getting in to adventures and broadcasting their experiences live on the net for profit.

Sat Jumpers: Engineers in the high-danger field of on-site satellite repair. They work for a small company in the city.

Traders: The heart of the city's black market. They collect networks of resources to obtain merchandise and their homes are stores holding just about everything.

Utopia Children: Young adults who were raised in radical utopianist communes to have advanced "values" and sent in to the city to spread those values.

Volunteers: Advantaged charity workers who take to the streets to help less advantaged people.

Y1s: Entrepreneurs, taking advantage of the low cost of doing business in the city to start new businesses (most of which either fail or are bought by corps within the first year).

STEP SIX - CHOOSE SKILLS

In Brief: Choose from Street Person, Well or Indie. Then choose a subtype within that class.

Every character begins with 100 skill points to buy skills with. Each character class has a list of skill costs. Each category of skills has a cost; that cost represents the cost (in skill points) to buy one level in any skill from that category. These costs are based on how easily characters of that class have access to teachers of those skills or can teach themselves. Skills are bought in levels from 1 to 6 with 1 representing a hobby level and 6 representing mastership at the skill. PCs can not buy level 6 (mastery) without special permission from the GM. Each level above the first gives +4 to skill rolls using that skill.

Some skills have prerequisites. One or more levels of another skill must be taken before any levels of this skill can be taken.

For example: *an Arcadian character, who can buy BIO skills for 5 points each, buys 3 levels of Emergency Medicine. This costs 15 skill points and gives him a skill level of 3, meaning he will have +8 on all rolls using this skill.*

See the section on using skills (p.67) for more information.

Skill Costs: A Complicated Example

Marvin is a Roofer. The player wants Marvin to be able to speak an incredible number of languages fluently. The skill Foreign Language is a SOC skill, and so the player looks up and sees that Roofers can buy SOC skills at 8 points per level. The player gives Marvin the Private School advantage, which gives -3 to SOC skill costs (min. 4). The player also gives Marvin the Multilingual advantage which gives -2 to skill costs for Foreign Language (min. 2). Finally, the player buys three levels of the skill Linguistics. The description of linguistics states that for each level in the skill the PC gets -2 to the skill costs for Foreign Language (min. 1). For three levels, Marvin should get -6 (min. 1).

The player takes the lowest minimum (min. 1, the minimum from the Linguistics skill) and applies all the bonuses (-3 from Private School, -2 from Multilingual, -6 from Linguistics = -11 in total). Since the bonuses would bring the skill cost below the lowest minimum, the player uses the lowest minimum (1). For Marvin, during character creation, SOC skills in general cost 5 points per level and Foreign Language costs 1 point per level. The player buys Marvin 10 languages at level 5 each for 50 skill points. At level 5, Marvin has a good chance of speaking these 10 languages without an accent.

After character creation, Marvin can continue to buy levels of Foreign Language skills using Experience Points. However, the Private School advantage states that the bonuses to skill costs are during character creation only (since they represent things the PC learned during childhood). The bonuses from Multilingual and Linguistics do not have this limitation. But, even without the -3 from Private School, Marvin still has a skill cost of 1, so there is no change. Later on, though, Marvin gets mixed up with drugs, gets seriously addicted, hits the streets and his character class switches from Roofer to Addict. Addicts have a SOC skill cost of 12, and so with the -9 from Multilingual and Linguistics, Marvin has a skill cost of 3 Skill Points per level.

Skill Description Features

The attribute this skill generally uses (roll Attribute + 1d20 +4/skill level above 1 and try to match the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do with the skill)

Nanomedicine (INL)- Prerequisite: Nanobot Programming (1). The PC can use nanotech tasks to treat medical problems. See p.406 for more.
Easy (10): Use nanobots to search for and destroy parasites in a bloodstream.
Moderate (20): Use nanobots to diagnose and repair internal tearing.
Hard (30): Reconstruct a severely damaged face using nanobots.

A skill PCs must have before they can buy this skill (and the number of levels of the prerequisite skill the PC must have).

A series of examples showing things PCs might do with a skill at different difficulties.

Special Skills

These are skills that are not normally available to the majority of player characters. Within the city there is usually only one group that is capable of teaching these skills, and the price of this learning is usually membership in the group. It may be possible to travel outside the city to find such skills. For instance, the Sexologists are a gang within the city who are the only people in the city who know and teach special psychic techniques involving sexual intimacy. A PC who wanted to learn these skills would have to: (1) Be a Sexologist OR (2) Make a special deal with the Sexologists OR (3) Find some other group in outside the city that will teach comparable skills.

The Special Skills are:

Animalists' Animal Defense (Combat)
Animalists' Animal Rage (WIL)
Animalists' Animal Sensitivity (AWR)
Animalists' Animal Sexuality (CHM)
Animalists' Animal Survival (WIL)
Animalists' Animal Sympathy (CHM)
Bleeders' Blood Attack (WIL)
Bleeders' Blood Communication (WIL)
Bleeders' Blood Memory (INL)
Bleeders' Blood Nina Combat (Combat)
Bleeders' Blood Poisoning (WIL)
Bleeders' Blood Reading (AWR)
Bleeders' Blood Sampling (AWR)
Bleeders' Blood Tracking (AWR)
Boarder's Rolling (AGY)
Dragons' Destroy (STH)
Drakes' Drake Poisons (INL)
Drakes' Drake Poison Immunity (END)
Freaks' Freak Communication (INL)
Freaks' Freak Contortion (AGY)
Freak's Freak Feat (varies)
Freaks' Freak Guessing (INL)
Freaks' Freak Magic (AGY)
Freaks' Freak Mind (WIL)
Freaks' Freak Sex (CHM)

Freaks' Freak Speech (CHM)
Freaks' Freak Swallowing (AGY)
Freaks' Live With Spikes (AWR)
Gamblers' Read Tell (AWR)
Hummingbirds' Hummingbird Lightshow (AGY)
Math Addicts' Math Communication (INL)
Math Addicts' Math Estimation (INL)
Math Addicts' Math Fighting (Combat)
Math Addicts' Math Memorization (INL)
Math Addicts' Math Prediction (AWR)
Math Addicts' Math Triangulation (AWR)
Needlepunks' Wave Riding (INL)
Omniscients' Sensory Integration (AWR)
Purists' Purity of Mind (WIL)
Purists' Sense Impurity (AWR)
Sexologists' Sexual Attack (WIL)
Sexologists' Sexual Comentality (WIL)
Sexologists' Sexual Cophysiology (AWR)
Sexologists' Sexual Demeanor (WIL)
Sexologists' Sexual Healing (WIL)
Sexologists' Sexual Safety (WIL)
Sexologists' Sexual Touch (AWR)
Sex Workers' Bad Trick Sense (AWR)
Technophiles' Technological Sympathy (INL)
Water Rats' Tunnel Surfing (AGY)

Athletics (ATHL)
Acrobatics (AGY)
Bicycle (AGY)
Climbing (AGY)
Driving (AGY)
Hold Breath (WIL)
Low Gravity Movement (AGY)
Motorcycle (AGY)
Running (SPD)
Skates (AGY)
Slipboard Combat (AGY)
Slipboard Riding (AGY)
Slipboard Stunts (AGY)
Sports (AGY)
Swimming (END)

Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Acupuncture (INL)
Addiction (INL)
Diagnosis (INL)
Emergency Medicine (INL)
Forensic Neurology (INL)
Forensic Pathology (INL)
Genetic Therapy (INL)
Nanomedicine (INL)
Pharmacology (INL)
Physical Therapy (INL)
Plastic Surgery (INL)
Psychotherapy (INL)
Psychopharmacology (INL)
Surgery (INL)
Veterinary Medicine (INL)

Combat (CMBT)
Aikido (Combat)
Archery (Combat)
Assassin :Armed (Combat)
Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)
Automatic Weapons (Combat)
Boxing (Combat)
Club (Combat)
Fencing (Combat)
Florentine Sword (Combat)
Immobilization (Combat)
Kickboxing (Combat)
Knife Fighting (Combat)
Knife Throwing (Combat)
Olanidad (Combat)
Olaninan (Combat)
Pistol (Combat)
Rifle/Shotgun (Combat)
Razormouth (Combat)
Self-defense Weapons (Combat)
Shiv (Combat)
Slam (Combat)
Sniper (Combat)
Specific Weapon Training (Combat)
Staff Fighting (Combat)
Street Fighting: Armed (Combat)
Street Fighting: Unarmed (Combat)
Subway Fighting (Combat)
Sword and Shield (Combat)
Tae Kwon Do (Combat)
Water Combat (Combat)
Wrestling (Combat)

Creative (CRTV)
Blacksmithing (INL)
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Archeology/Paleontology (INL)
Botany (INL)
Ecology (INL)
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Genetics: Botanical (INL)
Genetics: Cellular (INL)
Genetics: Disease (INL)
Genetics: Neurological (INL)
Genetics: Tissue (INL)
Geology (INL)
Linguistics (INL)
Meteorology (INL)
Neurology: Consciousness (INL)
Neurology: Personality (INL)
Neurology: Psychic (INL)
Neurology: Sensorimotor (INL)
Pathology (INL)
Philosophy (INL)
Physics (INL)
Psychic Science (INL)

Military (MIL)
Airplane Pilot (INL)
Biological Weapons (INL)
Boat Pilot (INL)
Brainwashing (INL)
Demolitions (INL)
Gun Repair (INL)
Helicopter (INL)
Interrogation (CHM)
Military Tactics (INL)
Offensive Driving (INL)
Poisons (INL)
Torture (INL)
Watersled (INL)

Psychic Exotic (PSYX)
Immune System Attack (WIL)
Insanity Attack (WIL)
Memory Attack (WIL)
Psychic Immortality (WIL)
Psychic Invisibility (WIL)
Psychic Kill (WIL)
Self Image Projection (WIL)

Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Belief Attack (WIL)
Calm Attack (WIL)
Control Attack (WIL)
Emotional Attack (WIL)
Hallucination Attack (WIL)
Pain Attack (WIL)
Physiological Control (WIL)
Psychic Defense (WIL and AWR)
Suggestion (WIL)

Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
Clairsentience (AWR)
Mediumship (AWR)
Mind Reading (AWR)
Precognition (AWR)
Psychic Sense (AWR)
Psychometry (AWR)

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Anonymity (INL)
Bomb Disarming (INL)
Chemical Analysis (INL)
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Denial of Service (INL)
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Jellynailing (INL)
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Mental Programming (INL)
Microelectronics (INL)
Nanobot Programming (INL)
Nanoengineering (INL)
Network Protocols (INL)
Network Security (INL)
Operating Systems (INL)
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Programming: AI (INL)
Programming: Application (INL)
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Secondary Nanotech (INL)
Smart Chemicals (INL)
Sniffing (INL)
System Crashing (INL)
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Thief/Espionage (THIE)
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Law: Clowdian (INL)
Law: Criminal (INL)
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Law: Tech (INL)
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Legends (INL)
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Street (STRT)
Animal Training (CHM)
Card Counting (INL)
City Knowledge (INL)
Drug Resistance (WIL)
Gambling (INL)
Graffiti (INL)
Herbal Medicine (INL)
Hypnosis (CHM)
Light Sleep (AWR)
Mechanics (INL)
Moneysaving (INL)
Needles (AGY and Combat)
Plumbing (INL)
Poison Tolerance (END)
Seduction (CHM)
Sleight of Hand (AGY)
Street Drugs (INL or AWR)
Tracking (AWR)
Trading (INL)
Wilderness Survival (INL)

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Aikido	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Airplane Pilot	INL	Military (MIL)
Alarm Systems	AWR	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
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Animal Sexuality	CHM	Animalists (Ch. 4)
Animal Survival	WIL	Animalists (Ch. 4)
Animal Sympathy	CHM	Animalists (Ch. 4)
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Archeology/Paleontology	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
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Assassin: Unarmed	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
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Belief Attack	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
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Climbing	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
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Cryptography	INL	Information (INFO)
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Forensic Pathology	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
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Gardening	INL	Creative (CRTV)
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Genetics: Anatomical	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Genetics: Botanical	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Genetics: Cellular	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Genetics: Disease	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Genetics: Neurological	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Genetics: Tissue	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Geology	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
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Impersonation	CHM	Thief/Espionage (THIE)
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Interrogation	CHM	Military (MIL)
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Knife Throwing	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
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Law: Business	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Law: Clowdian	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Law: Criminal	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Law: International	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Law: Tech	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Law: Tort	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Legends	INL	Sociological (SOC)
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Mediumship	AWR	Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
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Mental Programming	INL	Tech (TECH)
Meteorology	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Microelectronics	INL	Tech (TECH)
Military Tactics	INL	Military (MIL)
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Mnemonics	INL	Information (INFO)
Money	INL	Information (INFO)
Moneysaving	INL	Street (STRT)
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Nanobot Programming	INL	Tech (TECH)
Nanoengineering	INL	Tech (TECH)
Nanomedicine	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
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Network Security	INL	Tech (TECH)
Neurology: Consciousness	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Neurology: Personality	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Neurology: Psychic	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
Neurology: Sensorimotor	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
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Pharmacology	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Philosophy	INL	Intellectual (INTL)
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Programming: Application	INL	Tech (TECH)
Programming: Virus	INL	Tech (TECH)
Programming: VR	INL	Tech (TECH)
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Psychic Invisibility	WIL	Psychic Exotic (PSYX)
Psychic Kill	WIL	Psychic Exotic (PSYX)
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Psychopharmacology	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
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Robotics	INL	Tech (TECH)
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Sensory Integration	AWR	Omniscients (Ch. 4)
Sexual Attack	WIL	Sexologists (Ch. 4)
Sexual Comentality	WIL	Sexologists (Ch. 4)
Sexual Cophysiology	AWR	Sexologists (Ch. 4)
Sexual Demeanor	WIL	Sexologists (Ch. 4)
Sexual Healing	WIL	Sexologists (Ch. 4)
Sexual Safety	WIL	Sexologists (Ch. 4)
Sexual Touch	AWR	Sexologists (Ch. 4)
Shiv	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Skates	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Slam	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Sleight of Hand	AGY	Street (STRT)
Slipboard Combat	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Slipboard Riding	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Slipboard Stunts	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Smart Chemicals	INL	Tech (TECH)
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Sniper	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Social Work	INL	Sociological (SOC)
Specific Weapon Training	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Sports	AGY	Athletics (ATHL)
Staff Fighting	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Storytelling	CHM	Creative (CRTV)
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Street Fighting: Unarmed)	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Subway Fighting	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Suggestion	WIL	Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
Surgery	INL	Bio/Medtech (BIO)
Swimming	END	Athletics (ATHL)
Sword and Shield	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
System Crashing	INL	Tech (TECH)
System Prowling	INL	Tech (TECH)
Tae Kwon Do	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
Technological Sympathy	INL	Technophiles (Ch. 4)
Torture	INL	Military (MIL)
Tracking	AWR	Street (STRT)
Trading	INL	Street (STRT)
Tunnel Surfing	AGY	Water Rats (Ch. 4)
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Water Combat	Combat	Combat (CMBT)
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Weapon Making	INL	Creative (CRTV)
Wilderness Survival	INL	Street (STRT)
Wrestling	Combat	Combat (CMBT)

Athletics (ATHL)

Acrobatics (AGY)- The PC has been trained in doing physical tricks involving swinging, jumping, rolling, balancing, etc. Primarily for the purposes of amusing others. Additional STH based rolls may be necessary for some stunts. Acrobatics adds +4 to jumping rolls per level.

Easy (10): Do cartwheels.

Moderate (20): Swing off of a fire escape, somersault in midair and land on feet.

Hard (30): Backflip off a building and land on a telephone wire.

Bicycle (AGY)- The PC has trained at riding on various terrain with racing and mountain bikes. Gives the following maneuvers (with +4 for each level after the first - see Vehicle Skills, p.68).

Jump (20): Jump the bike over holes or obstacles.

Sharp Turn (20): By leaning over almost to the point of touching the ground, the PC can make tight turns.

Skidding Turn (30): By skidding the rear tire, the PC can make incredibly fast and tight turns.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Climbing (AGY)- The PC has trained in climbing with or without climbing tools.

Easy (10): Climb an old brick wall bare-handed.

Moderate (20): Climb a cliff face using climbing tools.

Hard (30): Climb a cliff face using no tools.

Driving (AGY)- The PC has practiced driving automobiles (electric and gasoline), trucks and busses. Gives the following maneuvers:

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sharp Turn (20): A tight, high-speed turn.

Skidding Turn (30): By skidding the rear tires, the PC can make incredibly fast and tight turns.

Hold Breath (WIL)- The PC has trained his or her body and mind such that the PC can hold his or her breath for a very long period of time (see p.64 for more on Oxygen Deprivation).

Easy (10): Hold breath for 2 rounds before END loss begins.

Moderate (20): Hold breath for 8 rounds before END loss begins.

Hard (30): Hold breath for 1 minute before END loss begins.

Legendary (40): Hold breath for 4 min. before END loss begins.

Low Gravity Movement (AGY)- The PC has trained (typically in VR) in moving in low or zero gravity environments.

Easy (10): Move without penalty at .5 G.

Moderate (20): Move without penalty at .1 G.

Hard (30): Move without penalty at 0 G.

Motorcycle (AGY)- Gives the following maneuvers.

Jump (20): Jump the motorcycle over holes or obstacles.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Skidding Turn (30): By skidding the rear tire, the PC can make incredibly fast and tight turns.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Trample (30): By raising the front wheel up, the driver can attempt to knock down and run-over a person.

Running (SPD)- The PC has learned a very efficient stride and knows just how much energy to spend to maintain maximum speed throughout different length runs.

Easy (10): Run a burst at +1 SPD -or- run a long distance at 75% of normal END loss.

Moderate (20): Run a burst at +2 SPD –or- run a long distance at 50% of normal END loss.

Hard (30): Run a burst at +3 SPD –or- run a long distance at 25% of normal END loss.

Skates (AGY)- The PC has trained in using roller-skates, rollerblades and motorized skates. PC can also use ice-skates or skis at additional difficulty. Gives the following maneuvers:

Jump (20): Jump over holes or obstacles.

Rails (30): Ride on very thin things like railings or small ledges.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Slipboard Combat (AGY)- Prerequisite: Slipboard Riding (1). Gives the following maneuvers:

Jump Ram (20): Jump up in the air and ram the bottom of the board in to someone as a knockaway attack.

Kick (20): Kick the board at someone's ankles.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Slipboard Riding (AGY)- Gives the following maneuvers:

Jump (20): Jump over holes or obstacles.

Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Slipboard Stunts (AGY)- Prerequisite: Slipboard Riding (1). Gives the following maneuvers:

Jump (10): Jump over holes or obstacles.

Rails (20): Ride on very thin things like railings or small ledges.

Wall Riding (20): Jump and skid along the sides of walls for several feet.

Sports (AGY)- The PC has learned every popular physical sport in the city, including basketball, soccer, football, handball and tennis. To determine the outcome of the game, each player must make either a sports skill roll (easy difficulty) or AGY rolls (moderate difficulty). The opposed winner wins the game.

Swimming (END)- The PC is skilled at swimming for speed, distance and agility.

Easy (10): Swim at ¼ SPD -or- swim a long distance at 75% of normal END loss.

Moderate (20): Swim at 1/3 SPD -or- swim a long distance at 50% of normal END loss.

Hard (30): Swim at ½ SPD -or- swim a long distance at 25% of normal END loss.

Vehicle Skills In Brief

Unlike normal skills, which list an easy, moderate and hard action that can be done with the skill, vehicle skills list a number of maneuvers that can be made with the skill. Each maneuver has its own difficulty. See the section on Vehicle Skills (p.68) for more.

Bio/Med (BIO)

Acupuncture (INL)- Originally a traditional treatment from Asia, this has become an accepted (if not commonly used) form of modern medicine.

Easy (10): Ease pain from a damaged nerve.

Moderate (20): Ease nausea.

Hard (30): Completely anesthetize someone for surgery.

Addiction (INL)- The PC has studied the medicine and biology of addiction and various therapies for addiction.

Easy (10): Name the withdrawal effects of a commonly abused drug.

Moderate (20): Prescribe pharmaceutical therapy to help someone get over a drug addiction.

Hard (30): Determine what a person was addicted to by examining his or her neurons with a scanning-tunneling microscope.

Diagnosis (INL)- By examining a patient the PC can tell what disease a patient has and how bad they have it. A full examination includes observing physiological differences, getting a medical history, asking the patient to describe what they are feeling and doing medical tests.

Easy (10): Diagnose a disease by doing a full examination (see above).

Moderate (20): Diagnose without doing any tests.

Hard (30): Diagnose without tests, a history or communicating with a patient.

Legendary (40): Diagnose a rare disease by looking at a photo of a clothed patient.

Emergency Medicine (INL)- The PC has trained in keeping patients alive long enough to get them to a hospital (or to a Black Med's home).

Easy (10): Clean and dress wounds (prevent additional bleeding and reduce chance of infection).

Moderate (20): Intubate a patient to make sure that air can continue to flow in to the lungs.

Hard (30): Do emergency surgery to reduce intra-cranial swelling.

Forensic Neurology (INL)- The PC has studied the examination of the brains of corpses to determine facts about their lives and deaths.

Easy (10): Determine a person's emotional state at the time of his or her death.

Moderate (20): Determine how much intellectual and sensory stimulation a person enjoyed during his or her life.

Hard (30): Determine if a person was manipulated by a psychic recently before his or her death.

Forensic Pathology (INL)- The PC knows how to examine a corpse using various tests to determine the cause and circumstances of death as well as the person's health during life.

Easy (10): Determine what caused a person's death.

Moderate (20): Determine what drugs a person has used over the past five years of his or her life.

Hard (30): Determine how many seconds it took for an injury to kill a person and what they were capable of (physically and mentally) during that time.

Genetic Therapy (INL)- The PC has studied the use of viruses to change the genetic code of patients in order to cure genetic problems and treat other diseases.

Easy (10): Prescribe and implement a genetic therapy to cure sickle-cell anemia.

Moderate (20): Prescribe and implement a genetic therapy to increase physical size.

Hard (30): Prescribe and implement a genetic therapy to help treat an anxiety disorder.

Nanomedicine (INL)- Prerequisite: Nanobot Programming (1) (TECH). The PC can use nanotech tanks to treat medical problems. See p.406 for more.

Easy (10): Use nanobots to search for and destroy parasites in a bloodstream.

Moderate (20): Use nanobots to diagnose and repair internal tearing.

Hard (30): Reconstruct a severely damaged face using nanobots.

Pharmacology (INL)- The PC has studied the use of pharmacological treatments (drugs) for various diseases. The PC knows the side effects and possible interactions of pharmaceuticals. Keep in mind that an accurate diagnosis (see Diagnosis) is the prerequisite for any pharmacological treatment.

Easy (10): Prescribe a treatment for pain.

Moderate (20): Prescribe a treatment for a late stage auto-immune disease infection.

Hard (30): Prescribe a treatment for a serious drug interaction.

Physical Therapy (INL)- The PC knows how to help people recover from serious injuries and illnesses. Therapy primarily involves exercises and stretching.

Easy (10): Help a patient recover from a stab wound to the thigh.

Moderate (20): Help a patient recover from a year in a coma.

Hard (30): Help a patient recover from serious brain damage.

Plastic Surgery (INL)- Prerequisites: Surgery (1). The PC has studied the use of advanced surgery techniques to change people's appearances.

Easy (10): Slightly improve someone's appearance.

Moderate (20): Make someone look completely different.

Hard (30): Do a complete sex change operation.

Psychotherapy (INL)- The PC has trained in helping people overcome psychological problems and traumas using various forms of therapy (talk therapy encourages people to discover their own feelings and mental processes, cognitive therapy teaches people to avoid illogical or harmful thoughts, role-playing therapy helps people prepare to deal with real-life situations and exposure therapy helps people deal with fears by slow exposure to the source of the fears).

Easy (10): Help a patient overcome a mild phobia.

Moderate (20): Help a patient deal with the psychological effects of a recent severe trauma.

Hard (30): Help a patient overcome a sexual fetish.

Legendary (40): Help a patient discover that he or she is paranoid and delusional.

Psychopharmacology (INL)- Prerequisites: Pharmacology (1). The PC has been trained in the use of pharmaceuticals to treat psychological problems. One of the major problems encountered in psychopharmacology is finding a treatment that has so few side effects that a patient can be convinced to stay on it.

Easy (10): Prescribe a treatment for anxiety.

Moderate (20): Prescribe a treatment for schizophrenia.

Hard (30): Prescribe a treatment for a patient with manic depression, obsessive compulsive disorder and a sexual fetish.

Surgery (INL)- The PC has been trained in the surgical treatments of illnesses. Keep in mind that an accurate diagnosis (see Diagnosis, p.22) is the prerequisite for any surgical treatment.

Easy (10): Remove a bullet from a thigh without causing additional bleeding.

Moderate (20): Open the chest and repair lacerations to the heart caused by a stab wound.

Hard (30): Replace a defective heart with a vat-grown heart.

Veterinary Medicine (INL)- The PC has trained in the diagnosis, surgical and pharmacological treatment of common animal ailments. The PC can also treat humans at higher difficulty (+10).

Easy (10): Splint a broken bone.

Moderate (20): Treat a common communicable disease.

Hard (30): Open-heart surgery.

Combat (CMBT)

Aikido (Combat)- This 20th century martial art was designed for non-violent self-defense. Gives the following moves with bare hands and feet only:

+4 to Disarm
+4 to Grab (Pain)
+0 to Knockdown
+4 to Dodge
+4 to Flip
+0 to Parry

Archery (Combat)- The PC has trained in using bows and crossbows for sport and for combat. Gives the following maneuvers with bows and crossbows:

+4 to Simultaneous Draw and Strike (bows only)

Double Aim (takes 2 actions, +10 to next action)

+0 to Strike
+4 to Vital Strike
No penalty for targeted strikes.

Assassin: Armed (Combat)- Techniques for quick and efficient killing of a surprised opponent with weapons designed for that purpose (knives, garrotes). For assassin training using firearms, see Sniper (p.25). Gives the following maneuvers:

+4 to Grab (Strangulation) with garrote weapons.

+0 to Special Action: Jugular Attack (Requires 1/2 or more bladed damage handheld weapon. If successful, victim loses 4 BLD per round until dead. AWR + AGY vs. 40).

+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed) with knives

Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)- Techniques for quick and efficient killing of a surprised opponent with bare hands alone. Gives the following maneuvers with hands and feet:

+4 to Grab (Strangulation)

+0 to Special Action: Neck Breaking (Requires a hold on the victim's head. If successful, instant paralysis and death. STH + AGY vs. 40)

+4 to Vital Strike (Blunt)

Automatic Weapons (Combat)- The PC has trained in using all automatic weapons: machine guns, automatic rifles, automatic pistols, etc. Gives the following actions:

+4 to Area Attack

+0 to Vital Strike (Bladed)

+4 to Split Reaction: Dodge (or Drop) and Simultaneous Strike

Boxing (Combat)- The PC has trained in fighting with bare or gloved fists.

+4 to Parry with forearms
+0 to Strike with fists
+4 to Blinding Strike with fists
+0 to Knockout Strike with fists
+4 to Pain/Stun Strike with fists

Club (Combat)- The PC has trained with all manner of clubs, including stick with nail, nightstick, pipe, baseball bat, telescoping baton and skullcrusher. Gives the following plusses with club weapons only:

+4 to Parry
+4 to Vital Strike (Blunt)
+0 to Wing
+0 to Strike

Fencing (Combat)- The PC has trained in sport fencing. Gives the following plusses with fencing swords (or with other swords at -8):

+8 to Parry
+0 to Strike
+0 to Vital Strike
+4 to Jump

Florentine Sword (Combat)- The PC has trained in fighting using two swords.

No penalty for using paired swords.
+4 to Parry
+4 to Strike.
+8 to Split Reaction: Parry and Simultaneous Strike

Immobilization (Combat)- This martial art is usually taught to police officers and security guards. The PC learns actions to take-down and immobilize opponents without hurting them. Gives the following actions:

+8 to Grab (Pain)
+4 to Grab (Wrestling)
+0 to Grab
+0 to Knockdown
-4 to Crippling Attack
-4 to Disarm

Combat Skills In Brief

Each combat skills lists plusses to combat actions and reactions (described on p.78) with a certain set of weapons. At level 1 in the skill, the PC only gets the plusses listed. Ignore any plusses that give +0 or a penalty. For every additional level of the skill, add +4 to each one of these plusses (meaning that the zeroes and negatives will eventually become plusses).

For instance, at level 1 a skill might give +4 to Strike, +0 to Parry and -4 to Vital Strike with a weapon. At level 1, the only plus that really counts is the +4 to strike. At level 2 the PC will get +8 to strike, +4 to Parry and +0 to Vital Strike (now only the Vital Strike does nothing). At level 3: +12 to Strike, +8 to Parry, +4 to Vital Strike.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).

Kickboxing (Combat)- Gives the following actions with feet:
>+4 to Wing
>+4 to Parry
>+4 to Knockaway
>+0 to Strike

Knife Fighting (Combat)- This is one of the most common combat skills taught in the city. Gives the following actions with knives and daggers:
>+8 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
>+4 to Jump
>+4 to Split Action: Jump and Strike
>+0 to Dodge

Knife Throwing (Combat)- The PC has trained in throwing knives, daggers, tomahawks and throwing glass. Gives the following actions when throwing only:
>+2 per level to initiative
>+4 to Strike
>+0 to Vital Strike
>-4 to Blinding Strike
>No penalty for targeted strikes.

Olanidad (Combat)- This is the Kalor art of combat with long pole weapons. Gives the following actions with those weapons (cardad, pendad, sordad, sordad-shield):
>+4 to Parry
>+0 to Wing
>+0 to Strike

The PC must also choose one traditional olanidad weapon to specialize in, which gives one of the following:
>Cardad: +4 to Entangle with cardads only
>Pendad: +8 to Knockdown with pendads only
>Sordad: +4 to Vital Strike with sordads only

Olaninan (Combat)- The Kalor art of combat with small knife-like weapons. Gives the following actions with those weapons (corinan, oponan, pelsinan):
>No penalty for using paired weapons.
>+4 to Split Action Jump and Strike
>+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)

The PC must also choose one weapon to specialize in, which gives the following:
>Corinan: +8 to Split Action Pain/Stun Attack and Vital Strike (Bladed) with corinans only.
>Oponan: +4 to Entangle with oponans only.
>Pelsinan: +4 to Parry with pelsinans only.

Pistol (Combat)- The PC has trained at close quarters combat using pistols (but not automatic pistols) and one-shot guns. Gives the following plusses:
>No penalty for using paired pistols
>+2 per level to initiative with pistols
>+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
>+4 to Split Reaction: Dodge and Strike
>+4 to Split Reaction: Drop and Strike

Razormouth (AGY and Combat) This is a skill usually taught in prison where having a concealed weapon readily available 24 hours a day can save your life. Practitioners learn to keep a razor blade in their mouths and move it around quickly. They can subtly spit it in to their hands for use as a weapon or, if hands are incapacitated, can hold it between their teeth and slash at enemies with their heads.
>Easy (10)- Talk with a razor in mouth without being cut.
>Moderate (20)- Sleep with razor in mouth.
>Hard (30)- Half-swallow razor so it will not be seen on a search of the mouth.

This is also a combat skill with the following actions:
>+0 to Slash Attack
>+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)

Rifle/Shotgun (Combat)- The PC has trained with the use of all rifles (including assault rifles and sniper rifles) and shotguns (including sawed-off shotguns). Gives the following actions with those weapons only:

+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
+4 to Simultaneous Strike
+0 to Strike

Self-Defense Weapons- Gives the following plusses with blinding powder, kubotans, pepper spray, and tasers.

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+4 to Blinding Strike
+0 to Crippling Attack

Shiv (Combat)- This skill, usually taught in prison, trains the PC in using small concealed, homemade poking weapons (including shiv and sharpened railroad spike) and making surprise attacks on victims' vital organs. The PC gets the following plusses:

+4 to Vital Strike
+0 to Blinding Strike
+0 to Crippling Strike
+0 to special action: Extra-Vital Attack (Requires shiv or small dagger capable of at least 1 bladed damage. Success is an attack that pierces the spine, heart or temples and does 5 bladed damage. STH + AGY vs. 40)
-special action: Invisible Aim (The PC takes aim mentally, even while the weapon is still concealed, giving +4 to the next action.)
+2 per level to initiative during surprise attacks only with shivs and small daggers

Slam (Combat)- This style of combat originated in the most violent corners of the city dance club and live music scene. Tightly packed people learned how to hurt people and how to avoid being hurt. Because many attacks involve elbows (which are harder to grab and pin than fists), Slam is a good counter to martial arts like Immobilization. Gives:

+2 per level to actions with hands and feet while blinded
+0 to Stomp
+0 to Knockdown with elbows
+6 to Paired Pain/Stun attack with elbows
+2 to Parry with forearms
+0 to special action: Blind Swing (Takes no blindness penalties. Does the same damage as a normal punch. STH + AGY +1d20 vs. 30)
+2 per skill level to STH feats to push through a crowd or avoid being pushed by a crowd.

Sniper (Combat)- The PC has trained in killing people from a long distance using sniper rifles. Other types of rifles with scopes can be used at additional difficulty (+10).

Double Aim (Takes 2 rounds, gives +8 to the next action).
+4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
No penalty for targeted strikes.

Specific Weapon Training (Combat)- The PC has trained in one hand weapon that is not covered by any other skill (including fire axe, karits, pickaxe, pike, sledgehammer, tiger claws or whip). Gives the following:

+4 to Strike
+4 to Vital Strike -or- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack (choose one)
+4 to Parry -or- +2 per level to initiative (choose one)

Staff Fighting (Combat)- Gives the following plusses with staves or with pole weapons being used as staves:

+8 to Parry
+0 to Strike
+4 to Split Action Jump and Strike

Street Fighting (Armed) (Combat)- The PC has been trained in rough-and-tumble, no-rules, do-anything-to-win fighting using whatever objects are available that can be used as weapons. Gives the following plusses using improvised weapons (see p.80) or cheap weapons (baseball bats, chains, crate cutters, daggers, kitchen knife spears, knives, pipes, rippers, sharpened sticks, shivs, skullcrushers, stick with nails, swinging rocks, swords (rusty saw) and throwing glass):

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+4 to Simultaneous Strike
+4 to Crippling Attack
+0 to Slash
-4 to Vital Strike (Bladed and Blunt)

Street Fighting (Unarmed) (Combat)- Gives the following plusses with hands and feet only:

+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+4 to Crippling Attack
+4 to Blinding Attack
+0 to Knockdown
+0 to Stomp

Subway Fighting (Combat)- Because so many confrontations happen in subways cars, some fighters spend hour practicing on subway cars. This skill gives the following combat actions:

-special action: Propelled Jump Kick (Requires the subway car to be accelerating or decelerating such that it is pushing the PC forward towards the target. Success means the PC makes a powerful jump-kick that does full kick damage and is a knockdown attack. SPD + AGY vs. 25)
-special action: Swing Kick (The PC grabs a handrail and uses it to swing at his or her enemy, doing a powerful kick. If successful, victim takes two blunt damage. SPD + AGY vs. 25.)
+4 to Jump, only when the PC is jumping behind a vertical handrail pole (the PC avoids the attack by putting the pole between themselves and the opponent).
+4 per level to save vs. loss of balance, only on subway cars.

Sword and Shield (Combat)- The PC has trained at using a sword (or machete) in one hand and a shield in the other. Gives the following plusses:

+4 to Parry
+8 to Split Action Parry and Simultaneous Strike
+0 to Knockaway

Tae Kwon Do (Combat)- One of the most popular martial arts in the world, nearly synonymous with Karate. Focuses on dropping opponents swiftly and efficiently using only hands and feet. Gives the following plusses while unarmed only:

+2 per level to initiative
+4 to Strike with fists and feet
+4 to Pain/Stun Attack
+0 to Split Action Jump and Strike (kick)
+0 to Parry (with the back of the hand)

Water Combat (Combat)- The PC has trained at fighting underwater. Gives the following plusses:

No penalty to fighting underwater.
+4 to Grab
+0 to Knockaway

Wrestling (Combat)- Gives the following plusses:
+0 to Grab
+4 to Grab (Wrestling)
+4 to Knockdown
+4 to Tackle
+0 to Flip

Creative (CRTV)

Blacksmithing (INL)- The PC can make artful or useful things out of metal using a hammer and anvil or moulds. PC can not make weapons with this skill.
Easy (10): Create a simple metal tool.
Moderate (20): Create a precise tool or weapon.
Hard (30): Create machinery parts.

Brewing (INL)- The PC can make alcoholic beverages through fermentation.
Easy (10)- Make a bad tasting beer with enough alcohol to get drunk (and kill any bacteria in the water).
Moderate (20)- Make a tasty beer or a bad tasting brandy.
Hard (30)- Make a tasty brandy or an award winning beer.

Carpentry (INL)- The PC has learned how to build and modify buildings and other large structures.
Easy (10): Build a small temporary shelter that can withstand a storm.
Moderate (20): Build a full house over the course of several months.
Hard (30): Build a sea-worthy sailing ship.

Cooking (AWR)- The PC can cook in various styles.
Easy (10): Make a tasty meal in a well-stocked restaurant kitchen.
Moderate (20): Make a delicious meal in an Indie's kitchen.
Hard (30): Make a delicious meal made from food scrounged from a Well's fridge.
Legendary (40): Make an award-winning meal made entirely out of half-rotten food scavenged from dumpsters and cooked in tin-foil over a fire.

Gardening (INL)- The PC can grow and nurture crops for food, medicine, poison or decoration. Although this skill gives knowledge of different plants and what conditions they need to grow, it gives only a little knowledge of how to use the plants.
Easy (10): Grow plants in a greenhouse with grow-lights.
Moderate (20): Grow plants in an air-conditioned house with a small grow-light.
Hard (30): Grow plants in cracks in the asphalt.

Graphic Design (INL)- The PC is trained to use software to create beautiful or compelling images. With modern technology, computer generated images can be printed on just about anything: paper, cloth, wallpaper and even skin.
Easy (10): Create a pleasant background for an internet site.
Moderate (20): Create a good-looking company logo.
Hard (30): Create a piece of art that could be framed and sold, using only public domain images.

Music (AWR)- The PC can compose, read, write, play and improvise music. Choose one primary instrument (including voice) that the PC specializes in and up to three secondary instruments that the PC can play at -8.
Easy (10): Play a popular old tune.
Moderate (20): Make up an entertaining song (given hours of practice).
Hard (30): Make up an entertaining song (on-the-fly).
Legendary (40): Compose and play a hit song.

Photography (AWR)- The PC knows how to capture the exact look, feel and details of a scene that the PC wants to capture. The PC is also acquainted with how to maintain and use various photographic, developing and printing equipment.
Easy (10): Use studio lighting to photograph someone looking very nice.
Moderate (20): Capture the beauty of a dark alley.
Hard (30): Capture the action of a twilight battle using a cheap camera.

Sculpture (AWR)- The PC can carve beautiful or useful things out of rock or wood or form them out of clay.
Easy (10): Make a wooden doorstop.
Moderate (20): Make a useful pot out of clay.
Hard (30): Carve a stone statue that is a perfect likeness of someone.

Storytelling (CHM)- The PC can tell entertaining and engaging stories.
Easy (10): Entertain small children.
Moderate (20): Entertain young adults.
Hard (30): Entertain battle-weary veterans.

Visual Arts (AWR)- The PC has trained at painting, drawing and sketching.
Easy (10): Paint a pleasing picture.
Moderate (20): Draw a recognizable sketch of a person from memory.
Hard (30): Draw an illustration which is almost as detailed and realistic as a photograph.

Weapon Making (INL)- Prerequisites: Blacksmithing (2). The PC has trained in making weapons out of wood and metal.
Easy (10): Make a Sharpened Stick.
Moderate (20): Make arrows.
Hard (30): Make a sword.
Legendary (40): Make a superb samurai sword.

Information (INFO)

Computer Modeling (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (1). The PC knows how to use computer software to model real world systems. This is a great aid in all forms of engineering and for predicting the behavior of systems.
Easy (10): Model the aerodynamics of a vehicle design.
Moderate (20): Model the ecosystem in a fishbowl.
Hard (30): Model weather patterns or the stock market.

Cryptography (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (2). The PC knows the theoretical math behind modern cryptographic techniques and code-breaking techniques. The PC can analyze, modify and create cryptographic or code breaking algorithms (see p.73 for more).
Easy (10): Do simple cipher by hand.
Moderate (20): Aided encryption or decryption (p.73).
Hard (30): As part of a research team, discover new cryptographic techniques after months of research.

Information Smuggling (INL)- The PC is acquainted with all the various things that data can be hidden in, from the static in a music recording to the thread pattern in the cloth inside a shoe.

Easy (10): Hide information in a data file or computer chip.

Moderate (20): Hide information in a manufactured product.

Hard (30): List all the items on a smuggler's person that might contain hidden information.

Math (INL)- The PC has studied the various forms of mathematics and statistics that are behind modern science and computer technology.

Easy (10): Calculate the compound interest on a loan.

Moderate (20): Understand the parabolic equations behind cryptography.

Hard (30): Understand the fractal equations behind Artificial Intelligence.

Mnemonics (INL)- The PC has learned various tricks and techniques to be able to remember large amounts of information very accurately.

Easy (10): Hear a long phone address and remember it for days.

Moderate (20): Memorize the configuration of a chessboard and remember it for days.

Hard (30): Memorize several pages of a book (as fast as it can be read) and remember it verbatim for weeks.

Legendary (40): Memorize a 1000 digit cryptographic key and remember it for months.

Money (INL)- The PC understands the complex world of international currencies, banks, electronic money transfers, investments and taxes. Business owners use this skill to conduct international business. Criminals use it to launder money and create tax shelters. Hackers use it to tap in to electronic money transfers and steal (or create) money.

Easy (10): Explain what happens, step by step, when you pay for something on-line.

Moderate (20): Create a tax shelter.

Hard (30): Set up a bank.

Intellectual (INTL)

Agriculture (INL)- The PC has studied the history, methods and science of modern agribusiness.

Easy (10): Explain crop-rotation.

Moderate (20): Determine which crop is most profitable for a certain farm.

Hard (30): Plant, grow, protect, harvest and sell a small crop.

Archeology/Paleontology (INL)- The PC has studied the methods used to gain information about pre-history (primarily nanotech and computers today) as well as the information that has been gained by those methods.

Easy (10): Tell what millennium human mitochondrial vampirism first appeared.

Moderate (20): Recognize the bones of a euoplocephalus.

Hard (30): Analyze pollen count layers assayed by nanobots to determine the month-by-month weather 10,000 years ago.

Botany (INL)- The PC has studied the science of plants.

Easy (10): Classify plants by kingdom.

Moderate (20): Identify North American edible plants.

Hard (30): Distinguish poisonous from edible wild mushrooms.

Ecology (INL)- The PC has studied how plants, animals, micro-organisms and the environment interact with each other.

Easy (10): Identify the role of each major player in an ecosystem.

Moderate (20): Determine what the introduction of a particular species will do to an ecosystem.

Hard (30): Create a sustainable enclosed artificial ecosystem from scratch.

Genetics: Anatomical (INL)- Prerequisite: Genetics: Tissue (1). The PC has studied the genes that code for major anatomical features like organs, limbs, etc.

Easy (10): Create a rat with fewer toes.

Moderate (20): Create a rat with six legs.

Hard (30): Create a rat with two working hearts.

Genetics: Botanical (INL)- Prerequisite: Botany (1). The PC has studied how to genetically engineer plants.

Easy (10): Make frost-resistant corn.

Moderate (20): Make dandelions with purple flowers and morphine inside them.

Hard (30): Create a thorny vine that can close on an animal (like a venus flytrap does).

Genetics: Cellular (INL)- The PC has studied the genes that code for the anatomy and internal components of cells. This skill can be used to manipulate single-celled organisms or the cells of multi-celled organisms.

Easy (10): Make cells slightly smaller.

Moderate (20): Create cells that lyse (destroy themselves) at a certain chemical signal.

Hard (30): Create cells that create and exude a complex chemical.

Genetics: Disease (INL)- Prerequisites: Genetics: Cellular (1), Pathology (1). The PC has studied the genetics behind the human immune system and behind parasites, bacterial diseases and viruses.

Easy (10): Modify a virus to make it less deadly.

Moderate (20): Modify a virus to make it more potent against a particular person.

Hard (30): Modify a bacterial disease to make it cause schizophrenia-like symptoms.

Genetics: Neurological (INL)- Prerequisite: Genetics: Tissue (1). The PC has studied what little is known about how genes express themselves as neurons, neuroanatomy and instincts.

Easy (10): Create a rat with no pain nerves.

Moderate (20): Create a rat who is slightly better at maze solving (and slightly worse at other tasks).

Hard (30): Create a rat with an instinctual fear of the color green.

Genetics: Tissue (INL)- Prerequisite: Genetics: Cellular (1). The PC has studies those genes that express themselves as different tissues.

Easy (10): Create a rat with stronger bones.

Moderate (20): Create a rat with bony spikes.

Hard (30): Create a rat that can see ultra-violet.

Geology (INL)- The PC has studied the nature and origin of minerals and the earth's composition. The PC knows the mineral history of the planet and the origin of geological features like mountains, valleys, islands, etc.

Easy (10): Describe the process of mountain building.

Moderate (20): Describe what nearby areas a rock might have come from.

Hard (30): Predict an earthquake by analyzing tectonic stresses as surveyed by nanobots.

Linguistics (INL)- The PC has studied the theory and composition of languages. Each level of this skill gives -2 to the skill cost for the skill Foreign Language (min. 1).

Easy (10): Analyze language samples with the help of a computer.

Moderate (20): Determine the origin of a language by comparing it to other languages.

Hard (30): Determine where someone is from by analyzing his or her accent.

Meteorology (INL)- The PC has studied weather and weather prediction.

Easy (10): Predict the next few day's weather using satellite images.

Moderate (20): Predict the next few day's weather using a homemade barometer and weather vane.

Hard (30): Predict the next few days weather using only natural senses.

Neurology: Consciousness (INL)- Prerequisite: Mental Programming (1) (TECH). The PC has studied the brain areas and neural connections that make up human attention, awareness and states of consciousness.

Easy (10): Create a program that causes unconsciousness.

Moderate (20): Create a program that makes attention more focused.

Hard (30): Create a program that induces a state of consciousness in which creative thought is easier.

Neurology: Personality (INL)- Prerequisite: Mental Programming (1) (TECH). The PC has studied what little is known about the neural mechanisms responsible for intelligence, judgement, memory and emotion.

Easy (10): Create a mental program that causes anger.

Moderate (20): Create a mental program that increases memory recall.

Hard (30): Create a program that can turn a timid introvert in to a reckless thrill-seeker.

Neurology: Psychic (INL)- Prerequisite: Mental Programming (1) (TECH). The PC has studied what little is known about the neural mechanisms responsible for psychic phenomena.

Easy (10): Explain what psychic skills can currently be emulated by mental programs.

Moderate (20): Create a mental program that gives a readout of the psychic sensory neurons commonly excited in psychic attacks.

Hard (30): Create a program that can do rudimentary psychic sensation

Neurology: Sensorimotor (INL)- Prerequisite: Mental Programming (1) (TECH). The PC has studied what is perhaps the best known area of human neurology: the systems that plan and control movement and the systems that bring in sensations and process them for meaning.

Easy (10): Create a mental program that displays pretty patterns in the user's field of vision.

Moderate (20): Create a program that takes over a person's arms and makes him or her juggle.

Hard (30): Create a program that takes over someone's body and rides a bicycle.

Pathology (INL)- The PC has studied the nature of diseases: how they spread, what they do to the body, how they reproduce.

Easy (10): Describe the disease vectors of influenza.

Moderate (20): Describe the effects on the liver of hepatitis.

Hard (30): List the onset symptoms of a rare South American parasitical disease.

Philosophy (INL)- The PC has studied the major philosophies of ethics, critical thinking and reality from around the world.

Easy (10): Identify the logical fallacy in an argument.

Moderate (20): Outline and criticize Descartes' argument for the existence of god.

Hard (30): Identify the major principles of morality from West African legends.

Physics (INL)- Prerequisite: Math (2) (INFO). The PC has studied the mathematical formulae that explain everything from falling objects to aerodynamics to psychic energy to the birth of the universe.

Easy (10): Calculate the speed and acceleration of an object sliding down a smooth incline.

Moderate (20): Calculate the amount of X-rays that would escape from the event horizon of a black hole.

Hard (30): Understand an attempted unified theory equation.

Psychic Science (INL)- The PC has studied the current scientific knowledge about psychic phenomenon including the biology, chemistry and physics.

Easy (10): Explain how quantum resonance effects the chemical reaction in psychic sensory complexes.

Moderate (20): Recognize psychic energy transmitters in a microscope.

Hard (30): Calculate the likelihood of a wormhole being present at a given time and space that connects to a 'ghost'.

Military (MIL)

Airplane Pilot (INL)- The PC has learned to navigate and fly all types of airplanes (does not include helicopters). Gives the following maneuvers:

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Emergency Landing (20): Land on something that is not a landing strip (or without landing gear) without destroying the plane and its passengers.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Biological Weapons (INL)- The PC is familiar with the creation, deployment, effects of and defenses against chemical and biological weapons (most of which are strictly illegal throughout the world).

Easy (10): List the vectors of Markoff's Disease.

Moderate (20): Recognize the early stage effects of Harmon.

Hard (30): List the ingredients to make nerve gas.

Boat Pilot (INL)- The PC can navigate and pilot all types of multiple-passenger water vessels. The PC gets the following maneuvers:

Survive Wave (10-30): By turning in to a large wave at the right moment, the ship can ride over it without being capsized (difficulty is based on the size of the wave).

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Brainwashing (INL)- Prerequisites: Interrogation (1), Torture (1). The PC has learned how to use sleep deprivation, hunger, pain and intimidation to break someone's psychological resistance. Over the course of several days (or weeks) resistance is brought down to a point that the victim can be forced to say and subsequently to believe anything that the PC wants. Each day, the victims can make a moderate (20 difficulty) opposed WIL roll to avoid having their psychological defenses broken down any further (each opposed success by the victim delays the brainwashing by one day). Difficulty is based on what resources the brainwasher has and how quickly the brainwashing needs to be done.

Easy (10): Brainwash somebody over the course of 2 months, using a full staff, several different types of psychoactive drugs and a subliminal analyzer.

Moderate (20): Brainwash somebody over the course of 4 weeks using a few doses of Compliance Drops and an assistant.

Hard (30): Brainwash someone in one week with no assistance or special equipment.

Demolitions (INL)- The PC has learned how to manufacture, wire and place explosives for maximum effect. This skill does not teach how to disarm explosives (see Bomb Disarming, p.32).

Easy (10): Place a Shaped Charge to destroy the hinges on a tank door.

Moderate (20): Make a pipe bomb.

Hard (30): Bring down a large building (without harming surrounding buildings) using several sticks of dynamite and radio detonators.

Gun Repair (INL)- The PC knows how to assemble, clean, maintain and repair firearms.

Easy (10): Clean a pistol.

Moderate (20): Manufacture bullets.

Hard (30): Recalibrate the sights of a sniper rifle.

Legendary (40): Re-engineer a National Guard rifle so it does not require the DNA-sensing chip to fire.

Helicopter (INL)- The PC knows how to fly a helicopter or similar vehicles. Gives the following maneuvers:

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Hover (20): Stay perfectly still in the air.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Interrogation (CHM)- The PC has learned to combine psychological pressure with methods of lie detection to convince a person to tell the truth. There are many tricks to interrogation: One is to lie and convince the victim that the PC already knows the truth but the victim may benefit by telling his or her side of the story. Another trick is to manipulate the victim in to lying and then ask the right questions to trap the victim in a lie. The PC's manner (usually yelling constantly at the victim) prevents the interrogated from collecting his or her thoughts enough to lie well or figure out when the interrogator is lying. Some interrogation borders on mild torture or brainwashing:

without ever touching the victim, the PC manipulates the victim's environment such that it slowly wears down the victim's will power.

Easy (10): Yell at someone to disrupt his ability to lie or detect lies (-7 to CHM & INL rolls).

Moderate (20): Manipulate someone in to letting herself be trapped in a lie.

Hard (30): Convince a person that telling the truth is to his advantage.

Military Tactics (INL)- The PC has studied military strategy, both in theory and in practice. The obvious application in the city is to help plan and execute battles between groups of people (typically gangs) so that the PC's side is more likely to achieve its goals.

Easy (10): Draw up a battle plan and explain it to a group of soldiers.

Moderate (20): Assess the military capabilities of a group of fighters by observing them.

Hard (30): From a vantage point where the battlefield can be seen, use radios to give orders to combatants and react to changes in the situation.

Offensive Driving (INL)- The PC has been trained to drive motor vehicles in combat situations. Gives the following maneuvers:

Ram (20): Hit a person or other object with the full force of the vehicle.

Resist (20): Resist an attempt by another vehicle to push the PC's vehicle off the road.

Sideswipe (20): Hit the side of another vehicle with the goal of damaging the vehicle and forcing the vehicle off the road or in to some obstacle.

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Poisons (INL)- The PC is well versed in the origin, use, effects and treatment of poisons. Note that this skill imparts very little knowledge of the secret Drake poisons (see the Drake Poisons skill, p.167).

Easy (10): Find something under a Well's sink that, when put on a blade, will make that blade more likely to kill.

Moderate (20): Manufacture Black Market Food Poison (p.144) from household chemicals.

Hard (30): Recognize a common poison by examining a dead body.

Torture (INL)- The PC has learned how to apply extreme amounts of pain to an individual without permanently injuring them, killing them or making them go unconscious. Victim gets an opposed WIL roll to resist the torture.

Easy (10): Force someone to do or say something when he has no real reason not to.

Moderate (20): Force someone to betray her country or friends.

Hard (30): Force someone to do or say something that will cause his own death.

Watersled (INL)- The PC has learned to operate small, one-person water vehicles. This skill can also be used (at +10 difficulty) to drive Snowmobiles. Gives the following maneuvers:

Survive Wave (10-30): By turning in to a large wave at the right moment, the sled can ride over it without being capsized (difficulty is based on the size of the wave).

Swerve (20): The vehicular equivalent of a dodge.

Sharp Turn (20): Make a tight turn.

Psychic Exotic (PSY:X)

Immune System Attack (WIL)- Prerequisite: Physiological Control (1) (PSY:M). The PC learns to excite another person's immune system in an unhealthy way, causing the immune system to be unable to fight off diseases or even causing the immune system to attack the body.

Easy (10): Slightly reduce someone's ability to fight disease (-10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Moderate (20): Significantly reduce someone's ability to fight disease (-20 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Hard (30): Cause the immune system to attack the body (1 BLD damage per hour for 8 hours or until powerful immunosuppressants are administered).

Insanity Attack (WIL)- Prerequisite: Emotional Attack (2) (PSY:M). This rare skill allows the PC to do permanent psychological damage to a victim. The skill is usually used slowly, with a number of covert small attacks over a period of time causing victims to lose touch with reality. Victims aree plagued by bizarre feelings and reactions that make them increasingly paranoid, anxious and alienated.

-A quarter of the way through the attack, victims start to mistrust their friends and to feel that impossible or unlikely things may be happening.

-Half way through the attack, victims start to have bizarre delusions, usually paranoid, apocalyptic or nihilistic in nature.

-Three-quarters of the way through the attack, victims are suffering near-constant hallucinations and delusions, they are anguished and panicking but they may feel inappropriate humor or pleasure at horrible things.

-At the end of the attack, the victim has undergone a complete psychotic break: nothing makes any sense to them at all, there is no cause and effect relationship between the things they do or experience and their emotions, pain and pleasure. Victims may stay psychotic forever. Intense treatment with anti-psychotics and therapy may make victims lucid, but it is unlikely they will ever feel or act completely "normal" ever again.

Easy (10): Drive someone insane over the course of a month.

Moderate (20): Drive someone insane over the course of a week.

Hard (30): Drive someone insane over the course of a day.

Legendary (40): Drive someone insane instantly.

Memory Attack (WIL)- Prerequisite: Suggestion (2) (PSY:M). This skill allows the PC to manipulate another person's memories. Like the Belief Attack, the PC must find some way of getting the ideas in to the victim's head (either by speaking directly to the victim or by the Suggestion skill) before the victim can be forced to remember the idea.

Easy (10)- Cause vague déjà vu.

Moderate (20)- Implant a faint memory in another person.

Hard (30)- Edit a person's memories.

Legendary (40)- Erase all memories from a year of a person's life.

Psychic Skills in Brief

Manipulative- Use WIL. When a psychic skill roll manipulates another person, that person gets two rolls: First is an opposed AWR roll (moderate difficulty) to sense that the manipulation is happening. If the victim notices the manipulation, he or she can make an opposed WIL roll (moderate difficulty) to block the psychic manipulation. Manipulative psychic skills use 2 pooled END per round (just like running or holding one's breath). Manipulative skills have modifiers listed on p.68. It is easiest to manipulate people by touch and when the PC is also effected by the manipulation. It is hardest to target a single individual at a distance.

Sensory- Use AWR. Sensory skills are made moderately more difficulty by the presence of a large crowd (psychic static). Sensory skills also increase in difficulty the farther away the thing or person being sensed is (like manipulative skills, touch is best).

Psychic Immortality (WIL)- Prerequisite: Physiological Control (2) (PSY:M). The PC has learned to control his or her own body to such a great degree that the PC can will his or her own heart to keep beating and lungs to keep working long after a normal person would have died. PCs can only use this skill on themselves.

Easy (10): +2 INCY
Moderate (20): +4 INCY
Hard (30): +6 INCY
Legendary (40): +8 INCY

Psychic Invisibility (WIL)- Prerequisite: Hallucination Attack (1) (PSY:M). PCs with this skill learn to 'deflect' the attention of others around them. If successful, the victim can 'see' the PC but can not notice the PC. Computers and alarms are not effected and if some secondary effect of the PC's presence is noticed (e.g. an alarm going off, a door opening and closing) then the PC will be noticed. The difficulty is based on how hard the PC must suppress the victim's attention so as not to be noticed. If the victim is actively searching for the PC, difficulty is +10 (if the victim knows they are looking for someone using this skill: +20). The PC can make additional people besides himself or herself invisible at +20 difficulty so long as they all stand together.

Easy (10): PC curled up in a ball in a vacant lot is not noticed by casual passers-by -or- an old enemy does not recognize the PC's face in a crowd.

Moderate (20): Janitor who things he is alone does not notice PC standing still in the hallway as the janitor walks past.

Hard (30): PC walks right past an alert security guard.

Legendary (40): Victim doesn't notice PC raising an axe to hit her.

Psychic Kill (WIL)- Prerequisite: Physiological Control (2) (PSY:M). The PC with this skill can lower another person's heart rate to the point that the victim simply dies. Death is quiet and painless. The difficulty is based on the amount of autonomic nervous system activity - it is much easier to kill someone whose heart rate is already depressed.

Easy (10): Kill a victim who is in a coma.

Moderate (20): Kill a victim who is asleep or unconscious.

Hard (30): Kill a victim who is wide awake.

Legendary (40): Kill a victim who is taking nervous system stimulants.

Self-Image Projection (WIL)- Prerequisite: Suggestion (1) (PSY:M). A PC with this skill can project ideas that change the way others see them. This form of manipulation is relatively easy because people are used to making snap judgments about each other without paying much attention to what goes in to those judgments. The difficulty is based on two factors: First, the disparity between what the psychic is trying to project and what judgments people would normally make. Second, the amount of scrutiny the PC is under by the victim. Note that this skill can not be used to make a victim believe <u>facts</u> that are untrue - it only changes the intangible, poorly-defined values that people assign to other people like badass vs. wimp, smart vs. stupid, rich vs. poor, attractive vs. unattractive, healthy vs. sickly, etc.

Easy (10): Young teen gang-member makes other subway riders think she is more of a badass than she really is.

Moderate (20): Creepy, isolated misogynist makes woman he is flirting with in a bar think he is charming and confident.

Hard (30): Arthritic old woman in a wheelchair makes a trained street-fighter think that she could beat him in physical combat.

Psychic Manipulative (PSY:M)

Belief Attack (WIL)- When the PC uses this skill, whatever the victim is hearing, reading or thinking (including thoughts implanted via the suggestion skill) will be believed as if the victim was certain they were true. Once the psychic influence ends, the PC can shed the beliefs the same way they would any other firmly-held false beliefs: by logically examining them. The difficulty is based on how likely the victim would be to believe the statement without the psychic influence. If a person already strongly believes something else, then both beliefs co-exist at once and the victim will follow the belief which best meets his or her drive for self-preservation.

Easy (10): Make a person believe "Potato chips are healthier than french fries."

Moderate (20): Make a person believe "Your friends are going to betray you."

Hard (30): Make a person believe "You can fly and jumping out of windows is fun."

Calm Attack (WIL)- PCs with this skill can force a depression of the central nervous system that leads to calmness, sleep or even unconsciousness. Difficulty is based on how excited the victims are and how much they want to stay awake (typically when people realize a psychic is trying to make them fall asleep, their desire to stay awake increases greatly). This skill can also be used to give people plusses to save vs. strong emotions or the effects of central nervous system stimulants (just as a good sedative would).

Easy (10): Make a tired, bored person fall asleep -or- Give +5 to save vs. fear/anger/stimulant effects.

Moderate (20): Make a person who has no real reason not to go to sleep take a nap -or- Give +10 to save.

Hard (30): Make someone who is trying to stay awake (like a security guard) fall asleep -or- Give +15 to save.

Legendary (40): Make an opponent fall asleep during combat -or- Give +20 to save.

Control Attack (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to gain temporary control over a victim's motor functions. Note that since the PC is not receiving kinesthetic feedback from the victim's body and does not see things from the victim's point of view (unless they have very high levels of Clairsentience) any action the PC makes through another person's body is very clumsy (-10 AGY).

Easy (10): Make someone's hand twitch just enough to make them miss a pistol-shot.

Moderate (20): Make someone drop a weapon.

Hard (30): Gain control of both arms for 1 action.

Legendary (40): Gain complete control of a victim's entire body (victim can make opposed WIL rolls every round).

Emotion Attack (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to excite emotions in others that the PC is currently experiencing himself or herself. To make a person experience an emotion the PC is not experiencing is +10 difficulty.

Easy (10): Make a person feel an emotion weakly.

Moderate (20): Make a person feel an emotion at a moderate level.

Hard (30): Make a person feel an emotion so strongly that they must make a save vs. emotion to avoid doing something stupid.

Legendary (40): Paralyze a person with euphoria or dysphoria.

Hallucination Attack (WIL)- The PC can make other people see, hear, smell and even feel things that aren't actually there. Note that the realism of these hallucinations depends, in part, on the PC's powers of imagination.

Easy (10): Make someone hear a soft murmur or see a faint shadow or glow.

Moderate (20): Make someone see a transparent image or hear a faint noise.

Hard (30): Make someone see and hear a person so vividly that he or she thinks the person is real.

Legendary (40): Blind and deafen someone with an obfuscating hallucination.

Pain Attack (WIL)- The PC causes another person to feel physical pain. The victim must make an opposed save vs. pain.

Easy (10): Annoying pain (no save necessary).

Moderate (20): Distracting -or- shocking pain (see p.63).

Hard (30): Distracting and shocking pain.

Legendary (40): Distracting and shocking pain and the victim's eyes hurt so much she can not keep them open.

Physiological Control (WIL)- This skill allows the PC to send messages to his or her own body or other people's bodies to trigger normal physiological actions. The scope of this skill is a lot like that of the Body Control mental program (p.94).

Easy (10): Make someone sweat.

Moderate (20): Make someone's immune system spend more energy fighting a particular disease (+7 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Hard (30): Reduce blood flow to an injured area (no post-battle BLD loss).

Legendary (40): Reduce someone's blood pressure fast enough to make that person faint.

Psychic Defense (WIL and AWR)- The PC has trained in defending himself or herself against psychic attacks. For every level of the skill, the PC gets +4 to the reaction Mental Block (p.79) and +4 to AWR rolls to notice that the PC is being psychically manipulated. The PC can also defend other people from psychic attacks (at +20 difficulty).

Suggestion (WIL)- The PC can implant ideas in people's heads. The victims do not necessarily believe these ideas (see belief attack) but if they fail their AWR rolls they will believe that the ideas came from their own minds and will consider them accordingly. The difficulty is based on the complexity of the idea.

Easy (10): "Skin Borgs are dangerous."

Moderate (20): "I should try looking in the box."

Hard (30): "A true anarchst does not try to destroy the government - a true anarchist refuses to recognize that there is a government and treats law enforcement the same as they do anyone else."

Psychic Sensory (PSY:S)

Clairsentience (AWR)- The PC can sense what another person is currently sensing. The PC must declare who they are trying to pick up senses from and what senses.

Easy (10): Get brief flashes of vision or sound.

Moderate (20): See exactly what a person is seeing -or- hear exactly what a person is hearing.

Hard (30): Experience all of a person's five senses.

Mediumship (AWR)- Prerequisites: Clairsentience (1). The PC can communicate with "ghosts" (leakage of psychic energy through subatomic wormholes that sometimes occurs during death).

Easy (10): Sense the presence of a ghost, experience brief flashes of the person's sensations of death.

Moderate (20): Hear the thoughts of a ghost, experience the full experience of the person's death.

Hard (30): Communicate telepathically with a ghost.

Mind Reading (AWR)- The PC can sense psychic energy coming from another person's mind that indicates what they are feeling and thinking. Can be used in combination with manipulative psychic skills to force people to think or remember specific things and thus psychically interrogate people.

Easy (10): Tell what emotions a person is experiencing.

Moderate (20): Hear occasional words from what the person is thinking.

Hard (30): Hear everything a person is thinking.

Precognition (AWR)- Prerequisite: Clairsentience (1). The PC is constantly 'open' to psychic communication coming from subatomic wormholes (that lead to other times and places) from his or her own mind or from the minds of others. As with mediumship, it is a matter of pure chance whether there will be an open wormhole and whether it leads to the future or past.

Easy (10): The faint impression of an object or a descriptive quality (e.g. "door" or "wet".)

Moderate (20): Brief flashes of vision or hearing.

Hard (30): Full info from all senses for up to 5 seconds.

Psychic Sense (AWR)- PCs with this skill can "see" the psychic energy that comes from most vertebrate nervous systems (and, to a lesser degree, from decaying organic waste, burning plastic and some other rare chemical reactions). Most psychics see psychic energy as a faint glow or aura. The most useful aspect of this skill is the ability to sense people: to see them through walls or in the dark, to tell how active their nervous systems are, tell if they are using or are under the influence of psychic skills, and to distinguish between people by their psychic 'accent.'

Easy (10): In the dark, tell if there is another human in the room -or- tell if someone is using psychic powers.

Moderate (20): In the dark, see a person well enough to fight at only -7 penalty -or- tell how stimulated someone's nervous system is.

Hard (30): In the dark, fight a person at no penalty -or- distinguish between people by their psychic signatures.

Legendary (40): See what areas of a person's brain are most active.

Psychometry (AWR)- Prerequisites: Mind Reading (1), Clairsentience (2). Some types of matter (mostly organic matter that still has natural fats and oils, like wood, lawn clippings, desiccated corpses) can briefly pick up and resonate back psychic energy they have been exposed to, much like a rock that was near a fire may radiate heat for a short period after the fire has been removed. The PC has learned to sense those weak echoes and gain some sense of what has happened near an object in its recent past.

Easy (10): Tell if someone has been psychically attacked or has died near the object within the last hour.

Moderate (20): Sense a strong emotion that happened nearby the object within the last 24 hours.

Hard (30): Get flashes of sight and sound that someone experienced near the object in the last 24 hours.

Tech (TECH)

Anonymity (INL)- The PC knows how to access the internet without leaving any traces that could be used to track back to the user. This is typically done through free (but poorly advertised) anonymous re-sender servers operated by privacy advocates.

Easy (10): Send an anonymous email for a $5 fee.

Moderate (20): Make an anonymous videophone call for free.

Hard (30): Access full-immersion VR -or- send money anonymously for free.

Bomb Disarming (INL)- The PC has learned how to disarm explosives. In combination with the surgery skill, this skill can be used to remove death borgs.

Easy (10): Dispose of a pipe bomb.

Moderate (20): Remove a death borg (requires surgery roll).

Hard (30): Disarm a briefcase nuke.

Chemical Analysis (INL)- The PC has learned to analyze the chemical makeup of samples.

Easy (10): Analyze a simple chemical using a handheld spectrograph.

Moderate (20): Analyze a complex chemical using a handheld spectrograph -or- analyze a simple chemical using a kid's chemistry set.

Hard (30): Analyze a mixture of complex chemicals using a handheld spectrograph.

Copy Protection (INL)- Prerequisite: Programming: Applications (1). The PC knows about the tricks that software companies use to prevent illegal copying and piracy and the tricks that software pirates use to defeat copy protection.

Easy (10): Determine what piracy group has broken copy protection on a piece of software.

Moderate (20): Write standard copy protection in to an application -or- break standard copy protection.

Hard (30): Break copy protection on classified R&D stage corporate software.

Data Pirating- Prerequisite: Internet Browsing (2). The PC has learned where people go on the internet when he or she wants to get pirated software and data. This includes knowledge of software trading rings, file sharing networks, and offshore pirated software net sites. When PCs use the skill to find pirated software, the amount of time it takes them depends on the level of success (success of 1 would be several days, success of 10 would be near instantaneous). A new character starts with $1000 in pirated data per skill level, anything else must be pirated during gameplay.

Easy (10)- Find a $10 (black market value) piece of pirated data for free on the net.

Moderate (20)- Find a $250 piece of data.
Hard (30)- Find a $1500 piece of data.
Legendary (40)- Find a $3000 piece of data.

Denial of Service (INL)- Prerequisite: Network Protocols (1). The PC knows how to overload computers and network connections by flooding them with false requests or garbage packets. Such attacks are often 'distributed': the hacker takes over several computers and uses all of them to attack at once.

Easy (10): Slow a small net-site server to a standstill using fifty computers.

Moderate (20): Slows someone's internet connection to a standstill using ten computers.

Hard (30): Slow a major ISP's mail server using one computer.

Internet Browsing (INL)- This is knowledge of how to find anything on the web quickly, efficiently and cheaply. The PC also knows generally what types of things are available on the net, what are the technological and economic mechanisms that make them available and what are the motivations of the people who put them there. Please note that this skill only includes finding publicly available resources, it does not include anything that would require hacking or piracy to get.

Easy (10)- Find a recipe for Anise-White Chocolate Sauce.

Moderate (20)- Find the full text of a Victorian era treatise on the criminal underworld.

Hard (30)- Find the number of residents in a city housing complex for the year 2013.

Legendary (40)- Find a security camera picture of a friend picking his or her nose.

Jellynailing (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). This is the art of forcing software to run on computers with less power, different hardware or a different operating system than the software was designed for. This usually involves running the program through an emulator (another program that executes the commands of the original program as if they were operating on a different system). No matter the skill of the user, the program will be slower (approximately twice as slow for each level the hardware is inadequate by).

Easy (10)- Run software intended for a slightly faster computer and a different operating system.

Moderate (20)- Write a translation matrix to run software using the wrong piece of hardware.

Hard (30)- Run modern software on a computer from a century ago.

Linework (INL)- The PC knows how to tap in to network connections at connection closets and switch boxes.

Easy (10): Tap in to an apartment's network connection at the locked switchbox on the street.

Moderate (20): Pirate an unauthorized network connection from a switchbox.

Hard (30): Reconfigure a network connection closet to create a new network leg.

Mental Programming (INL)- The PC knows how to write a code file that a mental installer can use to create new neural connections in human (and animal) brains. These new connections create logical circuits that can process commands and data much as a computer program can. Use in combination with the Neurology skills (p.28) to create programs that interact with pre-existing brain functions.

Easy (10): Create a program that can add integers together.

Moderate (20): Create a program that can monitor and react to the stimulation of a single brain area, keeping it within a pre-set amount of stimulation.

Hard (30): Create a program which uses pattern recognition to analyze streaming input.

Mental Programming Skill Roll Failure Table		
Failed By	**Type of Program**	**Effect**
0 to 3	Psychic	-5 to Mental Block, -7 to any psychic skill rolls until repaired.
	Memory	-5 to all INL based skill rolls until repaired.
	Emotional	-5 to all saves vs. emotions until repaired.
	Sensory	-5 to all sensory AWR rolls until repaired.
	Motor	-5 AGY until repaired.
4 to 6	Psychic	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of sudden psychic blast (uses 5 END, pain stun within 5 ft.).
	Memory	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of sudden loss of memory (1+ round to remember what's going on).
	Emotional	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of being stunned by emotions for one round with no save.
	Sensory	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of blinded for one round.
	Motor	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of single jerking movement (does punch or kick damage).
7 to 9	Psychic	Extreme psychic output until unconscious, counts as stun attack within 10 ft.
	Memory	Complete retrograde & anterograde amnesia (p.65) for 1d6 hours.
	Emotional	Rage (-10 to save vs. pain/fear) until unconscious.
	Sensory	Oversensitivity: +7 AWR, -15 to save vs. pain/strong stimuli for 1d6 hours.
	Motor	+5 STH, -5 AGY and exhaustion (-1 END/minute) until unconscious.
10+	Psychic	Extreme psychic lability (-20 to save vs. psychic attack) for 1d6 days.
	Memory	Loss of all recent memories, loss of 50 skill points, loss of many old memories.
	Emotional	Uncontrollable homicidal (odd) or suicidal (even) impulses for 1d6 days.
	Sensory	Obfuscating hallucinations (20 difficulty to save) for 1d6 days.
	Motor	Unwanted movements (-10 AGY) and weakness (-10 STH) for 1d6 days.

Microelectronics (INL)- The PC is fluent in the circuitry and microchips that power every modern electronic device. The PC can repair most electronic devices (given the correct parts).

Easy (10): Repair a computer by determining what part is not working and ordering a new one.

Moderate (20): Lay out a microchip design in a CAD program.

Hard (30): Alter the functioning of an electronic device by breaking off one of its microchips.

Nanobot Programming (INL)- The PC knows how to write the command files that are broadcast to nanobots to tell them what to do.

Easy (10): Program nanobots to spread out and destroy anything metal they find.

Moderate (20): Program nanobots to invade a book, read all the text and send the information back to a computer.

Hard (30): Program nanobots to break a hamburger down in to its component chemicals, transport those chemicals somewhere else and rebuild the hamburger.

Nanoengineering (INL)- The PC has studied the atom-by-atom design of nanobots and how to code design files that tell annobots how to build the next generation.

Easy (10): Create nanobots with a 'weapon' for destroying other nanobots.

Moderate (20): Create nanobots that have limited vision capabilities.

Hard (30): Create nanobots with tiny hot air sacks and propellers that let them fly.

Network Protocols (INL)- The PC understands the hidden header information attached to every data packet that gets sent out on a network. The packet tells what the data is, who sent it, how it was routed, where it is going to, among other things. The PC also knows secret network queries and commands that network administrators use to diagnose network problems.

Easy (10): Probe a network to find out what type of network it is and what other networks it had access to.

Moderate (20): Send a packet from one network node so it looks like it's coming from another node on the same network.

Hard (30): Get a complete list of nodes on a network.

Network Security (INL)- The PC understands how to configure networks, servers and workstations to resist intrusion by hackers. The amount of success on a roll increases the difficulty for a hacker to find a hole in a network or station's security.

Easy (10): Configure a personal workstation to resist hack attempts.

Moderate (20): Configure a server to resist hack attempts.

Hard (30): Configure an entire network to resist hack attempts.

Operating Systems (INL)- The PC understands how to configure, repair and use operating systems (the programs that run on a computer and create an interface for running other programs). For every level in the skill the PC must choose an operating system that they specialize in (OpenFree/OpenCert, OpenMicro, Amicus, Mainframe 10 or GuildOS). The PC is at +10 difficulty to any OS he or she hasn't specialized in.

Easy (10): Hide files from casual searches -or- find hidden files.

Moderate (20): Configure an OS so it runs faster and crashes less.

Hard (30): Repair an operating system that has been trashed -or- run a command the current account does not normally have privileges to run.

Payphones (INL)- The PC is versed in the workings of payphones and paycomputers. The PC knows how to hack in to these machines (typically by getting in to the circuitry and crossing a few wires) to get free access or even spare change. This skill also works on vending machines at a higher difficulty (+10).

Easy (10): Make free phone calls.

Moderate (20): Free paycomputer internet access.

Hard (30): Get a payphone to collect change and then drop it in to the coin return for the hacker.

Programming: AI (INL)- The PC knows how to create computer programs that are capable of complex pattern recognition, learning and decision making.

Easy (10): Create a program that can beat a human at chess.

Moderate (20): Create a program that can drive a car.

Hard (30): Create a program that can understand human language, do internet research and build a logical knowledge tree about a certain topic.

Programming: Application (INL)- The PC knows how to program complex user interfaces that lets the average user take advantage of the computer's processing powers.

Easy (10): Create a graphing calculator.

Moderate (20): Create a full-featured word processor.

Hard (30): Create a programmer's suite for easily creating new applications.

Programming Skill Roll Failures

0 to -2: The program has several small errors in it which are not immediately apparent. For every 10 minutes of use the program has a 1 in 20 chance of crashing.

-3 to -4: For every 5 min. of use the program has a 1 in 6 chance of crashing.

-5 to -9: The program has so many errors in it that the PC can not run it for more than a few seconds at a time without it crashing.

-10 or less: The program will not run at all.

Programming: Virus (INL)- The PC is familiar with the tricks utilized by viruses, worms, trojans and time-bombs.

Easy (10): Create a trojan that resembles a short VR movie but, when run, deletes files.

Moderate (20): Create an email virus which, if it can trick people in to running it, will send itself to others on the same network.

Hard (30): Create a worm which will hack in to network nodes and reproduce itself.

Programming: VR (INL)- The PC is familiar with programming of VR interfaces, movies, games or multiplayer VR universes.

Easy (10): Create a short (non-interactive) full immersion VR movie.

Moderate (20): Create a simulated training environment to teach kickboxing.

Hard (30): Create a massive game world for hundreds or thousands of players to interact, have adventures and meet pseudo-intelligent NPCs and villains.

Robotics (INL)- The PC is familiar with the mechanics and programming behind modern robotics.

Easy (10): Repair a Robo-Pal.

Moderate (20): Program a Bomb Disarming Robot to dig through trash-cans and find recyclables.

Hard (30): Create and program a robot from scratch.

Secondary Nanotech (INL)- The PC is well versed in the highly complex and advanced materials that are manufactured molecule-by-molecule by nanobots in corporate labs.

Easy (10): Recognize a common secondary nanotech material.

Moderate (20): Program nanobots to create a common type of secondary nanotech.

Hard (30): Invent a new secondary nanotech material.

Smart Chemicals (INL)- The PC is familiar with the use of very complex manufacturing chemicals which change chemical structure in reaction to various stimuli and can act as elementary logic processors.

Easy (10): Create a coating for glasses that gets darker when exposed to bright lights.

Moderate (20): Create paint that changes color when there are particles of explosives in the air.

Hard (30): Create a powder that can be inhaled which will bind to cinnamon smell receptors and cause the user to smell cinnamon when there are strong psychic reactions present.

Sniffing (INL)- The PC knows how to tap in to the packets of data flowing through a network or an internet router and to search through the packets for a particular sender, receiver or data strings. Once found and isolated, packets can be read, blocked or modified. Note that most important information being sent across the internet is encrypted, so decryption rolls may be necessary to peek in to someone else's communication.

Easy (10): Find and read packets sent to a particular address.

Moderate (20): Find and read packets with a particular word in them.

Hard (30): Intercept and edit packets before they reach their destination.

System Crashing (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). The PC knows what to do with a system to make it stop working.

Easy (10): Make one particular program on a system stop working so that it has to be shut down and re-started.

Moderate (20): Make the whole computer locked up so that it must be manually rebooted.

Hard (30): Crash a computer such that it will not boot up afterwards without hours of repair work by someone with high levels in the Operating Systems skill.

System Prowling (INL)- Prerequisite: Operating Systems (1). The PC knows all the tricks on how to do things on a computer without leaving any traces and without the system's manager being able to see that they are doing it. A hard (30) opposed Operating Systems roll can be used by a system manager to notice system prowlers (just as an opposed AWR roll can be used against prowling).

Easy (10): Erase the history of what internet sites one has browsed on a computer.

Moderate (20): Stop a system from registering that a particular user is currently logged in.

Hard (30): Create an administrator account on a computer that none of the other administrators can see.

Thief/Espionage (THIE)

Alarm Systems (AWR or INL)- The PC knows all about the various electronic alarm systems that protect buildings from thieves. The PC can recognize alarm systems (AWR) and determine how to bypass or disable them (INL). Sometimes AGY rolls are also required to disable or bypass the alarms without setting them off. See p.372 for information on different types of alarm systems.

Easy (10): Recognize a motion detector -or- Bypass infrared beams.

Moderate (20): Recognize a door sensor -or- Move very slowly past a motion detector.

Hard (30): Recognize pressure sensitive floor plates -or- Dress up in trash to fool a human-recognition computer.

Auto-Theft (INL)- The PC knows the various tricks for opening vehicles and hot-wiring them. Note that because there are few running cars in the city (and those that do run are gas guzzlers that very few people can afford to use) this skill is not as useful as it once was. Today it is as often used to break in to the vehicles people are living in to steal their possessions.

Easy (10): Open a door on a very old car using a long flat piece of metal.

Moderate (20): Hotwire an old car.

Hard (30): Hotwire a new car with a security system.

Disguise (INL)- The PC is familiar with the physical aspects of disguise: clothing, makeup, wigs, latex masks, platform shoes, etc. The PC can make himself or herself or someone else look different.

Easy (10): Make a young male look unrecognizable, even by close friends.

Moderate (20): Make a young male looks like an old male or a young woman.

Hard (30): Make a person look exactly like another person (requires latex masks). The disguised person must use the Impersonation skill to act or sound like that person.

Escape Artistry (AGY)- Prerequisite: Lock Picking (2). The PC has learned the various techniques that stage magicians use to escape from various enclosures. Most of these escapes involve having a lock pick hidden on one's person and using contortion to retrieve it and get in to a position where a lock can be picked.

Easy (10): Escape from a pair of handcuffs.

Moderate (20): Escape from a straight-jacket.

Hard (30): Escape from a steamer-trunk wrapped in a chain with a padlock.

Forgery (INL)- The PC knows how to forge signatures, ID cards and other paper based documents. Most attempts at forgery require an investment in equipment (ink, printers, lamination, etc.) which can range from a few bucks (for a cheap ID) to several thousand (for counterfeiting money).

Easy (10): Copy a signature.

Moderate (20): Create a photo ID.

Hard (30): Create counterfeit money.

Impersonation (CHM)- The PC learns to adopt the mannerisms, posture, accent and voice of another. The PC can try to impersonate someone's voice over the phone or, with a very good disguise, in person. The difficulty is based on how much contact the PC will have with those being fooled (walking by and waving 'hi' to someone is easier than having a long conversation) and how well those being fooled know the person being impersonated (close friends would be more difficult than casual acquaintances).

Easy (10): Wave hello to a casual acquaintance.

Moderate (20): Shout a few words at a co-worker.

Hard (30): Speak a few sentences with a friend.

Legendary (40): Have a long conversation with a lover.

Lock Picking (AGY)- The PC knows how to open locks, typically by putting tension on the lock and raking each pin in the lock (with a pick) until they stick in the proper position. This skills can be used in combination with the Microelectronics skill to pick electronic locks.

Easy (10): Pick the lock on a cheap filing cabinet.

Moderate (20): Pick a door lock.

Hard (30): Pick the lock on the change box on a payphone.

Pocket Picking (AGY)- The PC has learned how to put his or her hand in a person's pocket without the person noticing and to remove whatever is found there. The victim gets an opposed (moderate) AWR roll to sense the theft. Victims can also use common sense (e.g. knowing to check their pockets after someone has bumped in to them). Different pockets have different difficulties: a pocket inside a jacket or a pocket on tight jeans would be much harder than large external pockets on a bulky overcoat.

Easy (10): Bump in to a person, almost knocking him over, and remove one item from an external overcoat pocket.

Moderate (20): Walk past someone and pull something out of her pants pocket as the two pass.

Hard (30): While sitting next to someone on a subway, slit a tight jeans pocket with a razor blade and remove the contents.

Prowling (AGY)- The PC has practiced sneaking up on people, moving silent, quickly finding hiding places, crawling through shadows and blending in with the environment. Gives +4/level to prowling rolls (p.60).

Sociological (SOC)

Corporations (INL)- This is a study of the modern corporations of today.

Easy (10): Name all major multinationals and the major subsidiaries of each.

Moderate (20): Name banned corps, their locations and major sources of revenue.

Hard (30): Name and give brief biographies of the board of directors of a major multinational.

Fashion and Beauty (CHM)- Put together an outfit, makeup, jewelry and hair style that accentuates positive features and sends a certain impression.

Easy (10): Put together an attractive outfit (+4 to seduction) for $100.

Moderate (20): Put together a very attractive outfit (+8 to seduction) for $20.

Hard (30): Put together an outfit that makes someone look intelligent (+8 to CHM feats to act smart) for $15.

Foreign Language (INL)- The PC must take separate levels of this skill for each language he or she wishes to learn. Note that some languages are so similar that one language skill may be used to substitute for another at increased difficulty (e.g. substitute Foreign Language: Latin for Foreign Language: Italian at +20 difficulty).

Easy (10): Read and write text in the given language.

Moderate (20): Speak slowly about common things.

Hard (30): Have a normal-paced conversation.

Legendary (40): Speak with perfect, accent-less fluency.

History: City (INL)- The PC has studied the history of New York city and it's surrounding areas.

Easy (10): List the different names the city has had (e.g. New Orange, New Amsterdam).

Moderate (20): Tell what years a skyscraper was built in.

Hard (30): Determine what was on any given block 200 years ago.

History: World (INL)- The PC has studied world history.

Easy (10): Describe the role of the Vatican in the Freedom Wars.

Moderate (20): Name the major Chinese dynasties and say what made each one special.

Hard (30): Name the winner of any given battle in the crusades.

Kalor Language (INL)- The PC has studied the written and spoken language of the Kalor ("Clowdian") aliens (see p.363).

Easy (10): Read and write Kalor text.

Moderate (20): Speak slowly about common things.

Hard (30): Have a normal-paced conversation.

Law: Basic (INL)- The PC has studied the basic principles of American and World law: where laws come from, what courts judge what cases, how cases are brought in front of a court, who can practice law in what situations, what the general legal remedies are for every type of legal problem and the general procedures for legal actions.

Easy (10): File an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief.

Moderate (20): File a complaint against an immoral lawyer with the state bar.

Hard (30): Research all relevant laws and cases for a given legal question (see p.131).

Law: Business (INL)- This is the study of laws and legal doctrines relating to corporations and other businesses.

Easy (10): Form and register a business partnership.

Moderate (20): File a brief giving a legal argument for the disbandment of a corporation.

Hard (30): Find a federal law violation in a shareholder report by a large corp.

Law: Clowdian (INL)- Prerequisite: Kalor Language (1). The PC has studied the document which serves as the basis for all of Kalor society (see p.364 for more).

Easy (10): Accuse someone of a crime.

Moderate (20): Judge whether an Oht (Kalor sparring) blow counted as a win.

Hard (30): Find a never-before-noticed legal loophole to maneuver out of an intractable legal situation.

Legendary (40): Quote from any given passage in the law.

Law: Criminal (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). The PC has studied the criminal justice system and how to prosecute or defend a person who has been accused of committing a crime.

Easy (10): List the elements of murder.

Moderate (20): Figure out whether the 'deal' the district attorney is offering a criminal defendant is a good deal or not.

Hard (30): Get the evidence obtained from a bad (not quite legal) police search thrown out.

Law: International (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). The PC knows about laws and legal systems which cut across national borders, including maritime law, war crimes and international business law.

Easy (10): Determine who owns the floating cargo left over from a plane crash in international waters.

Moderate (20): Check a contract for the sale of goods to a company in another country for international validity.

Hard (30): Prepare a brief, on behalf of one country, seeking reparations from another country for war crimes.

Law: Tech (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). The PC is familiar with the large amounts of laws that have sprung up recently to regulate the manufacturing, sale and use of new technology, including psychic tech.

Easy (10): Determine what legal liabilities a person inherits if that person is a clone with a mind copied from anther person.

Moderate (20): Determine whether a design for a mental stimulator meets regulations for sale to the general public.

Hard (30): Gain UN approval to release a genetically modified organism, with unrestricted ability to reproduce, in to the environment.

Law: Tort (INL)- Prerequisite: Law: Basic (1). The PC has studied civil (as opposed to criminal) law and the various remedies for someone harmed by a tort, including lawsuits.

Easy (10): Take someone to small claims court over a dented fender.

Moderate (20): Sue someone for libel.

Hard (30): File a class action lawsuit against multiple international corporations.

Legends (INL)- The PC has studied various myths and legends from around the world and various theories about the origins of these myths.

Easy (10): Tell who was the Greek god of thieves.

Moderate (20): Describe the various pictures distributed on the internet that are claimed to be Jeffrey Hernandez still alive.

Hard (30): Name the different types of vampires the Gypsies believe in and how to kill them.

Oratory (CHM)- The PC has been trained to speak before an audience, to speak persuasively to different types of people and to use cues from the audience to gauge which persuasive tactics are working and which aren't.

Easy (10): Write a speech designed to work on a particular audience (+4 to persuasion rolls).

Moderate (20): Notice when a strategy isn't working and change gears (PC can re-roll a bad persuasion roll).

Hard (30): Predict the arguments an opponent will make and pre-argue against them (-7 to the opponent's persuasion roll).

Social Work (INL)- The PC is acquainted with the various human services available via city, county, state and federal government programs. The PC understands the massive (and largely corrupt) bureaucracies that provide these services and how to actually get people to the services meant for them.

Easy (10): Help someone fill out the paperwork to get on welfare.

Moderate (20): Help someone get on disability.

Hard (30): Help a mentally ill homeless person get in to a group-home.

Legendary (40): Get grant money to start a small new agency.

Street (STRT)

Animal Training (CHM)- The PC has learned to care for and train animals to serve useful functions. The difficulty is based on the complexity of the task and the natural 'trainability' of the animal.

Easy (10): Keep a dog alive and keep it from going feral.

Moderate (20): Train a dog to fetch thrown objects.

Hard (30): Train a dog to stop at "don't walk" lights.

Legendary (40): Train a cat to stop at "don't walk" lights.

Card Counting (INL)- Prerequisite: Gambling (1). The PC has learned to remember the values of cards that have been played to determine what cards are most likely to come up next and give a small (but in the long run very significant) advantage over other players.

Easy (10): Gain a +4 advantage in blackjack.

Moderate (20): Gain a +7 advantage in poker.

Hard (30): Gain a +7 advantage in poker when multiple decks are used.

City Knowledge (INL)- City knowledge is knowledge of the geography, culture, philosophy, sociology, economy and recent history of the city. Anything that a person learns by sole virtue of the hours he or she has spent on the streets is city knowledge.

Special Note: This skill is based on time spent on the streets and so follows different rules for skills advancement. Unless otherwise noted in the character class or an advantage/disadvantage, the PC gets 1 free level of this skill on starting the game and 1 free level for every 4th level advancement. The PC can not ever have more than 1 level of this skill per experience level.

Easy (10)- Figure out whose turf the PC is on by looking at graffiti -or- Navigate by finding common land marks.

Easy/Moderate (15)- Find the closest black market trader to the PC's home.

Moderate (20)- Figure out what turf the PC is on by looking at the cross streets.

Moderate/Hard (25)- Recognize the leaders of every city street gang by sight.

Hard (30)- Give any information listed anywhere in the PC Groups chapter -or- Recite the complete subway timetables.

Hard/Legendary (35)- Recognize, and tell the exact location of, some random alley by a photograph.

Legendary (40)- Figure out where in the city the PC is by smell alone.

Drug Resistance (WIL)- The PC has been high on many types of drugs and has learned to resist their effects and act normal when necessary.

Easy (10): +1 to lost attributes, +4 to save vs. drug side effects.

Moderate (20): +2 to lost attributes, +7 to save vs. drug side effects.

Hard (30): +3 to lost attributes, +10 to save vs. drug side effects.

Gambling (INL)- The PC knows how to play various games of chance (mainly dice or card games). When playing a game the PC makes an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) roll against their opponents (who can make gambling skill rolls or hard (INL rolls).

Graffiti (INL)- Not all gang members know how to read or write gang graffiti. The most basic messages (e.g. 'this is Risen turf') can be read by anyone with the City Knowledge skill. However, to read and write any complex messages, the graffiti skill is necessary. Note: Literacy is not required for this skill.

Easy (10)- Read an obituary written by a member of the PC's character class.

Moderate (20)- Read a battle description written by a member of another character class.

Hard (30)- Piece together a 30 year history of an area by examining different layers of graffiti.

Herbal Medicine (INL)- The PC knows how to use herbs, especially those which are grown in various indoor or outdoor gardens throughout the city to treat medical problems. These herbs are typically turned in to tea or alcohol extracts for consumption.

Easy (10): Treat headaches.

Moderate (20): Treat the symptoms of a flu.

Hard (30): Treat a major infection.

Hypnosis (CHM)- The PC can put willing people in to an altered state of consciousness where they are highly open to suggestion. There are many things hypnosis can not do: memories can not be made more accurate (although they may be made to seem more accurate), a person can not be forced to do something they truly don't want to do, attributes can not be increased (e.g. a person can not be made more agile). Hypnosis has had some success at revealing blocked memories, but it just as often causes the hypnotized person to make up completely fictional memories.

Easy (10): Help someone fall asleep.

Moderate (20): Give someone +4 to save vs. drug cravings.

Hard (30): Uncover blocked memories.

City Knowledge Levels		
XP Level	Free	Max.
1	1	1
2	1	2
3	1	3
4	1	4
5	2	5
6	2	6
7	2	6
8	2	6
9	3	6
10	3	6
11	3	6
12	3	6

Light Sleep (AWR)- The PC has trained himself or herself to sleep warily such that any sign of danger will wake him or her.

Easy (10): Awaken if someone turns a light on.

Moderate (20): Awaken if someone is walking around by the PC's bed.

Hard (30): Awaken if any one of several roommates awakens.

Mechanics (INL)- The PC knows how to analyze, maintain, repair and create mechanical systems.

Easy (10): Sabotage a garage door opener by sticking something in a gear.

Moderate (20): Repair an old fashioned pocket watch -or- Repair an automobile transmission.

Hard (30): Engineer and build a secret elevator to a basement.

Money Saving (INL)- In the game, characters get money per week which is equivalent to whatever they make (from work, welfare, crime, etc.) minus whatever they spend on housing, food, clothes, etc. This skill allows the PC to save money and add to his or her weekly spending money. This skill must be used actively: for each week the character wants to use it, the character must spend about 4 hours comparison shopping, clipping coupons, etc. (as appropriate for the character class).

Easy (10): Increase free money per week by 5%.

Moderate (20): Increase free money per wk. by 15%.

Hard (30): Increase free money per wk. by 25%

Needles (AGY and Combat)- This skill represents experience using syringes only:

Easy (10): PC gives himself or herself an intravenous injection.

Moderate (20): Draw blood painlessly.

Hard (30): Find a vein on a long-term drug addict and give an intravenous injection.

Legendary (40): Draw a drop of blood without the victim noticing (opposed AWR roll).

Needles is also a combat skill that gives the following (at +4 per level) when using syringes only:

+0 to Wing

+0 to Strike

No penalty for targeted strikes.

Plumbing (INL)- The PC is familiar with the repair, maintenance and installation of plumbing. Among the homeless, this skill is highly valued because it allows water to be illicitly 'pirated' in to abandoned buildings.

Easy (10): Clean out a clogged pipe.

Moderate (20): Pirate water from a street line.

Hard (30): Create a hot water heater from old metal trash cans.

Poison Tolerance (END)- The PC has given himself or herself small doses of poisons and gained a limited tolerance to many poisons. This skill is not as complete or strong as the poison tolerance that Drakes instill on their own starting at a very young age.

Easy (10): Take three quarters the normal effects of Black Market food poison.

Moderate (20): Take half the normal effects of Black Market Knife Poison.

Hard (30): Take half the normal effects of Drake Fungus poison.

Seduction (CHM)- Every level of the skill gives +4 to seduction rolls (p.62). The PC can also use this skill to notice body language cues that tell how easy it would be to seduce someone and how well the PC is doing at a given seduction (moderate difficulty).

Sleight of Hand (AGY)- The PC has trained himself or herself to manipulate small objects so quickly that it can not be seen. A common trick is to direct a person's attention to one hand while the other is doing the actual change.

Easy (10): Make a penny "disappear" by palming it and dropping it in to a pocket.

Moderate (20): Replace one playing card with another (from a sleeve) while tapping the deck.

Hard (30): Make 10 lit cigarettes disappear by waving one's hand over them.

Street Drugs- Uses AWR or INL. This is an overall familiarity with common street drugs – how much they cost, what their effects are, what people act like when they are on them, etc. INL is used for remembering facts, AWR is used for recognizing things.

Easy (10): Name the going price for a drug (INL) -or- Determine what drug the PC currently has in his or her own bloodstream (AWR).

Moderate (20): Name the common withdrawal effects of a drug (INL) -or- Determine a drug's purity by looking at and tasting it (AWR).

Hard (30): Determine the street sale potential, if any, of a prescription drug (INL) -or- Determine what drug a person is on just by looking at them (AWR).

Tracking (AWR)- The PC has learned to follow the signs that show that an animal or human has passed through. This skill is most useful in wilderness areas (like the Hole) where mud can show tracks, but it can also be used in urban areas. Tracks grow significantly harder to follow the older they get (generally +1 difficulty per hour after they were made). Tracking can also be used to determine information about the people or animals being tracked: how fast were they going, did they have a limp, did they stop often, etc.

Easy (10): Track a large man who ran through the hole bleeding.

Moderate (20): Track a child who was exploring an abandoned building (by looking at disturbed dust).

Hard (30): Track a rat through the hole.

Trading- (INL)- This skill is a detailed knowledge of how much every item or service is worth to what group (people without this skill only know what something is worth to them personally).

Easy (10): Identify the general worth of a black market item.

Moderate (20): Identify what group in the city would be willing to pay most for a black market item.

Hard (30): Determine what other inner cities one could travel to get the best markup on a black market item.

Wilderness Survival (INL)- The PC knows how to find food, clean water and shelter in wilderness environments (including that of the hole). The PC must roll for each day in the environment. Difficulty is based on how much food, water and shelter is available in the environment.

Easy (10): Survive in the Hole during summer.
Moderate (20): Survive in the Hole during winter.
Hard (30): Survive in the desert.

STEP SEVEN - CHOOSE EQUIPMENT

In Brief: Available money set by character class.

Starting Equipment

Based on the PC's socioeconomic class, he or she will get free equipment and services to start:

Street Person
- A room in an abandoned building that can be locked from the inside or outside with a padlock.
- A padlock.
- Several candles and a lighter.
- Old sheets and blankets for use as a bed.
- Several buckets: for drinking water, for washing water and for elimination.
- One outfit with shoes, gloves and a jacket.
- A few cans of food and a pan for cooking in.

Well
- State health insurance.
- A small studio apartment with a radiator.
- A bed, a couch or two chairs, a few shelves.
- Several casual outfits, a few pairs of shoes, pairs of gloves, hats and jackets.
- Standard internet connection.
- Cheap videophone/net browser/email computer built in to one wall.
- A fridge half-full of cheap food, some dishes and an oven.

Indie
- Private health insurance.
- Two bedroom apartment or small house with central heating and air.
- Furniture, including a bed, chairs, couches, shelves and bureaus.
- Dishwasher, washer and dryer, microwave.
- Standard internet connection.
- Cheap videophone/net browser/email computer built in to one wall.
- A few dozen outfits of varying styles and formality.
- A full fridge and cabinets full of dry goods, several dishes and cooking utensils.

Purchasing Equipment

The PC starts with an amount of money listed in the PC's character class description. Buy equipment and services listed in Chapter Three: The Market. The GM may disallow some purchases that would be unreasonable for the PC (especially those items that are listed as "Unavailable").

Be sure to note which equipment is being stored at home (or hidden somewhere else) and which equipment the PC regularly carries on his or her person. Check encumbrance, p.63 for more. The weight of equipment a PC can carry without minuses is STH times 5 lbs.

STEP EIGHT - BONUS CHARACTERISTICS

In Brief: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages.

In addition to the advantages and disadvantages listed below, you can adjust the PC (by gaining and spending Bonus Points) in the following ways:

Extra or Fewer Attribute Points: 1 Bonus Point = 1 Attribute Point

Extra of Fewer Health Attribute Points: 3 Bonus Points = 1 Health Attribute Points

Extra or Fewer Skill Points: 1 Bonus Point = 3 Skill Points

Extra or Fewer Money: For Street People: 1 Bonus Point = $125. For Wells: 1 Bonus Point = $250. For Indies: 1 Bonus Point = $500

Example: *A Well PC starts with only 70 Skill Points (-30 Skill Points = +10 Bonus Points), $750 less than normal (-$750 = +3 BP) but starts with 13 Health Attribute Points (+1 Health Attribute Point = -3 BP) and 90 Attribute Points (+10 Attribute Points = -10 BP).*

Gaining or Losing Bonus Characteristics in Game Play

The simple rule to remember here: character creation is meant to be fair, game play is not.

Advantages and disadvantages can be rewarded or taken away during game-play as part of the adventure with no points being exchanged at all. For instance, a player may the PC to have the Art Patron advantage, only to have that Art Patron killed during the first five minutes of game play, meaning that advantage is permanently lost and the points spent are wasted. On the other hand, the PC may save someone's life and gain the equivalent of Ally: Outgroup within five minutes of game-play. A PC might start with Addiction: Opiates, and declare in the first minutes of game play that she is quitting. Assuming the PC can resist the cravings rolls, he or she will be rid of that disadvantage.

To reiterate: Anything that the PC does or anything that happens to the PC in-game can remove advantages and disadvantages, or can give special advantages and disadvantages to the PC regardless of the points spent during character creation.

Advantages
Ally: Ingroup (5 BP)
Ally: Outgroup (3 BP)
Ally: Parents (3 BP)
Ambidextrous (2 BP)
Androgynous (1 BP)
Art Patron (3 BP)
Childhood on the Streets (5 BP)
Contact: Corporate (2 BP)
Contact: Government (2 BP)
Contact: Law Enforcement (5 BP)
Contact: Locals (3 BP)
Contact: Wealthy (3 BP)
Contact: Wise (2 BP)
Drug Resistant (4 BP)
Dumpster Stomach (2 BP)
Ethnic Group (4 BP)
Experienced (5 BP)
False Identity (5 BP)
Free Mental Installation (5 BP)
Free Surgery (5 BP)
Good Rep (4 BP)
Honey (20 BP)
Innate Talent: Brawler (15 BP)
Innate Talent: Creative (10 BP)
Innate Talent: Math (4 BP)
Innate Talent: Painful Psychic (5 BP)
Innate Talent: Psychic (15 BP)
Innate Talent: Technical (8 BP)
Instructor (10 BP)
License: Doctor (15 BP)
License: Lawyer (10 BP)
License: Psychic (7 BP)
Low Sleep Need (2 BP)
Minister (2 BP)
Multilingual (2 BP)
Pain Experienced (2 BP)
Part Time Job: Below Board (4 BP)
Part Time Job: Minimum Wage (3 BP)
Part Time Job: Skilled (6 BP)
Physically Attractive: Minor (2 BP)
Physically Attractive: Major (6 BP)
Potential Genius (10 BP)
Prison Baby (10 BP)
Prison Experience (5 BP)
Private School (5 BP)
Property Owner: Minor (5 BP)
Property Owner: Major (7 BP)
Sense of Direction (1 BP)
Security Clearance (5 BP)
Sexologist Associate (10 BP)

Special Armor (2 BP)
Special Computer (2 BP)
Special Pet (3 BP)
Special Weapon (3 BP)
Stockholder (3 BP)
Stone Face (1 BP)
Training: Corporate (3 BP)
Training: Drug Lords (4 BP)
Training: Military (5 BP)
Upclass (15 BP)
Vampirism (5 BP)
Weak Information Profile (1 BP)
Word (5 BP)

Disadvantages
Addiction: Alcohol (10 BP)
Addiction: Amphetamines (17 BP)
Addiction: Chomper (25 BP)
Addiction: Escape (10 BP)
Addiction: God Killer (25 BP)
Addiction: Inhalants (15 BP)
Addiction: Lava (30 BP)
Addiction: Mauler (30 BP)
Addiction: Maxin (10 BP)
Addiction: Multi-Drug (10 BP)
Addiction: Nicotine (5 BP)
Addiction: Opiates (17 BP)
Addiction: Slave (30 BP)
Addiction: Trace (30 BP)
Allergy: Deadly (4 BP)
Allergy: Incapacitating (2 BP)
Bad Rep (4 BP)
Blind (10 BP)
Chronic Pain (2 BP)
Clumsy (2 BP)
Colorblind (1 BP)
Crush (1 BP)
Deaf (5 BP)
Debt: Credit Card (3 BP)
Debt: Life Debt (1 BP)
Debt: Loan Shark (1-5 BP)
Debt: Restitution (2 BP)
Downclass (8 BP)
Drug Sensitivity (2 BP)
Enemy: Ex (2 BP)
Enemy: In Gang (4 BP)
Enemy: Parents (2 BP)
Enemy: Stalker (2 BP)
Environmental Intolerance (1 BP)
Epilepsy (2 BP)
ESL (2 BP)

Fried (4 BP)
Gang Outcast (10 BP)
Gang Probation (2 BP)
Haunted (2 BP)
Hemophilia (4 BP)
High Sleep Need (1 BP)
Hunted: Colin (8 BP)
Hunted: Corporation (5 BP)
Hunted: Drug Lords (10 BP)
Hunted: Federal Government (5 BP)
Hunted: Gang (4 BP)
Hunted: Police (6 BP)
Hunted: Serial Killer (3 BP)
Illiterate (8 BP)
Inexperienced: City (5 BP)
Inexperienced: World (8 BP)
Institutionalized (4 BP)
Learning Disability (3 BP)
Lookalike (1 BP)
Malnourished (5 BP)
Memory Gaps (1 BP)
Missing Arm (5 BP)
Missing Eye (5 BP)
Missing Leg (5 BP)
Mute (7 BP)
Night Blindness (3 BP)
No Healthcare (2 BP)
Obese (2 BP)
Old (15/decade BP)
Only Parent (10 BP)
Parole (4 BP)
Perv Bait (2 BP)
Physically Unattractive: Minor (2 BP)
Physically Unattractive: Major (4 BP)
Poor Hearing (2 BP)
Poor Vision (2 BP)
Pregnant (15 BP)
Recovering Addict (3 BP)
Sickly (4 BP)
Street Mouth (1 BP)
Stupid Relatives (3 BP)
Terminal Illness (17 BP)
Thin Bones (2 BP)
Unconscionable Contract (1 BP)
VD: Annoying (2 BP)
VD: Deadly (20 BP)
Virgin (1 BP)
Weak Stomach (1 BP)
Weird Brain (1 BP)
Young (7/yr. BP)

Advantages

Ally: Ingroup (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- An older member of the PC's character class has taken a liking to the PC. The ally is older, more skilled and more powerful than the PC. The ally looks after the PC by giving advice and by trying to keep the PC out of trouble.

Ally: Outgroup (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC starts the game with an NPC who is a friend or ally and is a different character class from the PC. The ally will try to help the PC whenever possible (so long as it doesn't hurt or put the ally in danger) and the PC may be required to return the favor every once in a while. When choosing this advantage, be sure to note what group the ally belongs to and what the nature of the relationship with the PC is.

Ally: Parents (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- Limitation: PCs in street families can not purchase this advantage since they already have it. Unlike most young people in the city, the PC's parents both know what the PC does on the streets and try to support the PC. The PC's parents live in the city, are of the same socioeconomic class as the PC, and are good for the occasional loan, emotional support, place to crash, advice and other similar favors.

Ambidextrous (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is almost equally comfortable using either hand for precision tasks. PC suffers only a -2 penalty for using paired weapons.

Androgynous (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- Given the right makeup, clothing and perhaps a little padding, the PC looks equally normal, attractive and convincing as a male or female. PCs with this advantage and a Physically Attractive advantage do not lose the advantage while crossdressing.

Art Patron (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- Limitations: The PC must have at least 3 levels in a creative skill. The PC has a wealthy fan of his or her art who is willing to buy it at more than the normal market price and who is willing to do other little things to help the PC make it as an artist. Gives +$75/wk. for every week in which the PC spend at least 8 hours working on his or her art.

Childhood On The Streets (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- Limitation: Wells and Indies only. Unlike most Well and Indies, who were raised outside the city or in the confines of a shut-in's apartment, the PC spent a significant portion of his or her childhood out on the streets. The PC was learning to survive in the city while most of his or her peers were trapped in their parents' VR fantasy worlds. Gives −2 to Street skill costs, Prowling (1) and one additional level of City Knowledge.

Contact: Corporate (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC knows somebody who has a moderately high-level position in a major multinational corporation. The PC can expect that the contact will always take the PC's calls, but can expect nothing else without the contact (and the contact's corp) gaining something in return. The contact can not be convinced to do something disloyal to their corporation.

Contact: Government (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has a contact who has a moderately high-level position in a city, state or federal government agency (not a law enforcement agency). Unlike the corporate contact, the government contact may be able to be convinced to do something not-quite-legal, but there has to be some benefit to the contact.

Contacts: Law Enforcement (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has a contact within the FBI, LBRA or District Attorney's office.

Contact: Locals (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The character knows a lot of people around the neighborhood. This includes neighbors, black market traders, local shop/restaurant/bar owners and neighborhood homeless people. They all know the character, know that he or she is an 'alright' person and will make some attempt to let the character know if they see something of interest going down.

Contact: Wealthy (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC knows somebody who lives in the city, has a lot of money and is not afraid to do something not-quite-legal with that money if the contact thinks it may benefit him or her.

Contact: Wise (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC knows somebody who has had a lot of experience living in the city (has the skills City Knowledge (5) and History: City (2)) and 15 levels in other skills from diverse fields. The contact also has wisdom born of experience and will almost always give useful advice.

Drug Resistant (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC's body chemistry is such that psychoactive drugs have less of an effect on them than they do on the average person. Gives +7 to save vs. drug effects. Does not help save vs. drug addiction and cravings.

Dumpster Stomach (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC grew up eating food which had not been properly handled and refrigerated. The PC has developed, over the years, a very impressive tolerance to food poisoning and other forms of food contamination. The PC gets +10 to save vs. diseases and toxin effects from bad food.

Ethnic Group (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- Limitations: The PC must take either the Bilingual advantage, the ESL disadvantage or 3+ levels of Foreign Language skill. Whatever other organization or class the PC belongs to, he or she also belongs to a small community of immigrants living in the city. The PC has spent all or some of his or her youth in the city. The PC understands American and City culture better than most of his or her fellow immigrants. Thus the PC is often called on to interpret for or represent his or her people. This additional duty does not go unrewarded: the PC can expect favors and free stuff from older member of their community, who realize what a valuable resource the PC is (even if they are secretly afraid of how much of the city has rubbed off on the PC).

Experienced (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has been around on the streets for a while before finding his or her place in the world and has a lot more city experience than most other level ones of the same class. The PC starts with one extra level of City Knowledge. The PC also gets a little more respect than some of his or her younger peers.

False Identity (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has spent years establishing a false identity. This identity has a fake ID, sparse (but believable) credit and rental history and a bank account. What the PC doesn't have is the capstone of a false identity: a birth record that would establish citizenship and allow the PC to get welfare or a legitimate job under that name.

Free Mental Installation (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- At some point in the PC's past he or she had free access to a mental installer (typically by being a friend, family member or lover of a black market trader who had one). Any mental programs the PC purchases during character creation come with no installation cost (PC pays only for the data cost).

Free Surgery (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- At some point in the PC's past he or she had access to a surgeon willing to do work free of charge. During character creation the PC can purchase any body modification and pay no surgery costs.

Good Rep (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- Deserved or not, the word among the PC's social circle (in other words, the PC's character class) is that the PC is someone special. Whatever is valued in the PC's circle (e.g. toughness, kindness, intelligence, bravery, loyalty, etc.), that's what people associate with the character's name. This rep will last about a year before most people forget about it.

Honey (Costs 20 Bonus Points)- This advantage is only available to Indies. The character was once a member of the Honeys, an Indie gang famous for genetic engineering and brewing psychoactive drinks. The Honeys were destroyed about a year ago by the Skin Borgs when the Skin Borgs expanded over the Honey's turf. The survivors disbanded and are now dispersed throughout the city. See p.355 for more on the Honeys. The PC gets the following: -$750 (being forced to leave their homes abruptly was a financial blow to the Honeys), Genetics: Anatomical (2), Genetics: Cellular (2), Genetics: Tissue (2), Genetics: Botanical (2), Botany (1), Brewing (2), Gardening (2), Psychopharmacology (2), -2 to Bio/Med Skill costs (min. 2). Character has $1000 in genetic equipment and brewing supplies, 10 labeled bottles of honeybrews (p.112) and Attack Bees (see p.124).

Innate Talent: Brawler (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC has been getting in fights since he or she was a little kid and fighting comes natural to the PC. The PC gets +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +5 to initiative, and a +3, a +2, and a +1 to any actions or reactions of the character's choice (the pluses can not be put on the same action or reaction).

Innate Talent: Creative (Costs 8 Bonus Points)- This advantage gives no plusses to creative skill costs and give no plusses to skill rolls. However, when the PC does succeed at a creative skill, the effect is beautiful or evocative in a way that no one else in the world could produce. For example: A PC with the cooking skill and decides to create a new recipe for Fajitas, that recipe will be as good as tasty or horrible as the roll dictates, there will not be any Fajita recipe in the world like it.

Innate Talent: Math (Costs 6 Bonus Points)- The PC is a mathematical prodigy. Gives -2 to Information skill costs (min. 2) and +4 to all Computer Modeling, Physics, Cryptography and Math skill rolls.

Innate Talent: Painful Psychic (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has a brain that is wired very unusually. The PC has the potential to be a very powerful psychic, but using this ability causes severe neurological side effects. The PC can purposefully limit his or her powers (-10 to psychic skill rolls) with no side effects. When using his or her full potential the PC gets +7 to psychic skill rolls (including Bleeder and Sexologist special skills),

+5 pooled END for psychic purposes, but the PC suffers from one of the following side effects. The PC can choose multiple side effects (the advantage costs 2 BP less for each additional side effect, minimum cost of 1 BP).

Pain: As soon as the PC starts using any psychic skill, he or she gets an incredibly painful headache. The PC must make hard (30 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain (see p.63). The headache lasts 2d4 hours.

Fainting: The next round after the PC uses a psychic skill, he or she must make a hard (40 difficulty) save vs. unconsciousness (see p.60).

Psychosis: As soon as the PC starts using any psychic skill, he or she must make a hard save vs. hallucinations and delusions. The hallucinations and delusions are bizarre in quality and last 1d4 minutes.

Depression: After each time the PC uses a psychic skill, he or she falls in to a deep depression. The PC feels a lack of pleasure and interest in anything he or she normally enjoys or finds exciting. The PC feels that everything is going terribly wrong (even if everything is actually going well). The PC must make hard saves vs. dysphoria to get out of bed each day. The PC suffers from full sleep deprivation (p.64) no matter how long he or she stays in bed. The depression lasts for 2d6 days.

Seizures: The next round after using a psychic skill, the PC make a moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. seizure (see p.65).

Innate Talent: Psychic (Costs 15 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Can not be taken together with the Painful Psychic advantage. The PC has a natural talent for psychic skills. The PC gets +4 to psychic skill rolls (including Bleeder and Sexologist special skills), +4 END for use in psychic abilities and -4 to all psychic skill costs (min. 5).

Innate Talent: Technical (Costs 8 Bonus Points)- The way the PC thinks makes it easier for the PC to understand how technology works and how to interface with it. Gives -4 to Tech skill costs (min. 5) and +4 to Tech skill rolls.

Instructor (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC has a very skilled mentor who is willing to help train the PC free of cost. Choose one of the following:

Doctor: -4 to Bio/Med Skill costs (min. 4), -2 to Intellectual (min. 6).

Fighter: -4 to Combat (min. 5), -2 to Athletics (min. 7), -2 to Military (min. 7).

Thief: -4 to Thief/Espionage (min. 5), -2 to Street (min. 5).

Hacker: -4 to Tech (min. 4), -3 to Information (min. 5), -2 to Intellectual (min. 5).

Artist: -4 to Creative (min. 3), -2 to Sociological (min. 5).

Psychic: -6 to Psychic: Exotic (min. 15), -6 to Psychic: Manipulative (min. 10), -6 to Psychic: Sensory (min. 10).

Academic: -4 to Intellectual (min. 4), -4 to Sociological (min. 4).

License: Doctor (Costs 15 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Wells and Indies only. The PC must have at least 6 skill levels in Bio/Med skills. The PC has a medical degree valid in the United States. He or she can provide medical services and can write prescriptions. The license will be revoked if the PC is caught doing anything illegal or unethical (especially abusing his or her status). The PC starts with +$1000 and gets +$100/wk. whenever he or she works part-time as a doctor.

License: Lawyer (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Wells and Indies only. PC must have at least 6 skill levels in Law skills. The PC is a barred attorney in the state of New York. He or she may be disbarred if caught doing something illegal or unethical. The PC can represent other people in court. The PC starts with +$1000 and gets +$75/wk. whenever he or she works as a lawyer.

License: Psychic (Costs 7 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Wells and Indies only. Must have at least 4 levels of Psychic: Manipulative or Psychic: Sensory skills. The PC has paid a large fee to be tested and licensed as a psychic by the state licensing board. The PC can legally work as a psychic in this state. The PC starts with +$750 and makes an extra +$100/wk.

Low Sleep Need (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has never needed as much sleep as the average person. The PC is happiest with about 6 hours of sleep per night and can sleep only 4 hours for several nights in a row with no detectable loss of abilities.

Minister (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is an ordained minister of a generally recognized church. The PC can marry people, gain access to places the general public can't (especially as a chaplain in hospitals, prisons, disaster scenes) and gets some measure of respect from members of that church. Note that being ordained does not guarantee employment at any church.

Multilingual (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC was raised hearing and speaking two languages. Because of this, the pathways in the PC's brain have formed such that the PC can more easily learn new languages. The PC can choose 2 languages to be completely fluent in. Skill costs for Foreign Language and Kalor Language are -2 (min. 2).

Pain Experienced (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- At some point in his or her past, the PC experienced quite a lot of pain for quite a while. The PC has learned how to handle pain and act normally while in pain. Gives +5 to save vs. pain.

Part Time Job: Below Board (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Wells and Unborn only. The PC has a job that never gets reported to any government agency. The job doesn't pay much but the PC doesn't need to pay taxes, provide proof of citizenship or have public assistance adjusted because of the extra income. The PC works 4 hours a day 5 days a week and will be fired if he or she misses 3 shifts in a month. The PC can also be fired (or put on an unpaid vacation) if the employer thinks authorities might be investigating. The PC gets +$35/wk. The most common below-board part-time jobs in the city: assistant to a black market trader, maid, exotic dancer and light manufacturing.

Part Time Job: Minimum Wage (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Wells only. The PC has a minimum wage job to supplement his or her normal public assistance income. The PC works 4 hours a day, 5 days a week. The job is something mildly tiring or degrading or embarrassing. The most common minimum wage jobs for teenagers in the city are: fast food, store clerk, janitor, grocery delivery and hospice assistant. The PC gets +$25/wk. The PC gets no vacation or sick leave and will lose the job if he or she misses 3 shifts without finding a replacement.

Part Time Job: Skilled (Costs 6 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Wells only. The PC has lucked in to getting a very good part-time job. The PC works 4 hours a day 4 days a week. The PC gets 2 hours vacation/sick leave per week. The PC can also take unpaid leave but will be fired if he or she misses more than 5 shifts in a month. The PC gets +$50/wk. The job should be based on whatever skills the PC has (e.g. tech support if the PC has tech skills, health club trainer if the PC has athletic skills, etc.). The most common skilled part-time jobs among young people in the city: tech support, network installer, chef, bartender and office assistant.

Physically Attractive: Minor (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has physical features which makes him or her more attractive to people who are interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives +4 to seduction rolls.

Physically Attractive: Major (Costs 6 Bonus Points)- The PC has physical features which makes him or her very attractive to those with an interest in the PC's gender. Gives +8 to seduction rolls.

Potential Genius (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC's brain is wired differently from other peoples' such that the PC has incredible mental potential. The cap for the PC's INL is raised from 20 to 25.

Prison Baby (Costs 10 Bonus Points)- The PC spent much of his or her early childhood in prison, being raised by a parent who was a prisoner there. The PC might have stayed with a parent or parents (in a segregated area of the prison), all the way until age ten. After ten the PC would have been forced to go to a foster home, orphanage or juvenile prison. The PC has been exposed to a lot of dangerous criminals and has had access to a lot of criminal skills. If prison is the "university of crime" then the PC is like a child who grew up attending university classes. The PC gets Back to Wall (3) (see text box), Light Sleep (2), Shiv (1), Razormouth (1), Law: Criminal (1), -4 to Combat skill costs (min. 3), -6 to Thief/Espionage (min. 3), -4 to Military (min. 3). Prison babies typically have quite a few prison tattoos and a surgery scar on his or her rib cage (from the tracking and control device).

> **Back to Wall** (AWR)- A special skill taught only in prisons. The PC has learned to habitually keep his or her back to something at all times.
>
> Moderate (20): the GM must inform the PC of any time his or her back is exposed

Prison Experience- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC has spent time in prison where he or she had the opportunity to pick up a lot of useful criminal skills. Gives -2 to CMBT skill costs (min. 4), -4 to THIE (min. 4), -2 to MIL (min. 4). The PC can buy levels in the special skill Back To Wall (see text box) and the skills Shiv and Razormouth for 4 skill points each.

Private School (Costs 5 Points)- Limitation: Wells and Indies only Rather than a VR school, the character with this advantage was sent away during his or her childhood, to live at a private school and receive a "real" education. PC gets –3 to Social skills costs (min. 4), -2 to Tech (min. 4) and –4 to Intellectual (min. 4) and -4 to Information (min. 6) during character creation only.

Property Owner: Minor (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- Limitation: Wells and Indies only. The PC owns a small house that he or she lives in. The home was most likely inherited. The PC gets an extra $25/wk. from saved rent and an additional +$25/wk. if the PC rents out rooms.

Property Owner: Major (Costs 7 Bonus Points)- Limitation: Wells and Indies only. The PC owns a large mansion. Extra $25/wk. from saved rent and +$100/wk. if the PC rents out all available rooms.

Sense of Direction (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has an inherent ability to sense what direction he or she is facing. Roll this as an AWR feat with a difficulty based on the number of cues available (things like being indoors, being hit in the head or being in another part of the world would increase the difficulty).

Sexologist Associate- (Costs 10 Bonus Points). Unlike many gangs, the majority of Sexologists have no problem with teaching their special skills to non-Sexologists. Although it takes serious study (living as a full-time Sexologist) to become as powerful as a Sexologist, some gain a few powers here and there from hanging out with Sexologists a lot. With this advantage, the PC can buy Sexologist special skills (excluding the Sexual Attack skill) at 10 skill points per level. Not available to Animalists, Drakes, Freaks, Hungry, Purists and Sex Workers (character classes that have disapproval of most sexologists or who have a philosophy too discordant from the Sexologists).

Security Clearance (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- In the process of getting some government job, the PC passed an extensive background check. The federal government believes that the PC has no loyalties to any terrorist group, organized crime agency or other country and is not addicted to drugs or mentally unbalanced. The PC can be hired to work on some government projects and that means a higher income if the PC works a part time job (+50% weekly income if the PC has Part Time Job: Skilled, License: Doctor, License: Lawyer or License: Psychic).

Special Armor (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- At some point the PC gained possession of a suit of armor that he or she would have never been able to afford otherwise. The PC might have found it, inherited it, won it in a card game, taken is off of a dead body, etc. Choose from Historical Reproduction Plate Armor (p.118), Modern Chainmail (p.119) or Spiked Armor: Poison (p.120).

Special Computer (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC was lucky enough to come across a very high-level computer at some point in his or her past. The computer is no longer as top-of-the-line as it was years ago, but it still considerably powerful and the PC has been using it so long that he or she is very good with it (+7 to skill rolls using the computer). Choose from: Laptop: Military, Desktop: Developer; Palmtop: Combo or Laptop: New.

Special Pet (Coasts 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has a trained animal that has been the PC's loyal friend and companion for many years. The PC has the pet specially trained (choose 5 commands the pet knows) and the PC and the pet communicate well. Choose from Dog, Chimpanzee, Horse or Eagle.

Special Weapon (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- At some point the PC was lucky enough to gain possession of a very special weapon which was much better than the PC could have any hope of getting a hold of at that period in his or her life. Because the PC has trained almost exclusively with this weapon, he or she gets +4 to any roll using the weapon. Choose from:

Skullcrusher: As per p.152, but by virtue of a very sharp rock, does an extra 1 bladed damage (pierces armor as 4 bladed).

Bow (Compound): As per p.151 but +2 ft. FR, +100 ft. MR. The bow is also made of a nearly indestructible material which can be used to parry or as a 1 blunt damage weapon.

Sword (Broadsword): As per p.152 but it is weighted and balanced perfectly (no hard strike).

Sword (Katana): A per p.153 but because of incredible sharpness: +1 bladed damage and +2 to the pierces-as damage.

Dagger (Freedom Army): As per p.144 with 4 stabbings worth of poison left.

Stockholder (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Wells and Indies only. The PC owns one or two shares of each major multinational corporation. The PC receives voluminous reports on the corps' economic status (use as an Introductory/Reference text for the Corporations skill), can call and ask questions of a stockholder relations rep, has a vote in some corporate matters and occasionally gets a dividend (1 in 20 chance every week of receiving $200). The PC can liquidate his or her stock to receive up to $750 in quick cash (and thereby lose this advantage).

Stone Face (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- Since he or she was born, emotions have never registered very strongly on the PC's facial expressions, body language, voice or physiology. The PC's emotions are just as strong as anyone else's (though the PC may have trouble convincing people of that fact). +10 difficulty to any attempt to detect lies or emotions in the PC.

Training: Corporate (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has been in a corporation and has learned in the best corporate training programs. Gives -4 skill costs (min. 3) to one of the following (choose only one): Bio/Med, Information, Intellectual, Tech or Sociological. The PC gets Corporations (1).

Training: Drug Lords (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC was once a member of the Drug Lords' organization and learned a lot about how the Drug Lords work (the PC does not know where any of the lords live, nor who really runs the Drug Lords). The PC gets -4 to the following skill costs (min. 3): Pistol, Addiction, Production Chemistry, Street Drugs. The PC also starts with $1000 worth of drugs, armor and weapons.

Training: Military (Costs 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has been trained in a military organization. The PC gets -4 to Athletics skill costs (min. 3), -3 to Combat (min. 4), -4 to Military (min. 3). PC gets Rifle (1).

Upclass (Costs 15)- The PC starts the game one social class higher than the majority of people in the PC's character class. For example: The PC might be the child of a Well and an Unborn who was raised in a street people family but has a US birth certificate and is on welfare. Or, the PC might be an Indie who found herself attracted to the ideals of a Well gang. PC gets +50% starting money. Skill costs are –2 for Intellectual, Information and Social skills (min. 7)

Vampirism (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has become infected with Mitochondrial Vampirism, an ancient disease (recently resurrected by archeologists) that may have been responsible for some elements of vampire myths. Gives +4 INCY, +4 BLD, +4 END, +2 STH, +2 SPD. The PC must eat 10 times the amount of sugar that normal people do, more if the PC has been doing heavy activity or have been oxygen deprived. For computing hunger damage, six hours of "normal" activity counts as a day, 15 minutes of heavy activity counts as a day and 1 minute of oxygen deprivation counts as a day. Note that fats and carbohydrates can be converted by the body in to sugars, but this takes so long that the PC may starve to death in the meantime. Sugary food is converted in to glucose (blood sugar), and consuming (or taking intravenously) glucose is faster still.

Weak Information Profile (Costs 1 Bonus Point)- Limitations: Wells and Indies only (Street People already have this advantage). Perhaps because of pure luck, perhaps because the PC has lived a simple life, the information about the PC available on-line is remarkably slim. Credit ratings, rental histories, medical records, social services records, marketing and junkmail lists, FBI files, etc. are only dimly aware that the PC exists. The PC can establish his or her citizenship (and eligibility for public assistance if the PC is a well), but little else.

Word (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The PC has a reputation within his or her class, and even beyond that, of being someone who can be trusted to be honest and to keep his or her word. This advantage will evaporate quickly if the PC acts inconsistently with this reputation.

Disadvantages

The Catch-All Rule

If a disadvantage doesn't have the potential to cause problems for the PC, the GM can choose to give fewer (or no) Bonus Points for it. For instance, it is ridiculous for an Addict PC to take the Bad Rep disadvantage with the "Liar/Backstabber" choice because all addicts already have that rep. The PC and the GM should work together to either lower the point value of the disadvantage (the PC might decide that, because of the PC's particular situation and life goals, that disad is worth 1 point) or to make the advantage worse to match the points awarded (the GM might rule that the PC is so infamous a liar and backstabber that his or her very name is used in all city social circles as a slang term for lying and backstabbing).

Addiction: Alcohol (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to alcohol (which has a craving difficulty of 15). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.108 for the drug profile of alcohol. The PC has been using alcohol daily for 1 year so far and so does not yet suffer from any appreciable long term effects (see p.108). Note: It costs an alcoholic approximately $35/wk. to buy enough alcohol to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Amphetamines (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to amphetamines (which have a craving difficulty of 20). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.109 for the drug profile of amphetamines. The PC has been using amphetamines for 6 months so far and suffers from ulcers and malnutrition (-1 BLD, -1 BDY), see p.109 for more long term effects. Note: It costs an amphetamines addict approximately $49/wk. to buy enough amphetamines to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Chomper (Gives 25 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to chomper (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.110 for the drug profile of chomper. The PC has been using chomper for 6 months and sufferers from lost hair and teeth (-5 to seduction rolls), Liver Damage (-6 to save vs. poisoning/drug effects) and Anemia (-½ BLD), see p.110 for more long term effects. Note: It costs a chomper addict approximately $49/wk. to buy enough chomper to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Escape (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to escape (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.111 for the drug profile of escape. The PC has been using escape for 6 months so far and suffers from blunted personality (PCs feelings and opinions are not very strong), insomnia (1 in 6 chance each night of not being able to sleep) and poor vision (-1 to vision based AWR rolls), see p.110 for more long term effects. Note: It costs an escape addict approximately $140/wk. to buy enough escape to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: God Killer (Gives 25 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to God Killer (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.111 for the drug profile of God Killer. The PC has been using God Killer regularly for 6 months so far and so does not yet suffer from any appreciable long term effects (see p.111). Note: It costs a God Killer addict approximately $70/wk. to buy enough God Killer to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Inhalants (Gives 15 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to inhalants, which are a number of commonly available chemicals (paint, airplane glue, etc.) which displace oxygen going to the brain and causes euphoria and dissociation. Inhalants costs about $2/dose (though they are most often shoplifted) and a typical addict must use 2 doses a day to prevent cravings. The PC suffers steady brain damage: -1 AWR, -1 AGY, -1 INL, -1 WIL for every 6 months of daily use. The PC has been abusing inhalants for about 3 months. Inhalants have a Craving Difficulty of 15.

Addiction: Mauler (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to mauler (which has a craving difficulty of 30). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.114 for the drug profile of mauler. The PC has been using mauler for 3 months and suffers from brain damage (-3 INL). See long term effects, p.114. Note: it costs a mauler addict approximately $49/wk. to buy enough mauler to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Multiple Addictions

The PC can not take more than one of the following addiction disadvantages for points. To create a PC who does any drug he or she can get a hold of, take the Addiction: Multi-Drug disadvantage.

Addiction: Maxin (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is psychologically addicted to the smart drug Maxin (which have a craving difficulty of 20). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.114 for the drug profile of Maxin. The PC has been using Maxin for 1 year so far and suffers from weakened bones (-1 BDY). See long term effects, p.114. Note: It costs a Maxin addict approximately $140/wk. to buy enough Maxin to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Multi-Drug (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is not addicted to any one particular drug. He or she has a psychological addiction to being intoxicated. The PC's basic problem is that he or she can not deal with living life in a sober state. The PC lost or never developed the psychological mechanisms to deal with unfiltered reality. The PC can stand to be sober for short periods, typically while he or she is doing something to keep busy (like hustling money to get drugs). When evening rolls around and nothing stands between the PC and examination of his or her life, the PC must make a craving roll (WIL + 1d20 vs. 20) to avoid finding some intoxicant. The PC will use whatever he or she can get a hold of: alcohol, marijuana, god killer, hallucinogens, inhalants, pain killers, amphetamines, etc. He or she may blow all available cash on week-long drug binges which leave the PC with debt, health problems and social problems (that are almost as good of a distraction as intoxication). Typical multi-drug addicts can spend as little as $35/week on drugs (though a typically multi-drug addict will spend more on better drugs when he or she has the money).

Addiction: Nicotine (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically addicted to nicotine (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.111 for the drug profile of nicotine. The PC has been smoking for 2 years and suffers from emphyzema (-1 END) and increased risk of cancer and stroke. See long term effects, p.111. Note: It costs a smoker approximately $15 to $49/wk. (depending on what they smoke) to buy enough tobacco to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Opiates (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to opiates (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.114 for the drug profile of opiates. The PC has been using opiates for 6 months so far and suffers from a poor immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), see long term effects, p.114. Note: it costs an opiate addict approximately $56/wk. to buy enough opiates to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more than this minimum level.

Addiction: Slave (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to Slave (which has a craving difficulty of 35). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.115 for the drug profile of Slave. The PC has been using Slave for 1 year so far and suffers from weight loss (-1 BDY), pale skin, liver damage (-1 to save vs. poison/drug effects). See long term effects, p.115. Note: It costs a Slave addict approximately $56/wk. to buy enough opiates to avoid withdrawal.

Addiction: Trace (Gives 30 Bonus Points)- The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to Trace (which have a craving difficulty of 30). See p.65 for addiction rules and p.116 for the drug profile of Trace. The PC has been using Trace for 1 year so far and suffers from damaged immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), arthritis (-1 AGY) and reddish skin. See long term effects, p.116. Note: it costs a trace addict approximately $49/wk. to buy enough Trace to avoid withdrawal.

Allergy: Deadly (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has a serious sensitivity to some common food item (e.g. peanuts, wheat, eggs, milk, soy, shellfish, tomatoes, fish). If the PC ingests even a little he or she will be incapacitated within 10 minutes and will die within 1 hour without medical attention.

Allergy: Incapacitating (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Like the Deadly Allergy, except the health problems the PC suffers more-or-less prevent the PC from doing anything (must make a 30 difficulty roll to do anything) but will not kill the PC. The reaction could be blinding headaches, convulsive vomiting or asthma.

Bad Rep (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- In the circles the PC runs in (the PC's character class) the PC's name is associated with something bad. The story may or may not be true, but if it isn't true there is no way the PC can prove his or her innocence. The only hope for the PC is to do so many good things that the bad thing is forgotten about. Choose one of the following that is believed about the PC.

   Traitor/Snitch: The PC knowingly betrayed those he or she was supposed to be loyal to.

   Uncontrollable/Dangerous: The PC did not take orders, listen to reason or consider the safety of comrades in a way that hurt others.

   Stupid/Irresponsible: The PC was asked to do something that a small child could do, but the PC acted without thinking about the consequences and failed terribly.

   Liar/Backstabber: The PC has pretended to be a friend while secretly hurting his or her supposed friends just to get ahead.

   Naive/A Liability: The PC showed a total lack of street smarts, city knowledge or common sense.

Blind (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC's eyes do not work at all. After character creation the PC can get cloned eyes for about $2,500 or implants which serve most of the same functions of eyes for less (see p.105).

Chronic Pain (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has some old injury that causes him or her to experience pain for about half of waking hours. The PC must make an easy (10) save vs. distracting pain about half the time and is at -10 to save vs. psychological addiction to pain-killer drugs. The PC's injury can probably be fixed with about $1000 of surgery. The PC can also get a Pain Blocker mental program, but sustained use of one of these programs has its own disadvantages (see p.98).

Clumsy (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- When the PC is not paying attention to what he or she is doing the PC drops things, knocks things over, bumps in to things, etc. At least once in a game session, while the PC is not trying to be careful, he or she will make some clumsy movement (a hard AGY roll can help the PC recover from or lessen the damage done).

Colorblind (Gives 1 Bonus Points)- The PC was born with pupils that are unable to distinguish between a broad range of colors. Most likely, the PC can not see a difference between colors containing red and colors containing green. The PC can get new eyes for about $2,500 but will have to learn how to understand the new information they give.

Crush (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC is in love with someone who doesn't return those feelings. The PC may eventually get over the PC's feelings (taking 6 months to a year) or may be able to finally woo the subject of his or her affections.

Deaf (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC was born without any ability to hear. The PC can get implants which let him or her hear (p.105) but will have to spend years learning how to hear.

Debt: Credit Card (Gives 3 Bonus Points) Limitation: Wells and Indies only. The PC is deeply in debt ($10,000 for Indies or $5,000 for Wells) to credit card companies. The PC must pay $100/wk. (Indie) or $50/wk. (Well) just to pay the interest on the debt. If the PC does not pay this money, the debt (and interest) will climb and the credit card company will send debt collectors after the PC. They will attempt to get a court order to garnish the PC's paycheck or welfare check. The collection agencies will trash the character's credit rating and will threaten to shut down any services provided by sibling companies to the credit card company (e.g. internet service, apartment rental, electricity).

Debt: Life Debt (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- Someone saved the PC's life; someone who had absolutely no duty to do so. The PC owes a major debt to this person. If the PC shirks an opportunity to repay this debt, he or she will gain a bad reputation among the PC's social circles.

Debt: Loan Shark (Gives 1 Bonus Point per $1000, max. 5)- The PC owes money to some criminal, typically a black market trader who makes money giving loans to the desperate. The PC is past due on the loan and the loan shark has sent out thugs with the job of getting the money, valuables or seriously hurting the PC. The more money that is owed, the more thugs the loan shark is willing to send. Some loan sharks will spend $2000 hiring thugs to get back $1000, just to make sure everyone knows that they can't renege on a debt. In the end, most loan sharks would rather kill the PC than let him or her get away without paying back a debt.

Debt: Restitution (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Members of gangs or street families only. At some point the PC committed some crime against or otherwise hurt another person. The PC's elders have decided that the PC must do whatever he or she can to repay the damage done. The PC must do whatever he or she can to help the victim, save something which would practically be suicide. If the PC shirks an opportunity to repay the victim, he or she faces serious punishment from gang/family elders. It is up to the elders to decide when the debt has finally been repaid (the elders are likely to err on the side of overpaying).

Downclass (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- The PC is in a lower socioeconomic class than the majority of people in his or her character class. For example: the PC might be a Roofer who, unlike most fellow roofers, is homeless instead of being on public assistance. Or the PC might be a Volunteer who is not independently wealthy, like other Volunteers, but who instead receives public assistance. For many, the biggest downside to this disadvantage is that PCs can not always hang out with peers: A Well PC might not be able to afford to eat at a nice restaurant with his Indie friends, or a Street Person might have to leave the party early so she can be at the shelter in time to get a bed. The PC starts with $1000 less, makes $35 less per week and suffers from a +4 penalty to skills costs for Bio/Med, Information, Intellectual, Tech and Sociological skills.

Drug Sensitivity (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC's body chemistry and neurology is such that the PC is extremely sensitive to psychoactive drugs of all types. Gives -7 to save vs. drug effects (does not effect addiction and craving saves).

Enemy: Ex (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has an ex-lover who has a major problem with the PC being alive and happy. The Ex is not angry enough to actually kill the PC. However, the Ex knows the PC's friends and family, knows secrets about the PC and will generally make life difficult for the PC.

Enemy: In Gang (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- Limitations: PCs in gangs only. A powerful member of the PC's gang does not like the PC and will attempt to sabotage the PC by whatever means are accepted within the gang (e.g. in the Risen the normal thing to do with an enemy is try to rip them open, in the Sexologists the normal thing to do to an enemy is to slowly turn public opinion about the PC around by convincing friends and lovers that the PC is no good). The enemy may even break the gang's own rules if the enemy thinks he or she can get away with it.

Enemy: Parents (Gives 2 Bonus Point)- The PC's parents have a serious problem with the PC's current lifestyle and will do whatever they can to sabotage the PC and force the PC to live as they do. The tactics used will vary according to parent. Some parents may try to blackmail the PC by suddenly withholding money the PC depends on. Some parents may hire cult deprogrammers. Some parents may try to physically capture the PC and haul him or her off the streets.

Enemy: Stalker (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is being stalked by some person who believes that he or she is deeply in love with the PC. The hope that the PC may someday return this love is the only things that has any meaning in the stalker's life. The stalker will ignore any evidence or reasoning that might take away this hope and may even delude themselves in to believing things to keep this hope alive (like that the PC is sending secret love messages or that the PC and the stalker are married). In general the stalker is more annoying than dangerous, but when stresses mount in the stalker's life, the stalker can become dangerous and might even decide that the pair would be better off together in the afterlife. The stalker has no special powers or training but is dangerous because he or she has memorized volumes of information about the PC.

Environmental Intolerance (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC is used to being in strict control of his or her environment. Many ex-VR addicts suffer from this syndrome. The PC can't ignore it when the environment is to bright, too dark, too cold, too warm, too quiet, too loud, smelly, etc. The PC simply hasn't learned how to deal with annoyances. The PC is at -4 to AWR, INL and CHM based rolls while distracted by an annoying environment.

Epilepsy (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC suffers from occasional seizures (about once a week). The PC loses consciousness and may make strange sounds or movements. The seizure lasts about 1 minute and it can take up to an hour to recover full AWR, INL and AGY. Anti-epileptic medications (covered by Indie and Well health insurance) can reduce the occurrence of seizures to about once a month, and anti-epileptic mental programs (10 MMUs, $250 +$250 installation) can eliminate the disorder.

ESL (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC speaks some non-English language fluently and has only recently started to learn English. The PC must buy levels of Foreign Language: English to be able to read, write, speak or understand any English at all. Because the PC is immersed in English, after character creation the PC can buy skill levels in English at -6 skill cost (min. 1).

Fried (Gives 4 points)- The character has used too many hallucinogens and has permanently changed the structure of his or her neural networks. This damage is so widespread it is impossible to repair via mental programming. The character suffers from the following deficits: -5 to save vs. hallucinations and delusions. One round penalty before they can use any skill or ability that utilizes abstract thought (for instance: a PC wants to use his math skill, he must spend a round trying to summon the right state of consciousness). Flashbacks (hard difficulty hallucinations or delusions) triggered by sensory stimuli. The PC does not know what sensory stimuli will cause a flashback (GM chooses 5 triggers) but may be able to figure out over time what they are.

Gang Outcast (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Gang members PCs only. The PC is currently not considered a member of the gang that is the PC's character class. The gang will not seek revenge for crimes committed against the PC and will become very angry if the PC masquerades as a member of that gang. Character creation is normal, but when the PC starts earning XP he or she does not have the skill costs and access to special skills that correspond with that character class (because the PC can no longer go to fellow PCs for training). Instead, the PC should use the skill costs and income of Freelancers (if the PC is a Well) or Eccentrics (if the PC is an Indie). At level 1, adventure 1, the PC has two choices: seek another path as another character class (see Disciplines, p.55) or try to get back in to the good graces of the gang that originally trained the PC.

Gang Probation (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Limitation: Gang PCs only. The PC has done something wrong. The PC was allowed to stay a member of the gang but on probationary status. The PC is being very closely watched by his or her gang elders. If the PC screws up in any way he or she will not be shown any mercy, will not be given a warning or another chance. The PC will simply be removed from the gang (see Gang Outcast). If the PC behaves flawlessly for one experience level, the probation will end.

Haunted (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC gets occasional flashes of sensation of himself or herself dying violently. These sensations all seem to point to some possible future event. If this really is a 'ghost' event (see p.402) then it means there is some very serious danger in the PC's future. What the PC has visions of <u>will</u> happen unless the PC can gain enough knowledge and wariness from these visions to survive the event. Unfortunately, the sensations the PC receives do not tell much and it may be hard to know when the danger is coming.

Hemophilia (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC's body does not produce clotting factors that let ruptured blood vessels close up. If injured, the PC keeps bleeding (losing half the original damage again every minute) until the PC dies or has the severed arteries repaired or cauterized. The PC can take drugs that will alleviate the symptoms ($5/day, free with Indie and Well health care) so that the PC stops bleeding after 2 minutes (injuries only do double damage). The disease can be cured with $1000 worth of genetic therapy.

High Sleep Need (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC needs more sleep than most people. The PC is most comfortable sleeping 12 hours a night and will suffer sleep deprivation damage if he or she gets any less than 10 hours.

Hunted: Colin (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- The self-reproducing serial killer Colin (see p.367) wants the PC dead. Knowledge of the PC varies among Colins (since Colin has no central interchange of information). A small percentage of Colins have never heard of the PC. The majority know the PC's name, character class and they want the PC dead, but nothing else. A minority know the PC personally: they know the PC's face, where the PC hangs out and whatever they have been able to discern by snooping around (Colins can learn quite a lot, since they take over people's bodies and masquerade as their victims). Colin's motivation may seem like rage, but really it's about reputation: Colin wants people to see him as a god, and he's not much of a god if he can't take out a single enemy. If Colin catches the PC he will kill the PC in an especially sadistic way and make sure that, when the body is found, everyone knows that it is Colin who did it.

Hunted: Corporation (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is wanted by a major multinational corporation. The corporation wishes to find the PC and prosecute the PC in criminal and civil courts for some crime against the corp. The corp has professional skip-tracers looking for the PC and data analysts combing the corporate databases for any sign of the PC. All the PC has to do is put his or her name and address on a "win a boat" contest entry slip at some fast food place (which is a subsidiary of the corp) and the next day there will be corporate security agents at the PC's front door. If the PC is found he or she will face a multi-pronged legal attack that can last for years. As soon as the corp finds the PC they will put the PC under 24 hour a day surveillance (so the PC can not escape again). The corp will not do anything illegal to get the PC (though some independent contractors might be tempted to bend the rules in order to get a bonus for catching the PC).

Hunted: Drug Lords (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Not available for Goods, Hungry and Night Shift, who are already enemies of the Drug Lords. The PC is an official enemy of the Drug Lords. Most likely the PC did something to the Drug Lords and the Drug Lords feel they have to kill the PC in order to get the message across that nobody gets to do that to them. The PC's vitals (name, gender, ethnicity, age, character class) have been distributed to the city's pusher gangs. Any pusher gang who kills the PC gets a $10,000 reward. Many pusher gangs let addicts in on this opportunity (the addict might get a few thousand if he or she kills the PC, the pusher gang gets the rest) which means there are thousands of people in the city out looking for the PC. If a Drug Lord gets any info on the PC's whereabouts, he or she will immediately send a Dagger team (p.383) out to get the PC.

Hunted: Federal Government (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC is on the "most wanted" lists of the FBI and other federal law enforcement agencies. The PC has a federal agent working 8 hours a day on finding the PC. The PC's picture and vitals are regularly seen on the internet, especially by cops and bounty hunters. There is a $20,000 reward for the PC's capture. Fortunately, Federal Agents have little knowledge of the city and, since they aren't allowed to bring in guns, are fairly weak on the streets. The agent's hope is to track down the PC via internet research and phone calls (the same way skip tracers do), corner the PC with a couple of agents and Night Shift officers, and have the National Guard on speed-dial if the PC puts up armed resistance. If caught, the PC faces criminal charges and life imprisonment.

Hunted: Gang (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- One city gang has named the PC in particular as one of its enemies. The gang is looking to kill the PC. Anyone who tries to protect the PC will become, to a lesser degree, an enemy of the gang. While its thirst for vengeance remains unfulfilled, the gang's memory will be quite long indeed. When choosing this disadvantage, be sure to note which gang and why they are so mad at the PC.

Hunted: Police (Gives 6 Bonus Points)- The city police department is out to get the PC and are under such pressure to catch the PC that even the corrupt Day Shift officers (who normally care more about graft than fighting crime) are out looking for the PC. The day shift's experience and control of resources, combined with the Night Shift's bravery and knowledge of the streets makes the police department a dangerous enemy, capable of powering though any area of the city (with the National Guard ready to step in if they meet armed resistance) in search of the PC. If caught, the PC faces criminal charges and life imprisonment.

Hunted: Serial Killer (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- An ordinary serial killer (not a Colin) wants the PC dead. Perhaps the PC is "the one who got away" or is someone who bullied the serial killer as a child. The PC doesn't know much about the serial killer. The PC might have caught a brief glimpse of the serial killer's face or heard the serial killer's voice during an aborted attack, but the PC does not know the killer's name and address and would have a hard time picking him or her out of a crowd.

Illiterate (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- The PC can not write or read any language. Later in the game the PC can learn to read by buying the equivalent of 5 levels in an Intellectual skill. While the PC can not read he or she has the following increased skill costs: +10 to Bio/Med, +20 to Information, +15 to Intellectual, +15 to Tech, +10 to Sociological, +5 to Military. If the PC is a Well, the PC will likely experience long periods of loss of welfare and homelessness because he or she will have to depend upon friends and social workers to complete the regular paperwork necessary to stay on welfare.

Inexperienced: City (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Not available to Utopia Children, who already have this disadvantage. The PC has received the same training as others in his or her character class, but has practically no city knowledge. The PC starts with no levels of the City Knowledge skill. The PC does not know basic things like

what a Skin Borg is (unless he or she is a Skin Borg, or is a member of a gang currently at war with or in an allegiance with the Skin Borgs). This disadvantage does not make the PC naive or stupid.

Inexperienced: World (Gives 8 Bonus Points)- For some reason the PC is an adult but has practically no knowledge of the city or the modern world in general. The majority of people with this disadvantage were raised in bizarre cult communes. The PC doesn't know simple things like what a police officer is, how to use an ATM machine or why it is wise to lock one's door at night.

Institutionalized (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has grown up in the care of the state. He or she was not lucky enough to be in the state orphanage when the children rebelled (see p.249). Instead, the PC has been shuffled around between juvenile detention facilities, foster homes, group homes and even mental hospitals across the state. These facilities are kind of like storage facilities for kids nobody wants. They do nothing to help the kids develop in to productive adults and the state only provides as much education as they have to avoid being charged with criminal neglect. The PC starts with –3 CHM (poor social skills development), +2 to skill costs for Bio/Med, Creative, Information, Intellectual and Social skills (during character creation only). The PC has a general ignorance of things most Wells and Indies take for granted (like how to make a budget, how to look for a job, how to handle disputes with a landlord, etc.).

Learning Disability (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC's brain is wired in such a way that some things are incredibly difficult for the PC to learn. Choose the type of learning disability as follows:
   Math: +2 to Bio/Med, Intellectual and Sociological skill costs, +4 to Tech skill costs, +8 to Information skill costs.
   Reading: +3 to Tech and Military skill costs, +6 to Bio/Med, Information, Intellectual and Sociological skill costs.
   Spacial: +8 to Athletic, Combat skill costs. +4 to Creative, Street and Military skill costs.

Lookalike (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- There is some person who looks enough like the PC that the PC is commonly mistaken for this person and visa versa. The lookalike sometimes gets in to trouble, which gets the PC in trouble.

Malnourished (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- In the past the PC was badly malnourished and this has had a lasting negative impact on the PC's health. The PC suffers from a permanent -1 BLD, -1 BDY (the max. caps for these attributes suffer from the same penalties). The PC is -4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and -4 to seduction rolls because of things like missing teeth, thin hair, etc. (this can be removed with plastic surgery, see p.132).

Memory Gaps (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has periods of his or her life that can't be remembered at all. Common causes are drug use, head injuries and mental program malfunction. The danger here is that something dangerous from the PC's past might show up and the PC won't recognize it coming.

Missing Arm (Gives 5 Bonus Points ea.)- The PC is missing one arm. For STH rolls that normally require both arms, the PC's STH is half (round down). For $250 the PC can purchase a strap-on electromechanical prosthetic that looks more-or-less normal and can be used for simple tasks (turning a doorknob, smoking a cigarette) but is not strong, fast or precise enough for things like fighting, lock picking, etc. For $2500 the PC can have a new arm cloned and attached.

Missing Eye (Gives 5 Bonus Points) The PC is missing one eye. A new one can be cloned and put in for $1000. With one eye missing the PC is -7 to AWR rolls requiring peripheral vision or precise judgment of distance.

Missing Leg (Gives 5 Bonus Points ea.)- The PC can get a solid prosthetic (nothing more than strap-on leg-shaped plastic) for $75, crutches for $25 or a non-electronic wheelchair for $100. Walking with a solid prosthetic or crutches reduces PC's SPD to 1. Wheelchairs make the PC's max. SPD equal to half his or her STH. For $450 the PC can buy an electromechanical prosthetic leg that can move and let the PC walk at normal SPD or run at max. 5 SPD. For $2500 the PC can get a new leg cloned and attached.

Mute (Gives 7 Bonus Points)- The PC can not speak or make anything other than coughing and gagging noises. The PC can have an electronic voicebox installed (p.106) for $450.

Nightblindness (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC sees very poorly (-10 to AWR rolls) in low light. PC is partially blinded (-5 to actions/reactions) in the light of a room lit with a 15 watt bulb and fully blinded (-10 to actions/reactions) in light so dim that a normal person could not read a book. The PC can get this condition removed with $1000 worth of genetic therapy.

No Healthcare (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Limitations: Wells and Indies only. The PC does not have the normal healthcare others of the same socioeconomic class have. The PC must pay per-use for medical care.

Obese (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is so overweight that it impairs his or her abilities and causes health problems. The PC is -10 to all jumping, sprinting, climbing rolls and +10 to rolls where weight is an advantage (tackle, pin, ramming). The PC is -7 to save vs. heat exhaustion and +7 to save vs. hypothermia. Depending upon the PC's STH, standing or walking may be a tiring activity (uses pooled END).

Old (Gives 15 Bonus Points per decade after 50)- The character starts the game much older than most of his or his peers. Age not only has physiological effects but changes the way characters are viewed by others. Many people assume that older people are weak and can be pushed around. For each decade after 50, the character gets a cumulative -2 STH, -2 END, -2 SPD, -1 AGY, -1 BLD and -1 BDY.

Only Parent (Gives 10 Bonus Points)- The PC is the only caregiver of a very small child that the PC is legally and psychologically attached to. If the child dies, the PC will be so psychologically distraught that he or she will be unable to complete normal day-to-day duties effectively (in other words, forget about playing the character as a normal PC for quite a while). The child starts at 3 to 5 years old. Create a mini character sheet for the child. The PC may be able to get others to watch the child, but this will either cost money (see Daycare, p.130), mean asking for a favor (which will eventually have to be repaid) or will put the child in a moderately dangerous situation. As the PC grows older and wiser, so will the child. For every experience level the PC gains, the child will age 1 year, will gain 4 attribute points and 50 skill points. By the time the PC reaches level 10, the child should be old enough to take care of himself or herself and even to be a PC. Because of extra costs from the child, the PC's income is reduced by $25/wk. for Street People, $50/wk. for Wells and $75/wk. for Indies

Child NPC Creation

Step 1 – Name, Age, Gender, Description

Step 2 – Create attributes by splitting up 35 attribute points with the following maximums: AGY: 10, AWR: 7, END: 7, INL: 6, STH: 5, WIL: 7. The NPC also has 1 BLD, 1 BDY and 3 INCY.

Step 3 – Use 100 skill points to buy skills as follows: 40 skill points for one level of any skill the parent has, 10 skill points for one level in a "child feat" (this is a CHM, INL, AWR or WIL feat that most adults can do but most children that age can't). Example: a child might start with Beg For Food (1), Find Home (2), Recognize Members of Mommy's Gang (1), Give Self Injection (2), Skill: Calm Attack (1).

Step 4 – Equip child (use money from PC's starting pool).

Parole (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC is out on parole from prison. The PC is out conditionally: there are a set of rules and if the PC breaks them the PC is given a five minute hearing and shipped back to prison (for about 6 months). The PC must meet a parole officer weekly and the parole officer may drop by unannounced (1 in 20 chance each day). The parole officer has access to the PC's apartment and can search it at any time he or she wants. Nearly all parole conditions include a curfew, a fixed address (or a tamper-proof tracking device for the homeless), meaningful employment, no drugs or alcohol (as tested by regular urine tests), no associations with criminals or gangs. There may be other conditions depending upon the PC's crime (a hacker might not be allowed to own a computer, a burglar might not be allowed to own tools, etc.)

Perv Bait (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Something about the way the PC looks, dresses or acts has a strong tendency to attract people with an unhealthy attitude towards sex and relationships, including some people who are dangerous. The PC attracts people that the PC really doesn't want attracted to them. The PC has no idea what it is about him or her that attracts these people (otherwise he or she would change it). The PC faces the risk of losing faith in sex and relationships altogether as they are again-and-again burned by partners who seem nice but end up having something seriously wrong with them.

Physically Unattractive: Minor (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has features which tend to make him or her less attractive to those interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -4 to seduction rolls.

Physically Unattractive: Major (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC has features which have a very strong tendency to make him or her unattractive to those interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -8 to seduction rolls.

Poor Hearing (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Without aid, the PC's hearing is very poor (-10 to hearing based AWR rolls).

Poor Vision (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- Without prescription glasses, contact lenses or some other special aid, the PC is almost blind. If the PC is nearsighted, he or she can see close-up things okay (well enough to recognize a person's face at 1 ft.) or if the PC is farsighted he or she can see far away things okay (well enough to recognize a building). Prescription glasses cost $40. Corrective surgery ($500) can restore the PC's vision to normal.

Pregnant (Gives 15 Bonus Points)- The PC has recently become pregnant. The PC has a strong desire to give birth to the baby and raise it. The pregnancy lasts for 40 weeks and is broken down in to three trimesters. The disadvantages faced by the PC vary according to trimester:

-1st Trimester (weeks 1 to 13): "Morning sickness" (-10 to save vs. nausea). Difficulty sleeping and fatigue (-2 END, -4 to save vs. unconsciousness). Emotional liability (-5 to save vs. fear, anger and other emotions).

-2nd Trimester (weeks 14 to 27): PC will begin to be visibly pregnant (-4 to save vs. loss of balance). Hormonal changes are generally positive: effects on skin and hair may make the PC more attractive to some (+2 to seduction rolls), anxiety is reduced (+4 to save vs. fear). Strange food cravings. Forgetfulness and trouble concentrating (-2 INL). Trouble dissipating body heat (-4 to save vs. heat exhaustion).

-3rd Trimester (weeks 28 to 40): Poor sleep. The PC is very large (-10 to save vs. loss of balance, back pain, walking around will use pooled END). Breath is short (-4 END). Occasional contractions throughout this trimester (20 difficulty distracting pain). Increased need to urinate. Fatigue (-4 to save vs. unconsciousness). Trouble dissipating body heat (-7 to save vs. heat exhaustion).

During the entire pregnancy the PC must be careful to avoid harm coming to the baby. During the first trimester, the baby is most sensitive to toxins and poisons (takes double damage the PC takes). As the baby gets bigger, it is less vulnerable to toxins but it becomes bigger and thus more vulnerable to physical injury: Any random injury to the PC has a 1 in 20 chance of hitting the baby during the first trimester, 1 in 10 during the second trimester and 1 in 6 during the third trimester. At all times the baby has AR 20 PR 2 bladed 2 blunt from the PC's body. Assume the baby has 0 BDY, 1 BLD, 1 INCY.

If the PC carries the pregnancy to term and gives birth, the PC will then have the Only Parent disadvantage (p.51).

Recovering Addict (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC has been a psychological addict of some drug and has recently quit. The PC has been clean for about 2 months and experiences cravings every 11 days or any time the PC is under psychological stress. The PC is at -10 to psychological addiction rolls for any drug. The PC has a psychological void in his or her life that was once taken up by the drug. This void manifests as things like insomnia, depression, boredom, lack of goals in life, etc. The PC also experiences various health problems depending upon what drug the PC used. Choose one of the following as the drug the PC used:

Name	Craving Difficulty	Health Problems
Alcohol	15	Brain damage (-2 INL, -2 AWR, retrograde and anterograde amnesia at 4 difficulty to save), liver damage (-2 to save vs. drug/poison effects)
Amphet-amines	20	Ulcers, malnutrition (-1/2 BLD, -1/2 BDY)
God Killer	30	Emphysema (-2 END), increased risk of cancer, brain damage (-1 INL, -1 AWR)
Mauler	30	Brain damage (-2 INL)
Opiates	20	-2 to save vs. disease progression and mortality.
Slave	35	Weight loss (-1 BDY), liver damage (-1 to save vs. drug/poison effects)
Trace	30	Damaged immune system (-4 to save vs. disease progression and contraction) and arthritis (-1 AGY)

Sickly (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- The PC was born with a susceptibility to many types of diseases. The PC has had more serious illnesses by their teens than most people do in 80 years. The PC starts with -7 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and -10 to save vs. shock. The PC regains lost END and heals from injuries half as fast.

Stupid Relatives (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- The PC's relatives (parents, siblings, even children) have an annoying habit of getting themselves in trouble and running to the PC for help.

Street Mouth (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has never learned how to speak in any way other than using street slang, a thick New York accent and many profanities. If the PC tries to talk like a non-street dweller, he or she will most likely stutter and be nearly unable to communicate. The PC can learn to speak in other ways, but it will take time and effort (PC must spend skill points as if buying 2 levels in a Sociological skill).

Terminal Illness (Gives 17 Bonus Points)- The PC has a non-contagious illness that there is no known cure for and that will eventually cause the PC's death. The PC's only hope is to stave off death with expensive medications (and even more expensive nanobot treatments) and hope for a cure to be discovered (and either pass FDA scrutiny or get on the black market). The only other poessibility is if the PC can gain enough money to be transferred in to a new body (see p.131). The PC must roll once on the random symptom table every week if un-medicated or every month if on medication (free with Indie health care, $75/wk. otherwise).

Random Symptom Table
(All minuses are permanent and cumulative)

01-05%	Weight loss (-½ BLD)
06-10%	Muscle loss (-1 SPD, -1 STH)
11-25%	Tiredness (-2 END)
26-30%	Hair loss, splotchy skin (-4 to seduction rolls)
31-35%	Dizziness (-4 to save vs. loss of balance)
36-40%	Pain sensitivity (-4 to save vs. pain)
41-50%	Nausea (-4 to save vs. nausea)
51-55%	Clammy skin (-4 to save vs. hypothermia)
56-65%	Weakened immune system (-2 to save vs. disease contraction and mortality)
66-70%	Cloudy eyes (-2 to vision based AWR rolls)
71-75%	Ringing in ears (-2 to hearing based AWR rolls)
76-80%	Calcium loss (-1 BDY)
81-85%	Loss of sex drive (+10 difficulty to be seduced)
86-90%	Light sensitivity (-4 to vision based AWR rolls in bright lights)
91-95%	Odor (PC emanates an odor characteristic of the very ill, -10 to seduction rolls)
96-00%	Dementia (-1 INL, -1 AWR, -1 WIL)

Thin Bones (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has very weak bones, usually as a result of bad genes or poor nutrition. PC is -2 BDY and has a max. cap of 3 for BDY.

Unconscionable Contract (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- At some point in his or her life the character signed a contract; probably in taking some job, signing up for a service, getting a loan or buying some expensive item. A clause in this contract that the character didn't even notice is grossly exploitative and may come back to haunt the character. The character does not even realize that this clause is hanging over his or her head.

If the PC can mount an expensive legal defense he or she can probably get the clause thrown out, but otherwise the PC is stuck with a legal duty. The clause might mean that the corporation can invade the privacy of the PC or experiment on the PC without the PC's knowledge. The clause might let the corporation take away property belonging to the PC, force the PC to travel or subject the PC to large fines.

Weak Stomach (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC's stomach is especially sensitive to irritants. -10 to save vs. nausea. Spicy foods, acidic foods or stress will cause heartburn (easy save vs. distracting pain).

Venereal Disease: Annoying (Gives 2 Bonus Points)- The PC has a disease which is spread via intercourse (contraction difficulty 10 for protected sex, 20 for unprotected sex). There is no known cure for this disease, only expensive pharmaceuticals which suppress the effects. The disease causes off-and-on swelling and burning/itchy rashes on the genitals, painful urination, increased risks of cancer and infertility.

Venereal Disease: Deadly (Gives 20 Bonus Points)- The PC has a sexually transmitted disease (contraction difficulty 15 for unprotected sex) for which there is currently no cure. Every month the PC must make a save vs. disease progression (difficulty 30). The PC can buy expensive drug cocktails (covered under Indie healthcare, $100/wk. on the black market) that will give +7 to save vs. disease progression. Unlike normal diseases, a successful save does not lessen the disease's effect, it only staves off progression. For each failure, the PC suffers from cumulative -¼ BLD, -2 to save vs. contraction and progression of other diseases and -1 to whatever is highest among STH, SPD, END. For every given experience level there is a 1 in 10 chance that a cure for that particular strain will be discovered (it will take at least 2 years after that to get FDA approval). The very rich have other treatments available. Nanotech treatments can find and destroy most of the disease organisms (return PC to a state of early infection). Transfer in to a new body (p.131) is a complete cure.

Virgin (Gives 1 Bonus Points)- The PC has never had sexual intercourse with another person (or even a realistic simulation of one in VR). The PC has a general idea of how it is done, but has no way of knowing is he or she can do it well or if he or she will enjoy it.

Weird Brain (Gives 1 Bonus Point)- The PC has an abnormal brain anatomy. This disadvantage does not effect abilities in any way, but because the anatomy is different, any attempt to put a mental program in the brain is extremely dangerous. The program will probably not work and there will probably be a loss of abilities (see the Mental Programming Skill Roll Failure Table, p.33). Other radiochemical neural stimulation based technologies (e.g. full immersion VR) will not work reliably on the PC.

Young (Gives 7 Bonus Points per year below 16)- The "normal" starting age for most character classes is 16 to 21. If a PC starts the game younger than this, he or she is likely to be treated differently. A young character is likely to be treated with less respect: thought of as not as tough, not as wise and not as dependable as an older peer. For each year younger than 16, the PC gets -4 Attribute Points and -½ health attribute point.

STEP NINE - CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

In Brief: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

Level One, Adventure One

At the first adventure using a new character the PC is at Level One, Adventure One. What that means is that the PC has just gained Level 1 status in his or her character class. The PC is no longer a trainee and is (just barely) a full fledged member of that character class. This does not mean that the PC has had no life or experiences, just that this is the first time the PC has been able to stand on his or her own two feet as a member of some community that can be found on the city streets. Many people never reach level 1 and whatever time they spend on the streets they depend on someone else.

The average age for a character at level one, adventure one varies by socioeconomic class. For Street People the average starting age is 16. For Wells the average starting age is 19. For Indies the average starting age is 21.

Gaining XP

Experience allows the PC to grow as a person and improve himself or herself. Experience is measured by Experience Points (XP). XP is awarded at the end of a gaming session, based on the PC's performance in the adventure. Some things player characters can do during a game to gain experience points:

Completing Adventure Goals: Whatever the goals of the given adventure are, the PCs should be awarded points to the degree that they completed the goals successfully. (5 to 25 XP)

Staying Alive: In some adventures, the PCs are thrown in to dangerous situations and the PCs get XP by surviving. (1 to 5 XP) The PC may also get points if every PC involved in the adventure survives. (2 XP)

Making Friends: With PCs with different beliefs, gangs, economic status, etc. it is a commendable achievement when two PCs become good friends and will be awarded. (5 XP)

Discovering Secrets: The game world has a lot of secrets: who controls the Drug Lords, what's up with the moles, etc. Whenever a PC finds out a major secret about the game world, he or she will earn XP. (5 XP)

Personal Growth: This is awarded when something happens that makes the PC wiser or more mature or when the PC realizes something important about his or her life. Usually this means that the character has overcome (or has decided to overcome) some personal flaw. It could also mean a wider outlook. For example, a Skin Borg bent on being the biggest badass on the block could realize that violence is not always the best answer, an obsessed gang member who wants to kill of all Roofers could decide that peace is an option or a completely selfish character may decide that it feels good to help others out. XP should only be awarded if this is a permanent change, not just a temporary deviation. This is used to award depth and change in PCs. (5 XP)

Good Roleplaying: GMs can experience points to players who show empathy for or commitment to the psychology and worldview of their PCs by doing something that fits very well with that character. This is a good way for GMs to compensate players that hurt their characters for the sake of realism (e.g. not using knowledge that the player has but the character wouldn't). (2 XP)

Making The World A Better Place: The PC will earn XP any time he or she helps some person or people (or even animals). This could mean saving a life, providing food to hungry people, teaching someone to read, etc. This can also mean helping people by less direct means, e.g. eliminating a serial killer and therefor saving the lives of anyone that serial killer would have otherwise preyed upon. (1 to 10 XP)

Benefiting Gang/Group/Cause: Whenever the PC does something that benefits the PC's group, gang or cause, the GM will award XP. (1 to 10 XP)

Clever Plan: Whenever a PC comes up with an idea which is clever and also works (has good effects) the GM will award XP. (1 to 5 XP)

Worked Well As Group: The GM will award XP whenever the PCs show that they can work together well and do things they would be unable to do alone. (2 XP)

Worldview Success: If the PC comes to an important and correct conclusion by following the tenants of one of his or her Worldviews (see p.12), the PC should earn (depending on how helpful the conclusion was). (2 XP)

Personal Ideal Success: If the PC succeeds in a way that shows that he or she is progressing towards or has reached a Personal Ideal (p.11) the PC will earn XP. (2 XP)

Losing XP

Just as various types of successes will add to the XP earned in an adventure, some failures can cause the PCs to get less XP than they would have otherwise. XP for an adventure can not drop below zero.

Failing at Adventure Goals: The GM may deduct XP if the PC fails at the goals of the adventure (especially if the goals were very easy or very important). (1 to 5 XP)

Splitting Up Group: If the PC chose to split up the party and it did not benefit the party to do so, the PC will lose XP. (5 XP)

Making the World a Worse Place: Anything that hurts people (or animals) or otherwise makes the world worse will cost XP. (1 to 5 XP)

Player Character Death: If one of the PCs in the party dies, each surviving PC will lose XP. (10 XP)

Spending XP

Generally, XP can be spend as soon as it is received. The only exception is when so little time has passed in the game universe between one game session and another that it is ridiculous to think that the PC might have improved in that way. Example: *The PCs are fugitives, on the run from an angry gang and hiding in abandoned buildings. When a game session ends, the GM awards 16 XP. One player decides that her character will gain one level in the skill Nanoengineering. However, since she had no study materials or time to study, the PC must wait to get the skill.*

The PC can buy the following with Experience Points:

> **Skill Points**: 2 XP = 1 Skill Point
>
> **Attribute Points**: 10 XP = 1 Attribute Point. Attributes can not be raised above their max. cap of 20. Negative sub-attributes can be removed (at a cost of 1 attribute point each) but positive sub-attributes cannot be purchased.
>
> **Health Attribute Points**: 30 XP = 1 Health Attribute Point. Health Attributes can not be raised above their max. cap of 6.

Level Advancement

In addition to spending XP, also you should keep track of how much the PC has earned in total so far. When the PC has earned 100 XP, whether the XP has been spent or not, the PC advances an Experience Level. For the most part, Experience Levels are simply an easy way of keeping track of how much experience the PC has. The following is what people tend to think about people of various experience levels:

Level Zero: Immature, untrained, skill-less, a dependent. About 30% of people on the streets at this level.

Level One: Inexperienced, Green. 30% of people at this level.

Level Two and Three: Moderately experienced, "average." 23% of people at this level.

Level Four to Six: Veteran, Experienced. 10% of people at this level.

Level Seven to Ten: Very experienced, gang elder. 4% of people at this level.

Level Ten to Thirteen: Wise and powerful, unborn family elder, gang leader. 2% of people at this level.

Level Fourteen or more: City legend, historical figure. 1% of people at this level.

Level Advancement can also be used as a rough estimate of time. One experience level might take six months to two years to achieve. Certain things are "timed" based on Experience Levels, such as: the growth of a child (see Only Parent, p.51), the increase in a Trader's level of contacts (p.325), the patience of investors in a Y1's startup (p.333), the increase in a Nightwalker's lifetime viewers (p.315) and the age grades of a Humankalorie (p.215).

The PC also gains 1 free level of the special skill City Knowledge (p.37) for every 4 level advancements (at level 5, 9, 13, etc.). The PC can buy levels of this skill with XP but can not buy more levels than his or her current experience level.

Disciplines

A PC's character class is what the PC does every day. For some, a character class is a means of making a living (e.g. Night Walker, Gambler), for some it is a means of protection or a group to belong to (e.g. Dragons, Orphans), for some it is the PC's hobby, duty or goal (e.g. Volunteer, Hunter). With each character class comes a discipline: while the PC is spending his or her days being the character class, the PC is also learning to be a better member of that character class.

For example: *Vorchag is a member of the Bleeders. He spends his evenings doing his duty to the Bleeders and to his master: he fights in gang wars, he runs errands and goes on missions for his master, etc. He also seeks training to become a better Bleeder: he learns special psychic skills that only his Bleeder elders can tech him, he learns traditional psychic skills, he invests in special Bleeder equipment, etc. Being a Bleeder is both his current Character Class and his current Discipline. When he gains 100 XP he will advance a level as a Bleeder.*

However, a PC can choose to have a different discipline from his or her character class. There are certain things that must be worked out during the game: First, the PC must gain access to teachers of the given discipline. The PC may also have to get certain equipment (e.g. to study to be a Boarder, one must have a slipboard). Second, the PC must deal with any social consequences of studying to be one thing while being another (the people in the PC's character class might have a problem with the PC studying to be something else and the people the PC is studying with might have a problem with the PC continuing to spend his or her days as the PC's character class). If the PC can deal with these various problems and can gain 100 XP, the PC can go up a level as that discipline. While the PC has another discipline, he or she gets the skill costs (and access to special skills) associated with that discipline.

Once a PC has gained one level in a discipline, the PC has all the knowledge and skills to switch to that as his or her character class. Again, the problem of gaining permission to be that new character class (and to leave the old character class) must be dealt with in-game. Once a PC is a new character class he or she gets the income, lifestyle and duties associated with that character class.

For most character classes, the PC must have at least one level as that character class to be a full member of the class. The PC does not always have a choice in the matter, though: a PC may be forced to adopt a character class before gaining a level in it. Assuming the class will accept the PC, the PC will operate as a level 0 member of the class. At this level, the PC does not have the same duties, benefits and opportunities as other members of the class – the PC is something like an apprentice. The PC earns half the income of that character class.

There are also a few special disciplines that do not have a character class associated with them. Think of these as an optional specialty. EMT (emergency medical technician) is one such discipline: there is no exclusive character class called EMT. If Vorchag the Bleeder gains a level as an EMT, he is now a Bleeder with special medical training and the option to get a good-paying part time job. This is a good option for PCs who want to keep their current character classes, but want to have some special training that sets them apart from the other people in their classes.

Some disciplines available to PCs are:

Animal Trainer- The PC learns to breed, raise, care for and train animals. Some Street People take this up as a way to make a little extra money (it's not lucrative enough to do as a full time career) and/or to provide trained animals for their street families. Indies and Wells sometimes take this up, but usually just as a hobby, not a moneymaking enterprise.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a master (level 4 or better) animal trainer willing to take on the PC as a student (such as service might be worth $15/wk. in the street community). The PC must also have a safe place where he or she can keep animals.

Skill Costs: ATHL 8, BIO 7, CMBT 12, CRTV 7, INFO 12, INTL 12, MIL 12, PSYX 30, PSYM 30, PSYS 30, TECH 12, THIE 10, SOC 12, STRT 7. The skills Veterinary Medicine (p.23), Tracking (p.39) and Animal Training (p.37) have a skill cost of 5.

Level Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Animal Training (3), Veterinary Medicine (2), must own at least 4 animals and First Aid Kit: Black Med. For level 2, Must have Animal Training (4), Veterinary Medicine (3) and must own at least 6 animals.

Special Opportunities: At any level, the PC can buy baby animals for ¼ their Untrained cost. The PC buys animal food in bulk, so pays half the per week cost for feeding animals. At level one the PC can make extra money training and selling animals (gives +$15/wk.). At level two the PC has gained some fame as an animal trainer and can make +$20/wk.

Demolitions Expert- Many gang members take up the study of creating, setting and disarming explosives in order to make themselves more useful (and more indispensable) to their gangs.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a master (level 3 or better) demolitions expert willing to train the PC, or the PC can pay $35/wk. for on-line VR training courses.

Skill Costs: ATHL 10, BIO 10, CMBT 14, CRTV 7, INTL 10, MIL 7, PSYX 30, PSYM 30, PSYS 25, TECH 8, THIE 10, SOC 10, STRT 12. The skills Biological Weapons, Demolitions, Poisons, Bomb Disarming, Microelectronics, Production Chemistry and Alarm Systems cost 4 points per level. The skills Blacksmithing, Surgery, Gun Repair, Chemical Analysis, Smart Chemicals and Lock Picking cost 6 points per level.

Level Requirements: For level 1, must have Demolitions (2), Bomb Disarming (2), must own Repair Tools: Hardware-Portable and armor with at least PR 1 bladed. For level 2, must have Demolitions (3), Bomb Disarming (3), Production Chemistry (1), Microelectronics (1), must own at least $100 worth of tools, $100 worth of sensory equipment, $100 worth of armor/shields. For level 3, must have Demolitions (4), Bomb Disarming (4), must own $200 worth of tools and Shield: Blast or Shield: Advanced Blast.

Special Opportunities: The PC can get explosives for half price (either by making them, reusing what they have disarmed or trading with other demolitions experts). At each level the PC has more and more renown within his or her social circles as an explosives expert and will be increasingly consulted or called on for help.

EMT- The PC is training to be an Emergency Medical Technician. Every group appreciates having members who have medical training and will often give the PC extra leeway to pursue his or her studies. PCs who become certified can gain part-time jobs as EMTs. Although this pays well, it can often force gang member PCs in to

difficult situations. For example: what should a PC who is an EMT and gang member for if he or she comes across a wounded member of an enemy gang? Such dilemmas mean that gang members (and those with close connections to gang members) seldom last long as EMTs. Being an EMT is also stressful, dangerous work that few have the personality to do for long.

Discipline Requirements: Indies and Wells only (Street People should seek out training from Black Meds). PC must pay $25/wk. for training (training is mostly VR simulations).

Skill Costs: ATHL: 12, BIO: 5, CMBT: 14, CRTV: 8, INFO 10, INTL 6, MIL 10, PSYX: 35, PSYM: 30, PSYS: 30, TECH 10, THIE 12, SOC 11, STRT 11. PC can get the skills Driving, Offensive Driving, Poisons, Needles and Street Drugs for 5 points/level.

Level Requirements: For level 1, the PC must pay $300 for a test, must have Driving (1), Emergency Medicine (2), Pharmacology (1), Surgery (1). For level 2, PC must own First Aid Kit: EMT. For level 2, the PC must have Emergency Medicine (3), Pharmacology (2), Surgery (2). For level 3, the PC must pay $300 for a test, must have 10 levels in BIO skills, must own Autosurgeon: Cardiopulmonary Support.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC is a certified EMT. The PC can legally carry around and use medical equipment which would otherwise be illegal. The PC is eligible for a job working in an ambulance for the city hospital. The PC earns +$50/wk. and can get all legal Biotech equipment at half cost. At level 2, if the PC has been working continuously as an EMT, he or she gets a raise to +$75/wk. At level 3, the PC is certified as an Advanced EMT, is put in charge of an ambulance team and earns +$100 wk.

Lawyer- The state of New York allows people to study for the bar without going to an accredited lawschool. The PC must register as a self-learner and pass a basic skills test at least 6 months before taking the bar. It is also virtually impossibly to pass the bar without paying for some sort of training or study materials. Passing the bar is expensive and time consuming and not many people with active lives on the streets have time for it.

Discipline Requirements: Indies and Wells only. Must pay $40/wk. for study materials. Must study many hours per week (30 hours a week, though this amount may be reduced with hard INL feats).

Skill Costs: ATHL 20, BIO 15, CMBT 20, CRTV 10, PSYX 50, PSYM 50, PSYS 50, INFO 7, INTL 10, MIL 15, TECH 10, THIE 15, SOC 17 STRT 15. Law skills cost 5.

Level Requirements: For level 1, the PC must pay $250, must have 4 levels of INTL or SOC skills and Law: Basic (1). For level 2, the PC must pay $1000, must have min. 10 INL, must have Law: Basic (3) and 1 level each of Law: Criminal, International, Tech and Tort. PC must also pass an investigation in to his or her moral character.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC is a certified legal student and can work in paralegal positions. If the PC chooses to get a part-time legal job, the PC gets +$35/wk. At level 2, the PC is a barred attorney in the state of NY. He or she may be disbarred if caught doing illegal or unethical things. The PC can represent other people in court. The PC can get +$75/wk. by working part-time as a lawyer.

Licensed Psychic- In order to seek money for psychic services, a person must be licensed as a psychic with the state. Licensing involves an expensive battery of psychic tests as well as a test on psychic law and ethics. Licensed psychics must test for every psychic skill they want to claim to have (and the state only recognizes a small number of psychic skills). Licensed Psychics are very rare (more because of the expense than the difficulty of testing) and Licensed Psychics can get a lot of high-paying corporate contracts.

Discipline Requirements: Indies and Wells only. Must pay $70/wk. for study materials and access to training machines. Must not have been convicted of any felonies.

Skill Costs: ATHL 15, BIO 12, CMBT 15, CRTV 10, PSYX 30, PSYM 7, PSYS 7, INFO 12, INTL 12, MIL 12, TECH 12, THIE 15, SOC 12, STRT 15. The skills Psychic Science, Neurology: Psychic, Law: Tech are 5 points per level.

Level Requirements: For level 1, the PC must pay $2000, must have Law: Tech (1) and 3 levels in any one Psychic: Manipulative or Psychic: Sensory skill.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC is a licensed psychic and can be hired to practice whatever manipulative or sensory skills he or she is certified as having (had 3 or more levels in at the time of testing). If the PC works part-time as a psychic the PC will earn an extra $100/wk.

Mercenary- The PC is training to make a living hiring himself or herself out as a soldier of fortune. Mercenaries typically live in the city and occasionally fly out to some scene of world conflict to sign on to a unit of mercenaries. There are also occasional job opportunities for a mercenary within the city.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must either find a seasoned mercenary (level 3 or greater) willing to train the PC, or the PC must pay $40/wk. for an on-line VR training course.

Skill Costs: ATHL 7, BIO 9, CMBT: 7, CRTV 10, INFO 9, INTL 12, MIL 5, PSYX 30, PSYM 20, PSYS 20, TECH 10, THIE 8, SOC 10, STRT 12.

Level Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have 2 levels in Athletics skills, 4 levels in Military skills, Military Tactics (1), Rifle/Shotgun (2), Automatic Weapons (2). For level 2, the PC must have Climbing (1), Running (1), Swimming (1), Sniper (1), Military Tactics (2), 5 levels of combat skills and 6 levels of Military skills. For level 3, the PC must have Emergency Medicine (1), Military Tactics (3), Demolitions (1) and Gun Repair (1).

Special Opportunities: While studying, the PC has connections who can get the PC smuggled firearms, ammo and armor at 10% off. The PC can also purchase firearms in places outside the city where they are cheaper and easier to get (half price) and pay someone $5/wk. to keep those weapons while the mercenary is in the city. At level 1, if the PC can get out of the country and get a weapon (rifle or automatic weapon) and armor, the PC has a reasonably good chance of getting hired on as a mercenary, which can pay anywhere from $1000 to $5000. At level 2, the PC has a little bit of street cred in the mercenary community and can almost certainly get hired at any site. At level 3, the PC is well known enough that he or she will probably be put in charge of a group of less experienced mercenaries at the given battle (and get paid $5,000 to $10,000).

Negotiator- Every once in awhile, gangs or other powerful city residents try to settle their differences through talking instead of violence. In these cases, the parties who are trying to work things out sometimes call on those within their ranks who are skilled at negotiating or they hire someone from outside the group to negotiate for them. The PC is training to be one of these negotiators, and will learn skills that will also make him or her a useful messenger, translator, peacemaker or mediator.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a seasoned negotiator (at least level 3) willing to train the PC.

Skill Costs: ATHL 12, BIO 10, CMBT 14, CRTV 7, INTL 7, MIL 12, PSYX 25, PSYM 15, PSYS 10, INFO 7, TECH 10, THIE 7, SOC 5, STRT 7. The PC can get the skills Storytelling, Internet Browsing, Oratory, Foreign Languages, Money, Information Smuggling, Law: Basic and Interrogation for 4 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Oratory (2), Interrogation (1), Foreign Language (1). Must have CHM of 7 or better. For level 2, the PC must have Oratory (4), Interrogation (2), Foreign Language (2). The PC must own either Hearing Aid, Voice Stress Analyzer or Subliminal Analyzer. Must have CHM of 11 or better.

Special Opportunities: A PC may be hired for occasional sporadic jobs. The more credibility the PC gains as a negotiator (by negotiating honestly and fairly) the more likely the PC is to be hired. A negotiation can pay anywhere from $5 to $1000. Negotiating jobs for the PC's own gang will earn nothing more than extra respect and gratitude. The PC can never hope to make a living negotiating. Even the city's best negotiators never work any more than once every few months.

Pit Fighter- There are places in the city where people fight for money (see p.383) and some Street People with few other prospects take up fighting in these arenas to make a little extra cash. The money earned by even the best street fighters is never enough to make it a career. At best it is a brutal part time job that leaves almost everyone in it scarred and disabled (or dead). Wells and Indies occasionally take this up, but they are usually mentally ill.

Discipline Requirements: The PC can either find a trainer (level 3 or greater Pit Fighter) willing to train the PC (usually in exchange for 50% of anything the PC earns while being trained) or the PC can train himself or herself in the ring (if this is the case, the PC will start most adventures with some injury gained in the ring).

Skill Costs: ATHL 5, BIO 12, CMBT 8, CRTV 8, INTL 20, MIL 15, PSYX 50, PSYM 40, PSYS 40, TECH 20, THIE 12, SOC 20, STRT 8. The skills Boxing, Kickboxing, Slam, Street Fighting: Armed, Street Fighting: Unarmed and Wrestling cost 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, the PC must have Street Fighting: Unarmed (3) <u>or</u> 6 levels total unarmed combat skills, must have min. 10 STH, min 10 AGY. For level 2, the PC must have Street Fighting: Unarmed (2) <u>and</u> 8 levels total of unarmed combat skills, must have min. 13 STH, min. 13 AGY.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, The PC can make an extra $15/wk. by working the nightly pit-fighting circuit without too much of a chance of serious injury (the PC has learned when it is best to fake being knocked out). At level 2, the PC has gained a bit of notoriety and can make +$30/wk. At level 3, the PC can make +$45/wk. but has gained such notoriety in the pit fighting circles that he or she may encounter people during non-work hours who want to challenge the PC.

Professional Artist- Some people manage to gain limited notoriety, social connections and a handsome bit of extra cash with some creative skill. These include mainly poets, musicians, painters, graffiti artists and VR samplers. The key making it as an artist is not skill or talent (a lot of people have a lot of that), it's learning to work within the art community and gain status.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must spend 20 hours a week working on his or her particular art form.

Skill Costs: ATHL 15, BIO 15, CMBT 15, CRTV 3, INFO 12, INTL 10, MIL 15, PSYX 40, PSYM 30, PSYS 30, TECH 10, THIE 15, SOC 7, STRT 13. The skill Graffiti costs 4 points/level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, level 5 in any one Creative skill.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC can make $75 for every week in which the PC spend at least 8 hours working on his or her art. At level 2, the PC can make +$100. At level 3, the PC can make +$150 and can use his or her influence over the city art scene to have a noticeable impact on city culture and politics.

Reporter- Sensationalistic news pieces, "true crime" novels and documentaries about the dangers and adventures of city life can earn a bit of extra money for a PC. The PC is training to work as a freelancer, selling stories to whatever media corp is currently buying them. The PC may get in a lot of trouble with various city groups for airing their dirty laundry, but fortunately the media corps never check the stories for accuracy so the PC can generally twist the story however he or she wants.

Discipline Requirements: Indies and Wells only. The PC must have a veteran reporter (level 2 or better) who is willing to take the PC on as a student.

Skill Costs: ATHL 12, BIO 15, CMBT 15, CRTV 5, INFO 9, INTL 7, MIL 15, PSYX 40, PSYM 30, PSYS 30, TECH 8, THIE 9, SOC 7, STRT 12. The skills Internet Browsing, Interrogation, Disguise, Impersonation, Corporations, History: City, Oratory and Graffiti cost 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, PC must have Photography (2) or Storytelling (2) and own either a Videocamera: Cheap, Digital Camera: Professional or Sound Recorder. For level 2, PC must have 4 levels of SOC skills and Internet Browsing (1) and own either Videocamera: Professional, Digital Camera: Professional or the Sense Recorder mental program.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC can make +$50/wk. selling occasional stories to the media corps. At level 2, the PC can make +$75/wk. At level 3, the PC can make +$100/wk.

Skip Tracer- Skip Tracers specialize in finding people who don't want to be found. They are the modern equivalent of a "private investigator" and can be found working for bail companies, debt collection agencies, repossession companies or working Freelance to get law enforcement rewards on wanted criminals. Although the PC would be wise to learn to handle himself or herself in a fight, the majority of training to become a Skip Tracer is training in research (tracking down a person via paperwork and phone calls).

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a seasoned Skip Tracer (level 3 or better) willing to take the PC on as an apprentice, or pay $45/wk. for on-line VR training courses.

Skill Costs: ATHL 10, BIO 15, CMBT 9, CRTV 7, INFO 7, INTL 12, MIL 10, PSYX 40, PSYM 30, PSYS 15, TECH 9, THIE 9, SOC 9, STRT 10. The skills Immobilization, Forensic Pathology, Money, Interrogation, Internet Browsing, Sniffing, Linework, Disguise, Lock Picking, Law: Criminal, Social Work and Tracking have a skill cost of 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1: Internet Browsing (1), Immobilization (1), must own handcuffs. For level 2: Internet Browsing (2), Immobilization (2), Law: Criminal (1), must own a taser and $200 worth of sensory equipment.

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC can make +$60/wk. working part-time as a skip tracer. At level 2, the PC can make +$80/wk.

Terrorist- The Freedom Wars (p.386) were basically a terrorist war: terrorists destabilized society so much that a revolutionary army was able to take over most of the country, then terrorists destabilized the revolutionary government enough that the US military was able to retake control. The city was ground zero for terrorist acts for the East coast of North America. Quite a few terrorists on either side of the conflict have gone to ground in the city, now living on welfare in decrepit old apartment buildings and are more than happy to pass on their skills to anyone who seems to share their political philosophies.

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a skilled terrorist (level 2 or greater) who is willing to train the PC.

Skill Costs: ATHL 8, BIO 10, CMBT 12, CRTV 7, INFO 7, INTL 12, MIL 5, PSYX 40, PSYM 30, PSYS 30, TECH 10, THIE 6, SOC 12, STRT 12. The skills Plastic Surgery, Sniper, Information Smuggling, Forgery, Philosophy, Anonymity, Production Chemistry, System Crashing, Disguise, Prowling, Light Sleep and Wilderness Survival cost 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, must have Brainwashing (2) or Demolitions (2) or Biological Weapons (2).

Special Opportunities: At level 1, the PC gains sources that can get him or her biological weapons, chemical weapons or explosives (including some listed as Unavailable) at 25% off. At level 2 the PC can get 35% off.

Torturer- Many gangs feel it is an unfortunate necessity to have at least one person in the gang who is able to get information out of a person by any means necessary (a minority of gangs would never do this and have no need for torturers). Torturers are respected but often looked at with distaste (and a little fear) even by fellow gang members. Even those who aren't looked at with distaste find it is easier to get along with people if they say nothing about the details of their trade around other people. Those torturers who are not total sociopaths tend to be very lonely people. This loneliness is why so many of them seek out students they can train (and thus create a new generation of torturers).

Discipline Requirements: The PC must find a seasoned Torturer (level 2 or greater) willing to train the PC.

Skill Costs: ATHL 10, BIO 10, CMBT 10, CRTV 10, INFO 10, INTL 15, MIL 7, PSYX 30, PSYM 20, PSYS 20, TECH 15, THIE 15, SOC 15, STRT 15. The skills Emergency Medicine, Pharmacology, Immobilization, Brainwashing, Torture, Interrogation, Poisons, Needles and Seduction cost 5 points per level.

Level Advancement Requirements: For level 1, must have Torture (3) and own $50 worth of tools. For level 2, must own a Torture Kit and one dose of Compliance Drops.

Special Opportunities: If the PC belongs to a gang that currently condones this sort of thing (gang's attitudes on this subject have been known to change) at level 1 the PC may be asked by his or her gang to do them a favor.

A Complex Advancement Example- *Vorchag starts the game as a level 1 Bleeder. His character class and discipline are both Bleeder. He participates in several adventures and gets a lot of XP. He spends the XP based on the skill costs of the Bleeder: he gets some psychic skills, including skills that only Bleeders can learn. He soon gains 100 XP and is now a Level 2 Bleeder.*

Vorchag grows dissatisfied with the Bleeders. He has a friend who is a Sexologist and he starts training to be a Sexologist. He now has Bleeder as his current character class and Sexologist as his current discipline. His income, duties and lifestyle are that of a Bleeder, but his skill costs are that of a Sexologist. As he gains XP he spends them on special Sexologist skills. However, before he can gain 100 XP, Vorchag's gang elders find out that he is studying with the Sexologists. Feeling that this is a conflict of interest, Vorchag's teacher orders him to stop his associations with the Sexologists. Vorchag refuses and it is only with luck, clever maneuvering and the help of his friends that he survives the incident. He is now considered an enemy of the Bleeders and has ceased to be a Bleeder as his character class. The PC asks the Sexologists to take him in, and he manages to talk them in to it. His character class is that of a Sexologist, but he is a Level 0 Sexologist, a mere trainee and not a full member of the gang. The PC is not allowed to have sex with anyone except his Sexologist teachers and he is not allowed to go out by himself and act on behalf of the Sexologists. Because the PC is so controlled and spends so much of his time studying, he has little opportunity to go out and make money (his weekly income is cut in half). After a few adventures he has gained another 100 XP and he goes up a level as a Sexologist. He is now a Level 1 Bleeder, Level 1 Sexologist whose character class and discipline are both Sexologist.

Vorchag now decides that he wants to get a job as an EMT. He puts aside the money for VR training courses, invests in equipment and learns medical skills. Now his character class is Sexologist and his discipline is EMT. The Sexologists don't mind: they would love to have another person around with emergency medical training. At Vorchag's next level advancement he becomes a Level 1 Bleeder, Level 1 Sexologist and Level 1 EMT. He remains a Sexologist (there is no EMT character class) but he is a Sexologist with skills who has the option of getting a nice paying part-time job.

Chapter Two - Organic Rule Components

His face was oily, his scalp itched, his socks were stiff with dried sweat, his eyes burned, his back and wrists ached, his hands trembled, his mouth was dry and bitter, his empty stomach felt acidic, and someone kept calling his name.

This was the most important hacking job of Twink's life. He had blown every bit of cash he had on a big bag of fast food, and had traded some computer equipment for some uppers and smart drugs. After breaking in to the switch box and giving it internet access, he took residence in the old abandoned rowhouse. There he sat crosslegged on the floor, amidst a layer of white dust, and he hacked.

The lights of day filtering through the boards, illuminating the ubiquitous dust particles, had come and gone more times than he had bothered to count. He had long ago finished the last cold, soggy french-fry. He had long ago drunk the last drop of luke-warm soda, diluted by the melted ice and barely held in by the water-logged paper cup. He had long ago pissed and shit it all out in the far corner, and now there was nothing left in him but stomach acid, smart drugs and uppers

The damn firewall just wasn't giving. Thankfully he was hacking via anonymous resenders, since network security kept finding him and cutting off his IP address. He had tried every security hole he knew and then went and looked up a hundred more, but the firewall quietly rebuffed every attempt.

When he first started hearing the voices calling his name, they were faint, sounding like they were coming from somewhere behind him. He hadn't been able to find the source and wondered if they were hallucinations caused by the uppers. Over time they grew louder and Twink found it harder to believe they weren't real. Everything around him seemed dangerous, like every board and rusty nail and scrap of paper was conspiring to destroy him. The world, he knew innately, was too dangerous and terrible place for the voices to be just a hallucination. He wondered if it was psychics trying to drive him insane, or whether someone had put some sort of mental program in his brain without him knowing it.

Then he realized the source of the voice: his laptop. It was no longer his, it worked for them. It steamed with evil intelligence, a supernatural awareness. 'You're a failure,' it seemed to tell him, 'You'll never find out what happened to your friends, you'll never see them again, and it will be all your fault.'

"Shut up!" Twink screamed, grabbing the laptop and jerking to his feet. "Shut up!" he repeated over and over again as he flung the laptop as hard as he could against the wall…

BASIC MECHANICS

Rolls are made during game play for one specific reason: to see if a character can do something he or she is trying to do. Rolls should only be made if a doubt exists as to whether the character can do it. When a roll does need to be made, the basic form is this:

Applicable attribute + 1d20 (one twenty sided die)
Vs. Action Difficulty

For instance: Sam wishes to climb the side of a building to get to the roof. AGY is the attribute and the GM decides that the difficulty will be 20. Sam has an AGY of 9 and so needs to roll 11 or higher on his d20 in order to succeed. Say, however, that Sam has special gloves that gives him +8 to climbing – now he would roll AGY (9) +8 (gloves) + 1d20 vs. 20 (Sam only needs to roll a 3 or better).

Sample Difficulties

0- Automatic Success

5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)

10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)

15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)

20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)

25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)

30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)

40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

Dual Attribute Rolls- Some rolls use two attributes. For instance, to save vs. unconsciousness a PC uses Endurance (for physical energy) and WIL (for mental energy). When using two attributes, add the attributes together and divide by half (rounding up). So, if a PC with 3 END and 12 WIL wants to save vs. unconsciousness with moderate difficulty, END+WIL/2 is 7.5, rounded up it's 8, so the PC would roll 8 + 1d20 vs. 20.

Opposed Rolls- When characters are competing, two rolls are made and whoever has the best success (success minus difficulty) wins. This represents that people competing may have different levels of ability but may also be trying things of different difficulty. A character trying to do a complicated martial arts maneuver must get a much higher roll to get the same amount of success as someone trying to do something as simple as a punch. Opposed rolls take the following form:

Character 1's Attribute + 1d20 v. Difficulty 1
opposing
Character 2's Attribute + 1d20 v. Difficulty 2

Deliberate vs. Chance- GM's decide whether a roll is a "deliberate" or "chance" roll. This depends upon how much chance influences the outcome of the event (as opposed to skill and talent). On a chance roll, a roll of 1 on the 1d20 means automatic failure, a roll of 20 means automatic success. If a roll could not have succeeded except for rolling a 20, the roll should be considered to have succeeded by 1. In almost all cases, fighting rolls are chance.

    Chance Actions: An action a PC needs to get done immediately, or when an action must either succeed or fail the first time the PC does it. Example: a climbing roll involving leaping from one building and grabbing on to the windowsill of another. No matter the AGY and climbing skills of the PC, the PC might succeed or might fail on a 1 or 20.

    Deliberate Actions: The PC is trying to do something, but can stop if he or she is about to fail. These are typically slower actions. Example: PC is at the bottom of a wall and makes a climbing roll to see if he can climb up it. A failure here does not necessarily mean that the PC falls, it might

just mean that the PC couldn't find a safe way to get up the wall. There are no automatic successes or failures here.

Savings Rolls - Save vs. X rolls are difficulty rolls to keep something from happening that will happen unless the roll succeeds. If a PC is making a save vs. unconsciousness then the PC will become unconscious unless he or she can meet the difficulty. A basic table of savings throws follows. See the section on using attributes for more information.

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	END
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL
Shock	END

Opposed Savings Rolls- Occasionally, characters will be required to make opposed savings rolls. This means that even if they succeed (meet their difficulty) they will fail if they do not succeed at a level greater to or equal to the level that their opponent succeeds their difficulty.

Example: *Sam hits Carl with a knockout strike. Carl beat his difficulty by 5. Now Sam not only has to beat the normal difficulty for a save vs. unconsciousness, he has to beat it by 5 or more to avoid going unconscious.*

USING ATTRIBUTES

Agility (AGY)

Use AGY for athletic type rolls: catching things, throwing things, blocking things (other than strikes), skipping rope, etc.

Balance- Use AGY for rolls to keep one's balance: walking a tightrope, moving on ice covered streets, racing down stairs, etc.

Climbing- Use AGY for climbing. See table for sample difficulties.

Landing- Characters can use AGY to save vs. falling or skidding damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.64). The first point of damage can be saved against at 10 difficulty, the second point at 20 difficulty, the third at 30, etc.

Climbing Difficulties (with no equipment)
10 (Easy) Tree with low branches.
20 (Moderate) Rocky cliff face.
30 (Hard) Sheer cliff face.
40 (Legendary) Glacial ice.

Prowling- AGY is also used for prowling (attempting to move through an area while not being noticed). The difficulty is based on several factors: the number of people and their proximity, how distracted or attentive they are, the amount of cover and whether there is darkness or a weather condition obscuring the PC. The person being prowled against should get an opposed awareness roll.

Prowling difficulties

10 (Easy) Crawling through a field of tall grass with a wind to cover noises and an unsuspecting person nearby.

20 (Moderate) Sneaking up behind someone who isn't expecting anything.

30 (Difficult) Crawling in a gutter at night with several people searching for PC.

40 (Legendary) Avoiding someone who is searching for PC by staying directly behind them (may also require SPD based rolls).

Awareness (AWR)

Noticing- Use AWR when characters need to notice a detail too small to be included in the GM's description of the surroundings (e.g. the man standing next to you has a small needle mark on his neck). AWR should not be used for a substitute for directed attention: if a player says "I'm looking carefully at the man next to me," he or she should be given every detail about that person with no AWR roll needed. AWR is also used to save vs. prowling (see above).

Manipulation- An AWR roll is also made when something is trying to manipulate the PC's mind (typically this will be a psychic). The normal difficulty is 20. If the PC's success is better than the manipulator's success, the PC realizes that he or she is being manipulated, and now can try to resist the manipulation (usually with a WILL roll).

Charm (CHM)

Acting- Use CHM whenever a PC needs to put one some sort of act to fool other people.

Acting difficulties

10 (Easy) Making people think you're bored.

20 (Moderate) Making people think you're in pain.

30 (Difficult) Making people think you're not scared.

First Impressions- CHM rolls can also be made to "modify" an NPC's reaction to the PC. The most common usage is to try to make people like the PC. A PC meeting a stranger who beats 20 on a CHM roll comes off as slightly more confident, friendly, intelligent and likeable than he or she would have otherwise. Note that this is "first impressions" only. After the PC has had more interaction with an NPC, the PC's actions and words become what the PC is judged by. Instead of trying to come off as likeable, PCs can also try to modify their first impressions in other ways, e.g. to come off as tough/mean/scary or as lowly/loser/wimp/ nothing-to-be-worried-about.

Persuasion- CHM is used to persuade NPCs to agree with an argument. First, PCs must roleplay arguing their case. Next, the GM decides the difficulty of the persuasion based on the logical strength of the argument. A very reasonable argument which makes a lot of sense might have a difficulty of 10. A very improbable argument that asks the listener to make a lot of assumptions might have a difficulty of 30. Note: Don't even bother rolling if an argument is so strong or so weak that it is ridiculous to believe that someone wouldn't/would agree with it.
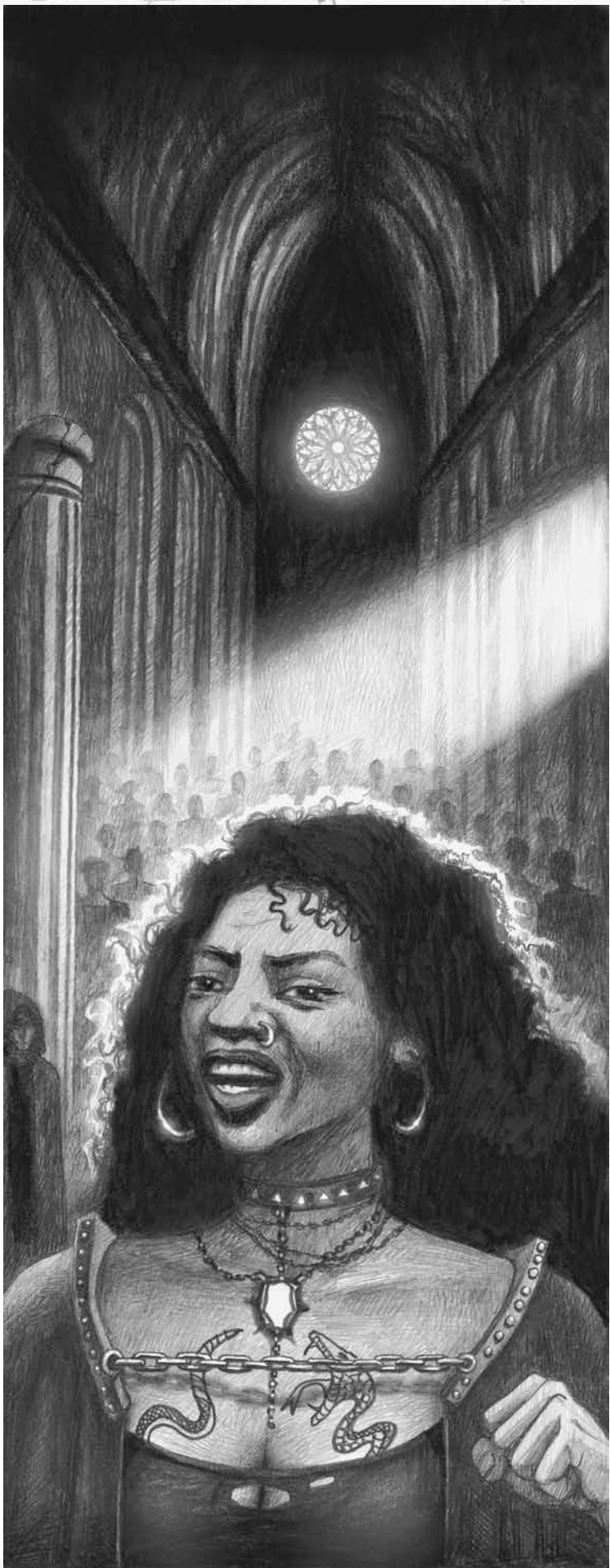
Seduction- Use CHM for seduction rolls. A successful roll means that the victim <u>wants</u> to have sex with the PC. How and if the victim will act on those desires is up to the GM or player. The normal difficulty for a sexually healthy adult who has a preference for the PC's gender is 20 (moderate). GMs can also force players to make "passive seduction" rolls to see if a person is attracted to the PC even without the PC trying to seduce the person. Passive seduction rolls typically have +10 difficulty.

Endurance (END)

Pooled Endurance- Endurance is used a measurement of the amount of energy a PC has to expend. The PC starts with a "pool" of points equal to his or her END. Any of the following removes 1 point from this pool:

> **Exertion**: Any round in which the PC is doing some strenuous physical action, including combat or anything that uses at least half the PC's STH or SPD.

> **Oxygen Deprivation**: Any round in which the PC can't or won't take in oxygen.

> **Mortal Injuries**: Any round in which the PC is mortally wounded (is at 0 BLD, see p.63).

Other miscellaneous things (e.g. toxins) can also remove pooled END. Using psychic manipulation skills removes 2 END per round.

When Pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated. The PC can not stand, can not make fighting actions or reactions and can not initiate any kind of communication. The PC will fail at <u>any</u> roll involving AGY, END, SPD or STH.

Example: *Tim has 9 END. He was just shot (bringing his BLD to 0) and he is in a room filled with poison gas. He is holding his breath and running as fast as he can (he hopes to jump out of the window). Each round he loses 3 pooled END (one from exertion, one from oxygen deprivation, one from mortal injuries), which means he has 3 actions before he becomes incapacitated. After two rounds he gets hit in the head with a rock and must make a save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls 1d20 plus an average of his WIL and END (which is currently 3).*

Fatigue- END can also be used more slowly by activities which do not use half the PC's STH or SPD but are tiring nonetheless (e.g. jogging, manual labor, even standing for long period of time). Example: Juan has a SPD of 10. If he runs at 5 or higher he will lose 1 END per round, so he decides to run at SPD 4. The GM decides that he will lose 1 pooled END for every 5 minutes running at this speed.

Rest- When Pooled END is lost to strenuous activity, it returns at 1 point per round when the PC is resting. Pooled END lost to oxygen deprivation returns at 1 point per round when the PC begins receiving oxygen again. Pooled END lost to fatigue returns at the same rate it was lost (e.g. if Juan loses 4 END by jogging for 20 minutes, he will regain it with 20 minutes of rest). If a PC ever reaches 0 END (incapacity) that PC is -1 END for the next 24 hours. If a PC reaches 0 END multiple times, the PC will be very tired (have aggregate minuses to END) until the next day.

Health- END is used to represent the body's general health. It is used to save vs. things like hypothermia, heat exhaustion, cardiac arrest (heart attack), shock and (along with WIL) unconsciousness. See Other Types of Damage (p.64) and Symptoms/Effects (p.65) for more.

Disease- END is also used to save vs. disease contraction and progression. See Disease (p.66) for more.

Intelligence (INL)

Speed of Thought- Among other things, INL represents how quickly a PC thinks (as opposed to AWR, which can measure how quickly a PC notices things, or AGY which represents how fast the PC's body reacts). A GM might sometimes ask PCs and NPCs to make opposed INL rolls to find out who figures out something first. INL (along with AWR) is used to determine initiative in combat (see p.76).

Skills- Intelligence is used to perform intellectual or creative skills. See Skills (p.67) for more. In Brief: roll INL +1d20 +4/ skill level above the 1st vs. the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do.

Speed (SPD)

Leaping- SPD is used for leaping rolls. The difficulty for making a leap is the distance (in ft.) times two, so a ten foot leap would have a 20 difficulty. Height differences, inclines, etc. can increase the difficulty.

Running- SPD also sets the maximum speed the character can run. For convenience's sake, we use SPD as its own measurement of speed and we list everything in the game as having a SPD, from a car to a PC to a tidal wave. If you need to determine miles per hour, it is approximately SPD divided by 2.

Strength (STH)

STH is used in opposed strength rolls, for instance, if two people are grabbing for an object.

Strength Feats- Strength is also used for lifting heavy objects or any other "feat" of strength. Assuming a character can get a good grip on an object, the difficulty to lift the object should be the weight in lbs. divided by 10, so a 200 lb. object would be 20 difficulty to lift (a poorly grippable object or an object with poor balance would have a higher difficulty). Some example STH feats:

STH Feat Difficulties
10 (Easy) Prying open a nut.
20 (Moderate) Breaking a wooden door
30 (Difficult) Pushing a horse around.
40 (Legendary) Pulling apart a cheap padlock

Encumbrance- STH also determines the amount that the PC can carry on his or her person without suffering a detriment to attributes. A PC's "Base Encumbrance" is equal to his or her STH times 5 lbs. If the PC is carrying his or her base encumbrance, well distributed over the body, the PC is at -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 Pooled END per hour. For every 10 lbs. over Base Encumbrance, the PC is at an additional -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 additional Pooled END per hour.

Example: *Nyorbu has a STH of 7. His base encumbrance is 7 x 5lbs. or 35 lbs. If Nyorbu is carrying 25 lbs., so long as it is packed well, he suffers from no minuses. At 35 lbs. he is at -1 to AGY and SPD and loses 1 Pooled END every hour. If Nyorbu is carrying 85 lbs. (35 lbs. plus 50 lbs, or 5x10 lbs. over his Base Encumbrance) he is at -6 to SPD and AGY and loses 6 Pooled END per hour.*

Willpower (WIL)

Mind Control- WIL is used for opposed rolls involving attempts at psychic manipulation (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the attack roll of the psychic) or brainwashing (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the skill roll of the brainwasher). Note that in order to resist psychic manipulation, the PC must first realize that someone is trying to manipulate him or her (see AWR, p.61).

Resistance- WIL is used to resist anything that would cause the PC to act (or not act) against his or her will. PCs can make WIL bases saves to resist, among other things, pain, nausea, fear, amnesia, hallucinations, delusions, euphoria, etc. See p.65 for a list of symptoms and effects of drugs/diseases/poisons and the consequences for failing saves against them.

Pain- One of the most common things PCs will have to resist is pain. Pain comes in two types:

Shocking Pain: This is pain that comes on suddenly (sometimes unexpectedly). It only lasts a second but it is so strong that it can cause the PC to be unable to act. A PC who fails to save by 1-9 looes his or her next action. A PC who fails by 10 or more loses his or her next action and reaction (see Actions and Reactions, p.78), meaning that the PC not only cannot act, but cannot defend himself or herself for one round.

Distracting Pain: This is pain that comes on more slowly and stays around longer, causing the PC to be distracted from anything he or she tries to do. When a PC fails a save vs. distracting pain, the PC suffers from a penalty equal to the amount he or she failed by. This penalty applies to any roll the PC has conscious control over (e.g. it would apply to an attempt to catch a ball, but would not apply to a save vs. disease contraction).

Example: *Logos fails a save vs. distracting pain by 3. Logos now suffers from -3 to skill rolls, actions, reactions and anything else he has conscious control over.*

Drug Cravings- WIL is also used to save vs. drug cravings (the difficulty based on the drug) after becoming addicted. See Drugs (p.65) for more.

HEALTH ATTRIBUTES

In Brief- Blades remove BLD. Crushing removes BDY (then double BLD). 0 BLD = mortally wounded, but PC can keep going until INCY or Pooled END = 0.

The three health attributes, BLD, BDY and INCY are used whenever a character takes any kind of damage which moves the PC progressively closer to death. There are many types of damage which may cause pain, may cripple the PC, but don't move the PC significantly closer to being dead and so they do not remove BLD, BDY and INCY. The two main types of damage are blunt and bladed.

Blunt Damage- Blunt damage comes from that does crushing damage to the PC's tissues, like a club or a punch. Things like falling, being crushed, being rammed by a vehicle also do blunt damage. Blunt damage is subtracted from BDY. Once all BDY is gone, blunt damage is removed from BLD but the effect is <u>doubled</u>. So, if a person with 2 BDY is hit with something that does 5 blunt damage, all 2 BDY are taken away and the character suffers 6 damage to BLD (the remaining 3, times 2).

Bladed Damage- Bladed damage comes from anything which cuts, pierces or spills blood, including knives, guns, barbed wire, skidding, etc. Bladed damage goes straight to BLD. Any other type of damage which causes the PC to lose blood, be unable to take in oxygen, or does damage to the heart and lungs also do damage to BLD.

0 BLD- When a PC reaches 0 BLD it means he or she has been mortally wounded and without medical intervention he or she will eventually die. Even at 0 BLD or below, a PC can still do things, even fight, for a limited period of time. END effects how long the PC can continue to act, and INCY (Incapacity) effects how much more damage a PC can take before being immediately incapacitated.

Incapacity- When damage reduces a PC's BLD to 0, any further damage is done to INCY. INCY represents the character's last reserves of energy to act even after being mortally wounded. Blunt damage does double damage to INCY. All further damage that would have done damage to BLD instead does damage to INCY. When a PC reaches 0 INCY it means he or she is incapacitated. An incapacitated person can not stand, make fighting actions or reactions, or initiate any kind of communication. An incapacitated PC may make moderate (20 difficulty) WIL rolls to be able to do very simple things (e.g. answer a question, crawl away from a fire) but cannot do anything that would require a roll (e.g. perform a skill).

As long as a PC still has INCY points left, he or she can still act normally, so long as the PC still has pooled END. As soon as a PC reached 0 BLD, he or she loses 1 point of pooled END every round (in addition to END lost from other activities/circumstances). When pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated.

After being incapacitated (either by reaching zero INCY or zero END), the PC has his or her INCY + END number of rounds before brain death occurs and no known means can revive the PC.

Armor

In Brief- AR is how much success a strike needs to bypass armor, PR is subtracted from any strike that hits the armor.

A piece of armor has two factors:

Armor Rating (AR) represents how much of the body the armor covers (or how difficult it is to hit an unprotected spot on the PC.)

Protection Rating (PR) represents how much damage each type the armor can absorb.

Example: *Lake has a leather vest with an AR of 7 and a PR of 2 bladed. A strike (a combat action, see p.79) with a success of 7 or below will hit the armor and 2 bladed damage will be subtracted from the damage the strike would normally do. If the strike was with a weapon that does 4 bladed and 2 blunt damage, it would only do 2 bladed and 2 blunt damage. A strike with a success of 8 and above would hit an unprotected spot and do full damage.*

AR of 20 represents total coverage and no amount of success can bypass the armor.

Multiple Layers- When a PC is wearing multiple layers of armor, each layer acts upon the damage independently. One strike may hit one piece of armor and lose some of its damage, hit another piece of armor and lose more, then bypass a third piece of armor and not lose any more. In order for damage to reach a PC, it must either bypass or cut through every piece of armor the PC is wearing.

Armor Piercing- Some weapons and types of damage cut through armor better than they cut through other things (like people). An armor piercing bullet may be listed as doing: "5 bladed damage (pierces as 10)". When subtracting damage absorbed by the armor, treat the damage as if it is 10. When the damage gets to the PC, however, it can't do any more than 5. Note that poisons on a bladed object do full damage if any bladed damage gets through to the victim.

Non-Damaging Attacks- There are attacks which do not do damage, but do things like cause pain, cripple joints, knock people out, etc. Armor can protect from these attacks too. To determine whether armor protects from such an attack, figure out how much damage the attack would have done if it were a normal strike, then figure out if any of that damage would have gotten through. If none would have gotten through, then the non-damaging attack has no effect. Also, some attacks have a minimum damage (e.g. a knockout strike requires an attack that would do at least 2 blunt damage if it was a normal strike) and if armor reduces the "would be" damage to less than this then the strike doesn't work.

OTHER TYPES OF DAMAGE

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:
-BLD damage (1 point per point of burn damage).
-Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/point of damage).
-Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage).
-Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/point of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Crippling Damage: ½ damage will make a hand unusable or badly damage a foot. 1 damage will make an arm or leg unusable. See Crippling Attack (p.78) for more.

Dropped Objects: Do blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs) times number of stories. E.G. 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage.

Electricity: When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:
-Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.
-Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)
-Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage), see Symptoms/Effects (p.65).
-Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

Explosion: Explosions can do one, two or all of the following:
-Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)
-Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)
-Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

END Damage: Some toxins to END damage. Every point of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Hunger: For every two days without food: -½ BLD, -4 END.

Radiation: For every point of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per point of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.81). For each point of ragged damage taken, PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Sleep Deprivation: For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions at (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). The PC can not regain pooled END by resting. When END reaches 0, PC looes 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Example: *Inferno is trying to stab Hoshi in the nuts with an ice-pick (a pain/stun strike). Hoshi is wearing a leather motorcycle outfit that has AR 10, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt. Inferno's difficulty for the strike is 25, and he gets a 32, meaning he succeeds by 7. This success is less than the AR of the armor, so the armor's PR is subtracted.*

Had this been a normal strike, the ice-pick would have done 1 bladed (pierces armor as 3). So, 3 bladed PR is subtracted from 3 bladed (pierces as) damage, and the result is 0. No damage gets through, and the strike has no significant effect on Hoshi.

DRUGS, DISEASE AND POISONS

Symptoms/Effects

Some drugs, diseases and poisons do simple damage to BLD, just like being stabbed. The majority, however, have effects or symptoms that hit people with different intensities (depending on how much of the drug or poison they've taken or how bad they have the disease). Some symptoms are simply annoying and can not be saved (e.g. red puffy skin). Some symptoms reduce attributes and can not be saved (e.g. a disease might cause "exhaustion" and reduce STH and SPD by 5). Some symptoms can be saved against (e.g. a poison might cause Vomiting, which can be saved against at 10 difficulty). Failing a save might mean the PC is incapacitated, or it may even kill the PC.

The following lists some common symptoms/effects, what attribute is used to save against them, and what happens to a PC who fails such a save:

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

Headache (WIL): -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage (see p.64) as 1 night without sleep.

Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL): Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible of physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Unless specified otherwise, lasts 1 round per point of failure.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Drugs

A drug can have different effects based upon when and how it is used. A drug can have:

- -Normal dosage effects (a normal person taking one dose of the drug).

- -Overdose effects (the effects of taking 2 times, 4 times and/or 8 times the normal dose).

- -Withdrawal effects (the effects when the drug exits the user's system)

- -Long term effects (the general effects of the drug for a habitual user)

- -Long term withdrawal effects (the effects of withdrawal after habitual use)

- -Tolerance (how much more a long term user must use to get the same effect)

Addiction- Drugs can be addictive in one or both of the following ways:

   Physiologically Addictive: Using the drug enough times changes the chemical balance of the brain and body such that the drug is needed for normal functioning. Without the drug the brain does not work right and addicts are driven to take more of the drug in order to "fix" things.

   Psychologically Addictive: The addict's personality adjusts to the effects of the drug such that he or she can no longer handle reality (day to day life) without the drug.

Saving vs. Addiction- Each addictive drug lists the addiction difficulty for physiological and/or psychological addiction. To this difficulty is added the number of doses the person has taken without a significant break (of at least 24 hours). Saves are thus made as follows:

WIL + 1d20 vs. Psychological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

END + 1d20 vs. Physiological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken

Cravings- Cravings first appear within 24 hours after an addicted character tries to stop using. PCs who are both psychologically and physiologically addicted must deal with 2 separate cravings. Cravings are saved against on WIL+1d20 vs. the Craving Difficulty of the drug. On the first successful save, the PC will not have another craving for 1 day. For each subsequent success, the time between cravings doubles. Some drugs do have special "triggers" which can cause a craving at any time, no matter how long it's been since the last craving.

Physiological cravings go away after a number of days equal to the Craving Difficulty. Psychological cravings never go away, they just get farther and farther apart.

If a PC fails a craving, he or she must do anything within his or her power to seek out the drug. If the PC gets a hold of the drug, he or she will use it immediately and will be back to a one day period between cravings. If a PC is searching for his or her drug of choice but cannot find it, the PC can make a new save vs. cravings every hour to give up searching.

Example: *In order to keep hacking despite the pain from her injuries, Lulu starts popping pain pills. The pain pills have a Physiological Addiction Difficulty of 5, a Psychological Addiction Difficulty of 1 and a Craving Difficulty of 20. Cravings for this drug can also be triggered by pain or anxiety. Lulu ends up taking 10 doses in the course of several days. At the end of that period the GM makes her save vs. Physiological Addition (at END + 1d20 vs. 5 +10 (the 10 doses)). Lulu fails and is now physiologically addicted to pain pills. She must also make a save vs. Psychological Addiction (at WIL + 1d20 vs. 1 +10). She fails at this roll. Now she is physiologically and psychologically addicted.*

When she tries to stop using not only does she experience the withdrawal effects listed for the drug, but within 1 day she must two saves vs. cravings at WIL + 1d20. She succeeds at both, and so her next craving will not be for two days. Two days later, she saves again and succeeds, it will now be four days until her next craving. Four days later, she saves again and succeeds. Eight days later, she saves again and succeeds. Before the next craving period, 20 days will have passed, which means she must no longer save vs. physiological cravings. Sixteen days later she saves only once, and succeeds. It will now be 32 days until her next craving.

Unfortunately, though, before that time she is badly cut by some barbed wire and is in a great deal of pain. This triggers an immediate craving. This time, Lulu fails, and she is now forced to drop whatever she is doing and seek out some pain pills. She succeeds, getting the pain pills. After the one dose she took wears off, she decides to quit again. She must make another save vs. physiological addiction (this time at END + 1d20 vs. 5 +1 (one dose)). She succeeds, and only has to deal with a psychological addiction. However, her craving periods are now reset and she will experience another craving within 24 hours.

Disease

Contraction- When a PC is exposed to a disease, the PC must make a save vs. Disease Contraction (END + 1d20 vs. the Disease Contraction Rating of the disease). Diseases will have different contraction ratings depending upon how the PC is exposed. Breathing the same air as an infected person may have a Contraction Rating of 10 while sharing body fluids with a person may have a Contraction Rating of 40. If the PC makes the save, he or she does not catch the disease. If the PC fails then the PC has the disease at 1x symptoms.

Progression- Once a PC has a disease, the PC must fight to keep the disease from getting worse. Each disease has a Disease Progression Speed, which represents how quickly the disease will get worse. If the disease progression speed is 8 hours, then every 8 hours the PC must save vs. Disease Progression. Each disease has its own Disease Progression Rating (the difficulty to save vs. disease progression). For every consecutive failure to save vs. disease progression, the symptoms increase by 1 level (1x to 2x, 2x to 3x, etc.). However, if the PC succeeds at a save, the disease is "halted": it can no longer progress. From this point onward, a failed save vs. progression has no effect, but a successful save means the symptoms level is reduced (3x to 2x, 2x to 1x). When the symptoms level reaches 0, the PC is cured.

Treatments- Treatments can do two things. Some treatments help the PC fight the disease (give the PC plusses to save vs. disease progression). Other treatments only help reduce the severity of symptoms (most over-the-counter medications work in this way).

Immunity- Once a PC has defeated a disease, the PC has immunity to it, and gets +10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from the same disease. The PC also gets +6 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from closely related diseases.

Example: *Marcos was stabbed in a battle and the wound was exposed to an infection. The infection has a Disease Contraction Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Rating of 20, a Disease Progression Speed of 12 hours, can be treated by antibiotics, and has the following symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage.*

12 hours after being stabbed, Marcos makes a save vs. disease contraction at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20. He fails, he now has 1x symptoms. He is -10 to save vs. heat exhaustion, has -5 STH, -5 SPD, takes 1 BLD damage and must save vs. vomiting (at difficulty 10). 12 hours later must make a save vs. disease progression (at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20). He fails, and now he has 2x symptoms: -20 to save vs. heat exhaustion, -10 STH, -10 SPD, an additional 1 BLD damage and he must save vs. vomiting at 20 difficulty. Since Marcos only has 8 SPD, he can now not even stand. Marcos' friends finally get him some antibiotics, which give +8 to save vs. disease progression. After another 12 hours he saves again at END (7) +8 (antibiotics) +1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds: the disease is not halted, but he is still at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and fails, but since the disease is halted nothing happens, he remains at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds, now his symptoms are reduced to 1x. 12 hours later he rolls again and succeeds again, now the disease is gone.

SKILLS

In Brief- Skill + 1d20 +4/level above the 1st vs. difficulty.

Basic Skill Use

There are certain activities that anyone can try to do without being trained: prowling, climbing, jumping, seducing, etc. Skills are generally things that someone can not even try to do without some sort of special training. A person doesn't have to be a trained long-jumper to try jumping over a hole (though it helps), but someone really does have to have some physics training to try to calculate the speed and acceleration of an object sliding down a smooth incline.

The majority of skills are "intellectual" and are rolled using INL. Other skills use the other attributes. Skills are purchased in levels, and are purchased with skill points at a cost per level set by the character class (see p.18). For every level above the first, the PC gets +4 to any skill roll. Each skill has six possible levels which can be achieved:

(1) Interest: Characters have studied only the basic levels of the skill. They know enough to try anything, but their chances of succeeding at difficult tasks are very low.

(2) Hobby: Characters keep up on the skill but are far from masters in it. (**+4** to skill rolls)

(3) Pursuit: Characters have spent a large portion of their time practicing the skill or keeping up with the subject. They have a respectable knowledge of the skill. (**+8** to skill rolls)

(4) Study: Characters have spent a significant portion of their lives studying the skill. They know almost everything an average person studying the skill could be expected to learn. Characters have a professional level of knowledge about the skill. (**+12** to skill rolls)

(5) Expertise: This is the equivalent of a Ph.D. in the skill. Characters know subtleties about the skill that few people know exist. (**+16** to skill rolls)

(6) Mastery: This is everything a person could possibly know about the skill. A person with Mastery in a skill will rarely, if ever, meet a person as skilled or knowledgeable as them. Starting PCs may not have level 6 in any skill without special permission from the GM. (**+20** to skill rolls)

Example: *Tim has Physics (3). Tim wants to calculate the radioactive decay of a batch of toxic waste. The GM says that this will be a moderate (20) difficulty use of the skill. Tim rolls INL +8 (because he has level 3) + 1d20 vs. 20.*

Skills & Time

When a PC uses a skill, it is assumed that a PC is taking as long as he or she needs to. This might mean one round (e.g. using Corporations to realize that a certain person is the CEO of a major corp) or weeks (e.g. using Carpentry to build a house). PCs gain no plusses from taking extra time to complete a skill, but they do take a penalty if they are trying to rush.

Working Together

Two PC with equal levels in a skill can often work together, giving +4 to the skill roll (one PC makes the roll). PCs with unequal levels in the skill cannot work together (one knows so much more than the other that the other can't do anything to help).

Books

Books are manuals for using a certain skill. Using a skill with a book generally takes significantly longer than using the skill unaided (twice as long if the text is in a mental program, three times as long if it is in a searchable computerized format, four times as long if it is in printed form). There are three types of books:

Introductory Texts: Useless to PCs who already have the skill, but can temporarily give the equivalent of level one (hobby) in the skill to people who do not have the skill.

Reference Texts Unusable by people who do not have the skill, but for those who do have the skill they increase the skill level by one (max. 6).

Introductory/Reference Texts: Can be used either way.

Not every skill has a book available (for many skills a book would be useless).

Combat Skills

Each combat skill lists fighting actions and/or reactions which are learned as part of the skill. In addition to any plusses listed in the skill, the PC gets +4 for every skill level above the first to each of these actions and reactions. Most combat skills only allow the plusses to work on certain weapons.

Some skills start with a negative on one of the actions/reactions. This does not mean that a PC with one level in the skill has a penalty. It only means that this is something that the PC doesn't benefit from until he or she gets multiple levels of the skill. For instance, if a skill gives -4 to Blinding Strike, then at level 1 the PC gets no benefit, at level 2 (-4 +4) the PC still gets no benefit. At level 3, however, (-4 +8) the PC does get +4 to blinding strikes.

Example: Fenn has Knife Throwing (4). The skill lists the following plusses when throwing knives or similar weapons:

+2 per level to initiative
+4 to Strike
+0 to Vital Strike
-4 to Blinding Strike
No penalty for targeted strikes.

Because Fenn has 4 levels in the skill, he gets +12 to all of these, so Fenn's actual plusses are:

+8 (+2 x 4) to initiative
+16 (+4 +12) to Strike
+12 (+0 +12) to Vital Strike
+8 (-4 +12) to Blinding Strike
No penalty for targeted strikes.

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon (e.g. Street Fighting: Armed and Knife Fighting both give plusses to Vital Strike with knives) the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).

Psychic Skills

In Brief- Psychic skills can manipulate (uses WIL, can be sensed with AWR and resisted with WIL, uses 2 END) or sense (uses AWR, disrupted by crowds) nervous systems. Animals harder.

Psychic Manipulation- Psychics can manipulate their own nervous systems, or the nervous systems of other people or animals. Psychic manipulation is rolled using WIL. Each psychic action uses 2 END.

When a psychic tries to manipulate another person, that person can make an opposed AWR roll (20 difficulty) to try to sense the manipulation happening. If the victim's success beats the psychic's, the victim realizes that he or she is being manipulated. An AWR roll is not necessary if the effects of the manipulation are obviously psychic (e.g. the psychic takes control of someone's arm and makes that person stab himself).

If a person realizes that he or she is being manipulated, the person can make an opposed WIL roll (20 difficulty) to try to resist the psychic manipulation. If the victim's success is greater than the psychics, the victim resists the manipulation.

Psychic manipulation rolls work best when the psychic is touching the victim. The farther away the target is, the harder it is to manipulate him or her (-1 per foot). A psychic can also choose to effect everyone in range (including himself or herself), which will make the roll easier (+10) but may mean that the psychic will have to resist his or her own manipulation.

Example: *Matt has Belief Attack (2). Matt is surrounded by a gang of addicts, one of whom has him pinned against a wall and is going through his pockets. Matt yells "I've got the plague" and makes a Belief Attack skill roll to make everyone believe it. He decides to target everyone, including himself. Matt rolls WIL (17) +4 (skill) +10 (everyone in range effected) +1d20 vs. 20 (the GM decides this is a moderately believable idea). He rolls 2, meaning he gets 33 vs. 20, a 13 success. Matt knows he is being manipulated, so doesn't need to make an AWR roll to tell he is being manipulated, but he does have to resist the manipulation. He must roll WIL (17) + 1d20 vs. 20 and get better than 13 success. If he fails he will believe he has the plague. The addicts, on the other hand, can not resist unless they realize they are being manipulated. They must make an AWR + 1d20 vs. 20 roll. The psychic going through Matt's pockets (touching him) has to beat 13 difficulty. Matt had -1 per foot on his success against the other addicts, and since they are all 4 ft. away they must get at least 9 success (29 on their WIL + 1d20 rolls). Only one makes the AWR roll, but she fails at resisting the attack. The addicts all run off to look for someplace to wash themselves off.*

Psychic Sensation- Like manipulation rolls, using psychic senses is easiest when the psychic can touch the source of the psychic energy. For each foot away the target it, the psychic gets -1 to the roll. Psychic sensation is made difficult by large crowds (because people put out a lot of psychic "noise" which can drown out one specific sensation). For every four people around the psychic, the psychic suffers a -1 penalty to rolls.

Example: *Matt is in a crowd of 100 people and wants to read the mind of someone 5 ft. away. Matt is at -25 (from the crowd) and at -5 (5 ft.) to his roll*

Animals- Psychic skills depend on natural systems within the psychic's nervous systems connecting with natural systems within another nervous system (or by-products of that nervous system). The more different the two nervous systems are, the harder the roll. A psychic using a skill on an animal takes the following penalty:

> Non-Human Primates: -4
> Non-Primate Mammals: -10
> Birds, Reptiles, Amphibians, Fish: -20
> Insects, Jellyfish, Shellfish, etc.: -40

Vehicle Skills

Normal skills list example things that a person with that skill could do at each level of difficulty (an easy thing, a moderate thing, a hard thing, etc.) Vehicle skills list a number of "maneuvers" that a person with that skill can do, each with a corresponding difficulty. For example, one of the maneuvers that people with the motorcycle skill get is "Stairs (20): Go up or down stairs or similar impediments." Maneuvers are rolled as a normal skill roll, but they have two special modifiers: maneuverability and speed.

Maneuverability: A rating of a particular vehicle that tells how good or bad it is at complex maneuvers. Maneuverability is expressed as a plus or minus to maneuvers done with the vehicle.

Speed: For some maneuvers (jumping, stairs), going fast is good, but for the majority of maneuvers going too fast makes the maneuver harder. Unless the GM decides that this is a fast maneuver, the difficulty for the maneuver is whichever is higher: the difficulty listed in the skill description or the current SPD of the rider.

Example: *Rakesh, who has Motorcycle (3), is chasing after someone on his motorcycle and is confronted with a flight of stairs. At the bottom of the stairs he will have to make a sharp turn or hit a wall. Rakesh is going at 30 SPD when he hits the stairs. The GM decides that Rakesh will not take a SPD penalty while going down the stairs. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (the maneuverability of the motorcycle) + 1d20 vs. 20 (the difficulty listed for Stairs in the Motorcycle skill description). Rakesh makes it easily. At the bottom of the stairs is the sharp turn, and the GM says that he will make Rakesh take the SPD penalty. Rakesh rolls AGY (15) + 8 (skill) +15 (maneuverability) + 1d20 vs. 30 (his current SPD).*

Maneuvers as Combat- The maneuvers Ram, Trample and Swerve can be used as combat actions and reaction. They can be opposed by other combat actions and reactions by people on foot. Example: *Rakesh wants to use the Trample maneuver to hit Lew (who is on foot). On Rakesh's action, he makes a Trample maneuver roll. As a reaction, Lew dodges. Rakesh succeeds by 5, Lew succeeds by 7, thus the dodge is successful.*

Non-Skills

A PC can try anything without using a skill. The PC simply narrates what he or she does. Example: *Flagg has no demolitions or electronics skills of any kind and he's trying to disarm a bomb. The GM doesn't make him roll a skill roll, doesn't even make him roll INL. The GM simply describes the bomb and asks Flagg what he does. Flagg decides the best thing to do is grab a handful of wires and yank them out all at once. The GM narrates the result...*

Unless they have some special disadvantage, PCs are expected to be able to do a certain number of normal things, including: read, eat, dress, keep clean, stay afloat, use a pistol, read a map, cook a meal, tie a knot, tell a lie, recognize symptoms of serious illness, etc.

Psychic Modifiers	
Manipulation Rolls	
Manipulating target remotely:	-1/ft.
Everyone in range effected:	+10
Sensory Rolls	
Touching the source:	-0
Sensing remotely:	-1/ft.
Being in a crowd:	-1/4 people

HACKING

In Brief:

Step 1: Homework – Talk to people, search the internet, sneak around to find out anything you can.

Step 2: Getting In – Find a hole in a firewall, use a virus, get in through a computer you've already hacked (privileges, sniffing) or use non-hacking methods.

Step 3: Once You're In – Better success at getting in = better privileges (more power). Can up privileges by hacking the OS. Can crash computer, try not to be detected, lock out other users, do more research.

System Security – Can setup the firewall well. Can monitor for intruders. Have home-field advantage (can almost always beat intruders once found).

Homework

In Brief: Roll Internet Browsing and/or CHM and/or success at sneaking the building vs. organization's secrecy rating. If successful, roll on table to see what you learned.

This is the term hackers use to describe everything that happens before attempting to hack the target system. Homework is research to find out as much as possible about the system.

There are three ways to do homework:

Internet Research: The PC scours the net for any information that has been posted in public places about the system. Roll Internet Browsing skill roll vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

Social Engineering: This is when the PC tries to con someone out of information about the company. The most difficult type is cold calls (calling up a member of the organization and pretending to be someone with a legitimate right to knowledge about the organization and the target system). An easier way is finding network administrators in a bar after hours and pretending to be a potential sex partner who find their job very interesting. PCs must role-play getting a hold of and talking to members of that organization. Roll CHM + 1d20 vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

Sneaking Around: Hackers use thief skills to enter the offices of the organization or homes of employees looking for anything that might give some clue as to how to get in (old passwords written on slips of paper, old software data cards, printouts of internal memos, old broken computers with hard drives that information can be scavenged from). Dumpsters are a common target of hackers doing this type of homework. Roll 1d20 plus a number signifying how far the hackers were able to intrude (10 if they just got a few bags of trash, 20 if they got in to the home of a network administrator, 30 if they were able to wander around the offices of the organization) vs. the organization's secrecy rating.

For each successful homework roll, the PC gets one of the following (roll on 1d100):

01-20: The physical location of the system or network and what physical security measures protect it. (Useful info if hackers must resort to an on-site hack attempt).

21-40: Location on internal network (+10 to Network Protocol rolls to find system)

41-60: The type of system, software running on it, and security setup. (+10 to Finding a Hole)

61-80: The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)

81-00: Information about the internal structure of the company (which can be used to help hackers impersonate company employees). (+10 to any further social engineering rolls).

Tech Skill and Hacking: What They Are Good For

Anonymity- This skill allows a hacker to avoid being tracked back to his or her location by sending commands to the target system anonymously.

Copy Protection- When hackers steal programs off of the system that they have hacked, this skill allows them to break the copy protection on the programs so they can use or sell them.

Date Pirating- This skill is used to get hacking tools without having to pay for them on the black market.

Denial of Service- This skill is used to disable a system without having to actually have access to it.

Internet Browsing- This skill is used for researching the publicly available information that will help the PC figure out the best way to attack a system.

Jellynailing- This skill allows PCs to run their programs on a target system or to run programs stolen from a hacked system on their computer, despite hardware incompatibilities.

Linework- This skill allows hackers to physically tap in to networks to hack them from the inside.

Network Protocols- This skill is used to map networks and to masquerade as another network node (send data from one station, but make it look like it came from another station).

Network Security- Hackers with this skill can get a better sense of the security on a target system, and they can also secure their own computer against counter-attacks.

Operating Systems- Once inside a computer, this skill allows a PC to manipulate the operating systems and do things the account doesn't normally have privileges to do.

Payphones- This skill is used to hack in to paycomputers, which are convenient places to stage an attack from.

Programming: Applications- The PC can write hacking tools which automate some of the aspects of hacking a system and allow the hacker to do several things at once. In extreme cases, hackers can also use this skill to decompile a security program and comb through it for holes that might let a hacker in.

Programming: Virus- This skill allows PCs to write programs which they can send to some user. If they can trick that user in to running the program (and if the program is good enough to bypass the computer's anti-virus programs) the program can open up backdoors to let the PC in to the system.

System Crashing- This skill is used to break computers. The whole point of the hack might be to sabotage a system, or crashing might be incidental (a system might be crashed to distract or disable network security or to cover the hacker's tracks).

System Prowling- This skill is used to let the PC keep system administrators from noticing the hacker's presence during or after the hack.

Cryptography- (an Info skill) Used when the PC gains access to some file or taps in to some communication that is encrypted. The PC uses the cryptography skill to help a code breaker program break the code and give the PC access to read or change the data.

Getting In

In Brief- Find a password, scam someone in to giving it to you (CHM+1d20 vs. secrecy rating), 'eavesdrop' on someone logging on to the computer (must break encryption), hack in to another computer that has privileges on target computer.

There are several ways to gain access to a system:

Getting a Password- This is the most common method and the one that requires little or no technical skills. The PC simply finds out someone's password and logs in using it. There are nearly as many scams to get people's passwords as there are scams to get people's money. One of the most common is Shoulder Surfing: spying on someone who is logging in to a system in a public place and watch what keys they are hitting. Some hackers have gone as low-tech as getting a password by threatening to hit a user with a brick.

Social Engineering- This is a very specific type of scam to get passwords. The hacker gets a hold of some user, pretends to be someone else in the organization and tricks the user in to giving out his or her password. Many companies and government agencies spend thousands or millions on campaigns to teach users not to give their passwords to anyone, but all it takes is one naive person.

Knowledge of a structure of the organization is vital to Social Engineering (see Homework) because it helps the hacker pretend to be a member of the organization. With good sound and video samples, Social Engineers can even use the Puppet program (p.91) and the Impersonation skill (p.36) to masquerade over videophone as someone the victim knows (even as the victim's own boss) which makes it much easier to get a password.

To try to get a password via Social Engineering, role-play the interaction with the victim, then roll 1d20 + CHM (and any plusses or minuses the GM rewards for a very convincing or not very convincing scam) vs. the organizations Secrecy Rating. A failure of 1 to 5 means that the victim won't give out the password. A failure by more than 5 means that the victim will report the incident to Network Security.

Sniffing- On any network, data being sent from one computer to another passes through several nodes. This data includes people logging in to systems on a network. If the PC can gain control of a computer which is in a network between the system and the person logging in to the system, the hacker can capture that user's password. On an internal network this can be as simple as hooking up a palmtop computer to a network port (using the Linework skill). On the internet, this means gaining control of an Internet Router that is intermediate between the system being hacked. Internet Routers are very powerful machines that help route information around the internet (every company or organization that has direct access to the internet, instead of buying it from somewhere else, has an internet router). See p.74 for an example Internet Router.

Once the PC has a computer which is on the network, the PC must use the Sniffing skill (and Sniffing software) to find a person logging in. The problem now is encryption. Most logins that take place over the internet (and even some that take place on internal networks) are encrypted, which means that once the PC has captured the login he or she has to break the code (see cryptography) to use it. For instance, one very paranoid system might have Remote Login Encryption Strength 20 for their internal network and Remote Login Encryption Strength 40 for internet logins.

Sibling Attack- Some computers "trust" other computers. For instance, an organization might use a single logon server that processes logins for any computer on the network. If that server says a person's password is legitimate, every other system on the network trusts that server and lets the person in. A hard Network Protocols roll can tell the PC what servers trust what other servers. If it is too hard for a PC to hack in to one server, they might be able to hack in to another server and then gain automatic access to the first server.

Virus/Trojan/Worm- The PC writes some malicious program and sneaks it in to the network. The PC might send it as an email attachment, or mail a data card to someone in the company, or infect a home computer of a user. The PC must then wait until the program gets on to the target system. Then the program will try to run and will try to open up a backdoor that lets the PC log directly in to the system. The only thing that can stop it is the system and network's anti-virus setup. Roll the Programming: Virus skill roll vs. the systems Virus Protection Rating.

On-Site Attacks

In Brief: Much easier to hack when in the building or at the machine.

There is a considerable advantage to being in the same building as the system the PC is trying to hack. If a computer isn't connected to the internet (or any other network that goes outside the building) it might be the only way the PC can hack in to the system. By entering the building and tapping in to the internal network with a portable computer, the PC can completely bypass the external firewall. The PCs can also do things like look for passwords scribbled down on pieces of paper, distract network security by doing things like pulling fire alarms, or even going to the system itself. If the station has an account logged on to it, the PC is in without needing to hack it at all. If not, PCs with high levels in the Operating System and Jellynailing skill can reboot the system in a hacker OS, run the normal Operating System in an emulator that gives them control over what it does, and gain control of the system that way. The only thing that can go wrong with this is if the Operating System is encrypted (very few are set up this way) so that some external decryption key needs to be entered before the operating system can even run.

How Long Does Hacking Take?

In Brief: An Evening

Hacking can be fairly quick if the hacker can get in easily. The more steps a hacker has to go through to get in to a system, the longer it will take. Generally, the more success the hacker gets on a roll, the quicker the hacker does that thing.

-Homework can take hours to weeks, depending on how much homework the hacker wishes to do.

-Breaking encryption (e.g. when Sniffing) can take from seconds to months, depending on the success at breaking the encryption (see p.73)

-Finding a hole takes about an hour (15 minutes with 10+ success).

-Raising privileges takes about half an hour (15 minutes with 10+ success).

-Most other things a hacker would want to do (looking for file, homework, putting in backdoors, crashing) that requires a skill roll takes about fifteen minutes.

-Most other things a hacker would want to do that don't require a skill roll (copying a file, logging in to a database, etc.) take only 1 or 2 minutes.

Finding a Hole- This is the form of hacking that has changed little in a hundred years. There are programs designed to give some people access to a computer and deny it to everyone else. These programs are never perfect and so every system has holes. Some holes are errors in the program, others are mistakes made by the people setting up the security setup, others are mistakes by users who choose passwords that are too easy to guess. Every day, new security holes are discovered and knowledge of them spread throughout the hacker community and every day software companies are creating new patches to close these security holes.

The word Firewall has a very specific technical meaning, but it is often used more generally to describe all the various attempts to plug up security holes around a system or network. In most security-minded organizations, the entire network has a firewall protecting the network from attacks coming in from the internet (a network firewall) and if hackers get past that they have to deal with firewalls protecting the individual computer which is the target of the attack (a system firewall).

To find a hole in a computer of network firewall, make an Operating Systems or Network Security skill roll with a difficulty equal to the firewall's strength. The PC could also use the following skills at +10 difficulty: Network Protocols, Internet Browsing, Programming: Applications. The PC could also use the following skills at +20 difficulty: Data Piracy, Programming (any), System Crashing, System Prowling, Payphones, Copy Protection.

A failure of 1 to 5 means that the user's attempts were simply blocked by the firewall. A failure of 6 or more means that the firewall recognized that there is an attack in progress, it immediately notifies system security.

Once You're In

In Brief- Hackers get in with a level of control equal to the success on the roll that got them in. They can improve their privileges (OS vs. 30), crash the computer (System Crashing skill roll), lock out other users, cover his or her tracks (System Prowling skill roll), put in backdoors, or do more homework.

Privileges- When a PC gets in to a system with one of the methods listed above, he or she has a username and password of an account on the system. Not all accounts are equal: some have privileges to do things that others can't. Each system will have a list of things that users can do with each level of privileges. If PCs get in using a Sibling Attack (see above) they will have access equal to whatever access they have on the sibling. Otherwise, the level of privileges is based on the amount of success on the roll that the PC got in with:

1-5: User (Typically has access to only limited areas of the computer. The PC can run most programs but can not change anything). Gives -10 to any rolls to manipulate the computer.

6-9: Superuser (Typically can control the accounts of users, install and run programs, but can not make system wide changes).

10+: Admin (Has complete control of everything on the computer, including the other administrator accounts). Gives +10 to any rolls to manipulate the computer.

If the hackers wants to do something that his or her current privilege level will not allow, there are two options: the PC can attempt to run a command at a higher level with a hard Operating Systems roll, the hacker can make a legendary Operating Systems roll to try to raise his or her privileges one level, or the hacker can try to hack in again with a different account (but this time with +10 to getting in because the hacker has already been inside the system and knows a lot more about what to expect).

Crashing- One options for hackers inside a system is to try to crash the system. A PC can crash individual programs, crash the whole computer so it will stop working until someone can physically reboot it, or the hacker can try to trash the computer so bad that it will not work again without hours of repair. Use the System Crashing skill (or the Operating Systems skill at +20 difficulty). If the PC's goal here is to destroy data be aware that many organizations back up their important data to solid memory that is kept offline, which means there's no way to get rid of the data other than finding where it is stored and physically destroying it (such as the Freedom Army did with the corporate AIs during the Freedom Wars).

Lockout- Sometimes hackers will attempt to change all the passwords on a system so that only they have access to it. The obvious response from system administrators is to remove the computer from the network, force their way in to the operating system (reinstalling the OS if necessary) and regaining control.

Prowling- Blatant and direct attacks like crashing the computer or trying to lockout the users often fail because the system administrators have physical access to the computer and the hacker does not. Most hackers find they can do what they want for longer if they keep themselves and their actions hidden. Hackers can make an opposed System Prowling roll (vs. the administrator's Network Security roll) to cover their tracks and not alert administrators of their presence.

Backdoors- Another thing hackers like to do in a system is to put in a backdoor, some invisible security flaw that only they know about which will allow them to get back in to the system whenever they like. The PC can make a moderate Operating Systems or Network Security roll to leave a backdoor and an opposed System Prowling roll to try to hide the backdoor so that it will never be discovered. The ultimate security response to this is every time a computer has been hacked in to, wipe the memory completely and rebuild it from scratch. Fortunately for hackers most systems either aren't important enough to warrant this kind of effort or the owners can't afford to have the system be down for as long as this would take.

More Homework- When a hacker gets on to one computer in a network, they can often snoop around on that machine and find out information about other computers on the network. For each machine in a network a PC gets Admin access on, the PC can roll once on the homework success table (p.69).

System Security

In Brief- Can prevent/stop hackers by: good firewall setup (Network Security, Cryptography skill rolls), monitor for intruders (Network Security skill roll vs. System Prowling). Found hackers can be easily cut off.

The amount of security on a network and on a system varies widely. At the low end, there are very many systems that have no staff dedicated solely to security and a system admin that doesn't know much about security at all. On the other end of a spectrum are very important government and corporate networks that have a network "war room" where a whole team of security administrators watch the network for intruders (and have the power to log on to any system on the network as administrator and snuff out an account being used by a hacker).

Security Setup- The first way a security administrator can protect a network or system from hackers is through skillful setup. It is the administrator's Network Security skill roll that sets the network and system firewall difficulties. It is the administrator's Cryptography skill roll that sets up the encryption strength for remote logins. It is the administrator that makes sure a system doesn't need to trust any other systems (unless absolutely necessary) and that each level of privileges can't do any more than it needs to.

Monitoring for Intruders- Every system has a rating representing how much of the time a network security administrator is monitoring the network and the systems on it looking for hackers, and how skilled the admin(s) are. For every experience level, assume that the security admins have one level of Network Security, Operating Systems and Cryptography. If a system has "30% monitoring by level 3 Admins" then a hacker makes a percentile roll. If the roll is 30 or less, then there is an Admin currently monitoring the network at the time that the hacker is trying to hack in.

If a hacker is unlucky enough to be on or trying to get on a system or network while it is being monitored, the hacker's only hope is to make an opposed moderate System Prowling skill roll vs. a moderate Network Security skill roll by the security admin. If the security admin wins the opposed roll (or succeeds uncontested) he or she has noticed the hacker. If the security admin wins by 1 to 5 points, he or she has a suspicion that the account logged in is that of a hacker (and not a legit user) but will probably try to check and make sure first. If the security admin succeeds by more than 5, he or she is instantly sure that this is a hacker at work.

Dealing With Intruders- Most security administrators have Admin accounts on every computer on the network, including the computer running the network firewall. If they identify an intruder, it only takes a second for them to log on to the firewall machine and block the intruder's network address. The hacker can try to get in coming from another network address, but before the hacker can do that a good administrator will change the password on the account the hacker was using or find and patch the security hole. The only chance the hacker has of fighting back is to make a first strike (cutting off the Admin's access). This strategy doesn't help for long, because a security admin can simply walk over to a machine to log-on in person or, failing that, shut it down.

Possible Systems on a Network

Billing Server- Has a dedicated connection to a bank, allowing the company to do on-line sales. Hackers on these systems can debit or credit accounts.

Database Server- Runs some large shared database (e.g. a database of customers, or of work orders, etc.)

File Server- For storing files so that people on different computers can access them. May store documents, accounting spreadsheets, program source code, etc. depending on what department it using it.

Firewall Server- This computer runs the external firewall. Hackers on this system can create backdoors in the firewall and can cut any station off from the network.

Internet Router- This computer is connected to an internet service provider and provides internet access for the entire network. Hackers on this system can sniff any connection from outside the network, and can block any connection.

Logon Authority Server- Keeps accounts and passwords so that a person can have one logon that works on multiple machines. Hackers on this system can access any account.

Mail Server- Handles routing of all email within the network, coming from the internet or going out to the internet. Hackers on this system can read people's email and control who gets what email.

Memory Archive Server- Makes solid state backups of data from other servers. Hackers on this system can search through old backups, and can see any data on any system that gets backed up.

Netsite Server- Runs the netsite that people can access from the internet. Most net sites provide information to the public, but others let people pay to access data/services or let employees log-in remotely.

Network Gateway- Adds an additional buffer of protection (beyond just a firewall) between a network and the internet. Users must log-on to (or hack in to) this machine before they can even try to access a machine on the network.

Phone Server- Routes incoming calls to the proper person. Monitors and records calls. Hackers on this system can control who can make and receive phone calls and can eavesdrop on any calls.

Security Admin Workstation- The workstation that security personnel use to monitor and administrate the network. Hackers on this system can make security admins blind to intrusions or block their attempts to cut off hackers.

User Workstations- Individual users within the company log-on to the network (and to other machines on the network) from these machines. By far the most common machines on a network.

VR Server- Runs a multi-user virtual reality program (see p.397).

Cryptography

Today, every code is breakable, but the amount of time it takes to break the codes depends on several factors:

Encryption- Modern encryption is done via computer programs that can take any sort of data (text, sound, video, pictures, computer programs, etc.) and encrypt them. Each piece of encryption software has a strength which tells how hard the codes are to break. Most encryption programs are used by people who know nothing about cryptography. Skilled cryptographers can help the program out by selecting options which best match the current situation. To add to an encryptions strength, roll a moderate (20 difficulty) cryptography skill roll and add the success (if any) to the encryption strength.

Unaided Decryption- This is where encrypted data is fed in to a computer program which tries to break the code. The program is left alone to make all its own decisions with no help from the user. To determine the success of the code breaking:

Code Breaker Strength x Available Power
+ 1d20 vs. Encryption Strength

Aided Decryption- This is where the PC uses his or her knowledge of encryption and of the particular code being used to help point the code breaker in the right direction. Make a moderate (20 difficulty) cryptography roll and add the success, if any, to the code breaker's roll.

Modifiers to Code Breaking

Small Sample Size -5
Large Sample Size +5
Knowing What Encryption Software Was Used +5
Knowing What Type of Data is Encrypted +5
Using Old Code Breaking Software -1/month
Having Part of the Unencrypted Message +5

Cryptography Success- Unlike other tasks, with code breaking it isn't a matter or succeeding or failing, but a matter of how long it will take the code breaker to crack the code. Every code breaker will succeed within some finite amount of time, the success merely determines whether it can do it fast enough to be of any use to the PCs.

-50: Longer than the lifetime of the universe.
-40: 10,000 years.
-30: 100 years.
-20: One year.
-10: One month.
0: One week.
1: One day.
3: One hour.
5: 30 minutes.
10: 30 seconds.
20: One second.
30: Instantaneously.

Example: *Marla wants to be able to log-on to her server from a remote location, but she doesn't want people grabbing her password as it goes across the net, so she sets up encryption. She buys software that makes 30 strength encryption, and she makes a cryptography roll to set all the right settings. She has Cryptography (2) and rolls INL (15) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20. She succeeds by 7 and thus adds 7 to the strength of her encryption.*

Kimberly grabs Marla's log-on as it passes over the network. She has a computer with 6 power and a code

breaking program with a Code Breaking Power of 2. She has Cryptography (4) and makes a skill roll to aid the decryption. She rolls INL (14) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 20. She beats the difficulty by 15. Her roll for decryption is: Code Breaker Strength (2) x Available Power (6) +15 (aided decryption) +1d20 vs. Encryption Strength (27).

She rolls 6 on 1d20. Altogether that's 33 vs. 27. She beat the difficulty by 6, meaning it will take 30 minutes for her to break the code.

Types of Encryption

Public Key- This type of encryption uses special keys that everyone makes public for anyone who wants to send them the message. The key is sort of like a deposit-box on a bank: it's easy to put information in (encrypt it) but only the key's owner can take information out (decrypt it). This technology allows people to send encrypted messages to people they've never meet and is the most common technology used on the Internet. The advantages is that it is easy to use, the disadvantage is that it is not as strong as other types of encryption.

One-Key- This is the oldest form of code. Both the party receiving and the party sending the message share a key which is used both to encrypt and decrypt the message. The advantage of this method is that it is very powerful, the disadvantage is that the two parties must meet at some point to exchange keys (a potential security hole).

Evolving- An evolving code is one where each message that is sent changes the key. They key is thus always changing and thus if a person manages to crack the code today, the key may be entirely different tomorrow. The advantage is that code breakers must keep track of every single exchange or lose the key. The disadvantage is that if the legitimate target of the encoded message misses even a few characters, they can no longer decrypt the message.

A Simple Hacking Example

Kimberly and her friends have an enemy trapped inside a small office building on Fourth Ave. Before they go in, Kimberly wants to look really quickly to see if she can find a blueprint for a building. Kimberly is working on a little Palmtop Communicator with a cellular internet connection. Kimberly makes an Internet Browsing roll to see if she can find the blueprints in some publicly available place on-line. Although she succeeds at her skill roll, the GM says that the blueprints aren't publicly available, but Kimberly does find the architects that created the building. There is a special "clients only" area of their netsite that Kimberly thinks might have the blueprints. There is no network firewall protecting the netsite server, which means Kimberly can attack it directly. Kimberly tries to find a hole in the system firewall of the server. The server has a System Firewall Strength of 20 and is running OpenCert. Kimberly has Operating Systems (2) with OpenFree/OpenCert as one of her specialties. Kimberly rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20. Kimberly succeeds by 7, meaning she gets in with SuperUser privileges. With this level of privileges she can easily get in to the client directory and pull out the blueprints for this building.

A Complicated Hacking Example

6:00PM: Kimberly and her friends desperately need to find the address of the last "client" visited by an escort working at 36F Escorts. Kimberly sends Talula and Marshall to go raid the dumpster of the 36F Escorts building. She sends Jack Monroe to call up 36F Escorts pretending to be interested in a job and to try to get as many details as possible about the network. Meanwhile, she stays at home and tries to find anything she can about the company via the internet.

A Sample Network: 36F Escorts

36F Escorts is the city's largest escort service. They have about 30 employees in their administrative office in downtown Manhattan (this does not include the escorts, who rarely see the office). They have one full-time computer tech, Marla Morrone, who works 9-5 Monday through Saturday and carries a pager when she is off duty. Marla's sister Jenny is an escort and whenever there is any hint that Jenny might be in trouble, Marla immediately leaves the office to check on her.

Access: Connected to the Internet.

Network Firewall Strength: 15

Network Security: 7% monitoring by level 2 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 10

Mail/Phone Server: This computer handles email and routes phone calls to the various call-center workstations.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 4d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 17

Privileges

User: Check email and phone stats.

Superusers: Change email and phone settings.

Admin: Edit email in mailboxes.

Billing Computer- This computer has a direct connection to the company's bank. The call center and the net site take credit card information and forward it to this computer which verifies credit info and bills customers.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (Internal) 40 (External) (a login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: Call Center DB

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 10

Privileges

User: Get billing reports.

Superusers: Manually credit or bill credit card accounts.

Admin: View full billing record (including hundreds of saved credit card numbers).

Call Center DB- This computer runs a custom database created by Marla to run the call center. There are full records of every customer, every escort and a calendar of every meeting since the system went up three years ago. When a customer calls in, the call taker records his or her preferences, when they want someone and the computer suggests an escort. The call taker makes an appointment and the database calls the escort.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 25

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 20

Privileges

User: Input and retrieve customer info, view escort info, enter and cancel appointments.

Superusers: Edit escort info.

Admin: Delete records and appointment history.

Marla's Workstation- This is Marla's office computer, from which she administers all other servers. She only turns it on while she is at work.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 4d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 40

Trusts: None

Operating System: GuildOS

Power: 15

Privileges

User: Run programs, access the internet.

Superusers: Add and remove software.

Admin: Delete system files. Edit user accounts.

Net Site Server- Runs the public net site (3D.36F-escorts.com.us) which advertises the company, gives a price list and links to the call center's phone address.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 40

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Power: 25

Privileges

User: Make changes to the net site contents. View traffic stats.

Superusers: Turn the net site off and on.

Internet Router- A small router with a connection to NYRLAN that gives internet access to every computer in the office.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 2d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Power: 10

Privileges

User: View firewall settings. View internet traffic.

Superusers: Packet sniffing. Block internet addresses. Turn on or off the network firewall.

Administrator: Edit packets.

User Workstations- 15 computers in the call center are used by call takers. They log-on to the Call Center DB and enter calls.

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (login every 4d20 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Power: 7

Talula and Marshall end up grabbing two bags of trash out of the dumpster without getting caught. The GM says that the two bags of trash are worth 10 points. Talula and Marshall roll 10 + 1d20 vs. the Organization Secrecy Rating of 36F Escorts (10). They succeed and roll on the homework success table, getting "The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)." Meanwhile, Jack Monroe makes a CHM (17) + 1d20 vs. 10 (secrecy rating) roll to get info from someone over the phone. The person is quite happy to talk about the computer network in the office. Jack rolls on the homework table and gets "Location on internal network (+10 to Network Protocol rolls to find system)" Kimberly rolls 1d20 + INL (14) +8 (from having Internet Browsing (3)) vs. 10 (secrecy rating). She succeeds and gets "The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)," which is useless because Talula and Marshall already found the same thing.

8:00PM: Having done all the homework they have time for, they decide it is time to strike. It is 8 pm, and they know (from their homework) that Marla, the company's computer tech (and sole security admin) has gone home for the day. They set up in an abandoned building across the street from the 36F building and Kimberly goes to work. First she must get past the network firewall. Out of all the skills she could use, she figures that Operating Systems is her strongest skill. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) vs. 15 (the Network Firewall Strength). She easily beats it and now has access to any computer on the network.

8:15PM: She has to figure out which server has the escort's appointments on it (the Call Center Database). Since Jack Monroe got "Location on internal network" Kimberly gets +10 to her roll. Kimberly makes a moderate Network Protocols skill roll at INL (14) +10 (from homework) vs. 20. Kimberly succeeds and finds the system.

8:30PM: Now Kimberly tries to find a hole in the firewall of the Call Center DB. The system runs Mainframe 10, which Kimberly does not have a specialty in, so she would be at +10 to her difficulty if she used Operating Systems. Instead she decides to use Internet Browsing (at +10 difficulty, because this is not the best skill to use to find a hole, see the list on p.71). So, she rolls INL (14) +8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (the System Firewall Strength) +10 (because she is using Internet Browsing). Kimberly fails by 7, meaning that not only did she not get in, the firewall will be notifying the system administrator. They figure Marla should be getting a page right now, wherever she is.

9:00PM: Realizing that she has to hurry, Kimberly looks for another system she can break in to more easily. She makes a moderate Network Protocols roll to get a list of every station on the network and the operating system of each. She finds a system called MailPhone that is running OpenCert (an OS she does specialize in). She rolls to find a hole in the firewall of that machine, using Operating Systems. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 20 (the System Firewall Strength). Kimberly succeeds by 7. That means she is in as a superuser. Looking to see what she can do, Kimberly finds that she can change people's phone and mailbox settings, but that doesn't do her too much good.

9:30PM: They see a woman striding quickly towards the building with a frown on her face. Fearing that it is Marla, the system admin, Jack Monroe goes down to stall her. Jack pretends to be someone Marla knows and starts reeling off some bullshit about money Jack owes her, not letting Marla get a word in. While this is happening, Marla decides that she needs better privileges. She figures that she's not skillful enough to raise her privileges, but she can try hacking in again and hope to get a better account. She's at +10 to hack in again because she's already seen the inside of the system. She rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +10 (has already been inside) +1d20 vs. 20 (the System Firewall Strength)). She succeeds by 12, meaning she gets in as an Admin. She now has access to everyone's mail and saved phone messages. The GM rules that because she succeeded by so much, she got in very quickly, in only 15 minutes. Kimberly downloads all the email and voicemail messages for their missing escort, hoping that might help.

9:45PM: Kimberly decides to try to hack in to one of the workstations of one of the call center operators. Her thought is this: they're probably logged in to the Call Center DB, so if she can gain control of one of their machines, she can get access to it. The workstations are running OpenCert, so Kimberly rolls INL (14) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 35 (the System Firewall Strength). She succeeds by 1, giving her user privileges. The GM says that with that success it will take half an hour to find the hole. While she is in the middle of doing this, Marla, the security admin, finally gets sick of trying to tell Jack that she's in a hurry. She tries to step past Jack and when Jack gets in her way she calls one of the security guards in the building. Jack doesn't want to tangle with the security guard and leaves. Talula, who is watching out the window, tells Kimberly. Kimberly doesn't have the System Prowling skill, so there's nothing she can do to hide from Marla, she just has to hope that she can find what she needs before Marla finds her. Marla goes in, talks to the shift manager, logs on to her workstation, and makes a Network Security roll to find the intruder. Since Kimberly is not prowling, it only takes a moderate success on the skill roll. Marla makes it easily, and finds the hacker on a superuser account on the Mail/Phone Server and a user account on one of the Call Center Workstations.

10:15PM: As Marla logs in to the Internet Router to cut off the network address Kimberly is coming in through, Kimberly is seizing control of the Workstation. The employee at the station watches in confusion as icons start moving without his control. If he was smart, he would simply pull the plug on his computer, but fortunately for Kimberly he is not very smart. Kimberly opens up the window for the appointment database and searches for the missing escort's last appointment. Kimberly pulls up the last appointment, but before she can save the information, Marla cuts off the internet connection. Kimberly is now locked out of the network, and Marla is busy resetting the passwords on the compromised accounts, monitoring for further attempts, and finding and patching the security holes that Kimberly used to get in. Kimberly could try to get on the internet via a different address and hack in again, but it will be next to impossible with Marla watching like a hawk. Instead, Kimberly makes an INL roll to see if she can remember what flashed by on the screen before she was cut off. She remembers a name. Maybe that will be enough…

See Also
Some Computer Systems (p.429) for systems that can be hacked in to.
Internet Geography (p.395) for a general description of the internet.

FIGHTING

In Brief

Combat begins by determining initiative (who acts first), then proceeds though a number of rounds until combat is finished. Each round, each participant gets one action (used in order of initiative) to use against an opponent and one reaction to react defensively to something done to him or her. There are many types of combat actions and reactions, each with a different intended result, different difficulty and using different attributes. There are also many factors that can modify the difficulty for an action or reaction, including skills, properties of the weapon, and environmental variables.

Attributes in Combat

The following gives a basic idea of how attributes figure in to various combat maneuvers:

AGY- Adds to the speed and accuracy of an action/reaction.

AWR- Adds to actions that require noticing and reacting quickly to sudden movements.

INL- Adds to actions that require the use of knowledge (e.g. knowing where to strike to hit a vital organ).

SPD- Adds to actions that involve quick and powerful footwork.

STH- Adds to the damage and pure force of an attack.

WIL- Helps PCs resist pain and to take hits (allowing themselves to be hit so they can make unopposed strikes against the opponent).

Initiative

At the beginning of combat, each participant makes an AWR + INL + 1d20 roll. The fighter with the highest roll will get the first action in the round, the second highest will go next, etc. The next round, initiative is the same. Initiative must be re-rolled every time there is a break in the action (e.g. fighters stop to taunt each other).

Surprise- The fighter who initiates combat should get a bonus to initiative, from +5 to +15, depending upon how much of a surprise the combat was to the other fighters. Also, characters who are completely unaware that they are the victims of an action (e.g. are hit unaware by a sniper) do not get a reaction.

A Combat Round

A combat round is a period of time during which each participant gets <u>one action</u> and <u>one reaction</u>. The character's reaction is made in response to any attack against them at any time during the round.

Converting Actions & Reactions- Characters do not have to use their actions and reactions at the designated time; they can do any of the following:

-Wait and use their one action at the end of the round.

-Give up their action for that round in order to gain an extra reaction (no penalty).

-Turn a reaction in to an action (at extra difficulty, see Simultaneous Action, below).

Range

Each weapon has a range. This is how close to or how far away from an opponent a character must be to use that weapon against that opponent. A sword might have a range of 1-2, this means that at range 0 you are too close to use it and at range 3 you are too far away. Jumps (see Noncombat Actions) can be used to get in to the proper range.

Range 0: Short knives, biting and clawing, minimum range for small pistols.

Range 1: Punches, kicks, knives, short swords, disarm and crippling strikes.

Range 2: Long swords, chain weapons, minimum range for shotguns & rifles.

Range 3: Pole arms, broadswords, whips.

Range 4: Projectile weapons.

Why keep track of range? First, because range gives a benefit to opponents with longer weapons. Second, range gives a benefit to opponents who are defending (since the opponent must use an action to step forward).
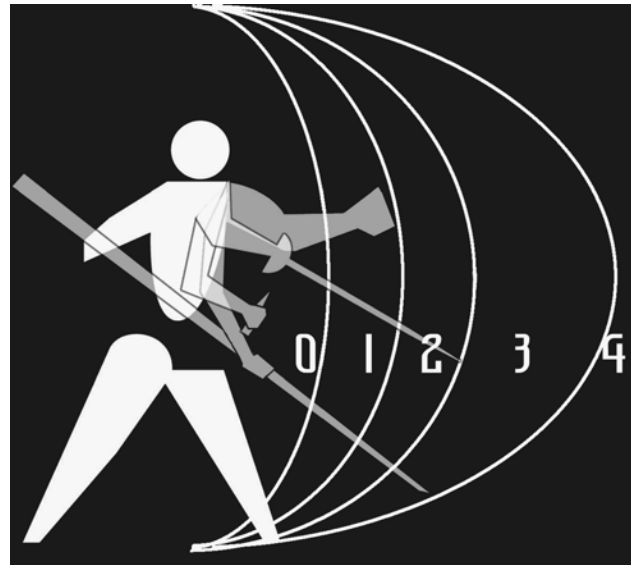
Noncombat Actions

These are actions which are useful during combat but they do not directly effect opponents and so the opponents can not react to them. The GM usually won't require a player to make difficulty rolls for these actions.

Draw- Ready a weapon for attack (may take more than one round if the weapon is not readily available).

Aim- Aim a projectile weapon at an enemy and follow any movement the enemy makes. If the character later makes an attack against the enemy with that weapon (without their aim having been interrupted) the character gets +4 to the roll.

Rise- Rise to standing from a prone state.

Jump- Move a specified number of units closer to or farther away from the opponent. See Range, above.

Resolving Combat

A combat action is an attempt to do something to someone else during combat. Like any other attempt to do anything (that the GM decides requires a dice roll) the character's action fails if the player cannot match the difficulty. If the player matches or exceeds the difficulty, the action will succeed unless it is opposed. Like all opposed rolls, the defender must make an opposing action (a reaction) and succeed (beat the difficulty) by more than the attacker succeeded. In other words, whoever does a better job, the attacker or defender, wins.

Action/Reaction Example

Attacker's Action:	Defender's Reaction:
Strike (Handheld)	Dodge

The attacker declares the action first: an attack with some handheld weapon. The defender then chooses to use his or her reaction to dodge the blow.

Attacker's attributes:	Defender's Attributes:
STH+AGY = 23	AWR+AGY = 30

Each action or reaction uses specific attributes, a handheld strike uses STH and AGY, a dodge uses AWR and AGY. The combatants add those attributes.

Attacker's 1d20 roll:	Defender's 1d20 roll:
14	5

Attackers add to their attributes to the result of their roll on a 20 sided die. If attackers had applicable skills or situational modifiers, those would be added in as well.

Attacker's Roll vs. Difficulty:	Defender's Roll vs. Difficulty:
Total of 37 vs. difficulty 25	Total 35 vs. difficulty 25

Each combatant's combined attributes plus 1d20 roll are compared to the difficulty of the given action. Both the attack and dodge have a difficulty of 25. Here, both combatants beat the difficulty for their respective actions.

Attacker's Success:	Defender's Success:
37 – 25 = 12	35 – 25 = 10

Success is the amount by which a player beats the difficulty for the action. Since the strike and dodge are opposed, the person with the most success wins. Here, the attacker's success is more than the defenders (by 2 points, making it an opposed success of 2). The attacker wins and inflicts damage upon the defender (the goal of that particular action).

Modifiers

Any factor can realistically modify the difficulties for actions and reactions in a combat. GMs will determine bonuses and penalties for each situation. Some common modifiers are:

Aim	+4 to action	The attacker has just aimed at the target (see Noncombat Actions)
Blinded (Full)	-15 to actions/reactions	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is completely obscured.
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to actions/reactions	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is partially obscured or blurred.
Burst	-4 to action	The character is firing more than one shot at once (up to the max. Rate Of Fire listed for that weapon). If the action is successful, each shot does damage.
Extended Action	+5 to action	The character puts his or her whole body in to an action (+5) but in doing so sacrifices his or her balance (-10 to next action or reaction). Not possible with projectile weapons.
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most actions/reactions	See Improvised Weapons (p.80) for more.
Leaning	-10 to actions/reactions	While leaning over to attack something below the character's knees, he or she is at -10 to their roll for any action or reaction.
Mounted	-4 to actions	Penalty only applies when the animal/vehicle is moving. Note that in order to hit opponents, mounted PCs must typically lean (see above). When the PC is moving he or she is at +4 difficulty to hit.
Paired	-4 to action	The character is attacking with two weapons simultaneously. If the action succeeds, both weapons do damage.
Prone	-8 to actions/reactions	Penalty does not apply to kicks or projectile weapons. Because of their reduced profile, prone characters are –8 to hit with a projectile. See also Stomp (p.79).
Simultaneous Action	-20 +WIL to action	The character makes an action as a reaction: he or she reacts to an action directed towards him or her with another action. Both actions happen simultaneously and neither are opposed. –20 to the roll, but WIL is added in as a third attribute.
Split	-10 to actions/reactions	The character splits one action in to two actions or one reaction in to two reactions but gets -10 to each. Actions created in this way must be used at the same time; reactions can be saved for later in the round.
Targeted	-4 to action	The damage done by a successful attack is done to a specific part of the enemy predefined by the attacker (depending upon the part, the attack might do less damage than normal, but never more).
Underwater	-8 to actions/reactions	Because water reduces momentum, all attacks do ½ damage underwater. Characters without any swimming skills can only move at 1 SPD underwater.

Combat Actions

These are actions that every person can attempt, even people with no combat training whatsoever. Actions that only people with special training can do can be found in the combat skills section (p.23).

Area Attack

Goal- Hit everything in a given area with bullets or other projectiles.

Roll- INL + Number of shots fired + 1d20 vs. 25 + size of area in feet.

Weapon- Any that can shoot more than once per action.

-Each victim can react separately to the attack.

-This is the only action which doesn't suffer from blindness penalties: the character can fire at an area without seeing it. Distance penalties for projectile weapons do apply.

-When declaring, define an area to spray. Roll a separate success roll for each person in the area.

-Each victim hit takes damage from one projectile.

Blinding Strike

Goal- Damage victim's eyes to blind him or her.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that damages eyes or flesh around the eye or any substance that can obscure vision or makes eyes shut involuntarily.

-Most weapons only partially blind (a nail can only poke out one eye at a time, sand will only partially damage vision).

-Some weapons fully blind on a successful strike (e.g. a caustic chemical spray). See Improvised Weapons: Blinding Substances (p.80) for more.

Crippling Attack

Goal- Damage a limb so as to make it unusable.

Roll- STH+INL +1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything that can cut tendons, break bones or dislocate joints (must be able to do at least ½ point of damage had this been a normal strike).

-A successful crippling attack cripples one limb.

-A person can continue to stand on one leg but is at SPD 1, -7 to all actions and reactions, and is -20 to save vs. loss of balance.

Disarm

Goal- Knock the opponent's weapon from his or her hand.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Fists, kicks or anything which can cause a wrist to lose tension.

-Usually a strike to the wrist, though it may be a strike to the weapon itself.

-The victim can resist with an opposed STH feat (STH+1d20 vs. 20) as a reaction.

Grab

Goal- Immobilize one limb or one weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, or anything which can grab (e.g. a snare).

-Once a limb or weapon is successfully grabbed, the grab remains until it is broken. The grabber can choose to let go, or the victim can use an action to make an opposed STH roll against the grabber. Any successful pain/stun attack against the grabber will also cause the hold to be broken.

Grab (Pain)

Goal- Immobilize a limb so that the victim can not move without pain.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Hands

-The victim's arm is simultaneously grabbed and twisted so that the victim must make a save vs. pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 20) to move in any way.

-The victim's free limb is still usable but usually on the opposite side of the body from the grabber.

Grab (Strangle)

Goal- Cut off blood and air flow through the neck.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Hands, anything that can be wrapped around the victim's neck, or anything hard that can pin the neck against a stable surface.

-Grab can be broken by opposed STH roll or pain/stun attack.

-During the hold, the victim takes 1 BLD damage per round. If the hold is broken before the victim dies, the lost BLD returns one per round.

-Both the victim's hands are free during the grab.

Grab (Wrestling)

Goal- Use multiple limbs to immobilize the victim's limbs.

Roll- STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Hands

-Goal is to get the victim in a hold that is easier to maintain than it is to break free from. To break hold victim must make hard (30) STH feat while holder makes easy (10) feat.

-Takes one limb to immobilize a limb (e.g. to immobilize both the victim's arms, attacker must use both his or her arms).

Knockaway

Goal- Do damage and knock the victim backwards.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of inflicting two or more points of blunt damage over a wide area.

-Victim takes 1 point of blunt damage and is knocked back one range unit per point of opposed success.

-Even if the damage is absorbed by armor, the victim is still pushed backwards.

-Victim must make an opposed moderate save vs. loss of balance (AGY+1d20 vs. 20) to avoid falling.

Knockdown

Goal- Knock the opponent to the floor.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of hooking legs or pushing the victim over through sheer force.

-If successful, the victim is knocked down with no save. See p.77 for more on prone fighters.

Knockout

Goal- Knock the victim unconscious

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

Weapon- Anything capable of doing significant blunt damage

-If successful, the victim can make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20). If they can not successfully oppose the knockout, the victim is knocked unconscious for one round per point of the attacker's opposed success.

-For every successful knockout, there is a chance of serious damage to the victim, whether the attacker desires it or not. Generally, if the attacker's opposed success is more than 10, the attack also does 1d6 damage to BLD.

Pain/Stun

Goal- Stun the victim by causing him or her pain.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Nearly anything capable of blunt, bladed or burn damage or otherwise capable of causing pain.

-If the attack is successful the victim must make an opposed save vs. shocking pain (difficulty 20). If the victim fails by a difference of less than 10, the victim loses his or her next action. If the victim fails by 10 or more, the victim loses his or her next action and reaction.

Weapon- Any weapon that does blunt damage

-Blunt damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Bladed damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where blunt damage is especially harmful (e.g. spine, temples).

Wing

Goal- Damage easy to hit, but non-vital parts.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Any weapon capable of doing damage.

-Aimed at exposed yet non-vital body parts (e.g. arms, thighs and ribs).

-Any damage which gets through the armor is cut in half.

Reactions

Dodge

Goal- Sidestep the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-After a successful dodge, the defender is still in roughly the same place as he or she was before.

Entangle

Goal- Stop and trap the weapon.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30

-Requires something that can stop and trap the weapon (e.g. chain, meat hook, trident, jacket, folding chair).

-If successful, the action is blocked and the attacker must use another action to unentangle the weapon.

Flip

Goal- Dodge attack and knock over attacker.

Roll- AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35

-This requires that the attacker make a lunge (punch or attack with a handheld weapon) and that the defender must be close enough to use the momentum to flip the attacker over a pivot point (usually the defender's shoulder).

-If successful, the attacker is knocked down with no save.

Drop

Goal- Drop below the path of the weapon.

Roll- AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

-Whether successful or unsuccessful, the defender ends up on the floor at the end of the reaction.

Jump

Goal- Jump out of weapon's range.

Roll- SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Unlike the Noncombat Action: Jump, this is in reaction to a specific attack.

-Determine how many range levels the character needs to move to be out of the range of the weapon.

-+10 difficulty for every range level beyond the first.

-If the defender beats the difficulty but doesn't beat the opposed action, the PC gets hit but ends up out of weapon's range at the end of the reaction.

Mental Block

Goal- Resist attempted mind control (especially psychic attacks).

Roll- WIL+1d20 vs. 20

-This is only useful against attacks that go directly to the character's mind.

Parry

Goal- Block the attacker's weapon.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Be sure to declare what you are blocking and with what. If you block a knife blade with your bare hands, for instance, you will take some damage (though not as much damage as you would have taken otherwise).

Slash

Goal- Cause damage, distracting pain and disfigurement by an attack on the face or any other sensitive area.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Anything capable of cutting or tearing long gashes in flesh.

-Does ½ point BLD damage and the victim must make an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain. Victim suffers a -1 penalty for each point of opposed success by the attacker.

Stomp

Goal- Do 2x damage to victim's lower than the attacker.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Feet.

-The victim must be below the knees of the attacker.

-Because this attack uses the full weight of the attacker against the victim, it does double the damage of a normal kick.

Strike (Handheld)

Goal- Do damage to the victim.

Roll- STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Weapon- Any handheld weapon capable of doing damage.

-If successful, it does the normal damage listed for the weapon.

Strike (Projectile)

Goal- Damage to the target.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 -1 per functional range unit vs. 25

Weapon- Any projectile weapon.

-For every one Function Range (FR) unit away the victim is, the character takes a -1 penalty to the roll (see Projectile Weapons, p.80).

Tackle

Goal- Knock both the attacker and the atackee to the ground.

Roll- SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20

Weapon- Body

-If the tackle is successfully dodged, the attacker must make a save vs. loss of balance to avoid ending up on the ground.

-A tackle does no damage.

Vital Strike (Bladed)

Goal- Use a bladed weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35

Weapon- Any weapon that does bladed damage.

-Bladed damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Blunt damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where bladed damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, heart).

Vital Strike (Blunt)

Goal- Use a blunt weapon to damage vital areas.

Roll- INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40

Actions	Reactions
-Each character gets only one per round.	-Each character gets only one per round.
-Characters get to use their actions in an order determined by initiative.	-A character can only use a reaction when he or she is the target of an action.
-Actions can be traded for reactions at no extra difficulty.	-A character can use a reaction as an action at extra difficulty (+20 +WIL).
-Characters can wait until the end of the round to use an action.	-If the character is not acted upon in a round, he or she gets no reaction.

Projectile Weapons

Range- When making any action with a projectile weapon, add to the normal difficulty the number of range units away the target is. For example, if a weapon has a FR (Functional Range) of 5 ft.: for every 5 ft. away the opponent is (rounded down) there is an extra point of difficulty. A target 60 ft. away would be at +12 difficulty to hit with that weapon. Weapons also have a Maximum Range (MR) beyond which the weapon can not do damage.

Cover- A character who lies flat, facing their enemy (reducing their profile) is very hard to hit with projectile weapons (-8 to hit). Any type of cover can give the enemy a minus to hit depending upon how much of the character's body is protected. Treat this as armor: standing partially behind a tree might have an AR of 5 and a PR of 15 bladed/blunt (from that one direction only).

Fighting Non-Humans

Machines- Non-Biological opponents do not have BDY, BLD or INCY. Instead, each device has an amount of blunt or bladed damage that, if it takes, will cause it to cease functioning. One machine, for example, may be able to take 4 blunt or 9 bladed damage before it stops working.

Size- Animals and machines which are bigger or smaller than humans are easier or harder to hit (see table). Also, small opponents can only take limited blunt damage because instead of absorbing the damage, the opponent goes flying (unless the opponent is crushed against something).

size	to hit
Bee	-20
Rat	-10
Cat	-5
Human	0
Horse	+5
Elephant	+10
House	+20

Special Attacks- Sense should be used in fighting non-humans. For instance, a blinding strike would be silly against an animal that does not depend upon its eyes, a rhinoceros would not be very susceptible to a knockdown attack by a human, etc. Without some knowledge of mechanics, a vital strike against a machine would be impossible.

Swarms- A swarm is a group of small animals attacking the character that are so numerous we treat them as one entity. A swarm can not be parried or dodged, only run from.

Armor can help the character: any portion of the character's body which is covered by armor can not be attacked. The amount of the character's body which is protected is the ratio of the AR to 20. So, a character with AR 10 could only be attacked by half the swarm at once. A character with an AR of 5 could only be attacked by three-fourths of the swarm.

Most swarms do not dodge and instead make simultaneous strikes at no minuses (for convenience's sake, assume that all swarm animals which can attack make a successful strike). Characters, on the other hand, usually can't kill more than a few swarm animals with each strike, except with certain weapons like poison sprays or flame throwers.

Weapon Specific Difficulties

The difficulties listed for the various actions and reactions represent the difficulty with the "typical" weapon someone might use to do that action or reaction with. Some weapons are designed so that some actions/reactions are easier, while others are much harder. For instance, a sledgehammer is so heavy and awkward that it is hard to make a strike with it. On the other hand, a whip is designed for pain/stun attacks and so such an attack would be easier. In weapon profiles, special actions and reactions are listed as:

Very Easy (-8 difficulty)
Easy (-4 difficulty)
Hard (+4 difficulty)
Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

Improvised Weapons

Normal objects can be used as weapons but since they are not designed as weapons they have higher difficulties to use. Many will also break after the first attack.

Slashing Weapons: Any object with a cutting edge strong enough to cut flesh does 1 bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

Poking Weapons: Objects with a point on them strong enough to be driven to flesh do only ½ a point of bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

Blunt Weapons: Blunt objects with a good handle can do between 1 and 3 blunt damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.

Thrown Objects: Any heavy object without a handle can be thrown at an enemy. If a character attacks someone with a huge rock at point blank range, we can simply say that is was a throw at 0 ft. They have normal difficulties but the following ranges:

Weight	Functional Range	Dmg
1-2 lbs.	3 ft.	½
3-5 lbs.	3 ft.	1
6-10 lbs.	2 ft.	2
11-20 lbs.	1 ft.	3
20-99 lbs.	½ ft.	4
100+ lbs.	½ ft.	1 dmg/20lbs.

Blinding Substances: Any substance which can be thrown in the eyes. PCs can make a blinding attack with these substances at no minuses. They can be thrown only within a range of 5 ft. Most of these substances can be avoided by closing one's eyes (a very easy dodge). A successful attack, though, will fully blind the opponent (-15 to all actions/reactions) for a length of time depending upon the causticity of the substance. Extremely caustic substances (like bleach) will not only blind but act as a pain/stun strike on a successful blinding attack.

After Combat

After combat is finished, PCs who have taken injuries should seek out medical attention. The best case scenario is that someone with the Emergency Medicine skill and proper medical equipment can immediately treat wounded PCs. Proper medical care will eliminate the three following effects. Inadequate care (care given too late, without proper equipment or without the proper skills) only reduces the following effects.

Bleeding- For each point of bladed damage a PC has taken, that PC will lose another ½ point of BLD over the next 15 minutes unless the wound is cared for (tourniqueted, cauterized, stitched up).

Pain- When the endorphins the body produces in an emergency wear off, the PC will feel every bit of damage done. The PC must save vs. distracting pain with a difficulty of 5 for each point of damage done.

Infection- Unless a wound is disinfected, the victim risks a serious infection. For every point of bladed damage a PC has taken, the PC must make a save vs. disease contraction with a difficulty of 10 per point of damage (max. 30). Note that burns and ragged damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.64) increase the chances of infection and are very difficult to treat medically. If the PC fails the save vs. contraction, he or she suffers from a disease with the following profile (see p.66 for more on fighting diseases): Disease Progression Rating: 20. Disease Progression Speed: 12 hours. Treatments: Antibiotics. Symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD) and 1 BLD damage.
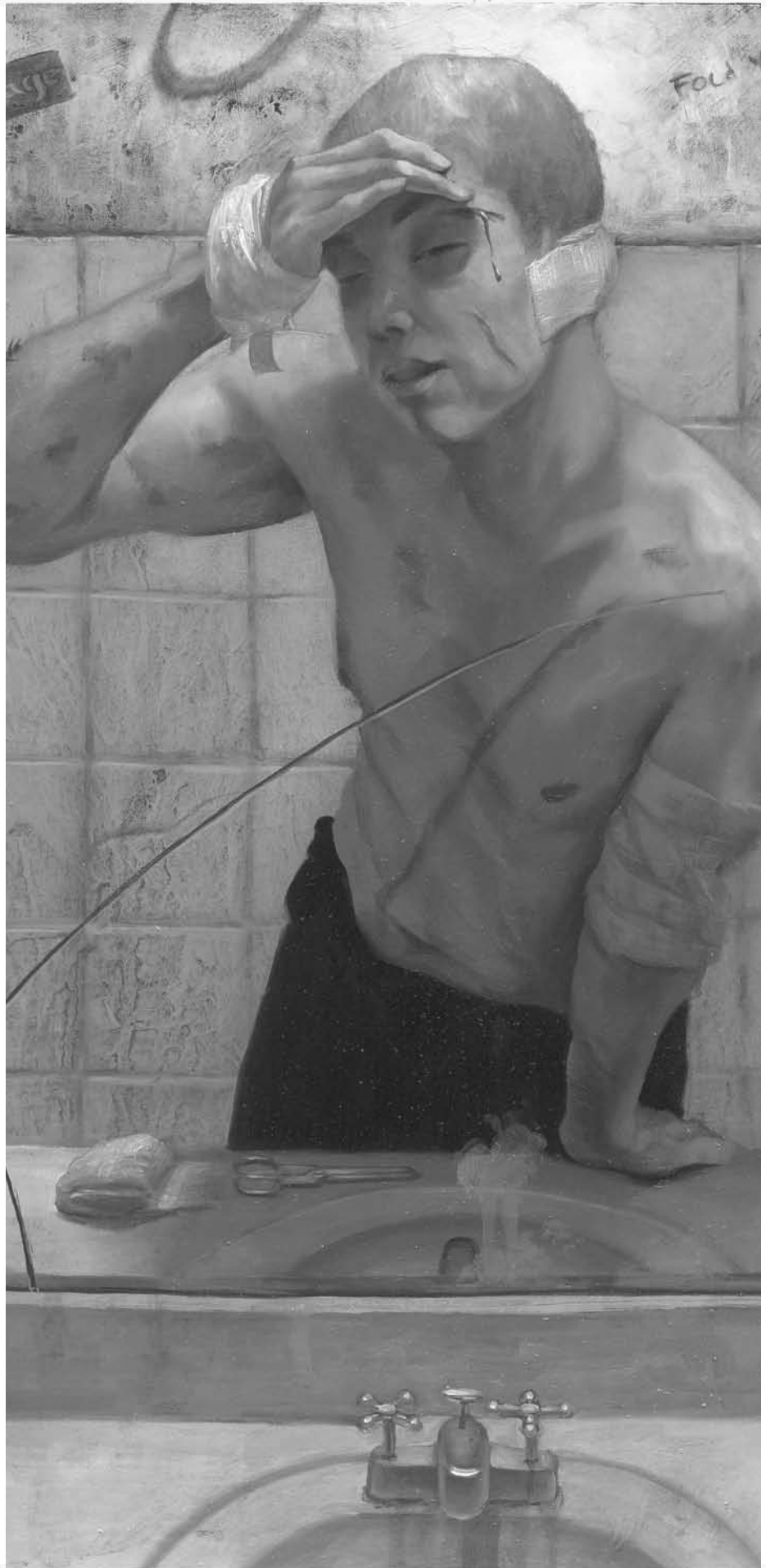
Simple Combat Example

Rusty and Juanita are in a fight:

Rusty: 12 AWR, 8 AGY, 10 INL, 6 SPD, 14 STH, 7 WIL, 3 BLD, 5 BDY, 4 INCY. No combat skills. Has a hunting knife (range 0-1, damage: 2½ bladed). No armor.

Juanita: 8 AWR, 10 AGY, 13 INL, 16 SPD, 4 STH, 8 WIL, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, 4 INCY. Kickboxing (2) (gives +8 to wing, +8 parry, +8 to knockaway, +4 to strike with her feet). No weapons. Her kicks do 1½ blunt damage. No armor.

GM- Roll initiative.

Rusty- (rolls INL (10) + AWR (12)+ 1d20) 28

Juanita- (rolls INL (13) + AWR (8) + 1d20) 23

GM- Rusty, you get the first action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm doing a split action, I'm moving in to range 1 and doing a strike at Juanita with my knife.

GM- Juanita, are you reacting?

Juanita- I'm going to dodge.

GM- Okay, roll. Remember, Rusty, since you split your action you're -10 to each action. The jump in to range will succeed automatically, but you're -10 to hit.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) -10 (split action) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 27, that's 2 success.

Juanita- (rolls AWR (8) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 26. Only one success.

GM- Okay, the knife hits you Juanita, and does 2½ damage to your BLD. Okay, Juanita, now it's your action.

Juanita- I'm going to make a strike with my feet.

Rusty- I'll block with my arm.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeeded by 8.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 25) I succeed by 12.

GM- Okay, Rusty parries the kick. Next round. Rusty, your action. What do you do?

Rusty- I'm going to make a strike against Juanita with my knife.

GM- Okay, Juanita, your reaction?

Juanita- Um… I'll parry with my leg.

GM- You realize that since you're parrying a bladed weapon, even if you succeed your leg may be injured? You might lose BLD or even have the leg crippled?

Juanita- Yeah, but it won't be as bad as if I get stabbed, right?

GM- Right.

Juanita- Okay, I'll do it.

GM- Okay, roll.

Rusty- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25) I got 3 success.

Juanita- (rolls STH (4) + AGY (10) + 8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25) I got 30. Five success.

GM- Okay, let's see, you kick the blade out of the way, but your ankle is grazed. Take… ½ BLD damage.

Juanita- Okay. I'm at 1 BLD now.

GM- Okay, Juanita, your action.

Juanita- I'll do a knockdown, with my feet.

Rusty- I'll let her kick me and do a simultaneous strike.

GM- Okay, roll.

Juanita- (rolls STH (14) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 30). Two success.

Rusty- (rolls (14) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25). Five success.

GM- Okay. Juanita, you take another 2½ damage to your BLD. Rusty, your knocked on the ground.

Juanita- My BLD is zero now, and I'm down to 2½ INCY.

GM- Well, you've just been mortally wounded. From now on you'll be losing a point of pooled END every round. Rusty, it's your action.

Rusty- I'll get up.

Juanita- While he's doing that, I'm going to run away.

Complex Combat Example

Raul and Tyra vs. Hammerhead and Ying.

Raul:
    Attributes: 14 AWR, 6 AGY, 4 END, 16 INL, 9 SPD, 3 STH, 15 WIL, 5 BLD, 3 BDY, 4 INCY.
    Skills: No combat skills.
    Weapons: Tech Sword (range: 1-2, damage: 6 bladed (pierces armor as 8), easy strike, easy vital strike) and Riot Shield (gives +10 to parry).
    Armor: None.

Tyra:
    Attributes: 17 AWR, 12 AGY (including the AGY penalty from her armor), 7 END, 6 INL, 12 SPD, 8 STH, 12 WIL, 3 BLD, 4 BDY, 3 INCY.
    Skills: Street Fighting (1) (gives +4 to Pain/Stun Attack, +4 to Simultaneous Strike, +4 to Crippling Attack).
    Weapons: Sharpened Stick (range: 2, damage: 2½ bladed, hard strike) coated with Black Market Knife Poison (within 1 round after being stabbed: 1 BLD damage per round for 6 rounds. Excessive thirst, Vomiting (20), Anaphylactic Shock (20), numbness (+7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch based AWR rolls), blurry vision (-7 to actions/reactions and AWR based rolls)).
    Armor: Trash Armor (AGY Penalty: -4, AR 8, PR 5 bladed 4 blunt).

Hammerhead:

Attributes: 6 AWR, 10 AGY, 13 END, 7 INL, 13 SPD, 17 STH, 14 WIL, 2 BLD, 4 BDY, 6 INCY.

Skills: No combat skills.

Weapons: Improvised Slashing Weapon (1 bladed damage, -8 to any actions except pain/stun, blinding and slash).

Armor: Nanopadded Armor (AR 10, PR 2 bladed 7 blunt 2) and Modern Chainmail (AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt).

Ying:

Attributes: 6 AWR, 14 AGY, 8 END, 12 INL, 5 SPD, 7 STH, 18 WIL, 4 BLD, 4 BDY, 4 INCY.

Skills: Knife Throwing (3) (gives +6 to initiative, +12 to strike, +8 to vital strike, +4 to blinding strike, no penalty for targeted strikes).

Weapons: 5 throwing daggers (FR 1 ft. MR 20 ft, damage: 2 bladed).

Armor: None.

-The Situation: They are in an alley, Raul and Tyra on one side, Hammerhead and Ying on the other, 10 ft. apart.

-Initiative: Ying (who gets +6 to initiative from the Knife Throwing skill) gets 34, Raul gets 32, Tyra gets 26, Hammerhead gets 23.

-Round 1: Ying's Action. Ying declares that he is throwing a dagger at Tyra (a strike). Tyra reacts by ignoring the strike and running at Ying full speed. Ying rolls AGY (14) + INL (12) +12 (strike) -10 (she is 10 ft. away and the dagger has a Functional Range of 1 ft.) + 1d20 vs. 25. He succeeds by 8. This is not enough to bypass Tyra's armor (she has AR 8) and all of the dagger's damage is absorbed by the armor. Since she ran at Ying, Tyra is now in range 2.

-Round 1: Raul's Action. Raul decides to hold his action – he wants to see what Hammerhead is going to do.

-Round 1: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares that she is going to make a pain/stun strike against Ying with her (poisoned) sharpened stick. Ying declares that he will do a Jump, jumping back 1 range level, to avoid the strike. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) vs. 25, she succeeds by 8. Ying rolls SPD (5) + AGY (14) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 2. Ying is stabbed in a tender spot with the stick, and must make an opposed save vs. pain. He rolls WIL (18) + 1d20 vs. 20. He gets 31, succeeding by 11, which beats Tyra's success, which means he doesn't lose any actions. He is now also at range 3, out of Tyra's weapon range. The stick has, however, punctured his skin, and starting next round he will take poison damage.

-Round 1: Hammerhead's Action. He decides to do a split action jump in (running in to range to hit Raul) and pain/stun against Raul. Raul declares that he will react by dodging. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) - 10 (split action) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 1. Raul rolls AWR (14) + AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 25, he fails. Raul must make an opposed save vs. pain. Raul rolls WIL (15) +1d20 vs. 20 and fails by 2. Raul will lose his next action (the one he saved).

-End of Round. Since everyone has been fighting, everyone loses 1 pooled END (Raul has 3, Tyra has 6, Hammerhead has 12, Ying has 7). At the start of this next round, Ying will take damage from the poison. He takes 1 BLD damage, must save vs. vomiting (rolls WIL (18) + 1d20 vs. 20, he succeeds), must save vs. shock (rolls END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20 and succeeds), and is +7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch or vision based AWR rolls and -7 to all actions and reactions.

-Round 2: Ying's Action. Ying declares he is making a strike against Tyra with a knife. Tyra declares that she will react by dodging. Ying rolls INL (12) + AGY (14) +12 (skill) -6 (he is 6 ft. away) -7 (poison effect) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 10. Tyra rolls AWR (currently 13) + AGY (12) + 1d20 vs. 25. She succeeds by 2. Ying's strike hits her, and bypasses the armor and does full damage. Tyra loses 4 BLD.

-Round 2: Raul's Action. Raul declares he is going to make an extended strike against Hammerhead with his Tech Sword. Hammerhead declares that he is going to make a simultaneous Disarm strike, trying to knock the weapon out of Raul's hand. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +4 (the Tech Sword has an easy strike) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 4. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + WIL (14) (because it is a simultaneous strike) + 1d20 vs. 25 + 20 (because it is a simultaneous strike), he fails. Since Raul's success on his strike is 4, less than the AR of either of Hammerhead's armors, the PR of both armors is removed from the damage of the sword. The sword does 6 bladed, but pierces as 8. Hammerhead's armors has a PR of 3 bladed and 2 bladed. Altogether, 3 bladed damage pierces Hammerhead's armor. Since Hammerhead's BLD is only 2, he loses all his BLD and 1 INCY point. Since he has received a fatal injury (is at 0 BLD) he will lose an additional 1 point of pooled END each round.

-Round 2: Tyra's Action. Tyra is out of range, so she decides to do a split action jump in and extended wing against Ying. Ying declares that he will react with a jump out. Tyra rolls INL (6) + AGY (14) +5 (extended) -10 (split action) + 1d20 vs. 20, she succeeds by 7. Ying rolls SPD (5) + AGY (14) -7 (poison effects) + 1d20 vs. 25, he fails. Ying takes half damage from the stick (loses 1 BLD) and takes another dose of poison. Starting next round he will be taking double the poison effects.

-Round 2: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead declares that he is going to disarm Raul. Raul declares that as a reaction he will do a simultaneous strike against Hammerhead. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 3. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) + WIL (15) (because he is doing a simultaneous action) -10 (this is his next reaction after an extended action) + 1d20 vs. 25 + 20, he fails. The sword falls from Raul's hand.

-End of Round. Everyone loses another point of END, and Hammerhead loses an additional point because he is at 0 BLD. Now Raul has 2, Tyra has 5, Hammerhead has 11, Ying has 6. Since the Ying has been stabbed twice, he has two doses of poison in them and double the effect.

Ying takes 2 BLD damage, reducing him to 0 BLD. He must save vs. vomiting at difficulty 40 (he fails and will spend all round vomiting), save vs. shock at difficulty 40 (he fails, now all his attributes are halved), and he is -14 to touch/vision AWR rolls and -14 to all actions/reactions.

-Round 3: Ying's Action. He decides to make a football tackle against Tyra, though he will be at -20 (from vomiting) and -14 (blindness) and so can only succeed by rolling a 20. Tyra decides to ignore him and dash in to weapon's range of Hammerhead. Ying fails.

-Round 3: Raul's Action. Raul declares that he is bending down to pick up his weapon. Since he is not acting against any opponent, nobody gets a reaction.

-Round 3: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares that she is making a pain/stun strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is dodging. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) vs. 25, and succeeds by 6. Raul rolls AWR (14) + AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 10. Tyra's attack misses Raul.

-Round 3: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead declares that he will make a Disarm strike against Raul. Raul has no reaction left. Hammerhead rolls INL (7) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 5. Raul drops his sword again.

-End of Round. Everyone loses another point of END, and Hammerhead and Ying lose 2 because they are both at 0 BLD. So, now Raul has 1, Tyra has 3, Hammerhead has 9, Ying has 4. Ying loses 2 INCY to the poison. He fails his save vs. vomiting.

-Round 4: Ying's Action. He doesn't take any.

-Round 4: Raul's Action. Raul declares that he is going to grab his weapon and jump backwards out of weapons range. Since this is a slightly complicated maneuver, the GM makes him make a moderate AGY roll (AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 20). Raul fails. The GM declares that Raul got the weapon but didn't make it out of weapon's range.

-Round 4: Tyra's Action. Tyra declares she is going to make an extended pain/stun strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is going to split his reaction, use one half to parry the strike, and save the other half for later. Tyra rolls STH (8) + AGY (12) +4 (skill) +5 (extended) vs. 25, and succeeds by 12. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +10 (from the shield) + 1d20 vs. 25, he succeeds by 3. Tyra's poisoned stick hits Raul in a soft spot. Raul must now make a moderate opposed save vs. pain. He rolls WIL (15) + 1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds by 9, which is 3 less than Tyra's success, which means he loses his next action. He will also take poison damage starting next round.

-Round 4: Hammerhead's Action. Hammerhead has a 2 damage punch, and he declares that he is going to make an extended knockout strike against Raul. Raul declares that he is going to use the second half of his split reaction to parry. Hammerhead rolls STH (17) + AGY (10) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 30. He succeeds by 9. Raul rolls STH (3) + AGY (6) +10 (from the shield) + 1d20 vs. 25, and succeeds by 5. Now Raul must make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls the average of his WIL (15) and END (currently 1), which is 8, + 1d20 vs. 20. He succeeds by 1, which is 8 less success than Hammerhead's knockout. Raul goes unconscious.

-Post Battle: Ying is vomiting and blind and will be dead by the beginning of the next round. Raul is unconscious and poisoned, he will die before he wakes up. Hammerhead has been mortally wounded by Raul's tech sword. At the beginning of next round he will have only 7 pooled END left, which means only 7 rounds to get medical attention before he goes unconscious. Tyra has been seriously wounded, she is down to 1 BLD and if she doesn't get her injuries treated they will bleed and she will lose another 2 points of BLD (½ point per point of injury) within 15 minutes, which will put her at 0 BLD. If Hammerhead and Tyra find a way to live through the next 15 minutes, unless they get quality medical care they will have to deal with pain (they will have to make saves vs. distracting pain, Hammerhead at 15 (3 damage x 5 difficulty) and Tyra at 20 (4 damage x 5 difficulty). They will also have to save vs. disease progression to avoid their injuries becoming infected (both at 30, since the difficulty is damage x 10 with a max. of 30).

Tips for GMs: Keeping Combat Quick

1. Never let the PCs get in to a fair fight. Either the PCs should be ambushed, or the PCs should be doing the ambushing, or the PCs should be vastly superior to the people they are fighting, or the PCs should be vastly inferior to their opponents.

2. Enemies run away, surrender or play dead when they realize they are getting their asses kicked.

3. Figure out the NPC fighter's typical action and typical reaction ahead of time and calculate it (e.g. this opponent strikes at 1d20 vs. 3).

4. NPC fighters only make simple actions (e.g. strike and dodge, no extended simultaneous split actions).

5. Don't bother keeping track of END if the battle is only going to last a few rounds.

6. Give opponents weapons with the same range as that of the PCs – this makes for a lot less jumping around during battle.

7. Start PCs and opponents in weapons range of each other.

8. Instead of calculating and rolling for every effect of a poison on an NPC opponent, just give the opponent a flat penalty to all actions and reactions. E.G. instead of the huge list of symptoms of Drake Fungus Poison, just say that each dose does 1 BLD damage and gives -10 to all rolls.

9. Give each player only a limited amount of time to declare an action or reaction.

Chapter Three – The Black Market

Caroline knew she had made many mistakes: taking the swing shift at the factory, not asking someone to walk home with her, trying to run from those muggers, running home instead of to a public area, not calling the police before they had a chance to cut her internet line. Perhaps her worst mistake had been to think she could wear the old plate mail armor her uncle had left her. The hinges on the door were about to give way, there was no time to change any of it, she could only stand her ground and fight.

Any second they would come pouring in, and she might have the advantage for a few seconds while they were surprised by the armor. Maybe she could hit one or two of them with her kitchen knife in that time. She would be lucky if the knife blade didn't snap the first time she hit someone with it. If she couldn't hurt them within a few breaths they would find the plates hanging loose and stab her in the holes. If her helmet got hit it would twist and she would be blind.

Even the banging on the door was drowned out by her panicked breath echoing in the helmet. She could smell her breath and the acidic odor of the metal. She could feel hot tears on her cheeks as she wept in fear…

Introduction

This chapter is a compendium of things that are, or might at some point, be available on the legitimate and black markets. Although player may use this section for equipping PCs during character creation, it is also meant as a reference for, among other things, what a villain might spend money on. The presence of something in this chapter does not imply that PCs can buy it, should; buy it, or have any ethical excuse for buying it.

Legality Ratings

The prices listed in this chapter represent the black market price for items. Most items, if bought through legitimate items, would be 2 to 10 times more expensive. It is illegal to possess any stolen merchandise. The prosecutor does not need to prove that a person knew an item was stolen, only that the item was stolen. Some items listed in this section are illegal for ordinary people to possess whether or not they can be proven to be stolen.

The legality of an item is listed as the type of legality (under what circumstances it is legal to have the item) followed by the maximum penalty for possessing the item.

Legality types are as follows:

Permit: It is legal for ordinary people to have and use this item so long as they have some sort of permit, prescription or other proof of permission to have the item. Examples: prescription drugs (must have a prescription), software suites (must be registered with the software company as a valid user), pepper-spray (must have a certificate of training in the safe use of pepper spray).

Licensed: Only a small group of professionals licensed by the city, state or federal government are allowed to possess, carry and use such items. Examples: pharmo-synths (only certain emergency medical personnel operating in situations where access to pharmaceuticals is limited are able to use these), mental installers (only licensed hospitals and doctor's offices can own mental installers, and they are commonly audited to make sure they are using them legally), firearms (only the National Guard can bring firearms in to the city, only in a state of emergency, and only if those firearms have security chips that only allow those guardspeople to fire them).

Forbidden: These are items which there is almost no legal way to own, possess or carry. Examples: illegal street drugs with no prescription use (unless being held by cops as evidence in a criminal trial), bioengineered diseases (unless kept in Centers for Disease Control labs for study), nuclear weapons (unless kept by the US military).

Example: *Tom is caught with a Blood Plug. Blood Plugs have a legality of Permit ($500 fine). Unless he can provide a prescription or show that he is an ambulance driver or some other licensed medical practitioner, he might be sentenced to pay up to $500, depending on what kind of mood the judge is in. If Tom can't pay, he'll probably have to spend some time in the city jail. On the other hand, if Tom was caught with the bioengineered disease Harmon, which has a legality of Forbidden (Life Without Possibility of Parole), his only hope is to beg for clemency if he ever wants to see the outside of a prison again.*

Name	Cost	Section
360 Sight	$400	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
3D Sound Helmet	$350	Sensory
After Battle Bath	$7	Services
Agility Booster	$650	Data: Mental Programs
AI Firewall	$50	Data: Applications
AI Secretary	$200	Data: Applications
Alcohol	Varies	Biotech: Chemical
Alligator	Varies	Servants: Biological
Amicus	$75	Data: Operating Systems
Amnesient	$40/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Amphetamines	$5/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Animal Boarding	$3/day	Services
Antibiotics	$50	Biotech: Chemical
Antibiotics (Severe)	$500	Biotech: Chemical
Anti-Nauseant	$10/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Anti-Psychic Cap	$250	Protection
Anti-Psychotic	$10/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Anti-Shock	$15/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Anti-Tank Weapon	$15,000	Weapons: Firearms
Anti-Toxin Kit	$500	Biotech: Chemical
Anti-Viral	$35	Biotech: Chemical
Anxiolytic	$7/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Apartment (Doorperson)	$700/mo.	Services
Apartment (Highrise)	$800/mo.	Services
Apartment (Loft)	$700/mo.	Services
Apartment (Projects)	$450/mo.	Services
Apartment (Tenement)	$350/mo.	Services
Armored Limo Ride	$75/mile	Services
Assassination	Varies	Services
Assassination (Cruel)	Varies	Services
Attack Bees	$3,000	Servants: Biological
Audio Bug	$50	Sensory
Auto-Blood Test	$3/ea.	Biotech: Non-Chemical
AutoFall	$115	Data: Mental Programs
AutoFighter	$1,600	Data: Mental Programs
AutoLockpick	$840	Data: Mental Programs
AutoMapper (Floorplan)	$400	Data: Mental Programs
Automatic Pistol	$4,000	Weapons: Firearms
AutoPilot	$975	Data: Mental Programs
AutoPossum	$220	Data: Mental Programs
AutoProjectile	$650	Data: Mental Programs
AutoSober	$350	Data: Mental Programs
Autosurgeon (Cardiopulmonary Support)	$350	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Autosurgeon (Object Removal)	$250	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Autosurgeon (Stitcher)	$200	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Autosyringe	$75	Biotech: Non-Chemical
AutoTyping	$115	Data: Mental Programs
Awake Inhaler	$100	Biotech: Chemical
Background Check (Credit)	$25	Services
Backpack	$10	Tools
Backup Diaphram	$5,250	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Backup Heart	$1,250	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Backup Oxygen	$1,100	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Band Account (Offshore)	$3/wk.	Services
Barbed Wire Snips	$10	Weapons: Self-Defense
Baseball Bat	$20	Weapons: Traditional
Basketball Shoes	$250	Transport
Bear	Varies	Servants: Biological
Bear Trap	$100	Weapons: Traditional
Bicycle	$75	Transport
Binoculars	$7	Sensory
Binoculars (Digital)	$750	Sensory
Biohazard Suit (Advanced)	$5,000	Protection
Biohazard Suit (Basic)	$200	Protection
Biowar Vaccine Kit	$250	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Black Market Food Poison	$30/dose	Weapons: Chemical
Black Market Knife Poison	$75/dose	Weapons: Chemical
Blanker	$850	Data: Mental Programs
Blinding Powder	$7	Weapons: Self-Defense
Blood Plugs	$75	Biotech: Chemical
Blood Test	$25	Services
Bloodhound Powder	$150	Services
Bloodhound Powder Maker	$5,000	Tools
Bloodhound Smell	$2,500	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Blowpipe	$25	Weapons: Traditional
Body Condom	$400	Protection
Body Control brain.	$650	Data: Mental Programs
Bolt Cutters	$50	Tools
Bolt Cutters (Folding)	$100	Tools
Bomb Disarming Robot	$1,000	Servants: Robotic

Name	Cost	Section
Bone Locks	$1,200	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Books	Variable	Data: Information
Boot Blades	$20	Weapons: Traditional
Bottled Water	$0.50	Tools
Bow (Archery)	$25	Weapons: Traditional
Bow (Compound)	$125	Weapons: Traditional
Brain Monitor	$680	Data: Mental Programs
Breath Filters	$195	Body Mod: Other Mods
Bright	$15/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Bug Sweeper	$30	Sensory
Bus	$7,000	Transport
Bus Ride	Varies	Services
CAD Suite	$200	Data: Applications
Caffeine	Varies	Biotech: Chemical
Calculator	$25	Data: Mental Programs
Call Stick (Medical)	$500	Services
Call Stick (Security)	$500	Services
Camping Net	$75	Tools
Camping Tent	$35	Tools
Camping Tent (Arctic)	$200	Tools
Car (New)	$15,000	Transport
Car (Used)	$1,000	Transport
Car Rental	$25/day	Services
Card Counter	$240	Data: Mental Programs
Cardad	$400	Weapons: Kalor
Carpentry Tools	$50	Tools
Carry Board	$150	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Carving Tools	$40	Tools
Cellphone (Black)	$200	Info Tech
Cellphone (Ear Bud)	$200	Info Tech
Cellphone (Used)	$15	Info Tech
Cellular Connection (Basic, Hacked)	$20	Services
Cellular Connection (Basic, Legal)	$30	Services
Cellular Connection (Broadband, Hacked)	$30	Services
Cellular Connection (Broadband, Legal)	$100	Services
Cellular Modem	$50	Info Tech
Cellular Modem (Broadband)	$200	Info Tech
Ceramic Gun	$8,000	Weapons: Firearms
Chain	$7	Weapons: Traditional
Chain (Heavy)	$25	Weapons: Traditional
Chemical Synthesis Equipment (Lab)	$10,000	Tools
Chemical Synthesis Equipment (Simple)	$200	Tools
Chimpanzee	Varies	Servants: Biological
Chomper	$5/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Cigarettes	Varies	Biotech: Chemical
City Map	$2	Data: Information
Claws (Retractable)	$1,000	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Claws (Retractable)	$350	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Climbing Pads	$1,000	Transport
Climbing Pads (Elite)	$4,000	Transport
Climbing Rope	$1/ft.	Tools
Cloak	$10	Protection
Cloak (Fighter)	$20	Protection
Clock	$105	Data: Mental Programs
Code Breaker	$200 million	Info Tech
Code Breaker (Latest)	$1,000	Data: Applications
Code Breaker (Military)	$10,000	Data: Applications
Code Breaker (Older)	$100	Data: Applications
Color Change Clothing	$1,000	Tools
Compass	$120	Data: Mental Programs
Compliance Drops	$20/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Computer Glasses	$3,000	Info Tech
Computer Repair Tools (Portable)	$25	Tools
Computer Repair Tools (Shop)	$200	Tools
Concentrator	$430	Data: Mental Programs
Condoms	$1	Protection
Construction Robot	$70,000	Servants: Robotic
Contraceptive Pills	$25/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Cop Data Chip	Varies	Sensory
Corinan	$100/ea.	Weapons: Kalor
Cracks	$2,500	Body Mod: Other Mods
Crate Cutter	$7	Weapons: Traditional
Crossbow	$250	Weapons: Traditional
Crowbar	$45	Tools
Cryptography Lab	$75	Data: Applications
Dagger	$35	Weapons: Traditional
Dagger (Ceramic)	$400	Weapons: Traditional
Dagger (Freedom Army)	Varies	Weapons: Chemical
Dagger (Throwing)	$49	Weapons: Traditional
Data Card	$5	Info Tech
Data Key	$5	Info Tech
Data Key (Security)	$75	Info Tech

Name	Cost	Section
Data Recorder	$100	Info Tech
Data Salvage and Repair Suite	$5	Data: Applications
Data Storage	$1/5 ZB/wk.	Services
Daycare (Chain)	$50/day	Services
Daycare (Unborn)	$25/day	Services
Death Borg (Combustion)	$3,500	Body Mod: Death Borgs
Death Borg (Explosive)	$4,750	Body Mod: Death Borgs
Death Borg (Explosive)	$1,500	Body Mod: Death Borgs
Death Borg (Fake)	$400	Body Mod: Death Borgs
Death Borg (Tagging)	$2,000	Body Mod: Death Borgs
Death Borg (Zombie)	$4,000	Body Mod: Death Borgs
Denial of Service	$20/hr.	Services
Denial of Service Program	$20	Data: Applications
Deprogramming	$750	Services
Desktop (Developer)	$5,000	Info Tech
Desktop (Homemade)	$100	Info Tech
Desktop (New)	$3,000	Info Tech
Desktop (Used)	$200	Info Tech
Detonator	$2	Weapons: Explosives
Digital Camera (Cheap)	$5	Sensory
Digital Camera (Professional)	$500	Sensory
Directional Microphone	$75	Sensory
Disguise Skin	$20,000	Protection
Diving Bell	$35	Transport
DNA Analysis Suite	$500	Data: Applications
DNA Analyzer	$1,000	Sensory
DNA Sequencer	$2,500	Tools
Dock Rope	$1/5ft.	Tools
Dog	Varies	Servants: Biological
Dog (Vampiric)	Varies	Servants: Biological
Drake Blood Poison	$40/4 doses	Weapons: Chemical
Drake Deleriant Poison	$30/4 doses	Weapons: Chemical
Drake Dioxyl Butylene Vinyl Chloride Ash	$200/4 doses	Weapons: Chemical
Drake Fungus Poison	$50/4 doses	Weapons: Chemical
Drake Glass Poison	$200/4 doses	Weapons: Chemical
Drake Knockout Drops	$25/2 doses	Weapons: Chemical
Drake Pain Juice	$5/dose	Weapons: Chemical
Drake Suicide Poison	50/4 doses	Weapons: Chemical
Drill Gun	$3,000	Weapons: Firearms
Drink (Alcoholic)	$2	Services
Drink (Non - Alcoholic)	$0.50	Services
Duct Tape	$2	Tools
Dust Mask	$0.25	Protection
Eagle	Varies	Servants: Biological
Ear Plugs	$2	Protection
Electric Bicycle	$150	Transport
Electric Car	$5,000	Transport
Electric Kick Scooter	$400	Transport
Electric Rollerblades	$500	Transport
Electronic Ears	$350	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Electronic Ears (3D)	$550	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Electronic Vestibular Organs	$400	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Emergency Cooling Pack	$5	Tools
Emergency Heat Pack	$5	Tools
Emotion Control	$215	Data: Mental Programs
Emulator	$1,300	Data: Mental Programs
Encryption Software Suite (Advanced)	$200	Data: Applications
Encryption Software Suite (Basic)	$20	Data: Applications
Entry Tool	$250	Tools
Escape	$20/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Face Recognition Software	$10	Data: Applications
Fake Gun	$60	Weapons: Firearms
Fangs	$350	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Fangs (Poisoned)	$750	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Finger Popper	$550	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Finger Writer	$850	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Fingerless Gloves	$2	Protection
Fingerprint Pads	$750	Tools
Fire Axe	$40	Weapons: Traditional
Fire Blanket	$40	Protection

Item	Price	Category
Fire Suit	$200	Protection
Fire Suppression Grenade	$80	Tools
First Aid Kit (Black Med)	$60	Biotech: Non-Chemical
First Aid Kit (EMT)	$250	Biotech: Non-Chemical
First Aid Kit (Minor)	$10	Biotech: Non-Chemical
First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional)	$75	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Fishing Line	$15	Tools
Flare	$5	Tools
Flare (Underwater)	$15	Tools
Flashlight (Emergency)	$75	Tools
Flashlight (Keychain)	$3	Tools
Flashlight (Large)	$25	Tools
Flashlight (Small)	$2	Tools
Flying Camera	$250	Servants: Robotic
Freedom Army Pistol	$2,000	Weapons: Firearms
Full Sensory Broadcast	$1,150	Data: Mental Programs
Garden Box (Electronic)	$80	Tools
Gasmask	$50	Protection
Gasoline	$7/gallon.	Services
General Anesthetic	$50/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Generator	$200	Tools
Genetic Mod: Anti-Toxin	$1,500	Body Mod: Genetic Mods
Genetic Mod: Healing	$1,000	Body Mod: Genetic Mods
Genetic Mod: Immune System	$800	Body Mod: Genetic Mods
Genetic Mod: Longevity	$1,500	Body Mod: Genetic Mods
Genetic Mod: Night Prowler	$2,000	Body Mod: Genetic Mods
Genetic Mod: Size	$750	Body Mod: Genetic Mods
Genetic Mod: Temperature	$750	Body Mod: Genetic Mods
Geoinfo Goggles	$300	Sensory
Geoinfo Goggles (Heavy)	$500	Sensory
Glucose	$5/dose	Biotech: Chemical
God Killer	$10/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Golem	Varies	Servants: Golem
Grenade (EMP)	$250	Weapons: Explosives
Grenade (Fragmentation)	$400	Weapons: Explosives
Grenade (Nerve Gas)	$1,000	Weapons: Chemical
Grenade (Percussion)	$500	Weapons: Explosives
Grenade (Tear Gas)	$150	Weapons: Chemical
Grenade Launcher	$5,000	Weapons: Firearms
GuildOS	$0	Data: Operating Systems
Gun Repair Tools	$200	Tools
Hacked Medical Care Card	$500	Services
Hallucinogen	$10/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Hand Dagger	$550	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Handcuffs	$20	Tools
Harmon	$500/dose	Weapons: Biological
Harpoon	$100	Weapons: Traditional
Health Bug	$70	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Hearing Aid	$45	Sensory
Helicopter	$50,000	Transport
Herbal Abortifacant	$10/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Aphrodisiac	$3/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Cleanser	$4/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Emetic	$1/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Psychedelic	$5/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Sedative/Painkiller	$1/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Stimulant	$1/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Vermifuge	$3/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal War Drugs	$10/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Withdrawal Tea	$2/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Herbal Wound Cleanser	$5/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Hip Flask	$25	Tools
Historical Reproduction Chainmail	$350	Protection
Historical Reproduction Plate Armor	$1,000	Protection
Home Rental	$850/mo.	Services
Honeybrew	Varies	Biotech: Chemical
Horse	Varies	Servants: Biological
Hotel (Cheap)	$30/night	Services
Hotel (Expensive)	$60/night	Services
Hotel (Homeless)	$10/night	Services
Housecat	Varies	Servants: Biological
Hummingbird	$20/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Hunger Control	$180	Data: Mental Programs
Immortality Insurance	Varies	Services
Inflatable Raft	$75	Transport
Insect Repellent	$5	Protection
Instacast	$50	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Instrument (Acoustic)	$20	Tools
Instrument (Electronic)	$150	Tools
Insurance (Car)	$100/wk.	Services
Insurance (Home)	$50/wk.	Services
Insurance (Kidnapping)	$2,500/wk.	Services
Insurance (Legal)	$10/wk.	Services
Insurance (Life)	$200/wk.	Services
Insurance (Medical)	$50/wk.	Services
Intelligence Booster	$450	Data: Mental Programs
Intelligent Gun	$40,000	Weapons: Firearms
Internal Armor	$1,250	Body Mod: Other Mods
Internal Computer	$650	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Internal Imager	$3,500	Sensory
Internal Psychic Sensor	$2,650	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Internal Radio Scanner	$175	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Internal Wireless Modem	$350	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Inversion Thumb Tap	$400	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Ipecac	$5/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Jack	$200	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Jump Shocks	$350	Transport
Karits	$300	Weapons: Kalor
Kayak	$200	Transport
Kevlar Vest	$200	Protection
Kitchen Knife Spear	$8	Weapons: Traditional
Knife (Combat)	$35	Weapons: Traditional
Knife (Hunting)	$30	Weapons: Traditional
Knife (Kitchen)	$3	Weapons: Traditional
Knife (Switchblade)	$45	Weapons: Traditional
Kubotan	$5	Weapons: Self-Defense
LAN-Tech Data Chip	Varies	Sensory
Land Mine	$200	Weapons: Explosives
Language Translator	$1,600	Data: Mental Programs
Language Translator	$200	Info Tech
Language Translator Program	$75	Data: Applications
Laptop (Military)	$2,000	Info Tech
Laptop (New)	$4,000	Info Tech
Laptop (Used)	$400	Info Tech
Laser Microphone	$200	Sensory
Laser Sight	$75	Weapons: Firearms
Latex Gloves	$1/pair	Protection
Latex Molder	$700	Tools
Leash	$700	Data: Mental Programs
Legal Research Database Access	$100/hr.	Services
Letter Bomb	$250	Weapons: Explosives
Lighter (Disposable)	$0.50	Tools
Lighter (Electronic)	$10	Tools
Line Tap (Direct)	$10	Info Tech
Line Tap (Fiber)	$45	Info Tech
Line Tap (Inversion)	$150	Info Tech
Linguistics Suite	$200	Data: Applications
Lion	Varies	Servants: Biological
Liquid Stitches	$35	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Local Anesthetic	$5/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Lock Breaking Kit	$225	Tools
Lock Pick (Auto)	$300	Tools
Lock Picks (Homemade)	$5	Tools
Lock Picks (Professional)	$50	Tools
Love Drops	$15/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Machete	$40	Weapons: Traditional
Mainframe 10	$150	Data: Operating Systems
Makeup (Theatrical)	$200	Tools
Makeup Kit	$40	Tools
Markoff's Disease	$1,000/gram	Weapons: Biological
Matchhead Bomb	$80	Weapons: Explosives
MathEnhancer NetHack Version	$3,900	Data: Mental Programs
Mauler	$5/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Maxin	$50	Biotech: Chemical
Meal (Fast-Food)	$4	Services
Meal (Sit Down)	$8	Services
Media Editing Suite	$100	Data: Applications
Media Forensics Suite	$250	Data: Applications
Medical Care (Ambulance)	$50/hr.	Services
Medical Care (Black Med)	Varies	Services
Medical Care (Check-Up)	$90	Services
Medical Care (Inpatient, Drug Rehab)	$200/day	Services
Medical Care (Outpatient, Drug Rehab)	$50/day	Services
Medical Care (Plastic Surgery)	$2,000	Services
Medical Care (Psychotherapy)	$50/hr.	Services
Memory Recall Booster	$650	Data: Mental Programs
Memory Storage Booster	$720	Data: Mental Programs
Memory Transfer	$700	Data: Mental Programs
Mental Basic	$1,300	Data: Mental Programs
Mental Illness Sim	$650	Data: Mental Programs
Mental Installer	$8,000	Info Tech
Mental Programming Code Checking	$30/MMU.	Services
Mental Stimulator (Basic)	$300	Info Tech
Mental Stimulator (Modified)	$700	Info Tech
Mental Stimulator (Photorealistic)	$500	Info Tech
Mercenary (Addict)	$100/day	Services
Mercenary (Dioxyl-Drake)	$300/day	Services
Mercenary (Drake)	$250/day	Services
Mercenary (Insomniac)	$250/day	Services
Mercenary (Professional)	$1000/day	Services
Mercenary (Semi-Professional)	$400/day	Services
Metal/Glassworking Cart	$750	Tools
Micro Tentacle	$200	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Microscope	$20	Sensory
Mini	$350	Tools
Minty Eye Drops	$10	Biotech: Chemical
Mitochondrial Vampirism	$2,000	Body Mod: Other Mods
Mobility Robot	$2,000	Servants: Robotic
Modern Chainmail	$500	Protection
Modern Plate Armor	$5,000	Protection
Molotov Cocktail	$40	Weapons: Explosives
Moped	$1,000	Transport
Motion Alarm	$15	Sensory
Motorboat	$4,000	Transport
Motorcycle	$5,000	Transport
Motorcycle Helmet (Sensory)	$200	Sensory
Motorcycle Outfit	$150	Protection
Multi-Sensory Goggles	$1,000	Sensory
Muscle Implants (Speed)	$2,000	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Muscle Implants (Strength)	$2,000	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Music Program	$150	Data: Applications
Nanobot Tank (Brain Backup)	$120,000	Servants: Robotic
Nanobot Tank (Construction)	$100,000	Servants: Robotic
Nanobot Tank (Data Storage)	$75,000	Servants: Robotic
Nanobot Tank (Forensic)	$80,000	Servants: Robotic
Nanobot Tank (Medical)	$85,000	Servants: Robotic
Nanobot Tank (Repair)	$100,000	Servants: Robotic
Nanobot Tank (Swat Team)	$85,000	Servants: Robotic
Nanobot Tank (Unprogrammed)	$75,000	Servants: Robotic
Nanobug	$1,000	Sensory
Nanocord	$50/ft.	Tools
Nanopadded Armor	$2,500	Protection
Nanoweave Armor	$2,000	Protection
Nausea Blocker	$60	Data: Mental Programs
Net Hosting: Personal	$2/wk.	Services
Net Hosting: Professional	$50/wk.	Services
NeuroBooze	$700	Data: Mental Programs
NeuroGod Killer	$950	Data: Mental Programs
NeuroHallucinogen	$500	Data: Mental Programs
NeuroHeroin	$800	Data: Mental Programs
Nightstick	$40	Weapons: Traditional
Nightvision Eye	$650	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Nightvision Goggles (Cheap)	$25	Sensory
Nightvision Goggles (Deluxe)	$1,500	Sensory
Non-Opiate Painkillers	$0.25/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Nuclear Bomb (Briefcase)	$50 million	Weapons: Explosives
Nutrient Bar	$2	Tools
NY Historical Society Data Chip	$100	Sensory
Office Rental	$300/mo.	Services
Office Suite	$50	Data: Applications
OpenCert	$100	Data: Operating Systems
OpenFree	$0	Data: Operating Systems
OpenMicro	$50	Data: Operating Systems
Opiates	$4/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Oponan	$150/ea.	Weapons: Kalor
Outfit (Clubwear)	$75	Protection

Item	Price	Category
Outfit (Electric)	$250	Protection
Outfit (Fetish)	$100	Protection
Outfit (Formal)	$100	Protection
Outfit (Formal, Tailored)	$300	Protection
Outfit (Grunge)	$5	Protection
Outfit (Jogging)	$5	Protection
Outfit (Military Surplus)	$25	Protection
Outfit (Raincoat)	$5	Protection
Outfit (Scrubs)	$5	Protection
Outfit (Uniform)	Varies	Protection
Padlock (Cheap)	$5	Tools
Padlock (Expensive)	$80	Tools
Pager	$20	Info Tech
Pain Blocker	$180	Data: Mental Programs
Palmtop (Combo)	$400	Info Tech
Palmtop (Communicator)	$100	Info Tech
Palmtop (Linework)	$200	Info Tech
Palmtop (Organizer)	$25	Info Tech
Palmtop (Wayfinder)	$50	Info Tech
Parachute	$750	Transport
Paycomputer	$1/minute.	Services
Payvidphone	$0.25/5 min.	Services
Pelsinan	$125/ea.	Weapons: Kalor
Pen Knife	$45	Weapons: Traditional
Pendad	$300	Weapons: Kalor
Pepper Spray	$20	Weapons: Self-Defense
Personal Helicopter	$2,000	Transport
Personal Sonic Alarm	$20	Weapons: Self-Defense
Pharmosynth	$10,000	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Pheromone Glands	$450	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Pheromones	$20/dose	Tools
Phonebook Armor	$10	Protection
Phonebook Armor (Glass)	$30	Protection
Pickaxe	$100	Weapons: Traditional
Pig Sticker	$400	Weapons: Self-Defense
Pigeon	Varies	Servants: Biological
Pike	$50	Weapons: Traditional
Pipe	$4	Weapons: Traditional
Pipe Bomb	$250	Weapons: Explosives
Plane Ticket	Varies	Services
Plastic Restraints	$2/ea.	Tools
Plumbing Repair Tools (Portable)	$40	Tools
Pocket	$250	Body Mod: Other Mods
Poison Ring	$30	Weapons: Chemical
Pool Shark	$475	Data: Mental Programs
Port Scanner	$5	Data: Applications
Portable Floodlight	$1,500	Tools
Portable OR	$7,500	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Portable Spotlight	$250	Tools
Pressure Suit	$250	Protection
Printer	$20	Info Tech
Programmer's Suite	$300	Data: Applications
Prostitution	Varies	Services
Protective Gloves	$95	Protection
Prowling Suit	$50	Protection
PRT Skin	$3,000	Protection
Psychic Communication Program	$2,350	Data: Mental Programs
Psychic Defense Pulse	$2,150	Data: Mental Programs
Psychic Goggles	$5,000	Sensory
Psychic Sensory Program	$2,000	Data: Mental Programs
Psychic Tracking Bug	$150	Sensory
Psychic Training Rig	$200,000	Tools
Psychic Intrusion Detection	$1,800	Data: Mental Programs
Puppet	$1,850	Data: Mental Programs
Puppet Program	$200	Data: Applications
Quarterstaff	$20	Weapons: Traditional
Quiet Cloak	$2,000	Protection
Radiation Detector	$100	Sensory
Radio	$2	Sensory
Radio Scanner	$20	Sensory
Radio Scanner (Advanced)	$250	Sensory
Radio Scrambler	$250	Tools
Railroad Spike	$5	Weapons: Traditional
Razor Ring	$30	Weapons: Traditional
Repair (Computer)	Varies	Services
Repeater	$100	Info Tech
Reston	$5,000/gram	Weapons: Biological
Retinaprint Contacts	$2,000	Tools
Reverse Engineer	$100	Data: Applications
Ripper	$35	Weapons: Traditional
RoboPal	$200	Servants: Robotic
Rock Climbing Kit	$200	Transport
Rope and Grapple	$75	Transport
Rope Saw	$25	Tools
Runner	$0.10/block	Services
RV	$9,000	Transport
Satellite Phone/Modem	$200	Info Tech
Sawed-Off	$2,000	Weapons: Firearms
Scanning Tunneling Microscope	$400	Sensory
Scanning-Tunneling Finger	$750	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Script Kiddie Suite	$20	Data: Applications
Scuba Gear	$500	Transport
Secretary Subscription	$5/wk.	Services
Security (Alarm System)	$30/wk.	Services
Security (Executive Personal)	$1400/wk.	Services
Security (On-Site)	$500/wk.	Services
Security (Per-Use)	$750	Services
Security Camera (Cheap)	$20	Sensory
Security Camera (Expensive)	$200	Sensory
Security Camera (Fake)	$50	Sensory
Security Package	$100	Data: Applications
Sedative	$3/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Seed Pack	Varies	Tools
Seismic Analyzer	$250	Sensory
Sense Recorder	$1,100	Data: Mental Programs
Servant (Addict)	$2/hr.	Services
Servant (Jack)	$4/hr.	Services
Servant (Licensed Psychic)	$100/hr.	Services
Servant (Skilled Street Person)	$10/hr.	Services
Sewer Crawler	$2,000	Servants: Robotic
Sexual Implant	$350	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Shaped Charge	$750	Weapons: Explosives
Sharpened Stick	$2	Weapons: Traditional
Shield (Arm Guards)	$500/pair	Weapons: Self-Defense
Shield (Blast)	$200	Weapons: Self-Defense
Shield (Blast-Advanced)	$1,500	Weapons: Self-Defense
Shield (Hand)	$15	Weapons: Self-Defense
Shield (Hand-Metal)	$50	Weapons: Self-Defense
Shield (Hand-Nails)	$25	Weapons: Self-Defense
Shield (Riot)	$750	Weapons: Self-Defense
Shield (Riot-Offensive)	$1,500	Weapons: Self-Defense
Shiv	$2	Weapons: Traditional
Shop Rental	$1,000/mo.	Services
Sibosin	$40/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Single-Shot Gun	$200	Weapons: Firearms
Skateboard	$15	Transport
Ski Goggles	$5	Protection
Skin Knife	$250	Weapons: Traditional
Skullcrusher	$30	Weapons: Traditional
Slave	$4/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Sledgehammer	$40	Weapons: Traditional
Sleep Alarm	$320	Data: Mental Programs
Sleep Control	$550	Data: Mental Programs
Slipboard	$1,500	Transport
Smart Drugs	$4/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Sniffer	$3,000	Sensory
Sniper Rifle	$3,500	Weapons: Firearms
Snowmobile	$1,000	Transport
Soma	$20/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Sordad	$400	Weapons: Kalor
Sordad Shield	$500	Weapons: Kalor
Sound Recorder	$7	Sensory
Space Suit	$5,000	Protection
Spectrograph	$250	Sensory
Spectrographic Smell	$1,700	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Spectrum Retinas	$3,000	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Spiked Armor	$95	Protection
Spiked Armor (Poison)	$500	Protection
Sports Car	$80,000	Transport
Spray Paint	$10	Tools
Spy Satellite Co-op	$75/wk.	Services
Steel Thermos	$35	Tools
Steel Toed Boots	$70	Weapons: Traditional
Sterilization Spray	$50	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Sterilizer	$100	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Stick With Nail	$15	Weapons: Traditional
Storage (Locker)	Varies	Services
Storage (Shed)	$20/mo.	Services
Strength Skin	$3,000	Protection
Subliminal Analyzer	$2,000	Sensory
Subliminal Analyzer	$75	Data: Applications
Subway Ride	$1.50	Services
Sunglasses (Cheap)	$0.50	Protection
Sunglasses (Electronic)	$30	Protection
Sunscreen	$5	Protection
Super City Map	$200	Data: Information
Supercomputer	$500 million	Info Tech
Surgical Kit	$75	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Surgical OR	$500/hr.	Services
Swinging Rock	$6	Weapons: Traditional
Swiss Army Knife (Electronic, Large)	$75	Tools
Swiss Army Knife (Electronic, Small)	$45	Tools
Swiss Army Knife (Mechanical, Large)	$7	Tools
Swiss Army Knife (Mechanical, Small)	$2	Tools
Sword (Broadsword)	$100	Weapons: Traditional
Sword (Fencing)	$60	Weapons: Traditional
Sword (Katana)	$100	Weapons: Traditional
Sword (Rusty Saw)	$75	Weapons: Traditional
Sword (Tech)	$2,000	Weapons: Traditional
Synth Blood	$100	Biotech: Chemical
Syringe	$1/ea.	Biotech: Non-Chemical
Targeted Virus	$6,000	Weapons: Biological
Taser	$150	Weapons: Self-Defense
Taser (Baton)	$300	Weapons: Self-Defense
Taser (Gun)	$400	Weapons: Self-Defense
Taser (Pen)	$200	Weapons: Self-Defense
Tattoo	$5/inch^2	Services
Taxi Ride	$10/mile	Services
Tear Gas Keyholer	$75	Weapons: Chemical
Telescoping Baton	$100	Weapons: Traditional
Temp Regulator	$350	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Temperature Skin	$2,000	Protection
Terminal	$975	Data: Mental Programs
Third Eye	$800	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Thor-O-Zine	$50/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Throwing Glass	$2	Weapons: Traditional
Tiger Claws	$45	Weapons: Traditional
Time on a Code Breaker	$200/minute.	Services
Time on a Mental Installer	$40/hr.	Services
Time on a Supercomputer	$1,000/minute.	Services
Tomahawk	$150	Weapons: Traditional
Torture Kit	$250	Tools
Tourist Data Chip	$50	Sensory
Trace	$4/dose	Biotech: Chemical
Tracking Bug	$50	Sensory
Trailer	$100	Transport
Trash Armor	$150	Protection
Trash Suit	$50	Protection
Trenchcoat	$35	Protection
Trojan (Logic Bomb)	$10	Data: Applications
Trojan (Spy)	$10	Data: Applications
Truck	$1,500	Transport
Ultrasound Imager	$375	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
Underwater Scooter	$1,000	Transport
Uniform	$100	Protection
UPS (Large)	$1,000	Info Tech
UPS (Small)	$50	Info Tech
US Military Strike Force Weapon System	$1 million	Weapons: Firearms
Vehicle Recharge	Varies	Services
Vehicle Repair Tools (Portable)	$50	Tools
Vehicle Repair Tools (Shop)	$400	Tools
Videocamera (Cheap)	$40	Sensory
Videocamera (Professional)	$1,000	Sensory
Virtual Machine	$100	Data: Applications
Visual Arts Suite	$10	Data: Applications
Vital Armor	$250	Protection
Voice Recognition Software	$10	Data: Applications
Voice Stress Analyzer	$50	Sensory
Voice Synth	$450	Body Mod: Electronic Implants
VR Editing Suite	$400	Data: Applications
VR Multiplayer Game Subscription	$102/wk.	Services
VR Training	Varies	Services
VR Training Programs	Variable	Data: Applications
Water Lung	$2,000	Body Mod: Biological Implants
Water Purifying Canteen	$70	Tools
Wetsuit	$100	Protection
Wheelchair	$100	Transport
Whip	$35	Weapons: Traditional
Winter Coat	$10	Protection
Withdrawal Blocker	$850	Data: Mental Programs
Wolf	Varies	Servants: Biological
Wolf (Vampiric)	Varies	Servants: Biological
Worm Robot	$250	Servants: Robotic
Wristwatch	$1	Tools
Zombine	$40/dose	Biotech: Chemical

Special Symbols
Look for these special symbols next to items in this chapter:

Value Buy- For PCs without a lot of money, this item offers excellent value.

Top Of The Line- The newest, latest and greatest. The best of what's available on the market.

Unavailable- This item is so rare and so highly sought after that it can not be purchased during character creation. The PC who wants one will have to seek it out in game, and even then he or she may never find one.

DATA

Applications

Applications are computer procard.

AI Firewall- This program monitors all network traffic coming in and out of a computer and blocks anything it thinks is suspicious. It notifies the user whenever it cuts off access and the user can override the decision. In hacking terms (see p.72) the program adds +10 strength to a firewall. Interface: Graphical. UF 2. Uses Power 4. Size 5 ZB. Costs $50.

AI Secretary- This program acts as a personal assistant, making appointments, keeping calendars, storing and organizing files and answering the phone to take messages. The secretary has a configurable human voice and appearance. The secretary has some language recognition (can understand simple plain-text questions and commands). It has routines for intelligent net research (it can do research on the net to find answers to questions). Typical commands that a secretary program could follow:

-"Get me any files I have on that RNN deal from last summer."

-"Call SRC, schedule an appointment with one of their account execs ASAP. Bump any non-critical appointments if necessary."

-"Carla's coming over for dinner next Thursday at eight. Call me and remind me to come straight home so I can clean up."

-"Go on-line and find out what the best price is on canned tuna fish by the crate."

Application Features

Interface: How the program is accessed.

Text/Speech: The program takes commands and responds in simple text. If hooked up to hardware with speakers and built in voice recognition, users can operate this software purely by voice.

Graphical: The PC sees a graphical environment in which icons representing program functions are moved and manipulated via a pointing device. Some text input (typing or voice recognition) is used but it is minimal.

VR: The program has a full Virtual Reality interface. The program's controls are represented as a 3D environment in which objects can be grabbed and manipulated.

Size: How much memory a program takes up on a computer's hard drive when installed.

UF: User Friendliness – how much skill is needed to use the program.

UF 0: Anyone can use the program without any special skills, knowledge of training.

UF 1: Users must either read the reference manual packaged with the software or must have one skill level in an applicable skill in order to use this program.

UF 2: Users must have at least 1 skill level in Operating Systems and 1 skill level in an applicable skill to use the program.

Uses Power: How much computer power (a feature of computer hardware) the program requires and eats up while running. A computer can run multiple programs at once so long as it has enough power (e.g. a power 5 computer can run a power 5 program or a power 3 and power 2 program.) A few programs use variable power: they can work at any power level, but work better the more power is put in to them.

Pirating Data

The following costs are the costs that people typically pay a Black Market trader for a program, an information file or the code which will be installed in someone's head as a mental program. Instead of paying a black market trader to procure the data, people with good internet skills can attempt to find free copies. The Software Pirating skill is the best skill to use for this purpose. Internet Browsing can also be used, but at higher difficulty. Also, members of the groups Technophiles, Crackers and Arcadians tend to share pirated data. So, for any piece of data, there is a chance that a member of these groups will have easy access to it. Since, on the black market, the rarer an item is the more it costs, difficulty for finding a piece of data is listed according to its black market value:

Black Market Value of Data	Software Pirating	Net Browsing	Technophile	Cracker	Arcadian
	skill roll difficulty		chance of availability		
$5	10	20	95%	99%	75%
$20	13	35	90%	95%	65%
$80	17	30	75%	90%	50%
$200	20	35	50%	85%	25%
$600	23	40	25%	75%	10%
$1000	17	45	15	50%	7%
$1500	30	50	7%	30%	5%
$2000	33	55	5%	25%	1%
$2500	37	60	2%	10%	1%
$3000	40	65	1%	5%	1%

-"Go on-line and find me a short definition of 'post-modern art'."

Interface: Text/Speech. Size 50 ZB. UF 0. Uses Power 5. Costs $200.

CAD Suite- Allows users to design any sort of manufactured item and test it in a virtual environment. Can be used to design anything from a screw to a skyscraper. Interface: VR. UF 2. Size 20 ZB. Uses Power 4. Costs $200.

Code Breaker (Latest)- This is the latest and hottest code breaker to hit the market, with techniques for dealing with the latest encryption schemes. Has a code breaking power of 2 (see Cryptography, p.73). It will quickly go out of date, becoming Code Breaker (Older) within 4 months. Interface: VR. Size 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses Variable Power. Costs $1,000.

Code Breaker (Military)- ⓤ This code breaker was designed by secret corporate labs working on commissions for the worlds' superpowers. The greatest minds in encryption spent years creating these schemes and subsequently had their memories of that time wiped. Every existing copies of these code breakers are hotcoded (see p.394) to make them uncopyable. Thus the number of copies of these code breakers in the world is permanently fixed. The code breaking schemes are so novel and don't exist anywhere else and so the program only loses 0.5 power per year. The software is permanently locked in a small box the size and shape of a brick which plugs in to a computer via a normal I/O Jack. The box has a 7 year uranium battery and if that ever fails the code is lost forever. Weighs 5 lbs. Code Breaking Power: 3. Interface: VR. Size 0 ZB. UF 2. Uses Variable Power. Legality: Licensed (10 yrs. Prison). Costs $10,000.

Code Breaker (Older)- This code breaking program is several months out of date and thus has a hard time dealing with the latest encryption schemes. Code Breaking Power: 1. Interface: VR. Size 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses Variable Power. Costs $100.

Cryptography Lab- This software suite allows those versed in the mathematics of cryptography to analyze encryption and decryption schemes and to create new schemes. Interface: Graphical. Size 40 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Costs $75.

Data Salvage and Repair Suite- Attempts to retrieve and reconstitute as much data as possible from damaged or wiped memory sources. Useful for forensics (e.g. looking for deleted files) or trying to salvage data after a hacker or virus attack. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 1 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs $5.

Denial of Service Program- This tiny program floods a target system with false requests, the goal being to slow or block any legitimate traffic coming to and from that system. For most systems, 1 instance of the program is enough to make the target spend 1 power dealing with fake requests. E.G. 5 copies of this program running on 5 systems can bring a 5 power computer to a halt. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 1 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Legality: Permit ($500 fine). Costs $20.

DNA Analysis Suite- A selection of advanced software for analyzing genes or whole genomes. Users can do things like simulate what an adult human might look like based on their DNA, find and analyze genetic modifications, and see the effects of genetic engineering on a simulated cell.

Interface: Graphical. Size: 5 ZB. UF 2. Uses 10 Power. Costs $500.

Encryption Software Suite (Advanced)- Uses the newest and best encryption techniques (the same ones banks use for electronic money transfers) and gives the user several options for configuration of the encryption scheme (allows for encryption to be aided with a skill roll, see p.73). Creates one-key codes at 50 strength (normal) 55 strength (evolving) and public-key codes at 40 strength (normal) 45 (evolving). The user must subscribe to a service that provides weekly updates in order to keep the encryption methods up to date (or encryption strength will degrade by -5 ever month). Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 50 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Costs $200 +$15/week for updates.

Encryption Software Suite (Basic)- One of many packages that allow users to encrypt files, messages or data streams. Each encryption creates a key (a string of several thousand characters) which can be stored on the computer or in some sort of data storage (e.g. a Data Key, p.101). The software can create a one-key code with a strength of 30 and a public-key code with a strength of 20. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 15 ZB. UF: 1. User Power: 1. Costs $20 +$5/week for updates.

Face Recognition Software- Can search through thousands of pictures per minute or analyze video streams looking for one or more faces. Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 0. Uses 1 Power per video stream. Costs $10.

Language Translator Program- This program automatically determines the language of text or audio and provides translation to and from the owner's language. Comes with the 20 most common languages (including English, Spanish, French, Kalor and Arabic). Additional language matrices available as 1 ZB files. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 30 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs $75 +$5 per language file.

Linguistics Suite- Analyzes large samples of spoken or written languages. Uses AI routines to identify language grouping and influences and even to create translation matrices for unrecorded languages. Interface: Text/Speech. Size 100ZB. UF 2. Uses 5 Power. Costs $200.

Media Editing Suite- Software for editing and manipulating pictures, video and sound. Interface: Graphical. Size: 10 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs $100.

Media Forensics Suite- Created for forensic scientists to extrapolate information from media evidence. Has tools to do anything from isolating background noise in a recording, to enhancing blurry images in a photo, to searching for invisible signs of forgery in a video, to determining what kind of camera was used to take a picture. Interface: Graphical. Size: 10 ZB. UF 2. Uses 3 Power. Costs $250.

Music Program- Compose and record completely realistic sounding music using simulated musicians and singers. Also has AI musicians who can accompany live music. Interface: Graphical. Size: 5 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs $150.

Office Suite- All the software needed to create, organize and share multimedia documents, presentations, calendars, databases, forms and spreadsheets. Interface: Graphical. Size: 15 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs $50.

Port Scanner- This program scans through every possible address on a network. For every response it tries to map what type of computer it will find. Note that a well-configured firewall will block a port scanner and alert network security immediately. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 1 ZB. UF 2. Uses 2 Power. Legality: Permit ($500). Costs $5.

Programmer's Suite- A selection of programming tools (documentation, pre-generated code snippets, translators, emulators and debuggers) that allows users to create computer programs quickly and reliably. Gives +4 to programming skills rolls and doubles the speed of programming. Interface: Graphical. Size: 2 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs $300.

Puppet Program- This software captures someone's image and voice and creates a virtual "puppet" that looks and sounds like the person and will do anything the user commands. The puppet is controlled by a controller in a VR interface whose every word, movement and expression is mimicked. Interface: VR. Size: 7 ZB. UF 1. Uses 5 Power. Costs $200.

Reverse Engineer- This program analyzes the code of other programs to try to help the user determine how it was made (e.g. using which programming language and programming tools). The program will decompile source-code and create program diagrams (the first step to figuring out what the code does and how to change it). Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs $100.

Script Kiddie Suite- When directed at a particular network, these programs look for any known holes in the firewalls. Most skilled hackers do not use this sort of software (other than to distract network security while they make a real attempt to get in). The program can find holes in a firewall (see p.71) at 10 + 1d20. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 5 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Legality: Permit ($500). Costs $20.

Security Package- Although all modern operating systems come with built-in security, many users prefer to supplement this with third party security packages which include virus checkers, firewalls and account administration programs. In its default configuration, the program creates a 20 strength firewall (see p.71). These programs are typically used by people who have no computer security skills (people with security skills can do a better job configuring their firewalls without using a program). Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 5 ZB. UF 0. Uses 1 Power. Costs $100.

Subliminal Analyzer- This program surreptitiously inserts itself in to a VR interface or videophone stream. It flashes subliminal images at the target and gauges the psychological reaction by measuring things like voice stress, breath rate and pupil dilation. When used in full immersion VR it is about half as accurate as the Subliminal Analyzer Goggles (see p.123) and when used in a videophone stream it is about one quarter as accurate. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 2 ZB. UF 0. Uses 2 Power. Costs $75.

Trojan (Logic Bomb)- This Trojan, once it is run, waits until a pre-set time and then runs some command or commands programmed in by the hacker. The command(s) can be anything from changing a file, to sending an email, to wiping the entire hard drive. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: Negligible. UF 1. Uses Negligible Power. Legality: Permit ($500). Costs $10.

Trojan (Spy)- If a hacker can run this software on a system or trick a user in to running it, the software "disappears" and runs silently on the system. The program records everything that users do on the system (including what passwords and encryption keys they enter) and sends back discrete reports to its master. Takes a moderate Operating Systems skill roll to discover and another to disable the Trojan. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: Negligible. UF 1. Uses Negligible Power. Legality: Permit ($500). Costs $10.

Virtual Machine- This software creates a simulated computer inside the user's own computer. The user can control every aspect of this virtual machine. A virtual machine could be used to run another operating system (to use software that couldn't normally be used on that computer), to analyze how a program works, or even to practice breaking an operating system using the System Crashing skill. The virtual machine runs at -2 power. Example: A power 10 computer running GuildOS could run a virtual OpenCert machine as if it were a power 8 machine. Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 50 ZB. UF 1. Uses 2 Power. Costs $100

Visual Arts Suite- Software for creating 3D or 2D art, illustrations or logos. Interface: Graphical. Size: 3 ZB. UF 1. Uses 1 Power. Costs $10.

Voice Recognition Software- Can search through audio or video recordings or streams for a specific person's voice print or for specific keywords. Can listen to 1 hour worth or pre-recorded sound in 5 minutes, or can listen to up to 10 live audio streams at once. For instance, a computer running this software could be hooked up to a radio scanner, could monitor 10 audio bugs and will trigger an alarm any time it hears the word "bomb." Interface: Text/Speech. Size: 2 ZB. UF 0. Uses 3 Power. Costs $10.

VR Editing Suite- Tools for designing static or interactive VR simulations. Also includes tools for modeling VR constructs from real people, places, animals and objects captured on still images or video. The suite can create self executing VR "games" (although nothing near the complexity and realism of the huge VR worlds that most VR addicts inhabit). Interface: VR. Size: 50 ZB. UF 2. Uses 7 Power. Costs $400.

VR Training Programs- These small simulations put the user in a VR world where they can practice some skill or task to perfection. There are training programs for everything from karate to cake baking. Every 4 hours spent using one of these programs reduces the skill cost to buy a skill by 2 (minimum 2). Each different skill and each different level within that skill requires its own unique module. Interface: VR. Size: 10 ZB. UF 0. Uses 5 Power. Module costs are:

	Level 1 or 2	Level 3 or 4	Level 5
Athletics (ATHL)	$200	$300	$400
Bio/Med (BIO)	$250	$350	$500
Combat (CMBT)	$650	$800	$1000
Military (MIL)	$650	$800	$1000
Tech (TECH)	$150	$300	$450
Thief/Espionage (THIE)	$350	$500	$650
Sociological (SOC)	$90	$120	$250

Information

These are pieces of data which contain stored human knowledge for humans to reference. Most information comes in the form of text and pictures and can be printed in a paper volume, stored on a computer or even implanted in one's brain as a mental program.

Books- These are reference materials that can be used to supplement a pre-existing skill (Ref), substitute for having a skill (Intro) or both (Intro/Ref). See the section on Using Skills (p.67) for more info. Books can be bought either as paper volumes, computer programs or mental programs. Paper books come in 1 or more hard-bound paperback volumes (½ lb. each). Computer programs require 1 Power to run and take up a 1 ZB of storage space. Mental programs use up MMUs as listed below, and require an additional installation cost.

Skill	Type	Cost	Paper Vol.s	Mental Program	
				MMUs	Installation Cost
Acupuncture	Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Agriculture	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Anonymity	Intro	$20	1	4	$80
Archeology/ Paleontology	Intro/Ref	$15	2	8	$160
Biological Weapons	Intro	$30	1	4	$80
Bomb Disarming	Intro/Ref	$30	1	4	$80
Botany	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Chemical Analysis	Ref	$15	1	4	$80
Copy Protection	Ref	$25	1	4	$80
Corporations	Intro/Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Denial of Service	Intro	$25	1	4	$80
Diagnosis	Intro/Ref	$20	2	8	$160
Ecology	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Forensic Pathology	Ref	$15	1	4	$80
Forgery	Ref	$30	1	4	$80
Genetic Therapy	Ref	$15	1	4	$80
Genetics: Anatomical	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Genetics: Botanical	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Genetics: Cellular	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Genetics: Disease	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Genetics: Neurological	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Genetics: Tissue	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Geology	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Gun Repair	Intro	$15	1	4	$80
Herbal Medicine	Intro/Ref	$15	1	4	$80
History: City	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
History: World	Intro/Ref	$20	2	8	$160
Information Smuggling	Intro	$20	1	4	$80
Law: Basic	Intro/Ref	$25	2	8	$160
Law: Business	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Law: Clowdian	Ref	$20	2	8	$160
Law: Criminal	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Law: International	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Law: Tech	Ref	$20	2	8	$160
Law: Tort	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Legends	Intro/Ref	$25	3	12	$240
Linework	Ref	$15	1	4	$80
Meteorology	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Microelectronics	Ref	$20	2	8	$160
Money	Intro	$10	1	4	$80
Nanomedicine	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Network Protocols	Ref	$20	2	8	$160
Network Security	Ref	$25	1	4	$80
Neurology: Consciousness	Intro/Ref	$35	4	16	$320
Neurology: Personality	Intro/Ref	$35	4	16	$320
Neurology: Psychic	Intro/Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Neurology: Sensorimotor	Intro/Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Operating Systems	Ref	$25	2	8	$160
Pathology	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Pharmacology	Ref	$35	3	12	$240
Physics	Ref	$20	2	8	$160
Plastic Surgery	Ref	$20	1	4	$80
Poisons	Intro/Ref	$25	1	4	$80
Production Chemistry	Ref	$30	3	12	$240
Programming: AI	Ref	$20	2	8	$160
Programming: Application	Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Programming: Virus	Ref	$25	1	4	$80
Programming: VR	Ref	$25	2	8	$160
Psychic Science	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Psychopharmacology	Ref	$15	1	4	$80
Secondary Nanotech	Intro/Ref	$15	1	4	$80
Smart Chemicals	Ref	$15	1	4	$80
Social Work	Intro/Ref	$10	1	4	$80
Surgery	Ref	$25	2	8	$160
System Crashing	Intro	$30	1	4	$80
Veterinary Medicine	Intro/Ref	$25	2	8	$160

City Map- A street map of the city with notes on landmarks and places of interest. Costs $2.

Super City Map- A 3D street map with blueprints taken from the Dept. of Urban Planning, as well as known owners of various buildings and tons of demographic information per city block (crime rate, power consumption, reported TB cases, etc.). Costs $200.

Mental Programs

These are programs that are installed in the human brain. Each program comes as a small piece of data (even the largest is less than 1 ZB) which contains instructions for a Mental Installer. The mental installer uses RCNS (Radio Chemical Neural Stimulation) to create new neural connections which together form a program. Installation is slow (about half an hour per MMU) and since the machines required to do it are rare and highly illegal, it costs a lot ($40/hr.).

Mental Program Features

Size: How much "free" space in the brain the computer takes up. Scientists have mapped several "safe" areas in the brain where programs can be installed without any noticeable loss of functioning. These areas have been divided in to 100 Mental Memory Units (MMUs) and every mental program takes up free space in the brain measured in MMUs.

Control Type: This is how the program is activated and controlled. The options are:

Kinesthetic: The user "feels" what they want to do.

Sublingual: The user thinks words to himself or herself that activates the program.

Password: The user sets passwords to turn the program on or off and any time the user hears those passwords the program responds accordingly.

Cost: Listed is the cost for the data itself and the cost to rent a black market mental installer to actually install the programs.

Mental Program Failure Table		
Roll	**Type**	**Effect**
01-20	Psychic	-5 to Mental Block, -7 to any psychic skill rolls until repaired.
	Memory	-5 to all INL based skill rolls until repaired.
	Emotional	-5 to save vs. all saves vs. emotions until repaired.
	Sensory	-5 to all sensory AWR rolls until repaired.
	Motor	-5 AGY until repaired.
21-40	Psychic	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of sudden psychic blast (uses 5 END, pain stun within 5 ft.).
	Memory	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of sudden loss of memory (takes 1+ round to remember what's going on).
	Emotional	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of being stunned by emotions for one round with no save.
	Sensory	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of blinded for one round.
	Motor	Each round, 1 in 20 chance of single jerking movement (does punch or kick damage).
41-60	Psychic	Extreme psychic output until unconscious, counts as stun attack within 10 ft.
	Memory	Complete retrograde & anterorgade amnesia (p.65) for 1d6 hours.
	Emotional	Rage (-10 to save vs. pain/fear) until unconscious.
	Sensory	Oversensitivity: +7 AWR, -15 to save vs. pain/strong stimuli for 1d6 hours.
	Motor	+5 STH, -5 AGY and exhaustion (-1 END/minute) until unconscious.
61-80	Psychic	Extreme psychic lability (-20 to save vs. psychic attack) for 1d6 days.
	Memory	Loss of all recent memories, loss of 50 skill points, loss of many old memories.
	Emotional	Uncontrollable homicidal (odd) or suicidal (even) impulses for 1d6 days.
	Sensory	Obfuscating hallucinations (20 difficulty to save) for 1d6 days.
	Motor	Unwanted movements (-10 AGY) and weakness (-10 STH) for 1d6 days.
81-00	Psychic	Seizure and destruction of internal psychic mechanisms (see p.401).
	Memory	Complete destruction of all memories.
	Emotional	Permanent dampening of all emotions.
	Sensory	Permanent hallucinations or loss of sensory acuity (-10 AWR).
	Motor	Permanent loss of physical abilities (-10 AGY, SPD, STH).

Agility Booster- This program hyper-stimulates the parts of the brain responsible for spatial awareness, planning movements and conscious control over movement.

Advantages: Gives a temporary +5 to AGY.

Limitations: This is extremely tiring: uses 1 pooled END per minute of use. If END reaches 0 the user goes unconscious. After the program stops, the user experiences a 90 minute period of sleepiness (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness) and lowered agility (-3 AGY).

Size: 30 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $50 +$600 Installation.

AutoFall- This program takes over when it senses that the user is falling and executes a number of twists to move the user in optimum falling position, then when the PC hits the body crumples in a way to minimize damage (especially damage which would be fatal). These are the same moves that a professional stunt person, skilled in falling, would do.

Advantages: Cuts fall damage in half. Up to 4 points of damage is done as crippling damage (breaking arms and legs) before any damage is done to BLD.

Limitations: when a fall happens, the PC loses control of his or her body. The PC can not save vs. falling damage, dodge, grab a rope, etc. The program also assumes landing on a flat surface and landing on anything else can cause unnecessary damage.

Size: 5 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $15 + $100 installation.

AutoFighter- This program is designed to take over the user's body and fight with fists, attacking anyone who comes close. The program can be set to go on if it detects a disturbance in consciousness.

Advantages: Good for people with very poor fighting skills or who fear they may be knocked unconscious or otherwise made unable to fight.

Limitations: The fighter is only moderately good (punches as 1d20 vs. 10, dodges as 1d20 vs. 5) and is very predictable (it does nothing but punch and dodge again and again). It can also be easily fooled in to overreacting: it will devote equal attention to dodging a piece of paper fluttering through the air as it does to dodging a knife blade. The fighter cannot dodge fast moving projectiles.

Size: 70 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual/Password
Costs $200 +$1,400 installation.

AutoLockpick- Takes over the user's hands and, if there is a basic rake and tension bar in them, will automatically attempt to pick a lock. Picks locks at 10 + 1d20. Size 5 MMUs. Costs $40 +$800 installation.

AutoMapper (Floorplan)- This incorporates the compass program and input from the visual system to create a 2 dimensional map of every place the PC goes. Walls and other large objects are represented by lines and little green footprints indicate the PC's path. Text notes can be added to a map.

Advantages: Creates a map of where you've been so you can find your way back.

Limitations: Same limitations as the Compass program (p.95). Also easily confused by slopes and multiple stories (floorplans of different floors may appear superimposed on the map). Holds ~20 mi^2 of mapping.

Size: 15 MMUs
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $100 +$300 installation.

AutoPilot- This program comes with several modules for common vehicles. Each module is a small laminated card full of barcodes, the PC only needs to stare at a card to load it in to temporary program. Once a module is loaded, the PC's hands and feet will act automatically to control the vehicle, going wherever the user imagines moving. The program gives kinesthetic feedback when the PC is exceeding the vehicle's parameters (e.g. PC may feel impedance when trying to accelerate the vehicle faster than it is able, or pain if the PC tried to turn faster than is safe at the current speed).

Advantages: The program lets the user operate a vehicle at a base level of competence (at about level 1 in the piloting skill for that vehicle).

Limitations: Holds only one vehicle module at a time.

Size: 45 MMUs.
Control Type: Kinesthetic
Costs $75 +$900 installation.

AutoPossum- On the user's command the program sends chemical messages to the body telling the body to shut down for 10 minutes. Heart and breath rate are reduced, digestive system is shut down, body temperature is reduced and nervous system is inhibited to the point that the user is in a semi-conscious stupor. The effect is that the PC may appear dead (20 difficulty AWR roll to sense signs of life) and toxins travel through the body at a slower rate (one quarter the normal speed).

Size: 10 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $20 +$200 installation.

AutoProjectile- After a short period of calibration, this program gives the user near-perfect aim with thrown weapons, bows and guns. The user sees crosshairs in his or her field of vision and the user moves those crosshairs with his or her mind.

Advantages: Aimed Strike or Vital Strike at 1d20 +40.
Limitations: Each weapon must be individually calibrated (takes at least 5 minutes) and must be gripped exactly the same way each time it is used. The program can only hold calibrations for 5 weapons at once.

Size: 20 MMUs.
Control Type: Kinesthetic
Costs $250 +$400 installation.

AutoSober- This program monitors the excitation and inhibition of major brain areas caused by psychoactive drugs and gives the user a visual readout of their general impairment. On command, the program attempts to reduce the effects of any drugs by providing opposite excitation or inhibition.

Advantages: Gives +7 to save vs. most drug effects.
Limitations: The program is not capable of undoing all the effects of a drug. The more exotic the effects, the less likely AutoSober is to be able to deal with them (e.g. can deal with "drowsiness" quite easily, but not "emotional dissociation").

Size: 15 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $50 +$300 installation.

AutoTyping- This program takes over the user's hands and lets him or her type words as fast as they can think them. Useful for people working on computer without speech recognition or for people with damaged speech capabilities. Size: 5 MMUs. Costs $15 +$100 installation.

Blanker- When this program is activated it changes the memory system so that each new long term-memory connection is encoded slightly differently. The memories are still encoded and still available for recall until the program is switched off. Within 25 seconds those memories are gone permanently. This program is typically used to let people work on top secret projects and not "take home" any memories of what they worked on.

Advantages: Lets memories accrued while the program is active be permanently wiped.
Limitations: Does not block learning, only autobiographical memories.

Size: 40 MMUs.
Control Type: Password.
Costs $50 +$800 installation.

Body Control- This program monitors and gives controls for various physiological systems that the brain controls (or influences), allowing users to control functions within their body that normal people have no conscious control over.

Advantages: Allows partial or total control over hormone levels, digestive system action, erectile tissues, pupil dilation, blood vessel dilation, body temperature, immune system sensitivity and action of the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems (the ones that prepare the body to deal with an emergency or to rest and relax). Altogether gives +7 to most medical skill rolls to diagnose or treat the PC, allows the user to defeat biometric deception detection systems, gives +4 to save vs. most drug effects.

Limitations: Not every aspect of human physiology is controlled or influenced by the brain.

Size: 30 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $50 +$600 installation.

Brain Monitor- A monitoring circuit analyzes feedback from every major brain area. The user can see real-time data on the activity of every part of the brain. The program can alert a user to influence on the brain by psychoactive drug effects, psychic intrusion, brain damage, mental illnesses or recently installed mental programs. The Brain Monitor has several security features to prevent it from being tampered with by other mental programs.

Advantages: Good for paranoid people who are afraid that someone or something is messing with their minds.

Limitations: Often the Brain Monitor can identify a problem but can not tell exactly what the source is. The Brain Monitor can identify the presence and activity of mental programs but can not tell what they do.

Size: 30 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $80 +$600 installation.

Calculator- A calculator was the first non-medical mental program approved by the FDA. A calculator is the typical group project for mental programming classes in universities, and there are more calculator programs floating around on the internet than any other mental program. Many have easter eggs, back doors or trojans. One popular calculator has very disruptive emotional and physiological effects when users press the six and nine buttons simultaneously.

Advantages: A full scientific calculator with limited graphing of simple polynomial equations.

Limitations: Not programmable, no complex analysis.
Size: 1 MMU.
Legality: Varies (some calculator programs are FDA approved, some are not).
Control Type: Sublingual/Kinesthetic
Costs $5 +$20 installation.

Card Counter- A small mental program which automatically recognizes and counts the cards dealt in a card game. The program shows how likely certain cards are to come up again. Gives +7 to gambling skills rolls (less if multiple decks are used). Size: 7 MMUs. Costs $100 +$140 installation.

Clock- A small clock showing date and time (including seconds) is visible in the user's visual field. Drifts about a minute per day (can be reset by looking at another clock). Size: 5 MMUs. Costs $5 +$100 installation.

Compass- This program uses complex calculations, analyzing data taken from kinesthetic sense, inner ear sensations and visual cues to keep track of the direction the PC is currently facing.

Advantages: Better sense of direction than all but the top 1% of humans. Can be "reset" by looking at a real compass or set landmarks.

Limitations: A hard strike to the head, being spun around, or prolonged time blinded in complete darkness will cause increasing inaccuracy.

Size: 5 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $20 + $100 installation.

Concentrator- This program stimulates or inhibits those parts of the brain that filter out sensations and thoughts that are not currently the focus of the user's attention. When "concentration" is turned up, the user can devote all their mental energy to one problem but he or she is unaware of anything else (including the passage of time). When turned down, everything that happens is noticed but the user can not think about any one thing for more than a few seconds.

Advantages: PC can gain up to 10 INL (for completion of a specific task) or up to 10 AWR (for general awareness of surroundings).

Limitations: For each increase in INL and AWR there is a corresponding decrease in the other. E.G. if the user wants +6 INL for a task, he or she takes a corresponding -6 AWR penalty to be aware of anything going on not involving that task.

Size: 20 MMUs.
Control Type: Password
Costs $50 +$400 installation.

Emotion Control- The PC sees a small control panel showing the levels for each basic emotion and allowing the user to control those emotional levels. People with anger management problems find it useful to set a maximum for their anger levels (if they get to angry, the program kicks in and inhibits anger). This program has a large potential for abuse, especially the anxiety control.

Advantages: Up to +15 to save vs. fear/anger/euphoria/dysphoria.

Limitations: Fear blocking has psychological addiction difficulty 30, craving difficulty 30, cravings triggered by anxiety. No direct control over "happiness" or "pleasure."

Size: 10 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Legality: Permit (5 yrs. prison).
Costs $15 +$200 installation.

Emulator- This very complex program forms a virtual computer inside the owner's brain.

Advantages: Users can run OpenMicro compatible programs in their own brains.

Limitations: The computer is very weak (Power 1, 2 ZB). Programs must be loaded visually (via a computer screen), run slowly and have a high likelihood of crashing.

Size: 60 MMUs.
Costs $100 +$1,200 installation.

Full Sensory Broadcast- Takes sensory data from all the user's senses, digitizes it and sends it (via a Jack, p.105) to a cellular modem which can then broadcast the live stream to the internet. In essence, the user is broadcasting his or her experiences in real time to the internet. The user can control the broadcast net site and get real-time demographic data from it without the viewers seeing the net site controls.

Size: 50 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $150 +$1,000 installation.

Hunger Control- This program allows users to control their subjective feelings of hunger. Within a year after this program was released, deaths related to anorexia rose by 700%. If prescribed and installed by a doctor, the doctor sets the hunger levels, if installed via the black market the user can control his or her own hunger levels.

Advantages: Can help the overweight lose weight, can help patients with terminal illnesses keep up their appetites.

Limitations: Large potential for abuse.
Size: 4 MMUs.
Control Type: Password
Costs $100 +$80 installation.

Intelligence Booster- Like smart drugs, this program hyper-stimulates the areas of the brain involved with memory, thought and logic.

Advantages: While active, PC gets +5 INL.

Limitations: Extremely tiring: uses 1 pooled END per minute of use. After the program is stopped there is a 90 minute period of sleepiness (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness) and lowered intelligence (-3 INL). Smart drugs provide no added benefit when using this program.

Size: 20 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $50 +$400 installation.

Language Translator- Language modules are loaded (via a computer screen) and while a module is loaded the user can speak that language fluently.

Advantages: Ability to understand a language and speak it with no accent.

Limitations: There is a significant lag between hearing the speech and hearing the English translation and a lag between trying to speak and actually speaking. Only one language module can be loaded at a time. Strong regional accents and idioms can confuse the program.

Size: 75 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $100 +$1,500 Installation.

Leash- This program is typically installed in people against their will for the purpose of enslaving them. The installer has passwords that can be used to cause the user debilitating pain, paralyzing euphoria, complete paralysis or uncontrolled rage.

Advantages: Allows verbal control of a victim. The paralysis is impossible to resist and the other commands can only be resisted with a legendary (40 difficulty) WIL feat.

Limitations: Although sometimes a component of brainwashing, this program doesn't actually cause a change in opinion or desire.

Size: 25 MMUs.
Control Type: Password
Legality: Forbidden (20 yrs. prison).
Costs $200 +$500 installation.
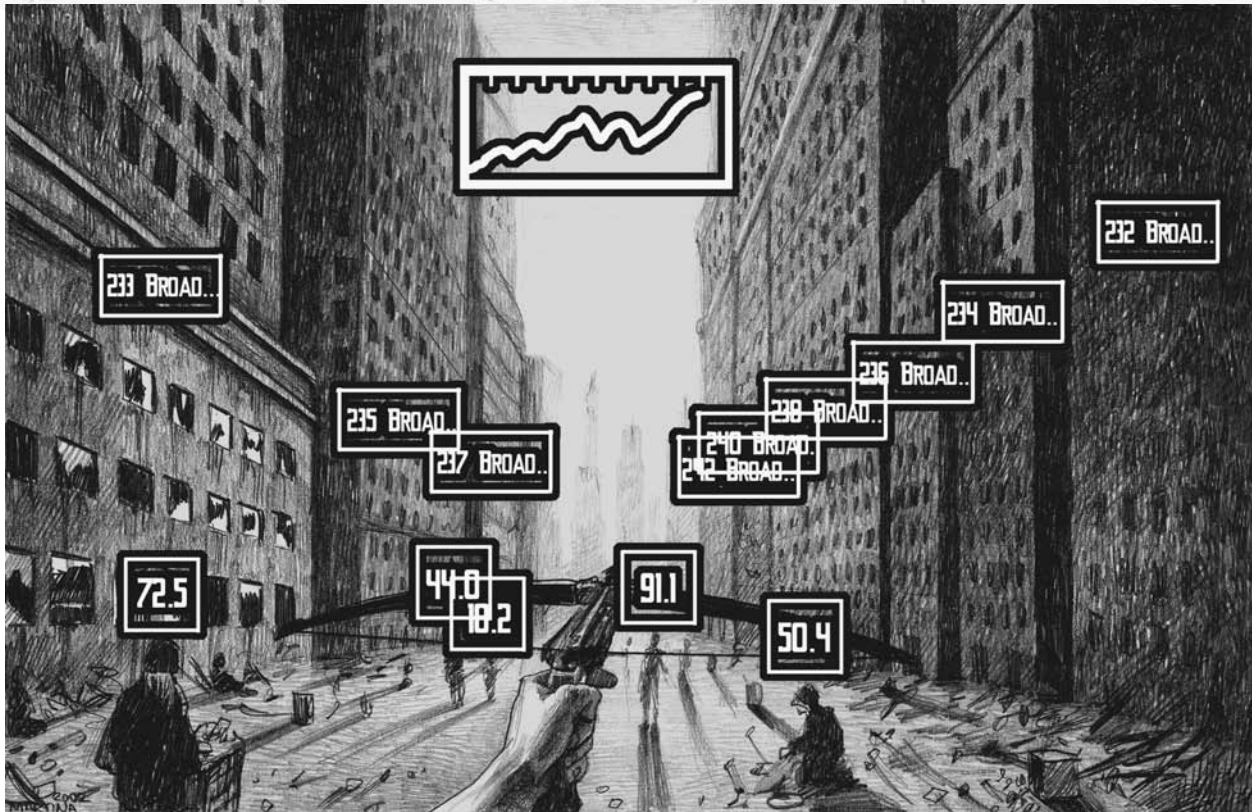
MathEnhancer NetHack Version- In 2074, a military sponsored mental program, designed to enhance mathematical ability, was stolen, hacked and released on the net. Hackers made several improvements to the program. There are currently several versions of the program, names different colors. Each version is slightly different and each has loyal users who claim their version is the best.

Advantages: Users can think in numbers, automatically know the relationship between any set of numbers they think about, can estimate things with a high degree of accuracy and can store thousands of numbers in their short-term memory. Without special training, a user gets +7 to math based INL rolls and -4 to learning Info skills (min. 2).

Limitations- Does not convey mathematics knowledge or skill: a user who knows only arithmetic can do arithmetic exceedingly well but can not do calculus. Intense training (as one might receive as a Math Addict) is necessary to learn to use the program to its fullest potential.

Size: 95 MMUs
Control Type: Sublingual
Legality: Forbidden (20 yrs. prison).
Cost $2,000 + $1,900 installation.

Memory Recall Booster- This program hyperactivates the portions of the brain responsible for memory recall. The user enters a relaxed lucid-daydream state in which they vividly recall memories with all the emotional intensity of the original events.

Advantages: +7 to memory based INL rolls.
Disadvantages: Although it may seem otherwise, memories are not recalled with complete accuracy. Rememberers may subconsciously add in details to fill in gaps without realizing that they are doing so. Users suffer a -10 penalty to AWR rolls concerning things going on in the real world while using the program.

Size: 30 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $50 +$600 installation.

Memory Storage Booster- This program hyperactivates the parts of the brain responsible for the storage of new memories.

Advantages: While activated, gives +7 to any roll to memorize any information.

Disadvantages: If over-used, old memories may be wiped out. Also, psychological traumas that happen while this program is active have much worse after-effects.

Size: 35 MMUs.
Control Type: Sublingual
Costs $200 +$700 installation.

Memory Transfer- Despite this program's name, there is no known way to transfer memories, knowledge or skills directly from one brain to another. This program transfers memories via storytelling (the same way humans have been transferring memories for millennia) but enhanced the recall, communication and storage. The teller must have Memory Recall Booster and the listener must have Memory Storage Booster ;installed.

Advantages: Both the teller and listener are put in a lucid day-dream state. The teller than proceeds to tell the story of whatever memory they want to 'transfer'. The teller's emotional state and state of consciousness are encoded and communicated via subliminal manipulations of the teller's vocal chords. The listener's program picks this information up and attempts to replicate that emotion/consciousness state in the listener. In other words, the listener feels what the teller feels, which is typically what the teller felt when the event originally happened. The teller gets +7 to recall the event and the listener gets +7 to remember the event.

Limitations: Listeners may come to believe that transferred memories actually happened to them. Skilled storytellers may make up stories and transfer them to users (who will probably believe they are true). Many cult leaders manipulate members using this program. Also, the listener may believe he or she is experiencing the memory exactly as the teller is, but the listener's own experiences

and prejudices may color their interpretation of what they are hearing. The listener may have received a very different memory and not realized it. See also the limitations for Memory Recall Booster and Memory Storage Booster.
    Size: 25 MMUs.
    Control Type: Sublingual
    Costs $200 +$500 Installation.

Mental Basic- This mental program is an "interpreter" – it allows users to write small programs and run them within the brain. The program was designed so that users can write mental program on the fly using a simple programming language. Example: A user opens up the interpreter, enters the code: "visualtextdisplay("Hi there!", 5); stim(15%, NC_Anger_Center);" runs it, and experiences the sentence "Hi there!" floating in their field of vision for five seconds and then experiences a small rush of anger.
    Advantages: Allows skilled programmers to write and run mental programs, in their own brains, on-the-fly, with no need to use a mental installer.
    Limitations: Programs runs slowly, can only access limited brain areas, and are wiped out when the program is turned off. A bug in the code of a program can cause serious problems (see Mental Programming Skill Roll Failure table, p.33).
    Size: 60 MMUs.
    Control Type: Sublingual.
    Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison).
    Costs $100 + $1,200 installation.

Mental Illness Sim- This program has pre-set modes that simulate the stimulation and inhibition of brain areas that occur in different mental illnesses. A user can turn on a mental illness at a given strength for a pre-defined period of time.
    Advantages: Allows users to actually experience something much like what mentally ill people experience.
    Limitations: Some potential for addiction and abuse (especially when experimenting with manic modes). In rare cases this program has triggered actual mental illnesses that don't stop when the program is turned off.
    Size: 20 MMUs.
    Control Type: Password.
    Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison).
    Costs $250 +$400 installation.

Nausea Blocker- When turned on, completely blocks sensations of nausea and attempts to stop the stomach from regurgitating its contents.
    Advantages: +15 to save vs. nausea.
    Limitations: When there are damaging toxins, drugs or diseases in the stomach, inability to vomit can lead to death.
    Size: 2 MMUs.
    Control Type: Sublingual
    Costs $20 +$40 installation.

NeuroBooze- This program mimics all the psychological effects of alcohol consumption.
    Advantages: All the psychological effects of alcohol (p.108) with exact control over intensity and duration and none of the physiological effects.
    Limitations: Because intoxication is easy, free and has no physical side effects, NeuroBooze has a much worse addictive potential than regular alcohol: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 40.
    Size: 15 MMUs.

Control Type: Sublingual
Legality: Forbidden (20 yrs. prison)
Costs $400 +$300 Installation.

NeuroDrugs

When mental programming was discovered, people were afraid that it could be used to create "drugs." Sensationalistic reporters painted pictures of teens starving to death, unable to stop self-stimulating their pleasure centers with mental programs. The fear of "NeuroDrugs" helped keep mental programming technology under strict government regulation.

Today, few people use NeuroDrugs. Drug sellers don't like the idea of a program that a user pays for once and never has to pay for again. Addicts don't like the idea of a free drug because they know that if they had an endless pile of drugs before them they would never be sober again.

The main market for NeuroDrugs are old addicts who have given up any hope of ever quitting. They know they'll be using drugs for the rest of their lives and they are willing to pay a lot of money for a drug that is freely available and doesn't damage the body. Despite these potential benefits, NeuroDrugs don't increase the life span of addicts: people with NeuroDrugs tend to take even worse care of themselves than normal addicts and most die of exposure or illness related to malnutrition

NeuroGod Killer- Simulates the effects of God Killer.
    Advantages: All the physiological effects of God Killer (p.111) with exact control over intensity and duration and none of the physiological effects.
    Limitations: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 40, Craving Difficulty 50.
    Size: 15 MMUs.
    Control Type: Sublingual
    Legality: Forbidden (20 yrs. prison)
    Costs $650 +$300 Installation.

NeuroHallucinogen- This program activates the same brain areas that recreational hallucinogens do. The hallucinogen has pre-set modes to mimic the various classes of hallucinogen (mescaline, LSD, ibotenic and DMT) and lets users configure novel new experiences.
    Advantages: Can give the same plusses and minuses as Herbal Psychedelic (p.112) or Hallucinogen (p.112).
    Limitations: Potential for psychological addiction, especially since the user can control the euphoric aspect of their experience. Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15, Craving Difficulty 20.
    Size: 15 MMUs.
    Control Type: Sublingual
    Legality: Forbidden (20 yrs. prison)
    Costs $200 +$300 Installation.

NeuroHeroin- This program mimics the effects of strong opiates on the brain.
    Advantages: All the physiological effects of opiates (p.114) with exact control over intensity and duration and none of the physiological effects.
    Limitations: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 40.
    Size: 15 MMUs.
    Control Type: Sublingual
    Legality: Forbidden (20 yrs. prison)
    Costs $500 +$300 Installation.

Pain Blocker- Allows for pain sensations to be partially or completely blocked, replaced with a 'buzzing' sensation. It is legal only when prescribed by a doctor and only when set to block only areas of the body where chronic pain is occurring. The cracked versions available on the street that allow users to control their own pain sensations are completely illegal.

   Advantages: Complete immunity to pain available.

   Limitations: Users may be tempted to disable all pain sensations all the time, which can significantly decrease the user's life span (cuts and burns are more common, medical care for serious problems is less likely to be sought, and joints go bad because the user tends to stand, sit and sleep in one position without shifting weight). When used during combat, users tend to make movements that aggravate injuries (each injury of 2 or more damage does an extra 1 point of damage during the course of the battle).

   Size: 4 MMUs.
   Control Type: Sublingual
   Legality: Permit (5 yrs. prison).
   Costs $100 +$80 installation.

Pool Shark- This program takes control of the user's hands to help them make perfect pool shorts.

   Advantages: Make pool shots of up to 40 (legendary) difficulty.

   Limitations: When up against a genuine master pool player, the master pool player will always win because they understand the subtleties of strategy.

   Size: 20 MMUs.
   Costs $75 +$400 installation.

Psychic Communication Program- Activates psychic

Psychic Mental Programs

This is a very new technology, just being leaked out of labs and on to the black market and years away from FDA approval. The psychic neural pathways in the brain are poorly understood and so these programs are quite clumsy. They are nowhere near as precise or powerful as a skilled psychic. The very presence of one of these programs severely interferes with any legitimate psychic skills a person might have. Their long term effects are still unknown.

systems in a series of bursts (which real psychics would feel as clicks or flashes of energy) to send text based messages to anybody else in the area with the program.

   Advantages: Text communication with other users at up to 1 mile away, encryption available.

   Disadvantages: The psychic energy released by a crowd reduces communication range to 10 ft. Text communication is slow. Ciphers are very simple (5 strength, one-key).

   Size- 90 MMUs.
   Control Type: Sublingual
   Legality: Licensed (15 yrs. prison).
   Costs $550 +$1,800 installation.

Psychic Defense Pulse- This mental program creates a chain reaction of psychic impulses in the brain which makes anybody nearby momentarily dizzy and light-headed. This is the first and, so far, the only form of psychic attack mental program.

   Advantages: For one round, everyone within 10 ft. is -7 to all rolls.

   Disadvantages: The user suffers -3 to all rolls. The pulse uses 5 pooled END.

   Size: 70 MMUs.
   Legality: Prohibited (1-5 years in prison).
   Control Type: Sublingual

Legality: Licensed (15 yrs. prison).
Costs $750 +$1,400 installation.

Psychic Intrusion Detection- This program monitors psychic sense receptors in different parts of the brain and attempts to determine when external psychic sources are manipulating the flow of information inside the brain. The program responds to intrusion with a visual and audio alert.

   Advantages: Lets non-psychics know when they are being manipulated.

   Disadvantages: Doesn't stop the manipulation and doesn't tell where the source is.

   Size: 70 MMUs.
   Control Type: Sublingual
   Legality: Licensed (15 yrs. prison).
   Costs $400 +$1,400 installation.

Psychic Sensory Program- This program connects to psychic energy receptors in the brain and converts information received in to visual stimuli. When activated the user sees a grid of 100 green squares in his or her field of vision that glow according to perceived psychic energy levels, looking much like a very early infra-red camera.

   Advantages: Lets non-psychics see the nervous systems of humans and animals in darkness or through thin walls, and can see when a human is trying to use psychic energy to manipulate someone.

   Limitations: Too much psychic activity within the user's own brain can make the program insensitive. Interferes with ability to use normal vision (-10 to vision based AWR rolls).

   Size: 80 MMUs.
   Control Type: Sublingual
   Legality: Licensed (15 yrs. prison).
   Costs $400 +$1,600 installation.

Puppet- This program, when activated, takes complete control of the user's body. The user is conscious and aware, but has absolutely no control over his or her body. Commands are transferred to the program via a jack, allowing the user's body to be controlled by remote.

   Size: 80 MMUs.
   Control Type: Via Jack.
   Legality: Forbidden (20 yrs. prison).
   Costs $250 +$1,600 installation.

Sense Recorder- This program allows the user to record information from sensory input. This information is stored in the brain and can be reviewed or transferred to a computer (via a jack or codespeak).

   Advantages: Sensations can be recorded for later review or to play back for others.

   Limitations: Quality is fairly poor (a cheap video camera could do better). Memory space is limited (user can store up to 250 pictures, 12 seconds of video, 2 minutes of sound or 5 seconds of full-sense recording).

   Size: 50 MMUs.
   Control Type: Sublingual
   Costs $100 +$1,000 installation.

Codespeak

Many programs take information in, but few need to transfer information out. When a mental program needs to transmit a data file to a computer it usually uses a Jack (p.105) or some version of codespeak. A codespeak program takes over the user's mouth and speaks a fast gibberish that a computer can understand and interpret as data. Codespeak is far too fast and complicated for a normal human to interpret it (with the possible exception of Math Addicts).

Sleep Alarm- This program allows the user to sleep with his or her eyes literally open. The program moves head and eyes to investigate sounds. The program immediately wakes the user up if any person, animal or object moves within 5 ft. of the user.

Advantages: Allows users to sleep with little fear of being snuck up on.

Limitations: Things like curtains being blown around by air conditioning can cause false positives, waking the user up unnecessarily. Skilled prowlers (who stay out of a user's field of vision and make no sounds: difficulty 40) can still sneak up on a user.

Size: 15 MMUs.

Control Type: Sublingual

Costs $20 +$300 install.

Sleep Control- This control panel allows users to control their need for sleep and ability to sleep.

Advantages: Users can control when they sleep, how long and how deeply. There is also a 'low sleep' mode where the major benefits of sleep are compressed in to a few hours (the user can survive on 2 hrs. sleep per night for several weeks with no noticeable effects).

Limitations: Using low sleep mode for more than two weeks in a row can lead to paranoid delusions.

Size: 25 MMUs.

Costs $50 +$500 installation.

Terminal- If the user is connected to an internet connection via a Jack (p.105) or Internal Wireless Modem (p.105), the user can access his or her PC via a mental monitor and keyboard. The user can do anything he or she could do if the user were sitting at that computer.

Advantages: Invisible remote access to a remote PC.

Disadvantages: Uses 50 strength one-key encryption to communicate with the remote computer. Cannot access full immersion VR.

Size: 45 MMUs.

Control Type: Kinesthetic.

Costs $75 +$900 installation.

Withdrawal Blocker- This program is used primarily by people trying to quit using a drug or drugs. It cuts (or reduces) many of the psychological effects of long term withdrawal from drugs and reduces some of the sensations of physical pain associated with the withdrawal.

Advantages: Gives +7 to save vs. pain, panic, hallucinations, seizures, unconsciousness, insomnia, vertigo and depression associated with long-term withdrawal. Gives +7 to save vs. cravings.

Limitations: There is no version of this program which can reduce the 'uglies' of Slave or the feeling of stupidity of Maxin withdrawal.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Size: 30 MMUs.

Control Type: Password

Costs $250 +$600 installation.

See Also

Operating Systems

Non-Tech characters can skip this section: if you buy a computer it comes with some version of OpenMicro (if it is a handheld) or OpenCert (if it is a laptop or desktop) installed on it. These are probably the only operating systems you ever have or ever will use.

An operating system is a computer program. It is the program that comes on automatically whenever a computer is turned on. The operating system connects to various hardware devices (monitors, keyboards, speakers, microphones, mental stimulators, net connections, etc.) and allows the user to interact with the machine. The operating system lets users run and control various applications.

Techie characters can choose the operating system of their computer devices. Different operating systems have different advantages and disadvantages. Although most programs come in forms compatible with every major operating system, some programs were originally written for a certain operating system and any other version is just a cheap copy. For example: all the professional media editing programs were designed in Amicus and later ported to other operating systems. The Amicus versions are still the best, and so Amicus users who own a Media Editing Suite get +4 to skill rolls using this program.

The different operating systems available are:

OpenFree- Open was the first major operating system created after the end of the Freedom Wars. Based on the most popular pre-Freedom War operating system (which passed in to the public domain). It was updated and repackaged by a group of programmers paid by the restoration committee and released free to the public. Now that the restoration committee is gone, programmers around the world use their spare time to create new updates to OpenFree. Since there is no central authority deciding which updates are best or which are necessary, running an OpenFree system that works well can be very hit-or-miss.

All the Open operating systems are highly graphical and user friendly, making them the easiest to use of any operating systems. Program controls are a variety of 3D objects which can be picked up, spun around, fit in with other components. The operating system has built in interactive help. While this is very nice for basic level users, it eats up a lot of computing resources. Open does so much at once that it tends to crash a lot.

Pros: Easy to use. Free.

Cons: Not very powerful. Doesn't always work with all modern software. Users typically spend a lot of time searching for patches and components.

Control Type: Graphical/VR

Costs $0.

OpenCert- Several corporations cooperate on a UN mandated "Open Standards and Certification Committee." This committee decides on standards for commercial versions of the Open operating system. This means that each corporation can write and sell their own version of Open, but each is certified so that a program written in one will work on all of them. Getting certification costs millions but corporations who make versions of OpenCert make their money back. The OpenCert versions compete

with each other, each one claims to work better or have better features (in reality they are mostly the same). Corporations that manufacture and sell computers typically ship those computers with their version of OpenCert on them. OpenCert installations have many important copy protection features to make sure that their users pay for them, and hackers around the world fight a constant battle to find ways to break these features.

Like OpenFree, OpenCert is a huge memory hog. Unlike OpenFree, millions of corporate programmers keep the OpenCert code reliable and secure.

Pros: Easy to use. Compatible with all Open software. Many features.
Cons: Memory and power hog. Expensive.
Control Type: Graphical/VR
Costs $100 (comes free with any laptop or desktop computer).

OpenMicro- This is a scaled down version of Open for use on handheld computers (palmtops, watches, glasses). It is simpler and has less features so it can run on a much less powerful computer. Like OpenCert, it is made according to standards so that any software written for use with OpenMico can work on any handheld.
Pros: Works on handheld computers.
Cons: Not as many features, can't run large applications.
Control Type: Graphical/Text/Speech
Costs $50 (comes free with any handheld computer).

Amicus- Amicus was created in-house for a VR Programming company before the Freedom Wars and fell in to the public domain after the Freedom Wars. Amicus is simple, powerful, has a quick and aesthetically pleasing interface, and is the operating system of choice for graphic designers, electronic musicians and VR programmers. All of the really sophisticated software packages for sound, graphics and VR are created for use on Amicus. Amicus is not very flexible and although it can be used for non-design purposes, it is not as good as other operating systems.
Pros: +4 to graphics, sound and VR rolls. Quick and precise interface.
Cons: Costly, non-graphic/sound/VR programs harder to find.
Control Type: Graphical
Costs $75.

Mainframe 10- This operating system is designed specifically for use on large servers and corporate mainframes. The purpose of this operating system is to run server software applications smoothly and reliably with easy recovery from backups in the case of a problem. Mainframe is seldom used on desktop computers. Since the OS is not designed to be used often, it has a very basic interface (though it is very precise).
Pros: Runs servers reliably and powerfully (+10 difficulty to crash a computer, +10 to Operating Systems rolls to repair a computer). Frees up system resources (+20 ZB, +2 power if running this instead of OpenCert).
Cons: Requires at least 1 level in Operating Systems (specializing in Mainframe 10) to use.
Control Type: Text/Speech
Costs $150.

GuildOS- This is the official operating system created by the Hacker's Guild. The Guild creates new updates every year and releases them for free. The GuildOS operating system has special built-in features, most of which were added in order to create a community of criminal computer hackers and to resist several attempts to wipe out the operating system:
-Built in 30 strength one-key encryption which can encrypt all the files on the hard drive (user must have a data key to access the computer).
-An emulator that can run OpenCert programs (at -2 power).
-Ability to mimic OpenCert (a person booting up the machine and casually examining it will think it's a normal OpenCert machine with nothing special on it).
-Decentralized anonymous file sharing. Each instance of GuildOS that is connected to the network creates a file sharing node. Each node anonymizes other nodes (so nobody can track down the actual source of a file or piece of info). Users must share data in order to get data.
-Decentralized knowledge tree where GuildOS users put information about every imaginable technical question. Like the file sharing, users must give in order to get and the originator of knowledge can be anonymous.
-Thousands of on-line chat rooms where hackers chat anonymously about any given topic.
Pros: Free. Frees up system resources (+20 ZB, +2 power if running this instead of OpenCert). Requires a Hard Operating Systems roll to install GuildOS. Built in encryption and emulation. Built in file sharing, chat and knowledge tree (+15 to Data Pirating and Internet Browsing rolls). Users can easily control every aspect of the operating system (gives +10 to Anonymity, Copy Protection, Jellynailing and Operating Systems rolls).
Cons: Illegal. No safety controls (one mis-typed command can destroy the OS). Requires at least one level in Operating Systems (specializing in GuildOS) to run.
Control Type: Text/Speech
Legality: Forbidden ($500 fine)
Costs $0.

INFO TECH

Info Tech Features

Battery Life: All portable devices come with built in rechargeable batteries. Batteries can be recharged at any AC outlet and typically take less than 10 minutes to fully charge.

Input: Whatever devices are built in to the hardware to allow it to take commands from a user. Additional input options can be purchased and attached to the device.

Output: The device's built in to hardware to allow it to display information to the user. The most common output devices are visual displays (LCD screens) and speakers.

Power: Any device capable of running applications has a power rating. Applications use up a certain amount of power while running. For example: a laptop with 7 power could run a program that uses 3 power and a program that uses 4 power simultaneously, but could not run a program that uses 8 power.

Memory: Any device capable of storing data or applications has the amount it can store (in ZBs) listed.

Cellphone (Black)- This is a modern voice-only cellphone, used mainly by criminals, government agents and corporate operatives. It features 50 strength evolving public-key encryption for voice communication, voiceprint and fingerprint protected address book, waterproof to 50 ft., EMP resistant, shock resistant (can take 5 blunt or bladed damage) and sound cancellation around the mouth and earpiece (so nobody can eavesdrop on a conversation). Battery lasts for 16 hours of conversation. Costs $200 +$5/week for a cellular account (see p.130).

Cellphone (Ear Bud) T - This top of the line cellphone is a tiny piece or rubber that fits comfortably in one ear. It is voice controlled, holds up to 1 million phone addresses, and has adaptive volume adjustment (it constantly adjusts sound levels so that audio from the phone neither blocks out other noises nor is blocked out by them). Battery Life: 4 hours. Costs $200 +$5/week for a cellular account (see p.130).

Cellphone (Used)- An old cellphone, barely compatible with modern networks. It can only do voice, there is a lot of packet loss (static), it is incapable of encryption, it hardly works at all inside buildings, and batteries only last for about 2 hours worth of talking. Costs $15 +$5/week for a cellular account (see p.130).

Phone Addresses

There are no more "phone numbers" since all phones are simple computers that send and receive sound data over the internet. Instead of a number, the user has an address assigned by their internet service provider. For instance, Kim Ibn'Fazar, who gets her internet through NYR-LAN, might have a phone address of KIFazar@Manhattan.NYR-LAN.com.us. It is only rarely that people have to remember an address because most phones can access public and personal address books.

Cellular Modem- This small device, which can plug in to the access port on any modern computer, allows the computer to access the internet through any of the city's cellular networks. Will create a medium speed connection (good enough for everything but full-immersion VR). Costs $50 +$5/week for a cellular account (see p.130).

Cellular Modem (Broadband)- Like the cellular modem, this product allows a computer to connect to the internet anywhere in the city that there is a cellular service. This modem is actually several separate cellular modems bundled in to one device about the size of a slipper. Common uses: Accessing full immersion VR programs wirelessly, sending full immersion sensory streams (as Night Walkers do), controlling people by remote via the Puppet program (p.91). Costs $200 +$10/week for a cellular account (see p.130).

Code Breaker- A huge computer (takes up a whole room) built specifically to break codes. Inside the large climate-controlled box is a tangle of tens of thousands of microprocessors, each as powerful as a normal personal computer, networked together in to a tree formation. The computer guesses codes at Power 75 and can do other tasks at Power 20. Memory: 500 ZB. Weights 1000 lbs. Costs $200,000,000.

Computer Glasses- T This is the most versatile computing solution, what top corporate computer techs wear in the field. The actual computer is small enough to be strapped to a belt or fit in a large pocket. The computer has a built in cellular modem and rechargeable batteries that can run up to 48 hours. The computer communicates wirelessly with a pair of glasses and two gloves. The gloves let the user communicate with text/speech interfaces (typing on an air-keyboard), graphical interfaces (pointing and dragging with hands) or even VR interfaces. The glasses are translucent, so the user can still see what's going on in the real world. The glasses can record sound and video equal to Videocamera: Cheap (p.123). Power: 15. Memory: 50 ZB. Weighs 1 lb. Costs $3,000.

Data Card- This is the modern equivalent of a data disk. It is the size and shape of a business card, designed to fit in to a wallet. It can be bent, scratched or written on without destroying the data inside. Memory: 2 ZB. Costs $5.

Data Key- Small key shaped object, holds up to 1 ZB of data and can be plugged in to a standard I/O Jack for most computers. Data keys are typically used to hold encryption keys. Costs $5.

Data Key (Security)- T Like the data key, but data is held in hotcoded form (any attempt to take apart the key to get out the memory chip will destroy the data). The key only makes the data available if the owner's thumb is pressed to the key and a secret code word is whispered in to it. If the wrong code word is used three times, the data on the key deletes itself. Many paranoid people have permanently lost access to everything on their hard drives because they lost the key, broke the key, lost a thumb or forgot the password. The higher quality banks issue these keys to their customers instead of ATM cards. Costs $75.

Data Recorder- This very simple device has data jack inputs and records everything that comes in through the inputs. Up to 10 days worth of live streams from just about any input device can be recorded and retrieved later. Battery Life: 10 days. Costs $100.

Desktop (Developer)- This is a very high-end computer, usually owned by computer professionals who need a lot of computing power. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 20. Memory: 100 ZB. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs $5,000.

Desktop (Homemade)- This computer is made entirely from parts scavenged from the trash. Because some of the parts are old and on the edge of going bad, every week there is a 1 in 20 chance of the computer breaking. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 7. Memory: 30 ZB. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs $100.

Desktop (New)- A new, high-end computer. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 15. Memory: 60 ZB. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $3,000.

Desktop (Used)- A used computer that was new about 5 years ago. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 6. Memory: 25 ZB. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs $200.

Language Translator- About the size and shape of a wallet, this computer contains voice recognition and translation software for 20 common languages (including English, Spanish, French, Kalor and Arabic - the most common languages spoken in the city) with a data card slot for adding in other languages. It automatically determines what languages are being spoken and translates between them. Batteries last 8 hours. Costs $200 +$10 per language card.

Laptop (Military)- These laptops are military surplus, designed for use in the field. Has a built in satellite modem (this page), a built in solar cell (one hour of full sunlight recharges the battery enough for 30 minutes of use). Fully charged, batteries last 48 hours. The laptop has EMP and physical shielding (can take 15 bladed or blunt damage or 5 heat damage without breaking). Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power: 10. Memory: 30 ZB. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $2,000.

Laptop (New)- A new, high-end laptop. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power 12. Memory 40 ZB. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs $4,000.

Laptop (Used)- An old used laptop. Input: Keyboard, Voice. Output: Monitor, Speakers. Power 5. Memory 20 ZB. Weighs 6 lbs. Costs $400.

Line Tap (Fiber-Optic)- A small device for tapping in to fiber-optic lines without interrupting them. Costs $45.

Line Tap (Direct)- A set of devices that looking like nail-clippers with wires attached to them. When they are clamped on to a wire they push metallic contacts in to the core of the wire, allowing the user to splice in to communication lines without interrupting them. Costs $10.

Line Tap (Inversion)- Superconducting pads that can be placed on a wall. It uses electromagnets and electromagnetic sensors to tap in to the data lines inside the wall without actually touching them. Costs $150.

Mental Installer- This is the device that makes all of mental programming possible (see p.408 for more). A person's head is strapped tightly in to a large device about the size of an easy-chair. The device has several parts: An IV drip, an onboard computer to run the machine, an array of supercooled electromagnetic sensors and two very precise radio lasers. The device is very sensitive to vibration (typically found bolted to the floor in basements). Legality: Licensed (15 yr. prison). Costs $8,000 +$10 per IV pack.

Mental Stimulator (Basic)- A small arch which the top of the head is inserted in, small enough to be strapped to a bed or the head of an easy-chair. This device uses Radiochemical Neural Stimulation (p.408) to allow a computer to directly interact with the user's motor and sensory areas. Users must wear a small dermal patch which puts the necessary chemicals in to their bloodstream. Typically, this machine is used to put the users in to a full-immersion VR simulation. The device is not precise enough to create a "photorealistic" simulation (there is a noticeable blurriness in a simulation which distinguishes it from real-life). The device is also physically incapable of shooting radio-beams in to many areas of the brain (it's not possible to do things like activate pleasure centers or stop the heart). VR Fantasy companies rent these devices to their regular subscribers, and those found on the black market have typically been stolen from subscribers during house burglaries. Weighs 35 lbs. Costs $300.

Mental Stimulator (Modified)- This is a cheap mental stimulator that has been illegally modified. It can now stimulate any part of the brain, not just the motor and sensory centers. Weighs 35 lbs. Legality: Forbidden (life in prison). Costs $700.

Mental Stimulator (Photorealistic)- This is a top-of-the-line mental stimulator with more precise electromagnetic sensors and more precise radio beams for a full-immersion VR experience which (with a powerful enough computer creating the simulation) has as much richness and detail as real life. Typically found in the homes and apartments of wealthier VR addicts. Weighs 50 lbs. Costs $500.

Pager- A tiny hunk of old technology that can clip on a belt. Passively receives unencrypted radio signals, can receive phone addresses, text or short (up to 30 second) voice messages. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs $20 +$1/wk. for service.

Palmtop (Combo)- This palmtop computer is packed with every available feature (All the features of Language Translator, Palmtop: Wayfinder, Palmtop: Communicator, Video Camera: Cheap and Radio Scanner). Battery Life: 36 hours. Power 3. Memory: 10 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs $400 +$5/week for cellular service.

Palmtop (Communicator)- A small palmtop computer with a built-in cellular modem so the owner can make phone calls or surf the internet from anywhere there is cellular service. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 3. Memory: 7 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs $100 +$5/week for cellular service.

Palmtop (Linework)- This palmtop is designed for network hardware techs who need to be able to tap in to LANs and diagnose problems. Comes with built all three types of Line Taps built in and preloaded Sniffer software. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power: 2. Memory: 5 ZB. Weighs .7 lbs. Costs $200.

Palmtop (Organizer)- The size and shape of a wallet. This small computer is used for taking notes, keeping addresses and calendars and storing reference materials. Input: Touch sensitive screen, voice input, digital camera. Output: Small color LCD, sound. Can synchronize with other computers within 10 ft. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 2. Memory 5 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs $25.

Palmtop (Wayfinder)- A small computerized device the size of a wallet with a built in GPS and street maps for the entire world. The device shows the user where he or she is on a map and can give spoken directions to get to any street address. Battery Life: 24 hours. Power 2. Memory 3 ZB. Weighs .5 lbs. Costs $50.

Printer- An old peripheral device which prints full color text and images on pieces of paper. Costs $20 +$10 for a 1000 page ink cartridge.

Repeater- Small bell shaped handheld device, can adhere to almost any surface. Amplifies and relays radio and cellphone signals. The repeater is used to get signal to cellular or radio based devices in places like underground tunnels, the center of a large building, etc. Battery Life: 24 hours. Weighs 1 lb. Costs $100.

Sattelite Phone/Modem- Looks like a fat, heavy cellphone with a thick antenna with a black plastic ball on the end. Instead of communicating with ground based cellular networks, this phone communicates with satellites in orbit, making it possible to communicate via voice or access the internet from anywhere in the world and from many points in orbit. Battery Life: 8 hours. Weighs 1 lb. Costs $200 +$10 per week subscription.

Supercomputer- This device takes about 3,000 ft.² of space. This computer can be walked inside: motorized racks can slide around to create aisles large enough for techs to walk through. Techs can replace broken equipment without turning the computer off. The computer distributes computing tasks to its thousands of ultra-powerful processors. Power 50. Memory: 5000 ZB. Costs $500,000,000.

UPS (Large)- About the size and shape of a washing machine, this device uses gyroscopic batteries (see p.291) to hold a tremendous amount of energy. In the event of a power failure, it can keep up to 20 electronic devices running for up to 24 hours. Weighs 150 lbs. Costs $1,000.

UPS (Small)- About the size and shape of a shoebox, this device plugs in to a wall and keeps a battery charged. In the event of a loss of power, this battery can power one normal electronic device (e.g. a computer) for 1 hour. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $50.

BODY MOD

Biological Implants

Biological Implants have the following characteristics (unless stated otherwise):

-They are matched to the buyer's DNA, so there is no problem with rejection.

-They get all their chemical and energy needs from the user's bloodstream.

Bloodhound Smell- Genetically engineered tissues are grown and implanted in to the user's nasal passages, giving the user an incredible sense of smell, limited only by the small size of the olfactory processing areas of the brain. Despite the name the PC will not be able to smell as well as a bloodhound. They can smell the differences between people and can smell an object that has a person's scent on it. +15 to smell based AWR rolls. Costs $2,000 +$500 surgery costs.

Claws (Retractable)- The user's fingernails are replaced by retractable claws that look like large cat claws. The claws have an easy strike and a very easy slash, they do 1 bladed damage. Costs $250 +$100 surgery costs +$300 for Teflon Coated Steel Claws (pierces armor as 3 bladed).

Claws (Retractable-Poisoned)- The user's fingernails are replaced by retractable claws that are linked to a poison gland in the palm. That gland also feeds an anti-venom in to the user's bloodstream. The claws have an easy strike and a very easy slash, they do 1 bladed damage and the poison does 1 bladed damage per round for 5 rounds. Costs $750 +$250 surgery costs +$350 for Teflon Coated Steel Claws (pierces armor as 3 bladed).

Fangs- Several of the PC's upper and lower teeth are replaced with long, hard sharp fangs. Like a predator's teeth, these fangs are designed for ripping and tearing flesh. If the user can bite in to someone's flesh (very hard strike (-8), does 1 bladed damage (pierces as 2) and counts as a hold) then the next round the user can tear out the flesh that has been bitten (does 2 bladed damage). Costs $250 +$100 surgery costs +$300 for Teflon Coated Steel fangs (pierce armor as 5 bladed).

Body Mod Costs
Body Mods may have a cost for the mod itself (this is the cost paid for the actual implant) and/or a cost for surgery (the cost to pay a doctor to perform the mod). PCs who get a lot of body mod work done at once ($1,000 or more in surgery costs) can get a 30% discount on surgery costs (because it takes a lot less resources to put a person out once and do multiple surgeries then to put them out on several separate occasions).

Fangs (Poisoned)- The PC's incisors are replaced with sharp fangs which are fed poison by glands in the back of the mouth. These same glands create an anti-venom which is fed in to the user's bloodstream (in case the user accidentally bites himself or herself). As a weapon, the fangs have a very hard strike (-8) do ½ bladed damage (pierces as 1) and the poison does 1 BLD damage per round for 5 rounds. Costs $500 +$250 surgery costs +$200 for Teflon Coated Steel fangs (pierce armor as 4 bladed).

Finger Popper- Semen producing tissue is placed inside the index finger with a tiny hole under the fingernail for semen to be released. Massaging the underneath of the finger and flexing the joints will cause ejaculation. This implant can allow a man or a woman to impregnate a woman. Women can only sire female offspring since they do not have a Y chromosome. Although this implant has been lauded for allowing lesbian couples to have offspring, it also has an unsavory history of use by both men and women to impregnate women without their knowledge or consent. Costs $400 +$150 surgery costs.

Muscle Implants (Speed)- Muscle fibers are grown in a vat and surgically implanted, mostly in to the legs. After a few weeks for the muscles to fully attach, ability to run, jump and kick are significantly increased (although wear and tear on joints is also increased). Gives +5 SPD, +1 END, +1 AGY. Costs $1,000 +$1,000 for surgery costs.

Muscle Implants (Strength)- Muscles implanted, mostly in the arms, back and chest, give +6 STH, +2 END. Costs $1,000 +$1,000 surgery costs.

Pheromone Glands- Tiny glands implanted in the armpits release the same pheromones that people pay $20 per vial for (p.137). Gives +8 to seduction rolls. Costs $400 +$50 surgery costs.

Spectrum Retinas- The PCs retinas are removed and replaced with new retinas that can see the full visual spectrum as well as infrared and ultraviolet. The user can see warm objects (especially in the dark) and can tell the difference between objects that look the same to normal people (e.g. real skin vs. prosthetic flesh). On the other hand, the PC's color spectrum has shifted so that they don't see the same colors as everyone else – where someone sees blue they might see yellow. The PC has to re-teach himself or herself what colors mean, a process which can take years. Costs $2,000 +$1,000 surgery costs.

Water Lung- A third lung is implanted in the chest cavity. The owner can learn to close off their normal lungs and breath water in to the third lung. Because it is not as efficient as their normal lungs, END is reduced by half when breathing water. Costs $1,500 +$500 surgery costs.

Death Borgs

Death Borgs

Death Borgs are the street name for any implant that activates upon the death (usually brain death) of the implant's owner. The purpose of a Death Borg is typically to deter would-be murderers, and thus the Death Borgs have large, flashy chrome protrusions (typically on the forehead). All Death Borg implants can be controlled by tapping on the protrusion in a pre-set sequence. The implant can be disarmed or forced to prematurely go off. See p.341 for more.

Death Borg (Combustion)- This Death Borg is meant to remove a dead body, and is installed mostly in people going in to covert missions. If the user's heart stops beating for 2 rounds, capsules of a liquid propellant burst open all over the body. The body bursts in to flames and burns at extremely high temperatures, reducing the body (and anything within a few feet) to ashes within 2 minutes. Anyone within 5 ft. when the capsules burst takes 3 burn damage, anyone touching the owner takes 5 burn damage. The implant can be activated by the owner with his or her own tongue using sensors on the roof of the mouth. Costs $3,000 +$500 surgery costs.

Death Borg (Explosive-Large)- If the user's heart stops beating for 2 rounds, a large incendiary and shrapnel based explosive, located in the owner's chest, explodes, doing 20 burn and 10 bladed (pierces armor as 20) damage with an incremental range of 5 ft. (for every 5 ft. away the victim is, halve the damage). Costs $4,000 +$750 surgery costs.

Death Borg (Explosive-Small)- If the user's heart stops beating for 2 rounds, a small container of explosives in the victim's chest explodes, doing 10 burn and 5 bladed (pierces armor as 10) damage with a range increment of 3 ft. Costs $1,000 +$500 surgery costs.

Death Borg (Fake)- This is a Death Borg protrusion designed to look exactly like the real thing, although it connects to nothing. Costs $200 +$200 surgery costs.

Death Borg (Tagging)- This Death Borg is meant to insure that a murderer will be caught. When the owner of the implant dies, small explosive charges explode causing a cloud of mist to fill the immediate area. The mist has two components: a powerful dye that stains skin bright blue, and an oil that smells strongly of skunk spray. Both of these are virtually impossible to remove from human skin (a moderate chemistry roll and painful exfoliation would be necessary). The implant also sends information out on to several radio frequencies (including police radio frequencies). The information contains the exact location (via a GPS unit inside the implant), time of death, and black-and-white pictures taken by a small digital camera in the Death Borg protrusion. Costs $1,500 +$500 surgery costs.

Death Borg (Zombie)- Created by the German military, this Death Borg allows a soldier to keep fighting even after being mortally wounded. If the user's heart stops beating for 2 rounds, the implant activates. The implant releases a powerful cocktail of drugs in to the bloodstream (compare to a Blood Plug and Thor-O-Zine) and reactivates the brain with a series of electric shocks. The owner experiences a painful strobing in-and-out of consciousness three times per second. This is very distracting and painful, but well trained soldiers with this implant have been able to keep fighting. The chemicals and shocks give +7 INCY, +5 END and +5 STH but are so distracting that the users suffers -3 AGY, -10 INL, -10 AWR. The heart will give out within 20 minutes and no known medical technique can get it started again. Costs $3,000 +$1,000 surgery costs.

Electronic Implants

Electronic Implants have the following characteristics (unless stated otherwise):

-No external protrusions (which would be an infection risk).

-Batteries are recharged via cheap AC chargers that beam electromagnetic energy through the skin to the implant. Recharging takes about 5 minutes.

-The implant connects to the nervous system via a pair of non-vital nerves (just as the Jack connects to nerves in the little finger).

-They are controlled via a small (1 MMU) sublingual interface mental program.

-The implant is shielded (PR 5 bladed 5 blunt) and is made from non-toxic materials, so there are few problems with the implant rupturing if it is hit with a knife or bullet.

-Scars from the implantation are barely visible after a few months. A medical skill roll is required to distinguish implantation scars from other types of scars.

360 Sight- Pinhole digital cameras are installed around the back, top and base of the PC's skull. The information from these cameras is piped in to the PC's visual system so that they see a series of transparent images in their peripheral vision that represent everything happening around them. Gives +10 to peripheral vision based AWR rolls. Long hear or headgear will obscure the cameras. Battery Life: 12 hours. Costs $300 +$100 surgery costs.

Backup Diaphragm- A piezoelectric web is placed around both lungs. It senses if the PC stops breathing and activates the web, causing the lungs to alternately inflate and deflate. Batteries Life: 8 hours. Gives +4 INCY. Costs $5,000 +$250 surgery costs.

Backup Heart- A tiny, electronically powered pump is placed in the chest cavity. If it senses that the heart has stopped beating, it starts pumping, shunting blood around the heart. It is not as powerful a pump as a heart (max. 1 END while it is pumping). Battery Life: 5 hours. Gives +2 BLD, +4 INCY. Costs $750 +$500 surgery costs.

Backup Oxygen- A tiny container is attached to the internal carotid arteries and monitors levels of oxygen in blood going to the brain. Oxygen is stored in a solid state (as CO_{12}) in a tiny container and is released in to the bloodstream when oxygen levels drop too low (0 END). For 10 rounds the PC has +3 INCY and cannot drop below 1 END. The oxygen imbued solid can be replaced via a needle stuck in to the implant at the base of the skull. Costs $800 +$300 surgery costs +$50 per refill.

Bone Locks- Each of the major bones are surgically severed, a bit of bone is shaved off and an electromagnetic lock is put in its place. The user can command the bones to lock and unlock. The user is given an ability to contort their body equivalent to a master contortionist, although the user must proceed carefully or risk damaging nerves, muscles and tendons. Costs $200 +$1,000 surgery costs.

Electronic Ears- The PC's ears are replaced with top-of-the-line electronic sound sensors. The PC can make out a whisper at 100 ft. but can not be deafened, even by a percussion grenade. Gives +7 to hearing based AWR rolls. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs $150 +$200 surgery costs.

Electronic Ears (3D)- Like the Electronic Ears, but a third sound sensor is placed in the back of the head. An electronic chip compares the sound from all three sound sensors and calculates the exact location and intensity of the originating sound source. This information is fed to a mental program that shows the sound source as a green spike in the user's field of vision. Reduces darkness/blindness penalties by half. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs $250 +$300 surgery costs.

Electronic Vestibular Organs- The vestibular organs (which sense balance and movement of the head) are removed and replaced with a small panel of nano-scale gyroscopes (the same as in Geoinfo Goggles, p.121). These gyroscopes can not be confused by being spun around or by blows to the head. Gives +7 to save vs. loss of balance. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs $200 +$200 surgery costs.

Finger Writer- The same particle-jet print head tech that lets printers put text and images on paper is installed on the tip of the user's finger. Ink is injected in to tiny holes in the implant. The implant comes with a mental program that transcribes sublingual speech and prints it out as the user passes his or her finger over any solid object. User can visually scan any kind of font or handwriting and reproduce it with the finger writer (gives +5 to forgery skill rolls). In conjunction with mental programs that store images, the writer can reproduce full color pictures. Comes with 1 free black ink cartridge. Specialty ink cartridges can let the writer print well on cloth, skin, print in color, in glow-in-the-dark ink, or even in ink visible only in the ultra-violet spectrum. Battery Life: 90 minutes. Costs $750 +$100 surgery costs +$5 per ink cartridge +$15 per specialty cartridge.

Hand Dagger- A small knife blade is hidden in the bones of the forearm. The blade slides out through a small slit at the base of the user's palm. The blade has an Easy Strike, does 2 bladed damage (pierces as 4). Costs $250 +$300 surgery costs.

Health Bug- A tiny metal disk which is implanted under the skin of the chest. Keeps track of general indicators of health: heart beat, breath rate, blood oxygenation and temperature. This information is broadcast up to ½ mile. Costs $50 +$20 surgery costs.

Internal Computer- A small computer is placed in the PC's abdominal cavity. It can communicate with most other computers within 5 ft. via wireless. The computer has Power 7, Memory 20 ZB. Battery life is 12 hours. Costs $400 +$250 surgery costs.

Internal Wireless Modem- A small cellular modem, equal in capabilities to Cellular Modem (p.101) allows a Terminal Mental Program (p.99) or Internal Computer (p.105) to access the internet. Costs $250 +$100 surgery costs +$5/week for cellular account (p.130).

Internal Psychic Sensor- A series of small electrochemical sensors are placed directly under the skin of the forehead. They have approximately the same capabilities of psychic goggles (p.122) allowing the user to see a grid of large pixels that glow to show psychic energy sources. Costs $2,500 +$150 installation.

Internal Radio Scanner- A rechargeable device in the stomach cavity has the same capabilities of a Radio Scanner (p.122). Allows the user to communicate sublingually on any radio channel, and can use simple encryption. Costs $75 +$100 surgery costs.

Inversion Thumb Tap- A set of high definition electromagnetic sensors in the thumb, operate just like a Line Tap: Inversion (p.102). Typically used with an Internal Computer (this page) or Emulator Mental Program (p.95) to allow the user to tap in to network connections as they travel through a wall. Costs $250 +$150 surgery costs.

Jack- This is one of the most common implants, it is also the least invasive and one of the cheapest. A tiny data jack is implanted in the base of the hand, tied to a sensory and motor nerve (a tiny bit of functionality in the little finger is lost, but it is seldom noticed). The Jack can allow mental programs to connect directly to computers and communication devices, or can allow users to control electronic devices sublingually or kinisthetically. Costs $100 +$100 surgery costs.

Micro Tentacle- A very small robotic tentacle with pincers on the end is placed inside the index finger. When activated it snakes out and the user has full kinesthetic control and feedback. Since the tentacle is very tiny it is excellent for fine manipulation. Gives +7 to Lock Picking, Surgery, Electronics Repair and Bomb Disarming skill rolls. Costs $150 +$50 surgery costs.

Nightvision Eye- Tiny electronic cameras are placed in the sclera (the white of the eye) right next to the iris. These cameras are extremely sensitive to light. They are useless in bright light, but when it gets dark they switch on and let the PC see a bright, clear view of his or her surroundings. The cameras are black and white and do not work in absolute darkness (which is very rare). Costs $500 +$150 surgery costs.

Scanning-Tunneling Finger- A tiny black dot on the tip of the PC's finger contains a scanning-tunneling microscope. When the dot is pressed to a surface, thousands of tiny piezoelectric arms sweep over the surface, building an atom-by-atom 3D view of the surface. This view can be seen in the PC's visual field. Costs $700 +$50 surgery costs.

Sexual Implant- This small electronic implant allows the user to control various physiological aspects of his or her genitals and adds the capacity to vibrate that some may find pleasurable. Costs $200 +$150 surgery costs.

Spectrographic Smell- A small tube in one nostril pulls air in to a spectrograph in the thoracic cavity. Has the same capabilities as Spectrograph (p.123). It also gives the user alerts if it senses particles consistent with explosives, firearms, drugs or biological weapons. Costs $1,500 +$200 surgery costs.

Temp Regulator- A rechargeable electronic device implanted in the thoracic cavity reacts to dangerous drops and increases in body temperature by warming or cooling the via electrochemical reactions. Gives +10 to save vs. hypothermia or heat exhaustion. Battery Life: 4 hours. Costs $250 +$100 surgery costs.

Third Eye- A powerful and versatile camera is placed somewhere on the user's head (most commonly between the eyes). Users typically close their eyes when they switch on the camera. The camera has nightvision, infrared, telescopic, ultra-violet and microscopic modes. The user can switch between modes mentally and the information from the camera feeds directly in to the visual system. Battery Life: 24 hours. Costs $750 +$50 installation.

Ultrasound Imager- Sensors in the PC's hands use sounds (higher than the human ear can hear) and their reflections to build a picture of the internal structure of an object. The implant is hooked up to the PC's visual system so that the PC only needs to place their palms on something and they 'see' an image of the object's insides. Gives +4 to Alarm Systems, Autopsy, Bomb Disarming, Vehicle Repair and Medical Diagnosis skill rolls. Battery Life: 8 hours. Costs $250 +125 surgery costs.

Voice Synth- The voicebox is removed and replaced with an electronic speaker. The owner can adjust the voicebox to mimic the vocal properties of any other person or to mimic sounds that the human voice is incapable of making. Gives +15 to voice impersonation rolls. The owner can also yell louder than most humans without tiring or hurting his or her voice. Costs $250 + $200 surgery costs.

Genetic Mods

Genetic Mods have the following characteristics (unless stated otherwise):

-Genetic mods must be specifically coded to the buyer's DNA.

-Come in a vial of clear liquid that is injected intramuscularly.

-Liquid contains a virus that inundates the PC's cells, changing the DNA, and then dies out.

-PC suffers the symptoms of a mild flu for about a week.

Genetic Mod: Anti-Toxin- The PC's body is changed to be able to resist many common toxins, including those used in chemical warfare. The PC has complete immunity to the most common and mundane poisons (nerve gas, most black market food and knife poisons,

Drake Blood Poison), takes only half damage from slightly more exotic toxins (the paralytic in Freedom Army daggers, Drake Glass Poison, Drake Knockout Drops, Drake Suicide Poison) and has no ability to resist very exotic toxins (including Drake Fungus Poison). Costs $1,500.

Genetic Mod: Healing- This mod increases the amount of chemical energy the PC's body devotes to healing injuries. The PC heals at a much faster rate than normal people (typically healing 2 BLD and 1 BDY per week) and things that would never heal on normal people (scars, amputations, paralysis) will eventually heal. The PC must eat twice as much as normal while healing. Costs $1,000.

Genetic Mod: Immune System- The PC's immune system is programmed to be doubly active and to target most known diseases. People with this mod usually develop a serious allergy (see Allergy: Incapacitating, p.47). There may also be occasional periods of skin rashes and sores on mucous membranes – this is the body's immune system mistakenly attacking the body. PC gets +15 to save vs. disease contraction and progression. The PC must eat twice as much as normal when exposed to or fighting illnesses. Costs $800.

Genetic Mod: Longevity- This mod causes the body to break down less quickly as it ages, and may even reverse some of the effects of aging. Nobody has been using this mod long enough to know how much it will increase human lifespan, but estimates are that a person may be able to live 150 to 200 years. Costs $1,500.

Genetic Mod: Night Prowler- Originally created by the Freedom Army for assassins, this modification causes a cyclical change in the taker. During the day, the taker is absolutely normal. When circadian rhythms signal that is it night-time, the PC's senses become much more acute (+10 to AWR rolls, must make saves vs. pain to avoid being stunned by strong stimuli). The PC's skin pigmentation also changes rapidly to match the amount of ambient light. It becomes lighter or darker, but does not change color. Gives the PC +8 to prowling rolls. Costs $2,000.

Genetic Mod: Size- This mod changes the body so that it will grow. The user will become taller, larger and more muscular. The mod stops before serious health problems result. Most people with this mod grow to be between six and seven feet tall. PC gains +3 BDY, +2 BLD, +5 STH (max 23), +2 SPD, +3 END. Costs $750.

Genetic Mod: Temperature- This mod increases the body's ability to keep itself warm and makes cells more able to resist damage from cold. PC gets +10 to save vs. hypothermia, takes only half damage from hypothermia and is at -4 to save vs. heat exhaustion. PC must eat twice as much as normal when exposed to cold weather. Costs $750.

Other Mods

Breath Filters- Tiny filters in the trachea remove particles (smoke, disease, tear gas, etc.). The nerves around the trachea are deadened so the owner does not feel like he or she is choking. The filter must be unlocked and replaced (by a professional) once a week. Costs $120 + $75 surgery costs +$20/wk. for replacements.

Cracks- This is a genetically engineered fungal disease, designed to be instantly recognizable and to deter anyone from touching the owner. The disease is coded to its owner so that the owner carries the disease without being harmed by it. Carriers are covered by long, thin, painless sores that glow in dim light. The disease lives on sweat and plasma that oozes from the sores. Non carriers who touch a carrier immediately develop a terrible fungal infection that destroys tissues, created skin boils and causes excruciating pain. The disease can kill a normal perfectly-healthy person in as little as 15 minutes. To non-carriers, Cracks has the following disease profile (see p.66 for disease rules):

Disease Contraction Rating: 30 (skin-to-skin contact), 40 (body-fluid contact).

Disease Progression Rating: 30.

Disease Progression Speed: 5 minutes.

Treatments: Pain killers, anti-inflammatories, intravenous antibiotics and antifungal creams can reduce the symptoms and keep the disease from spreading.

Symptoms (1x): Burning pain (20), red rash.

Symptoms (2x): Boils, swelling, burning pain (30), anaphylactic shock (20).

Symptoms (3x): Permanent disfigurement, burning pain (30), anaphylactic shock (30).

Costs $2,500.

Internal Armor- The owner is opened up and special secondary nanotech materials (puncture proof films, armor plates and reactive padding) are placed around or in front of vital organs and major arteries to protect from the types of damage typically done during combat. Because the armoring can interfere with the ability of surgeons to easily access vital areas, gives +7 to surgery skill roll difficulties. The armor halves any damage done to the owner. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $750 +$500 installation.

Mitochondrial Vampirism- A vial of the symbiotic virus that has been reconstructed by archeologists (that some researchers associated with vampire myths). Many of the samples of this virus available on the black market have been adulterated (mostly because buyers demanded something more 'vampire-like' instead of the real thing) and it's hard to tell what one will get when buying a vial. The vial usually contains a mild immunosuppressant (so the consumer's body doesn't kill off the disease before it can get inside the mitochondria). The disease has the following profile (see p.66 for disease rules):

Disease Contraction Rating: 40 (injecting virus filled fluid), 30 (swallowing virus fluid), 20 (body-fluid-contact), 10 (sexual contact).

Disease Progression Rating: 30.

Disease Progression Speed: 48 hours.

Treatments: Harsh antibiotics configured specifically to fight this disease can sometimes cure it.

Symptoms (1x): Fever, tiredness, voracious hunger.

Symptoms (2x): Permanently increased metabolism: +4 INCY, +4 BLD, +4 END, +2 STH, +2 SPD. Starvation damage accrues at four times to more than a thousand times as fast (depending on how much work is done in the absence of oxygen). At this point the virus has entered the mitochondria and the immune system can do little to fight the disease.

Costs $200 (for Risen) $2,000 (for others).

Pocket- The user has a nearly invisible crease in his or her flesh which can be opened to reveal a pocket about the size and shape of a rear pants pocket. The pocket is lined with puncture resistant secondary nanotech material (see Nanoweave Armor, p.119) so the user can carry things like needles and razor blades without fear of being hurt. Costs $100 +$150 surgery costs.

BIOTECH

Chemical

Chemical Features

Administered: How the drug is taken. Note that intravenous injections take a skill roll (using the skill Needles or most Bio/Med skills).

Effects: What the effects are of one dose of the drug. The effects are grouped by how long they last. Effects that can be saved against have the difficulty to save listed after them. E.g. "+7 STH, Vomiting (10), Unconsciousness (20) for 2 hours" means that for two hours the user gets +7 STH, must save vs. vomiting at 10 difficulty and vs. unconsciousness at 20 difficulty. Unless stated otherwise, users only have to make one save vs. each drug effect during the entire period of effects.

Withdrawal Effects: What effects the user experiences when the chemical starts to exit the user's system (unless stated otherwise, this is when all the Effects cease). The amount of time that Withdrawal Effects lasts is listed.

Tolerance: How much more of the chemical a user must use after having taken many doses. E.g. "+10% for every month of daily use (max. +50%)." means that for each month of daily use, the user must take an aggregate 10% more to get the same effects, with a maximum possible tolerance of +50%.

Addiction: When there is a possibility that a drug may be psychologically and/or physiologically addictive, the difficulties are listed here. Users must save vs. addiction based on the listed difficulties with +1 difficulty for each consecutive dose. The difficulty to resist drug cravings and any special circumstances which will trigger cravings is listed. E.g. Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15 means that if a PC uses 7 doses in a row he or she must make a roll of WIL + 1d20 vs. 22 or become psychologically addicted to the drug. See p.65 for the complete rules of addiction.

Long Term Effects: These are the additional effects on a user who uses the drug a lot over a long period of time. Length, frequency and effects are listed. E.g. the effects of using the drug 10 times within 24 hours might be listed, or the effects of using a drug daily for one year might be listed.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: These are the additional effects of withdrawal on a user who has been using the drug a lot over a long period of time.

Interactions: If there are any potential changes of effect when this chemical is taken along with other chemicals, they are listed here.

Overdose: Each chemical may have several overdose ratings. "Overdose (2x)" may list the effects of taking two doses at once, "Overdose (4x)" may list the effect of four doses.

Alcohol - One of the oldest medicinal and recreational drugs. In ancient times, weak alcoholic beverages were the only liquids people could drink without fear of bacterial and parasitic infections. Today, alcohol is the number one recreational drug and number one drug of abuse. Liquor stores are among the most profitable businesses in the city. In its purest form alcohol can be burned and it can be used as a disinfectant.

Administered: Orally as a liquid (can also be snorted or taken as an enema).

Effects: +4 to save vs. fear, +2 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-2 AGY), slower reactions (-2 to INL rolls based on speed of thought), pleasant buzz for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: The next day, sensitivity to stimuli (-10 to save vs. pain/dose), nausea (10 difficulty/dose), headache (10 difficulty/dose) for 6 hours.

Tolerance: +1% for every dose (max. +500%). Note that tolerance disappears when liver damage sets in (see Long Term Effects).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 15, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15, Craving Difficulty 15 (cravings triggered by anxiety).

Long Term Effects: For every two years of daily use: brain damage (-1 INL, -1 AWR), permanent Retrograde Amnesia and Anterograde Amnesia (at 2 cumulative difficulty), liver damage (-1 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

Long Term Withdrawal: After 1 month or more of daily use the user experiences delirium tremens: Hallucinations (30), Delusions (30), Panic (20), confusion (-10 INL), Insomnia (30), fever, sweating, Seizures (10), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Cardiac Arrest (10).

Overdose (2x): Vomiting (20), +10 to save vs. fear, +6 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-10 AGY), confusion (-10 INL), loss of inhibitions for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (30), Coma (20), Seizures (20) for 6 hours.

Overdose (8x): Coma (30), Seizures (30) for 6 hours. Liver damage (permanent -4 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

Costs $1/dose for pruno (home-brewed alcohol made from canned fruit, bitter tasting, found in prisons and some wino encampments).

Costs $1/dose for fortified wine or beer (wine or beer with extra alcohol added, this is the most common drink of winos because it provides the most alcohol per dollar).

Costs $2/dose for canned beer, beer on tap, or a shot of liquor (at a bar or convenience store).

Costs $5/dose for good quality beer, wine or other alcoholic beverage.

Costs $15/dose for very high quality alcoholic beverage.

Costs $10/dose for absinthe (an illegal alcoholic drink that also had mild psychedelic properties comparable to herbal psychedelic, p.112).

See also Honeybrew (p.112).

Amnesient

Administered: Intravenously

Effects: Retrograde Amnesia (40), -4 INL, -2 AGY, blurred vision (-4 to vision based AWR rolls) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Dry throat, Headache (20) for 1 day.

Overdose Effects (2x): -6 INL, -4 AGY, Seizures (20).

Overdose Effects (4x): Unconsciousness (30), Seizures (30), permanent brain damage (-4 INL, loss of memories and skills).

Long Term Effects: For every 5 doses: Brain damage (permanent -1 INL).

Amphetamines- A prescription drug and drug of abuse since the 1930s.

Administered: Orally as pills (also sniffed, smoked and injected).

Effects: Excitement, pleasure, +10 to save vs. loss of consciousness for 5 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Dysphoria (10), anxiety (-4 to save vs. fear), Insomnia (20) for 24 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 10, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 20.

Long Term Effects: After 4 doses in 24 hours: Hallucinations (20 +10/additional dose), Delusions (20 +10/additional dose). After 1 month of daily use: ulcers, malnutrition (-1 BLD, -1 BDY).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 4 doses in 24 hours: Dysphoria (20), Anxiety (-8 to save vs. fear), Insomnia (30), Trembling (-5 AGY) for 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Normal Effects plus Difficulty Breathing/ Irregular Heartbeat (-10 END) for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Seizures (20), Coma (20) for 5 hours.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs $5/dose.

Antibiotics

Administered: Orally as pills

Effects: +8 to save vs. disease progression for bacterial, fungal and parasitic infections.

Overdose Effects (4x): Nausea (20).

Long Term Effects: For every use, 2% chance of developing antibiotic resistant strain. For every course of antibiotics which is not completed the chance increases to 10%.

Costs $50 for a full 2 week course ($500 during a bacterial plague outbreak).

Antibiotics (Severe)- Usually reserved for fighting antibiotic resistant strains, this selection of powerful antibiotics has severe side effects.

Administered: Intravenously.

Effects: +12 to save vs. disease progression for bacterial, fungal and parasitic diseases. Hair loss, joint pain (-5 AGY), Vomiting (20), liver damage (permanent -4 to save vs. poison/ drug effects), digestive system damage (very sensitive digestive system for 3 months).

Costs $200 for a full 2 week course ($2,000 during a bacterial plague outbreak).

Anti-Nauseant

Administered: Intramuscular Injection

Effects: +15 to save vs. nausea for 4 hours

Costs $10/dose.

Anti-Psychotic- A cocktail of drugs meant to treat hallucinations, delusions, bizarre thinking and inappropriate emotions that can be brought on by schizophrenia, a severe manic episode, stimulant drug induced psychosis or severe psychological trauma.

Administered: Orally as pills or intra-muscular injection.

Effects: +10 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, mild sedation, Dysphoria (10). Lasts 24 hours.

Long Term Effects: Because the pills have an anhedonic (loss of ability to feel pleasure) effect, regular uses must make weekly WIL rolls (10 difficulty) to continue taking the drug willingly.

Overdose (2x): -5 AWR, -5 INL, +20 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, Dysphoria (20) for 24 hours.

Overdose (4x): Tardive Dyskenesia (permanent -4 AGY due to brain damage), Stupor (20) for 24 hours.

Costs $10/dose.

Saving Vs. Drug Effects

When a chemical lists an effect with a difficulty next to it, users must save vs. that effect. E.G. if a certain dose of a drug causes Seizures (20) the user must save vs. seizures at difficulty 20 or suffer seizures. What follows are the attributes used to save and the effects of a failed save:

Anaphylactic Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/ depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

Headache (WIL): -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage (see p.64) as 1 night without sleep.

Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL): Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible of physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Unless specified otherwise, lasts 1 round per point of failure.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Anti-Shock- A drug that helps keep the body from going in to shock after a physical trauma or systemic infection.

Normal Dose: +10 to save vs. trauma or anaphylactic shock for 2 hours.

Costs $15/dose.

Anti-Toxin Kit- A small plastic box (a little bigger than a paperback book). Inside are 15 pre-loaded syringes (anti-venoms and anti-toxins for common poisons) and a small blood tester attached to the kit. Blood samples are touched to the tester and an LCD readout recommends which syringe(s) to use and how much. Note that not all poisons have an anti-toxin available. Also note: randomly sticking someone with anti-toxins and anti-venoms can easily kill them. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $500 +$1d10x10 per replacement syringe.

Anti-Viral- A cocktail of drugs that interferes with the reproduction of viruses.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +7 to save vs. disease progression from viral diseases.

Long Term Effects: For every use, 2% chance of developing anti-viral resistant strain.

Costs $35 got a full 7 day course.

Anxiolytic- These pills are designed to help people with panic disorders by reducing anxiety and stress.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +5 to save vs. fear for 24 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every month of daily use (max. +50%).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 15 (cravings triggered by fear or worry).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 1 month of daily use: -10 to save vs. fear.

Overdose (2x): +10 to save vs. fear, -3 AGY, -2 INL, -2 AWR, -5 to save vs. unconsciousness for 24 hours.

Overdose (4x): Unconsciousness (30), Coma (10) for 24 hours.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs $7/dose.

Awake Inhaler

Administration: Inhaled orally.

Effects: +15 to save vs. unconsciousness/coma (if patient is already unconscious he or she can make a save to wake up), nervousness (-7 to save vs. fear), shaking (-4 AGY), difficulty paying attention (-7 to most INL based skill rolls) for 10 minutes.

Withdrawal Effects: Tiredness (-4 END) for 2 hours.

Overdose (2x): Difficulty breathing (-10 END), muscle cramps (-10 AGY), Hallucinations (10) for 15 minutes.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Seizures (30) for 20 minutes.

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs $100 for a 10 dose inhaler.

Blood Plugs- A metal vial with a strong, thick needle. The blood plugs contains a variety of stimulants, sugars and oxygenated chemicals.

Administration: Injection directly in to the heart (requires skill roll).

Effects: +3 BLD, +2 END, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness for 1 hour.

Overdose (2x): No additional effects.

Bought From: Pharmacy (with Prescription), Black Market Traders, Needle Punks, Black Meds.

Legality: Permit ($500 fine)

Costs $75

Bright- This drug increases the sensitivity of sensory neurons and stimulates the parts of the brain that interprets sensory stimuli. Unpleasant sensations become more unpleasant, pleasant sensations become more pleasant and all sensations become much more acute.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +5 AWR, -7 to save vs. pain/nausea, sensitivity to loud sounds, bright lights, strong smells, etc. for 2 hours.

Overdose (2x): Painful hypersensitivity (must save vs. pain for any sensory stimuli), hallucinations (30) that things are vibrating for 2 hours.

Overdose (4x): Seizures (30) for 2 hours.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 4 consecutive doses: -4 AWR for 24 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every week of daily use (max. +400%).

Interactions: Doubles the effects of hallucinogens.

Legality: Licensed (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $15/dose

Caffeine

Administration: Orally

Effects: +4 to save vs. unconsciousness for 2 hours.

Tolerance: +10% for every year of regular use, max +%100

Addiction: Physiological addiction difficulty 1, craving difficulty 5 (cravings triggered by sleep deprivation).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: -4 to save vs. unconsciousness, Headache (10) for 2 days.

Overdose (2x) +7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Overdose (4x): Shaking/cramps (-4 AGY).

Costs $0.75/dose for a large cup of coffee (a cup of hot coffee in a paper cup is also a good way to warm up your hands after a long cold night on the streets).

Costs $1.50/dose for an espresso shot.

Costs $0.50/dose for a caffeine pill (usually used by stressed out corporate employees whose stomachs are too sensitive for coffee).

Costs $0.25/dose for a teabag full of green tea and guarana (herbs with as much caffeine and caffeine-like chemicals as coffee).

Costs $1.00/dose for a large caffeinated soda from a convenience store.

Chomper- The first drug created by the Drug Lords. Chomper is no longer aggressively marketed. Most Chomper addicts are now dead or have become Hungry (see p.220).

Administration: Intravenous injection.

Effects: Pleasurable mood swings, anxiety reduction (-7 to save vs. fear), grinding of teeth for 6 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: After 16 hrs. without using the drug: shortness of breath (-5 END), Panic (20), vertigo (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Headache (20) for 4 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Hair/teeth loss (-5 to seduction rolls), liver damage (-1 to save vs. poison/drug effects per month of daily use), anemia (-1 BLD/year of daily use).

Overdose (2x): Endocrine collapse (certain parts of the endocrine system necrotize, death within 4 hours unless given an experimental endocrine control implant).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $5/dose from Drug Lords.

Costs $20/dose from Black Market Traders and Goods.

Cigarettes- Cigarettes contain nicotine which has a mild calming effect (although the effect is mostly from breathing deeply, not from smoking) and is a weak anti-psychotic (which is why so many schizophrenics self-medicate by smoking). Cigarettes can be used in self-defense by burning opponents (hard blinding, hard pain/stun). Cigarettes have the following drug profile:

Effects: +2 to save vs. fear, +2 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 1 hour.

Tolerance: +10% for every month of regular use (max +200%).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 20 (cravings triggered by stress or any activity which was previously always followed by a cigarette).

Long Term Effects: Emphysema (-1 END/2 yrs. Smoking), increased risk of cancer and stroke.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: -4 to save vs. fear, -4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, headache (20), food cravings.

Overdose (2x): Nausea (20) for 1 hour.

Costs $3/12 doses for roll-your-own (usually smoked by homeless people because it is the cheapest and requires the smoker to have a lot of free time).

Costs $5/12 doses for generic pack (usually smoked by wells and people on minimum wage because they are the cheapest ready-to-smoke cigarettes).

Costs $7/12 doses for reservation cigarettes (usually smoked by traditionalists or the paradoxical health-conscious smoker because they are pure tobacco with no additives, genetic modifications or pesticides).

Costs $7/12 doses for clove cigarettes (usually smoked by Indies because they are trendy and don't smell as objectionable as most other cigarettes).

Compliance Drops- Usually used to drug someone before a kidnapping, rape or robbery. Also used as a "truth serum."

Administration: Orally as tasteless liquid.

Effects: Confusion (-10 AWR, -10 INL), Sudden Amnesia (20), anxiety (-10 to save vs. fear), timidness (-10 WIL, must make INL or WIL rolls to avoid following any order), physical weakness (-10 STH, -10 SPD, -5 AGY), Anterograde Amnesia (20) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headache (20), blurry vision (-10 to AWR based rolls), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance) for 24 hours.

Overdose (2x): Unconsciousness (40), Coma (30), Pulmonary Arrest (20) for 4 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $20/dose.

Contraceptive Pills- Available for men or women. One pill lasts 30 days. Costs $25/dose.

Escape- Originally designed as a psychiatric drug for short-term treatment of emotional trauma, now a major street drug. Escape addiction is a little like suicide: all the bad things in the abuser's life cease to matter, but so do the good things. Abusers sleep-walk thought life, driven by the habit of self-preservation but not caring about anything. Because of their inability to feel pleasure, the Hungry are immune to most addictions, but not to Escape addiction.

Administration: Orally as pills or smoked as powder.

Effects: Depersonalization (feeling that everything one experiences is happening to somebody else, +15 to save vs. anger/fear/pain/euphoria/dysphoria), -5 WIL for 24 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: None.

Long Term Effects: Steady, slow loss of personality and ability to sleep, poor vision (-1 to vision based AWR rolls per year of use).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 20, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Catatonia (20), coughing blood (2 BLD damage).

Overdose (4x): Catatonia (40), coughing blood (8 BLD damage).

Legality: Licensed (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $20/dose.

General Anesthetic- Used to make a patient unconscious and unresponsive to pain during surgery. Requires a medical skill roll to apply the right dosage (see underdose and overdose).

Administration: Intravenously.

Effects: Unconsciousness (50), immunity to pain, Anterograde Amnesia of events immediately preceding administration, for 1 hour.

Overdose (1.25x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Pulmonary Attack (30).

Underdose (0.75x): Stupor (40), extreme pain may cause the body to go in to shock.

Long Term Effects: Mild brain damage: -1 INL for every 10 uses.

Costs $50/dose.

Glucose- Blood sugar. It is injected when a patient is in danger of going in to convulsions from diabetic insulin shock or in danger of metabolic collapse in patients with mitochondrial vampirism (p.107). Costs $5/dose in a pre-loaded syringe.

God Killer- Displaced crack cocaine in 2061 as the #1 illegal drug in the city and was only recently displaced by the "new generation" drugs. There are still a huge number of god killer addicts in the city, and most violent burglaries, muggings and robberies are committed by people under the influence of god killer who are stealing to feed their god killer habit. God killer causes an intensely pleasurable stimulant rush and an equally pleasurable feeling of megalomania and invulnerability (see p.379 for more).

Administrasion: Smoked.

Effects: Intense pleasure and excitement, +15 to save vs. pain/fear/unconsciousness, Delusions (30) (delusions are of grandeur, megalomania, solipsism, invulnerability) for 3 hours.

Overdose (2x): Psychotic rage (30), +4 STH, +4 INCY, immunity to pain, Cardiac Arrest (10).

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), psychotic rage (40).

Long Term Effects: Emphysema (-1 END/yr. of use), increased risk of cancer, brain damage (-1 INL and -1 AWR per 2 yrs. of use).

Withdrawal Effects: Anxiety (-7 to save vs. fear) for 24 hours.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for 1 month: Panic (30).

Tolerance: +10% per month of regular use (max +50%).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 20, Craving Difficulty 30 (cravings triggered by feelings of helplessness or low self esteem).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $7/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs $10/dose from Black Market traders, Goods.

Hallucinogen- For the most part this is a recreational drug (though there are those that use hallucinogens for religious, psychic, psychological, artistic or philosophical purposes).

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: Hallucinations (20), +4 AWR, +2 INL for 5 hours.

Long Term Effects: For every 10 uses, permanent -1 to save vs. Hallucinations/Delusions.

Overdose (2x): Obfuscating Hallucinations (20), Delusions (20), Panic (10).

Overdose (4x): Obfuscating Hallucinations (40), Delusions (40), Panic (20).

Legality: Forbidden (2 yrs. prison)

Costs $10/dose

Herbal Abortifacient- A matchbox full of ground herbs is swallowed whole. 75% chance of causing an abortion during early pregnancy. The mixture causes Vomiting (30), fever, weakness (-1 BLD, -10 END), Cardiac Arrest (10) for 1 day. Costs $10/dose.

Herbal Aphrodisiac- A packet of herbs, to be made in to tea, which contains mild stimulants, mild euphoriants, inhibition reducers and herbs that increase the flow of blood to the extremities. It does not cause love and only increases sexual desire if there was some amount of sexual desire to start with. Gives +4 to seduction rolls against the drinker. Costs $3/dose.

Herbal Cleanser- A packet of herbs which, when drunk as tea, causes the drinker to run a mild fever, sweat a lot and urinate a lot. Increases the speed that toxins are flushed out of the body. Costs $4/dose.

Herbal Emetic- A packet of dried, chopped leaves and roots. When swallowed whole, they cause immediate vomiting (30 difficulty to save). Costs $1/dose.

Herbal Psychedelic- This collection of herbs has many of the same effects of a hallucinogen but with no actual hallucinations. The user experiences mild euphoria (+2 to save vs. pain/fear), increased psychic senses and attention to details (+4 to psychic and fine detail AWR rolls, -4 to other AWR rolls), unusual and creative thoughts (+4 to creative skills rolls) and difficulty keeping attention on one line of thought (-4 to most INL based skill rolls) and susceptibility to other hallucinogens (-8 to save vs. hallucinations and delusions) for 3 hours. Costs $5/dose.

Herbal Sedative/Painkiller- A paper packet of herbs grown in vacant lots by Black Meds. The herbs are made in to a tea, which tastes strongly of peppermint and other bitter herbs. Includes valerian, poppy, skullcap and chamomile. Prescribed for sleeplessness (+4 to save vs. insomnia), anxiety (+4 to save vs. fear) and pain (+4 to save vs. pain). Mildly addictive (0 addiction difficulty, 10 craving difficulty). Costs $1/dose.

Herbal Stimulant- A small packet of herbs to be made in to tea. The main stimulant chemicals are caffeine and ephedra (a chemical related to amphetamines, although much weaker). The tea is often prescribed for symptom relief for flues and colds, to help a person stay awake, or occasionally to combat mild depression. Gives +4 to save vs. unconsciousness/dysphoria and +1 END for 4 hours. Costs $1.

Herbal Vermifuge- A large packet of herbs, makes a cloudy bitter tea. When drunk the tea helps to flush parasites out of the digestive system (+4 to save vs. disease progression for parasites). Costs $3/dose.

Herbal War Drugs- This is one of the most exotic herbal preparations the Black Meds sell. This preparation is only found in the city (it is a unique mix of herbal traditions, including Zulu, Cree and others). The perpetrations comes in two parts: a small packet of herbs is chewed like chewing tobacco, and rags which have been dipped in herbal extracts are wrapped around the legs and dampened with alcohol. The combination makes the user feel excited, stronger, braver and slightly numb. Gives +1 STH, +1 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness, -4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions, +4 to save vs. pain/fear for 4 hours. The next day the user suffers from -4 END. Costs $10/dose.

Herbal Withdrawal Tea- A small packet of herbs, to be made in to tea, contains herbs which help lessen the effects of withdrawal from common drugs. Contains mild sedatives, eurphoriants and painkillers (the idea is to sleep through as much of withdrawal as possible). Gives +4 to save vs. drug cravings. Costs $2/dose.

Herbal Wound Cleanser- A bleached sock stuffed with herbs, should be dampened and put over a wound to decrease the chance of infection. +4 to save vs. disease contraction from injuries. Costs $5/dose.

Honeybrew- When the indie gang the Honeys was destroyed by the Skin Borgs (see p.355) many of their specially brewed psychoactive alcoholic drinks ended up on the black market. However, Honeys made a practice of not labeling their bottles until giving them away (as their loving creators, the honeys knew each drink by sight). The brews are made with genetically engineered herbs, fruits, cactuses and other ingredients which usually have strong and exotic psychoactive constituents, chemicals that most city dwellers have never had. Some are uppers, some are downers, some are hallucinogens, some are smart drugs, some are mild euphoriants, some are odd combinations that can not be described in a few words. They are not as intense as most street drugs, and not of much interest to addicts, but more casual drug users find the unique effects interesting. They are also prized as trophies of wealth and prestige and they are also valued for the sense of danger that comes in taking a drug with unknown effect. Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison). Costs $500 for unlabeled, $900 for labeled.

Honeybrews

Here are a few of the most common honeybrews one might find. They represent a few of the most common brews, though there are many hundreds of other batches, some so bad that most bottles were destroyed and some that were so good they have almost all been consumed.

Absinthe Surprise- A clear, bright green liquid in a short, squarish bottle with a silver cap. It tastes strongly like anise but with an intensely bitter taste that stays in the mouth for a few hours. The effects are mild hallucinations and delusions: the drinker feels that all senses are crystal clear and that anything one imagines is somehow real. Emotional states, good or bad, are enhanced. There is a small chance of out-of-body hallucinations. Drinking to 0much causes obfuscating hallucinations.

Faces In Things- A clear pinkish-brown liquid in a tall black glass wine bottle. Tastes like a crisp white wine mixed with dirt and roots (especially ginseng). Drinkers experience a very mild feeling that everything looks like a face (this may be a placebo effect caused by the name). The user also feels strong and vigorous. They want to go out and exercise – any strenuous use of muscles feels pleasant. There is an anesthetic effect, but it is rarely noticed. People who drink this on an empty stomach sometimes vomit. Drinking too much causes cramps and vomiting.

San Pedro Sunrise- A deep yellow liquid in a nearly spherical glass bottle studded with pebbles. Tastes like watered down, slightly slimy, tequila. It has a strong hallucinogenic effect. Drinkers see colorful geometric patterns, feel that their bodies are changing, and lose the ability to sense time, size and distance. Drinkers with a religious or mystical bent have a persistent feeling of "sacredness." Drinking too much causes obfuscating hallucinations.

Dark Datura Mistress- A tall slim bottle containing a dark green liquid. It tastes like a sangria or merlot wine; very fruity, with a strange taste much like a nut or a root. It smells much like corn flakes. The effects are flushed face, mild sexual excitement, poor impulse control, sensation of floating or flying, feelings of being "powerful," hallucinations of voices (usually saying tempting or erotic things). Despite all these effects, drinkers are very rarely aware that they are intoxicated and suffering drug effects. Afterwards, memories of what happened are poor. When people drink a lot, they suffer bizarre behavior and delusions and will not later remember anything that happened.

Dionysian Feast- Comes in old green wine bottles with the labels stripped. The bottles are filled with a milky, brown-green carbonated liquid. It tastes like very hoppy beer with a mild taste of milk or butter. Drinkers feel intense hunger and will eat until completely stuffed, enjoying the taste of every bite of food. After becoming stuffed, drinkers typically lie down and sit motionless for hours, feeling a satisfied euphoria. Drinking too much seems to have no ill effects.

Gold Knockout- A brick shaped gold-tinted glass bottle with a gold cap. Inside is a clear liquid with gold flakes (about $5 worth of gold). It tastes like vodka and aspirin.

Drinkers feel an intense, manic excitement which lasts about an hour, then intense drowsiness (most drinkers fall asleep), followed by a pleasant sedation that lasts about two days.

Mad Dog Mead- Tall, cylindrical clear glass bottle, usually fitting snugly in a smoke-damaged cardboard box. The bottle is filled with an amber colored liquid that tastes like mead (fermented honey) with an aftertaste like sour milk. The drinkers' muscles tighten, leading to a hunched-over posture and an involuntary grimace. Drinkers start to feel that their minds are working to a beat (typically 80 to 160 beats per minute). It feels like each "beat" will bring another thought that is the logical conclusion of the last thought. Thoughts feel clear, strong and undeniably correct. Drinkers do perform much better at cognitive tasks (equivalent to Maxin), but whenever they make a mistake they cannot be convinced that they were wrong. People who drink too much have a paradoxical paranoia and euphoria: they think people are out to get them, but they are too happy to care. Some people who drink a lot have suffered strokes.

Russian Tequila- A tube-shaped, clear glass bottle with a white plastic cap. It contains a clear, slightly brownish liquid with a small segmented worm at the bottom. The drink is actually just normal tequila. The worm is genetically engineered to live at the bottom of the bottle in a state of suspended animation. If swallowed whole, the worm will wake up and sting the mouth, throat or stomach of the swallower with a highly psychoactive venom. A person who is stung becomes physically weak, experiences strong hallucinations and delusions (which they may continue to believe for days after the venom has worn off). Many people have delusions of being given messages by powerful beings or of having objects placed inside their bodies. About one in twenty people who are stung stop breathing.

Purple Rice Wine- Small, bowling-pin shaped faux-China bottle with hand-painted flowers. The liquid is clear with a slight purple tinge. Tastes like sake (Japanese rice wine). Drinkers experience blind spots, cold tingling limbs, fidgeting, dissociation (everything that happens feels like a memory being remembered), reduction of emotion, inability to correctly estimate the passage of time and hallucinations of faint music or other pleasant background noises. The most unique effect is delusions, most of which have a death motif (PC is dead, PC is dying, everyone but PC is dead, etc.) but which are quite pleasant. Any stress or anxiety a person was under goes away, but when the drug starts to wear off the stress and anxiety comes back so strongly that drinkers may panic or even commit suicide.

Belly Fire- Glass hip-flasks are filled with amber colored liquid with red and purple chili peppers floating at the top and sunk to the bottom. It tastes like a cross between brandy and sweet and sour sauce and is very hot. The effects are an immediate sensation of warmth in the mouth and belly that quickly spreads to the whole body. The body's core temperature actually rises a few degrees, and the user has a sensation of being clean, refreshed and impervious to cold. Drinkers have been known to walk around in blizzards without jackets and freeze to death. Drinking too much is very hard on the stomach and most people vomit.

Hummingbird- This drug semi-permanently increases the user's metabolism so that they are in a constant energetic state (except when taking short naps).

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: Feeling of stimulation and energy, +1 INL, +2 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness, +4 to save vs. hypothermia.

Long Term Effects: After taking 30 doses in 2 months: +4 END, +2 STH, +2 SPD, +8 to save vs. hypothermia, double damage from starvation. Effects disappear within 1 month after discontinuing use of Hummingbird.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (10).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $20/dose.

Ipecac- Causes immediate vomiting when swallowed.

Costs $5/dose.

Local Anesthetic- Used for numbing body parts.

Administration: Injected in to tissues.

Effects: Insensitivity to pain in given area for 1 hour.

Overdose Effects (2x): Dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Light-headedness (-4 INL), Vomiting (10) for 1 hour.

Costs $5/dose.

Love Drops- Some people use this drug consentually to enhance their experiences. Others illicitly slip it in to drinks to increase the chances of compliance to sexual advances. Note that, in the culture of the streets, drugging someone without their knowledge is a crime worthy of death.

Administered: Orally as a clear, tasteless liquid.

Effects: Feelings of love, empathy, sexual desire, loss of inhibitions, -2 WIL, -2 AWR, -2 INL, +10 to seduction rolls for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headache (10), tiredness (-4 END) for 24 hours.

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 2, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Hallucinations (20), shortness of breath (-10 END), Cardiac Arrest (10) for 2 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $15/dose.

Mauler- A major drug of abuse, one of the new-generation drugs created by the Drug Lords, marketed aggressively (by holding people down and forcing them to take it) and sold almost exclusively by the Drug Lords. Mauler is best known for its long term addicts, who spend most of their days roaming the streets in packs in an irrational, animal-like state. It is sold as small squares of paper with complex symbols on them (designed to make counterfeiting the drug harder).

Administration: Paper held under tongue.

Effects: Narrowing of Attention (+8 AWR to whatever the PC is paying attention to, -15 AWR for everything else), Euphoria (10), excitement (+4 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 8 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Burning-itching sensation on skin (save vs. distracting pain, 20 difficulty).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Steady loss of ability for rational thought. For every month of regular use user suffers -1 INL. By 2 years the user is mostly irrational, operates via habit and instinct.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for at least 1 week: Burning-itching (must save vs. pain at 40 difficulty or the user will do serious damage to himself or herself by scratching).

Overdose (2x): Loss of blood pressure (-10 END, -5 INL, -5 AGY, -5 STH, -5 SPD), loss of body heat (-15 to save vs. hypotherma).

Overdose (4x): Coma (30), loss of body heat (-30 to save vs. hypothermia).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $5/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs $20/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Maxin- The most powerful smart drug to date. Although its effects are generally unpleasant, some people became psychologically addicted to it because they dislike feeling "stupid" then they are not on the drug.

Administration: Inhaler.

Effects: +6 INL, +1 WIL, +1 AWR, excitation (+4 to save vs. unconsciousness), irritability (-4 to save vs. fear/anger/pain/nausea) for 2 hours.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (20), Stroke (20).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (40), Stroke (40).

Long Term Effects: Weakened bones (-1 BDY/yr. of daily use).

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 5, Craving Difficulty 20. Cravings triggered by any activity which requires high INL.

Withdrawal Effects: Pleasant sedation (-8 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Long Term Withdrawal: User is plagued by constant feelings of being mentally impaired.

Interactions: Mixing with other smart drugs will overstimulate the brain and decrease INL.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $50 for 10 dose inhaler.

Minty Eye Drops- An import from Japan, a tiny plastic bottle containing saline with mint and herbal extracts that are absorbed in to the bloodstream and make the user feel enlivened and alert. Gives +2 AWR, +2 END, +4 to save vs. unconsciousness for 15 minutes. Costs $10 for 12 doses.

Non-Opiate Painkillers- These pain-killers are not as powerful as opiate painkillers, but they are non-addictive and have fewer side-effects and are thus available over-the-counter.

Administration: Orally as pills.

Effects: +4 to save vs. pain.

Interactions: Can cause liver damage when combined with alcohol.

Overdose (2x): Nausea (20).

Costs $0.25/dose.

Opiates- Used as a painkiller and a drug of abuse. Despite improvements in pharmaceutical technology, Opiates are still the best pharmaceutical way to relieve pain.

Administration: Orally as pills (some abusers snort or inject it).

Effects: +10 to save vs. pain, +5 to save vs. fear, -3 INL, -3 AGY, euphoria (10) for 6 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Difficulty sleeping, -4 to save vs. pain/fear.

Tolerance: +10% per week of daily use (max +200%).

Long Term Effects: After daily use for a month: weakened immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After daily use for a month: cramps (roll vs. distracting pain), Insomnia (30), flu-like symptoms, diarrhea for 7 days.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 5, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 1, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): +16 to save vs. pain, +7 to save vs. fear, -5 INL, -5 AGY, euphoria (20), unconsciousness (20) for 6 hours.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (10), fluid in lungs (-10 END).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs $4/dose.

Sedative- A generic sedative used to treat panic, psychosis, rage and insomnia.

Administration: Intramuscular injection.

Effects: +7 to save vs. fear/anger, +3 to save vs. pain, drowsiness (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness, +7 to save vs. insomnia), +4 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions.

Tolerance: +10% for each month of daily use (max. +50%).

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 0, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 0, Craving Difficulty 15.

Long Term Withdrawal Effects: After 1 week of daily use: Insomnia (20), Panic (10).

Overdose (2x): Unconsciousness (30), -4 INL, +10 to save vs. fear/anger.

Overdose (4x): Coma (30).

Overdose (8x): Cardiac Arrest (40).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs $3/dose.

Sibosin- This new drug eliminates the need for sleep without the stimulation and addictive potential of amphetamines. It has been made illegal because of instances of permanent inability to sleep (commonly followed by mental illness and suicide). It is illegal and is used by the street family the Insomniacs to give them increased psychic powers.

Administration: Orally as a little yellow pill with a terrible bitter aftertaste.

Effects: Inability to sleep, no damage from sleep deprivation, inability to become inured to details (must make saves vs. continual annoyances), +5 to psychic WIL rolls for 48 hours. Each time the drug is used there is a 1 in 20 chance of the effects becoming permanent (see p.172 for discussion of what happens next).

Long Term Effects: Any person who uses the drug for multiple days in a row gets +7 to psychic WIL rolls and must make WIL rolls to avoid mutilating their own bodies (at a difficulty of 10 per day, max. 30).

Overdose (2x): Same as normal effects, but increased (1 in 6) chance of permanent effects.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $10/dose for Insomniacs (who get special volume-discounts), $40/dose for anyone else.

Slave- The newest drug from the Drug Lords and a major bid to replace God Killer. Slave is probably the most addictive drug ever created (hence its street name).

Administration: Smoked (white pellets in a glass pipe).

Effects: Mellow excitement (user feels giddy but doesn't want to do anything), +7 to save vs. fear, -7 to save vs. hallucinations/delusions for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: What users call "the uglies": everything the user experiences, remembers or thinks about seems unbearably awful. Loss of willpower (-5 WIL). Lasts 1 week.

Addiction: Psychological Addiction Difficulty 40, Craving Difficulty 35.

Long Term Effects: Weight Loss (-½ BDY, -½ BLD per year of regular use), pale skin, liver damage (-1 to save vs.

poison/drug effects per year of regular use).

Overdose (2x): Diarrhea, Vomiting (30).

Overdose (4x): Brain swelling (if untreated will progress to seizures, brain damage and death).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $4/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs $10/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Smart Drugs- A combination of sugars, vitamins and drugs that increase brain activity.

Administration: Orally as pills or sugary drinks.

Effects: +4 INL, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Overdose (2x): +4 INL, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness, trembling (-2 AGY).

Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison)

Costs $4/dose.

Soma- A collection of herbs and mushrooms which, in ancient India, was made in to a tea for use as a pro-psychic hallucinogenic sacrament. It was rediscovered in 2075 and is gaining popularity on the black market. Soma makes a milky-greenish tea which tastes bitter and awful to those who have not "gained a taste for it" yet. In the city, the Tea Drinkers control most of the sources of soma for the city, so it is expensive to buy from anyone other than them.

Effects: Hallucinations (10), +4 to AWR based psychic rolls, +2 to WIL based psychic rolls, -2 to most INL based skill rolls for 4 hours.

Long Term Effects: After 1 year of daily use, gives semi-permanent +4 to AWR based psychic rolls, +2 to WIL based psychic rolls.

Overdose (2x): Obfuscating hallucinations and delusions (mostly of leaving the body and flying, bizarre patterns, of meeting mythical and archetypical figures and of transcending time and space) at 30 difficulty to save, +6 to AWR based psychic rolls, +4 to WIL based psychic rolls, -4 to INL based skill rolls for 5 hours.

Overdose (4x): Vomiting (20), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Obfuscating Hallucinations (40), Delusions (40), Panic (30), Euphoria (30) for 6 hours.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $10/dose from a Tea Drinker.

Costs $20/dose from a Black Market Trader.

Synth Blood- A self-warming pack of synthetic blood with an attached IV, used to replace blood in the field and often stolen from the backs of ambulances. Must be administered intravenously. Returns up to 4 BLD or INCY. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $100.

Thor-O-Zine- T Invented in the city and considered the best cocktail of war drugs available anywhere. Hyperstimulates the nervous system while reducing the ability to feel pain. Users feel something much like a small dose of God Killer: the feeling of invulnerability and great power, especially physical power.

Administered: Intravenously in the tongue.

Effects: Cramping of the tongue and jaw muscles (causing difficulty speaking), +10 to save vs. fear, +7 to save vs. unconsciousness, +7 to save vs. pain, +3 AGY, +2 INL, +4 STH, +3 END, +2 SPD, +2 INCY for 30 min.

Withdrawal Effects: Weakness (-2 STH, -2 END), -7 to save vs. unconsciousness.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 2, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 2, Craving Difficulty 20.

Overdose (2x): Muscle Cramps (-7 AGY), Seizures (20), +6 STH, +4 END, +4 INCY.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $50/dose.

Trace- One of the drugs created and marketed by the Drug Lords. Because only certain pushers are allowed to sell Trace and because Trace addicts have a distinctive look, addicts the Drug Lords want to "keep an eye on" are put on Trace (hence the name).

Administration: Intravenous injection.

Effects: Sedation (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness), Euphoria (10) for 4 hours.

Withdrawal Effects: Headaches (40), poor hearing and vision (-7 AWR) for 48 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 30, Craving Difficulty 30.

Long Term Effects: Weakened immune system (-1 to save vs. disease contraction/progression per 3 months daily use), arthritis (-1 AGY per year of daily use), skin turns reddish.

Overdose (2x): Paralysis (20), difficulty breathing (-10 END)

Overdose (4x): Paralysis (40), Pulmonary Arrest (20).

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $4/dose from the Drug Lords.

Costs $10/dose from Black Market Traders, Goods.

Zombine- This 'war drug' is a cocktail of different drugs, mostly illegal street drugs. It was previously the most popular war drug cocktail in the city before the Needle Punks crated Thor-O-Zine. It is valued for its ability to make users immune to pain and able to exert more physically, yet it has a short period of effectiveness and a crippling withdrawal.

Administration: Smoked as powdery white clumps.

Effects: Rapid heartbeat, +12 to save vs. pain, dissociation (+7 to save vs. fear/euphoria/ dysphoria), -4 to save vs. anger, increased vigor (+3 STH, +4 END, +4 INCY) for 15 minutes.

Overdose (2x): Cardiac Arrest (10), paralyzing dissociation (30, like euphoria or dysphoria except instead of feeling good or bad the user just doesn't care), +20 to save vs. pain, increased vigor (+4 STH, +4 END, +5 INCY) for Lasts 20 minutes.

Overdose (4x): Cardiac Arrest (30), paralyzing dissociation (30), muscle cramps (-10 AGY) for 30 minutes.

Withdrawal: Headache (20), weak and aching muscles (-2 STH, -2 END), Blurred vision (-10 to vision based AWR rolls), muscle tremors (-2 AGY) for 4 hours.

Addiction: Physiological Addiction Difficulty 4, Craving Difficulty 15.

Legality: Forbidden (4 yrs. prison)

Costs $40/dose.

Non-Chemical

Auto-Blood Test- Shaped like a flat pen with an LCD test readout on the side. Draws blood from a fingertip and tests for glucose level, 75 common drugs, 90 common toxins, disease indicators, 50 common diseases and other blood factors (oxygenation, red blood cell count, white blood cell count, electrolyte balance, etc.) Gives +7 to medical diagnosis skill rolls. They are supposed to be one-use only, though some wise old Black Meds have figured out how to open them up, clean them out and re-use them. Costs $3/ea. or 50 for $100.

Autosurgeons

Small robotic devices that do simple emergency medical procedures. They are nowhere near as good as a skilled medical practitioner with the proper tools. They are typically for emergency field use by untrained personnel.

Autosurgeon (Cardiopulmonary Support)- A mask is placed on the head. A robotic arm snakes in to the mouth and inserts an intubation tube in to the airway (the tube will attempt to suck out any airway obstructions) to pump air in and out of the lungs. An attached probe is placed on the ribcage: it monitors heartbeat, will use electric shocks to restart the heart and can insert a needle through the ribcage to pump air or blood out of the thoracic cavity that may impede the ability of the lungs to inflate. Altogether this does a very good job sensing cardiopulmonary health and administering emergency solutions. When EMTs are forced to work alone they often use one of these to maintain breathing while they drive or work on other problems. Gives +5 INCY. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $350.

Autosurgeon (Object Removal)- A large tube contains a battery powered device. A tiny robotic arm snakes in to a wound. Ultrasound and electrochemical sensors guide the arm to find and remove non-organic tissues and bone shards from a wound. The auto-surgeon self-sterilizes so it can be used multiple times. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $250.

Autosurgeon (Stitcher)- This electronic device looks like a hand-held mini-vac but with a blunt wedge at the end. When the wedge is placed in a wound it automatically cleans the wound, cauterizes ruptured blood vessels and stitches the wound up. Can restore up to ½ BLD per bladed injury and gives +4 to save vs. post-injury infection. The autosurgeon self-sterilizes so it can be used multiple times. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $200.

Autosyringe- Small electronic device, loads vials of liquid and injects a pre-set amount. It senses arteries and injects in to them automatically (no skill roll required for intravenous injection). It is so quick it is usually painless (moderate AWR check to even feel the prick). Automatically disinfects itself after each use. Costs $75.

Biowar Vaccine Kit- This series of injections immunizes the patient to all the major biological weapons that there are vaccines for. Typically given to soldiers, mercenaries and people who are likely to be victims of terrorist attacks. The vaccination gives +10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from Harmon, Markoff's Disease, Tetanus, Hepatitis, Anthrax, Smallpox, Bubonic Plague and others. Being given the vaccine causes the symptoms of a mild flu for about 4 days. About 1 in 10 people experience more serious reactions: 01-50%: severe flu symptoms (debilitating for 2 weeks), 51-75% auto-immune reaction and permanent-tissue damage (-2 STH, -2 END), 76-00%: shock (see p.65). Costs $250.

Carry Board- A lightweight board with handles for immobilizing and carrying wounded patients. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $150.

First Aid Kit (Black Med)- Made entirely from scavenged materials, typically comes in an old plastic case. Contains bleached rags, carpet needles, nylon thread, a sports-bottle of distilled water, a scalpel (made of a shard of razor blade melted in to a toothbrush handle), tweezers, duct tape, a vial of rubbing alcohol, a small flashlight, short metal rods (for splints), 1 dose Herbal Wound Cleanser, 2 doses Herbal Sedative/Painkiller, 1 dose Herbal Stimulant, 1 dose Herbal Febrifuge, 1 dose Herbal Emetic. Lets PCs use the Emergency Medicine skill at -7. Weighs 6 lbs. Costs $60.

First Aid Kit (EMT)- A large plastic box which opens to reveal many shelves (like a tackle box) containing various tools that a trained Emergency Medical Technician might find of use. Includes everything in First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional) as well as: industrial scissors (for cutting off clothes), tracheotomy kit, intubation tube, intubation air pump with small oxygen bottle, body stats monitor (monitors breath, body temp, EKG, blood oxygenation), stomach pump, liquid stitches, sterilization spray, defibrillator, neck brace, cling film, blood oxygenator, 5 Auto Blood Tests, camera probe, handheld suction device, 4 units of Synth Blood, Anti-Toxin Kit, Plastic Restraints, 4 doses Anti-Shock, 2 Blood Plugs, 2 doses Glucose. Weighs 25 lbs. Costs $250.

First Aid Kit (Minor)- A tiny kit designed for use by people with no medical training to deal with minor (non life-threatening) injuries. A small pocket-sized plastic box contains aspirin, bandages, gauze, disinfectant wipes. Costs $10.

First Aid Kit (Semiprofessional)- This kit is designed for people who have taken a first aid course and want a kit to keep in their home, office or vehicle but will, in all likelihood, never use it. This is a briefcase sized metal box containing bandages, gauze, medical tape, butterfly bandages, disinfectant wipes, disinfectant spray, heat pack, cold pack, gloves, CPR mouth-guard, eyewash, scissors, tweezers, anti-shock pills, ipecac, non-opiate painkillers. The kit has no equipment for surgical procedures. PCs with emergency medicine can perform easy (10 difficulty) tasks with this kit. Weighs 12 lbs. Costs $75.

Instacast- A foil packet containing a thick flexible bandage. When wrapped tightly around an injury it hardens within 5 minutes in to a thick cast (PR 4 bladed 5 blunt). Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $50.

Liquid Stitches- Designed for first aid kits, this is a tiny tube filled with a pharmaceutical skin glue. A wound should be cleaned and closed as cleanly as possible, then the tube run over the wound. The tube applies the glue and seals it by blowing heated air on to it. When the cap is replaced it sterilizes the tip with a burst of steam so it is ready to be used again. The glue allows oxygen in and flakes off naturally after a couple of weeks. The only downside is that if foreign particles are trapped inside the wound by the glue, they will almost certainly cause an infection (unless the glue is removed and the wound cleaned). Returns up to ½ a point of lost BLD per bladed weapon injury. Costs $35.

Pharmosynth- Ⓤ A device about the size of a box of facial tissues which is typically strapped to an arm, thigh or worn as a hip-pack. Designed for military medical units,

this device is fairly rare on the Black Market and most of the Pharmosynths in the city are owned by Needle Punks. This secondary-nanotech device can assemble proteins together in to drugs on the fly. Simply type in the name of the drug and it pops out in a vial or is expelled in to an IV drip. The device even has a Jack connection so it can be controlled mentally. The device can not create every drug, but it can create a drug that is of some use in almost every medical situation, including close analogues of Amphetamines, Anesthetic (General), Anesthetic (Local), Antibiotics, Anti-Nauseant, Anti-Psychotic, Anti-Shock, Anxiolytic, Caffeine, Hallucinogen, Opiate, Sedative and Smart Drug. Legality: Licensed (50 yrs. prison). Costs $10,000 +$100 for a protein pack refill (enough for 25 drug doses).

Portable OR- A wheeled cart with a tall umbrella. When opened, strips of clear plastic unroll from the edges of the umbrella, surrounding the cart with a tent. A mister sprays a mild disinfectant mist. The cart hosts a number of useful surgical devices: IV pumps, suction, laser cauterization, heart/lung machine. The cart also has a tool and supply bank which responds to verbal commands (e.g. ask for a scalpel and one pops out on a small tray). Allows PCs to use the Surgery skill in the field at only -4. Weighs 150 lbs. Costs $7,500.

Sterilization Spray- A tiny aerosol canister, contains powerful antiseptic chemicals which will kill most bacteria and virii on the surface of items. The antiseptic chemicals evaporate or break down in to component parts in seconds. The spray can even be used safely on food (although it leaves the surface of food tasting bitter). If sprayed on skin it will cause irritation and if sprayed in eyes or inhaled can cause burning pain (distracting pain at 20 difficulty to save). Although it is painful, it can be sprayed in to wounds to help prevent infection. One canister has enough spray to cover 30 square feet. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $50.

Sterilizer- This battery-powered device can sterilize surgical tools and syringes in 15 seconds. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $100.

Surgical Kit- A nylon pouch with a shoulder strap. When unzipped and laid open there are surgical tools and supplies (each in a sterile wrapping). Has tools which can be used as 2 bladed weapons. Allows PCs to use the Surgery skill at -7. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $75.

Syringe- Requires a skill roll to hit a blood vessel. Costs $1/ea. or $10 for 25.

See Also
Blood Test, p.130
Seed Pack, p.137
Weapons: Chemical, p.144

PROTECTION

Protection Features

Heat Factor: This is a simultaneous bonus to save vs. hypothermia and penalty to save vs. heat stroke.

AGY Penalty: The penalty to all AGY rolls while wearing this item.

AR: Armor Rating, this is the amount of the body that the armor covers and the amount of success that an enemy must make on a strike to hit some hole in the armor. See p.64 for more.

AR 20: Full body protection with no weak spots.
AR 15: Full body protection with some weak spots.

AR 12: Face completely exposed.
AR 10: Head completely exposed.
AR 7: Head, neck, hands, feet completely exposed.
AR 5: Only body, thighs, upper arms covered.
AR 4: Only torso and hips covered.
AR 3: Only torso covered.

PR: Protection Rating, how much of each type of damage the armor protects from. If an armor protects from 6 bladed damage, then a strike that does 10 bladed damage that hit the armor would only do 4 bladed damage to the wearer.

Anti-Psychic Cap- A flexible plastic cap filled with a thin layer of a gelatin known to interfere with psychic manipulation. The wearer and any psychic targeting the wearer gets +10 difficulty to psychic skill rolls. Costs $250.

Biohazard Suit (Advanced)- This skin is made out of a secondary-nanotech material that "breathes" (exchanges oxygen and moisture) without letting in any other chemicals. Unlike other biohazard suits, it is comfortable to wear for long periods of time. The suit is made out a slick, shiny, grey material that appears thin but is actually quite strong. The suit is completely airtight, and tiny wires running throughout the suit sense if there is an opening and triggers an alarm. There is a helmet with a clear-plastic faceplate and a sophisticated gasmask that lets the wearer breath freely. AR 20, PR 4 bladed, 2 burn, 2 radiation and complete protection from all toxins and diseases. Costs $5,000.

Biohazard Suit (Basic)- A thick rubber airtight body suit with excellent air filtration. So long as the suit is removed properly, it protects completely from all diseases and most toxins. Sweat in the suit puddles in the feet. AGY penalty: -1 (-4 to fine motor skills because of thick gloves). Heat factor: +10. AR 20, PR 1 bladed. Costs $200.

Body Condom- Manufactured for soldiers to be able to deal quickly with chemical weapon attacks (especially Nerve Gas attacks). The body condom looks like a fanny pack, but soldiers can quickly pull out a long sheet of clear film and wrap it around themselves. Electronic zippers seal automatically enclosing the soldier in an air-tight bubble. The fanny pack pumps in filtered air. The user has access to a foaming brush that he or she can use to wash off skin that might have been contaminated. The bubble even has arm and leg holes (although the user can only walk hunched over). The condom is made from a secondary nanotech material which is tear and puncture resistant (AR 20 PR 2 bladed). Costs $500.

Cloak (Fighter)- Homeless fighters designed this cloak to keep them warm but let them be ready to fight at a moment's notice. This cloak goes over the shoulders, wraps around the wearer and fastens with velcro. As a fighter draws a weapon, the cloak is torn open and falls to the floor. The cloak has rocks sewn in to the hem, so the fighter can grab it and swing it at enemies (to entangle weapons), to blind opponents (by covering thier heads), or swung as a strike (1 blunt damage, range 3). Heat Factor: +6. Costs $20.

Cloak- A long cloak with a hood and internal pockets. This was common wear for psychics in the 40s and 50s and is still sometimes associated with psychics today. Heat Factor +6. Costs $10.

Condoms- 4 for $1

Disguise Skin- This secondary nanotech skin is made of an elastic material about 1/8 inch thick that resembles skin. The skin must be custom made to the individual who will be wearing it. To put on and adjust the skin (so that there are no wrinkles and orifices line up) takes about 1 hour. It is controlled by a sophisticated internal computer that reads info from a tiny digital camera hidden in one of the eyebrows and from a jack (p.105). The camera can scan a person's appearance and store it for later use. The user can command the skin to replicate some person in memory. The skin will attempt to replicate that persons appearance by changing skin color, changing skin smoothness, pumping air in to tiny sacks in the skin and by changing the length and color of artificial hair follicles. The skin cannot change height, it can increase but not decrease bulk, it cannot make realistic facsimiles of scars or tattoos. It's great for disappearing in to a crowd (40 difficulty AWR feat for someone to recognize a person wearing the skin). Impersonation is much more difficult (can be aided by independent makeup, Impersonation skill rolls and environmental conditions such as darkness). Rechargeable batteries last 48 hours. Weighs 15 lbs. Heat factor +10. AR 15, PR 2 bladed. Costs $20,000.

Dust Mask- A cloth face mask that protects from particulates in the air. They must be disposed of or they get clogged up and smelly. Costs $0.25.

Ear Plugs- A molding foam protects the ears from loud sounds. Costs $2.

Fingerless Gloves- Used by people who want to keep their hands as warm as possible while leaving their fingers free for anything that requires fine manipulation (picking locks, typing, rolling cigarettes). Costs $2.

Fire Blanket- A reflective, heat-resistant blanket that can be quickly unfolded and wrapped over the body to survive a fire. Can also be used to hide from infrared sensors. PR 10 burn damage. Costs $40.

Fire Suit- A suit made out of a thick, shiny, mirrored material with a helmet. The suit gives AR 20, PR 3 burn, 2 bladed, 1 blunt. AGY penalty: -3. Heat factor: +7. The suit is so shiny it gives –7 to all prowling rolls. Costs $200.

Gasmask- Protects from almost all inhalation based chemical and biological attacks. Costs $50.

Historical Reproduction Chainmail- Long shirt made of metal rings with metal plates over arms and legs. Weighs 30 lbs. AGY penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +4. AR 6, PR 3 bladed 2 blunt. Costs $350.

Historical Reproduction Plate Armor- A series of metal plates which slide over each other at joints, with full metal helmet with eye slits. Weighs 75 lbs. AGY penalty: -5. AWR penalty: -5. Heat factor: +8. AR 15, PR 6 bladed 5 blunt. Costs $1,000.

Insect Repellent- A spray containing multiple chemical signals that repel common pests (especially fleas and mosquitoes, a major plague vector). Lasts 8 hours. Enough for 20 applications. Costs $5.

Kevlar Vest- This antique (30 to 100 yr. old) vest predates secondary nanotech. It provides good protection from normal (non-armor piercing) bullets, but it is heavy and doesn't cover the whole body. AGY Penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +8. AR 5, PR 6 bladed, 1 blunt. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $200.

Latex Gloves- Cheap, thin, disposable. Costs $1/pair or $10 for 20.

Modern Chainmail- Cheaper than nanotech armor, yet still light and flexible. This suit of clothing (long sleeved shirt and pants) is made up of interlaced rings of thick grey high-strength plastic. Weighs 10 lbs. Heat factor: +2. AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt. Costs $500.

Modern Plate Armor- This armor resembles feudal Japanese plate armor. Overlapping plates, made of high strength plastic, are connected to a padded bodysuit and cover the whole body. Comes with a helmet with integrated gasmask and nightvision. AGY Penalty: -4. Heat Factor: +6. AR 17, PR 10 bladed 10 blunt 8 burn. Weighs 50 lbs. Costs $5,000.

Motorcycle Outfit- A black leather jacket, chaps, boots and a motorcycle helmet. Heat factor: +7. With helmet: AR 10 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 5 knockout 5 skid 2 fall. Without the helmet: AR 7 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 4 skid 2 fall. Costs $150.

Nanopadded Armor- Looks like a thick cloth jumpsuit. The cloth of the jumpsuit is a special secondary nanotech material that moves fluidly but reacts to pressure extremes by expanding (puffing up) and absorbing damage. Thus, the armor provides excellent protection from blunt damage. Heat factor: +8. AR 10, PR 2 bladed 7 blunt 2 burn. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $2,500.

Nanoweave Armor- Secondary nanotech armor, it looks like a tight-fitting jumpsuit suit of shiny black cloth with adjustable straps. The suit is made from carbon nanotubules created and interwoven by nanobots. The cloth is virtually impossible to puncture and tear and the weave is too tight for even a needle to get through. It takes 5000 lbs per square inch of tension to tear the cloth. AR 10 PR 6 bladed 2 burn. Heat factor: +4. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $2,000.

Outfit (Clubwear)- New, trendy clothing, in some particular style (see p.343), appropriate for a dinner party or going out to a club. Gives +2 to seduction rolls. Costs $75.

Outfit (Electric)- A stylish trench coat, gloves, shoes, ski-mask and pants, all connected to a battery pack which runs heating elements throughout the outfit. Battery can run up to 24 hours at full power and can give up to +20 heat factor. Costs $250.

Outfit (Fetish)- An outfit designed to appeal to people of a particular minority sexual aesthetic. Gives +8 to seduction rolls towards those people. Costs $100.

Outfit (Formal)- A formal outfit, including a tie, that might be appropriate for a business meeting. It is the right size, but not tailored. Costs $100.

Outfit (Formal, Tailored)- A formal outfit, incorporating the best materials and latest styles, hand-tailored to fit the wearer perfectly. Gives +2 to seduction rolls. Costs $300.

Outfit (Grunge)- An outfit of clothing, including shoes and a hat, bought from thrift stores and homeless scroungers, appropriate to the current weather. It is made to be comfortable, durable and warm, not to be stylish (many holes and stains). Costs $5.

Outfit (Jogging)- Sneakers and grey sweats. Costs $5.

Outfit (Military Surplus)- A full outfit, including boots and a hat, from military surplus stores. Mostly olive green and cammo. Gives +4 to prowling in greenery. Costs $25.

Outfit (Raincoat)- A thin plastic raincoat, with hood, which can be folded up small enough to fit in a pocket. Heat Factor: +2. Costs $5.

Outfit (Scrubs)- Cheap disposable clothing as a doctor or nurse might wear. Does not include shoes. Costs $5.

Outfit (Uniform)- A uniform as a security guard or fast food worker might be required to buy. When bought in thrift stores, they usually still have the patches from their companies on them.
 Costs $10 for service industry.
 Costs $25 for security.

Phonebook Armor- Layers of magazines, phonebooks and other salvaged paper products are strapped together with duct-tape in to a suit. The suit covers the torso, hips and thighs. It is usually hidden under clothing (it provides the best protection when an enemy isn't expecting the person to be wearing armor). The suit is moderately flexible while giving good protection from blunt and bladed damage. AGY Penalty: -2. Heat Factor: +5. AR 5 PR 2 blunt and 2 bladed. Costs $10.

Phonebook Armor (Glass)- Like phonebook armor except that sharp pieces of glass are glued in to the armor. This type of armor is most effective when hidden under frumpy and ill-fitting clothing, where the glass isn't seen. If an opponent punches the wearer there is a 1 in 4 chance of being hit with glass, if the opponent grabs or tackles the wearer it is almost certain the opponent will be cut. Being cut with glass does ½ bladed damage and people not expecting to be cut must make a save vs. shocking pain. Costs $30.

Pressure Suit- Used to help regulate blood pressure to extremities for people who experience a lot of pressure changes (divers, space workers). AR 10, PR 3 bladed. Heat Factor +4. Costs $250.

Protective Gloves- These look and feel like normal leather gloves, but inside them is a layer of secondary nanotech fibers which protect the hands from any cutting damage, even from very fine needles. PR 6 bladed 3 burn. Costs $95.

Prowling Suit- A dull black body suit with gloves, shoes (selected for their quietness), and a face mask. Gives +8 to prowling in darkness. Costs $50.

PRT Skin- Designed by the Freedom Army for its elite anti-psychic squad, this bodysuit and helmet is filled with a thin layer of gelatin that protects the wearer from and makes them practically invisible to psychics. +30 difficulty to any psychic skill roll sensing, effecting or by the wearer. Heat factor: +5. Also gives AR 20, PR 2 bladed 1 blunt. Costs $3,000.

Quiet Cloak- This is a long, thick trench coat with long sleeves. The length of the hem can be adjusted so that it almost (but not quite) touches the floor. The cloak is made of a material that absorbs sound, and it is further outfitted with battery-operated digital noise cancellers. The cloak can not actually stop all noise, but it does a very good job at reducing noises. Gives +3 to prowling rolls (+7 to rolls to be quiet). Costs $2,000.

Ski Goggles- Dark glasses that completely enclose the eyes, giving total protection from eye attacks (PR 1 blunt 2 bladed) and reducing the effectiveness of blinding lights by half. Costs $5.

Space Suit- Designed for operation in vacuum and zero-gravity environments. Has a built in water pack, temperature control, and oxygen in a large backpack. Inside the suit is a gel which will travel to and seal holes. If the suit takes more than 6 bladed damage, the suit will no longer be able to protect from vacuum. Oxygen lasts up to 24 hours. AGY Penalty: -5. AR 20, PR 8 bladed 3 blunt. Weighs 95 lbs. Costs $5,000.

Spiked Armor- Black leather jacket and pants with sharp spikes all over them. Gloves have spikes on the knuckles (+1 bladed damage to punch). Anyone trying to hit, tackle or grab the wearer will probably take damage (½ bladed). Heat Factor: +5. AR 10 PR 1 blunt 2 bladed. Costs $95.

Spiked Armor (Poison)- Black leather jacket, pants and a mask covered with spikes. Inside the suit is a network of puncture-resistant tubes that carry poison (from a canister on the belt) to the tip of each spike. When activated, a tiny droplet of poison appears on the end of each spike almost instantly. Any time the armor is punctured and bladed damage done to the wearer, there is a 1 in 20 chance the users will take ½ dose of poison from a severed line. A canister of poison the equivalent of Black Market Knife Poison (p.75) costs $50, the equivalent of Drake Pain Juice costs $30. Heat Factor: +6. AR 12, PR 1 blunt 2 bladed. Costs $500.

Strength Skin- Secondary nanotech armor that must be strapped very tightly to the joints. The skin senses when muscles are contracting and adds to the movement with its own muscle-like piezoelectric fibers. Battery lasts for 30 actions worth of enhanced movement. This is a very bulky and unnatural looking skin (it is easy to tell when someone is wearing a strength skin). Heat Factor: +5. AGY Penalty: -3. AR 10, PR 2 blunt 3 bladed. Adds +7 STH, +5 SPD. Costs $3,000.

Sunglasses (Cheap)- Thrift store or convenience store dark glasses with black plastic frames. Reduces effectiveness of blinding lights by half. Costs $0.50.

Sunglasses (Electronic)- Designer frames and shatter-proof, glare resistant lenses covered with a coating that reacts to electricity by becoming darker. A tiny (invisible) photocell senses bright lights and darkens the glasses accordingly. AR 5 for eye attacks, PR 4 bladed 2 blunt. Blinding lights are incapable of effecting the wearer. Costs $30 (+$75 for prescription lenses).

Sunscreen- Odorless, waterproof, SPF 100. Enough for 20 applications. Costs $5.

Temperature Skin- A thin bodysuit with a web of electrochemical cooling and heating units. Often used by those who wish to wear other skins without worrying about overheating. Battery lasts 12 hours. Can give heat factor from -20 to +20. AR 10, PR 1 bladed 5 burn. Costs $2,000.

Trash Armor- Plate armor made by homeless craftspeople out of whatever pieces of metal or plastic they could scrounge up, drill holes through, and attach to a denim bodysuit with fishing line. Weighs 70 lbs. AGY Penalty: -4. Heat factor: +10. AR 8, PR 5 bladed 4 blunt 3 burn. Costs $150.

Trash Suit- Pieces of actual trash sewn to a body suit, covering every part of the body, so that the wearer can walk around normally, but if the wearer drops and curls up in a ball he or she looks like a heap of trash. Good for defeating human-recognition alarm systems. Weighs 15 lbs. AGY Penalty: -3. SPD Penalty: -3. AWR Penalty: -3. Heat factor: +5. AR 5, PR ½ bladed, ½ blunt. Costs $50.

Trenchcoat- A thick, ankle-length coat; waterproof, with large internal pockets. Costs $35.

Uniform- An actual uniform, purchased from the black market, of a police or national guard officer. Legality: Licensed ($500 fine). Costs $100.

Vital Armor- A tight elastic black bodysuit, designed to be concealed under clothing. Has plastic plates designed to protect vital areas of anatomy (jugular, spine, heart,

etc.) Heat factor +2. Gives AR 1 (vs. normal attacks) or AR 7 (vs. vital strikes) PR 7 bladed 5 blunt. Costs $250.

Wetsuit- Designed to keep people warm in cold water. Heat Factor: +10. AR 7, PR 1 bladed 3 skidding. Costs $100.

Winter Coat- A thick, waterproof coat with a hood that goes down to mid-thigh. Heat factor: +7. Costs $10.

See Also

SENSORY

3D Sound Helmet- A black plastic helmet that looks like a hard hat with round indentations all over it (making it look a little like half a golf ball) with attached eyepieces. Each indentation is a parabolic microphone. The helmet amplifies sound (using smart amplification, so a whisper 100 ft. away sounds the same as someone shouting right at you). The helmet triangulates the source of sounds. In the eyepieces the user sees a little green spike wherever a sound came from and a little stick-figure above anything the helmet thinks is a human voice or human breathing. Weighs 2 lbs. Batteries Life: 16 hours. Costs $350.

Audio Bug- A tiny electronic device, about the size and shape of a pen cap, that broadcasts unencrypted audio up to 100 ft. Battery life: 48 hours. Costs $50.

Binoculars (Digital)- These look like thick plastic dark glasses, but the wearer sees a digital readout. Can zoom up to 100 ft., has some light-amplification and a digital rangefinder. Batteries Life: 16 hours. Costs $750.

Binoculars- Old-style non-electronic binoculars. Can fold up to fit in a pocket. Costs $7.

Bug Sweeper- A tiny keychain device that, when on, emits a tone when it is near a radio transmitter of any kind. The stronger the transmission, the louder it gets. Costs $30.

Digital Camera (Cheap)- About the size of a lighter. Optical viewfinder, auto focus, weak flash, can take up to 100 pictures before the internal memory becomes full. By holding the shutter, it is possible to take a jerky silent movie of a scene. Will output to any computer. Costs $5.

Digital Camera (Professional)- Zoom will bring objects up to 500 ft. closer. Intelligent variable flash can illuminate up to 100 ft. GPS position and compass directions are imbedded in each picture. Image detail is very good (you can take a picture of someone from 10 ft. and count the individual hairs in their eyebrows in the photo). 5000 ISO (can take picture in almost zero light). Comes with wide-angle lens attachment. Can hold up to 1,000 pictures in onboard memory, more on a standard data card (p.101). Other uses: Flash on full is bright enough to blind people (-7 to actions and reactions for 1 round). By staring at the viewfinder, the camera can be used as a telescope or nightvision scope. Can take full motion video as if it was Videocamera (Cheap). Battery Life: 24 hours. Weighs 1 lb. Comes with carrying case. Costs $500.

Directional Microphone- A handheld device with a parabolic cup and a very sensitive sound sensor, used for eavesdropping in a particular direction. Can hear whispers at up to 150 ft. Costs $75.

DNA Analyzer- Briefcase sized device, takes any material containing DNA (blood, fresh skin, semen, hair with a follicle attached) and retrieves a full genome sequence from it (takes about 1 hour). An onboard computer can identify species (or if the species is not on record, tells what species it is closest to) and search for specific markers (input by the user). If the DNA is of a human it can identify gender, ethnic group, eye color and skin color. For more detailed analyses the genetic sequence can be output to a computer running the DNA Analysis Suite (p.90). Weighs 25 lbs. Costs $1,000.

Geoinfo Goggles- These glasses with thick frames and lenses contain a micro-gyroscope and GPS (global positioning system) inside so they always know exactly where they are and what direction they are pointing at. A memory chip clips in to the goggles and a digital readout on the inside of the lenses overlays information over whatever the wearer is looking at. The glasses show position, compass directions and whatever context information is provided by the data chip. Costs $300.

Geoinfo Data Chips

Cop Data Chip- This chip is only legal for law enforcement officers to possess. They show street names and street addresses for the city. They also show criminal records associated with each address (e.g. this address was what a paroled ex-burglar gave his parole officer). It has the names of residents at any given address and the owners of every building, though this info is highly inaccurate. The system would be a lot more useful if the city police were better about entering information about crimes in to the databases provided to them. The goggles also have basic (and often out of date) information about gang turfs. Legality: Licensed ($500 fine). Latest chip costs $300, older chip costs $100.

LAN-Tech Data Chip- This chip is created by NYR-LAN (the city's largest internet service provider) for distribution only to field technicians (any other use or possession is illegal). The chips are used to help technicians easily track breaks in the lines. Shows street names and addresses, subscriber information (name and status of subscribers at any given address) and network wiring running under the streets and through walls. Legality: Licensed ($500 fine). Latest chip costs $250, older chip costs $75.

NY Historical Society Data Chip- Shows historical information on just about every address and street corner. Information from as recently as 2060 is available. The user can use a small dial to shift through decades or can see it all at once. Costs $100.

Tourist Data Chip- Gives the wearer the names of streets, the street addresses of buildings and historical information about major landmarks in the city. Costs $50.

Geoinfo Goggles (Heavy)- These goggles are often used by swat teams. They are heavy (AR 20 from blinding attacks, PR 3 blunt 5 bladed) and have an integrated nightvision and 3D sound pinpointing system (the goggles triangulate the source of noises and overlay a blue oscilloscope wave at their location). Costs $500.

Hearing Aid- A tiny device that fits almost invisibly in one ear. Senses and amplifies sounds to a desired level. Uses smart amplification (so that quiet sounds are amplified more, loud sounds less). A person with normal hearing can hear people whispering 20 ft. away. Costs $45.

Internal Imager- Two heavy, boxy devices on tripod legs are placed on either side of an object or building. One beams ultrasound, magnetic resonance and x-rays through to the other. Very high definition sensors scan what comes through the object and a powerful computer synthesizes all this information in to a single image, making an informed guess about what the inside of the object or building looks like. The image is displayed on a color screen on the receiving box. Can be used to scan the inside of everything from a package, to a car engine, to a human body, to a small building. Gives +5 to Alarm Systems, Autopsy, Bomb Disarming, Vehicle Repair and Medical Diagnosis skill rolls. Typically used by swat teams, security teams and bomb squads. The two devices weigh 30 lbs. each. Batteries last for up to 4 scans. Costs $3,500.

Laser Microphone- A small device on a tripod with an invisible infrared laser. The device scans for a reflective surface it can bounce the laser beam off of. When it has found such a spot it can sense tiny vibrations on the object and reconstruct nearby sounds. On a clear day it can retrieve sounds from several miles away. Costs $200.

Microscope- Small, handheld device, the size and shape of a pack of cigarettes. Magnifies any object it is placed over up to 1000X. Costs $20.

Motion Alarm- A black box the size and shape of a pager. Can be stuck to most walls and ceilings. It scans a wide cone for movement and will either sound a loud alarm or cause a keychain to vibrate. Batteries Life: 48 hours. Costs $15.

Motorcycle Helmet (Sensory)- This looks like an ordinary black motorcycle helmet but it filters air and has a full sensory package including GPS with street map overlay, nightvision and 3D audio. Battery Life: 24 hours. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $200.

Multi-Sensory Goggles- Look like thick dark goggles with rubber frames. A small wheel on the side is turned to change modes. The glasses have normal vision, light-amplification, infra-red vision, 3D sound tracking, ambient psychic energy monitoring (a small graph shows the intensity of nearby psychic sources but not their location), and ultra-violet vision (good for sensing thing that would otherwise be invisible, like body fluids or prosthetics). Batteries Life: 16 hours. Costs $1,000.

Nanobug- A clear spray which contains thousands of microscopic electronic devices, each with a tiny battery and radio transmitter. These devices adhere to whatever surface they are sprayed on (even flesh) and send out sound recordings and position information (20 strength encryption) within 100 ft. The bugs will eventually corrode in the atmosphere after about 12 hours. Costs $1,000.

Nightvision Goggles (Cheap)- Old, thick, heavy, blinded by bright lights, with a 2 hour battery life and a monochrome black and green display. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $25.

Nightvision Goggles (Deluxe)- Resembling sunglasses with thick frames, these glasses can amplify very low light (giving a full color view of the scene) or use invisible infrared beams to illuminate complete darkness. The glasses constantly adjust the amplification level so that no matter how bright or dark it is the scene looks like a well-lit room. AR 5 from blinding attacks, PR 2 bladed 1 blunt. Battery Life: 12 hours. Costs $1,500.

Psychic Goggles- These heavy goggles project 6 inches from the face. They contain the latest electrochemical psychic energy sensors. Overlaid over normal vision is a grid of large pixels that glow to show psychic energy sources. The goggles are poor when compared to a skilled psychic, but they can show when a person is using a manipulative psychic skill and can also be used to sense nervous systems (in other words, see people in the dark or through walls). Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $5,000.

Psychic Tracking Bug- A small plastic disk about the size of a silver dollar. When a glass capsule inside it broken, a chemical reaction starts that creates psychic energy, enough for those with psychic senses to track the location of the bug. The chemical reaction lasts 16 hours. Since it is non-metal, non-electronic and does not use radio waves, normal bug sweepers can't find it. Costs $150.

Radiation Detector- Watch sized device, detects radiation, tells its type, intensity and the directions it is coming from. Costs $100.

Radio- Small electronic device about the size and shape of a pack of cigarettes. Typically bought from a thrift store or salvaged from the trash, this lets users listen to the few analog (non-internet) radio stations, most of which are run by teenage music-philes out of their bedrooms. Costs $2.

Radio Scanner- A small handheld device that can tune in to and listen to analog or encrypted digital communications on any radio frequency (inlcuding cellular). Simple encryption sequences can be programmed in. Batteries Life: 16 hours. Costs $20.

Radio Scanner (Advanced)- About the size of a briefcase. Can monitor multiple frequencies, can search all frequencies for specific data strings, can triangulate the source of radio transmissions, can sweep for bugs and when hooked up to a computer it can let the computer search the entire RF band. Weighs 10 lbs. Battery Life: 8 hours. Costs $250.

Scanning Tunneling Microscope- Briefcase sized device. A tiny object is placed inside, the air is pumped out, and very precise piezoelectric arms (through which electrons tunnel) "feel" the surface of the object. An LCD panel shows a molecule-by-molecule 3D view of the surface of the object. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $400.

Security Camera (Cheap)- About the size and shape of a stubby marker, this camera is cheap and easily concealable. It transmits images unencrypted via radio to a radius of 50 ft. Video is grainy, black and white, with no sound. Bright lights or darkness blinds the camera. Battery Life: 48 hours. Costs $20.

Security Camera (Expensive)- A wall-mounted camera which plugs in to wall power and has a 16 hour backup battery. Transmits images via radio (encrypted with 20 strength) for 200 ft. The camera is reasonably resistant to damage (can take up to 5 bladed or blunt damage before it breaks). Video is full color, can shoot in a good range of light and dark (about as good as a human eye) and has high-quality sound. The camera can be set to stay wide and survey a whole area, to sweep an area, or owners can log in by remote and control the movement and focus of the camera. Costs $200.

Security Camera (Fake)- An empty shell with a glowing red light that looks like a security camera. Takes an easy Photography or Alarm Systems skill roll to tell otherwise. Costs $50.

Seismic Analyzer- A heavy plastic disk (about the size and shape of a frisbee) is placed on the ground or buried underground. The disk senses seismic vibrations, calculates their source and intensity, and transmits the data (unencrypted) to wireless receivers within 200 ft. Can also store data on a standard data card. Battery Life: 30 days. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $250.

Sniffer- Commonly used by airport security and federal agents tracking fugitives. This device can be strapped on to a person's back or wheeled around on a cart. It comes with a nozzle on a hose that sucks in air. Sensors inside analyze air particles and display the results (wirelessly) to readout goggles. The device can smell gunpowder, drugs, explosives and biological weapons from up to 10 ft. away. It can also track the scent of a particular human (with the same facility as Bloodhound Powder, p.130). It can find dead bodies up to 1 mile away. Weighs 75 lbs. Costs $3,000.

Sound Recorder- A device about the size and shape of a pen that can record and play back up to 24 hours worth of audio and can transfer the recordings to a computer. Costs $7.

Spectrograph- Handheld device with a small LCD readout. Incinerates small samples of material and makes a best guess as to the chemical makeup. Weighs 1 lb. Costs $250.

Subliminal Analyzer- This sensory device looks like a thick pair of glasses but offers versatile sensory capabilities. It has high definition heat, lowlight, microscopic and sound sensors . The glasses also have a sophisticated computer which tracks any human that comes in to view and measures body temperature, pupil dilation, breath and heart rate, micro-expressions (unconscious facial expressions that only last a tiny fraction of a second) and voice stress. By compiling all this biometric data, the goggles can detect lies with 95% accuracy. The real value of the glasses is their "subliminal prompting and response profiling" technology. Whenever someone looks at the glasses they flash full color images at them at subliminal speeds (too fast to be consciously noticed). The glasses gauge a person's subconscious reaction. For instance, a picture of a naked female shown for a thirtieth of a second might cause a slight change in breath rate, heart rate and surface temperature of the face that would indicate a sexual preference for females. The more a person looks at the glasses, the more complete profile of the person is built. The glasses can be used to gauge sexual preference, test for affiliation or identification with different groups or causes, build a personality profile, or even to check for violent sadism (found in most serial killers). Battery Life: 8 hours. Costs $2,000.

Tracking Bug- About the size and shape of a pen cap, sends out regular pulses that can be easily used to triangulate the position of the bug (with an advanced Radio Scanner) up to 10 miles away. Battery Life: 3 days. Costs $50.

Videocamera (Cheap)- About the size and shape of a small drink bottle, the camera saves digital movie files on internal memory, which can then be transferred to a computer or reviewed from the viewfinder. Takes about 16 hours of video. Costs $40.

Videocamera (Professional)- This is the type of camera a news reporter or documentary filmmaker might use. It rests on the shoulder, the user views through wireless viewing glasses and controls the camera by hand. The camera features a floodlight, low light recording, a 1000 ft. zoom, and "zooming" parabolic microphone. Can record up to 24 hours of video on internal memory (more with standard data cards) and has a built in cellular modem which can connect to the internet and upload video as it's being recorded. It is waterproof and fairly shockproof (can take up to 4 blunt damage). Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $1,000 +$5/week for a cellular account (see p.130).

Voice Stress Analyzer- This small keychain sized device listens to all speech with high quality sensors and vibrates when it detects inaudible cracks in the voice which are indicative of someone trying to consciously control their voice tone (which could indicate acting, nervousness, impersonation or lying). The analyzer vibrates harder the more stress it senses. It can be used with phone conversations, but is much less accurate. Costs $50.

SERVANTS

These are human bodies, animals and robots that people purchase for use as servants.

Biological

Biological servants come from two primary sources. The first is animal breeders and trainers (most of whom are homeless) who train an animal for a specific purpose and then sell it. The second is animal bodies that are grown to maturity in vats with no formation of neural networks (in other words, no consciousness or personality). The grown body is given a mental program, a sort of artificial intelligence that allows it to perform the basic functions of life and follow the commands of its owner.

Biological Servant Features

Attributes: These are the typical attributes for an animal of this type. Only certain attributes are listed here (attributes like INL, CHM and WIL are non-existent or inconsequential).

Natural Abilities: Any special natural abilities of an animal, like a prehensile tail or natural armor.

Senses: Different AWR scores are listed for each important sensory modality (e.g. an animal might have 20 AWR when it comes to hearing, but only 3 when it comes to sight).

Attacks: The basic attacks of an animal are listed here. The attributes used and difficulties of various actions and reactions are different from that of humans, so a simple attribute-free difficulty is listed here (e.g. strike at 1d20 vs. 2).

Feeding Costs: This is the weekly cost to keep the animal alive (not including medical care).

Training/Mental Programs: Each type of training or mental program an animal might have is listed here. Each has its own unique price. Each has a number of commands that the animal can be expected to know. The gist of the commands is given, but the commands themselves are not necessarily spoken words (they may be unique passwords, or whistles, or communicated by pulling on a rein).

Alligator- Large, muscular, cold blooded amphibious reptile. Its major weakness is that it is virtually unable to escape a successful grab of its jaws (can make opposed Hard STH feats to wriggle out of the grab).
  Attributes: END 3, SPD 10 (underwater) 6 (on land), STH 17, BDY 8, BLD 6, INCY 5.
  Natural Abilities: Thick skin acts as PR 2 bladed 1 blunt.
  Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 20, Hearing AWR 20, Vibration Sense AWR 25.
  Attacks: Bite/Grab at 1d20 vs. 10 (if successful does 3 bladed damage and victim is grabbed), Neck Breaking at 1d20 vs. 15 (if victim is grabbed, alligator writhes and twirls, doing 1d6 blunt damage), Tail Bash at 1d20 vs. 5 (2 blunt damage).
  Feeding Costs $4/wk.
Mental Program, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'attack', 'heel', 'stop', 'grab' (a grab attack). Costs $400.
Mental Program, Riding: Knows (as taps) 'go/faster', 'slow/stop,' 'left', 'right', 'up', 'down', 'stay', 'heel.' Costs $400.
Untrained: A wild alligator. Costs $300.

Attack Bees- These are genetically engineered honey bees (first created by the Honeys, a gang which is now gone). They live in a hive and must be cared for. They are given "commands" by spraying a command chemical on the hive or at a swarm of bees. Besides being engineered to follow commands, the bees have a sense of smell comparable to that of a bloodhound. Some strains also make honey with hallucinogenic chemicals in it.
  Attributes: SPD 15.
  Senses: Smell AWR 50.
  Attacks: There are approximately 1000 bees in a swarm. Up to 250 bees will sting in a given round (see Swarms, p.80). Bees die after they sting. For every 50 stings, the victim suffers from a cumulative distracting pain (10), dizziness (-2 to save vs. loss of balance) and difficulty breathing (-2 END).
  Feeding Costs $2/wk.
  Knows 'stop', 'attack' (any person who had been sprayed), 'find and attack' (a person whose clothing is placed in the beehive), 'guard' (attack anyone who comes within 50 ft.).
  Costs $3,000.

Bear- A few rich weirdos have been known to bring bears in to the city, which they use as bodyguards, sparring partners and even try to ride around on. Bears are large muscular omnivores that can stand bipedally but move fastest on all fours.
  Attributes: END 10, SPD 5 (standing) 15 (all fours), STH 20, BDY 6, BLD 6, INCY 4.
  Senses: Sight AWR 10, Smell AWR 25, Hearing AWR 20.
  Attacks: Tackle (and pin) at 1d20 vs. 0, bite at 1d20 vs. 5 (does 4 bladed damage), claw swipe at 1d20 vs. 7 (range 1, does 2 bladed 1 blunt damage).
  Feeding Costs $25/wk.
Mental Program, Puppet: Comes with a jack that can be hooked to a cellular modem so someone can remotely control the bear and sense what it is sensing. Costs $2,500.
Mental Program, Guard: Knows 'attack', 'heel', 'guard', 'pin.' Costs $2,000.
Untrained: A wild bear. Costs $700.

Chimpanzee- Most often used as an assistant for the physically disabled.
  Attributes: END 6, SPD 17, STH 10, BDY 1, BLD 3, INCY 4.
  Senses: Sight AWR 10, Hearing AWR 18.
  Attacks: Bite at 1d20 vs. 10 (1 bladed damage).
  Feeding Costs $7/wk.
Mental Program, Servant: Knows 'fetch' (with point), 'fetch' (up to 20 named objects), 'heel', 'stay,' 'get help,' 'press button (with point)', 'put away' (up to 20 named objects with set locations), 'open door.' The chimpanzee can also guide visually impaired people around obstacles. Costs $500.
Untrained: A mostly tame but otherwise untrained chimpanzee. Costs $250.

Dog- A large dog of indeterminate breed. The dog is the most commonly used servant in the city, both trained and with mental programs, and more commercial mental programs have been written for the dog than any other animal.
  Attributes: END 10, SPD 15, BDY 2, BLD 2, INCY 3.
  Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.
  Attacks: Bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (2 bladed damage), Vital Strike Bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (4 bladed damage)

Feeding Costs $7/wk.

Trained, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'attack', 'heel', 'stop', 'grab' (a grab attack). Costs $150.

Trained, Guard: Knows 'stay', 'he/she's okay', 'heel', 'quiet', 'attack'. Will bark if strangers come by, will attack if strangers get too close. Costs $100.

Trained, Bloodhound: Knows 'smell', 'track', 'point', 'heel' and 'stay'. Costs $300.

Trained, Assistant: Knows 'fetch' (with point), 'heel', 'stay,' 'get help.' The dog can also guide visually impaired people around obstacles. Costs $150.

Trained, Dogfighting: Knows 'kill' (Vital Strike against other dogs at 1d20 vs. 6), 'watch out' (Jump Out at 1d20 vs. 5), 'stop' (stop fighting), 'finish him' (attack on the throat of an incapacitated opponent), 'stay', 'heel'. Costs $300.

Mental Program, Psychic Alarm: Gives a distinctive growl when it senses psychic activity, and points towards the source. Knows 'heel,' 'stay,' 'attack' (attacks source of psychic activity). Costs $400.

Mental Program, Assistant: Knows 'stay', 'heel', 'get help', 'fetch (with pointing)', 'press button (with point)'. Costs $250.

Mental Program, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'heel', 'guard' (will attack anyone who comes within 5 ft.), 'attack', 'grab', 'knockdown', 'eat', 'sleep,' 'go' (urinate and defecate). Costs $400.

Mental Program, Leash: Acts like a normal dog, can even be trained, but a mental program running in its brain responds to the commands (as codewords): sleep (dog falls asleep), like (dog likes intensely whoever it is looking at when the word is said), hate, stay (dog can not leave a 10 ft. radius). Costs $175.

Mental Program, Spy: Acts like a normal dog, but unable to leave the area it is placed in. Records anything it sees and hears (data retrieved through a jack hidden under the fur) up to 8 hours of sound and video. Knows 'heel', 'stay', 'sleep.' Costs $250.

Untrained: A young dog with no particular training. Costs $75.

Dog (Vampiric)- This is a dog which has been infected with a slightly mutated strain of the Mitochondrial Vampirism virus (see p.256). The dog's metabolism is changed such that it can survive on very little oxygen (and thus can deal with extreme blood loss) but it can die of starvation in a matter of hours if deprived of a steady flow of sugars.

Attributes: END 15, SPD 18, BDY 2, BLD 7, INCY 8.

Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

Attacks: Bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (2 bladed damage), Vital Strike Bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (4 bladed damage)

Feeding Costs $21/wk.

Trained, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'attack', 'heel', 'stop', 'grab' (a grab attack). Costs $750.

Trained, Dogfighting: Knows 'kill' (Vital Strike against other dogs at 1d20 vs. 6), 'watch out' (Jump Out at 1d20 vs. 5), 'stop' (stop fighting), 'finish him' (attack on the throat of an incapacitated opponent), 'stay', 'heel'. Costs $1,500.

Mental Program, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'heel', 'guard' (will attack anyone who comes within 5 ft.), 'attack', 'grab', 'knockdown', 'eat', 'sleep,' 'go' (urinate and defecate). Costs $900.

Untrained: A young dog with no particular training. Costs $500.

Legality: Forbidden ($1,000 fine).

Eagle- Large predatory bird, can carry up to 10 lbs.

Attributes: END 20, SPD 40, BDY 1, BLD 4, INCY 4.

Senses: Sight AWR 35, Hearing AWR 10.

Attacks: Slash with talons at 1d20 vs. 7 (½ BLD damage, save vs. distracting pain), Blinding Strike with beak at 1d20 vs. 10.

Feeding Costs $5/wk.

Mental Program, Scout: Will fly over an area and return. The eagle has a small data jack under the feathers on its head which can be used to download high quality pictures taken from the bird's vision. Costs $400.

Mental Program, Servant: Knows 'fetch', 'attack', 'come', 'guard'. Costs $300.

Horse- Horses are hard to ride in the city (the parks have too much underbrush and the streets have too many potholes). Horses in the city are shod with special rubber shoes that let them run on concrete without hurting their hooves.

Attributes: END 20, SPD 45, BDY 6, BLD 6, INCY 3.

Abilities: Thick hide has PR 1 bladed 1 blunt.

Senses: Sight AWR 10 (better for long-distance vision), Hearing AWR 18, Smell AWR 20.

Attacks: Kick at 1d20 vs. 5 (5 blunt), Bite at 1d20 vs. 10 (1 bladed damage, pain/stun attack), Trample (if figure is not prone, horse must rear up, using 1 action) at 1d20 vs. 10 (7 blunt damage, 1 in 20 chance the horse will break a leg).

Feeding Costs $7/wk.

Training, Police Horse: Knows to stop if the rider falls off or drops the reigns, attacks anyone who tries to grab or attack the rider, knows 'go/faster', 'stop', 'slow', 'turn right/left'.

Training, Race Horse: Trained to run at very high speeds (up to 60 SPD) for several minutes, to dodge and weave amongst traffic. Knows 'go/faster', 'stop', 'slow', 'turn right/left'. Costs $1,000.

Training, Travel: Is adept at traveling on rocky and uneven terrain and with heavy baggage. Knows 'go/faster', 'stop', 'slow', 'turn right/left'. Costs $400.

Mental Program, Combat: Will kick down and trample over humans. While being ridden, attacks anyone who comes within range. Knows 'go/faster', 'stop', 'slow', 'turn right/left,' 'attack'. Costs $500.

Untrained: A young horse, broken just enough to mount but otherwise untrained. Costs $250.

Housecat

Attributes: END 5, SPD 13, BDY 1, BLD 3, INCY 3.

Senses: Sight AWR 10 (no darkness penalty), Smell AWR 15, Hearing AWR 15.

Attacks: Clawing (a pain/stun attack) at 1d20 vs. 3.

Feeding Costs $3/wk.

Training, Pest Killer: Will prowl around its home area killing mice, pigeons, birds. Costs $5.

Mental Program, Spy: Acts like a normal cat, but unable to leave the area it is placed in. Records anything it sees and hears (data retrieved through a jack hidden under the fur) up to 8 hours of sound and video. Knows 'heel', 'stay', 'sleep.' Costs $220.

Mental Program, Assassin: Claws have bioengineered poison glands (on a successful scratch, does 1 BLD damage per round for 6 rounds). Knows 'attack', 'stop', 'heel', 'find and kill' (with scent). Legality: Forbidden (2 yrs. prison). Costs $900.

Lion- The largest of the predatory cats, usually used as a fantasy plaything by the rich.

    Attributes: END 7, SPD 18, BDY 8, BLD 6, INCY 3.

    Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 15, Hearing AWR 15.

    Attacks: Bite/Grab at 1d20 vs. 5 (3 bladed damage), Flesh Tearing at 1d20 vs. 10 (after victim is grabbed, lion tears the flesh out, causing 10 bladed damage).

    Feeding Costs $25/day.

Mental Program, Riding: Knows 'go/faster', 'slow/stop', 'right', 'left', 'stay', 'heel', 'eat', 'attack' (bite), 'guard'. Costs $1,500.

Mental Program, Hunter: Knows 'attack' (bite and tear), 'find and grab' (with scent), 'find and kill' (with scent), 'stay', 'heel', 'eat', 'guard'. Costs $1,500.

Untrained: A wild lion. Costs $1,000.

Pigeon- An intelligent scavenger bird, one of the most numerous birds in the city.

    Attributes: END 3, SPD 10, BDY 0, BLD 1, INCY 1.

    Senses: Sight AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

    Feeding Costs $1/wk.

Mental Program, Spy: Acts like a normal pigeon, but unable to leave the area it is placed in. Records anything it sees and hears (data retrieved through a jack hidden under the feathers) up to 1 hour of sound and video. Knows 'heel', 'stay', 'sleep.' Costs $150.

Training, Homing: When released it returns to its home coop (often with a message attached). Costs $20.

Wolf- A relative of the dog, larger and harder to train.

    Attributes: END 12, SPD 16, BDY 3, BLD 3, INCY 3.

    Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

    Attacks: Bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (3 bladed damage), Vital Strike Bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (6 bladed damage)

    Feeding Costs $10/wk.

Mental Program, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'heel', 'guard' (will attack anyone who comes within 5 ft.), 'attack', 'grab', 'knockdown', 'eat', 'sleep.' Costs $700.

Untrained: A wild wolf. Costs $500.

Wolf (Vampiric)- See Dog (Vampiric) for more details. So far, humans, dogs and wolves are the only animals people have been able to infect with strains of Mitochondrial Vampirism.

    Attributes: END 16, SPD 19, BDY 3, BLD 8, INCY 8.

    Senses: Sight AWR 5, Smell AWR 17, Hearing AWR 15.

    Attacks: Bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (4 bladed damage), Vital Strike Bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (8 bladed damage)

    Feeding Costs $3/day.

Mental Program, Attack: Knows 'stay', 'heel', 'guard' (will attack anyone who comes within 5 ft.), 'attack', 'grab', 'knockdown', 'eat', 'sleep.' Costs $1,500.

Untrained: A wild vampiric wolf. Costs $900.

    Legality: Forbidden ($1,000 fine).

Golem

"Golem" is street slang for a human whose mind has been wiped and replaced with a mental program to make that body in to a mindless servant. The very rich even create clones of themselves that they can copy their minds in to. The cost of a golem is determined by its source, physical attributes and programming.

'Bomb Baby' Configuration

This is one possible way to configure a golem:

Source: Mindwiped (Unethical) $1,000

Physical Attributes: Child $1,000

Programming: Walking Bomb $2,000

Death Borg (Explosive-Large) (p.104) $4,000 +$750 surgery costs

Total Cost: $8750

Appearance: A young boy, dressed in the soiled clothing of a homeless person.

Methods: Makes its way to a given location. If someone tries to stop it, the golem will act like a child trying to catch up with its parents. If someone detains it, the child will scream and cry and try to run away.

Typical Attack: When it reaches its destination it explodes, doing 20 burn and 10 bladed (pierces armor as 20) damage with an incremental range of 5 ft. (for every 5 ft. away the victim is, halve the damage).

Source:

    Vat Grown- This Golem was created from DNA owned by the company that created the golem. Those well versed in Golems can recognize one of these Golems by sight. Costs $2,000.

    Cloned- A specific person's DNA is given to a company who clones it and grows it to maturity in a vat. Most people clone themselves, but there have been disturbing reports of other incidents (such as stalkers cloning the source of their obsession). Costs $3,000.

    Mindwiped (Unethical)- Organized criminals kidnapped some person, wiped the person's mind and sold the body on the black market. There is no denying that a person was murdered to create this golem. Costs $1,000.

    Mindwiped (Ethical)- A person who was mindwiped and his or her body sold on the black market. The exception here is that the body comes with some sort of "pedigree" (usually video footage) showing that it was not simply the victimization and murder of an innocent person. Note that just because it is called 'ethical' doesn't mean that ownership of such a body would be considered ethical by everyone in the city. The primary ethical pedigrees are suicides (people who asked a black market trader to wipe their minds, sell their bodies, and give the money to their families) and executions (a group of people capture some murderer and wipe that person's mind as a form of street justice). Costs $5,000.

Physical Attributes:

    Normal- All attributes near 10. BDY, BLD, INCY are 4. Costs $0.

    Superior Strength- END 15, STH 17, SPD 15. BDY, BLD are 6. Costs $500.

    Attractive- Considered sexually attractive by common standards. Costs $500.

    Child- All attributes near 5. BDY, BLD, INCY are 2. Costs $1,000.

Why There Aren't More Golems

The idea of human bodies being turned in to slaves that feel no pain, fear, exhaustion and are incapable of disloyalty is, to some, very inviting and, to others, very disturbing and frightening. Yet there aren't very many golems running around the city. At any given time there are only about five to ten golems in the city. Why are such perfect slaves so few in number? The answer is that for every dangerous, painful or disgusting thing that a golem can be programmed to do, it is easier and cheaper to find a desperate, but otherwise normal, human willing to do it.

'Untouchable Warrior' Configuration

This configuration focuses on strength, speed and intimidation to power through an area, find a victim and kill him or her.

Source: Vat Grown $2,000

Physical Attributes: Superior Strength $500

Programming: Expert Assassin $10,000

Modern Plate Armor (p.119) $5,000

Entry Tool (p.135) $250

Motorcycle (p.140) $5,000

Death Borg (Combustion) (p.104) $3,000 +$500 surgery costs

Automatic Pistol x2 (p.147) $8,000

10 Clips (300 bullets) $6,000

Total Cost: $40,250.

Appearance: A large muscular figure covered all over with plated armor, riding a motorcycle, with two automatic pistols in holsters on its belt.

Methods: After being given a picture of a victim and told where the victim is likely to be, the assassin rides directly to that area. It kills anyone who attacks it or tries to get in its way. It grabs random people, shows them the picture, and asks where to find the person in the picture. It uses lie detectors to determine when people are lying and it tortures and kills people it thinks aren't telling the truth. The golem uses psychic sensors to find every human in the area and confirm whether or not this is the victim. When it finds the victim it kills him or her immediately, then triggers a death borg that causes it to burn to ashes.

Typical Attack: Paired vital strike with both pistols at 1d20 +5 vs. 0. Damage is 8 bladed damage x 20 bullets per attack. It does not dodge or parry and makes simultaneous strikes at no penalty. The golem has AR 17, PR 10 bladed 10 blunt 8 burn.

Programming:

Servant- Knows 'fetch' (with point), 'fetch' (up to 50 named objects), 'heel', 'stay,' 'get help,' 'press button (with point)', 'put away' (up to 20 named objects with set locations), 'open door,' 'attack' (with fists at 1d20 vs. 5). Costs $250.

Sex Toy- The body is programmed to provide a variety of sexual services and to mimic human reactions to stimuli. Legality: Forbidden (2 yrs. prison). Costs $1,000.

Gladiator- Programmed as a fighter and as a 'practice dummy' for those learning martial arts. Can fight unarmed, with knives, clubs and swords. Legality: Forbidden (2 yrs. prison). Costs $500.

Assassin- Uses a compass, auto-mapping, face recognition and auto-fighting technology. The assassin is shown a picture of the target and given coordinates where the target is likely to be. The assassin navigates to the spot (not responding to any people who try to talk to it), then patrols the area until it sees the person. It can attack with knives or firearms. If the assassin cannot find the victim it will continue to search until it dies of thirst, exhaustion or exposure. Legality: Forbidden (2 yrs. prison). Costs $1,000.

Expert Assassin- 🚫 This program was recently stolen from a military R&D lab. It is the most sophisticated golem program to date. It uses psych-mental programming, sophisticated AI routines and encyclopedic information on every situation, object or place the golem might encounter. The Golem has a variety of settings and modes available. The assassin can blend in to urban environments, can survive for weeks or months, can pick up and use useful items (weapons, armor, etc.) and can interrogate people. See p.400 for a more in-depth description of what the expert assassin can do. Legality: Forbidden (50 yrs. prison). Costs $10,000.

Walking Bomb- This program is designed to let a golem deliver explosives to a location. It has sophisticated AI programming to help it reach a location (can navigate overland, climb fences, forge rivers and even use an explosives detector to cross a minefield). It has several "cover modes" (how the program acts if stopped or confronted by someone) including "parent looking for child," "child looking for parent," "homeless schizophrenic", and "foreign tourist who doesn't speak the language." The program does not eat or sleep, but can drink water it finds. When it reaches its target it triggers an implanted explosive. Although it may act like a person these are pre-programmed responses, it can not learn or adapt. Legality: Forbidden (2 yrs. prison). Costs $2,000.

Blank- No programming. Golem require life sustaining machinery to survive. Costs $0.

Robotic

Robotic Servants Features

Robots may have the following features:

Radio Range: When a robot is remote controlled via a radio device, this is the maximum distance that the robot can stray from the control device and still have reliable communication.

Encryption Strength: When a robot is controlled and sends sensory feedback via radio, this is the strength at which the data is encrypted. See Encryption, p.73 for more.

Battery Life: Most robots work via rechargeable batteries.

Will Break: This is the amount of cumulative damage that will typically cause the robot to cease functioning.

Bomb Disarming Robot- A remote controlled telepresence robot. It has heavy tractor-treads on a base and a long robotic arm with a camera and several electronic tools on the end. The arm has pressure sensors, allowing remote users in VR to feel as if they are actually touching an object. Users can perform Bomb Disarming by remote at -4 and surgery at -6. The robot can fight, doing 3 bladed damage using its cutting tool, but at -7 to all actions and reactions. Can move at SPD 4 over most terrain. Arm has 4 STH. Radio Range: 1 mile. Encryption Strength: 30. Battery Life: 8 hours. Will break after taking 5 bladed or 5 blunt damage. Weighs 95 lbs. Costs $1,000.

Construction Robot- A large robot (25 feet tall) controlled by telepresence and usually used for construction. It is vaguely human shaped. The robot has STH 100, SPD 20. A telepresence user can operate the robot at -10 AGY. Radio Range: 1 mile. Encryption Strength: 35. Battery Life: 6 hours. Will break after taking 15 bladed or 20 blunt damage. Weighs 1500 lbs. Costs $70,000.

Flying Camera- A small remote-controlled helicopter with a video camera and parabolic microphone on it. The robot has a built in noise dampeners so it makes only a soft whirring noise when flying. Can move at 10 SPD. Radio range: 100 ft. Encryption Strength: 20. Battery Life: 4 hours. Will break after taking 1 bladed or 1 blunt damage. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $250.

Mobility Robot- Designed for use by physically disabled people. This is a small robot on treads that operates via an electronic battery. It has a "torso" on a telescoping pole and can raise up to six feet tall. It has two arms with humanoid hands and high definition visual sensors. It can pick up objects up to 20 lbs. It is controlled by an internal computer that responds to voice commands from its owner. The robot is best at opening doors, getting things, moving things, and putting things away. Battery Life: 4 hours. Will break after taking 2 bladed or 3 blunt damage. Weight 70 lbs. Costs $2,000.

Nanobot Tanks

These are heavy, airtight tanks, filled with nanobots (microscopic robots that can manipulate things on the atomic level) in a dormant state. The tank comes with a powerful battery. When the tank is activated, nanobots spill out and are fed energy via a powerful electromagnet. The electromagnet is powerful enough to fry unshielded electronics within 5 ft. and disrupt unshielded electronics within 100 ft. Once the tank is activated, the nanobots only have a few minutes to work before predator nanobots (which exist, invisibly, on everything) multiply to the point that they destroy the nanobot colony. Nanobot tanks can be recycled (a savvy trader can get up to 10% of the original value of a tank back). Nanobots tanks are the tools of the very rich and very powerful. They are heavily regulated and only a few have been seen in the city since the Freedom Wars.

Nanobot Tank (Brain Backup)- Very rich people use these tanks to make copies of their minds which can be put in a clone's body if something happens to them. The kit is two nanobot tanks – a memory tank and a tank that hooks up to a IV (like the medical tank). The needle is put in to the spine (requires medical skill roll) and nanobots enter the cerebrospinal fluid. They stimulate neurons and record the neural connections. They transmit the information back to the tank which stores it as solid-state memory. The whole process takes about 5 minutes and creates a copy of the brain with enough detail to reconstitute the person's mind in a blank body (see p.409 for more). Weighs 125 lbs. Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison). Costs $120,000.

Nanobot Tank (Construction)- These are the tanks that big corporations use to manufacture secondary nanotech. A large tank (about the size of a refrigerator) is filled with nanobots, liquids and the chemical components that nanobots usually use to create secondary nanotech (primarily carbon and silicon). When the tank is activated, an onboard computer directs the nanobots to build something. Since a sealed tank is nearly predator free, nanobots can operate for longer than they can in open air and can create complex objects. The construction tank must be hooked to a special high-voltage transformer to work. The tank can make about $10,000 worth of secondary nanotech (see p.407). The tank can make other things (normal-tech objects, organs, pharmaceuticals, etc.) but it is not cost effective to make these products because cheaper methods are available. Weighs 800 lbs. Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison). Costs $100,000.

Nanobot Tank (Data Storage)- This tank has a special high-capacity data line hooked in to it. When activated it takes in data and stores it as solid-state read-only memory. Can hold up to 5,000 ZB. Memory stored in this manner has good resistance to the elements and can last several hundred years. Costs $75,000.

Nanobot Tank (Forensic)- Federal forensics teams working on very important cases use these tanks. A large plastic tank on a squat tripod (looking somewhat like a hibachi) is placed in a crime scene, the detectives leave the area and the tank blows a fine powder in to the air that coats everything in the room. The power source activates and the nanobots analyze every surface in the room and transmit the information via microwaves back to a computer in the tank. When the nanobots are finished (about 2 minutes) a detachable hard drive in the tank contains a 30 ZB database of every particle found in the room. For each particle, the location, physical and chemical properties, and the genome of any DNA that was found is listed. Forensic scientists can use this data to tell, among other things, who was in the area and what they did. A similar but slightly modified tank pumps nanobots in to the ground for archeological/paleontological surveys. Weighs 60 lbs. Legality: Permit (2 yrs prison). Costs $80,000.

Nanobot Tank (Medical)- Private hospitals for the very rich (located outside the city) use these for emergency treatment of their patients. A large plastic tank on stilts contains a saline solution with nanobots in it. A long tube with a needle comes down from the tank. The needle is placed in a major vein and the liquid is pumped in to the bloodstream. When the tank is activated, the nanobots are programmed to seek out and destroy foreign matter (including viruses, poisons, bacteria, bullets, cancers) and to rebuild damaged tissue. One tank can restore up to 5 BLD and 3 BDY before it must go in to cleanup mode (the nanobots must destroy themselves and predator nanobots so all the foreign bodies does not kill the patient via anaphylactic shock). Weighs 95 lbs. Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison). Costs $85,000.

Nanobot Tank (Repair)- A series of five connected tanks that can be found on-board multi-million dollar fighter jets. When the plane experiences a serious malfunction, the tanks spill open and power the nanobots (since fighter jets are already EMP shielded, the power source does no damage). The tank has complete schematics for the plane in its on-board computer and it repairs as much as it can (starting with the most critical systems). In theory, the schematics for any device could be programmed in to the tank for emergency repairs. 5 tanks weigh 20 lbs. each. Legality: Permit (2 yrs. prison). Costs $100,000.

Nanobot Tank (Swat Team)- The world's most elite and important swat teams use these tanks. This flattened tank is designed to be worn as a backpack. A high pressure nozzle held in the hand can spray a thick stream of nanobot-containing foam. Controls on the handle of the nozzle turn on the power source and control the mode. In "Entry Tool" mode, the foam destroys locks, hinges and any electronics it can find. In "Bomb Disarming" mode, the foam finds any explosive or biologically hazardous materials and destroys them (breaks them down in to base molecules). In "Emergency Medical" mode, foam sprayed in to wounds will repair severed blood vessels (restores up to 4 BLD). In "Emergency Suppression" mode, the foam pops, splattering all over everything in the area. When foam splatters on skin, nanobots sample the DNA of the person and determine if it is a member of the swat team. If the person is not on the swat team, the nanobots burrow in to the skin and stimulate pain nerves (shocking pain at 30 difficulty to save). Legality: Licensed (2 yrs. prison). Costs $85,000.

Nanobot Tank (Unprogrammed)- A lightweight plastic tank about the size and shape of a fire extinguisher. A small built in computer lets the owner input programming via a keyboard or data disk. A black powder (made up dormant nanobots and the molecules they are constructed from) is gently blown out via a nozzle. The battery lasts 2 minutes (the maximum time a nanobot colony can survive in open air without being overrun by predator nanobots). Weighs 75 lbs. Legality: Permit (2 yrs.). Costs $75,000.

RoboPal- A small robot, encased in durable plastic, looks vaguely like a dog, runs on rubber treads. The robot is meant to be a babysitter for small children. It can track a specific child (via a locking wristband the child wears) and follows the child everywhere it is able to. If the child goes somewhere the robot cannot, the robot starts to cry and screams "take me with you!". The robot can respond to requests for entertainment by telling thousands of stored stories and jokes. The robot has primitive AI image recognition and it can recognize and alert the child to a number of dangers (poisons, electrical outlets, hot water, fire, etc.) If the robot senses that the child is in danger it orders the child to step back, and threatens to inform the parent otherwise. If the child refuses to back away, or if the child appears sick or injured, the robot calls the parents and/or an emergency dispatcher via a built in cellphone. The RoboPal has a speakerphone so that parents or emergency dispatchers can speak to the child. Legal Note: Courts have found it to be criminal neglect to leave a small child with only the RoboPal as a babysitter. The robot is shock and waterproof. Battery Life: 24 hours. Will break after taking 3 bladed or 5 blunt damage. Costs $200.

Sewer Crawler- This robot looks like a long segmented worm surrounded by telescoping circular tubes that can expand or contract. The robot is 6 ft. long and can change its width from as little as 1 ft. to as much as 6 ft. These robots crawl around inside the pipes that carry water, sewage, natural gas and steam around the city. The robots clean the pipes (a spinning chopping blade on the front can chop up obstructions, and can turn a human body to slush in under 5 minutes) and a small welding system on the side can patch leaks by welding a metal plate over them. The robots travel a set route and return every 24 hours for maintenance and recharging. The robot can travel at up to 30 SPD (more if there is a current flowing with them, less if there is a current against them). Will break after taking 10 bladed or 10 blunt damage. Costs $2,000.

Worm Robot- About the size and shape of an old mercury thermometer. This robot moves much like an earthworm (can move up to 6 inches per second on some surfaces). It works via telepresence, sending back what it sees (black and white) and hears. The worm has tiny pincers on the front which can bite holes through wood, plaster and flesh. The worm is typically used to spy on people, but some people put poison on the pincers and use it to assassinate people. Radio Range: 100 ft. Encryption Strength: 10. Battery Life: 1 hour. Will break after taking 1 bladed or 1 blunt damage. Costs $250.

See Also
Animal Boarding, p.129
Mercenary (All), p.132
Servant (All), p.133

SERVICES

After Battle Bath- A tradition among unborn street fighters: after a battle they reward themselves (or are rewarded by family elders) by paying someone to draw them a hot bath (either with pirated hot water or water heated over a fire) which is filled with herbs that relieve pain, help disinfect cuts and relax the bather (they also smell pleasant). Gives +4 to save vs. disease contraction from cuts and scrapes. Costs $7.

Animal Boarding- For anything up to a large dog size (bigger animals must be taken to stables outside the city) costs $3/day.

Apartment (Doorperson)- One bedroom in a large apartment building. On-site security, elevators, central heating and air. Costs $700/mo.

Apartment (Highrise)- A luxury apartment with every amenity: modern appliances, biometric locks, nice view, central heating and air, health club for tenants, etc. Costs $800/mo.

Apartment (Loft)- A whole floor in an old light manufacturing building. 1000 square feet of space, 12 ft. high ceilings, industrial elevator. See p.357 for more. Costs $700/mo.

Apartment (Projects)- An apartment in a complex of huge buildings built to deal with the massive need for low income housing in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Limited to low income, elderly and disabled renters. Apartments are small, have no AC. There are centralized laundry, sports and community facilities in each building. Costs $450/mo.

Apartment (Tenement)- A cramped one-rood apartment in a very old tenement building. Steam heating (no AC). See p.357 for more. Costs $350/mo.

Armored Limo Ride- A limousine service from outside the city can be called to send a car. Driver has Driving (3), Offensive Driving (1). Costs $75/mile (min $200).

Assassination- This is the cost to put a hit out on a person. The employer has little control over who performs the assassination and how or when they do it. Usually, the employer never meets the Assassin. Assassins are usually high-level Freelancers with homemade rifles and personality disorders. The price depends upon the defenses and social status of the victim. Costs from $100 for a person with few defenses and nobody who would seek revenge to $10,000 for a person with full-time protection.

Assassination (Cruel)- This type of assassination is used not merely to kill but to send a message. The assassins are usually sadist serial killers who take the occasional for-profit job. The victims' last hours (or days) are unimaginably terrible, and the assassins are always looking for never-before-seen horrors to visit on victims. The assassin makes sure that whoever finds the body can easily see how much the person suffered. Common themes include surgical mutilation, murdering victims' families in front of them, and forcing people to do horrible things. Many people who would hire a normal assassin would find hiring a cruel assassin reprehensible, so the market for cruel assassinations is very limited. Costs $5,000 to kill a person without bodyguards, $10,000-$30,000 for a person with bodyguards.

Background Check (Advanced)- Gives credit information, previous and current addresses, interests, shopping habits, legal, medical and educational history. This information is piecemeal and the accuracy and completeness is random, based on whatever blocks of data the background check corporations has managed to buy from different sources. Costs $200/ea. or $150/wk. for unlimited checks.

Background Check (Credit)- A quick credit report (takes less than a minute) shows info pertaining to the financial solvency or insolvency of a person. The more info given (legal name, pseudonyms, current and previous addresses) the more accurate the returned info. Costs $25/ea. Or $20/wk. for unlimited checks.

Band Account (Offshore)- This bank account requires no official identification, thus it is perfect for unborn and fugitives who want to make non-cash money transactions. Costs $3/wk.

Blood Test- Available at any medical clinic. Gives a rundown of poisons, drugs, pollutants and indicators of disease, explained by a nurse. Takes about 10 minutes. Costs $25.

Bloodhound Powder- Given a sample of a person's DNA, black market traders with bloodhound powder machines can manufacture a small vial of powder. When the buyer snorts the powder, he or she can suddenly smell the target and anything the target has touched. The user can smell the target at 50 ft. (with no wind) or anything the person has touched at 5 ft. Costs $150.

Bus Ride- A bus leaving from the bus terminal in Brooklyn costs: $30 (within 100 miles), $50 (anywhere in the Eastern half of the US) or $100 (anywhere in the Western half of the US, or in Mexico or Canada).

Call Stick (Medical)- This pen-shaped device represents one pre-paid emergency response from a private ambulance service. When the stick is snapped, a radio transmitter sends the location to the dispatcher, who sends a private ambulance to provide emergency medical care and transport the PC to a hospital. Costs $500.

Call Stick (Security)- Like the Medical Call Stick, but when it is snapped a dispatcher sends a car with two security guards to the PC's location (takes 2d6 minutes to show up). Costs $500.

Car Rental- A licensed driver can rent a gasoline powered car (equivalent to Car: Used) with an alarm system and $5,000 liability insurance for $25/day.

Cellular Connection (Basic, Hacked)- A Cracker programs a cellphone or cellular modem to access someone else's cellular service. Each week that the cellphone is used there is a 1 in 20 chance that the piracy will be discovered and action taken (in most cases, service will simply be shut off, though occasionally private security is sent to find the pirate and deliver him or her to the police). Legality: Forbidden ($500 fine). Costs $20.

Cellular Connection (Basic, Legal)- Allows cellphones and cellular modems to access the internet. Unlimited usage for $5/wk.

Cellular Connection (Broadband, Hacked)- Like a basic hacked cellular connection, a Cracker reprograms a broadband cellular modem with someone else's account. Each week the connection is used, there is a 1 in 10 chance of the cellular company finding the piracy. Legality: Forbidden ($500 fine). Costs $30.

Cellular Connection (Broadband, Legal)- Like the normal cellular connection, except the subscription allows a broadband modem to open several connections (thus allowing for high speed access). Unlimited access for $10/wk.

Cellular Connection (Priority, Hacked)- This cellular account is reserved for corporate and government officials. The idea is that these accounts have special priority over all accounts, so that in an emergency when all available cellular transponders are busy, the cellular phone or modem can automatically get through. Every time the account is used, there is a 1 in 20 chance of the intrusion being detected and appropriate measures being taken by the federal government. (Note: A cellphone can be programmed to switch back and forth between using two different accounts). Legality: Licensed (2 yrs. prison). Costs $100.

Data Storage- This is the cost to store data on some internet server so that it can be accessed from anywhere on the internet by anyone who has the PC's password. Costs $1 per 5 ZB per week.

Day Care (Chain)- In a well lit, clean, secured, state licensed day care with a good rep. Parents are given accounts that allow them to log-in from anywhere on the net and check-up on their kids via surveillance cameras. Costs $50/day.

Daycare (Unborn)- A reputable homeless person who will watch a child for a day. Only street people know who are the "sure thing" unborn caregivers (those who would never exploit or abuse a kid and who would fight tooth and nail to protect a kid under their care). It takes decades to build up this kind of rep, and many street person PCs may have been watched at some point in their past by a reputable caregiver. Costs $7/day for street people or $25/day for wells and indies.

Denial of Service- A handful of young city Crackers are paid to hammer some network node with false requests and other attacks in order to effectively block this node's internet access. Costs $20/hr.

Deprogramming- A cult deprogramming team (typically 4 or 5 middle aged adults) find and kidnaps an alleged cult member (using non-lethal weapons and restraints) and takes the person back to a motel room. For several days the group tries to convince the person (using methods that resemble cult brainwashing) that he or she was the victim of an evil cult but that the cult has no control over them now. The deprogramming doesn't always work, and sometimes it works so well that the deprogrammed person goes on to become an anti-cult crusader. Costs $750.

Drink (Alcoholic)- One shot, a small mixed drink, or a pint of beer from a bar or restaurant or bottled from a liquor or grocery store. Equals one dose of alcohol (see p.108). Costs $2.

Drink (Non-Alcoholic)- Purified water, juice or soda at a vending machine or restaurant. Costs $0.50.

Gasoline- There are two recharge stations in the city that sell gasoline (at Houston and Broadway, Downtown and by the on ramp to the George Washington Bridge in Inwood). It can also be purchased in 5 gallon containers from many black market traders. Being doused and set on fire does 8 burn damage per round. Costs $7/gallon.

Hacked Medical Care Card- A card with some well's state healthcare account on it. It is typically sold to someone with the same age, gender and ethnic group as the well. Problems can arise if the card owner's medical records conflict with the medical problems (or lack thereof) of the customer. Every month there is a 1 in 20 chance of the account being revoked. Costs $500.

Home Rental- The cost to rent a full house (usually a 2 story brownstone, see p.357). Costs $850/mo.

Hotel (Cheap)- A tiny hotel room with a bare steel-spring cot (towels and sheets not provided) and a shared bathroom down the hall. Steam based heating (no AC). Phone and Internet access available at $0.10/minute from a coin-operated box. Costs $10/hr., $30/night or $100/wk.

Hotel (Expensive)- A room in one of the large (formerly "grand") hotels. A vacuumed room with a queen bed (sheets and towels provided), bathroom with bathtub, AC and heating, full internet access and a videophone. Food vending machines in the lobby. Costs $60/night, or $250/wk.

Hotel (Homeless)- This is the cost to stay for the evening in a private room in an abandoned building that is maintained by homeless people. The room has candles for lighting, a trash furnace for heat, a bucket of (relatively) clean water, a pile of blankets on the floor for a bed, and a bucket with an air-tight lid for a toilet. The rooms typically only lock from the inside. If the PC has no way of gauging the honesty of he homeless innkeeper, there is about a 1 in 6 chance of staying at a place where the owners will attempt to rob the guest. Common scams include: entering through a secret door while the guest is sleeping, using a wire hook to snag possessions from a hole in the ceiling, dropping large rocks on the guest from a hole in the ceiling, poisoning the drinking water, etc. Costs $3/night for street people, $10/night for Wells and Indies.

Immortality Insurance- Once every five years the insured goes in to a clinic outside the city and has his or her neurological structures copied to solid state memory (See Nanobot Tank: Brain Backup, p.128). The memory is kept in an ultra-secure, climate controlled storage facility. Samples of the policy holder's DNA are also stored. If the policy holder dies, a new body is cloned and the memory copied in to it. The new person isn't an exact copy: there are minor changes (mostly deficits) to skills, memory, personality and intelligence. There is also a long period where the person must learn to use his or her new body and is extremely clumsy (lasts up to 5 years). It takes up to 1 year for the new body to be grown. The cost is based on the policy holder's health, age and lifestyle. Costs $200 to $1,000/wk.

Insurance (Car)- Covers liability, theft and vandalism, up to $10,000. Costs $100/wk.

Insurance (Home)- Up to $10,000 replacement cost for any damage to the home itself or any theft or damage to property within the home. Does not cover anything that is the fault of a homeowner or guest. Costs $50/wk.

Insurance (Kidnapping)- Rich executives usually purchase this kind of insurance. $100 million will be paid as ransom to get the policy holder back. Rather than pay this amount, most insurance companies find it worth their while to send private SWAT teams to rescue the kidnapee. If the kidnapee dies at any point during the kidnapping or rescue, $50 million will be paid to the named beneficiary

(usually the corp paying for the insurance) and $50 million will go to fund a global manhunt for the kidnappers. Costs $2,500/wk.

Insurance (Legal)- Prepaid legal insurance from a tiny firm of young city lawyers. PC gets 1 hour free office consults per week and up to 10 hours of courtroom representation for civil or criminal defense. Costs $10/wk.

Insurance (Life)- If the PC dies, $10,000 will go to a named beneficiary. Medical checkup required. No money if PC commits suicide or is murdered by the beneficiary. Costs $200/wk.

Insurance (Medical)- All necessary medical costs, short of a complete replacement body, are covered by this insurance. Treatment is provided in clinics in Queens. Emergency services are provided by an ambulance helicopterand can arrive in 4d6 minutes. Costs $50/wk.

Legal Research Database Access- Access to one of the major on-line databases that are necessary to make a professional legal case. Gives access to AI aided searches of all laws and legal decisions and text transcripts of most trials from the last 20 years. An AI can even write simple legal briefs. Arguing a complex legal case without this service gives a -8 penalty. Costs $100/hr. or $1,000/wk. for unlimited access.

Meal (Fast-Food)- Full meal from a cheap fast food place or a vending machine. Costs $4.

Meal (Sit Down)- A full meal at a moderately nice sit-down restaurant. Costs $8.

Medical Care (Ambulance)- An ambulance will stabilize the patient and transport him or her to the appropriate medical facility. Because there is a shortage of ambulances, ambulances arrive in 1d6 x 1d6 x 1d6 minutes. Costs $50/hr.

Medical Care (Black Med)- Medical care or services from a member of the Black Med street family. See P.157 for more.

Average Price Charged by Black Meds			
	Street People	Wells	Indies
Simple consult	$1	$10	$20
Treating a small infection or wound	$2	$15	$30
Large infection or wound	$5	$20	$40
Installing a cybernetic implant	$10	$50	$75
Treatment of a deadly, communicable disease	$30	$100	$200
Problem requiring major surgery	$50	$200	$300

Medical Care (Check-Up)- A visit with a doctor and battery of standard tests (blood test, MRI) to check for any potential medical problems or anomalies. Available in city clinics. Costs $90.

Medical Care (Inpatient, Drug Rehab)- Customer is kept at a facility outside the city, given drugs and counseling to aid in resisting withdrawals and avoiding drug cravings (+10 to save vs. cravings). Unless they are there on a court order or a psychiatrist orders a hold, patients can check out any time they want. Costs $200/day.

Medical Care (Outpatient, Drug Rehab)- The patient goes in to a clinic once a day for a medical checkup, an injection of drugs to help with withdrawal and cravings, and up to 15 minutes of counseling on request. Gives +5 to save vs. cravings. Costs $50/day.

Medical Care (Plastic Surgery)- Outpatient surgery in a clinic outside the city. Nearly any feature can be changed. Takes a about 2 hours of surgery per feature change. After 10 feature change the patient might be mistaken for someone else, after 20 feature changes the patient is virtually unrecognizable. The surgery can be used to make the patient closer to the most common standards of physical attractiveness (+2 to seduction rolls per feature change, with a max. +10 bonus). See p.341 for a discussion on the potential problems with the unrestrained use of this service. Costs $2,000 per feature change.

Medical Care (Psychotherapy)- Therapy from a licensed therapist. A consult to a psychiatrist who can prescribe drugs can be easily obtained. Costs $50/hr.

Mental Programming Code Checking- This is the cost to have a tech (who is very skilled at mental programming) thoroughly analyze the memory of a mental installer directly before it is about to install a program in a person. The purpose of this is to insure that no code hidden in the program that could be used to harm the PC. Some people hire two independent code checkers. Costs $30/MMU.

Mercenary (Addict)- An addict is paid to travel with the employer and help the employer fight enemies. The addict will flee if he or she is wounded or faces a superior military force. Costs $100/day.

Typical Addict Merc
Level 2 Addict
Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 5, CHM 4, END 6, INL 8, SPD 10, STH 9, WIL 5, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 3.
Appearance- A thin homeless person with a slightly wild look in his or her eyes. Wearing torn, greasy rags. Body is covered with sores and/or needle tracts.
Motivations- To make a buck so he or she can buy drugs.
Methods- The addict merc is not particularly brave or skilled. He or she depends upon ambushes or in outnumbering an enemy. They attack whoever their boss says to attack and run when the situation starts looking dangerous.
Special Equipment- Skullcrusher (range 1-2, 3 blunt damage, pierces as 6).
Special Skills- Street Fighting: Armed (1).
Typical Attack- Will do a crippling attack with the skullcrusher (trying to take out a person's knees or elbows) at STH (10) + INL (8) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 8). As a reaction will do a Jump Out at SPD (10) + AGY (8) + 1d20 vs. 25 (+10 for every additional range level) or 1d20

Mercenary (Dioxyl-Drake)- A young Drake from the family that creates and uses the psychic-disrupting Dioxyl Ash. The Drake will only fight psychics. The Drake carries two hot dioxyl ash pipes (see p.168) and has at least one level in Street Fighting: Armed or Club. Costs $300/day.

Mercenary (Drake)- A young Drake, hired as a bodyguard or to fight alongside the employer. Drake elders need to know what cause the young Drake will be fighting for

and will not allow the Drakes to become associated with something really reprehensible. The cost also goes up drastically if the Drakes might get in trouble with a powerful group (e.g. the Drug Lords). The young drake has several pieces of throwing glass (FR 1 ft. MR 50 ft. ½ bladed damage) poisoned with Drake Fungus Poison (causes -10 STH, vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance), Vomiting (20) and 1 BLD damage). The Drake typically has at least one level of the skill Knife Throwing. Costs $250/day.

Mercenary (Insomniac)- A young Insomniac with psychic skills is hired to follow employers in to battle and use psychic skills to debilitate and confuse the enemy. Insomniac elders will not let an Insomniac fight for a completely reprehensible cause. Costs $250/day.

Typical Insomniac Merc
Level 1 Insomniac
Attributes- AGY 9, AWR 10, CHM 7, END 10, INL 9, SPD 9, STH 9, WIL 15, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.
Appearance- A young homeless person, wearing very little clothing, with several self-inflicted scars and a weary look in his or her eyes.
Motivations- To make money to support his or her family.
Methods- The Insomniac is not being paid to fight, he or she is being paid to mess up the enemy using psychic skills so that the employer can kill the enemy. If someone tries to come after the Insomniac physically, he or she will run.
Special Equipment- Shield (Hand-Nails) (gives +5 to parry).
Special Skills- Emotion Attack (2) or Hallucination Attack (2) or Pain Attack (2).
Typical Attack- Will make a Pain Attack skill roll to cause the victim to suffer shocking pain at WIL (15) +10 (Sibosin effects) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 +9 vs. 0). The victim can make an opposed save vs. pain (if victim fails by <10, loses next action, if victim fails by 10+, loses next action and reaction). If physically attacked, will parry with the shield at STH (9) +AGY (9) +5 (shield) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 2).

Mercenary (Professional)- A professional mercenary (level 2 Mercenary) who travels the world fighting other people's battles. Well trained, well equipped (typically has at least a smuggled pistol and nanoweave armor) with a fair bit of knowledge. Will fight alongside the employer for $1,000/day.

Mercenary (Semi-Professional)- A city well Freelancer who has trained himself or herself specifically as a mercenary and has had a little bit of experience (level 1 Freelancer, level 1 Mercenary). The mercenary is trying to build up a rep and is unlikely to betray employers or flee unless the odds look really bad. Typically has at least Modern Chainmail and a Sword: Katana. Costs $400/day.

Mercenary (Thug)- A young well (level 1 Freelancer), typically a God Killer addict, paid to fight alongside the employer. The thug is typically high on either God Killer, Thor-O-Zine or Zombine. These drugs make the thug brave (unlikely to flee) but also prone to doing stupid things. Typically carries a Baseball Bat (range 1, damage 3 blunt) and wears Phonebook Armor (AGY Penalty: -2, AR 5 PR 2 blunt and 2 bladed). Costs $200/day.

Fighting Alongside
Mercenaries like it better when they fight with (rather than at the direction of) an employer. That way they know that the employer is not sending them in to a battle that the employer himself or herself is not willing to risk. When an employer refuses to fight alongside a mercenary, the charge typically doubles.

Typical Semi-Professional Merc

Level 1 Freelancer, Level 1 Mercenary

Attributes- AGY 12, AWR 9, CHM 7, END 11, INL 7, SPD 10, STH 13, WIL 9, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- An athletic young man or woman wearing an armored shirt made from interlocking plastic rings, holding a sword and carrying a small metal shield.

Motivations- Trying to build a rep within the city as a reputable mercenary. He or she knows that every battle counts towards building a rep and will not flee a battle unless death seems imminent. Wants to become an international mercenary and travel the world fighting with high-tech weapons.

Methods- March in to battle, strike at the enemy whenever possible and try not to get hit.

Special Equipment- Sword: Katana (range 1-2, easy vital strike, 5 bladed damage), Shield: Hand-Metal (gives +8 to parry). Modern Chainmail Armor (AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt).

Special Skills- Sword and Shield (1).

Typical Attack- Strike with the sword at STH (13) + AGY (12) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 0). Parries with the shield at STH (13) +AGY (12) +8 (shield) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +12 vs. 0).

Net Hosting: Personal- Space on an internet server with enough bandwidth and space host most personal or hobby net sites, including message boards. Costs $2/wk.

Net Hosting: Professional- Enough bandwidth and space to run most commercial sites, including those with streaming full-sensory VR to thousands of users. Costs $50/wk.

Office Rental- One room office in a downtown office building. On-site security. Costs $300/mo.

Paycomputer- Running a very limited form of OpenCert, the user can access the internet, run programs or use a datacard. After the session is done, the whole computer is wiped and the OS is re-installed from read-only solid memory (to clean up any changes or damage done to the OS). Input: touch screen, keyboard, voice recognition. Output: screen, speakers. Power: 2. Memory: 5 ZB. Costs $1/minute.

Payvidphone- Usually found outside minimarts, liquor stores, fast food places, and in the lobbies of office buildings. Costs $0.25 for a 5 minute call to any voice or vid address in the world.

Plane Ticket- From the International Aerospace Port in White Plains, New Jersey, 20 miles Northeast of the city. Costs $75 (Eastern US), $120 (Western US, Canada, Mexico) or $350 (intercontinental).

Prostitution- The cost for sexual services varies considerably based on the skills and physical characteristics of the sex worker, the type of sex acts preformed, the location and duration of those acts. Costs can range from a quarter for a quick sex act in a back alley to five thousand for a weekend with a high-class escort. A 'typical' sex act (see p.191) costs $10.

Repair (Computer)- This is the cost to repair a random hardware malfunction in a computer. The cost is partly for replacement parts and partly for labor. Cost is (roll percentile):

> 01-25: 10% cost of computer.
> 26-50: 20% cost of computer.
> 51-75: 50% cost of computer.
> 76-95: 100% cost of computer.
> 96-00: 200% cost of computer.

Runner- The cost to hire a street person Runner to take a message or package to any part of the city. Costs $0.10/block for normal speed (delivers within 8 hours) or $25 for rush (delivery within 30 minutes).

Secretary Subscription- The PC pays a weekly cost for the services of a secretary AI (p.89) on a host server. The secretary is running 24 hours a day and can be accessed from anywhere on the internet. Costs $5/wk.

Security (Alarm System)- Includes the installation of an alarm system (with motion detectors and voice-activated 'panic button'). Any time the alarm is triggered or the owner calls for help, two security guards in a car show up in 2d6 minutes. Costs $30/wk.

Security (Executive Personal)- There are two plainclothes bodyguards watching the customer's residence 24 hours a day and will accompany the customer on any outings and trips. An armored car is available for transport upon request. Bodyguards are level 4 freelancers with Nanopadded and Nanoweave Armor, Telescoping Batons and Taser Guns. Backup is available via helicopter within 3d4 minutes. Costs $1400/wk.

Security (On-Site)- The presence of at least one security guard at the site 24 hours a day, with backup available in an emergency (3d6 min. response time). Costs $500/wk.

Security (Per-Use)- Several security services have a phone address people can call for a pay-per-use security response. After calling, a car with 2 security guards shows up within 2d6 minutes. Costs $750 per response.

Servant (Addict)- This is the cost to hire an addict to follow the employer around and do manual labor, run errands or anything else (save fighting). Note that addicts are usually unreliable and may try to rob employers if they think they can get away with it. Costs $2/hr.

Servant (Jack)- Jacks are professional beggars who have a reputation for doing anything to make a buck, from singing and dancing, to manual labor, to acting as a tour guide. This is the cost to hire a Jack to do whatever the employer can think of for the Jack to do (save fighting). Costs $4/hr.

Servant (Licensed Psychic)- This is the cost to hire a well Freelancer who has been certified by the government as a psychic (level 1 Freelancer, level 1 Licensed Psychic). The psychic will use his or her skills to benefit the employer but will not do anything that is dangerous, degrading or illegal. Costs $100/hr.

Servant (Skilled Street Person)- A level 1 Black Med, Cracker, Drake, Gambler, Insomniac, Keeper, Runner, Thief or Water Rat is paid to follow the employer around and use their particular skills and knowledge to aid the employer in whatever his or her goals are. The street person will not fight on behalf of the employer, will not do anything degrading or dangerous, and will not work on behalf of causes that his or her family elders think of as reprehensible. Costs $10/hr.

Shop Rental- A street-facing shop on the ground floor of a building, with an office/stockroom in the back. Costs $1,000/mo.

Spy Satellite Co-Op- The PC pays a regular cost for a share of access to a geostationary spy satellite hovering over the city. The PC can access low-res images of any part of the city at any time (visual images can see objects as small as a car, infrared images can see objects as cold as a bonfire). The PC can also attempt to take control of the key-hole imager and point it at any particular spot. The key-hole imager can see in enough detail to recognize people's faces and can track the heat-signatures of humans even through moderate cloud cover. If more than one user wants to use the key-hole at once (which happens about half the time), the satellite immediately starts a bidding war. Bids are taken anonymously (you don't know who you are bidding against or where they want to look), are very quick (failure to answer in a few seconds means conceding) and money is instantaneously deducted from the winner's bank account. Costs $75/week.

Storage (Locker)- Put in money, get a key card. You must pay every 48 hours or the key card will be revoked and the locker will unlock to the world. At any subway station a 1' by 1' by 2' locker is available (with a 1 in 20 chance of it getting broken in to). At SafeLock (a chain with 2 city locations) 2' by 2' by 3' lockers are available in a well-lit climate controlled building with video surveillance and occasional security guard drive-bys. Subway locker costs $1/48 hours, SafeLock locker costs $2.50/48 hours.

Storage (Shed)- A 5' by 5' by 8' shed in a converted office building. Open 24 hours with on-site security. Sheds open with a password and electronic key. Costs $20/mo.

Subway Ride- See p.412 for more info. Costs $1.50 to get in to the system.

Surgical OR- This the cost to rent a complete Operating Room in a major hospital with fully stocked supplies and nurses. Costs $500/hr.

Tattoo- Full color tattoo, either done by an artist with a needle or by a computer-controlled laser. Costs $5/square inch.

Taxi Ride- There are a few well-worn taxis still operating in the city. Costs $10/mile (min. $20).

Time on a Code Breaker- This is the cost for remote access to a very powerful computer designed especially to break codes. The code breaker is located outside the city, but remote access software lets users have full control as if they were sitting at the computer itself. Time must be booked in advance and reserved time is billed for whether it is used or not. The computer guesses codes at Power 75 and can do other tasks at Power 20. Memory: 500 ZB. Costs $200/minute.

Time on a Mental Installer- This is the cost to use a black market mental installer owned by a black market trader. Since they are so valuable (as well as being a target for Colins), customers are usually blindfolded when they are taken to the installer so they don't remember the location. See p.408 for more on mental installers. Costs $40/hr.

Time on a Supercomputer- This is the per minute cost to run programs on a supercomputer. Time must be booked in advance and reserved time is billed for whether it is used or not. Computer has Power 50, 5000 ZB memory. Costs $1,000/minute.

Vehicle Recharge- There are about 20 electrical recharge stations throughout the city which can recharge most electrical vehicles in about a minute. They are un-staffed, take bank cards, credit cards and cash. Most other electrical devices (including implants) can also be recharged here. Costs $5 for small vehicles, $10 for large vehicles.

VR Multiplayer Game Subscription- This is the entertainment and social activity of choice for the majority of the city's shut-ins. Comes with a high-speed internet connection and rental of a Mental Stimulator: Basic. The user can plug in at any time and spend time interacting with other players in a full-immersion fantasy VR world. See p.360. Costs $102/wk.

VR Training- On-line access to VR training programs that use realistic simulations to teach anything from kung-fu to surgery. Users can access from home VR systems or can pay to use a machine at a VR parlor. Each hour spent will reduce the cost to buy a skill by 2 (min. 2). VR systems can train skills up to level 5. Costs $20/hr. for SOC and TECH skills, $40/hr. for ATHL, BIO and THIE skills, $70/hr. for CMBT and MIL skills.

TOOLS

Backpack- Costs $10.

Bloodhound Powder Maker- This is the size and shape of a toaster oven. It is fed key genetic markers (usually by being hooked to a DNA Analyzer, p.121). From the genetic markers, the device determines the unique combination of chemicals given off by that individual (this is the same unique combination that bloodhounds can smell that let them track a person). The device then manufactures a very complex molecule designed to change chemical structure when it comes in to contact with that combination of chemicals. The powder comes out in a small vial, and when snorted the powder attaches to certain smell receptors. The person who snorted it has a bloodhound's ability to track that one individual. Whenever the user is near the person or something the person has touched, he or she smells a strong smell of nutmeg. One dose of power lasts about 8 hours. The chemical components the powder is made out of cost $5 per dose. Weighs 45 lbs. Costs $5,000.

Bolt Cutters- Long handles allow a lot of pressure to be put on thick, high-strength blades. Designed to cut padlocks, chain-link fences, even some metal bars on windows. Because of its awkward balance it makes a poor weapon (1 bladed or 1 blunt damage, very hard strike, hard entangle) but if a weapon can be caught between the blades, the fighter holding the bolt cutters can use an action to snap it. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $50.

Burglary Tools

An old law makes it a misdemeanor ($500 fine or 30 days in jail) to carry "burglary tools". Burglary tools are anything a prosecutor can convince a judge was being carried for use in a burglary, even something as simple as a screwdriver. Overworked judges at the criminal courts building are willing to take the prosecutor's word that someone is a 'known burglar' and thus any tool they were carrying must have been a burglary tool.

Bolt Cutters (Folding)- Like normal bolt cutters, but these are made from lightweight plastics and alloys with folding handles. Folded, the bolt cutters are about the size of a paperback book. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $100.

Bottled Water- A small plastic bottle of filtered water. Costs $0.50.

Camping Net- This lightweight net can hold up to 750 lbs. and is large enough to be set up as a comfortable hammock. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $75.

Camping Tent- A canvas bag holding a folded up waterproof tent. With practice the tent can be setup and taken down in 5 minutes. Tent can hold up to 4 people (although not comfortably). Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $35.

Camping Tent (Arctic)- This tent is designed for long-term use in very cold environments. It has sturdy supports (can hold up to 70 mph winds), insulated walls with a heat-reflective coating on the interior, a smoke hole that can be opened in the top. The tent can hold up to 10 people (although not comfortably). Weighs 85 lbs. Costs $200.

Carpentry Tools- Includes tools that can be used as ½ bladed poking or 2 blunt weapons (See Improvised Weapons, p.80). Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $50.

Carving Tools- A small pouch of tools used by artists for carving in wood or stone. Has tools that can be uses as 1 bladed poking or 1 bladed slashing weapons. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs $40.

Chemical Synthesis Equipment (Lab)- A collection of high-tech computer-controlled machines that can manufacture just about any chemical. Weighs 1000 lbs. Costs $10,000.

Chemical Synthesis Equipment (Simple)- Made from scavenged household items and a few special-ordered parts, this collection of heaters, condensers, flasks, filters, drips, separators, etc. fills several cardboard boxes and can be setup by someone with the Chemical Synthesis skill to manufacture simple chemicals (including most drugs). Costs $200.

Climbing Rope- High quality rope that a mountain climber or spelunker might use. Has a burn and cut-proof nylon sheath (takes 3 bladed or 5 burn damage to cut the rope). Can hold 500 lbs. Has moderate bounce. Weighs 1 lb./10 ft. Costs $1/ft.

Color Change Clothing- A suit of clothing and shoes in one of the following styles: 'jeans and sweater', 'generic uniform', 'suit and tie' or 'short dress'. The clothing is controlled by a computer (controls hidden inside the left sleeve) and made from smart chemical fibers that can change color. The suit can change to any pre-programmed color and pattern, or can show simple animated patterns for a trendy high-tech look. When using a preprogrammed camouflage mode appropriate to the environment, gives +4 to prowl. Battery Life: 16 hours. Costs $1,000.

Computer Repair Tools (Portable)- Small tool kit with a few commonly needed parts. Allows use of the Microelectronics skill to repair computers or computerized devices. Has tools which can be used as ½ bladed poking weapons. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $25.

Computer Repair Tools (Shop)- A large box of tools with many spare parts. Has tools which can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 blunt damage weapons. Gives +4 to Microelectronics repair rolls. Weighs 45 lbs. Costs $200.

Crowbar- Metal bar for prying things open. Can be used as 2 blunt 1 bladed weapon (range 1). Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $45.

DNA Sequencer- This dishwasher sized, computer controlled device, is capable of creating the small vials of virus-filled liquid which infect cells and change the DNA. A person or animal can ingest the vial to change its DNA, or an embryonic cell can be infected with the virus to create a custom person or animal. See Genetic Mods (p.106). Weighs 150 lbs. Legality: Licensed (10 yrs. prison). Costs $2,500 +$5 worth of materials per vial of virus.

Dock Rope- Thick old rope, usually hemp, salvaged from old docks (usually by Water Rats). It is starting to decompose but is still strong and durable enough for many purposes. Can hold up to 250 lbs. Takes 2 bladed or 3 burn damage to cut the rope. Weight 1 lb./5 ft. Costs $1/5ft.

Duct Tape- 50 ft. roll. Costs $2.

Emergency Cooling Pack- When capsules inside this small gel-filled pouch are broken it becomes ice cold and stays cold for up to 4 hours. Can only be used once. Gives +5 to save vs. heat exhaustion. Weighs 1 lb. Costs $5.

Emergency Heat Pack- When capsules inside this small gel-filled pouch are broken it becomes very warm and stays warm for up to 4 hours. Can only be used once. Gives +7 to save vs. hypothermia. Weighs 1 lb. Costs $5.

Entry Tool- This long, heavy tool was designed for SWAT teams to quickly get past obstacles. It is a pry bar, an axe and a sledgehammer all in one (one side of the pole has a hammer-axe, the other has a pry-bar). Can be used as a weapon doing either 3 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6) or 4 blunt damage at range 2 (hard strike). Weighs 25 lbs. Costs $250.

Fingerprint Pads- A tiny computer disguised as a watch connects (via clear wires) to clear pads that are glued to the fingertips. The watch can scan fingerprints (using an ultra-violet camera) and can replicate them. The pads slightly decrease touch sensitivity of the fingertips (-4 to skills such as lock picking or surgery). Costs $750.

Fishing Line- A 100 ft. spool of nylon line. Takes hard (30) strength feat to break. Can hold up to 100 lbs. Weighs ½ lb. Costs $15.

Flare- Burns with a bright red or green light for 1 hour, illuminating up to 20 ft. Can be held in the hand. Does 2 burn damage when used as a weapon. Costs $5.

Flare (Underwater)- Like the flare, but it is designed to work underwater. Costs $15.

Flashlight (Emergency)- This small, durable flashlight is waterproof and shockproof and uses no batteries. Shaking the flashlight vigorously for 5 seconds will power it for about half an hour. Can illuminate up to 25 ft. Costs $75.

Flashlight (Keychain)- A tiny flashlight with an ultra-bright LED. Can illuminate up to 10 ft. Battery lasts 1 hr. Costs $3.

Flashlight (Large)- A heavy, long metal flashlight with a steel casing. Can be used as a blunt weapon (range 0-1, 2 blunt). Batteries last 12 hours. Can illuminate up to 100 ft. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $25.

Flashlight (Small)- A small rechargeable flashlight that fits in the palm of the hand (and can clip on to the handlebars of a bike). Batteries last 2 hours. Can illuminate up to 50 ft. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $2.

Garden Box (Electronic)- A small plastic box filled with soil. Plugs in to a wall, has a small full-spectrum light (automatically supplements the available light) and a tiny heater and evaporation-based cooling system to keep the plant's temperature within a set range. Gives +8 to gardening skill rolls. Costs $80.

Generator- A squat 30 lb. device on wheels, uses a hydrogen tank to power an electrical generator. Can provide enough electricity to power up to 4 devices for up to 24 hours. Costs $200 +$50 per hydrogen tank.

Gun Repair Tools- Tools for repairing and cleaning guns, as well as a small electric furnace and mold for making bullets. Contains tools that can be used as ½ bladed poking weapons. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $200.

Fire Suppression Grenade- Brown paper cylinders with a pin. Five seconds after the pin is pulled they burst open, spilling out mounds of white fire-suppressing foam, enough to cover a 400 ft.[2] area with foam. The foam is very slippery and anyone trying to move through it must make a save vs. loss of balance. Costs $80.

Handcuffs- 20 difficulty to pick. Takes 50 difficulty STH feat to break. Costs $20.

Hip Flask- Costs $25.

Instrument (Acoustic)- An old beat-up non-electronic instrument, the type homeless people often play for spare change in their off-hours. Guitar, bongos, harmonica, sitar, saxophone, etc. Costs $20.

Instrument (Electronic)- A long tube (about 4 feet) with a shoulder strap. The surface of the tube is pressure sensitive and has the image of black and white piano keys wrapped around it. The top of the tube had a microphone and a saxophone-style mouthpiece. The whole thing is a powerful speaker. The tube communicates wirelessly to a pair of LCD display glasses. The tube has an internal music program comparable to the Music Program (p.90) with 10,000 built-in recordings (and room for 20,00 more). It can be used as a sampler, mixer, megaphone, instrument (users familiar with guitars, saxophones, drums or pianos can easily learn to play this) or as a blunt damage weapon (2 blunt damage, 1-2 range). Battery Life: 8 hours. Costs $150.

Latex Molder- Put a data disk containing a 3D model of an object in to the device, and in 30 minutes it will create a latex replica of the object (with appropriate shading, coloring and texture). It is mainly used to make latex face-masks for purposes of impersonation but it can be used for a number of other creative purposes as well. Costs $700 +$5 worth of latex per mask.

Lighter (Disposable)- Plastic butane lighter, can burn for up to 10 minutes straight (prone to melting or exploding if left on too long). Costs $0.50.

Lighter (Electronic)- Rechargeable, high-powered infrared heaters focused on a point, can easily ignite wet wood in high wind. Costs $10.

Lock Breaking Kit- A chisel, rubber mallet and canister of freon for freezing and shattering locks. One can of freon lasts for 4 locks. Costs $25 for chisel and mallet, +$200 for freon can.

Lock Pick (Auto)- A small electronic device (looks like a thick marker) is stuck in a lock. It automatically puts tension on the lock and rakes the pins (lock picking at 5 + 1d20). Costs $300.

Lock Picks (Homemade)– A short rake and tension bar made from street sweeper bristles and other odd bits of metal. Lets a user perform Lock Picking at -4. Costs $5.

Lock Picks (Professional)- A tiny leather pouch with well crafted tools for picking just about any kind of mechanical lock. Lets a user perform Lock Picking at no minuses. Costs $50.

Makeup (Theatrical)- A large toolbox filled with wigs, prosthetics, fake blood and everything else needed to create any kind of disguise or effect. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $200.

Makeup Kit- A small kit that can fit in a purse, with everything needed for most styles of makeup. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $40.

Metal/Glassworking Cart- A wheeled cart containing a portable hydrogen-burning ceramic forge, an anvil, hammers, tongs, crucibles, a bucket of cheap scrap metal and a bucket of glass pebbles. Has tools that can be used as 1 bladed poking or 2 blunt damage weapons. Weighs 200 lbs. Costs $750.

Mini-Blowtorch- A small device about the size and shape of a marker, uses liquid hydrogen and a plasma flame. Can cut through any metal and almost every other material. When used as a weapon, does 2 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6) at range 1. Costs $350 +$25 per refill cartridge.

Nanocord- A black line about the width of fishing line, made from a chain of carbon rings assembled by nanobots. The line is strong enough to hold 750 lbs. and has no elasticity. Weighs 1 lb./500 ft. Costs $50/ft.

Nutrient Bar- Lasts up to 5 years unrefrigerated. Contains protein, sugar, carbohydrates and vitamins. Most people could survive on four of these per day if they had to. Costs $2.

Padlock (Cheap)- 20 difficulty to pick, takes 6 bladed or 6 blunt damage to break. Costs $5.

Padlock (Expensive)- 40 difficulty to pick, takes 15 bladed or 15 blunt damage to break. Takes a hard strength feat to open it with a bolt cutter (and will ruin the bolt cutters). Costs $80.

Pheromones- Made either for men or women, these chemically engineered pheromones have no consciously perceivable scent (except perhaps to Sexologists or Animalists) but they tend to trigger a strong sexual attraction in any person attracted to the wearer's gender who comes within 5 ft. +8 to seduction rolls. Lasts 4 hours. Costs $20/dose.

Portable Floodlight- This light uses a powerful secondary nanotech light-emitting-diode. The whole package weighs 5 lbs. and includes a battery belt-clip with a cord leading to a handheld floodlight. The pale, bluish light is extremely bright and can illuminate a square mile. People standing anywhere near the source of the light are partially blinded (-7 to actions/reactions) when facing away from the light and fully blinded (-15) while facing it. Battery Life: 2 hours. Costs $1,500.

Portable Spotlight- This is a smaller, cheaper version of the portable floodlight which is smaller and less bright. It is the size and shape of a handheld megaphone. It has a smaller cone of light and can illuminate targets up to a mile away. It partially blinds those facing the light (-7). Weighs 3 lbs. Battery Life: 4 hours. Costs $250.

Plastic Restraints- Thick plastic restraints that can be quickly closed around wrists and ankles, can only be released by cutting them. Takes 40 difficulty STH feat to break. Costs $2/ea. or 20 for $20.

Plumbing Repair Tools (Portable)- A small box with tools for repairing plumbing problems. Has tools which can be used as ½ bladed poking or 2 blunt weapons. Weighs 7 lbs. Costs $40.

Psychic Training Rig- This washing-machine sized device contains sophisticated electrochemical sensors which are placed on a student's head. A series of pre-programmed biofeedback exercises gives a student rudimentary control over his or her internal psychic systems. PCs with unlimited access to one of these devices can learn psychic skills at -10 skill cost (min. 4). Costs $200,000.

Radio Scrambler- A small handheld device that broadcasts loud static on every frequency anyone is trying to communicate on, destroying any capability of radio or cellular communication within ½ mile. Weighs 1 lb. Battery Life: 8 hours. Costs $250.

Retinaprint Contacts- Contact lenses with secondary nanotech LEDs inside, controlled and powered by remote from a tiny pocket computer. Can change eye color, retinal images, and act as sunglasses. Used mainly by thieves to fool biometric locks. Costs $2,000.

Rope Saw- A flexible saw-on-a-chain that rolls up in to a tiny package (can easily fit in a pocket). Used mainly by campers. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Can be used as a 1 bladed improvised slashing weapon. Costs $25.

Seed Pack- Suitable for planting in a garden. Common plants are $3, rare plants are $15, illegal plants (e.g. marijuana, peyote, opium poppies) are $25. Double the cost for live plants (easier to grow than seeds, +5 on gardening rolls). Double the cost for plants genetically engineered to grow outside in the city (frost resistant, pollution resistant, low light).

Smart Paint- Originally designed for military camouflage: to let soldiers spray-paint equipment to match any environment with just one can. The paint uses smart chemicals and electronics built in to the can to let the user change the color the paint is spraying on the fly. The user can even color-match using a tiny optical sensor. Weighs 0.5 lbs. Costs $100.

Spray Paint- A normal can of spray paint. Can be used as a blinding weapon. Costs $10.

Steel Thermos- Can be used as a blunt weapon (range 1, 1 blunt damage). Weighs 1 lb. empty, 4 lbs. full. Costs $35.

Swiss Army Knife (Mechanical, Small)- Choose up to 6 non-electronic add-ons (see next page). Costs $2.

Swiss Army Knife (Mechanical, Large)- Choose up to 10 non-electronic add-ons (see next page). Costs $7.

Swiss Army Knife (Electronic, Small)- The knife has a tiny rechargeable battery in it to run electronic add-ons. Choose up to 6 electronic or non-electronic add-ons (see next page). Costs $45.

Swiss Army Knife (Electronic, Large)- Choose up to 10 electronic or non-electronic add-ons (see next page). Costs $75.

Torture Kit- A small leather pouch filled with tools scavenged from other purposes (medical tools, repair tools, cleaning instruments). The tools are specially selected to look as wicked and horrible as possible. Allows a PC to use the Torture skill with no minuses. Contains tools which can be used as 1 bladed damage slashing weapons. Costs $250.

Vehicle Repair Tools (Portable)- A box of tools with many spare parts. Allows someone to use the Mechanics skill to repair vehicles at -7. Has tools which can be used as 1 bladed poking or 1 blunt damage weapons. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $50.

Vehicle Repair Tools (Shop)- Allows someone to use the Mechanics skill to repair vehicles at no minuses. Has tools which can be used as 1 bladed poking or 2 blunt damage weapons. Weighs 120 lbs. Costs $400.

Water Purifying Canteen- A small canteen with a built in water-purifier. Costs $70.

Wristwatch- A cheap digital watch on a plastic band. Receives date and time from official broadcasts. Has an alarm. Waterproof to 35 ft. Costs $1.

Swiss Army Knife Add-Ons

Adaptive Screwdriver- This screwdriver has an end made out of dozens of tiny rods made out of a high-strength alloy. The screwdriver is pushed in to the screw or bolt, molds itself to the right shape, locks with a flip switch on the side to make the perfect driver. Costs $60.

Band Wrench- A strong rubber strap is pulled around any bolt up to 3 inches in diameter, tightened, then used as an effective wrench. Costs $5.

Blood Test (Electronic)- A tiny stick with a disposable needle at the end (3 needles fit in the add-on). Only a finger-prick is needed. Does test for red and white blood cell counts, glucose and oxygen levels, common drugs and toxins. Results are displayed on a tiny LCD on the side of the arm. Gives +4 to medical diagnosis rolls. Costs $75.

Camera (Electronic)- A tiny digital camera takes pictures via a tiny hole in the body of the knife. Works in low light. Can save up to 1000 pictures, which can be transferred wirelessly to any computer. Costs $20.

Can Opener- Small tool for prying holes in cans. Costs $0.

Cigar Cutter- Hearty enough to cut fingers as well. Costs $0.

Compass- Tiny non-electronic compass on the body of the knife. Costs $0.

Corkscrew- Good for removing corks, as well as other things. Costs $0.

Curved Knife- Inwardly curved knife, good for gutting and skinning small animals. Costs $0.

Cutting Tool (Electronic)- A tiny disk at the end of a small arm spins at very high speeds, able to cut through lead pipes. Disks must be replaced often. Costs $15.

Drill (Electronic)- Small spinning drill with a steel bit hard enough to drill through most metals. Costs $5.

Distress Siren (Electronic)- Built in to the body of the knife. When activated this lets out a series of high pitched squeals which lasts up to 48 hours and can be heard up to 4 miles away. Some search and rescue teams have sensors that can detect and triangulate the location of a distress siren up to 20 miles away. Costs $30.

Electronic Tester (Electronic)- Uses two slots. Two arms are placed at different points along a wire. Gives readings for current, voltage and resistance. If data is moving through the wire it tries to guess the packet protocol, density and packet speed. On electromagnetic induction mode it can read info without actually touching the wire (though it is much less accurate) and can be used as a very basic metal detector. Costs $100.

Flashlight (Electronic)- A tiny bluish-white ultra-bright LED, can illuminate up to 20 ft. Costs $0.

Flipping Screwdriver- Screwdriver with two heads: a flat and a hex, which are interchanged by flipping over and snapping the head in to place. Costs $0.

GPS (Electronic)- Gives direction facing and current location (latitude and longitude) accurate to 5ft. Costs $15.

Hook- Good for carrying things bound by cords (such as bales of hay) without cutting your hands. Costs $0.

Knife Blade- 1 bladed damage. Costs $0

Lighter (Electronic) At the end of a short arm, high-powered infrared heaters focus on a point and can easily start a fire, even with wet wood. Costs $5.

Lock-Pick Gun (Electronic)- A tiny electronic arm automatically rakes pins in a lock while the user twists with a built in tension bar. Can pick simple (20 or less difficulty) locks within 1d6 minutes. Costs $20.

Magnifying Glass- A tiny lens magnifies 4 times. Costs $0.

Metal File- Small stick studded with tiny diamonds, capable of filing holes in metal. Costs $5.

Nail Clipper- Small finger and toenail clipper. Costs $0.

Optics Stick (Electronic)- A tiny electronic sensor and a piezoelectric liquid lens feeds to a tiny backlit display (user must look through a viewing hole at the end of the arm). Can be used as a microscope (up to 200x magnification), telescope (up to 1000 ft.) or night-vision scope. Costs $150.

Pen- A small removable ink-pen with a refillable cartridge. Can write on virtually any surface. Costs $0.

Pliers- Pliers with a small wire-stripper at the end. Costs $2.

Plug Recharger (Electronic) This allows the users to plug a knife directly in to any wall socket to recharge the battery without needing any external recharger. Costs $5.

Punch- A small pointed piece of metal for poking holes in things. Costs $0.

Purifying Straw- A small metal straw with a tiny filtering system inside of it. If water is sucked through the straw, most toxins and diseases are filtered out. Can also be used as an air filter, but with much less efficiency. Costs $80.

Saw- Tiny, slightly curved saw with sharp teeth. Costs $0.

Sewing Machine (Electronics)- A tiny mechanical arm does a simple cross-stitch with a tiny spool of black thread. It can be used to stitch up wounds, but there is a good chance (1 in 6) that the needle will snap. Costs $5.

Sound Recorder (Electronic)- Built in to the body of the knife. Up to 10 hours of sound can be recorded and transferred to a computer. Costs $10.

Terrorist Stick (Electronic)- A tiny vacuum is rubbed on the seams of a suspect package or the hands of a suspect person. It senses tiny particles of explosives, radioactive material or common bioweapons and sounds an audio-alarm. Costs $250.

Toothpick- Tiny plastic toothpick which can be removed from the body of the knife. Costs $0.

Tweezers- Tiny metal tweezers which can be removed from the body of the knife. Costs $0.

TRANSPORT

Transport Features

Power: If a battery based vehicle, lists the battery life. If gasoline powered, lists miles per gallon.

Speed: Lists the vehicle's maximum speed (on the same scale as the attribute SPD).

Acceleration: How much speed a vehicle can pick up in a round. If a vehicle has acceleration 5 and speed 20 then it can reach its max. speed in 4 rounds.

Maneuverability: The maneuverability rating is added to any maneuvers attempted in the vehicle. See p.68 for more.

Damage Capacity: How much damage a vehicle can take before it stops working.

Available Upgrades: The cost for each upgrade that can be added on to a vehicle. See Vehicle Upgrades (p.142) and Slipboard Upgrades (p.141) for details on what the upgrades actually do.

Basketball Shoes- These shoes are made out of highly advanced secondary nanotech material and are designed for athletes to be able to move, stop and change directions quickly and to jump higher. Each pair is created to exactly fit the wearer's feet. Tiny capsules absorb the energy from footfalls, then releases this energy whenever the wearer jumps. Gives +4 to jump rolls and +2 to any AGY rolls based on stopping or changing directions quickly. Costs $250.

Bicycle- An old bicycle, probably stolen.
Speed: Rider's SPD x 2
Maneuverability: +4
Damage Capacity: 4 blunt or 4 bladed.
Costs $75.

Bus- An old 30 seat school bus, still painted yellow.
Power: 20 miles/gallon gasoline.
Speed: 50
Acceleration: 5
Maneuverability: -10
Damage Capacity: 20 bladed or 20 blunt.
Available Upgrades: Air Filters $300, Air-Bags $100 (driver only), Autodrive $450, Bullet Proofing $5,000, Defroster $75, Fire Suppression $200, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $300, Live Tires $2,000, Mirrored Windows $500, Nightvision Windshield $250, Noise Dampeners $200, PA $75, Ram Spikes $250, Telepresence $300, Theft Alarm $250, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $500, Winch and Cable $180.
Costs $7,000.

Car (New)- Four seat, AC.
Power: 40 miles/gallon gasoline or electric battery charge lasts 60 miles.
Speed: 85
Acceleration: 25
Maneuverability: +7
Damage Capacity: 10 bladed or 15 blunt.
Available Upgrades: Air Filters $100, Air-Bags $150, Autodrive $350, Bullet Proofing $1,000, Defroster $75, Fire Suppression $100, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $200, Live Tires $1,500, Mirrored Windows $75, Nightvision Windshield $100, Noise Dampeners $100, PA $75, Ram Spikes $150, Telepresence $200, Theft Alarm $75, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $150, Winch and Cable $180.
Costs $15,000.

Car (Used)- An old pre-war automobile, of the type that litter the streets of the city (except running).
Power: 30 miles/gallon gasoline.
Speed: 70
Acceleration: 15
Maneuverability: +4
Damage Capacity: 7 bladed or 8 blunt.
Available Upgrades: Air Filters $100, Air-Bags $150, Autodrive $350, Bullet Proofing $1,000, Defroster $75, Fire Suppression $100, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $200, Live Tires $1,500, Mirrored Windows $75, Nightvision Windshield $100, Noise Dampeners $150, PA $75, Ram Spikes $150, Telepresence $200, Theft Alarm $75, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $150, Winch and Cable $180.
Costs $1,000.

Climbing Pads- Secondary nanotech pads that strap to hands and feet have a thick brown gel on them. When slapped against some porous surface, the gel fills every little crack, molding itself to any little imperfection. When thumb switches (on the hand pads) are hit, electricity is run through the pads, turning them in to hard solids, capable of supporting 150 lbs. of weight per pad. The pads use a 10 lb. battery pack and last two hours. It takes dozens of hours of practice to be able to climb quickly and easily with the pads. Gives +20 to climbing rolls. Weighs 25 lbs. altogether. Costs $1,000.

Climbing Pads (Elite)- These are the latest technology, developed for use by military special forces teams. Bulky pads are replaced with gloves and boots. Instead of a thick layer of gel stuck to pads, every time a glove or boot is placed on a surface, a smudge of gel is shot out. The gel hardens so it can support the user's weight, then when the user is done it turns back to a smudge on the wall. A computer senses when someone is trying to attach to or detach from a surface (no messing around with thumb switches). This interface is much more efficient, allowing users to move faster (at a speed of SPD+STH divided by 4) and with less practice. The rechargeable battery pack and the disposable gel pack last for one hour of use. Weighs 15 lbs. Gives +25 to climbing rolls. Legality: Permit ($500 fine). Costs $4,000 +$50 per gel pack.

Diving Bell- An old wooden, metal or plastic barrel or trash can, outfitted with a window, internal handles and detachable bags of rocks on the bottom. The bell has the same buoyancy as water, so it can be pulled along with a diver as a portable oxygen station (about 45 minutes worth of oxygen). The diver holds on to the handles, breathes the air in the bell, their legs dangle in the water. Costs $35.

Electric Bicycle- An old used bicycle outfitted with a small electric motor. The user can pedal or use the motor.
Power: Battery charge lasts 15 miles
Speed: Rider's SPD x 2 or 10 (motor)
Acceleration: 2 (motor)
Maneuverability: +4
Damage Capacity: 4 blunt or 4 bladed.
Costs $150.

Electric Car- Cheap, light, incredibly efficient, two-person electronic vehicle. This is the most common vehicle in the US. It is excellent for driving on the well-paved, low-traffic roads of corporate living centers or gated communities, but drives terribly on the cracked, pothole filled streets of the city.
> Power: Battery charge lasts 125 miles.
> Speed: 30
> Acceleration: 5
> Maneuverability: +10
> Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.
> Available Upgrades: Air Filters $75, Air-Bags $75, Autodrive $150, Bullet Proofing $750, Fire Suppression $75, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $100, Live Tires $1,250, Mirrored Windows $50, Nightvision Windshield $100, PA $75, Telepresence $150, Theft Alarm $75, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $150, Winch and Cable $200.
> Costs $5,000.

Electric Kick Scooter- Like a skateboard with two wheels, handlebars, and a small electric motor on the back.
> Power: Battery charge lasts 20 miles.
> Speed: 20
> Acceleration: 10
> Maneuverability: +10
> Damage Capacity: 4 bladed or 4 blunt.
> Costs $400.

Electric Rollerblades- Two skates fitted with tiny rechargeable electric motors.
> Power: Battery charge lasts 7 miles.
> Speed: 17
> Acceleration: 5
> Maneuverability: +10
> Damage Capacity: 2 bladed or 2 blunt.
> Costs $500.

Helicopter- 2 seat, gasoline-powered helicopter.
> Power: 5 miles/gallon gasoline.
> Speed: 20 (up) 60 (forward)
> Acceleration: 1 (up) 5 (forward)
> Maneuverability: 0
> Damage Capacity: 10 bladed or 10 blunt.
> Available Upgrades: Air Filters $300, Air-Bags $100, Autodrive $650, Bullet Proofing $2,000, Defroster $75, Fire Suppression $250, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Nightvision Windshield $250, Noise Dampeners $5,000, PA $75, Telepresence $300, Theft Alarm $250, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $500.
> Costs $50,000.

Inflatable Raft- A small canvas satchel containing a self-inflating raft that can hold up to 6 people. Costs $75.

Jump Shocks- Available for motorcycles and bicycles. Pneumatic shocks absorb jolts by compressing canisters of air. When the canisters reach maximum pressure (take about 1 hour of city riding, 10 minutes of off-road), the rider can trigger a release which pushes the wheels down rapidly, allowing skilled riders to use the jump maneuver (see the Bicycle and Motorcycle skills) at +10. Costs $350.

Kayak- A one-person human-powered boat, built for riding in rough waters and quick maneuvering.
> Speed: STH / 2 in still water.
> Maneuverability: +4
> Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.
> Costs $200.

Moped- A small, low-power electronic scooter.
> Power: Battery charge lasts 40 miles.
> Speed: 20
> Acceleration: 7
> Maneuverability: +7
> Damage Capacity: 5 bladed or 5 blunt.
> Available Upgrades: Autodrive $350, Bullet Proofing $200 (protects only engine and battery), Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $100, Live Tires $500, Nightvision Windshield $100, Noise Dampeners $100, PA $75, Ram Spikes $50, Telepresence $200, Theft Alarm $65, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $90.
> Costs $1,000.

Motorboat- A boat with an electric engine. Holds 6 people.
> Power: Battery charge lasts 50 miles.
> Speed: 40.
> Acceleration: 5
> Maneuverability: +2
> Damage Capacity: 8 bladed or 8 blunt.
> Available Upgrades: Autodrive $350, Bullet Proofing $200 (protects only engine and batteries), Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Nightvision Windshield $100, Noise Dampeners $200, PA $75, Ram Spikes $50, Telepresence $200, Theft Alarm $65, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $90.
> Costs $4,000.

Motorcycle- An old used motorcycle.
> Power: 40 miles/gallon gasoline.
> Speed: 70
> Acceleration: 35
> Maneuverability: +15
> Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.
> Available Upgrades: Autodrive $350, Bullet Proofing $200 (protects only engine and gas tank), Defroster $75, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $100, Live Tires $500, Nightvision Windshield $100, Noise Dampeners $250, PA $75, Ram Spikes $50, Telepresence $200, Theft Alarm $65, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $90.
> Costs $5,000.

Parachute- Large backpack attached to a body harness. The backpack is designed for quick opening for use in base jumping (jumping at small altitudes, e.g. off a bridge or tower). At anything over 800 ft. the parachute has enough time to open fully and the wearer only takes ½ point falling damage (see p.60). Wearer takes 1 point at 800-500ft., 2 points at 500-200ft., 5 points at 200-100 ft. and normal damage at less than 100 ft. Weight 35 lbs. Costs $750.

Personal Helicopter- A large backpack with an electrical motor and blades hanging down the back. Within 1 minute it can be converted to a small helicopter. The helicopter can lift at 2 SPD, move forward at 30. Maneuverability 5. Requires a clear radius of 8 ft. Batteries last 15 minutes. Weighs 70 lbs. Costs $2,000.

Rock Climbing Kit- A small nylon satchel containing 100 ft. of climbing rope, 6 pitons (1 bladed damage poking weapons), a hammer (2 blunt damage), an ascender, a belay device, a harness, 4 carabineers, 4 cams, a chalk bag and rock shoes. Gives +10 to climbing skill rolls. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $200.

Rope and Grapple- 30 ft. of climbing rope on a sturdy metal hook. Gives +8 to Climbing rolls. Costs $75.

RV- With shower, toilet, bunk beds, cooking range, sink, AC electricity.

 Power: 20 miles/gallon gasoline.
 Speed: 50
 Acceleration: 5
 Maneuverability: -10
 Damage Capacity: 20 bladed or 20 blunt.
 Available Upgrades: Air Filters $300, Air-Bags $100 (driver only), Autodrive $450, Bullet Proofing $5,000, Defroster $75, Fire Suppression $200, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $300, Live Tires $2,000, Mirrored Windows $500, Nightvision Windshield $250, Noise Dampeners $200, PA $75, Ram Spikes $250, Telepresence $300, Theft Alarm $250, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $500, Winch and Cable $180.
 Costs $9,000.

Scuba Gear- Everything but the wetsuit (see p.120) needed for underwater diving all in one backpack, including facemask with LCD depth and oxygen readout, oxygen tanks and regulator, weight belt. Weighs 75 lbs. Costs $500.

Skateboard- A small low-tech skateboard.
 Speed: Rider's SPD.
 Maneuverability: -4
 Damage Capacity: 6 bladed or 6 blunt.
 Costs $15.

Slipboard- The most advanced of the human-powered vehicles. The slipboard uses secondary nanotechnology and a thin stream of lubricant to make the bottom ultra-smooth and practically frictionless. A rider can go 20 miles on one lubricant pack (replacements cost $5). Grooves along the bottom let the rider steer by shifting his or her weight. Weighs 20 lbs.
 Speed: Riders SPD x 2
 Maneuverability: 0
 Damage Capacity: 15 blunt or 15 bladed.
 Available Upgrades: Compartment $25, Handles $30, Headlight $45, Inner Light $250, Jump Kit $400 (jump packs cost $50 ea.), Painter $150, Ram Blade $45, Reinforced $200, Security $150, Sound System $89, Surf Transformer $100, Tether $30.
 Costs $1,500.

Slipboard Upgrades

Compartment- A small locked compartment in the board (lock is 30 difficulty to pick) big enough to hold a pistol or paperback book.

Handles- Two handles on the top of the board. Make it easier for a rider to pick up the board and use it as a shield or bashing tool.

Headlight- A tiny battery powered light in the front of the board illuminates the area ahead.

Inner Light- The slipboard is translucent and has lights inside it that make it glow. Not very useful, but it looks cool.

Jump Kit- A small chamber inside the board holds a number of explosive charges. The rider triggers a charge via a footswitch. The explosive causes a pneumatic explosion as compressed air shoots out of the lubricant holes on the bottom of the board. The force adds power to a jump. Multiple packs can be triggered in a row. The board can hold five packs at a time. Gives +7 to a jump roll if 1 pack is triggered and an additional +3 for each additional pack triggered.

Painter- Small canisters of paint, activated by a footswitch, feed in to the lubricant flow so that instead of leaving a nearly-invisible trail the board leaves a swath of paint in its wake.

Ram Blade- A spring-loaded knife blade is attached to the front of the board for making bladed ram attacks (adds 3 bladed damage to a ram).

Reinforced- The board's structure is reinforced with very high-strength secondary nanotech materials. It makes the board a little heavier but virtually unbreakable (and useful as a battering ram).

Security- A voice recognition chip is connected to a taser and a motion sensor: if anyone tries to touch the board and the board doesn't hear its owner's voice, the board zaps them (5 electrical damage).

Sound System- The board has a battery powered stereo (reads data cards) and internal speakers, letting the rider blast out music at a volume that can be heard blocks away.

Surf Transformer- Tiny rolled-up balloons in compartments on the sides of the board inflate, stiffen and turn the board in to a passable surfboard. Takes several minutes to deflate the balloons and get them stuffed back in their compartments.

Tether- A strong elastic tether connects the board to an ankle band. A favorite trick of boarders with this upgrade is to kick their board at someone (after hitting the person, the board comes back to the boarder). The elastic can stretch up to 15 ft.

Snowmobile- A one-person craft for traveling over snow.
   Power: Battery charge lasts 60 miles.
   Speed: 40.
   Acceleration: 5
   Maneuverability: +4
   Damage Capacity: 5 bladed or 5 blunt.
   Available Upgrades: Autodrive $350, Bullet Proofing $200 (protects only engine and batteries), Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Nightvision Windshield $100, Noise Dampeners $100, PA $75, Ram Spikes $50, Telepresence $200, Theft Alarm $65, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $90.
   Costs $1,000.

Sports Car- The newest and best technology, put together for maximum speed and maneuverability.
   Power: 30 miles/gallon gasoline.
   Speed: 120
   Acceleration: 50
   Maneuverability: +9
   Damage Capacity: 7 bladed or 8 blunt.
   Available Upgrades: Air Filters $100, Air-Bags $150, Autodrive $350, Bullet Proofing $1,000, Defroster $75, Fire Suppression $100, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $200, Live Tires $1,500, Mirrored Windows $75, Nightvision Windshield $100, Noise Dampeners $100, PA $75, Ram Spikes $150, Telepresence $200, Theft Alarm $75, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $150, Winch and Cable $180.
   Costs $80,000.

Trailer- A small trailer, designed to be hitched to the back of a car or truck, can sleep two. Reduces vehicle SPD and maneuverability by 5. Costs $100.

Truck- An old used truck.
   Power: 25 miles/gallon gasoline.
   Speed: 60
   Acceleration: 12
   Maneuverability: 0
   Damage Capacity: 10 bladed or 10 blunt.
   Available Upgrades: Air Filters $75, Air-Bags $80, Autodrive $350, Bullet Proofing $750, Defroster $75, Fire Suppression $100, Floodlight $75, GPS $20, Intelligent Suspension $200, Live Tires $1,500, Mirrored Windows $75, Nightvision Windshield $100, Noise Dampeners $175, PA $75, Ram Spikes $150, Telepresence $200, Theft Alarm $75, Theft Alarm (Aggressive) $150, Winch and Cable $100.
   Costs $1,500.

Underwater Scooter- A small one-person device that pulls the rider along or under the water.
   Power: Battery charge lasts 15 miles.
   Speed: 15 on the surface of the water, 7 underwater.
   Acceleration: 2
   Maneuverability: +5
   Damage Capacity: 5 bladed or 5 blunt.
   Costs $1,000.

Wheelchair- A simple non-electronic wheelchair. PCs can move in the wheelchair at half their STH. $100

See Also

Vehicle Upgrades

Air Filters- Seals all cracks and filters air coming in to a closed cab vehicle, compare to gasmask (p.118).

Air-Bags- On an impact, air-bags inflate on all sides of the passengers, protecting them from damage.

Autodrive- An artificial intelligence computer can see via electronic cameras mounted on the vehicle. Uses a GPS and world maps to drive to any location. The computer will only drive at safe speeds and can not do any maneuvers.

Bullet Proofing- Passengers and the vehicle's engine are protected with AR 20 PR 7 bladed 4 blunt.

Defroster- An independent power supply can warm an engine enough to run in a matter of seconds.

Fire Suppression- Powder based fire extinguishers automatically puts out fires in the engine compartment or cabin.

Floodlight- A very bright light on a swivel-mount. Can illuminate an area the size of a football field.

GPS- The vehicle has a built-in GPS and map computer to monitor location and give directions.

Intelligent Suspension- A computer scans the road using ultra-violet lasers and adjusts the suspension and shocks for best performance. Gives +4 maneuverability.

Live Tires- Tires made up of thousands of piezoelectric springs controlled by a computer. The tires change their own shape on-the-fly to give optimum performance. Gives +5 maneuverability.

Mirrored Windows- Passengers can see out, nobody can see in.

Nightvision Windshield- The interior of the windshield shows an overlay of data from a nightvision camera on the front of the vehicle.

Noise Dampeners- The vehicle's engine is surrounded by sound canceling devices that make the vehicle much quieter.

PA- A powerful speaker outside the vehicle lets a passenger address a 2 block radius.

Ram Spikes- A high-strength ram on the front of the vehicle connects to the vehicle's frame, allowing it to ram things with less chance of damaging the engine. Has spikes that add 4 bladed damage to a ram.

Telepresence- The computer has a cellular connection to the internet which lets the user log-in remotely, see a view from the vehicle (via mounted cameras) and drive the vehicle remotely. Communication has 40 strength encryption.

Theft Alarm- The car uses an electronic key (see p.375). If someone touches the vehicle without using the key, a siren goes off. The car will not start while the alarm is going. The car can also page a number (presumably the owner's pager or cell).

Theft Alarm (Aggressive)- Biometric tests (voiceprint, fingerprints) allow only pre-programmed users to enter and operate the vehicle. Any other attempt at entry is met with, first, a warning, then electric shocks and noxious gas issuing from both the inside and outsides of the vehicle (shocks cause 5 electrical damage, gas causes 5 END damage per round and is a pain/stun attack).

Winch and Cable- Can lift up to 1000 lbs.

WEAPONS

Biological

Biological Weapon Features

Disease Contraction Rating: Patients exposed to the disease must make a save vs. disease contraction at the difficulty listed (different types of exposure have different difficulties) or will catch the disease at a level of 1x (see symptoms).

Disease Progression Rating: After catching the disease, the patient must make saves vs. disease progression at this difficulty. A failure means that the patient gets worse (an extra level of symptoms). The first success means that the disease can not progress any further (the patient can not get worse). Each following success reduces the level of symptoms by one.

Disease Progression Speed: This is how often the patient must save vs. disease progression.

Treatments: What treatments are known to help the user fight the disease or lessen the symptoms.

Symptoms: Symptoms are listed in levels of severity. Each time the disease progresses, the symptoms get worse by one level. Symptoms that can be saved against have the difficulty for the save listed. See the table of drug effects (p.65) for more on what a failure to save means. If a disease progresses past the listed levels of symptoms, assume that the effects and difficulties for the highest level of symptoms doubles for each extra level.

Harmon- This genetically engineered virus is commonly utilized for mail-based terrorism. It comes in the form of a clear liquid which can be sprayed on anything a person is likely to handle. Harmon has the following disease profile:

Disease Contraction Rating: Handling an object sprayed with Harmon (and not washing hands immediately afterwards): 20, Being prayed in the face with Harmon: 30, Exchange of bodily fluids with an infected person: 20, Touching something an infected person has touched: 10.

Disease Progression Rating: 30

Disease Progression Speed: 24 hours.

Treatments: Vaccine available. Responds well to anti-viral drugs.

Symptoms (1x): Tiredness (-4 END, -7 to save vs. unconsciousness), easy bruising, coughing small amounts of blood.

Symptoms (2x): Hair loss, easily injured (blunt and bladed damage doubles), coughing and defecating large amounts of blood (-2 BLD), cloudy eyes (-5 to vision based AWR rolls), weakness (-7 END, -10 to save vs. unconsciousness).

Symptoms (3x): Coma (30), Bleeding Out (-1 BLD/hr.), large blood blisters appear whenever any tension is put on the skin.

Legality: Forbidden (Life w/o Parole).

Costs $500/dose.

Markoff's Disease- This genetically engineered HDNA virus is very potent and deadly, but it will become harmless if it gets dried out. Terrorists commonly put it in food, drinking water and public swimming pools. Markoff's Disease is uniquely feared because it's victims go insane and may help spread the disease by attacking others.

Disease Contraction Rating: Swallowing or being immersed in liquid adulterated with the disease: 30, Bodily fluid exchange with an infected person: 30, Touching an infected person's bodily fluids (and not immediately washing hands): 10.

Disease Progression Rating: 20

Disease Progression Speed: 24 hours.

Treatment: Vaccine available. Responds well to anti-viral medication.

Symptoms (1x): Fever, Paranoid Delusions (20), trembling (-7 AGY for fine manipulation).

Symptoms (2x): Restlessness, Hallucinations (20), Paranoid Delusions (30), violent rage (20), confusion (-15 INL), shaking (-15 AGY for fine manipulation).

Symptoms (3x): Delirium, confusion, violent rage (30), numbness (+7 to save vs. pain), Vomiting (20), vertigo (20 difficulty saves vs. loss of balance), Cardiac Arrest (30).

Legality: Forbidden (Life w/o Parole).

Costs $1,000/gram (10 grams enough to adulterate a large swimming pool).

Reston- Reston is the mass-casualties biological weapon of choice for terrorists because of its ease of manufacture, transport and dissemination. A terrorist with a gas mask, a small envelope of Reston and access to a tall rooftop can easily bring an entire city to its knees. Reston has the following disease profile:

Disease Contraction Rating: Inhaling a few particles: 10, Inhaling a gram of virus particles: 40, Exchange of bodily fluids with an infected person: 30, Breathing in close quarters with an infected person: 10.

Disease Progression Rating: 30.

Disease Progression Speed: 16 hours.

Treatments: No vaccine. Anti-viral drugs somewhat effective.

Symptoms (1x): Fever, joints aching, bloodshot eyes, difficulty breathing (-5 END).

Symptoms (2x): Severe fever, Hallucinations (20), muscle weakness (-7 STH), severe respiratory distress (-15 END, -3 BLD).

Symptoms (3x): Anaphylactic Shock (20), Seizures (30), Cardiac Arrest (30), severe respiratory distress (-20 END, -6 BLD).

Legality: Forbidden (Life w/o Parole).

Costs $5,000/gram (1 gram can infect 1 mi^2).

Targeted Virus- This virus is made using a sample of a victim's DNA, made especially to infect that person, while being nearly harmless to anyone else. Terrorists using targeted viruses have been known to douse themselves in the disease, walk up to and shake hands with the victim.

Disease Contraction Rating: Touching infected fluid (and not washing hands immediately): 30 for intended victim, 10 for anyone else.

Disease Progression Rating: 30 for intended victim, 10 for anyone else.

Disease Progression Speed: 4 hours.

Treatment: No vaccine. Anti-viral medications have moderate effects. Airway maintenance using an intubation tube is the best way to keep a victim alive.

Symptoms (1x): Red, swollen eyes, red, blotchy skin, runny nose, coughing.

Symptoms (2x): Weakness (-5 STH), dizziness (-7 to save vs. loss of balance), clear blisters form all over the body, inflammation of throat and lungs (-15 END, 2 BLD damage, difficulty swallowing), burning pain all over the body (30 difficulty distracting pain), impaired mental state (-5 INL).

Symptoms (3x): Stupor (30), Hallucinations (30), Delusions (30), burning pain (40 difficulty distracting pain), difficulty breathing and swallowing (-20 END, 4 BLD damage), sores oozing clear fluid all over the body.

Symptoms (4x): Coma (30), Seizures (30), throat constricts (inability to breathe), deep open fissures in the skin (severe fluid loss, heightened chance of secondary infection, permanent disfigurement).

Legality: Forbidden (Life w/o Parole).

Costs $5,000 for the personalization of the disease, $1,000/dose.

Chemical

Black Market Food Poison- A vial of clear liquid bought from a black market trader for putting in a person's food or drink. The liquid is some toxic chemical, typically a pesticide, herbicide, cleaning product or industrial solvent. They are seldom truly tasteless (takes around 20 difficulty AWR roll for an unsuspecting person to detect them, more or less depending upon how bland the food or drink is). Because each vial is made from different toxins, the effects are random and death is not certain. Effects are as follows (roll percentile for each batch):

01-50%: Within 1 minute of ingestion: burning sensation in mouth and throat, Vomiting (30), diarrhea, stomach cramps (20 difficulty distracting pain), weakness and light-headedness (-5 STH, END, INL) for 24 hours.

41-55%: Within 30 minutes after ingestion: headache, Vomiting (10), chills for 2 hours. Within 1 week after ingestion: Seizures (20), Cardiac Arrest (20), memory loss for 1 week, permanent neurological damage (-10 AGY, -5 INL, -5 AWR).

56-85%: Within 15 minutes: Headache (20), spasms (-10 AGY), weakness (-7 END, -7 STH) and sensitivity to bright lights for 48 hours. Within 1 hour: Paralysis (20), Pulmonary Arrest (30).

86-00%: Within 5 minutes: painful cramping and muscle constriction, starting with the face and moving throughout the body, causing distracting pain, loss of AGY, muscle strains and joint dislocation. Complete paralysis within 30 minutes. Pulmonary Arrest (50) within 1 hour.

Costs $30/dose.

Black Market Knife Poison- A small packet of bitter-smelling gummy substance designed to be put on knife blades, arrow heads, darts, shivs or any other weapon which will pierce skin. Different toxins are used (including snake venom, chemical solvents, pesticides, plant toxins). Because they use different recipes, the effects and deadliness of these poisons are unreliable. Effects are as follows (roll percentile):

01-15%: Within 1 round of being stabbed: Paralysis (20). Within 2 rounds: Paralysis (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30). Within 3 rounds: Paralysis (50), pulmonary Arrest (50).

16-30%: Within 5 rounds of being stabbed: inability of blood to coagulate (any bladed injury causes ½ BLD damage per round) for 8 hours.

31-70%: Within 1 round: 1 BLD damage per round for 6 rounds. Excessive thirst, Vomiting (20), Anaphylactic Shock (20), numbness (+7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch based AWR rolls), blurry vision (-7 to actions/reactions and AWR based rolls) for 24 hours.

71-00%: Within 1 round: severe shortness of breath (-10 END), lightheadedness (-5 INL, -5 AGY), vertigo (must make easy (10) saves vs. loss of balance) for 10 rounds.

Costs $75/dose.

Chlorine Cocktail- This is typically two glass bottles duct-taped together. They contain common cleaning agents which, when mixed together, produce copious amounts of chlorine gas. The Cocktail is typically smashed against a wall or ground inside an enclosed area. When chlorine gas gets in the eyes is causes blindness (-7 to actions/reactions), pain (moderate (20) distracting pain) and eyes take weeks to heal. When inhaled, causes burning sensation in nose and throat (moderate (20) distracting pain), coughing and corrosive burns to the lungs (4 END damage for each round exposed to the gas). One Cocktail can fill a 400 ft^2 room with gas in a matter of seconds. Costs $50.

Dagger (Freedom Army)- This dagger was created decades ago by Freedom Army scientists for assassination of enemy leaders. There are a number of them left in the city. The dagger is thin and tapered, made of a teflon coated alloy designed to pierce armor. Inlaid in to the blade are a number of thin black strips containing a powerful paralytic anesthetic agent. Upon being stabbed, the black strips dissolve and the drug enters the blood stream. The anesthetic acts so quickly that some victims don't even realize they've been stabbed. A second later, the paralytic hits the heart and lungs and the person dies of lack of oxygen. The dagger can be used about 10 times before the black strips dissolve completely. Comes with a waterproof sheath. Dagger does 2 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6). Easy Vital Strike. No pain/stun or slash. One round after damage is done, complete paralysis (80 difficulty to save). Costs $750 with ten stabbings left, $600 with 5 stabbings, $500 with 2 stabbings, $300 with no stabbings left.

Drake Blood Poison- This is the only poison that the Drakes will tell people how it is made. They do so to make people fear it and thus to make it a valuable deterrent. The Drakes keep small rusty iron pressure cookers on a constant low heat, incubating the contents in an anaerobic (no oxygen) environment. Blood and feces are the main ingredients in the incubator, and there are several strains of highly toxic organisms have been breeding in the pressure cookers for years.

Appearance: Thick black liquid with a terrible stench. Sold in plastic baggies.

Administration: 2x effects if placed in a wound or on anything that pierces skin (full effects in 4 rounds), 1x effects if ingested (full effects in 5 minutes).

1x Effects: Over-stimulation of skeletal muscles causing rigid posture, a terrible grimace, and cramps (-7 AGY), coughing and vomiting blood (-1 BLD), large boils filled with clear fluids around the area where the poison entered the body, vomiting, diarrhea (thirst damage unless massive amounts of fluid are taken), fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Headache (30), must make a save vs. disease progression (20 difficulty) or suffer 1 BLD damage per level of the disease. Symptoms last 48 hours.

2x Effects: High fever causing delirium (-10 AWR, -10 INL, Delusions (20), Hallucinations (20), -15 to save vs. heat exhaustion), throat and tongue swells so that it is difficult to talk, swallow or breathe (-7 END), red rash and boils covering the body, vomiting and diarrhea (thirst damage without intravenous fluids), meningitis (swelling of the tissues surrounding the brain and spinal cord causing headaches, vomiting, stiff neck, joint pain, dislike of bright lights, and seizures), coughing and vomiting blood, 1d20 BLD damage.

4x Effects: Paralysis (20), Stupor (30), Seizures (30), severe bleeding from all body orifices (-3 BLD), body turns bright red with boils rising immediately, throat swells (tube must be put down the throat or the victim will choke to death), severe meningitis (causing brain damage), 4d6 BLD damage.

Treatment: Intravenous liquids, gastric lavage (cleaning out digestive system with water), immersion in cool water (to keep down fever), broad-spectrum antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs and treatment with oxygen can ease the symptoms.

Costs $40 for 4 doses.

Drake Deliriant Poison- Made from the ground seeds and liquid extracts of weeds growing in vacant dirt lots in Drake territory (fences prevent people from viewing exactly what is growing in these fields, but the poisonous weed Jimsonweed has been positively identified). This poison is used for multiple purposes. Although deadly in high doses, in lower doses it interferes with people's minds, causing delirium and frightening delusions. People poisoned by the drug are often confused, and although the accuracy of anything they say is suspect, they sometimes reveal pieces of information that they would not otherwise reveal.

Appearance: A small square of folded paper containing a sticky, clumpy brown powder, with a consistency much like brown sugar, smelling strongly of weeds and grass.

Administration: The poison can be ingested (1x effects per dose within 3 minutes), inhaled (2x effects within 2 rounds), stuck to a weapon (with honey) that will pierce skin (2x effects within 2 rounds), or dissolved in alcohol and sprayed in someone's face (the poison enters the bloodstream via mucous membranes in the face, 2x effects within 10 rounds).

1x Effects: Blurred vision (-7 vision based AWR rolls), fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), increased strength (+2 STH, +1 END), confusion (-15 INL), Delusions (bizarre, 30 difficulty to save), Obfuscating Hallucinations (primarily reliving memories from the past as if they were currently happening, 20 difficulty to save), Sudden Amnesia (30), Retrograde Amnesia (20). Symptoms peak within 30 minutes, and slowly drop off, not disappearing completely for 1 week.

2x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), fever (-15 to save vs. heat exhaustion), severe thirst (double damage from thirst), Vomiting (20), Stupor (30), Cardiac Arrest (20), symptoms taper off and disappear in 2 weeks.

4x Effects: Coma (30), Seizures (20), Cardiac Arrest (30). Symptoms disappear in 3 weeks.

Treatment: Sedatives and anticonvulsants can be used to decrease symptoms.

Costs $30 for 4 doses or $100 for a plastic spray bottle with 10 doses in it.

Drake Dioxyl Butylene Vinyl Chloride Ash- This is the fresh ash from a special plastic that the Drakes gather and burn. The ash releases random psychic energy, a sort of "static" that can disrupt psychic skills. Dioxyl ash has a half-life of about one hour (every hour after it is burned, its potency is reduced by half).

Appearance: Black paste in an old sardine can.

Administration: Can be wiped on the forehead of a psychic (to disable that psychic) or on the forehead of someone trying to resist a psychic.

1x Effects: -2 to all psychic skill rolls.

2x Effects: -4 to all psychic skill rolls, slight dizziness (-5 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-5 to save vs. loss of consciousness).

4x Effects: -8 to all psychic skill rolls, dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-10 to save vs. loss of consciousness).

8x Effects: -15 to all psychic skill rolls, vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance at 20 difficulty), Unconsciousness (20).

Treatment: Effects go away as soon as the ash is washed off.

Costs $200 for 4 doses.

Drake Fungus Poison- This is the mysterious poison that the Drakes use to make their own bloodstreams and bodily fluids poisonous. Nobody but the Drakes know the fungus it comes from or exactly how it is made. Because it is tasteless and kills without leaving any outward signs of what happened, it is an ideal poison for murder. The Drakes sell their Fungus Poison, but they keep the price high (to dissuade people from buying it in order to analyze it, experiment with it or try to build their own immunity).

Appearance: The poison comes as a clear, sticky, nearly flavorless liquid, sold in pen caps topped with chewing gum. A dose is about one drop.

Administration: The poison can be ingested (1x effects per dose within 2 minutes), absorbed through mucous membranes (e.g. 1x effects within 4 minutes if put in someone's eyes). Weapons that will pierce skin can be coated with the poison. Effects happen within 2 rounds. Typically causes 2x effects if it is a small weapon (razor, piece of glass, knife) or 4x effects if it is a larger weapon (machete, kitchen knife spear).

1x Effects: Weakness and pain in muscles (-5 STH), numbness (-5 to AWR rolls for touch), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), faintness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 5 minutes.

2x Effects: Weakness (-10 STH), thick tongue (difficulty speaking or swallowing), numbness and blurred vision (-7 to AWR rolls), vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance, 20 difficulty), Vomiting (20), and irregular heartbeat (1 BLD damage) for 1 hour.

4x Effects: Paralysis (20), Unconsciousness (20), cyanosis (bluish tone to the skin), Cardiac Arrest (30) for 2 hours.

8x Effects: Paralysis (30), Seizures (30), Unconsciousness (40), Cardiac Arrest (40) for 4 hours.

Treatment: No known treatment besides artificial respiration and heart-rate regulation.

Costs $50 for 4 doses.

Drake Glass Poison- Drakes can develop very little immunity to this poison and they are in a lot of danger of accidentally poisoning themselves while manufacturing it. Thus, only the most careful Drakes are aloud to create it and the prices are high. Drake Glass Poison is made with ground glass and irritants (such as poison ivy) designed to make a victim scratch whenever they get any on their skin. Scratching is only a vehicle to get the real poison (the source of which is unknown, though many believe it is insect venom) in to the bloodstream. This poison is renown for its subtlety (you can kill someone by putting it on their doorknob) but it is also easy to defeat (a victim only has to avoid scratching and wash the area).

Appearance: Thick white powder in a small folded square of paper.

Administration: Put on anything that a person will touch. The first effects are itching, and if the victim scratches then microscopic abrasions are opened in the skin that let the poison in to the bloodstream. Depending on how much they scratch and how much of their body came in contact with poison, the victim may suffer 1x to 4x effects within 1 minute after scratching.

1x Effects: Spreading numbness around the area where the poison entered the body (+10 to save vs. pain), paleness, tingling in extremities, weakness (-5 STH), slowed heartbeat (-7 END), chills, Vomiting (10), difficulty breathing and swallowing, Pulmonary Arrest (20). Symptoms last 24 hours.

2x Effects: Loss of blood to extremities (will lose fingers and toes if a vasodialator is not given), extreme weakness and numbness throughout the body (-10 AWR, -10 STH), Vomiting (20), short shallow breaths (-10 END), Pulmonary Arrest (30). Symptoms last 48 hours. Even if the victim survives, there will be permanent neurological damage (-7 to touch based AWR).

4x Effects: Loss of bladder and sphincter control, extreme drop in body temperature (Hypothermia at 30 difficulty to save), paralysis of diaphragm (Pulmonary Arrest at 50 difficulty to save), Cardiac Arrest (30), Coma (40), severe and permanent neurological damage.

Treatment: Vasodialators (to re-open closed blood vessels), artificial respiration and keeping the patient warm will reduce damage from the poison.

Costs $200 for 4 doses.

Drake Knockout Drops- This is the Drake's most non-lethal product (though they are careful to tell people that there is always a chance of death when using it).

Appearance: A slimy, clear fluid. Sold in pen caps sealed with chewing gum.

Administration: Put in to food or drink. Effects (1x per dose) within 5 minutes after ingestion.

1x Effects: Drowsiness (-10 to save vs. unconsciousness), dizziness (-15 to save vs. loss of balance). Effects last 4 hours.

2x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), Vomiting (20), Pulmonary Arrest (10), vertigo (must save vs. loss of balance, 20 difficulty), Anterograde Amnesia (15). Effects last 8 hours.

4x Effects: Unconsciousness (30), Pulmonary Arrest (30), Seizures (30), Vomiting (30). Effects last 12 hours.

Interactions: The Knockout drops have a synergistic effect with alcohol, doubling the effects of the knockout drops. Highly acidic food and drinks will break down the chemicals, halving the effects.

Treatment: Heavy doses of stimulants will cancel most of the effects.

Costs $25 for 2 doses.

Drake Suicide Poison- This is the poison that Drakes give to people who ask for something "painless" (which usually means they are going to commit suicide). Note: There are tales of young Drakes taking pity on depressed customers and selling them something other than suicide poison (depending on the story it might be a powerful hallucinogen, an aphrodisiac, or just dirty water). Drake elders deny that any Drake ever sells anything other than what the customer asks for.

Appearance: Milky, reddish liquid in a tiny piece of sponge, wrapped in duct tape.

Administration: Swallowed, effects peak within 10 minutes.

1x Effects: Unconsciousness (20), numbness (+10 to save vs. pain), twitching eyes and lips, slowed breath and heartbeat (-10 END). If victim goes unconscious, Coma (20) and if victim goes in to a coma, Cardiac Arrest (20).

2x Effects: Numbness and euphoria (+15 to save vs. pain), Unconsciousness (30), Coma (30), Cardiac Arrest (30).

4x Effects: Coma (40), Cardiac Arrest (40).

Treatment: Heavy doses of central nervous system stimulants can prevent heart failure. If no medication is available, anything that can be done to help the victim stay awake will reduce the chance of death.

Costs $50 for 4 doses.

Drake Pain Juice- A clear viscous fluid, looking much like Drake Fungus Poison. The juice is loaded with concentrated capascin (the stuff in pepper spray) as well as an herbal extract that helps block painkillers (including natural endorphins). If the fluid gets in to any cut, does an aggregate 10 difficulty to save distracting pain (feels like burning). Ingesting the fluid cause mouth pain and vomiting. Getting it in the eyes causes 30 difficulty distracting pain and blinds the victim. Costs $5/dose.

Grenade (Nerve Gas)- A small canister that silently emits an invisible mist of powerful nerve toxin. When inhaled it kills instantly, paralyzing the lungs and heart. When it lands on exposed skin it seeps in to the bloodstream unless it is washed off immediately. People with large portions of their skin covered will die more slowly. Victims save vs. paralysis, with a failure of 10+ the victim is unable to breathe. The difficulty is 20 (minus the AWR of any skin protection) and doubles every 5 minutes. The mist from one grenade has a radius of 100 ft. See Body Condom, p.118. Legality: Forbidden (Life in Prison). Costs $1,000.

Grenade (Tear Gas)- Goes off in 1 round after being thrown. Lets out a steady stream of vapor (reaches a radius of 75 ft. within 5 rounds). Eye exposure to the vapor causes severe pain (moderate (20) distracting pain) and partial blindness (-7 to actions/reactions and vision based AWR rolls). Breathing the vapor causes coughing, difficulty breathing (-10 END), Pain (30) and Vomiting (20). Legality: Licensed ($1,000 fine). Costs $150.

Poison Ring- This looks like a normal (although gaudy) ring. It has a hidden compartment which can be filled with a powder or liquid poison. When a tiny stopper is removed, the ring only need be tipped over food or drink to drop poison in to it. Costs $30.

Tear Gas Keyholer- This canister of teargas shoots the tear gas at high velocity through a hole on the end of a metal cone. This device allows tear gas to be deployed through a keyhole, in the space under a door, or even though a hole punched in automotive glass with the pointed end. Eye exposure to tear gas causes severe pain (moderate (20) distracting pain) and partial blindness (-7 to actions/reactions and vision based AWR rolls). Breathing the vapor causes coughing, difficulty breathing (-10 END), Pain (30) and Vomiting (20). Legality: Licensed ($1,000 fine). Costs $75.

Explosives

Explosives Features

Explosives have a range increment. To determine the damage taken by a victim, count the number of range increments away that person is. For each range increment, reduce the damage by half. So, if an explosion does 20 burn damage, has a range increment of 5 ft. and the victim is 15 ft. away, the victim takes 2 ½ burn damage (20, divided by 2 at 5 ft., divided by 2 at 10 ft., divided by 2 at 15 ft.).

Detonator- Penny-sized electronic device for setting off explosive charges. Can be set on a timer or to respond to an encoded radio signal. Cost $2.

Grenade (EMP)- This grenade does not actually explode. It releases a quick pulse of electromagnetic energy which will momentarily disrupt electronics within 100 ft. and will permanently damage unshielded electronics within 10 ft. Legality: Licensed ($1,000 fine). Costs $250.

Grenade (Fragmentation)- This grenade looks like the stereotypical grenade: a small round ball made out of painted metal. After the pin is removed and the grenade thrown it detonates in 2 rounds. The grenade is designed to send sharp pieces of shrapnel flying in every direction. Does 1d20 bladed damage (pierces armor as double), range increment 4 ft. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $400.

Grenade (Percussion)- This grenade is designed to do structural damage to buildings, trenches, vehicles, tunnels, etc. After the pin is removed and the grenade is thrown it detonates in 2 rounds. Does 10 blunt damage, range increment 2 ft. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $500.

Land Mine- One of many unexploded Freedom War land mines recovered from the Midwest. Does damage mostly to the legs of the victim. Takes a moderate AWR feat to hear the click of the land mine arming. Does 5 bladed, 6 burn damage (range increment 1 ft.). Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $200.

Letter Bomb- A tiny bomb small enough to fit inside a thick envelope. The bomb is triggered when the envelope is opened. Does 4 bladed, 3 burn damage (range increment 1 ft.). Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $250.

Matchhead Bomb- A small incendiary bomb, about the size of a pack of cards, made mostly from match heads. Usually used for starting fires. Uses a fuse. Does 6 burn damage (range increment 2 ft.). Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $80.

Molotov Cocktail- A glass bottle filed with some flammable liquid (typically gasoline). It is used as a quick arson tool (light and throw against the building you want to burn) or as an anti-tank weapon (the idea is to engulf the tank in flames and cause it to overheat). It makes a poor hand-to-hand combat weapon since it can fail to shatter when it hits the victim. Any object hit with a burning Molotov Cocktail (which shatters) takes 5 burn damage per round for 5 rounds (or until the fire is extinguished). Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $40.

Nuclear Bomb (Briefcase)- Ⓤ Hard (30) difficulty to disarm. Computer controlled detonator can be set on a timer or to respond to an encrypted radio signal. Does 2^{150} burn damage and 2^{500} radiation damage, range increment 10 ft. (will destroy buildings within 4 blocks, kill instantly within 6 blocks, severe radiation illness within 1 mile) Weighs 20 lbs. Legality: Forbidden (Life Without Possibility of Parole). Costs $50 million.

Pipe Bomb- A homemade bomb made from a length of pipe filled with explosive materials. A fuse is cut to the desired time. Metal shards from the pipe do the majority of the damage. Weighs 1 lb. Does 1d10 bladed damage (pierces armor as double), 4 burn damage, range increment 4 ft. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $250.

Shaped Charge- A bell shaped explosive with a computerized timer on it. The bell has a gummy substance along the rim which will let it stick to most surfaces. The device is designed to do the majority of damage in one direction. Useful for blowing locks open with minimal damage to the rest of the building. Does 10 burn and 10 blunt damage, range increment 1 ft. Does 30 blunt damage to whatever it is stuck to. Weighs 5 lbs. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $750.

Firearms
Firearms Features

ROF: Rate of Fire. This is how many projectiles can be fired as a single action (as a burst, with a -4 penalty, or as an Area Attack, see p.78).

FR: Functional Range. For every functional range unit away the target is, the shooter suffers a -1 penalty. So, if a weapon has an FR of 10 ft. and a victim is 70 ft. away the shooter is at -7 to hit the victim.

MR: Maximum Range. Weapons can not do damage beyond this range.

Damage: The damage done by one projectile on a successful strike. If multiple projectiles hit a victim, multiply by the number that hit. If the projectile pierces armor well, its "pierces as" damage (the damage to use when computing how much damage gets through the armor) is listed here.

Clip Holds: How many times the weapon can fire without being reloaded.

Anti-Tank Weapon- A one-use launcher of an explosive shell, designed to take out tanks or walls. FR 3 ft. MR 200 ft. Damage: 30 bladed, 10 burn (range increment 2 ft.). Weighs 15 lbs. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $15,000.

Automatic Pistol- A modern high-tech pistol with the DNA-reader removed (see p.339). ROF 10. FR 8 ft. MR 750 ft. Damage: 5 bladed. Clip holds 30 rounds. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Weighs 1.5 lbs. Costs $4,000 +$20/bullet.

Ceramic Gun- This pistol is used almost exclusively by assassins, terrorists and intelligence agents. The gun is made entirely from silicon, ceramics and plastics. Instead of gunpowder, shells are filled with water (which are heated to thousands of degrees by an electric battery). The gun only shows up as a faint shadow on x-rays and ultrasounds. The battery lasts for four shots. ROF 1. FR 2 ft. MR 50 ft. Damage: 6 bladed. Weighs 1 lb. Legality: Forbidden (25 yrs. prison). Costs $8,000 +$5/bullet.

Drill Gun- Developed by the military in the 2040s as a lightweight anti-tank weapon. Although designed to destroy the circuitry inside tanks, Freedom Army soldiers found they could use it to kill National Guard troops in heavy armor, and today it is mostly known as an "armor killer." This is a liquid propellant gun (liquid propellant is pumped in to the firing chamber). It is slightly bulkier than a pistol with a distinctive shape: a long barrel with large bumps in a spiral along it. As the bullet is passing through the barrel, a computer times secondary firing along the bumps to get the bullet spinning at 500,000 RPM. The bullet is made out of an ultra-hard alloy and shaped like a drill bit. The bullet digs in to the material and drills its way through (gyroscopic forces help keep it from being deflected). Inside the bullet is a small explosive charge: as soon as the bullet stops spinning, it explodes. When the weapon is used on an unarmored human, it typically spins right through without exploding. ROF 1. FR 8 ft. MR 1000 ft. Damage: 4 bladed (pierces armor as 15) and 8 bladed when it explodes. Clip holds 10 rounds. Weighs 5 lbs. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $3,000 +$75/bullet.

Fake Gun- A replica of a pistol, typically a spray-painted plastic toy. Takes a hard (30) AWR roll or a moderate (20) Pistol or Gun Repair skill roll to recognize it as a fake by sight. Legality: Permit ($100 fine). Costs $60.

Freedom Army Pistol- This is one of the pistols manufactured by the Freedom Army during their short reign in the city. They are poor in quality but relatively plentiful. Weighs 1 lb. ROF 3. FR 7 ft. MR 500 ft. Damage: 5 bladed. Clip holds 15 rounds. Weighs 1 lb. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $2,000 +$20/bullet.

Grenade Launcher- Designed to be attached to a rifle, this gun fires explosive rounds. Designed for taking out vehicles. ROF 1. FR 5 ft. MR 200 ft. Damage: 15 bladed 7 fire (1 ft. range increment). Clip holds 20 rounds. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Weighs 3 lbs. Costs $5,000 +$250/grenade.

Integrated Weapon Systems

The latest and best military technology is an "integrated weapon system," so called because it integrates every piece of military technology (weapons, armor, communication equipment, first aid equipment, survival gear) in to a single device. They are very flexible (have a wide variety of features and can be used in a wide variety of situations) but different models are configured to work best in different situations (e.g. urban night infiltration, amphibious assault, jungle patrol, etc.). Since they are more often rumored about than seen, people can only imagine what all the features are.

Intelligent Gun- This bulky short rifle is controlled by a sophisticated computer. It has sophisticated sights which wirelessly transmit information to "scope" glasses. Features include:

-Will not normally fire at "friendly" targets (as identified by 30 strength encrypted radio transmissions).

-Senses the type of target and changes ammo on the fly to maximize damage (e.g. soft bullets for unarmored targets, armor piercing for armored targets).

-Increases the rate of fire when it senses it is aiming at a "vital area."

-Barrel moves to compensate for vibrations (using piezoelectric springs and gyroscopes), allowing a user to run and maintain perfect aim.

-DNA check (only the owner or owners can use the gun).

ROF 30. FR 200 ft. MR 7500 ft. Damage: 8 bladed (pierces as 12). Clip holds 50 bullets. Weighs 4.5 lbs. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $40,000 +$25/bullet.

Laser Sight- Attached to the top of a firearm. After adjustment, reduces range penalty by up to 4 points. Costs $75.

Sawed-Off- This is an old hunting shotgun with a shortened barrel for a wider spray of shot. This weapon is most useful for close quarters urban combat. ROF 1. FR 5 ft. MR 50 ft. Very easy strike. Damage: 5 bladed. Holds 10 rounds. Weighs 3 lbs. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $2,000 +$25/shell.

Single-Shot Gun- This homemade pistol is made from a length of pipe strapped to a wooden handle, pre-filled with gun-powder and a home-cast bullet. It only fires once and has a 1 in 20 chance of misfiring (if it misfires it has a 1 in 6 chanced of blowing up and injuring the holder). FR 3 ft. MR 50 ft. Damage: 5 bladed. Weighs 1 lb. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $200.

Sniper Rifle- With a scope and attached tripod. ROF 5. FR 50 ft. (using scope) 10 ft. (not using scope). MR 2000 ft. Damage: 6 (pierces armor as 9). Clip holds 15 rounds. Legality: Licensed (5 yrs. prison). Costs $3500 +$30/bullet.

US Military Strike Force Weapon System- The US military owns every known copy of this integrated weapon system and the blueprints on how to build it. The whole thing is virtually all secondary nanotech. It features full plate armor (AR 18, PR 10 bladed/blunt/burn), a gasmask, chameleon ability (+10 to prowl), a sensory system with night-vision, motion alarms and sound amplification (+20 to AWR rolls to notice humans), an internal first aid system that monitors health and can respond by injecting appropriate drugs (see consciousness plug and blood plug, p.110), and a self aiming gun on a robotic arm. The gun aims at whatever the wearer is looking at and the wearer can fire just by thinking (requires a Jack). The robotic arm automatically moves (so user won't get caught going through a doorway or ducking under a tree-branch). The weapon can also be set on "kill all" mode (in which is kills any humans it can find not broadcasting an encrypted "friendly" radio signal). When firing "by sight" the wearer rolls AWR + INL + 1d20 (minus range penalties) vs. 0, when the weapon is set to automatically track and destroy targets is makes Vital Strikes at 30 + 1d20 (minus range penalties) vs. 0. ROF 40. FR 500 ft. MR 7500 ft. Damage: 10 bladed (pierces as 14). Backpack holds 5000 bullets. Weighs 75 lbs. Legality: Forbidden (20 yrs. prison) Costs $1,000,000.

Kalor

Traditional weapons of the Kalor aliens (p.363) and their human devotees (p.212).

Kalor Weapon Features

Range: Every weapon has a range within which it will work. See p.76 for more on moving in and out of range. If a weapon has range 1-2, it can be used normally if the opponents are 1 or 2 range levels apart. However, if the opponents are three range levels apart the weapon is too short to hit and if the opponents are 0 range levels apart the opponent is too close to do full damage. Ranges are as follows:

Range 0: Touching (biting, head buts, knives).

Range 1: Arm's Length (punches, kicks, knives)

Range 2: 4 ft. (swords, clubs)

Range 3: 6 ft. (whips, chains, lances)

Some weapons might do different things at different ranges. A lance, for instance, might do bladed damage if used at one range (where the blade can hit the enemy) and blunt damage if used at another range (where the enemy can only be hit by the pole).

Damage: The amount of damage done by the weapon on a normal strike.

Special Actions/Reactions: The design of some weapons makes it easier or harder to do certain actions and reactions. Example: If a sword gives "easy strike" then the holder gets +4 whenever making a strike with it. These actions and reactions are listed with the following nomenclature:

Very Easy: +8 on rolls.

Easy: +4 on rolls.

Hard: -4 on rolls.

Very Hard: -8 on rolls.

Pierces As: When a weapon is good at piercing armor, this is the amount of damage to use when calculating how much damage surpasses armor. Note that the max. damage that can hit the human inside the armor is the normal damage listed.

Cardad- An Olanidad weapon valued for entrapping weapons and tearing flesh. On each end of a hollow steel staff are 2 crescent blades, back-to-back. At 0-1 range: 2 blunt damage. At 2-3 range: 4 bladed damage, easy parry, easy entangle, easy pain/stun. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $400.

Corinan- A tiny, thin blade that extends between the index and ring fingers from a rod clenched in the fist. It is designed for only one thing: to pierce vital organs. Range: 0-1. Damage: 4 bladed (pierces armor as 7). Very hard parry, very easy vital strike. Weighs 1 lb. Costs $100/ea.

Karits- The traditional weapon of a Kalor assassin (not a regulation Oht weapon), the Karits is designed to be concealed in long sleeves. The fist clenches a small rod which attaches to a long blades that extends along the back of the hand all the way to the elbow. Attacks are made by slashing at victims with the elbows (an attack which can be quite powerful, but requires the attacker to be very close). Range: 0. Damage: 6 bladed. Hard strike. Costs $300.

Oponan- This Olaninan weapon is the only weapon for which the rules of Oht allows any variation. The Oponan has a handle which is gripped in the fist, a blade covers the knuckles, and two inwardly curved blades project from either side. Inside the open arc of these blades may be smaller blades. The Oponan is designed for catching and wrenching away weapons, catching and disabling limbs, and catching the neck and cutting open veins. Range: 0-1. Damage: 3 bladed. Easy parry, easy entangle, easy disarm, easy crippling attack. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $150/ea.

Pelsinan- Like the Corinan, the blade extends from a steel rod gripped in the fist, but the Pelsinan has a wide tapered bladed suitable for parrying with. Range: 0-1. Damage: 4 bladed. Easy parry. Weighs 1.5 lbs. Costs $125/ea.

Pendad- Known as a weapon for those who dislike killing, the Pendad resembles a shepherd's crook with a sharp spike at the end of the hook. Slightly longer than other Olanidad weapons. At 0-2 range: 2 blunt damage. At 3 range: 3 blunt damage or 3 bladed damage (pierces as 6), easy parry, easy grab, easy entangle. Weighs 60 lbs. Costs $300.

Sordad- Considered the most artful and beautiful of the Olanidad weapons, each end of the hollow steel staff ends in a comma shaped blade. The blade can be used to stab or tear flesh. At 0-1 range: 2 blunt damage. At 2-3 range: 4 bladed damage (pierces as 6), easy parry, easy pain/stun, easy strike. Weighs 12 lbs. Costs $400.

Sordad Shield- A recent invention, not regulation Oht. This is a Sordad with a long oval shield attached to the middle. At 0-1 range: 2 blunt damage, very easy parry. At 2-3 range: 4 bladed damage (pierces as 6), easy pain/stun. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs $500.

Self-Defense

Barbed Wire Snips- Lengths of old (slightly rusty) barbed wire, harvested and sold by homeless scavengers. Useful for hiding inside anything soft an opponent might grab during combat (like a dreadlock). Grabbing barbed wire without expecting it causes Shocking Pain (30). Costs $10/10 snips.

Blinding Powder- Manufactured by homeless people (Drakes and others) as a cheap substitute for pepper-spray. This powder is made up of sand and caustic chemicals that cause painful burning sensation when thrown in someone's eyes. Powder can be thrown in a range of 5 ft. Very Easy Blinding Strike, but the victim can make a Very Easy Parry by closing his or her eyes. A successful blinding strike partially blinds (-7 to all actions/reactions) and is Distracting Pain (30). Costs $7 for a bag of 3 handfulls.

Self-Defense Weapon Features

Pain- Most self-defense weapons do pain to the enemy. Saves vs. pain are made on WIL + 1d20 vs. the difficulty listed. The effects of a failure depends on the type of pain and the amount of failure:

Shocking Pain (failed by 1-9): Loses next action.

Shocking Pain (failed by 10+): Loses next action and reaction.

Distracting Pain: -1 to all rolls for each point the character failed by.

Electricity- When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

-Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.

-Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)

-Cardiac Arrest (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage)

-Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

Example: *Barry tries to grab a National Guardsperson's shield during a riot. The shield blasts him with 3 points of electrical damage. Barry must save vs. paralysis (difficulty 60), must save vs. unconsciousness (difficulty 30), must save vs. Cardiac Arrest (difficulty 15) and takes no burn damage.*

Kubotan- These are small metal rods, small enough to fit in pockets, usually with a blunt point at the end. This is a self-defense weapon. Too small to do any real damage with but the blunt point is excellent for causing pain when it is slammed in to a joint or the face. Range: 0. Damage: ½ blunt. Easy pain/stun, easy blinding. Costs $5.

Pepper Spray- A tiny canister which can be kept in a pocket or even put on a keychain. It has a safety lock. When used, it sprays a blast of capsaicin (the chemical which makes peppers hot) which can blind and incapacitate. One canister has enough for 5 attacks. Very Easy Blinding Strike, but the victim can make a Very Easy Parry by closing his or her eyes. Damage: on a successful blinding strike, victim is partially blinded (-7 to actions/reactions) must save vs. Distracting Pain (30) and if the victim breathes he or she will suffer from severe nose and throat pain, coughing (-10 END) and Vomiting (20). Legality: Permit ($500). Costs $20.

Personal Sonic Alarm- A small keychain device that, when activated, emits a piercing and painful wail (distracting pain (20)) that can be heard up to a mile away. Costs $20.

Pig Sticker- This small device is flat, sticky, has the consistency of gel It sticks to skin and can be put anywhere that the owner fears he or she might be the subject of unwanted touching. Can be applied internally or externally. The pig sticker is covered with tiny DNA reading chips. Any time flesh presses against it, it does a DNA sample and finds out if this is the owner's flesh. If not, a tiny needle shoots out, injects a toxin, and retracts. The toxin causes Unconsciousness (10 the first round, 20 the second and 30 the third), Paralysis (20) and Stupor (20) for 2 hours). The Pig Sticker holds enough toxin for 5 stings. Some owners have figured out how to put different toxins in to the Pig Sticker (like Drake Blood Poison, for instance). Costs $400 +$50 for toxin refill.

Shield (Arm Guards)- This high-tech armor covers the outside of the forearms with cups covering the hands. The cups are partially flexible (the wrists can move freely, but it is very hard to break someone's wrist). Arm Guards are useful for martial artists who want to be able to parry weapons with their hands. Gives +4 to parry. PR 8 bladed 6 blunt. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $500/pair.

Shield (Blast)- Designed for bomb squads. This is little more than a large chunk of curved metal with handles and legs to keep it upright. Large enough to completely conceal a crouching person. PR 25 bladed 10 blunt 10 radiation. Weighs 75 lbs. Costs $200.

Shield (Blast-Advanced)- AKA the Personal Tank. This shield is made of thick layers of metal and secondary nanotech materials. It is self-propelled, rolling around on electrically powered treads at up to 5 SPD. When it stops, collapsible feet extend five feet backwards, making the shield nearly impossible to knock over backwards. The shield has a nightvision enabled camera on the front linked to a large LCD on the inside so the person behind the shield can see clearly what is happening on the other side of the shield. There is even a gun port so that weapons of multiple types can be aimed (using the LCD viewer) and fired without ever stepping out from behind the shield. PR 50 bladed 25 blunt 25 radiation. Weighs 100 lbs. Costs $1,500.

Shield (Riot)- This high-tech shield is made of curved clear plastic. It is 4.5 ft. high and 2.5 ft. wide. It is designed for crowd control and there are a great many of them that are left over from the political turmoil of the 2040s and 2050s (although they may have patched holes). Gives +10 to parry. PR 8 bladed 6 blunt. Weighs 8 lbs. Costs $750.

Shield (Riot-Offensive)- Designed for modern riot control, this shield is made of clear plastic with sharp electrified spikes around the edges. Anyone attempting to grab the sides of the shield will have their hands pierced by the spikes (½ bladed, pierces armor as 3) and will be hit with 3 points electricity damage (see p.64). Gives +10 to parry. PR 8 bladed 6 blunt. Costs $1500.

Shield (Hand)- Pieces of scrap wood lashed together to make a primitive shield. The shield is about 3 ft. in diameter. Gives +5 to parry. PR of 3 bladed 3 blunt (shield can be destroyed completely by 6 damage). Weighs 7 lbs. Costs $15.

Shield (Hand-Metal)- Like the wood shield but made of scrap metal, making it stronger and lighter. Gives +8 to parry. PR of 5 bladed 4 blunt. Costs $50.

Shield (Hand-Nails)- Like the wooden shield, except with long nails driven through all around the shield. Gives +5 to parry, +4 to pain/stun attack. PR 3 bladed 3 blunt. Costs $25.

Taser- Small handheld device with two pointed metal prongs. Can zap a person up to 5 times per battery. Range: 0-1. Damage: 3 electrical. Costs $150.

Taser (Baton)- A telescoping baton with taser prongs along the end. The device can be used to simultaneously hit and shock someone. Can zap a person up to 2 times per battery. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt, 3 electrical. Costs $300.

Taser (Pen)- Resembles a thick marker rather than a weapon, giving stunners the element of surprise. Can zap twice per battery charge. Range 0. Damage: 2 electrical. Costs $200.

Taser (Gun)- The ends of two metal darts stick out so the taser can be used as a normal taser, or the darts can be shot out (they are connected to the taser by the insulated wires). After the shock is delivered, the darts retract (takes 1 full round). Can zap 5 times per battery charge. FR 3 ft. MR 20 ft. Damage: 3 electrical. Costs $400.

Traditional

Traditional Weapon Features

Range: Every weapon has a range within which it will work. See p.76 for more on moving in and out of range. If a weapon has range 1-2, it can be used normally if the opponents are 1 or 2 range levels apart. However, if the opponents are three range levels apart the weapon is too short to hit and if the opponents are 0 range levels apart the opponent is too close to do full damage. Ranges are as follows:

Range 0: Touching (biting, head butts, knives).

Range 1: Arm's Length (punches, kicks, knives)

Range 2: 4 ft. (swords, clubs)

Range 3: 6 ft. (whips, chains, lances)

Some weapons might do different things at different ranges. A lance, for instance, might do bladed damage if used at one range (where the blade can hit the enemy) and blunt damage if used at another range (where the enemy can only be hit by the pole).

Damage: The amount of damage done by the weapon on a normal strike.

Special Actions/Reactions: The design of some weapons makes it easier or harder to do certain actions and reactions. Example: If a sword gives "easy strike" then the holder gets +4 whenever making a strike with it. These actions and reactions are listed with the following nomenclature:

Very Easy: +8 on rolls.

Easy: +4 on rolls.

Hard: -4 on rolls.

Very Hard: -8 on rolls.

Pierces As: When a weapon is good at piercing armor, this is the amount of damage to use when calculating how much damage surpasses armor. Note that the max. damage that can hit the human inside the armor is the normal damage listed.

Baseball Bat- An old wooden or hollow metal bat. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $20.

Bear Trap- Spring loaded metal trap with a chain on it. Takes only 10 pounds of pressure to spring the trap. Does 1 bladed damage and traps the leg that set it off. Weighs 35 lbs. Costs $100.

Blowpipe- A 3 ft. long white PVC tube for blowing darts with. Takes 1 round to load a dart in the tube. FR 2 ft. MR 30 ft. Does 0 bladed damage (pierces as 2). Costs $25 +$4/dart.

Boot Blades- Small strong blades that are attached to the toes of boots. Adds 2 bladed damage to a kick. Costs $20 each +$15 for spring loaded.

Bow (Archery)- A cheap plastic bow, typically left over from some pre-war gym class. Comes with a leather quiver. Takes 1 action to draw an arrow. FR 5 ft. MR 100 ft. Damage: 2 bladed. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs $25 +$5/arrow.

Bow (Compound)- A complicated hunting bow, using high-tech materials to make it lightweight and powerful. FR 7 ft. MR 250 ft. Damage: 3 bladed. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs $125 +$7/arrow.

Chain- A length of chain of the right size for combat. Can be used for entangling. Range 2-3. Damage: 3 blunt. Hard strike, hard vital strike. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $7.

Chain (Heavy)- This is a length of chain heavier and shorter than that typically used in combat. It is so heavy that only the strongest fighters in the city can use it

effectively (takes a moderate strength roll to use without a penalty). Range: 1-2. Damage: 4 blunt. Very hard strike, very hard vital strike. Weighs 65 lbs. Costs $25.

Crate Cutter- A small folded piece of metal contains a razor blade. Designed as a multi-purpose cutting tool. Range: 0. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy slash. Costs $7.

Crossbow- Takes 2 actions to load the bow (or 1 action with a hard strength feat). 2 handed. FR 7 ft. MR 350 ft. Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 5). Weighs 7 lbs. Costs $250 +$7/bolt.

Dagger (Ceramic)- Made entirely out of ceramics and glass, this dagger is quite sharp and invisible to most weapon detectors. Range: 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed (pierces armor as 4 bladed). Costs $400.

Dagger (Throwing)- A dagger designed and weighted to be thrown. FR 1 ft. MR 20 ft. Damage 2 bladed. Costs $49.

Dagger- A knife designed for stabbing through the ribcage and in to the heart. Damage: 2½ bladed. Easy vital strike. Costs $35.

Fire Axe- A red painted axe from the fire-hose alcove of some office building. These are plentiful on the black market (being the first things rioters would steal during every major riot in the last 100 years). Range: 1. Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Hard strike, easy vital strike. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs $40.

Harpoon- A heavy metal spear designed for piercing the thick flesh of sea creatures and holding them on a hook. Weighs 25 lbs. Requires moderate (20 difficulty) STH feat to use without penalties. Removing violently (once it has pierced flesh) does 5 ragged bladed damage. FR 5 ft. MR 75 ft. Damage: 6 bladed damage (pierces as 7). Hard Strike. Weighs 15 lbs. Costs $100.

Kitchen Knife Spear - The blade from a small kitchen knife is tied in to the split end of a stick. The result is a primitive, but highly effective, spear. The spear is mainly used for throwing, but in a pinch is can be used as a hand-weapon. When thrown: FR 2 ft. MR 40 ft. Damage: 3 bladed. When used as a handheld weapon: Range: 2. Damage: 2 blunt (when bashing) or 3 bladed (when stabbing). Easy parry, easy slash. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $8.

Knife (Combat)- This knife is crafted specially for fighting with. It is best at slashing-type attacks. Range: 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed. Easy slash, easy wing. Costs $35.

Knife (Hunting)- A large knife with a serrated back side and a hollow handle (containing matches, fishing hook and line, sharpening stone and water purification tablets). Range 0-1. Damage: 2½ bladed. Costs $30.

Knife (Kitchen)- A large bread knife. Each time it hits an opponent there is a 1 in 20 chance of the blade breaking. Range 0-1. Damage: 2 bladed. Costs $3.

Knife (Switchblade)- A spring loaded knife designed to be concealed in the palm and opened in an instant for surprise attacks. Range: 0. Damage: 1½ bladed. Easy slash, easy wing, easy vital strike. Costs $45.

Machete- A rounded sword-like blade designed for chopping through thick foliage. Range: 1. Damage: 4 bladed. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $40.

Nightstick- One handed weapon made from plastic or fiberglass. Range: 1. Damage: 3 blunt Very easy parry. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $40.

Pen Knife- What looks like a fancy metal pen conceals a strong, sharp blade which is just long enough to pierce the ribcage and heart. Range: 0. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy slash, easy vital strike. Costs $45.

Pickaxe- Range: 2. Does 3 bladed damage (pierces as 6). Hard strike. Costs $100.

Pike- A long sharpened stick or rod, braced against the ground, used to impale oncoming enemies. More useful for mass combat than person-to-person combat. Range 3. Damage: 5 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Easy vital strike. Weighs 20 lbs. Costs $50.

Pipe- An old metal pipe, scavenged from a hole in the ground, or a piece of rebar scavenged from a ruined building. Range: 1. Damage: 3 blunt. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $4.

Quarterstaff- A 6 ft. long straight piece of wood. Range 1-3. Damage: 2 blunt. Easy parry. Weighs 10 lbs. Costs $20.

Railroad Spike- An old metal railroad spike sharpened to a sharp point. Range: 0-1. Damage: 1½ bladed. Easy vital strike. Costs $5.

Razor Ring- A part of a razor blade welded to a brass ring. The idea is to wear the razor inside, keeping it hidden and doing a surprise attack on someone's jugular vein with it (see the Assassin: Armed skill, p.23). Range: 0. Damage: ½ bladed. Costs $30.

Ripper- Like the shank, this weapon was first designed by prisoners and is now manufactured by homeless people from trash. The ripper is a piece of ragged scrap metal with a handle on it, designed to cut and tear flesh. While the shank is a weapon of assassination, the ripper is a tool of intimidation. Range: 0-1. Damage: 2 ragged. Easy pain/stun. Costs $35.

Sharpened Stick- A 2.5 ft. long stick, fire-hardened and sharpened to a point. Range: 2. Damage: 2½ bladed. Hard strike. Costs $2.

Shiv- This is a small sharp object (usually a piece of glass, plastic or scrap metal) sharpened to a point on one end and wrapped up in cloth (as a handle) on the other. It is just long enough to pierce the heart if driven in to the body with enough force. This is a traditional assassin's weapon, especially in prison. Range: 0-1. Damage: 1 bladed damage (pierces armor as 3). Hard strike, easy pain/pain stun. Costs $2.

Skin Knife- This knife is made from a triangle of a flexible secondary nanotech material that looks like skin (30 difficulty to detect in bright lighting) and even feels a bit like skin (15 difficulty to detect by touch). The knife does contain metallic elements and so will be detected by a good metal detector. Each skin knife is matched to the skin tone of the owner, and if the owner gets a tan a new knife must be purchased. When it is only a little curled up (as when it is plastered to a person's arm) it is very flexible, but if it is yanked off and squeezed in to a tight tube, it becomes very hard. The result is a very sharp stabbing weapon - a tight flesh colored tube with a sharp end. A practiced user can grab, curl and be ready to stab with a knife in only one round. Range: 1. Damage: 2 bladed (pierces armor as 3 bladed). Costs $250.

Skullcrusher- A long tree branch, forked at the end, with a heavy pointed stone or piece of concrete lashed to the end. The pointed end on the rock makes the skullcrusher excellent for breaking shields, doing damage through armor and crushing skills. Range: 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt damage (pierces as 6). Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $30.

Sledgehammer- A very powerful weapon, yet its size makes it difficult to use. Requires moderate STH feat to use without penalty. It can be raised over the head (one action) and brought down for a double-damage smash attack. Range: 2. Damage: 4 blunt (pierces armor as 6). Very hard strike, very hard vital strike, very hard parry. Weighs 14 lbs. Costs $40.

Steel Toed Boots- These boots are made for working in dangerous situations (PR 6 bladed 6 blunt to the feet) but they are also very good for kicking and stomping. Adds 1 blunt damage to kicks or stomps. Weigh 3 lbs. Costs $70.

Stick With Nail- This is either a large tree branch or a board, with a long nail through one end. The Stick With Nail is the perfect weapon to use against someone wearing phonebook armor (p.119) as the nail can penetrate the armor. Range: 2. Damage: 3 blunt, 1 ragged (pierces armor as 4 bladed). Easy pain/stun. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs $15.

Swinging Rock- A rock or chunk of concrete tied to the end of a length of cord. Range 2-3. Damage: 3 blunt. Hard strike, hard vital strike. Weighs 4 lbs. Costs $6.

Sword (Broadsword)- A replica medieval sword. It is very heavy, two-handed and designed to cleave through armor. Takes an moderate (20) STH feat to use without penalty. Range: 1-3. Damage: 5 bladed damage (pierces as 7). Hard strike. Weighs 5 lbs. Costs $100.

Sword (Fencing)- A thin, flexible stabbing-sword that focuses on speed vs. power. Range: 1. Damage: 3 bladed. Easy parry, easy vital strike. Weighs 2 lbs. Costs $60.

Swords

Newcomers to the city are often surprised to see the large number of people, especially Well gang-members, carrying and using machetes and swords. There are three basic reasons for this:

First, guns are too expensive for most gang members to afford, thanks to a severe gun ban which has continued from the Freedom War days.

Second, swords were the number one weapon (until the invention of guns) because they are very effective weapons. They give longer range than a knife, they move faster than a club and they are sharp and heavy enough to pierce rudimentary (leather or phonebook based) armor.

Third, many people in the city, especially wells, grew up in VR fantasy worlds where swordplay was common. Although real combat and VR combat has significant differences, the numerous battles fought in VR were enough to make swords the easiest weapons for young street punks to learn to use.

Sword (Katana)- A replica of a Japanese samurai sword. Range: 1-2. Damage: 5 bladed. Easy vital strike. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs $100.

Sword (Rusty Saw)- This blade is made from an old hand saw, cut in to a blade and reinforced to make it less flexible, connected to a makeshift handle. The sword is designed to look quite nasty, although it is not the most efficient weapon to use in battle. It is used to grab a hold of and tear skin open. Range 1-2. Damage: 2½ ragged. Hard strike, easy pain/stun, easy slash. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs $75.

indies. Range: 1-2. Damage: 6 bladed (pierces armor as 8). Easy strike, easy vital strike. Weighs 3 lbs. Costs $2,000.

Telescoping Baton- A metal tube that can fit in a pocket. When it is swung, it telescopes out in to a full sized baton. Range 1-2. Damage: 3 blunt. Easy pain/stun attack. Weighs 1.5 lbs. Costs $100.

Throwing Glass- A 2, 3 or 4 pointed "star" made with sharp shards of glass hot-glued together. FR 1 ft. MR 50 ft. Damage: ½ bladed damage. Costs $2.

Tiger Claws- A pair of wristbands with three claws each curving over the fist for bladed punching and clawing attacks. Adds 2 bladed damage to a punch. Easy slash attack. Costs $45.

Tomahawk- Although made of steel, it is shaped and balanced exactly like the original Native American throwing axe. This ancient design gives it portability, accuracy and power that few weapons can rival. When thrown: FR 3 ft. MR 20 ft. Damage: 4 bladed (pierces armor as 6). Very easy vital strike. When used as a hand weapon: Range: 1. Damage: 4 bladed. Weighs 1 lb. Costs $150.

Whip- A leather whip, usually sold in sex shops. Range: 3. Damage: 1 bladed. Easy pain/stun attack. Costs $35.

Sword (Tech)- This sword is made entirely from secondary-nanotech materials (mostly carbon), designed to be lightweight, unbreakable and to stay incredibly sharp. The sword has very little metal in it and only sets off very sensitive metal detectors. It is shaped approximately like a Japanese katana and is shiny black. Requires a special secondary-nanotech scabbard (anything else it could pierce too easily and accidentally cut the wearer). The tech sword is fairly rare (most people who can afford them buy a gun instead). They are typically bought by eccentric

Chapter Four - PC Groups

Amin and his fellow gang members stood and waited, breathing heavily. A few blocks down the street, the Omniscients turned the corner and came in to view. The Omniscients were coming at them at a brisk walk, not running. The walls suddenly brightened as someone behind Amin started up the floodlight. They had thrown together a shielded floodlight at the last minute, knowing how the Omniscients liked to break street lights and fight in the dark. For the tenth time in the last few minutes, Amin checked the sharpened machete in one hand and the makeshift shield attached to his forearm. He raised them slightly, in his head he ran through the basic block and strike pattern he had practiced. This would be his first battle.

He raised his machete as the Omniscients came nearer. The first ranks of the two gangs raced in to battle and Amin rushed forward, looking for someone to take on. He saw that some of the Omniscients were hanging back. Watching his sides, making sure nobody attacked him from behind, he pushed his way through the fray towards them. Something seemed odd about them - they didn't seem interested in joining the battle. As he got closed he noticed that some of them looked old and dirty, with the leathery skin of a homeless person. They were dressed in Omniscient clothing but didn't have any visible implants. Amin saw scars - not the random zigzags of accident scars but the clean rows of something done on purpose. Amin stopped in his tracks - it had to be Insomniacs, hired by the Omniscients, dressed up as Omniscients so they wouldn't be targeted.

Amin inhaled to scream out "Insomniacs" but when he tried to speak he found his vocal cords paralyzed. He could feel his arm moving, and he felt the cold metal of the machete touch his throat…

Non-Player Character Groups

These are elements of the city's population that are a significant portion of the city population but they are not appropriate as player characters.

Children- Adults in the city tend to think of children as being in the same group as their parent's (e.g. that's a shut in kid, that's a Drake kid). Despite this, kids have their own needs, lifestyles and social groupings. Not appropriate as PCs because their self-sufficiency and ability to exercise free will is limited. See p.362 for more info.

Colins- Colin is a serial killer who kidnaps people and uses mental installer technology to copy his mind over theirs, thus reproducing himself. Not appropriate as PCs because they are not unique characters with unique personalities and because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.367 for more info.

Cultists- These are members of one of the city's many cults. Not appropriate as PCs because their ability to exercise free will is limited. See p.374 for more info.

Crazies- This is the most common slang term for homeless people who are unable to get by in any social group because of a mental illness. Not appropriate as PCs because they have little or no control over their own actions.

Drug Lords- Generically, this is any employee of the Drug Lords organization, from the rich and powerful lords, to lowly street pushers, to chemists working in production labs. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.381 for more info.

Hostel Patients- At any given time, there are very many people in the city who are patients at government run hostels. These are usually very old people or people in the terminal stages of incurable diseases. Inappropriate

Non-Player Character Groups (continued)

Serial Killers- These are people who kill other people to satisfy their own emotional needs. They are generally loners and not part of any social grouping. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs.

Violent Criminals- These are groups of bullies who prey on those weaker than them in order to get money. Most are young God Killer addicts with troubles childhoods who live in a nexus between addiction, mental illness and plain evil. Not appropriate as PCs because their moral standards are inherently different from most other PCs. See p.371 for more info.

Visitors- At any time there are people travelling through the city. Some are tourists with a sense of adventure, other are business people staying in one of the city's cheap hotels. Some people come to the city from private cities, gated communities and corporate living centers in order to take advantage of drugs, prostitution, gambling and other forms of illegal entertainment. Not appropriate as PCs because they don't stay long in the city. See p.351 for more info.

Shut-Ins- These are Wells and Indies, who are afraid of the city. The majority spend all day in Virtual Reality fantasy worlds. Not appropriate as PCs because they avoid the streets whenever possible. See p.359 for more info.

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STREET PEOPLE FAMILIES

Favorable Stereotypes- Hard working, clever, loyal, responsible, specialized, humble, unprejudiced, realistic, patient, willing to do unpleasant things.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immoral, uneducated, opportunistic, short-sighted, dishonest criminals and thieves.

Street People who have formed themselves in to large extended families are better off, by a large degree, than most other street people. The members of families have pacts of mutual self-defense and revenge similar to gangs, with the same deterrent effect. In fact, many wells and Indies see the families as nothing more than "homeless gangs," although being in a family has many more benefits than being in a gang.

Street People vs. Homeless

Many Street People don't like to be called homeless. Most have homes which they are quite proud of. Their homes are decorated, defended, and are quite comfortable places to sleep or just hang out. Some homes even have pirated electricity or running water.

The word "homeless" is usually used to refer to someone who does not have an income and does not have a safe place to sleep at night. The real homeless are usually nomadic, switching from place to place as something goes wrong with the last place they slept. The worst off homeless people do not even have time to seek a place to live: they sleep wherever they are when exhaustion overtakes them.

Street Poetry and Music

For more than a century, poetry has been the primary form of artistic expression of the homeless in the US. The reason is simple: poetry is one form of art that doesn't require expensive equipment and supplies or massive amounts of training. If people can memorize their poetry, they don't even need a pencil and paper.

Street poetry in the city does not resemble other art scenes. There are no stars of poetry, no homeless people reproduce the poetry of another, and nobody bothers to analyze another person's poetry: they hear it, enjoy it, and forget about it soon afterwards. The poetry scene is thus incredibly egalitarian, everybody on the street, whether they have ever written a poem before or not, is equal. There is also little impetus for anyone to refine or perfect their art.

Poetry reading is seldom organized. Some street people read poems around campfires when they are bored and there is nothing else to do. Some write poems on scraps of paper and leave them lying around: someone might read them, or they might not. Occasionally, some well-meaning Indie from outside the city will gather a bunch of street poetry and publish it on the net, and it may enjoy some small success outside of the city (mostly for the unflinching emotional honesty, not for the poetic skill) but that success seldom reaches back to the people on the streets.

Some poems are put to music and sung. Some are stories, funny or sad, about the poet or people the poet knows. Some are pure descriptions of the feelings of the poets. Some have a political flavor: demands for rights and respect and jobs. If street poetry has any use, besides keeping street people entertained during boring hours, it is in getting street people used to saying, loudly, how they feel and what they want (a skill that too few of them have).

Street musicians in the city can not make enough money to make a living, yet when someone walks down the major avenues of the city in the evenings, one can still hear the vigorous playing of street musicians. These street musicians are street people who have spent all day pursuing their real livelihood, and when it is time to relax, they get out their instruments, get together with their friends and play music. They always have a hat out in case someone wants to give them money, and they do get a significant amount of spare change, but even if they didn't they would probably still be playing music somewhere.

Most street people don't have anyone watching their backs. If they don't hit a good dumpster, they starve for that night. If they get sick, nobody is there to take care of them. When they leave whatever abandoned spaces they have claimed as their own, nobody is around to keep their stuff safe. If they are attacked, they can call for help but it is likely that nobody will come. The families, on the other hand, live as large collectives that watch out for each other in ways that even Indies and wells envy.

Families take over whole blocks, creating neighborhoods they can walk in safely. Abandoned buildings are taken

Food

Street people get food from four basic sources:

-First, food handed out at soup kitchens or by outreach workers.

-Second, homeless people buy food at fast food restaurants (street people become adept amateur nutritionists, finding out what foods satiate them the longest at the lowest price).

-Third, scrounging through dumpsters. There is quite a lot of food in dumpsters: for every five pounds of food that is prepared and served in the city, approximately one pound of food is thrown out. How the food is thrown out makes a major difference. In some restaurants (with employees that know how things work on the streets), cooked food being thrown out is put in to plastic bags separate from uncooked meat and other trash. In the worst case scenario, restaurant employees are under orders to sabotage their garbage to discourage scrounging. They mix food in with other garbage and even sprinkle on cleaning products or rat poison.

-Fourth, a few people hunt and gather for food. Only the Keepers have been able to gain a significant portion of their nutrition this way, but other street people occasionally supplement their diet with the occasional pigeon or fruit from a tree growing in someone's yard.

over and turned in to street people mansions. They are guarded all the time, so family members can leave their possessions lying around. When family members come home, they have a luxury few street people have: the ability to relax. They can let their guard down, kick off their shoes, chat with friends and family, eat a warm meal, and when they are lucky they can even take a hot bath.

The families also have developed a culture of being homeless. People born in the families are born homeless and are trained from an early age on the skills that they will need to survive on the streets. The major families each have some special skill or ability that helps them make money and makes them an invaluable resource to other city groups. Since they are trained from birth to do one thing, they are incredibly apt, experts whose knowledge and skill cannot be rivaled.

For all that the members of Street People Families have, the one thing they don't have is hope. They will never be anything other than homeless criminals. They are only able to exist in the city because it is a sort of blind spot in the vision of society. Were the economy to ever improve, the streets made safe, the trash cleaned up, organized crime agencies destroyed, ordinary people convinced to leave their apartments, the street people families would be like a rat's nest that has been suddenly uncovered: forced to scatter.

Den Mothers and Fathers

Not all unborn family members engage in the trade typical for that family, yet they usually do something to help the survival of the family. Some come in to the family by common law marriage. Others grew up in the family, but felt their skills and talents lent to them doing something other than the family's occupation. When young, these people are usually errand and message runners. When they become older, many become "den mothers" or "den fathers" who spend all their time making sure that the spaces that the family lives and works in are running smoothly. Den mothers and fathers usually have quite a lot of authority because they are responsible for everything from keeping quarters sanitary to resolving disputes between family members.

Unborn

N., Street slang for someone who was born in the US, but was not born in a hospital and does not have a birth certificate. Unborn are usually the children of homeless people and are born with the help of homeless midwives. Since they do not "exist" in any government database, it is almost impossible for the Unborn to get a legitimate jobs or get on public assistance, and most grow up resigned to the idea of being a homeless criminal for all of their lives.

Black Meds

In Brief- Large street family who make their living as unlicensed street-doctors.

Favorable Stereotypes- Creative, quick thinking, compassionate, resourceful, never denying anyone help.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Barbaric, ignorant, unethical, arrogant, afraid to admit ignorance.

Other Names- Street Doctors, Black Market Doctors, Rusty Scalpels.

Origin- The 2040s were a very hard time for the city, and people found themselves homeless in increasing numbers. Hospitals were required by law to provide emergency care for the indigent, but economic crises, natural disasters and plagues made going to a hospital dangerous and unrewarding. A homeless person going to a hospital for medical treatment might be mistakenly thrown in a plague ward, or might die under a tent in the hospital parking lot before a triage nurse could even get around to seeing the homeless person.

Fortunately for homeless people, a significant amount of medical knowledge had made its way to the streets. Many people with significant medical training had become homeless. Many immigrants still practiced indigenous healing practices. The homeless in New York started practicing medicine on each other. Many homeless people were soon more comfortable with homeless midwives than with hospitals, and the children born on the streets to these midwives were the first major group born in the United States without birth certificates, a group that would later become known in city slang as the unborn.

Even as the homeless medics gave birth to the unborn, they were teaching medical knowledge to other homeless people. They blended together modern science, ancient traditions, and new improvisations to create a form of medicine that could be preformed with equipment scavenged from the trash. The street medics had their own children on the streets and taught them their medical techniques.

When the Freedom Army took control of the city, medical volunteers did their best to treat the city population, but their supplies were severely limited. Many homeless people with street-medicine knowledge volunteered, and many were inducted in to the Freedom Army's medical corps.

After the Freedom Wars, most homeless medics lapsed back in to homelessness. Continuing to practice medicine on the streets, they gained loyal patients from throughout the city. The post-war gangs also found that they sometimes needed medical services outside of a hospital, and their money helped the homeless medic families become successful. The homeless families traded knowledge and supplies and they were the first street families to join in to mutual self-defense pacts. Over the course of a nearly a generation, the connections between the families became so close that some started to consider themselves to be all one family. They clustered around the Bowery (the part of the city with the highest population of homeless people) so they could defend themselves more easily.

Timeline

2045- First HDNA virus outbreak (will become worst plague in human history).
2047- 25 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.
2050- Freedom Army attacks.
2054- Nuclear explosion in central park is beginning of end for Freedom Army.
2057- Manhattan reopened to habitation.
2060- 320 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.
2070- Medic families join together in self-defense pact.
2079- 1000 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

Becoming- Black Med children hang around when their parents are performing medical care and they become familiar with many medical problems and medical procedures at an early age. Black Med children are allowed to view everything that goes on, from consultations, to amputation, to death and burial of patients. The average Black Med child can distinguish syphilis from other venereal diseases at the age of seven. Young Black Meds are often asked to help out in many ways, including handing tools to elders in the middle of a surgery. With some exceptions, young Black Meds are not allowed to touch patients until they reach their teenage years. During their early teenage years, elders try to have someone watching them whenever they are working on a patient, though during busy times young Black Meds sometimes have to work alone. Black Meds are usually allowed to make house calls by themselves at around fifteen to seventeen.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is still a junior member of the household, is still considered a student, is still required to consult with an elder when he or she is in any doubt, but the PC is allowed to deal with patients and make house calls on his or her own.

Lifestyle- Homeless people have many more medical problems than non-homeless people. They are exposed to many more diseases, are much more likely to be injured, have poorer nutrition, and have a harder time keeping wounds clean. Many homeless people are homeless because of medical problems and physical disabilities. Altogether, significant medical problems are the norm for homeless people, and people without medical problems are rather rare. Even though there is one Black Med for every 23 street people (including addicts and homeless "crazies") the Black Meds are kept very busy.

When homeless people are sick or injured, many are well enough to walk across the city to the Bowery, where they seek out any building with a red cross on it. Those who can not walk may be lucky enough to have friends strong enough to carry them. Most homeless people don't have friends that strong and they must send someone to go get a Black Med. Any adult Black Med can make a house call (there are no specialists). Any adult Black Med will take on any medical problem. Black Meds will also treat animals (especially the pets of other street people).

As soon as the Black Med gets a good idea what the problem is and what steps must be taken to fix it, the Black Med asks about payment. Unless the patient is truly on the edge of death, the following discussion sounds much like any other haggling taking place for goods or services in the city. Black Meds ask for less from poorer clients than they do from wealthier ones. Black Meds are more likely to take IOUs from street people and people they know than they are from others. If the client can't pay and the Black Med is unwilling to take an IOU, the Black Med usually requires an agreement from the patient that he or she will

stay and work off the debt once he or she is returned to health. Street People, especially, are often very happy to agree to this arrangement. Once the patient is cured, the Black Med household puts the patient to work in any way they can think of: the patient cleans, does manual labor, watches children, helps during dumpster diving runs, and sometimes even helps the Black Meds defend themselves. The Black Meds are the final arbiter of how much work it takes to pay off a debt, though they rarely get more than their money's worth from these arrangements.

Average Price Charged by Black Meds			
	Street People	Wells	Indies
Simple consult	$1	$10	$20
Treating a small infection or wound	$2	$15	$30
Large infection or wound	$5	$20	$40
Installing a cybernetic implant	$10	$50	$75
Treatment of a deadly, communicable disease	$30	$100	$200
Problem requiring major surgery	$50	$200	$300

The Black Meds use many methods to treat patients, including many methods that legitimate medical personnel would never consider. They use stolen pharmaceuticals (though their supply is very limited and they use them sparingly). Over the counter drugs, which have been shoplifted, are used much more commonly. The Black Meds also grow herbs and use them in teas, tinctures and poultices. Most injuries and infections are treated using soap stolen from public restrooms (to clean the area), a bucket of tap water (to rinse it), alcohol or a hot knife (to sterilize it), a sewing needle and thread (to stitch it up) and boiled rags (to bandage it). Patients are asked to take out their own stitches when the wound is healed. Surgery is avoided whenever possible, since the Black Meds know the terrible possibilities of infection. When surgery is performed, it is usually to remove a foreign object from a wound or to drain an infection, and it is usually with little or no anesthetic (a belt of whiskey is the most common anesthetic used). Caesarians are never preformed unless the mother is already dead (the risk of infection is too high). Acupuncture, massage, hypnosis and psychic physiological manipulation are used occasionally, though not every Black Med has these skills. When Black Meds believe a patient doesn't have an actual problem, they readily give out placebos (usually horrible tasting, though useless, herbal teas).

Black Meds know that there is a limit to their abilities. City hospitals are required to treat the indigent who are in imminent danger, and Black Meds sometimes decide that the best thing to do is patch someone up enough to the point that they will survive the trip, then help the person make it to the city hospital.

The Black Meds are famous for having an attitude of "If you don't like how I do things, you can go crawl off and die." The patient has no choice as to treatment options, they must take whatever the Black Med gives them. Black Meds find it hard to make life-or-death decisions every day without a bit of megalomania, even if it is a pretend megalomania that goes away at the end of the day. Some Black Meds, however, take the megalomania to heart and think of themselves as infallible. If Black Meds think a patient would want to be euthanized, they do it (usually by suffocating the patient). When a patient does die, the Black Meds make every attempt to bring the body back to the loved one's friends and family, but if they can't find any friends and family they usually use the body as a teaching tool for young Black Meds, then bury it in a small non-denominational ceremony. The Black Meds don't have to worry about malpractice lawsuits, though they have occasionally had to defend themselves when they were blamed for a patient's death.

It is rare that Black Meds have serious enemies, but when they do they will typically refuse the enemy treatment, or may even pretend to treat an enemy and then kill them. Black Meds also kill patients who they find out are serial killers, child molesters or other people that the Black Meds feel are beyond salvation. Black Meds could use their medical knowledge to do a lot of horrible things to enemies (torture, surgical mutilation) but they seldom do, usually because they have been battling pain for all their lives and find the idea of purposefully creating more to be distasteful. Some Black Meds keep samples of diseased fluids from plague victims they treat. They have never had occasion to use them, but the implication is obvious: if some group seriously hurts the Black Meds, the Black Meds will fight back using biological weapons.

There are no ethical standards for Black Meds and no review of a Black Med's actions beyond the eldest in the household. Black Meds are often forced to make life-or-death decisions with no guidance but their conscience. In these cases, a bit of megalomania is good: it allows for a Black Med to make a decision and carry through with it, rather than freezing up. Black Meds are commonly thrown in to situations where multiple people are wounded and they only have time to save one person's life (and will often choose to treat the friend rather than the stranger). Sometimes people will refuse needed treatment because of fear, because it is painful, because of religious objections of for other reasons. Black Meds sometimes allow people to go off without treatment, but sometimes will force unwanted treatments on people, especially if they think people are mentally ill or are the victim of cult brainwashing. Other times, patients will try to purchase treatments for themselves that the Black Meds think are unwise. These people are often mentally ill and believe that they have diseases or have problems with their physical appearance that they don't have. Like Sex Workers, Black Meds entertain each other with stories of the weird things they are asked to do. Black Meds sometimes refuse and sometimes do not, depending upon how much money they are offered and how they feel about the patient. A common excuse given by Black Meds for performing questionable acts is "if I didn't do it, he/she would have just found someone else who would, at least this way it's my family that gets fed."

Sometimes Black Meds are asked to do something that is unquestionably unethical. They may be paid to sabotage the treatment of another patient. They may be paid to torture or surgically mutilate someone. They may be paid to give people implants against their will. Although most Black Meds will refuse, customers keep asking until they find a Black Med who will. Black Meds who do this sort of thing keep it strictly secret (or risk ostracism by other Black Meds). Some Black Meds make a regular practice of taking on these very unethical jobs, others are just desperate for cash and fall prey to temptation.

When they are not performing medicine, Black Meds spend most of their time making or acquiring medical supplies. Black Meds often trade with other street people, trading medical services for over-the-counter drugs and medical supplies that the street people have shoplifted. Some skilled Thieves even raid pharmacies and trade prescription drugs. Teenaged Black Meds are often sent to jump the barbed wire fence compounds in the backs of hospitals. They quickly bust open the locks on the biohazard dumpsters, grab gray plastic bags and run before the security guards can get there. At home, they and their families carefully sift through the trash looking for anything that can be salvaged, soaked in bleach and re-used. Biohazard waste that is not reused is often kept for use in traps. Black Meds also make their own medical supplies. They tear up rags, boil them, bleach them and use them as bandages. They sometimes even make scalpels by snapping razor blades and melting them in to the end of toothbrushes (a technique some black med probably learned in prison decades ago). Many older Black Meds have tiny gardens growing in backyards where they grow medicinal herbs which they harvest and sell or trade to other Black Meds.

Social Structure- The basic unit of Black Med life is the household. A household typically has one or two members who are considered the wisest doctors in the household, and everyone else in the household works for the wisest as assistants. In a typical household, children run errands (take messages, borrow supplies from other households), adolescents and teens make house calls, carry non-ambulatory patients on makeshift stretchers, and do basic intake of patients. Young adults handle the majority of cases, doing basic surgery and treatment for minor problems. The oldest and wisest Black Meds take over whenever a problem is complicated. If their hands are too unsteady with age to perform surgery, they watch and direct a younger surgeon. Some household members do not have any medical skills, but they help out in other ways: manufacturing bandages, helping keep the household clean, etc.

Advancement- Advancement in the Black Meds is a slow process of seeing case after case until one develops a body of medical wisdom. The longer a Black Med has been practicing, the more weight their medical opinion holds. Starting a household and being the patriarch or matriarch of the family is also a means of gaining respect and influence.

Population- There are about 1,300 Black meds, making them the largest street family.

External Relations- Black Meds are generally thought of as soft: they are not skilled at combat and the worst they typically do to enemies is threaten to withhold medical treatment. This is perhaps an illusion: since nobody has made a serious attempt to wipe out the Black Meds, nobody knows how vicious they can get.

Street People Families: The Black Meds are the oldest and best known of the street families. They literally and figuratively helped give birth to the other street families. In so much as there is a homeless community, the Black Meds are the glue that hold it together. Whenever there is a serious threat to the Black Meds, other street people (including addicts) help out, if only out of a selfish desire for self-preservation. The Black Meds often take favors in exchange for treatment, and every Black Med household is owed at least one favor by each of the major families. If they called in all their favors, no homeless group would have as much political or military power. They have few reasons to use this power though: they have no real enemies and few needs beyond salvaged and stolen medical equipment.

Crackers: The Black Meds share turf with the Crackers and have a very close relationship with them, often trading services and favors.

Jacks: If there is any homeless group that the Black Meds do not like it is Jacks because Jacks sometimes give medical advice and even attempt medical procedures, usually with no real medical knowledge.

Indies: Almost all Indies pay for medical insurance which gives them faster and better medical care than the Black Meds can. Most Indies will find some occasion to hire or buy things from the other street families, but rarely ever deal with Black Meds. Some Indies don't even know that Black Meds exist. The Purists know that there are a bunch of homeless doctors and many have nightmares of a dirty homeless person cutting them open.

Traders: Most Black Meds have a strong relationship with a black market trader who refers clients to the Black Med. Both the Black Med and the Trader find this an advantageous relationship.

Volunteers: Volunteers also provide basic medical services for street people, often with a vastly different style from the Black Meds. Volunteers usually see only the mistakes that the Black Meds have made, or cases where the patient never went to a Black Med treatment. Volunteers rarely hear about the cases that Black Meds treated successfully and so few believe that there is quality medical care available on the streets. There are sometimes clashes when a street person is begging to be taken to the Black Meds while a Volunteer is trying to arrange for an ambulance to pick them up.

Needle Punks: Black Meds sometimes buy drugs from Needle Punks. When they have clients who can afford it, the Black Meds sometimes even write prescriptions and send people to the Needle Punks as if the Black Meds were doctors and the Needle Punks were pharmacists. The Needle Punks, on the other hand, rarely ever need anything from Black Meds (their medical problems are very different from what the Black Meds know how to deal with) and don't often think of the Black Meds.

Wells: When Wells go to get illegal implants, they often go to state healthcare doctors who take bribes to do illegal surgeries, but when they can not find a doctor or can not afford the bribes, they often go to Black Meds. The Well groups who get the most implants, the Animalists, Freaks, Risen and Freelancers, are common visitors to the Black Meds.

Goods: Of all the Wells, it is the Goods who are most familiar with the many varied services of the Black Meds. Goods often need to call in Black Meds to help when a homeless client is suffering from an OD, withdrawals or other medical problems relating to drug use.

Military Style- When Black Meds fight, which is rare, they tend to rush in, slash at enemies in places which will incapacitate them, then immediately run away. They grab their wounded as they run, scattering, hiding and providing medical care for their wounded. When the wounded are either patched up and ready to fight again, or stabilized and put in a safe place, the Black Meds meet at a pre-arranged spot to plan their next strike. Although they are poor fighters and have little strategy, the Black Meds' quick response to injuries means that they suffer fewer fatalities in a battle than other groups.

The Black Med's biggest weakness is their insistence on taking all of their wounded with them when they retreat, which can severely slow them down. They also depend on being able to find safe hiding places nearby where they can treat their wounded. This is no problem when they are fighting in the Bowery, but when fighting elsewhere they often have to depend on street people seeing them and guiding them to hiding places.

In one famous battle with the Math Addicts, the Black Meds fought with the Math Addicts until several of the Math Addicts were badly wounded. Even as the battle raged, Black Med elders formed a truce with the Math Addicts: if the Math Addicts would cease their aggression, the Black Meds would treat the Math Addict wounded. Although proud of this victory, most Black Meds assume that other enemies would not be as rational or trusting.

Typical Weapon- A scalpel with a Drake poison smudged on it is a common weapon.

Turf- Almost all of the Black Meds live in the Bowery. Those who don't are close enough that they can flee to the Bowery in times of danger. The Bowery is in the Southeast corner of downtown, hugging the sunken city. The part of the Bowery that the Black Meds live in is bordered on the North by Houston street and on the South by the ruins of the Brooklyn bridge. In the late 1800s, the Bowery was a bustling theater district. In the beginning of the 20th century commerce moved out and the Bowery became a run down skid row, home to hundreds of flophouses. It stayed mostly a skid row, despite a few minor periods of gentrification in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Today the Bowery is the most run down part of town with the most abandoned buildings. The few surviving commercial enterprises in the Bowery are cheap residential hotels and liquor stores. Since there is no commerce here, the city government has no incentive to keep street lights running or keep the roads repaired, and the result is something that looks like a post-apocalyptic city. The Bowery has the city's highest concentration of homeless people. The Black Meds and Crackers share the area, living interspersed with each other and other street people. Most Black Meds live inside old abandoned hotels. Inside the Bowery, the Black Meds live interspersed with Crackers and other street people. Most live in abandoned hotels scattered throughout the turf.

Distinguishing Features- Black Meds often wear a red cross on their clothing, usually made from scraps of red cloth. Their clothing is often covered with many old blood-stains. Black Meds can sometimes be recognized by the cleanliness of their hands. The Black Meds wear simple clothing and hairstyles with nothing hanging down that might accidentally get in to a wound.

Symbols- Black Meds paint red crosses on the buildings where they live so that people know where to go when they are seeking medical care. They occasionally even make crosses out of bloody bandages.

Slang

Aunt Mary: n., a way to call for help by an elder without alarming a patient (e.g. "get Aunt Mary" means "get anyone you can as fast as you can.")

Bleed: n. any ruptured blood vessel with blood flowing from it.

Circling: v., short for "circling the drain" – about to die.

Gomer: n., a person who does not need or wouldn't benefit from treatment.

Jennie: n., a female patient seeking gynecological treatment.

Pincushion: n., a patient with multiple stab wounds.

Black Med Combat- This combat skill represents a form of combat that has been made possible by the Black Med's familiarity with anatomy and with cutting human flesh. To learn this skill, corpses are tied to posts and young black meds slash at them. Elder black meds give feedback on each slash, telling what it would have done to a live person. Black Med combat focuses on cutting the body in places which are easy to hit, not usually protected by armor, but will incapacitate an enemy. Gives the following plusses (with an additional +4 per level above the first) to the following combat actions with scalpels, razor blades or very sharp knives only:
   +4 to Crippling Attack
   +4 to Pain/Stun Attack
   +0 to Blood Strike (Special Maneuver, INL+AGY vs. 30, does damage as per a normal strike but the cut continues to bleed: ½ BLD damage per round for 6 rounds or until the injury is tourniqueted).

Skills

Free Skills: Diagnosis (1), Emergency Medicine (1), Herbal Medicine (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 4, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, INTL 11, MIL 9, PSY:X 25, PSY:M 16, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Black Med Combat costs 5 skill points per level.

Income- $250 +$17/wk.

Special Equipment- Free First Aid Kit: Black Med. PC can purchase medicinal herbs at half their normal price.

Suggested Skills- Acupuncture, Bomb Disarming, Diagnosis, Emergency Medicine, Herbal Medicine, Hypnosis, Gardening, Needles, Pharmacology, Physical Therapy, Running, Surgery.

Suggested Equipment- Alcohol, Auto-Blood Test, Dust Mask, Hip Flask, Latex Gloves, Syringes and all the herbal medicines (p.112).

Suggested Reading- Death Borgs, Disease, Implants.

Crackers

In Brief- Street family whose members are taught from an early age to hack for money.

Favorable Stereotypes- Quick witted, practical, intelligent with many technical skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Cruel, arrogant, cynical, braggarts. Vandals and blackmailers.

Other Names- Street Hackers, Homeless Hackers, Paycomputer Crackers, Shoulder Surfers.

Origin- Hacking gained popularity in the 1980s when dial-up bulletin boards put together teenagers with a desire to explore the computer systems owned by others. Hacking quickly became a sophisticated subculture, which became increasingly feared as computers and computer networks became a bigger part of people's lives. Although most hackers were teenagers concerned with exploring and going where they weren't supposed to, criminals soon learned many of their techniques. In New York, for example, criminals would hang around payphones and use stolen calling card numbers to give people unlimited calls to foreign countries for only a few dollars. During this period, hackers would often create the techniques and those techniques would slowly filter down in to the underworld.

The degree to which computers were important to people's lives (and thus the degree to which computer hackers were feared) increased steadily in the late 20th and early 21st century, peaking in the 2030s. As internet connections became cheaper, more homeless people got on the internet and used it to communicate and seek means of survival. Ubiquitous wireless networks let homeless people (who knew how hack) get on to the internet from any part of any urban area. Homeless people remained very well connected until the 2040s, when population growth and global economic crises caused a terrible internet slowdown. The internet slowdown made much of the technology of the 2030s unusable and most homeless people forgot about the internet.

The internet itself was destroyed by terrorist bombing around the globe in 2050. It was not restored until 2060, after the Freedom Wars. There was a short lived economic boom in the city as techs were needed to route new fiber optic lines (or salvage old ones) and to setup new computer systems using the new open-source operating systems released by the restoration committee. In the years after the Freedom Wars, thousands were employed as techs in the city. Then the gated community movement started achieving goals and people started leaving the city to go live in gated communities. The bottom dropped out of the city economy and many of the techs that had helped rebuild the city found themselves homeless. These homeless people found they could gain access to the internet by hacking paycomputers, and they soon taught these skills to other homeless people. Hacking gave some homeless families an edge and insured their growth and prosperity.

The most skilled homeless hackers quickly got to know each other and most became friends, sharing knowledge and tips. As the hackers became older and became the elders of large families of hackers, they found utility in joining the families together for mutual self-protection. By 2075, all of the city's major hacking families had joined together in to one large group, supporting each other, known as the Crackers.

Timeline

1982- Internet begins.

2040s- Internet slowdown, tech criminals steal tech from corps and experiment on themselves.

2050- Freedom Wars begin, internet destroyed.

2060- Internet restored.

2061-2065- Massive exodus from the city.

2075- Last cracker family moves to the Bowery.

Becoming- Elder siblings are forced to take younger siblings with them on hacking jobs so that the younger siblings can watch and learn the trade. Young kids are given old pieces of equipment and encouraged to play with them and learn as much as possible. By the time Crackers are ten or eleven, they are allowed to go out in to the city in

small groups to hack payphones in order to get change. By the time they are fifteen, Crackers are expected to start doing more sophisticated hacking jobs and to make enough money to support not only themselves but also their families.

At level one, adventure one, a Cracker is part of a small cabal of hackers their own age who travel around making money for the family by hacking.

Lifestyle- Most Crackers go for the quick and easy score. Payphones and paycomputers are the biggest targets for Crackers. Sometimes they rig the machines to get change out of them. Other Crackers hack the machines so they can get free service, then they sell unlimited free service to passers-by at a low cost. They shoulder surf at pay computers, getting people's logins to pay-for-use sites and selling them to other people. They steal parts from broken pay computers and salvage parts from dumpsters to make cheap computers that they sell to Wells.

Crackers can also be seen with tiny homemade computers hooked up to network router boxes on the streets. They sabotage the internet lines going in to buildings then offer to fix the problem for a few bucks. They tap network lines, recording phone conversations and blackmailing callers.

Other ways Crackers make quick cash are: They extort small business owners with threats of denial of service attacks on their public servers. They peddle cracked software and illegally copied porn on street corners. They hire themselves out to help thieves defeat security systems. They forge their own barcodes using cheap printers (or sometimes even by hand). These barcodes code for cheap products, and they take them in to stores and stick them on expensive products. If the clerk doesn't notice, a Cracker can pay a couple of bucks for hundreds of dollars worth of stuff which they can use or sell.

There are also the "big-time" hacking jobs which most people associate with hackers. Most Crackers do not generally live on big-time hacking jobs. Also, they require quite a large investment of time and money before any profit is seen, whereas most crackers need money right away. Finally, a hacker's ability to get in to a system is as much a matter of luck as it is skill, and street people don't like to risk their time, money on effort on anything that is not a sure thing.

It is usually the best, the most skilled and the most wealthy Crackers who attempt "big-time" jobs. Sometimes they are paid to get in and do a specific thing on a computer or network (steal a particular piece of data, change a particular network, or bring a particular system down). Other times, they hack in to a system hoping to find data they can sell. Sometimes they are trying to push money in to a bank account of theirs. Whatever the specific goal, big hacking jobs are the result of weeks of research and

"leg-work" and no matter how much work Crackers put in to a job they might not get in.

Social Structure- Younger Crackers, especially those who have not yet started families, typically form themselves in to cabals. Cabals are groups of 4 to 6 Crackers who work together whenever they find a big hacking job to do. Childhood playmates often grow up to be Cabal members, and lovers and siblings are often in the same cabal with each other. People tend to be in Cabals with Crackers of similar skill levels. Cabals usually dissolve when Crackers start raising families and the extended family becomes a more important grouping.

The Crackers are not as closely knit as the other street people families. The Crackers are not all connected by blood or marriage, and Cracker households feel less familial obligation towards each other. An elder from one family has little authority over Crackers from another family. On the other hand, the Crackers are very well connected via the internet and the Cracker elders are in constant communication with each other. When some Cracker family has a need, all the other Crackers know about it and there will almost always be some Cracker elder willing to volunteer the services of a child or grandchild to help out.

Advancement- Most Crackers never become "big time" hackers. They practice the basic scams the family makes its money on. They become street-savvy, wise and respected members of the community without ever breaking in to some corporate server. A few cabals will make it big, however, making enough money to invest in better equipment and giving them enough free time to attempt big jobs. To stay on top, Cabals have to be on the internet nearly every waking hour, keeping up with every little development in the world of operating systems and computer networks. When cabals do make it big time it is usually only for a few years. After a few years, they start having children and forming families and they can no longer stay cutting edge. Instead, they lapse back in to scrounging change from payphones and peddling pirated data on street corners.

Cracker elders are a powerful resource for the Cracker community because they are a wealth of hoarded data. Most of this data isn't about the latest security holes or network protocols, it is about people. Elders have spent decades hoarding data, often with highly eccentric filing systems which only they know how to use. When a young Cracker wants to know about the internal structure of a company (so they can call up and pretend to be an employee), or when a Cracker stole some piece of data and doesn't know who to sell it to and how much it is worth, or when a Cracker needs info about the habits of a network security admin, they go to their elders. By hoarding secret data that has been stolen over the decades, Crackers often know quite a lot of the city's secrets.

Population- There are about 1,100 Crackers. About 330 (30%) are adolescents and teenagers who group together in Cabals, making money for their families. About 385 (35%) are adult Crackers who have started families and spend as much time keeping a household going as they do messing with tech. About 165 (15%) are grandparents and great-grandparents who do little hacking but preside over a hoard of information and contacts. At any given time only about 55 (5%) of Crackers are attempting "big-time" hacking jobs.

External Relations- To most people in the city, Crackers are blackmailers and some even think of them as "computer terrorists." Most people only hear about Crackers when Crackers destroy some service those people are using (or are falsely accused of destroying the service). Of all the Street People, Crackers are the best able to make their feelings known to the rest of the world, including their feelings of alienation and hatred for the society that condemned them to a life on the streets. Most unborn are born homeless and don't know anything other than what it is like to be homeless, but the Crackers make a living understanding and infiltrating the world of the rich and powerful. They quickly learn that those with money and power seldom deserve it, and many Crackers end up speaking with a spite towards the comfortable that puts people (especially those old enough to remember the Freedom Wars) on edge. People know that a Cracker can easily mess up their lives in ways that they don't know how to defend from, and that scares people.

Black Meds: The Crackers have a very strong relationship with the Black Meds: they both live in the Bowery together, often neighbors and occasionally roommates. There is quite a lot of intermarriage and mixed households. Crackers and Black Med households often trade services. Politically, though, the Black Meds distance themselves from the Crackers. Crackers get in to a lot of trouble as they steal, invade and blackmail, and the Black Meds don't want to be asked to answer for the crimes of Crackers.

Street People: Crackers have very good relations with other Street People. The Street People, who don't depend on information systems (such as bank accounts) to survive, have nothing to fear from the Crackers. Instead the Crackers give Street People access to information and worldwide communication that they would not otherwise have. Some street people have never been on the internet except using paycomputers hacked by some Cracker (with a Cracker helping them to navigate the net). Crackers often work together with other Street People, especially with thieves, who get them in to places the Crackers can not get via networks alone.

Traders: Cracker elders in particular spend a lot of time creating and maintaining contacts with black market Traders. Traders come to Crackers when someone needs a hacker for hire, and Crackers come to Traders when they need to sell some piece of data they stole off a system.

Arcadians and Technophiles: These two Indie groups often engage in computer hacking, but their reasons are vastly different from those of the Crackers. The Arcadians do it to gain an edge over other people and the Technophiles do it out of passion for technology. Both see the methods of the Crackers as crude and destructive, and they sometimes alert system managers to the presence of Crackers, creating bad blood.

Sat Jumpers- Sat Jumpers would be a great asset to the Crackers if they weren't too fixated on loyalty to their jobs to take a good bribe. Crackers often spend time seeking out the rare Sat jumpers who will take some cash in order to give up a password or insert a piece of code in to a satellite. Most Sat Jumpers refuse to take bribes, and do so with an obvious distaste that pisses off most Crackers.

Night Walkers and Y1s: These Indies depend on the internet for their livelihood and often run afoul of the Crackers. Knowing how desperately they need their internet connections, Night Walkers and Y1s are common victims of the "I heard your internet connection is down, I can fix it for $20" ploy. Unlike VR Addicts, who are usually too naive to know that they are being had, Y1s and Night Walkers often figure out the extortion and try to get back at the Crackers.

Law Enforcement: Crackers seldom gain the attention of the Night Shift, who have few computer skills and are too busy worrying about serial killers and drug gangs to think about petty computer crimes. Night Shift often have an attitude towards Crackers of "I'd kick your ass if I knew what it was you were doing." Occasionally, when some city government site is being hacked and network administrators track down the Crackers, the Night Shift are asked to go grab the offenders. Sometimes the FBI become involved, though usually by the time they can make it to the city the Crackers are done and gone. The Crackers only really worry about corporate security forces, who let very little stand in the way of keeping their multi-billion dollar systems secure. When corps get a physical location on Crackers they may send city security guards (usually well Freelancers) or they may send elite corporate operatives. The corps try to catch the Crackers in the act, and use an army of corporate attorneys to put the Crackers in prison for life. Crackers doing big-time jobs live in fear of armies of corporate employees tracking them down.

Military Style- The Crackers are fairly unsophisticated in military matters. When forced to battle, they stand side by side to form a wall or circle and advance on the enemy, stabbing with their screwdrivers or whatever weapons they have.

Typical Weapon- A sharpened screwdriver.

Turf- Crackers live scattered throughout the area known as the Bowery, which they share with the Black Meds and many non-family street people and addicts. The Bowery is bordered by Houston street on the North and the Manhattan base of the Brooklyn Bridge on the South. The Bowery is famous as a skid row and has the highest concentration of street people of any place in the city. See the Turf section of the Black Meds for more info.

Distinguishing Features- Crackers look mostly like other street people: they wear scrounged clothing, usually in multiple layers. They tend towards black clothing when they have a choice and many wear sunglasses. On occasion, Crackers dress up as if they are field techs (tool belts, polo-shirts with company logos, fluorescent safety vests) so they can hack in to payphones and network lines with less chance of getting caught.

Symbols- A screwdriver is a common symbol for Crackers.

Slang

Big Time: adj., 1. attempting to hack in to an important computer system to make money, 2. cabals who attempt such jobs regularly.

Cabal: n., A small group of hackers who regularly work together whenever they find a big job.

Cracked: adj., An illegally copied piece of software or data with the copy protection software removed.

Owned: adj., hacked in to and controlled by a hacker.

Pirated: adj., Illegally copied software or data.

Leg Work: n., Any part of preparing for a hacking job that is done in person (e.g. raiding dumpsters, eavesdropping on network security personnel in their after-work hangouts, etc.)

Skills

Free Skills: Operating Systems (1), Payphones (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 5, INTL 9, MIL 9, PSY:X 25, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 5, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- $250 +$15/wk.

Special Equipment- $5000 in pirated data (including software, information and the installation coding for mental programs).

Suggested Skills- Alarm Systems, Copy Protection, Corporations, Cryptography, Data Pirating, Denial of Service, Forgery, Internet Browsing, Linework, Lock Picking, Money, Network Protocols, System Crashing, System Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Code Breaker: Latest, Computer Repair Tools: Portable, Crowbar, Data Cards, Denial of Service Program, Port Scanner, Programmer's Suite, Script Kiddie Suite, Trojan: Spy.

Suggested Reading- Corporations, Hacking (p.69), Hidden, Information Technology, Some Computer Systems (p.429).

Drakes

In Brief- Homeless family, makes and sells poisons (including psychic disrupting ash). They ingest and gain immunity to a poison which makes their bodily fluids poisonous.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest traders if treated well, efficient killers if pushed.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, dangerous, reckless, cowards, unethical assassins.

Other Names- Poisoners, Poison Sellers, Toxics.

Origin- In the chaos and disasters of the 2040s, many people found themselves on the streets of the city alone, homeless, separated from their friends and family, often from their culture and homeland. One lone immigrant on the streets was Jacob Drake. As early as 2047 he was supporting himself by making and selling poisons. He recognized poisonous weeds growing in cracks in the pavement and empty lots, he gathered them, ground them up, and made highly concentrated tinctures. Jacob Drake was also known to poison enemies. By the standards of the city's homeless people, Jacob Drake was very successful. He made enough money to support himself and eventually a common-law wife and several children. His wife and children joined him in the business.

The Freedom Wars disrupted almost everything in the city, but not the Drake's business. When the Freedom Army took control of the city, they tried to disarm its populous. They swept the city for guns with high-tech sensors. People were desperate for some of self-defense and they paid or traded whatever they could for potent poisons they could stick on the end of a knife. The Drakes even sold to some of the rebels fighting the Freedom Army.

Jacob Drake died shortly after the end of the Freedom Wars. His wife and children carried on with the family business, and they learned more sources of poison and what they were good for. They followed one practice that Jacob Drake had taught them: to always take very tiny bits of the poisons they made so that they would have some partial immunity should they accidentally poison themselves. The rule was to start with a dosage that is certain to be safe, then take more and more until the person gets sick. The Drakes discovered one poison, which they made from a fungus, which had a massive potential for immunity. Drakes taking the poison had to take more and more to get sick. After months of taking the poison, they found that they could take doses of the poison that would kill an ordinary person. After years of taking

the poison, one young Drake took as much as he could stand and fed some of his blood to a rat, killing it. The Drakes had discovered a way to make their blood, saliva and even their breath poisonous to others.

As people fled the city to live in gated communities and corporate living centers, the city became more and more lawless. The Drakes were able to start operating out in the open. Their name had been well-known among the city's homeless community for years, but now non-homeless people in the city began to hear about the Drakes and came to buy poisons from them. The Drake family grew very rapidly: a young Drake would marry another homeless person and teach everyone in the spouse's family how to manufacture and sell poisons.

Drakes are always searching for new poisons they can manufacture cheaply. Two years ago, one Drake read an article on the internet about a plastic that, when burned, created a sort of psychic "static" capable of disrupting the use of psychic skills. A group of the Drakes learned how to scrounge this plastic from trash heaps and burn it in the furnace of their buildings. Smearing themselves with the ash, these Drakes could sabotage psychics just by being present. With growing numbers, a healthy trade in poisons, and now the ability to take on psychics, Drakes became one of the most powerful street families in the city.

In 2079. The Sat Jumpers, an Indie group (who was then trying to act like a gang) had gotten in a war with the Drug Lords and was about to be destroyed. The leader of the Sat Jumpers paid $75,000 ($75 for every Drake) to help them fight the Drug Lords. The Drakes joined the fray, using the same tactics they used in their own self-defense, and were able to make the Drug Lords back off with very few Drake casualties.

Timeline

2040- Jacob Drake sells poisons in the city.
2042- Jacob Drake marries Eun Hoang
2050- Freedom army invasion of the city.
2055- Last Freedom army soldiers flee the city.
2055- 5 members of Drake family.
2057- Jacob Drake dies.
2060- Dioxyl Butylene Vinyl Chloride (Dioxyl-BVC) invented.
2061- Drakes start taking fungus poison.
2063- 59 member of Drake family.
2065- Drakes discover they can make their blood poisonous.
2060- 703 members of the Drake family.

2078- Scientists discover psychic disrupting properties of Dioxyl-BVC ash.
2078- Tammy Drake reads about Dioxyl-BVC ash.
2079- Drakes hired by Sat Jumpers to fight Drug Lords.
2079- Eun Drake dies.

Becoming- Women are not allowed to ingest of work with poisons while pregnant or while breast-feeding. After being born, Drake babies are started on tiny doses of Drake poisons. The doses are slowly increased (with each step up causing short periods of illness). At around five, young Drakes are taught to defend themselves against non-Drakes by finding pieces of broken glass (which can be found nearly everywhere in the city), putting poison on them and stabbing enemies. Young Drakes are taught to cut themselves and use their own blood as poison if they do not have anything else. It is hard, but most young Drakes eventually learn to cut themselves. Drake children keep small doses of the Drake fungus poison, but otherwise they are not allowed to prepare of handle Drake poisons (because they might accidentally poison themselves). They are often asked to work in the fields however: weeding, watering and harvesting plants.

At around twelve, young Drakes begin to be instructed on how to handle poisons carefully. They watch their parents or older siblings make poisons, and eventually they are allowed to do it themselves. They are taught the effects and dosages of each poison and are eventually allowed to sell.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is considered old enough to manufacture and sell poisons and to go out on the streets without an escort.

Lifestyle- The Drakes sell a product that is not needed often, but when it is needed it is very valuable to the people buying it. Fortunately, the cost of producing poisons is not high for the Drakes: they grow most of what they need and, with more than a thousand Drakes, labor is plentiful. If a Drake can sell one dose of poison in a day it is considered a good day. At any time of day, Drakes can be seen hanging around on street corners in Drake territory and in other parts of the city, waiting to sell. They carry tiny packages of poison hidden in their clothing. People come from all over the city (and occasionally from outside the city) and pay cash to get a tiny package of poison. The buyer rarely knows what poison they want, they simply explain what they want it to do. They may say, for instance "I want something I can slip in someone's food that they can't taste" or "I want something I can put on my knife so that anyone I cut will die." The price is haggled for, and the Drakes usually get $20 to $30 from poorer looking clients several hundred from richer looking clients. The customers don't just buy poison: they buy advice on exactly how to use the poison, exactly what the effect will be, and sometimes even what to do if the client accidentally poisons himself or herself.

Drakes try to avoid hearing anything which would tell them how the poison will be used. As long as they don't know what will be done with the poison, they can stay ethically neutral. If they find out what a poison will be used for (e.g. a client blurts out that he wants to kill his mother) then the Drake feels morally responsible for what is done with the poison.

Drake Ethics

Many people in the city think that by selling murder weapons, Drakes are responsible (in part) for the murder of innocent people. The Night Shift, in particular, would like to hold Drakes responsible for every murder committed using Drake poisons.

The Drakes do not see their acts as unethical. They know that innocent people are sometimes killed by their poisons, but they also know that innocent people are sometimes helped. The Drakes see poison as a great equalizer, letting those too poor to afford fancy weapons or too weak to use them stand on equal footing with the rich and strong. The Drakes speak proudly of battered wives who have poisoned their husbands, or disabled street people who fended off whole pounder gangs with the threat of a poisoned blade. Often the threat or even the mere possibility that someone will use poisons against an exploiter is enough to prevent that exploitation. Drakes will sometimes give special deals to those they suspect are being abused and exploited.

Although they readily admit that much evil is done with their poisons, they feel that the city is, overall, a better place for their presence

The Drakes have seven basic poisons that they create and sell on a regular basis. These are the poisons that they know the can get the ingredients for, at little or no cost, year after year. The most important and widely produced poison is that which Drakes make from juice squeezed from a fungus. The Drakes do not know the scientific name of the fungus, and they do not let non-Drakes see it. The Drakes make thousands of doses of this poison every day, most of which they consume themselves to keep their blood toxic. In order to create this fungus, they have huge grow boxes in dozens of abandoned houses, with hundreds of hours of labor per day put in to feeding them, keeping them warm, harvesting them, then compressing and distilling the juices.

The Drakes also collect other non-standard poisons, in case they run in to a client with a very special need. These may be poisons that they made, stole or traded for. The average elder might have 20 to 50 different poisons and will know the exact effects and dosages of each. The Drakes rarely have a client who needs these exotic poisons, but when they do they typically charge hundreds of dollars.

Young Drakes are expected to be assassins in times of war. Instead of defending themselves in face-to-face battles, the Drakes sneak around enemy territory, stabbing people in the back and poisoning the food of enemies. Sometimes people will come to the Drakes looking to hire them as assassins. Sometimes if the "cause" is good enough (e.g. killing the leader of an especially violent pounder gang), the Drake elders will endorse the project. They are wary of getting in to a war with a superior military force and will often charge money for their services in proportion to the might of the enemy.

There are some Drakes, however, who will take any assassination job, no matter how unethical. These Drakes must operate in secret or face ostracism. They typically work through black market traders, never meeting their clients.

Sometimes Drakes are paid to consult about poisons. When someone in the city is murdered by poison, Drakes are often paid to look at the body and figure out what poison was used. The information a Drake gives (how the poison was administered, how long it would have taken) is sometimes vital in solving murder mysteries.

Social Structure- The core unit of the Drakes is a household. A household is an extended family living and working together in an abandoned building. Within the household, jobs are divided up according to skill and ability, and the majority of teens and young adults are given the job of going out and selling poisons. The household is typically led by the eldest people in the household, even though these people may not have the most knowledge of Drake poisons. In some households there are two leaders: one controls the workings of the household and relationships between household members, the other leader controls the household's dealings with other households and the outside world.

Drake households are more than just neighbors – they are connected by blood or marriage to every other household. Households are provide help to each other whenever it is needed and to support the family as a whole.

There are a large number of elders in the Drake family, and most of them are the parents and grandparents of people who married in to the family. These elders are respected for their wisdom and knowledge. Though living long lives has taught them how to run a household and survive

A Typical Drake Household

The Yanna and Marcellus Drake household lives in a small abandoned townhouse, with poisonous fungi growing in the basement, and poisonous weeds growing in the small back yard. The eldest members are Yanna and Marcellus, both in their sixties, who run the household. Living with them is Uncle Paul, Yanna's younger brother. Three of Yanna and Marcellus' five children live with them, along with their three spouses and five grandchildren. The grandchildren range in age from 2 to 12. Yanna and Marcellus' oldest son, Kurro, is married to Lisa Drake, a granddaughter of Jacob Drake, who lives in their house. When she married Kurro eight years ago, she taught the family how to create and sell poisons, thus turning them in to Drakes. Pinky Drake, the ex-boyfreind of Yanna and Marcellus' dead daughter, sleeps in the house most nights and helps out whenever he can.

on the streets, they haven't been making and selling Drake poisons for very long. The Drakes who have the most experience being Drakes are the five children of Jacob and Eun Drake (aged 30 to 38). Despite their youth, these five are considered respected elders. They are each the head of a household and every Drake owes them. When a Drake household isn't pulling its weight, the children of Jacob talk to them, sometimes even threaten to kick them out of the family.

Jacob Drake's wife, Eun Drake, married again after Jacob died. Many of Jacob Drake's children disliked Eun's new husband and disliked their half-brothers and sisters. Tammy Drake, who discovered dioxyl ash, is a daughter of Eun Drake and her new husband. Tammy trained her family in gathering dioxyl-plastic, and the furnace that she burned the plastic in was in her family building. The dioxyl burning Drakes have, thus, always thought of themselves as slightly separate from the other Drakes. The majority of Drakes aren't related by blood to Jacob or Eun, and they don't care one way or another. It is the children of Jacob who view the dioxyl-Drakes with a bit of suspicion and perhaps dislike. Despite this, the dioxyl-Drakes always cooperate in the livelihood and the self-defense of the Drakes, and the Drakes have always protected the dioxyl-Drakes as they would any other Drake.

Advancement- The most common way to advance within the Drakes is to gain experience, start a family, move out and found a household. Anyone who becomes well known as accomplished in some skill (e.g. as an accomplished warrior, an accomplished diplomat) will often be called upon for favors and will gain many owed favors in turn.

Population- There are about 1000 Drakes, only about 25 are actually descended from Jacob Drake, the founder of the family. About 200 are the family Tammy Drake and manufacture dioxyl ash.

External Relations- The attitude of most indie and well groups towards the Drakes is dislike, distaste and distrust tempered by a tolerance. The tolerance comes from need: Indies and wells seldom need poison, but when they do they usually go to Drakes. Indies and wells recognize that poison is an important type of self-defense, though they often fear and dislike the Drakes' methods. The gangs that rely on military and personal strength are the most critical of the Drakes because they know that poison is a sort of equalizer, the perfect weapon for the physically weak. The Animalists, Humankalorie, Hummingbirds, Roofers, Risen and Skin Borgs depend on might rather than sneak attacks. They are the most critical of the Drakes, calling them cowardly assassins. Even members of these groups visit the Drakes occasionally.

Purists: The Purists have an incredible distaste for the Drakes. To the Purists, the idea of poisoning oneself is tantamount to spiritual suicide. The Purists avoid the Drakes whenever possible. For their part, the Drakes know they would have an incredibly hard time poisoning a Purist and so they try to avoid conflicts.

Street People: Street People are more respectful of the Drakes. One reason is because stret people are traditionally apowerless and depend on poisons for self-defense. Another reason is because they realize the value of doing anything, even morally questionable activities, to make money to take care of one's family.

Night Shift: The Night Shift almost never buy poisons from the Drakes. They investigate murders commited with Drake poisons and hold the Drakes responsible for all of them. The Night Shift like to harass Drakes whenever they can, and only the danger of getting up-close to a Drake keeps them from being more trouble to Drakes.

Psychic Gangs: The dioxyl-Drakes, with their psychic-disrupting ash, are thorns in the sides of the psychic gangs (Insomniacs, Bleeders, Immortals and Tea Drinkers). The Drakes don't often pick fights with these gangs (like other street families, they don't have time to start wars) but the dioxyl-Drakes do hire themselves out as mercenaries and bodyguards to other groups who are fighting with psychics. The Bleeders have an additional reason to dislike the Drakes: the Drake's poisonous blood makes it dangerous for the Bleeders to do anything to them.

Military Style- Drakes always prefer assassinating enemies to fighting them in outright battles. In times of war, hundreds of Drakes may prowl through enemy territory, looking for lone enemies they can hit from behind with an instant poison, or watching to see where enemies live so they can break in to their homes later and poison their food. When Drakes are confronted by an actual battle they cluster together, creating a small zone of flying shards of glass that most enemies are afraid to come near. If any of their members are wounded, they are dragged to the center of the cluster. If any Drakes are killed, they are picked up and used as shields. The cluster of Drakes will try to move away from the enemy as quickly as they can. The target is usually an alley, where a few brave Drakes can hold off the enemies while the rest run away.

Typical Weapon- Shards of glass coated with poison. The glass is either held in one's hand, thrown, or launched from a home-made slingshot.

Turf- The Drakes occupy a small piece of turf in what used to be called the East Village, directly North of the Bowery. This part of town was a hip home to artists and political radicals during the 1960s, but drugs and crime turned it in to a skid row almost as bad as the Bowery. Drake turf is South of 8th Street, North of Houston, East of 2nd Avenue and West of Avenue A. The only real landmark in Drake turf is the Orpheum Theatre, an old Yiddish playhouse turned off-Broadway theater, now abandoned. Directly East of Drake turf is St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, a very old (though oft rebuilt) church with one of the largest soup kitchens in the city.

Distinguishing Features- Many Drakes wear wide-brimmed hats. Most wear clothes with long sleeves that hide their hands (this helps them slip poisons in to things without being seen). A few wear clothing with pieces of broken glass glued to the outside of their clothing (this helps persuade people not to mess with them, especially when they are recognized as Drakes). Otherwise, they wear normal street people clothing: whatever they can scrounge from the trash or stitch together from the remains of old clothing.

Symbols- Specks or droplets spilling from a hand (with pinched fingers) are common graffiti symbols for Drakes. Perhaps because of this graffiti, pinched fingers pointing down have become a common hand-symbol for poison.

Slang

Children of Jacob: n., the direct descendents of Jacob Drake, who are the most persuasive elder in the family.
Dioxyl: n., (from Dioxyl-Butylene-Vinyl-Chloride), 1. the plastic that can be burned to create psychic disrupting ash, 2. the Drakes who create and use this ash.

Skills

Free Skills: Drake Poison Immunity (2), Drake Poisons (2)
Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, INTL 11, MIL 9, PSY:X 32, PSY:M 24, PSY:S 28, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.
Special Skills: The special skills Drake Poisons and Drake Poison Immunity cost only 7 skill points per level.

Drake Poisons (Uses INL)- This is like the Poisons skill (p.29), except the emphasis is strongly on the poisons used by the Drakes, how they are made and what they do. There is some knowledge of non-Drake poisons, but it is sparse and there is little knowledge of the biological mechanisms of their action. The secrets of Drake poisons are guarded.
Easy (10): Recognize a Drake poison by sight.
Moderate (20): Make Drake Fungus Poison.
Hard (30): Recognize a Drake poison by inspecting a dead body.
Legendary (40): Recognize a non-Drake poison by inspecting a dead body.

Drake Poison Immunity (Uses END)- This skill represents the Drake practice of taking tiny doses of their own poisons in order to build up an immunity should they ever accidentally poison themselves. Note that some poisons are easy to build and immunity to, others are hard: Drake fungus poison is easy, Drake deleriant, knockout drops, pain juice and suicide poison are moderate and Drake blood and glass poisons are hard. This skill also works against non Drake poisons but at +10 difficulty.
Very Easy (5): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose of Drake Fungus Poison.
Easy (10): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Fungus Poison.
Moderate (20): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Deleriant.
Hard (30): Feel no effects from a non-lethal dose or survive a lethal dose of Drake Blood Poison.

Income- $250 +$14/wk.

Special Equipment- The PC has access to up to 5 doses of each Drake Poison and Blinding Powder (p.149) per week, 1 dose of Drake Dioxyl-BVC ash per week, and 20 doses per day of Drake Fungus Poison for personal ingestion. The PC can get much more poison if expecting to make a big sale (though will have to share the profits). The PC can pay a dioxyl-Drake to prepare a Dioxyl Ash Pipe (see p.168) for $5 (or an equivalent IOU). PCs can buy Homemade Slingshots (FR 1 ft., MR 30 ft., do 1 bladed damage with a piece of sharp glass) for $20.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Poisoned Bloodstream: (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC has gained a massive immunity to Drake fungus poison and takes daily doses. The doses the PC takes are thousands of times more than is necessary to kill a person, and enough can be found in their blood, tissues and bodily fluids at any given time to be deadly.

-Saliva or a few drops of blood put in something someone has ingested will have moderate effects (see 2x Effects) within 10 minutes.

-If something coated with the PC's blood pierces a person's skin, the person suffers from serious effects immediately (see 4x Effects).

-The particles of moisture coming up out of the lungs have enough poison in them that if the PC breaths directly in the face of someone who is inhaling, the victim will get a tiny dose of the poison (see 1x Effects) which takes effect nearly instantly (within 1 round).

-Unprotected sexual intercourse exposes the partner to toxins passing through mucous membranes (which are much more permeable than skin) so that the partner suffers from moderate effects (see 2x Effects).

-Any person or animal to consume large portions of the PC's blood and flesh will suffer immediate and powerful effects (see 8x Effects).

Grandchild of Jacob: (Optional Advantage)- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC is one of the grandchildren of Jacob Drake. Grandchildren are given slightly more respect, are believed to know a little more about Drake poisons (even if their knowledge is no better than other Drakes). Most importantly, one of the PC's parents is one of the most influential of the Drake elders, who have been Drakes longer than anyone alive and who have the most influence over what the family does.

Dioxyl: (Optional Advantage)- Costs 7 Bonus Points. Cannot be taken in conjunction with the Grandchildren of Jacob advantage. The PC belongs to the small group of

Dioxyl Ash Pipe

This is a length of metal pipe, filled with dioxyl-BVC plastic and sealed, then put in to a furnace until it is red hot. The pipe is handled using thick welder's gloves. While still hot the pipe lets off powerful anti-psychic static which disrupts psychic skills over a wide range (as opposed to cold dioxyl ash which is only strong enough to work by touch). Within 10 ft. the ash gives –4 to all psychic skill rolls, within 2 ft. if gives –10. Hitting someone with a dioxyl ash pipe does both blunt and burn damage and hitting them in the head (an aimed shot) can seriously disrupt someone's nervous system (especially psychic systems). The pipe stays hot enough to burn for about half an hour.

Range: 1

Damage: 2 blunt, 1 burn (see p.64). Any time the pipe touches a person's head, that person suffers from dizziness (-7 to save vs. loss of balance) and faintness (-7 to save vs. unconsciousness) for 5 rounds and psychic disruption (-15 to psychic skill rolls) for 1 hour.

Drakes that scavenge dioxyl plastic, burn it, use and sell the ash. The PC has access to 5 doses of Dioxyl-BVC ash per week and can make a Dioxyl Ash Pipe whenever he or she is heading in to battle with a psychic. The PC also gains immunity to the disruptive effects of dioxyl ash (no dizziness or faintness) but the result is permanent densitization of the normal psychic systems (any attempt by the PC to use a psychic skill or by a psychic to effect the PC is at -15 even when dioxyl ash is not present).

Suggested Skills- Gardening, Lock Picking, Knife Throwing, Prowling, Sleight of Hand, Street Fighting: Armed.

Suggested Equipment- Blowpipe, Lock Picks: Homemade, Knife: Kitchen, Poison Ring, Phonebook Glass Armor, Throwing Glass.

Suggested Reading- Assassins, Black Market, Drake Poisons (p.145).

Drake Poisons in Brief

See the p.145 of the equipment section for more details.

Drake Blood Poison: Made from: incubated blood, feces and disease samples. Used for: putting on a weapon to create horrifying infections. Effects: fever, paralysis, delirium.

Drake Deliriant Poison: Made from: extracts from weeds. Used for: brainwashing and torturing people. Effects: confusion, loss of willpower, hallucinations and delusions.

Drake Dioxyl-Butylene Vinyl Chloride Ash: Made from: burned plastic. Used for: disrupting the abilities of psychics. Effects: Psychic attempts are obscured by something like "static."

Drake Fungus Poison: Made from: juice from a fungus. Used for: killing quickly, keeping Drake blood toxic. Effects: Weakness, paralysis, heart failure.

Drake Glass Poison: Ground glass, plant based irritants and insect venom. Used for: killing with access to something a person will only touch (like a doorknob). Effects: first itching, then when the person scratches the itch enough that deadly poison enters the bloodstream: numbness, paralysis, permanent neurological damage.

Drake Knockout Drops: Made from: medicinal herbs and stolen pharmaceuticals. Used for: knocking people out. Effects: Unconsciousness, occasionally death.

Drake Pain Juice: Made from: hot peppers and herbs. Used for: torture, self-defense.. Effects: debilitating burning pain.

Drake Suicide Poison: Made from: Insecticide. Used for: painless deaths. Effects: Euphoria, numbness, sleepiness, heart failure.

Insomniacs

In Brief- Use a drug which gives psychic power while "burning" away the ability to sleep (leading to numerous psychological problems).

Favorable Stereotypes- Powerful psychics, highly aware, self-sacrificing, awesome self-control.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Psychologically damaged, self-hating, dangerous, intolerant, hate life, bizarre addictions.

Other Names- The Sleepless, Sleep Burners, Sibosiners, Sibos.

Origin- In 2072, researchers at a corporate pharmaceutical research lab thought they had discovered something they had been trying to find for a decade: a drug that would remove the need to sleep. Sibosin, the name given to the experimental drug by the marketing department, seemed to remove the need for sleep in primates with no side effects other than a slight irritability. Human tests showed that not only did the drug decrease or eliminate the need to sleep, it also increased psychic ability. The military rushed to sponsor more research. Two side effects derailed the high-hopes of the corporation. First, the irritability first seen in primates was much more pronounced in humans. Second, to the horror of the test subjects, too many doses in a row and the effect of the drug was permanent. The number of doses that would cause permanent insomnia was not stable between subjects: some could take the drug for thirty nights in a row without a permanent effect, others could take it for two nights and never be able to sleep again. Irritability in permanent insomniacs quickly turned in to a form of madness: constant awareness of their surroundings led to an annoyance that many subjects said was worse than physical pain. Although their environments could be changed, the insomniacs felt the same way about their own bodies, and they quickly turned to all manner of self-destructive habits and finally suicide.

Knowing that they could never get FDA approval for the drug, and fearing the terrible consequences if Sibosin should become an abused street drug, the military and the corporation attempted to destroy any information about the chemical structure of the drug or how to manufacture it. A test sample made it on to the black market, where it was passed around the community of illegal drug manufacturers (each paying hundreds of thousands to get a sample of the drug). The drug hit the streets through the black market traders (the Drug Lords saw no use for it, since it wasn't addictive) and there was a brief fascination with using it. That fascination was quickly soured: a number of horror stories circulated through the city of people who used the drug, became permanently unable to sleep, mutilated themselves and then killed themselves. Use of the drug waned and some Traders stopped carrying it.

There was a tiny cluster of street families in the city who thought of themselves as psychics. Unable to afford expensive electrochemical feedback machines, these street people had to resort to teacher-to-student training. Teacher to student training is an inefficient, unreliable and lengthy process. Most students who learn this way take years to learn even the most miniscule psychic skills. The psychic street families thus had barely any skill, but it was enough to give them a slight edge. They heard about Sibosin, how it increased people's psychic abilities, and they heard the horror stories about people going insane. Having led hard lives on the streets, they figured that as a community they could deal with a bit of insanity, and they figured it was better to be insane than dead. They pooled money and bought a large batch of Sibosin, waiting for more desperate times to use it. They did not have to wait long for desperate times (street people seldom do) and they started taking Sibosin en masse, knowing that there was a good chance that many of them would become permanent insomniacs. Two members of this small group became permanent insomniacs, but the use of the drug made the group powerful enough to pull themselves out of trouble.

Next time the group faced hard times, they dipped in to their stash of Sibosin again, and again and again. As more of their members became permanent insomniacs, they found out more about the nature of the madness. Some of their members succumbed to suicide, but even more learned to live with the madness, and to remain productive members of the community. The group came to depend on Sibosin more and more and to use it almost all the time. The group became known throughout the city as a powerful and dangerous group of psychics. The Insomniacs became one of the city's most successful street families and they grew quickly as many people married in to the group.

Timeline
2071- A group of small street families who dabble in psychic skills form a loose alliance of families.
2072- Sibosin invented.
2075- Human tests with Sibosin, side-effects discovered.
2075- Sibosin research ends.
2075- Sibosin hits the black market.
2076- The families purchase a large batch of Sibosin.
2076- Insomniacs first use of Sibosin.
2076- Two Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.
2078- 50 Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.
2080- 250 Insomniacs permanently unable to sleep.

Becoming- Young Insomniacs are trained in psychic skills from an early age. The type of training requires a skilled psychic to spend many hours with a student, giving endless verbal feedback on what the students' psychic systems are doing. Children as young as seven are also allowed to imbibe powerful concoctions of caffeine, amphetamines and even maxin, to help prepare them for what using Sibosin will be like. No member of the family is forced to use sibosin, although almost all choose to. An Insomniac must be fifteen before they allowed to take sibosin (the elders keep all of the family's sibosin and decide who can have it). Even when they are allowed to take it, young people must be very careful: they can not take it more than three days in a row, except in the most dire emergencies. They will need to get much older and wiser before they are allowed to use Sibosin at their own discretion.

At level one, adventure one, a PC is still considered young by the family, and has only been using sibosin for a short period. It is possible that the PC has become permanently unable to sleep, but it is unlikely. The PC is only now starting to develop bad habits that will plague him or her in later years.

Lifestyle- Sibosin comes in a tiny yellow pill that will leave a horrible bitter aftertaste if it is not swallowed down quickly enough. The effect is immediate, though sometimes subtle. The drug does not amp one up: a user can be calm or tired, but not sleepy. Any sleepiness that the user has disappears immediately and doesn't come back. The other effect is that the user can not become inured to details. Say there is a crack in the wall, the sibosin user can not simply get used to it and forget it is there. They will notice the crack again and again every time they look at it, even if they have looked at it a million times already. The user will eventually become so sick of the crack it will be like torture and the Insomniac will want to destroy it or do something else so that he or she never has to look at it again. The longer the user stays awake, the worse this effect gets. Eventually they become aware of the sound and sensation of their own breathing, of their heart beating, of blinking, of food churning within their intestines, and even the feel of their own skin. It is like they are wearing a coat, made of some hot, sticky, slimy, unbearably uncomfortable material that they can not take off for even a second. For those with psychic skills, their raw power increases dramatically (skill and subtlety does not increase). It takes at least 24 hours without sleep for psychic power to increase by a significant level.

When someone stops taking sibosin, the constant awareness of their surroundings slowly fades, and the ability and need to sleep comes back a little at a time. Twelve hours without sibosin, and a person might be able to sleep a few hours, another day and they may be able to sleep five or six, another day and they can sleep through a full night. There is no "crash" like after coming down from amphetamines. Sleep simply comes whimpering back, like some kicked dog who comes back when it gets hunger overcomes its fear. Or sometimes not. Sibosin users never know when they stop using sibosin if the need for sleep will ever come back, if the irritable awareness will ever fade. For many, a simple yawn can be a cause for relief, and even weeping with joy. Every day, more and more Insomniacs find themselves unable to sleep.

Unlike some other families, who have been living the same way for generations, the Insomniacs are a family in the process of changing. Four years is the longest anyone in the family has gone without sleep. Nobody else that the Insomniacs know of has gone longer. Even if the first test subjects were still alive, they would only have been without sleep for five years. Nobody has any idea what might happen after ten years without sleep, or after twenty. Some Insomniacs believe that they will slowly grow more and more powerful as the years go on until they are more powerful than any psychic in recorded history. Others secretly hope that after many years without using sibosin, the ability to sleep will slowly return. This is perhaps the Insomniacs' only hope, since nobody in the world seems interested in finding a cure for insomnia (the government claims that Sibosin never made it on to the black market).

What's worse, Insomniacs have a growing annoyance with the sound of their own thoughts and their own states of consciousness. This can not be changed as easily as one's home or body can, and most drugs provide too short a solution. Non-Insomniac addicts can spend their days high on drugs and then pass out as they are coming down, but Insomniacs do not have that luxury. For every high they experience every low in excruciating detail. Many insomniacs become addicted to sniffing glue and self-asphyxiation for the brief feeling of dissociation from reality it gives them. Some Insomniacs pay a lot of money for drug cocktails (usually made by Needle Punks or Goods) which will knock them out in a way that resembles sleep. This is rarely a good solution: it is expensive and the drugs have annoying side effects.

If insomniacs hold incredibly still for long periods of time, they cease to feel their own bodies and the sense of uneasiness with their own bodies disappears. Many experienced Insomniacs who have been charred for a long time give up on the moving world and stay in a motionless state most of the day, using their impressive psychic powers to communicate and interact with their environment. These insomniacs often learn breath control, and exist in a constant state of near-hypoxia. These Insomniacs, called the "Stills" or "Non-Breathers" seldom leave Insomniac territory. They can be quite impressive to outsiders: their breath and pulse are hard to detect, making them seem dead, but their minds are powerful enough to make their will known without a blink.
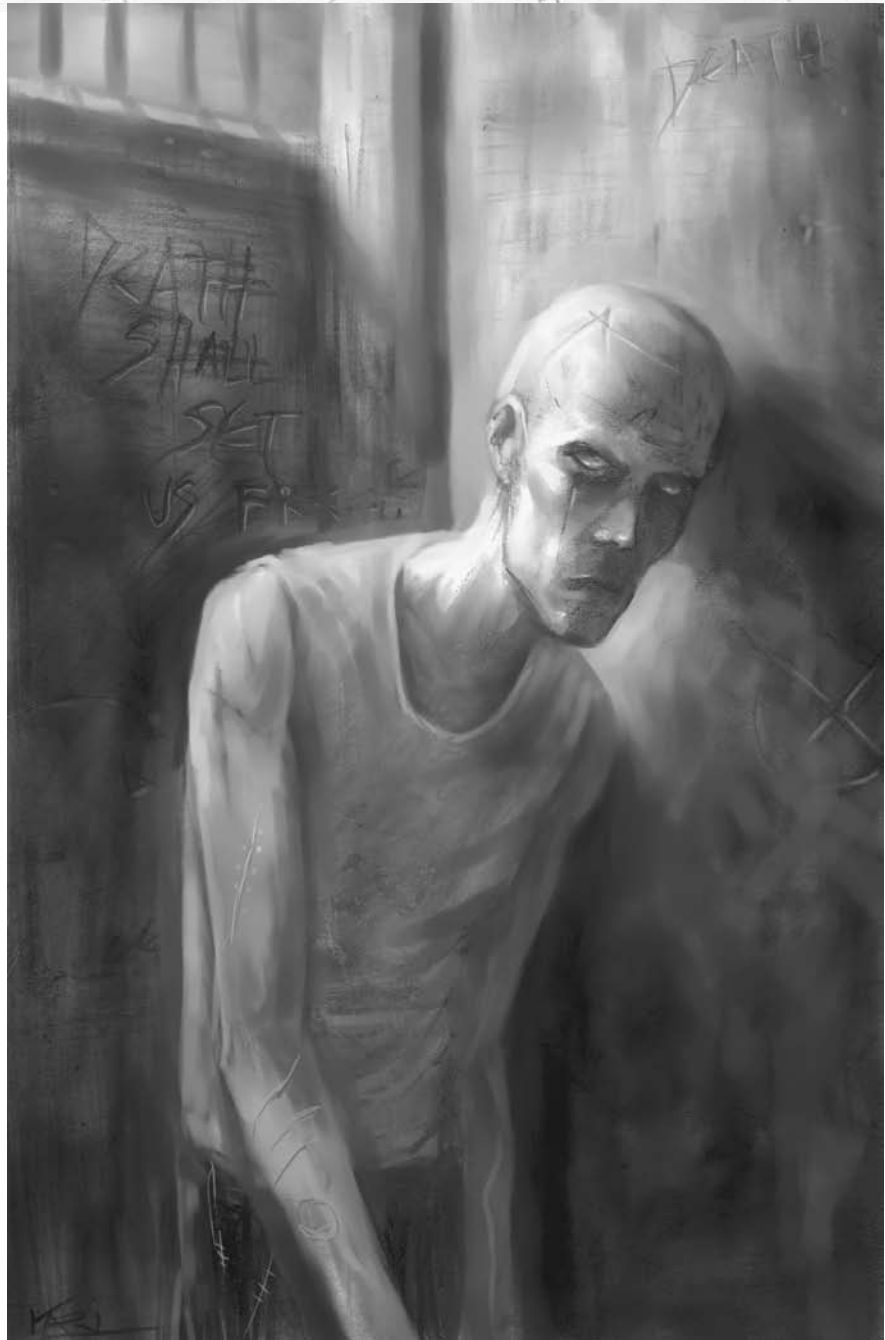
Social Structure- Insomniacs are mostly free agents, searching the city for ways they can use their psychic skills to make money. They use the money they get to care for their younger siblings, children and other dependents. They also pay a small tribute to their elders. Whatever is left, they get to keep. Older insomniacs may assign a job to a younger member, but these assignments are considered favors rather than impositions.

Respect for elders is an unvarying rule. Younger Insomniacs don't have to obey the orders of elders, but they must listen quietly, answer any questions asked of them and call their elder "Ma'am" or "Sir." Any failure to show respect is taken as evidence that the young Insomniac has forgotten how much more powerful the elders are. The elders see nothing wrong with trying to cure this ignorance by taking control of the younger Insomniac's body and mind and making him or her feel complete helplessness. The "Stills" often demand that younger Insomniacs pay them respect by telling them everything that is happening throughout the city.

Sibosin has redefined age: a twenty year old who has been without sleep for five years may be considered the "elder" to a fifty year old who has only been using Sibosin for a few years and still sleeps the occasional nights.

Advancement- A regular user of sibosin will eventually lose his or her ability to sleep, it may take months or it may take years but it will happen. Some members of the family take little or no sibosin and care for the family in other non-psychic ways. These Insomniacs rarely gain much respect.

When a person becomes "charred" (permanently unable to sleep), the tortures of sibosin turn in to an inescapable prison. Some lose hope and kill themselves, but for most it is the commitment to their families that keeps them going, and it is this commitment that is honored by the non-charred. Even as the charreds' problems get worse, so do their powers. Even as they become increasingly unable to live a normal life, and more and more subject to bizarre and self-destructive behaviors and addictions, they grow more powerful and more respected by the other Insomniacs. By the time they spend most of their time still, the Insomniac has the power (and usually the wisdom) to command tremendous respect from the Insomniacs and most of the rest of the street community.

Population- There are about 800 Insomniacs in the city. About 300 of them are too young to take Sibosin. About 50 are old enough, but choose not to use Sibosin. 200 are using Sibosin but can still sleep. 200 are charred, but still walk the streets with their uncharred family members. About 50 in the family are the "still" or "non-breathers."

External Relations- The Insomniacs are able to gain considerable respect in the gang community simply by virtue of being psychic. Most people don't like to mess with psychics, and so they avoid messing with Insomniacs. On the other hand, the Insomniacs have no fear of other psychic gangs, and they put the Tea Drinkers, Immortals and the Bleeders on their list of people who they don't care if they offend. Insomniacs sometimes even bully these other gangs around, though they usually stop short of provoking pointless wars.

    Street Families: The Black Meds often call Insomniacs to consult on medical cases, the Crackers often pay them to steal passwords out of people's heads, the Water Rats and Keepers think of the Insomniacs as fair and reputable traders, and visa versa. Ever since the new Dioxyl group formed within the Drakes, though, the Insomniacs and the Drakes have had a sour relationship. The dioxyl Drakes have the ability to mess with psychics, and they use it whenever possible, sometimes cruelly. Like most street people, though, the Insomniacs are usually too busy trying to stay alive to get in to wars, and the Drakes are the subject of more spite than violence.

    Skin Borgs: Quite a few Skin Borgs have anti-psychic armor, and those Skin Borgs make it a point to bully Insomniacs whenever they see them. There have been a few battles between Insomniacs and Skin Borgs, but no all-out wars.

    Traders and Goods: Insomniacs make a lot of money by selling their psychic skills, but they also spend a lot of money on Sibosin. The Insomniacs depend on black market traders to find them clients and to sell them Sibosin at bulk rates. Insomniacs also sometimes buy Sibosin from Goods.

Military Style- During war, even the elder still Insomniacs begin moving again (often moving with the help of two younger Insomniacs). The Insomniacs are not afraid to cross the city in search of an enemy to strike, and they only leave enough members behind to keep the children hidden if someone should come to their turf while they are away. The party moves slowly, not caring much about stealth, dealing with any enemy they come across. With this style of advancing, a full-out battle is usually unavoidable. When battle begins, the elder Insomniacs stay still as pillars, using psychic powers to confuse and disable the enemies. The younger Insomniacs run around with knives and clubs, taking out any enemy who appears unable to defend themselves. The elders also use their powers to give orders to the younger Insomniacs. If there is an enemy that seems immune to the powers of the elders, the elders will command several young Insomniacs to surround and ambush that enemy.

Typical Weapon- A wooden club or steel pipe is a common weapon for an Insomniac, with a knife being the next most common.

Turf- Insomniac turf is downtown, just North of the Bowery, bordered by Houston on the South, Avenue B on the East, the sunken city to the East and 14th Street on the North. Like the Bowery, this part of town has been run-down for some time, the buildings are nearly all abandoned (save a few cheap hotels, welfare apartments, soup kitchens and liquor stores). Nobody has made any serious efforts to save any of the buildings in this part of town for more than a century. Those buildings that haven't already fallen down are rotting and crumbling away.

Many charred insomniacs live in abandoned buildings right on the edge of the sunken city (because many have an addiction to ice-cold baths).

Distinguishing Features- Multiple fits of self-mutilation have left most Insomniacs with many scars. The older and more powerful the insomniac, the more scars, and the deeper those scars tend to be. They usually also have tattoos and piercings. Because they hate to be hot, they wear little clothing and what they do wear are things like short sun-dresses, thin tank tops, cut-off shorts, holey slacks and sports bras. Being dirty or oily annoys them so that they bathe more often than any other street people and are therefor remarkably clean.

Symbols- A red X or a bloodshot eye are used to represent insomniacs.

Slang

    Burn: v., temporarily remove the need and ability to sleep with sibosin.

    Charred: adj., permanently unable to sleep.

    Itchies: n., annoyance with some detail an Insomniac can't ignore.

    Non-Breathers: n., those who spend most of their time not moving and seldom breathe.

    Still, the: n., another term for non-breathers.

    Yellow: n., sibosin.

Skills

    Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, INTL 11, MIL 9, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 10, PSY:S 10, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- $250 +$14/wk.

Special Equipment- The family pools money to buy sibosin in bulk. The PC can get up to 3 doses a week free.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Charred: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 7 Bonus Points. The PC has taken sibosin one time too many and can no longer sleep. The PC never needs to sleep and never suffers from sleep deprivation damage. Additional doses of Sibosin have no effect on a charred PC. **Addiction**: Any time the PC becomes asphyxiated, is exposed to very cold water, or does inhalant drugs, he or she must make a save vs. psychological addiction (20 difficulty, +5 for every level the PC has been charred). **Itchies**: Any unpleasant sensation that is constant and unchanging becomes harder and harder to deal with (+1 difficulty to save for every hour the PC has to deal with it). Example: *An Insomniac notices an annoying hum near his dwelling. Every hour, he must make a save, using WIL, to avoid doing something about the hum. After 10 hours, it is only 10 difficulty, after 20 hours it is 20 difficulty, etc. The difficulty keeps rising until the PC is forced to find and destroy the source of the hum, move away, or poke his own eardrums out.* **Mutilation**: Unless the PC becomes entirely still (so the PC doesn't feel his or her own body) the PC must make a daily save to avoid changing his or her own flesh (cutting it, scarring it, piercing it, tattooing it, etc.). The difficulty of this save is 5 per level that the PC has been charred. **Psychic Prowess**: The PC gains +4 AWR, +10 to psychic based WIL rolls and +10 pooled END for use with psychic skills.

Cold Water Addict: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 5 Bonus Points. This disadvantage is only available to PCs with the Charred disadvantage. The PC is addicted to immersion in very cold water (cold enough to force them to make a save vs. hypothermia). As per the addiction rules (p.65) the PC must make a Cravings roll (difficulty 20 +5 for every level the PC has been charred) every day to avoid acting on their craving for immersion in cold water.

Asphyxiation Addict: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 7 Bonus Points. This disadvantage is only available to PCs with the Charred disadvantage. The PC is addicted to being asphyxiated to the point that they nearly lose consciousness (must be long enough to force them to make a save vs. unconsciousness, see p.64). As per the addiction rules (p.65) the PC must make a Cravings roll (difficulty 20 +5 for every level the PC has been charred) every day to avoid acting on their craving to be asphyxiated.

Suggested Skills- Belief Attack, Clairsentience, Control Attack, Hold Breath, Pain Attack.

Suggested Equipment- Lighter: Disposable, Stick With Nail.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, Psychic Phenomenon, Sibosin (p.115).

Keepers

In Brief- Live a hunter-gatherer lifestyle in the wilderness of Central Park, hunting wild animals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Self-sufficient, skilled survivors, protecting a strange and marvelous ecosystem.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Xenophobic, territorial, ignorant and increasingly primitive.

Other Names- Holers, Central Park Hunters.

Origin- In the Mid 19th Century, rich New Yorkers, wanting to emulate the large park spaces of major European cities, campaigned for a large park to be built. The state legislature purchased a large portion of land in the middle of the city that was underutilized because it was too rocky, mountainous and swampy. 843 acres were eventually purchased. The area was heavily landscaped over the course of many years, and was the first park in the US to be landscaped. In addition to being the city's largest and most majestic park, Central Park was also used to store water for the city in human-made lakes.

Throughout the late 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries, Central Park was once one of the world's most impressive parks. Buildings and services slowly invaded the park, including museums, community centers, skating rinks, sports fields, a zoo, payphones, food-carts. In the 2030s, corporate sponsors of the park filled it with vending machines and advertising billboards. In the turbulent times of the 2040s, huge shantytowns of homeless people made their home in central park (despite attempts by riot police to clear them out) and heat-waves and pollution killed off much of the greenery.

During the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez moved the base of operations for the Freedom Army to the city. Jeffrey Hernandez found the park an ideal place to build: it was the largest piece of land in the city where he could build without having to tear anything down. Taken with the beauty of the park, Hernandez did not want to destroy the greenery so he planned, as much as possible, to build in harmony with it. Many of the buildings in his complex were designed to be mostly underground with underground roads and walkways between them. These mostly-underground buildings would also be harder to bomb.

In 2054, while the complex of buildings was still under construction, rebels snuck bombs in to the buildings and detonated them. Most were traditional explosives but one was a small nuclear device. The buildings were destroyed and thousands of Freedom Army soldiers were killed. The Freedom Army itself soon fell. The restoration committee did a minimal cleanup of radioactive waste in the park, then fenced it off and condemned it. As soon as people were moved back in to the city, people started cutting holes in or knocking over the fences. People went in to "the hole" as it had become known, for privacy: to do drugs, have illicit sex, hide bodies or stolen goods or to hide from enemies. For the most part, this activity occurred on the outsides of the park. People rarely went deep in to the interior of the park.

Street people began to move in to the park and build small shacks to live in. Some of these street people formed small cooperative associations, others didn't. The street people who lived in the park found that they could hunt and trap animals in the park and gather edible plants. Recent immigrants who had lived in similar ways in their native countries took to this quickly, but even hardened urbanites quickly became skilled hunters and gatherers. The Street People who lived in the park found a comfortable life there. However, addicts, mentally ill people and violent criminals soon started encroaching on their living spaces. To escape the growing danger of life on the outside of the Hole, many of the people who had been there the longest moved closer to the center of the hole. These older park residents became a community of friends. These friends became more and more skilled at surviving in the ecosystem of the hole, and in turn they became more dependent on it.

The older hole dwellers feared that too many people moving in to the hole would deplete the natural resources, and they formed a task force with the name "Keepers of the Hole" to try to dissuade newcomers from moving in to the hole. They accomplished this mostly by destroying homes and stealing the belongings of newcomers. The newcomers could not retaliate in turn because they could never find the homes of the Keepers. The Keepers then started imposing limits on how, where and when non-Keepers could hunt. The Keepers disliked violence, but they found that the same strategies that let them hunt and trap animals could be used against invaders. They also found that setting up many traps in "Keeper only" areas was a good way to keep people out of those areas.

The more self-determination the Keepers achieved, the more other Street People wanted to join them. The Keepers allowed those that they liked to join. As their population grew, so did the "Keepers only" areas of the park. By 2075, all non-Keepers had been forced out of the hole. The Keepers were now firmly in charge of every inch of it.

Timeline

1853- NY State authorizes purchase of central park.
1859- Central Park first opened for use.
1871- Central Park Zoo.
1880s- Poor people campaign for equal access to park.
1925- Croton Reservoir in Central Park closed.
2050- Freedom Army attacks on corporations and government in New York.
2051- New York firmly under Freedom Army control.
2052- Construction of Freedom Army complex in Central Park begins.
2054- Several bombs, including a small nuclear bomb, destroy Freedom Army complex.
2057- Nuclear cleanup ends, Central Park fenced off and people allowed back in the city.
2061- Elder park residents forced to move deeper in to the Hole.
2062- "Keepers of the Hole" task force forms.
2075- Keepers have complete control of the Hole.

Becoming- The Keepers are not currently accepting new family members, except on the rare occasions when a young Keeper falls in love with and marries a non-Keeper (and even then, the "marriage" is usually not considered legitimate, and the spouse is considered only a visitor, until children are born).

Young Keepers are taught to hunt and gather plants at an early age. For snacks they pick berries and catch and cook lizards. They play games of hide and seek in the hole (although older children must accompany young children to make sure they don't accidentally wander in to areas that have traps). At adolescence, Keepers are expected to participate in adult activities: cooking meals, going on hunting parties, building shelters, setting up traps.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is about fifteen and is considered old enough to go out of the Hole and in to the city by themselves to trade, scrounge and make war.

Lifestyle- The Keepers know of several types of edible berries, roots and greenery growing within the hole. Some Keepers know herbal medicine and gather medicinal herbs as well as food-plants. The Keepers also hunt for animals to eat. The Keepers have been known to eat snakes, mice, rats, gophers, raccoons and birds (especially pigeons).

Each Keeper has a hunting area in which he or she is allowed to put small homemade traps. Once or twice a day a Keeper checks these traps and gets any animals that have fallen prey to them. When Keepers find signs that a bigger animal is living in the park, they form small hunting parties. They track it down and kill it with small homemade bows. The Keepers will occasionally chase a prey animal out of the hole and continue to track it through the city. The Keepers are careful to never hunt a species in to extinction (unless it is a foreign species that is causing ecological problems in the hole). When Keepers can not hunt or gather enough food to give them good nutrition, they leave the hole and visit soup kitchens and city dumpsters.

Keepers typically only spend a three or hour hours a day hunting and gathering. The exception is some young people who enjoy the challenge of a hunt so much that they will hunt for hours to catch an animal, even though that animal may not have much meat on it. Most Keepers spend several hours a day outside of the hole. They wander around in the block or two surrounding the hole. They hit dumpsters looking for anything they can salvage for use in crafts. The Keepers may sell hand-made weapons, clothing, food and even some medicinal herbs that grow in the park. They also offer services: anything they can do with their wilderness survival skills, from hunting down a rabid dog to butchering and dressing a raccoon that some addict caught (in exchange for a portion of the meat). The Keepers have been known to take and hide fugitives, but the price tag is usually very high and the Keepers will not hide someone from an enemy they do not think they can defeat (e.g. the Drug Lords). They also do some begging and canning, hoping a little change to buy things they can't buy, trade for or find in the trash (such as alcohol or hygiene products).

Keepers typically spend their evenings sitting around communal fires in clearings deep in the park. They sit around, tell stories and jokes, have discussions and debates, and work on various crafts: clothing, traps, weapons, tools, etc. Many Keepers have hunting dogs and these dogs are cared for and trained in the evenings. At night they sleep in groups of three to five in small homemade shelters. The shelter is usually just a large lean-to, with plenty of room for several people to sleep in but not enough space to stand up. In the winter, when the weather is poor and the Keepers anticipate spending more time in-doors, larger "hut" like dwellings are constructed.

Social Structure- The basic unit of the Keepers is a household: a single adult, couple or parents and children who sleep in the same shelter. A family is responsible for taking care of its own needs. Several families (usually about 50 people in total) will share a clearing, but have no special duties to each other (beyond being cordial neighbors).

Most major decisions among the Keepers are made by group consensus of the elders of the community. Keepers generally get along and cooperate well together. Most disputes are solved with the help of elders. Only a few times has anyone been accused of breaking some law. The Keeper's laws were put together when the Keepers were first formed. A Judge decides when someone has broken a law and what the punishment should be. The judge is chosen by the elders, holds the position for life, and is expected to be fair an impartial.

Keeper laws are simple, and worded differently depending on who is repeating them. The general message is always the same: every person living in the park must not harm the ecosystem of the park, must not harm park residents, must cooperate with group projects (anything that can not be done alone, like building a shelter or a group hunt) and must fight against enemies of the Keepers (insomuch as they are physically able). The only rule that applies to outsiders is that non-Keepers can not enter the park without permission of the Keeper elders.

When Keepers are judged to have broken these rules, the Judge's most common punishments are: taking away personal property from the perpetrator and giving it to the injured party, shunning the perpetrator for short periods, banishing the perpetrator for short periods or (in the most severe cases) permanent banishment. When outsiders are caught in the Hole, the punishment depends on what the judge thinks the trespasser's motivation is: some are simply escorted out of the hole, some are robbed and beaten then escorted out of the hole, a few are killed and fed to hunting dogs.

Advancement- People gain respect within the Keepers by being good at the skills that Keepers alive: hunting, wildcrafting, crafts, trading. The surest way to gain respect and power is to become old, as elders are the acknowledged advisors and leaders of the Keepers.

Population- There are about 500 Keepers living in the Hole.

External Relations- The Keepers are fiercely protective of their turf. They equate their livelihood with their ability to control what goes on in their turf, and thus any invasion is taken as a physical assault. Unfortunately, the city population has many motivations to enter the hole: it is tempting as a shortcut, a place to hide, a place to meet privately, a place to stash stolen goods, and a place to see and experience a true wilderness (something few city residents have seen outside of VR).

Boarders and Runners: The Boarders often think of the hole as a good place to do some "off-roading" and Keepers like to give them a good beating whenever they catch them. Runners are tempted to enter the park in their endless quest for shortcuts, and they are given a little more leniency when caught (because they are fellow street people just trying to make a living).

Neos and Hunters: Neos enter the hole, mostly for religious or spiritual purposes. Neos new in the city don't know that anyone owns the hole, but when it is explained to them they are usually polite and ask permission, are willing to pay, and are respectful enough of the environment that Keepers let them in. Hunters are another common intruder, coming in to the hole to hunt humans or animals they have released there. Keepers would beat or kill Hunters if they could, but are usually forced to retreat in the face of the Hunters' superior firepower.

Military Style- Any time the Keepers are engaged in a conflict, they do whatever they can to get the enemy to come in to the hole after them. This works well because the Keepers are rarely the aggressors (when they are, they usually try to hunt down and assassinate the enemy instead of confronting them). When an individual does something against the Keepers, if that individual can make it out of the hole alive, he or she will probably get away with whatever the perpetrator did.

Inside the hole, the Keepers use their best hunting skills to their advantage. They hide in blinds, picking off enemies with arrows and spears. They get an enemy to chase them and then lead that enemy right in to a trap. Or, they simply wait for an enemy to get tired of trudging through thick underbrush looking for someone to fight, then they attack in a massive ambush.

Typical Weapon- Home-made bows and arrows are a common weapons, but in close quarters combat they are discarded and replaced with short spears and large knives.

Turf- The Hole (a.k.a. central park), a rectangle of untamed parkland (with the occasional ruin) sitting in the center of the island, bounded on the North by 110th Street, on the South by 59th Street, on the West by Central Park West (a.k.a. 8th Avenue) and on the East by 5th Avenue. The entire park is surrounded by a barbed wire fence with many faded "caution" and "condemned area" signs. The whole of the hole is under the control of the Keepers and they do whatever they can to keep strangers out: They patch up the fence surrounding the hole to leave only a few entrances and exits, they put traps throughout the hole (that serve a dual purpose of catching food and dissuading intruders) and they keep an eye on the area from tree-top blinds. For more on the park, see p.349.

Distinguishing Features- Keepers dress much like other Street People, wearing a variety of old stained and dirty clothing scavenged from the trash. The Keepers modify their clothing by adding skins, furs and cloths and cords made from plant fibers. They also wear trophies of successful hunts as jewelry: bits of bone, teeth, claws, scales, etc.

Symbols- A squiggle approximating the shape of the city and a large rectangle in the center is a common symbol of both the Hole and the Keepers.

Monis Ef (Keeper Judge)

Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 15, CHM 3, END 3, INL 17, SPD 6, STH 5, WIL 14, BLD 2, BDY 4, INCY 1.

Appearance- Monis Ef is middle aged, part Middle Eastern and part East Indian in ethnicity. He has a shaved head, many black Maori-style tattoos. He always wears an olive military-surplus coat. He has tinted glasses with thick frames.

Social Status- Monis is the judge of the Keepers, and he will keep this position until he is dead or senile. Any time an outsider is caught in the hole or a Keeper is accused of a crime, Monis decides what punishment (if any) will be met out. He has never executed a Keeper, though he could if he wanted. Monis is exempt from the duty to participate in group projects and other Keepers anonymously leave him food and gifts to help support him. Monis is required to stay completely impartial, and this requires that he form few emotional ties with anyone in the community.

History- During the early days of the Keepers, Monis came to the park as a young homeless wanderer. He learned the ways of the park and married a young woman living in the park. Together they had two children. About five years ago, his wife and children died during a plague outbreak. Extremely depressed, he moved his shelter away from the rest of the Keepers and barely hunted enough to survive. The other Keepers allowed him to slack off on his duties, although they could have accused him of a crime if they had wanted. When the original judge died of cirrhosis of the liver (after many decades of alcohol abuse) Monis was asked to become the new judge. Monis wanted a way to help the community without having to spend too much time around them, so he agreed.

Personality- Monis spent much of his life a wandering loner, preferring books and ideas to people. His wife and children made him more sociable, but when they died he became more of a loner than he had ever been. He has suffered from bouts of depression throughout his life, but now he feels there is no reason for him to come out of his depression. He spends most of each day lying in a hammock near his property, drifting in and out of half-sleep, reading paperback books others have brought him, and watching the forest. It is only rarely that Monis is called upon to act as a judge, but when called he takes his job very seriously and he believes he does it well. Monis is cynical, believing that most people act out of bad motives, though he does like to give people the benefit of the doubt the first time they are brought to him. His punishments are not cruel - they are utilitarian, calculated to do whatever is necessary, but no more, to prevent the crime in the future. Emotional appeals do not sway Monis, instead they disgust him and piss him off. He is soft spoken but not afraid to let people know his displeasure if he feels they are interfering with his ability to do his job. Monis does not like to display emotions, much less talk about them, and he has never discussed with anyone his feelings about the death of his wife and children.

Motivations- Monis feels he has an important part of ensuring the survival of the Keeper community. He believes that without an impartial judge, the Keepers would factionalize and the community would break up. He doesn't think anyone else in the community has the capacity for impartiality that he does. He always makes rulings to protect the community, not out a desire for fairness or vengeance.

Methods- Monis had little persuasive power, but when a person is brought before him accused of a crime, Monis' ruling is final. When Monis is judging, he hears testimony from anyone who wishes to give it, allows time for witnesses to be sought and evidence gathered. If an accused can not be found, he is not afraid to rule in his or her absence. He is usually ready to give a ruling as soon as the testimony ends.

Special Skills- Monis likes to read, and since his selection is limited he reads whatever he can get. He thus knows a lot of trivia about different subjects.

Slang

  Hole: n., Central Park.

  Judge: n., a Keeper with the job of judging any crime committed by a Keeper.

Skills

  Free Skills: Tracking (1), Wilderness Survival (2).

  Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 12, INTL 13, MIL 9, PSY:X 25, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 12, THIE 6, SOC 9, STRT 4.

Income- $150 +$7/wk.

Special Equipment- Since there are many animal breeders and trainers among the Keepers, the PC can get trained animals at 50% off.

Suggested Skills- Animal Training, Archery, Blacksmithing, Climbing, Herbal Medicine, Prowling, Running, Swimming, Tracking, Trading, Weapon Making.

Suggested Equipment- Bow: Archery, Cloak, Fingerless Gloves, Knife: Kitchen

Suggested Reading- City Geography: The Hole, Environment & Ecology.

Water Rats

In Brief- Scavengers and thieves who use water tunnels for quick escapes and live without fear of retribution in fortresses in the sunken city.

Favorable Stereotypes- Lucky, charming, daring, attractive, athletic, proud but humble.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immature, irresponsible, thoughtless, arrogant kleptomaniacs.

Other Names- Timms, Sewer Surfers.

Origin- The five Timm siblings grew up on the streets. Their parents, who were unborn alcoholics, let them wander around the city unattended. Led by the oldest brother, Matt Timm, they did a lot of dangerous things including swimming in the dangerous waters of the "sunken city" (those parts of the city that had been partially submerged by rising ocean levels). When Matt was thirteen, the Timms' parent's died and they were solely responsible for their own survival. One thing they did was dive in to the sunken city, pull up scrap metal and sell it to recyclers.

As they continued to make a living this way (as well as canning, panhandling, trading, shoplifting and other normal street people activities) they became stronger swimmers and discovered methods to explore more of the sunken city. They created makeshift diving bells and strung rope between submerged buildings (hidden underwater so that nobody else could use them). Looking for more salvage opportunities, they broke in to storm drains to pull trash out of the catch basins. They heard that a group of deadly, isolationist homeless people lived in the sewers, but the Timms had always been known for their luck and bravery. Eventually, the Timms did run in to the Moles but they found that if they turned and walked away as soon as they saw a Mole, there wouldn't be any trouble. The Timms were the first (and are currently the only) group to form an agreement, spoken or unspoken, with the Moles.

As they became more successful, the Timm family grew. The siblings became old enough to have boyfriends and girlfriends and these eventually became husbands and wives who brought in their own extended street families. The family grew exponentially and the Timms were happy to teach their new family members to dive and navigate in the sunken city. The Timms made their own boats to take elder family members around. Soon they discovered that travel to the half-submerged buildings of the sunken city was so easy that they took up permanent residence in them. Since the Timms were the only ones who knew how to get to these buildings, they had found a space that was exclusively theirs. The Timms slept more safely than anyone else in the city.

The young Timm children (and the other children that had joined the family) were encouraged to play in the water as much as they wanted. These children found themselves crawling up in to the water tunnels that terminated in the sunken city. Since most of the tunnels under the city are below the groundwater level, massive amounts of groundwater have to be pumped out of the island each day to keep the tunnels from becoming infiltrated. The tunnels that carry this water out to the water are constantly flowing, though usually not very full (except when it rains). The young Timms found that they could wade up the tunnel (against the current) then get on makeshift surfboards and surf their way out to the sunken city. Eventually the elder Timms figured out that this would be a great way to escape from enemies. The Timms scouted out and broke the locks off of entrances to these tunnels throughout the city. They found that nobody was willing to chase them in to the tunnels.

Like most street people, Timms did a little bit of shoplifting and other petty theft to get by. Now that they had an easy way to escape from pursuers, they became much more bold in their thievery. Recyclable scrap was becoming harder and harder to find and the Timms were happy to focus more of their time on theft. Groups of Timms would walk in to stores, grab whatever they could, and run out, not caring if a security guard pursued them.

Very few people had ever heard of the Timms while they were salvaging and selling scrap from the sunken city. When they started shifting towards bold theft as a means of income, people started hearing about the Timms. The Timms were a constant pain for well Freelancers working as security guards, who started calling the Timms "Water Rats" as an epithet. The Timms heard about this and, delighted that they had received notoriety, started calling themselves Water Rats with pride. As the Water Rats became more bold they started stealing from anyone who had something worth stealing, including a few gang members. The Water Rats had to fight against a few angry gang members and proved that they could hold their own even against a city gang.

Timeline

2052- Matt Timm born.
2058- Timm parents die.
2062- Youngest Timm born.
2067- Timms dive in to sunken city for scrap.
2071- 1st Timm children born.
2074- Moles "discovered" by city population.
2075- Timms first encounter Moles.
2078- Timm children invent sewer surfing.
2079- Timm parents adopt sewer surfing as a way to escape from enemies.

Becoming- Toddlers are dragged in to the water by their elder siblings. They learn to swim before they can even walk well. Play is also work (as it is for most street children): as soon as they learn to dive, they are encouraged to find anything on the bottom that can be used or traded. The salvageables that Water Rat children being up are usually worth only a few bucks a week, but it gives the young Water Rats a sense of contributing to the family. Older Water Rats will sometimes throw spare change in to the water and let kids keep whatever they can grab. Adolescents move on to more dangerous games, such as exploring the flooded basements of old buildings, underwater wrestling, and surfing the flow of water out of storm drains on homemade rafts.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is around sixteen years old and is generally thought of as an adult and is expected to pull his or her own weight within the family. The years of play will have given the PC almost every skill necessary to make a living as a Water Rat. At this age, the PC is also expected to help defend the Water Rats in times of war.

Lifestyle- All around the city are the dangerous waters of the "sunken city". The current between half submerged buildings is swift and dangerous, and even powerful speedboats have trouble making it through. This was one of the reasons Jeffrey Hernandez chose Manhattan as his base of operations during the Freedom Wars: an amphibious assault would be problematic at best. The Water Rats are the only people in the city able to navigate the submerged ruins of the city safely. Their primary tool is a maze of hidden ropes under the water. These lines let them navigate the sunken city without being carried off by the swift currents.

The younger Water Rats spend much of their day exploring the hundreds of half-submerged buildings of the sunken city looking for anything that can be salvaged or reused. Besides finding profit, they enjoy the thrill and challenge of exploring. The most accomplished swimmer dive in to dark, flooded basements. They use flashlights wrapped in plastic bags. Rope is a precious commodity to the Water Rats an any they find they keep for themselves. The strongest swimmers among the Water Rats carry rope between buildings, creating lines that less-accomplished swimmers can use to get from building to building.

Water Rats have build a number of small boats, which are typically used for ferrying elders (who can not swim as well) back and forth from the sunken city to the city. When the weather is very cold, even the strong swimmers travel by boat. Water Rats like to move back and forth between the city and the streets in the early hours of the morning, when there are fewer people who might be watching. The Water Rats worry that if someone was to watch them, they could find the hidden lines and make their way to the partially submerged buildings that the Water Rats live in.

Water Rats spend a lot of time in the city visiting recycling centers, black market traders and anyone else who they think will buy the stuff they have salvaged from the sunken city.

Every few weeks, when the weather isn't too cold, the Water Rats will plan a "rampage." They scout out an entrance to the groundwater outflow tunnels. Then they infiltrate neighborhood stores. At a precise moment (usually the chiming of a church's bells) they grab whatever they can (including people's wallets and purses) and race to the sewers. As they run, they dump the goods in to bags made of mesh or old nets, which they strap to their backs. Security guards often try to chase them, but the Water Rats are only a few blocks from the tunnel entrance and once they jump in they are safe.

Social Structure- The Timms are a small, tightly knit group who depend on each other for their survival. There is only one family name: Timm. People are either born with it or take on the name when they marry in to the group. Matt Timm is the undisputed leader of the Timms, and leads by virtue of the respect everyone in the family has for him.

Elders are respected, but do not lead the family (as they do in most other street people families). One reason is that the Water Rats are a very new family, and the elders who came in to the family (often because a child or grandchild married a Water Rat) were too old to learn the skills of the Water Rats. They don't know how to dive or sewer surf and so the most useful thing they can do for the family is stay at home in the partially-submerged buildings and keep the homes running smoothly.

Advancement- Unlike most street families (which reward age and wisdom) the Water Rats reward youth, vigor and daring. Acts of bravery that benefit the Water Rats will cause a PC to be liked and respected by other Water Rats, including Matt Timm. The only way to gain a lot of influence in the Water Rats is to become a friend of Matt Timm's.

Population- There are about 300 Water Rats living in the city. 5 are the original Timm siblings, 10 are the children of those siblings and the rest are people who married in to the Water Rats and their extended families.

External Relations- Most wells and Indies see the Water Rats as nothing more than thieves who might grab something they own and run off. Most gang members in the city have to live with the consequences of their members' actions and it makes them slightly annoyed that the Water Rats can do whatever they want and then run off to the safety of their sunken city fortresses. The Water Rats also have a propensity to trespass on the turf of other gangs and are most likely to get in to trouble with gangs who don't like people violating their turf (specifically the Night Shift, the Keepers, the Purists, the Risen, the Roofers and the Skin Borgs).

Freelancers: For Freelancers working as security guards, the Water Rats are a big embarrassment. Only a small percentage of goods shoplifted in the city are taken by Water Rats, but when the Water Rats steal everyone sees it and the security guards usually get in trouble with their bosses for letting the thieves get away.

Moles: The Water Rats are the only group to have any kind of relationship with the moles. This is an unspoken pact to leave each other alone. When Water Rats see Moles they simply turn and walk the other way. The Water Rats haven't run in to any of the deadly traps the Moles are known for, probably because any traps set in the storm drains would quickly be washed away. Some people are so enamored with the idea of the Moles as psychotic, inbred, xenophobic killers that they refuse to believe that something as simple as live-and-let-live could be the explanation for the Water Rat's ability to move through the storm drains without being attacked by Moles. Many people accuse the Water Rats, and Matt Timm in particular, of having various nefarious deals going with the Moles.

Military Style- The Water Rats are a small, inexperienced and poorly equipped military force, and they know it. They avoid traditional warfare whenever possible, since they know they would be devastated. Their approach is to harass and annoy the enemy for years. They pop out of tunnels in enemy territory, race through doing as much

Matt Timm
(Eldest Timm Sibling and Leader of the Water Rats)

Level 8 Water Rat

Attributes- AGY 16, AWR 9, CHM 14, END 18, INL 14, SPD 16, STH 17, WIL 12, BLD 6, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- Caucasian and African features, tall with broad shoulders, muscular, clean shaven with shaved head, broad mouth and attractively round head with a little bit of baby fat. Many people find Matt very physically attractive. When not wearing his homemade black wetsuit, Matt wears cotton shorts and holey t-shirts.

Social Status- Matt is the eldest of the Timm siblings and the acknowledged leader of the Water Rats. He, more than anyone, is responsible for the creation of the Water Rats and he is respected for his intelligence and leadership skills, even by elders who have been brought in to the family. Matt is the only one of the Timm siblings who has never married and had kids, though he is a loving uncle to his many nieces and nephews.

History- When Matt's parents committed suicide, Matt was forced to take over the care of his younger brothers and sisters. So that his siblings wouldn't lose hope, Matt adopted an optimistic demeanor, full of dry humor and false bravado. Eventually this "act" became his real outlook on the universe. He fearlessly led his brothers and sisters in to dangerous parts of the cities: the sunken city, the storm drains. It was a surprise to him when the Timms became a successful street family.

Personality- Matt is jovial, friendly, never lets him self get stressed out or anxious about anything that happens. He will joke about anything, including subjects like torture, war, disease, insanity, etc. Matt believes in "Timm luck" and encourages others to believe in it. Matt enjoys music and plays almost every night with family members. When Matt needs to think he pounds out long, fast paced, deafening solos on his homemade drum set.

Methods- Matt personally leads almost every major attack, theft run, and dive project. Matt is the strongest swimmer in the family had he has strung a majority of the Rats' ropes and cables. Matt will never veto or criticize a plan because it is too dangerous. Instead of issuing "orders," he tries to get other Water Rats excited about a plan or project, hyping how great the project will be. When he has to negotiate with non-Water Rats, he tries to use similar persuasive tactics on them. Matt is vengeful but not bloodthirsty: he loves to humiliate an enemy, but not to kill them.

Motivations- Matt is motivated by two drives: a desire to protect and provide for his family, and a desire to do fun and interesting things.

Special Skills- Hold Breath (4), Swimming (6), Tunnel Surfing (3), Water Combat (3), Wrestling (3).

Typical Attack- Timm tries not to get in to a fight without a body of water nearby he can drag his opponent in to. Typically he will try to tackle an enemy (to push them in to the water) at SPD (16) + STH (17) + 12 (skill) 1d20 vs. 25 (or 20 + 1d20 vs. 0). Once in the water he tries to get the person in a wrestling hold where he can keep them immobile underwater until they go unconscious. The Grab: Wrestling is at STH (17) + INL (14) + 12 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 12 + 1d20 vs. 0). Since Timm has the Water Combat skill he does not suffer the -8 penalty to actions and reactions from being underwater.

damage and stealing as much property as they can, then they disappear in to the tunnels again. They sometimes hurl chunks of concrete at enemies as they run past, but this is the limit of their offensive strike capabilities. The Water Rats try to embarrass enemies in to submission rather than fight with them.

The Water Rats know that once they get to the tunnels they are safe. Anyone who dares follow the Water Rats in to their tunnels will probably be smashed in to the walls of the tunnels. If they make it to an exit, they will have to fight Water Rats underwater. Water Rats are deadly fighters when in the water, since most have been wrestling underwater since they are children. An assault on the Water Rats' homes would be even more dangerous: nobody knows exactly what buildings they live in or how to get to those buildings without being smashed against the sides of partially-submerged buildings.

Gangs know little about the sewer systems and they rarely know which of the thousands of manhole covers around the city lead to the tunnels the Water Rats. If any gang was to figure it out they would have a powerful weapon against the Water Rats: they could block their access to the tunnels and trap them on the streets. Fortunately, the Water Rats have not yet pissed off anyone enough to prompt such measures.

Typical Weapon- Almost all Water Rats carry knives on them. They also like to pick up whatever is at hand and throw it at an enemy as they race away.

Turf- The Water Rats consider their turf to be strips of half-submerged city streets that surround the island, known in city slang as "the sunken city." At any given point on the coast there might be no sunken city at all, there might be a few buildings deteriorating as a few feet of water lap at their foundations, or there might be whole city blocks under five to ten feet of water. There are about a thousand buildings partially submerged by water and the Water Rats have gone in to most of them looking for salvageables at some point. The Water Rats make the majority of their homes on the broad swaths of sunken city submerged by the East River near midtown and downtown.

When they come out of the water and on to the city streets, most Water Rats like to stop by at the Painted Rock, a small dive bar directly to the North of Mem Junkie turf at 30th St. and Park Ave. This small, dimly lit bar has an interior decorated with pieces of old ships (given to the owner by Water Rats). The bartenders give cheap drinks to Water Rats.

The Water Rats have secret lines tied underwater that let them navigate through the sunken city safely. These lines are very important to the Water Rats and so is keeping them secret. To outside observers, most Water Rats can be seen crawling in to windows in to abandoned buildings at the foot of the sunken city, and then the Water Rats are gone.

The Water Rats also consider Roosevelt Island a part of their turf. Roosevelt Island was a small sliver of land in the East River. The entire island is now submerged in the East River, although most of the large apartment buildings survive. Since it is harder to travel to than the sunken city, the Water Rats have not explored the majority of this part of their turf yet. They have plans to go here should their current dwellings ever be invaded.

Distinguishing Features- Water Rats have the physique of swimmers. Their hair is short or shaved and they seldom wear facial hair or makeup. They often wear homemade wet suits, stitched together out of materials and fitted exactly to them. The often wear mesh backpacks containing plastic garbage bags protecting whatever they need to keep dry. Those with Timm blood have, among other things, Caucasian and African American features, a strong brow and jaw-line, broad shoulders and attractively shaped heads.

Symbols- The color blue, water drops and cartoonish rats.

Slang

Shakeys: n., the Painted Rock Bar (called this because Water Rats are often shaking with cold when they enter).

Tunnel Surfing: n., swimming or rafting through the groundwater outflow tunnels.

Skills

Free Skills: Swimming (3), Hold Breath (2).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, INTL 11, MIL 9, PSY:X 25, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Tunnel Surfing costs only 7 skill points per level.

Tunnel Surfing- Uses END. This skill allows Water Rats to navigate through the groundwater outflow tunnels without getting smashed to death against tunnel walls. Water Rats with this skill have learned every tunnel entrance, every fork and turn and can tell where they are in the tunnel system even in complete darkness. Strong swimming or paddling and kicking off of walls is needed to avoid being smashed. Tunnel surfing is easier when the Water Rat has some sort of raft or surfboard, harder if they are just swimming. When there are heavy rains the tunnels become flooded and tunnel surfing becomes significantly harder.

Easy (10): Surf on a raft on a rain-less day.
Moderate (20): Swim on a rain-less day.
Hard (30): Swim on a rainy day.
Legendary (40): Swim on a rainy day while carrying another person.

Income- $200 +$13/wk.

Special Equipment- Free Mesh Backpack (a small backpack pieced together from piece of old net). The PC can buy a homemade wetsuit, made from scrounged materials and fitted to the PCs body by family elders, for $25. The suit has a +7 heat factor and has AR 6 PR ½ bladed 2 skidding.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Hot Body: (Mandatory Advantage) Over the years, the PC's body had adapted to surviving swims in ice cold temperatures. The PC's metabolism increases when it gets cold, especially if aided by a nice hot irish coffee at Shakeys. The PC gets +6 to save vs. hypothermia.

Suggested Skills- Hold Breath, Music, Pocket Picking, Water Combat.

Suggested Equipment- Crowbar, Dagger, Diving Bell, Dock Rope, Homemade Wetsuit (see above), Flare: Underwater, Flashlight: Small.

Suggested Reading- Sunken City, Underground, Weather.

NON-FAMILY STREET PEOPLE

Favorable Stereotypes- Intensely motivated, skilled, observant, brave, very hard-working.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Dirty, crazy, diseased, untrustworthy, desperate liars and thieves with no control over their lives.

Being a street person without a large family to turn to for protection is dangerous and hard. Nobody chooses to end up in this position (although some people are partially at fault for their current lives). Most people in this position desperately want to do something else with their lives. Those who were born with birth certificates usually just want to get on welfare and get off the streets. Those who weren't born with birth certificates usually would like to join one of the large street families. Non-Family Street People are usually the most ambitious of any people in the city because they know that things can't get much worse. Living on the streets is very hard, though, and when street people lose hope the results are terrible. Most Non-Family Street People are bitter about their place in society. They believe that society kicked them while they were down and is making it difficult for them to improve their lives.

Non-Family Street People are the most victimized people in the city. They are victims of robberies, hate crimes, sex crimes and attacks by pusher gangs. Young people have been to known to go pour flammable liquids on homeless people and set them on fire. Street people are not victimized because they are hated more than the rest of the street population, or because they are not as tough and wary. They are victimized because people know that street people have no gangs, no families, no political interest groups, no corrupt politicians looking for reelection that care what happens to them. Occasionally a victimized street person will have powerful friends and family that will come after a victimizer. In the majority of times this is sadly not the case.

Most Non-Family Street People are damaged in some way. The bright, charming, emotionally balanced people rarely end up on the streets by themselves. Even when

they do, life on the streets is so hard that it often makes people bitter and mean, makes them turn to drugs or even drives them crazy.

Non-Family Street People are ingenious in the ways they find to make money. Every scam to cheat someone out of money, every piece of trash that can be salvaged or reused, every line that someone could say while begging for change, every thing someone can do with their bodies to make money, there is a street person who has done it.

Homeless Housing

The sleeping arrangements for street people vary greatly. Some street people live in running or non-running cars or in recreational vehicles parked in the city. Car campers are usually people who work or get a check from the government but still cannot afford an apartment. Most street people are squatters, taking over one of the city's many abandoned buildings and making it fit for living in. Some abandoned buildings are barely modified: they have no electricity, no running water, no heating or air conditioning, no good locks on the doors. These abandoned buildings are no more than holes to hide in when their resident's sleep: the street people often sleep in closets, in heating ducts and under floorboards so that they will be safe from anyone who wanders in. These buildings often become choked with refuse and the people sleeping in them move on to another building. Other abandoned buildings have been heavily remodeled by their squatters, especially when powerful street families have taken them over. These buildings can have secure locks (or better, round the clock guards), stolen electricity and hot and cold running water. The houses that some street families have taken over are so nice that some Wells and Indies envy them. Other street people have been known to create their own shelters out of cardboard and scrap wood.

The homes of street people are not easy to find, and this is done on purpose. An alley that appears to be completely filled with trash may contain a secret home. Some homes are large, others are barely big enough for one person to crawl in, wrap up in a blanket, and sleep. No matter how small the home, and no matter how badly off the owner's current situation is, almost every home is decorated and outfitted with a hundred personalizations, no matter how small. Houses often have ingenious construction, amenities and security features.

The worst off street people are those who do not have any kind of sleeping arrangement staked out. When they are lucky they can sleep in one of the city's few shelters (those who bother to show up at a shelter have about a 1 in 10 chance of getting a bed), or in some other street person's home. Otherwise they must try to find some warm place, with no safety and no privacy, to try to sleep through the night. Sleeping out in the open is always dangerous. Though learning to sleep lightly helps, it never completely illuminates the danger. Some homeless people, usually those who are on drugs or are psychotic, can not even find a warm vent to sleep on. For those street people, the random fluctuations of the weather is the factor that decides if they live through the night.

Street People Alignment

Common folk-wisdom among Street People is that people fall in to one of two categories:

-The "what goes around comes around" people. These people offer help and kindness and help to each other (when they can) and they believe they will at some point receive help and kindness back. They also avoid ripping off or giving shit to other street people because they believe that this will eventually come back to them as well. "What goes around comes around" people attribute the mechanism of repayment to various sources. Some believe god will make sure people are repaid for their deeds. Other believe in an invisible, impersonal principle at work in the universe that enforces karma. Other simply believe that enough people are like them that it is inevitable that their charity will someday be repaid.

-The "take what you can get" people. These people either don't believe that what goes around comes around, or they do believe it and are too desperate to care. They ask for help, favors and even loans which they will never return, and they take advantage of other street people. The "take what you can get" people try to associate with "what goes around comes around" people as much as they can, but they often are ostracized after constantly taking and never giving and are force to hang around with other "take-what-you-can-get" people.

Home Thieves

Most homeless people, especially older people who know the city's ins and outs, are quite adept and finding good shelter. They can find places that are warm in the winter or cool in the summer, comfortable, well hidden, dry, easy to defend, etc. Some street people, however, take over other people's shelters. These are usually younger, stronger people, often drug addicts or mentally ill, who find an older street person with a nice dwelling, and forcibly move in. If the home's finder stays, he or she will be reduced to the position of a housekeeper. Most leave, preferring to find another shelter than fight to their old one. Unfortunately, the home thieves seldom take good care of their homes and when the homes are choked with waste and infested with rats and insects from improperly stored food, the home thieves leave to prey on more responsible street people again.

Addicts

In Brief- Live on the street, everything in their lives centers around feeding their drug habits.

Favorable Stereotypes- Cunning, tough, wary and street-smart despite their sad disability.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Diseased, desperate, unwise, weak-willed, remorseless, cowardly, mentally ill, unprincipled, willing to betray anyone.

Other Names- Junkies, Dopers, Users, Druggies.

Origin- Drugs are a technology and this technology has seen several major increases over the years. With every technological leap, more people become addicted to drugs and more people are so addicted that they end up on the streets. When Arab alchemists distilled alcohol, when tobacco companies found that adding ammonia to tobacco would cause more nicotine to enter the bloodstream, when Bayer labs found that two morphine molecules could be bound together to create a heroin molecule, when drug dealers discovered that cocaine and baking soda could be used to create crack, the number and plights of addicts have increased.

For many years, alcohol was the king drug of the US. In Seattle, Skid Row was a street where lumberjacks would slide felled trees downhill, and as this neighborhood deteriorated it became the home to many down-and-out alcoholics. The Bowery in New York, once a quite nice neighborhood, became one of the poorest parts of New York. Cheap lodging houses meant that alcoholics could spend less money on rent and more money on booze. The Bowery quickly developed in to one of the country's most famous skid row neighborhoods.

For street gangs illegal drugs have always meant quick and easy money. During prohibition, the mafia turned in to a nationwide organization by distributing and selling

Warning: Not all character classes are equal. Most character classes have advantages and disadvantages that balance out to make them approximately as powerful as each other, but this character class is inherently unbalanced and will not be as powerful as starting characters from other classes.

alcohol. In the 80s the Crips and Bloods spread franchises nationwide by getting in on the ground floor of the booming crack market. In 2044 God Killer, a drug even more addictive than crack, was invented. Within a few years, cities all over the country were being terrorized by God Killer pushers. They were rich, armed to the teeth and completely fearless from using their own product.

During the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez, a recovering addict, gained power over most of the US and many parts of the rest of the globe. Hernandez broke the back of international drug cartels and domestic pusher gangs with one single act: he legalized drugs. Addicts had to register as addicts, attend treatment programs, and they would be dispensed a free dose of their drug, whether it was opiates, alcohol, amphetamines or even God Killer. Nobody was willing to pay money for what they could get for free and pushers went broke. Drug related crimes and medical problems among addicts dropped dramatically. Despite being given free drugs, many addicts managed to get off drugs during the Freedom Wars. After the wars, ex-addicts reported that the treatment programs, the monitored doses, and the reduction of stress and anxiety (since they no longer had to spend every hour of the day scrounging to make money for drugs) helped them quit using.

When the Freedom Army was destroyed, the old narcotics laws were immediately reinstated. Even while survivors of the New York bombings were in refugee camps, illegal drug sales started again. When the city was reopened for occupation, drug sales began again. The people who got in on the ground floor quickly became rich and powerful criminals, known as "drug lords" who controlled the movement of all drugs in to the city. The drug lords sold drugs to street gangs. The street gangs grew rapidly, becoming huge and powerful organizations. They sold mostly God Killer to poor and homeless people. The street gangs made millions for the drug lords. The street gangs

fought for turf, and they used the money they made to buy expensive weapons. While the street gangs sold the most drugs, there were a variety of other dealers: users who occasionally bought in bulk and sold to fellow users, homeless people who hung out on major avenues selling low-quality marijuana to tourists, black market traders who sold stolen pharmaceuticals, lone dealers who carried pagers and developed a loyal clientele by selling quality drugs.

Then, in 2075, the city drug scene changed forever and this variety disappeared. The city's biggest Drug Lords got together, killed all the others and took over every level of the drug trade. The Drug Lords formed their own organization to create, distribute and sell drugs. The Drug Lords were incredibly efficient and didn't waste time and money with infighting. The Drug Lords were the most powerful organization in the city. Soon after taking power, the Drug Lords introduced new and even more addictive drugs. Although more addictive, they were not as pleasant, and pushers had to go to extreme methods to get people hooked. Pushers started holding people down and forcefully injecting them with drugs until they were addicted. The number of addicts increased, and more and more people ended up on the streets. In the five years since the Drug Lords consolidated the number of addicts on the streets doubled.

Timeline
700- Alcohol distilled by Arab alchemists.
1850s- Skid Road (later Skid Row) in Seattle.
1853- Hypodermic needle invented.
1855- Cocaine first extracted from coca leaves.
1887- Amphetamines invented.
1895- Heroin invented.
1919- Methamphetamines invented.
1920- Heroin illegal in the US.
1925- Heroin black market in China Town.
1970- Amphetamines illegal in the US.
1985- Crack revolutionizes crime and addiction in NY.
1988- Ecstasy illegal in US.
2044- God Killer invented.
2053- Freedom Army legalizes drugs for registered addicts.
2055- Freedom Army rule in the city ends.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate.
2076- Chomper invented.
2076- Maxin invented.
2077- Mauler invented.
2077- Trace invented.
2078- Escape invented.
2078- Slave invented.

Becoming- Addicts have many different stories. Some were once rich, some have always been poor, some have been on the road to being a homeless addict since they were kids, some people were hit out of the blue just recently.

The most common life story of an addict is something like this: *You were a poor kid and the other kids you hung out with drank or used drugs to pass the time. You started using and soon couldn't stop. You alienated friends and family and soon ended up on the streets. You were just learning to get buy when some pusher gang grabbed you, held you down, and forced you to use one of their new drugs. The withdrawals from this drug were so bad that you would do anything to get more drugs.*

Some people become addicts and are able to "keep it together" for quite a while. They stay on welfare, they keep their apartments and they are able to keep up their drug habit. The defining characteristic of a true addict, however, is that if it comes to a choice between drugs and anything else, the addict will choose drugs. It always comes down to such a choice: pay the rent or buy drugs, have a phone interview with a welfare department social worker or get drunk and pass out. A lot of addicts choose drugs over their own health and what puts them on the street is medical problems. Most wells and Indies have a social "safety net" that keeps them from ending on the streets: family who will loan them money, friends who will give them a place to sleep for the night, etc. Addicts find themselves continually lying to, stealing from and betraying their friends and family and soon they find that the social safety net is gone.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been an addict for quite a while, and has been on the streets for about six months.

Lifestyle- Getting money to get drugs takes up the majority of an addict's attention and time. Most addicts have no particular skills that they can reliably make money with. They "hustle," a term which, among addicts, means doing anything one can to make money. Hustling means panhandling, shoplifting, canning, salvaging and reselling things they found in the trash, selling sex, calling up relatives and old friends begging for money, and anything else that they think can make them a quick bit of change. The more desperate for drugs an addict is, the more degrading or dangerous things addicts will do. When they get really desperate, addicts will get together and decide to mug someone. They try to find a person who is alone in a secluded place (or lure someone in to such a place), then grab them, beat them senseless and take everything on them.

When addicts do get some money they go on drug runs to get drugs. Addicts are keenly aware of where they can get the best deal of drugs and will sometimes go halfway across town to get the best deal. Runs are also a dangerous and anxious time for addicts: when they have money or when they have drugs, they are a target for robberies by other addicts. Addicts buy their drugs from whoever is their preferred dealer (a pusher gang, a Good, a black market Trader, a liquor store). Once they have their drugs, they usually (but don't always) have enough willpower to get someplace safe to use the drugs. They know that if they start using in a public place they will wander around intoxicated and may even pass out, making them targets for all kinds of predators. So, when they can, they find some secret little place where they can use their drugs.

Addicts have a tendency to be very ritualistic about their drug use. They handle their drugs and kits with care and reverence. They do everything they can to make the moment when they first take in their drug as perfect as possible. Some addicts use drugs alone, but others like to be around other addicts who are also using. When addicts have enough to share, they usually do.

It is a constant struggle for addicts to ration drugs. They buy drugs that need to last them a certain period of time (a day, several days, a week). They swear they will only use a little bit at a time to stave off withdrawals. The problem is that once they start using drugs, they stop caring and all they want is more drugs. Most addicts fail and blow all their drugs all at once. Sometimes when addicts get

a lot of money they blow it all on drugs and go through a years worth of drugs in a few days. Some addicts manage to stay on public assistance, despite being homeless, and every month they get a huge check. The drugs won't let them spend their money wisely and they typically blow through the money on drugs and things like hotel rooms and prostitutes, and within a few weeks they are back on the streets checking payphones for spare change like the rest of the addicts.

When addicts are trying to get money for drugs, they sleep little and are on their feet a lot. By the time they get their drugs, they are often exhausted and weary. When they use drugs that are sedatives, or when they come down off of stimulant drugs, they crash and sleep for ten to twenty hours (depending on how long they've been up). They might wake up once or twice to go urinate or vomit, but most of the time they just enjoy being unconscious and not having withdrawal pains.

Taking care of other necessities of life comes last. When they are hungry, addicts usually go to soup kitchens, or search through dumpsters. They get clothing and hygiene products in the same way. Medical problems are usually ignored until they become emergencies, at which point the Addict is taken by friends or Volunteers to the emergency room.

Social Structure- Friendships rarely last long among addicts. Most start strong but end badly after one of the friends betrays the other in some moment of desperation. Sexual relationships last longer because there is a stronger mutual need, and addict lovers are likely to stay together despite betrayals. Couples cling to each other tenaciously, depending on each other for the physical aspects of survival as well as psychological support. These relationships are rarely happy ones: paranoid mistrust, frequent arguments and physical abuse are common. Each partner is likely to try to exploit the other, and women in these relationships are often pressured in to prostitution to support both herself and her partner. What's worse, when either partner seems close to leaving the streets or successfully quitting drugs, the other partner is likely to deliberately sabotage this progress.

The more intensely addictive the drug, the less likely the addict is to have friendships with other addicts. Alcohol is one of the least addictive drugs abused on the streets, and winos are likely to form friendships and even small communities that may last for decades. Winos who camp together may watch out for each other and even join together to fight off threats. Slave addicts, perhaps the most desperate of all addicts, may form brief compacts for the purposes of robbing someone or defending a shelter, but they seldom ever trust each other.

Advancement- Advancement as an addict is nearly impossible. There are skills that can help one survive as an addict, but almost all are learned within the first few months on the street. Wise old addicts don't have it much better than any other addict. Most addicts go steadily downhill as their health, their self-esteem and their mental health get steadily worse. A very few addicts catch the eye of a pusher and become personal servants for the pushers, they get paid with drugs for their loyalty and labor, and these addicts are better off than other addicts. Some addicts get off the streets and in to housing, via a job (even pushing) or public assistance, while still using, but their being housed rarely lasts long.

The best way to advance as an addict is to stop using. If pushers figure out that an addict is trying to quit, they will try to stop the addict, and many pushers would rather see an addict die than quit. Other addicts may sell out an addict who is trying to quit, hoping to gain favor among the pushers. There are many people and agencies trying to help addicts get off of drugs, but too few to help every addict trying to quit. At any given time, about one tenth of the addicts (about 1,500 people) are seriously trying to quit, and only about 200 Volunteers involved in programs designed to help addicts and only about 750 Goods trying to get users on less harmful drugs. Most addicts are on their own when trying to quit. Many addicts don't even seek help, knowing that they are likely to betray and hurt anyone who tries to help them.

The ultimate problem of quitting an addiction is a very simple one: an addict can successfully resist the urge to use drugs a million times, but if they fail only once then all that work is for nothing. Addicts expend incredible amounts of willpower in trying to quit, but one moment of weakness can bring it all down. Most addicts have tried to quit, and most addicts have stories about the moment of stupidity, or pain, or anxiety that brought them down.

Population- There are 15,000 drug addicts and winos living on the streets (compared to 10,000 indies and 30,000 wells). There are about 5,000 winos, 2,000 opiate addicts, 1,500 amphetamine addicts, 3,000 god killer addicts, 1,000 chomper addicts, 500 maxin addicts, 2,500 mauler addicts, 500 trace addicts, 1,000 escape addicts and 3,000 slave addicts living out on the streets. The addict population is growing at a rate of 10 per day (15 new addicts show up on the streets while 5 addicts die or make it off the streets).

External Relations- Addicts are one of the most universally disliked groups in the city. "Scum", "insects" and "animals" are words commonly used to describe them. Many think of the addicts as not having any free will of their own, being chemically driven to do whatever depraved act they must in order to get drugs. Even those who claim to have compassion for addicts are careful not to turn their backs on them.

Pushers: Most addicts are dependent on members of pusher gangs to supply them with their drugs. They usually hate the pushers they have to deal with, and may be beaten, raped or ripped off by the pushers with little they can do as vengeance. The only power addicts have is to move to an area controlled by a different pusher gang and hope that the other pusher gang will be nicer.

Drug Lords: The Drug Lords often use the Addicts to their advantage. The Drug Lords may, for instance, have their pushers put out word to all the addicts that they are paying a handsome sum for some piece of information, or they may even put a price on someone's head. It rarely takes the Drug Lords more than a few thousand to have nearly 15,000 addicts (in addition to 5,000 employees of the Drug Lords and many others) looking for some person. Addicts, thus, often become the enemies of the enemies of the Drug Lords (especially Goods, Hungry and Night Shift).

Goods and Volunteers: Goods and Volunteers are the only groups in the city who make it a full time job to help addicts. Most times addicts are grateful and try to help and protect the Goods and Volunteers. Sometimes, however, the addicts do harm to Goods and Volunteers, either to rob them or because they are doing the bidding of the pusher gangs.

Hungry: Almost all Hungry were once addicts living on the streets. Many still have contacts among the addicts community and even those Hungry with no contacts are sympathetic of Addicts.

Night Shift: The Night Shift has a split personality when it comes to addicts. At times they see addicts as victims of an evil organized crime agency. At other times addicts are seen as the largest horde of dangerous criminal scum in the city. Typically the Night Shift forgives addicts the crime of buying, possessing and using drugs, but they will beat down any addict who victimizes anyone else (including fellow addicts).

Typical Weapon- Sharp rocks and pieces of wood.

Turf- Addicts can be found all over the city, though they are more likely to be found outside of gang territory (where pushers operate) and in the most run-down neighborhoods with the most abandoned buildings (where addicts like to sleep).

Distinguishing Features- Most addicts are malnourished, many are skinny, many have thinning hair and missing teeth. They have many scars from untreated infections, and may have amputations of extremities lost to frostbite. Some addicts have needle-tracts on arms, legs, neck, etc. The longer the person has been shooting up, the more tracts. Addict clothing is typically dirtier, smellier and less well fitting than the clothing of most homeless people. Addicts rarely pay any attention to personal grooming, and the men usually have beards and both men and women commonly have long, unkempt hair.

Symbols- Graffiti artists often use pills, needles or small pipes to symbolize addicts.

Slang- Addicts in the city have thousands of special terms they use amongst themselves, and these vary between users of different drugs and between small groups of addicts. Each addict has an average of five slang names for his or her drug of choice and is able to convey messages to their fellow addicts, such as "I am searching for drugs" or "I have drugs" or "I am under the influence of drugs" using slang that few that might overhear would ever understand. More general slang, known by addicts of multiple groups, is:

Backtrack: v., Pull blood in to a needle prior to injecting.

Bang: v., Inject.

Blades: v., Snorting drugs from the tip of a hot knife.

Bring Up: v., Make a vein ready for injection.

Bugged: adj., Having sores from infected injection sites.

Candy: n., Drugs.

Carpet Sniffing: n., The crawl characteristic of an addict coming down and searching for any crumbs of drugs that may have been spilled.

Charlying: v., Rubbing drugs in to small cuts made in the skin.

Chilling: v., Snorting alcohol.

Cutting: v., Adding non-drug substances to drugs to increase profits.

Full Timer: n., A person who lives on the streets, devoting all their attention to getting drugs.

Gank: v., To cheat or steal drugs from another addict.

Hot: adj., Poisoned.

Huffing: n., Using inhalant drugs (e.g. sniffing glue).

Hustling: v., Doing whatever one can think of to make money for drugs.

Kit: n., Set of equipment for using drugs (especially with a syringe).

Lit: adj., Intoxicated.

Mainlining: v., Injecting drugs in to a bloodstream.

Mission: n., A search for drugs or trip to get drugs.

Part Timer: n., A person who keeps up their normal means of income while being an addict.

Popping: v., Injecting drugs directly under the skin, where they create a small bubble and are quickly absorbed in to the bloodstream.

Pulling: v., Vomiting, esp. from drug use.

Score: v., Buy drugs.

Speedball: n., A stimulant and a depressant taken together.

Stash: n., Drug hoard, especially when hidden.

Worm: n., A person who sells fake drugs.

Skills

Free Skills: Drug Resistance (1), Street Drugs (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 10, CMBT 7, CRTV 9, INFO 13, INTL 14, MIL 11, PSY:X 30, PSY:M 20, PSY:S 20, TECH 14, THIE 4, SOC 12, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The skills Street Drugs, Needles and Drug Resistance costs only 5 skill points per level.

Income- $50 +$7/wk.

Special Equipment- PCs who need special equipment to use their drug of choice (e.g. needles, pipes, lighters, spoons, etc.) get one free drug kit.

Special Bonus Characteristics

PCs must have one of the following disadvantages. Each disadvantage is as per their description in the disadvantages section (see p.45) but only gives the number of Bonus Points listed below:

Addiction: Alcohol- Gives 0 BPs. See p.45.
Addiction: Amphetamines- Gives 3 BPs. See p.45.
Addiction: Chomper- Gives 7 BPs. See p. 46.
Addiction: Escape- Gives 0 BPs. See p. 46.
Addiction: God Killer- Gives 7 BPs. See p.46.
Addiction: Opiates- Gives 3 BPs. See p.47.
Addiction: Inhalants- Gives 2 BPs. See p.46.
Addiction: Mauler- Gives 10 BPs. See p.46.
Addiction: Maxin- Gives 0 BPs. See p.47.
Addiction: Multi-Drug- Gives 0 BPs. See p.47.
Addiction: Slave- Gives 10 BPs. See p.47.
Addiction: Trace- Gives 10 BPs. See p.47.

Group: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC belongs to a small group of (4-6) addicts who are all addicted to the same drug. These addicts know each other, share living quarters and cooperate in schemes to make money. At their best (when they are not desperate for drugs) the group acts like a corner gang: the members protect each other and seek revenge for crimes committed against each other.

SRO: (Optional Advantage) Costs 10 Bonus Points (only 5 if the PC also has the Group advantage)- The PC (and possibly some fellow addicts) have it together enough, most weeks, to scrape together the rent for a tiny room in a Single Room Occupancy residential hotel. The room is just barely big enough for a single cot and a nightstand. The bathroom is outside of the room and is shared with the whole floor. There is no kitchen, although some residents hook up hotplates and a lucky few even

have old mini-refrigerators. Having a door that locks is a luxury many addicts only dream of and the PC is in a much better position if he or she ever tries to get back on his or her feet. If a week goes by and the PC can't scrape up enough money to give to the manager, the PC will lose the room and be out on the streets.

Long-Term Addict: (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 7 Bonus Points. The PC has been using his or her drug of choice for quite a while and is suffering badly from the drug's side effects. Depending on the PC's drug of choice, the PC suffers from:

Drug	Using For	Side Effects
Alcohol	10 yrs.	Brain damage (-5 INL, -5 AWR, retrograde ad anterograde amnesia at 10 difficulty save), liver damage (-5 to save vs. drug/poison effects).
Amphetamines	4 yrs.	Malnutrition (-3 BLD, -3 BDY)
Chomper	2 yrs.	Lost hair and teeth (-15 to seduction rolls), Liver Damage (-24 to save vs. poisoning/drug effects), Anemia (-2 BLD).
Escape	2 yrs.	Blunted personality (PC has few strong feelings about anything), severe insomnia (1 in 2 chance each night of getting any sleep), poor vision (-2 to vision based AWR rolls).

Drug	Using For	Side Effects
God Killer	6 yrs.	Emphysema (-6 END), Brain Damage (-3 INL, -3 AWR).
Inhalants	2 yrs.	Brain Damage (-4 AWR, -4 AGY, -4 INL, -4 WIL).
Mauler	1 yr.	-12 INL, tendency to act without thinking.
Maxin	4 yrs.	Weakened bones (-3 BDY)
Multi-Drug	6 yrs.	Scars and Bad Skin (-4 to seduction rolls), Brain Damage (-3 INL, -3 AWR), Poor Immune System (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and personality), Malnutrition (-2 BDY, -2 STH).
Opiates	4 yrs.	Poor immune system (-4 to save vs. disease contraction and progression).
Slave	2 Yrs.	Weight loss (-1 BDY, -1 BLD), pale skin, liver damage (-2 to save vs. poison/drug effects)
Trace	3 yrs.	Poor immune system (-12 to save vs. disease contraction and progression), arthritis (-3 AGY).

Suggested Skills- Drug Resistance, Light Sleep, Needles, Shiv, Street Drugs.

Suggested Equipment- Phonebook Armor, Shiv.

Suggested Reading- Drugs.

Gamblers

In Brief- Start and play games in alleys, survive by being cunning gamblers and cheaters.

Favorable Stereotypes- Fun, witty, observant, intelligent, like challenges, good people-sense.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Calculating, charming, amoral, two faced, habitual liars, cheaters, prey on the weak minded.

Other Names- Cardsharks, Cheats.

Origin- The majority of games people play in the city can be traced back to England, China and Native America. English commoners brought their own forms of gambling to the United States. The Puritans tried to eliminate gambling, but failed. The US government eventually turned to lotteries for fund raising. Gambling as a profession first became large in the underworld of Victorian England, where the laws and society created a stable criminal class. "Magsmen" around London would play and cheat others on card and skittle games.

Large casinos appeared early in the beginning of the 19th century, and with them came professional gamblers who would use cheating and skill to make money at the expense of "the house." In the middle of the century, riverboat casinos became popular and flashy riverboat gamblers became well known (and widely hated). The largely unregulated and "uncivilized" west was filled with gambling. Chinese immigrants brought by the gold rush (and later by the railroads) ran some of their own gambling institutions. Prejudice forced many of these immigrants to move to the East coast, especially to New York's China Town (which would quickly grow to become the largest Chinatown in the Western hemisphere).

After the prohibition ended, gangsters turned to gambling as one of their sources of income. The great depression brought a new sense of morality, and mayor La Guardia, elected on a promise to clean up the streets, closed down many gambling houses and fought mobsters. The East coast crackdown on mobsters sent them West to California, and a crackdown on them there forced them to Los Vegas, a paradise of legal gambling. In Los Vegas they set up large empires which set the culture of gambling for the rest of the country. Atlantic City in New Jersey legalized gambling hoping to become the Los Vegas of the East coast.

The next revolution in gambling came from a number of court decisions which gave Indian reservations the ability to open their own casinos, despite state regulations to the contrary. Gaming released the tribes from the prison of abject poverty they had been trapped in for centuries. Many tribes became healthy and successful communities with their gambling money. By the 2040s, the Native Americans were one of the few economic blocks in the US not owned or controlled by one of the three big multinational corporations. When the Freedom Army refused to grant the tribes autonomy, they formed their own armies and helped the US military fight the Freedom Army.

During the Freedom Army occupation of the city, gambling was outlawed but it did not end. Back-room and back-alley games of cards and dice were as common as ever, even when people had nothing more to gamble with than scraps of food. Even in these incredibly lean times, a few people survived the occupation on gambling proceeds alone. When the Freedom Wars ended, gambling stayed illegal. The city sprouted hundreds of illegal card-rooms, most in the back of bars. Flashy slot machines quickly left city consciousness in favor of simple craps and poker games.

People have been gambling since before recorded history. Whether the gambling was done in mob-owned card rooms, flashy casinos or in back alleys, there have always been a tiny class of people able to make a living through the proceeds of gambling. In the city today there are no tribes, corporations or organized crime agencies that run gambling in the city, but there are still professional gamblers.

Timeline

1665- 1st horse racing track built on Long Island.
1800s- Large casinos in US.
1835- Vigilantes in Mississippi lynch 5 cardsharks.
1833- NY lottery ends after scandals.
1849-1855- Gold Rush gambling.
1850s- Heyday of riverboat gambler.
1850s- Chinese immigrants bring new gambling to US
1880s- Chinese, fleeing discrimination in California, start NY Chinatown
1895- 1st slot machine.
1900s- NY public fear of Chinatown gambling, prostitution and crime.
1929-1932- NY Mayor La Guardia war on sin (including gambling houses)
1931- Gambling legal in Nevada.
1978- New Jersey legalizes casinos to revitalize Atlantic City.
1980s- Video slot machines become popular.
1987- Court decision opens door for Indian gaming.
2010- On-Line gambling so prevalent, casino gambling nearly extinct.
2050- Freedom Army makes enemy of US Indian tribes.
2053- Gambling made illegal by Freedom Army.
2055- Restoration committee grants increased autonomy to Indian tribes.

Becoming- Some gamblers have parents who are gamblers and learn the trade from their family. Others find they have a proficiency as children and learn from other older gamblers (who occasionally like to take on apprentices). Gamblers must learn many skills and weave them together seamlessly to win without causing suspicion.

At level one, adventure one the PC has been gambling professionally for about 6 months, long enough that the PC is confident that he or she can make a living gambling.

Lifestyle- Successful Gamblers do not believe in luck. People who lose money gambling believe in luck. They believe that because they have lost several times they are more likely to win the next round, or they may believe that they may win because they deserve it or because they want it badly enough. Professional gamblers never depend on the outcome of a die roll or card draw to be anything other than completely random. "Luck" never favors any person for any reason, except cheaters.

Professional gamblers survive by combining incredible gambling skill with the ability and willingness to cheat when necessary. Gamblers have learned hundreds of methods of cheating that most people would never think of, some high-tech, some centuries old. There are dozens of ways for a cheater to mark a card so that nobody can notice the markings but them, from creating tiny holes, to using infra-red paint (which can only be seen with special glasses), to making tiny indentations on the card with a fingernail. Gamblers also use sleight of hand to switch cards, making sure they get the good cards and their opponents get the bad cards. Gamblers need only see a card for a blink of an eye to recognize it and Gamblers can easily look at the top card of a deck without being caught. Gamblers can also use sleight of hand to replace dice with loaded dice. Special devices, from mirrors to remote transmitters, can be used to spy on the hands of other players.

Card counting is another common form of cheating. The Gambler keeps note of the value of cards that have been used, and determines from this information what cards are most likely to come up. Most Gamblers can do the math in their heads, other must hide small calculating devices on their person (e.g. a device in the shoe which responds to coded toe-presses).

Gamblers often work together: one plays as the gambler who will win the money, the other is a "confederate." Confederates pretend not to know the gambler at all, instead they pose as another player or as a person simply observing the game. Confederates not in the game can peek at the hands of other players and relay that information to players using a variety of secret codes. Confederates within the game can strategize together using secret codes and gain a huge advantage over other players. Confederates are also useful to look out for law enforcement, to provide distractions when a Gambler needs people looking the other way, or to "accidentally" get in the way of anyone chasing a caught cheater.

Gamblers try to get in on games that are already going, but they may quickly find themselves unwelcome at card rooms. When people on street corners start games up, Gamblers join in, and they are likely to start some themselves.

Social Structure- Most gamblers work alone, but a few work together in small groups. When they work in groups, it is typically to help create and maintain an illusion in a complex scam. Many gamblers take on apprentices just so they can have confederates for such scams.

Gamblers can typically recognize other professional gamblers by style of play alone, and they avoid playing against each other whenever possible (playing against each other would be the gambling equivalent of a fair fight, and neither party wants that). Some gamblers may be protective of their turf and try to chase off other gamblers. Most gamblers have the courtesy to warn a turf invader, but if they don't take the hint the worst thing a gambler can do is expose another. Most gamblers are more concerned with making a money than conflicts with each other, but a few have been known to get in feuds.

Advancement- Gamblers advance by becoming more skilled at the skills of gambling (Card Counting, Gambling, Read Tell, Sleight of Hand). Those who save their money can reinvest it in nice clothing so that they can pose as Indies and Wells and get in to higher stake games. The limit on Gamblers in the city is that there just aren't enough rich people to have very-high-stake games. A Gambler might move from $50 pot games to $500 pot games, but there are no $5000 pot games unless the Gambler can afford to leave the city and live near large casinos.

Population- There are about 400 gamblers living in the city.

External Relations- Gamblers try not to be known as Gamblers. If someone realizes that someone is a Gambler, then that Gambler has made a serious professional error. Known Gamblers are often hated and sometimes even hunted. Gamblers typically pose as well Freelancers and are treated accordingly (see p.273).

Street People: Since Gamblers are street people, they may have contacts within the street people community that know that they are Gamblers. Some Gamblers may even hire non-Gamblers to help them as confederates. Gamblers are especially likely to have friends, lovers and family members who are Jacks, Sex Workers and Thieves.

Freaks: Gamblers come to Freak territory en-masse during the festival of the Freak to try to make money from festival goers. Most Freaks use scams or tricks in some way or another. Because they use the same techniques, Gamblers often recognize what Freaks are doing and visa versa. "Professional courtesy" keeps them from ratting each other out.

Typical Weapon- Switchblades are common (because gamblers know sleight-of-hand and can bring out a switchblade covertly).

Turf- Gambling is scattered all over the city. There are many games going on in the backs of bars and many games that start up spontaneously on alleys and street corners. The highest concentration of gambling is in the red light district, directly South of the Hole (a.k.a. Central Park). Many Gamblers can be found in Freak territory during the Festival of the Freak.

Distinguishing Features- Gamblers tend to dress a little more flashily than most street people, they spend a lot of money on clothes and are able to pass as Wells or even Indies. They may have fake jewelry to accentuate the illusion of wealth. It is important for Gamblers to look like people who don't care if they lose a lot of money (rather than street people desperate to turn a profit so they can feed themselves).

Symbols- Dice and cards and other game pieces are common symbols for gamblers. Some gamblers may use personal symbols that consist of specific cards, or combinations of dice, etc.

Slang

Action: n., The total amount one person bets in the course of a game.

Confederate: n., A person who helps a gambler make money.

High Roller: n., A person who gambles a lot of money.

Holdout: n., An extra card kept on one's person.

Juicer: n., Person who marks cards.

Mechanic: n., Sleight-of-hand cheater.

Shooter: n., A person rolling dice.

Shill: n., Person with the job of upping bets (even though they will probably lose).

Spook: n., Someone who peeks on players and secretly conveys information to a player.

Stacking: n., Pre-arranging cards in a deck.

Tell: n., A behavior that betrays a bluff.

Wall Kid: n., Lookout.

Skills

Free Skills: Gambling (2), Sleight of Hand (1), Card Counting (1), Read Tell (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 11, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 10, INTL 12, MIL 10, PSY:X 25, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 4, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Read Tell costs only 10 skill points per level.

Read Tell (Uses AWR) Everyone has a tell, some unconscious behavior that they do when they are bluffing. A Gambler learns to watch a person (a person can make a Hard opposed AWR roll to notice if they are being watched) play several games to discover their tell.

Easy (10): From tells, figure out if a player is trying to hide strong emotions.

Moderate (20): From tells, figure out if someone has a good or bad hand.

Heard (30): From tells, figure out the relative value of a player's hand.

Legendary (40): From tells, and the other cards that have been dealt, figure out every single card a person holds.

Income- $250 +$10/wk.

Special Equipment- Free dice and a deck of cards.

Suggested Skills- Card Counting, Drug Resistance, Forgery, Gambling, Pocket Picking, Seduction, Sleight of Hand.

Suggested Equipment- Knife: Switchblade, Outfit: Clubwear.

Suggested Reading- Fashion & Style.

Jacks

In Brief- Persuasive and quick-witted beggars who will say and do anything to make a buck.

Favorable Stereotypes- Quick witted, brave, creative, entertaining, loyal and hard working.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Loud, obnoxious, hyperactive, annoying, uneducated, prideless con-artists.

Other Names- Jacks-of-all-trades, Beggars.

Origin- Begging has been a staple for homeless people for millennia. Throughout ages and cultures, people have come up with many different methods to enhance their begging. Some used strong arm tactics, begging forcefully and with an implied threat. Some used signs with evocative messages on them. Some came up with stories about needing gas money to drive a pregnant wife to the hospital, or of being robbed after just getting in to town. Some beggars try to be amicable and entertaining, forcing the begee to like the beggar. Some beggars blurred the lines between beggars and day-laborers: their "will work for food" signs would occasionally net them paying jobs, but much more often would get them alms. In the 20th century, places like New York and San Francisco became so inundated with beggars that people learned to tune them out. In order to get noticed, beggars in these places had to be very dramatic or entertaining. In the economic troubles of the 2030s and 2040s it became so bad that if a beggar wasn't a child or attractive woman he or she had to be a one-person show. To make even a bit of change a beggar had to be able to sing and dance, tell jokes and stories, even do dangerous stunts.

There is a story that, around 2070, someone came around some street corner asking for Jack, wanting to hire him for something. A local beggar, thinking that there might be some opportunity in it, said that yes, he was Jack. He was taken along to some job, bluffed his way through it (stories about what he did vary), succeeded via quick thinking and pure luck, and was paid a handsome sum of money. The beggar told his beggar friends, and the next day when someone came looking for Jack, a handful of people came up all claiming to be Jack. The story goes on to say that the skills and quick thinking of "Jack" became increasingly well known, until every beggar in the city was claiming to be Jack and claimed to do any sort of job.

A new form of beggar was born in the city. A brave, gregarious, extroverted, quick thinker who claims to be able to take on any job. "Jack" beggars became so popular that beggars (save for the children and people too old or disabled to be cavorting around) were forced to start calling themselves Jacks in order to compete.

Timeline

1980s- "Will work for food" signs became popular.
2070- First Jack.
2075- City beggars all call themselves Jack.

Joining- Being a Jack is not a learned trade, it's something people do if they don't have any other skills that they can use to make a living. Many Jacks grew up on the streets as homeless orphans, surviving mostly by begging. Very few Jacks are ever "trained" by other Jacks, although Jacks may watch other Jacks in action and see what they do. For the most part, though, being a Jack can't be learned, it's about improvising, saying or doing anything to make money.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been calling himself or herself Jack for about half a year and has learned most of the ins-and-outs of the trade. The Jack is usually too new to have any loyal repeat customers.

Lifestyle- The Jack phenomenon is begging that has evolved to meet the current sensibilities of city residents. Jacks are homeless people who make money by begging and doing odd-jobs. They accost people who are walking down the streets and ask if there's anything they can do for the person for a buck. The Jacks have a near limitless list of things they can do for a buck: give directions, tell a joke, sing a song, take a message, give a foot massage, listen to the begee's problems, carry their bags, protect their home from burglars while they are gone, watch their back, etc. Usually the person who was accosted gives the Jack a dollar just to get them to shut up and go away. Sometimes, the person hears something they like and pays a dollar for the service. People have varying experiences when they actually pay for a service, some say that the Jacks did a horrible job and ripped them off, other claim that the Jacks did a great job. Enough people have had good experiences that they come back asking for Jacks whenever they need help doing something. Jacks who do their jobs well often become trusted servants for Indies and even Wells.

Some Jacks use their people-skills as sales-people. They or other street people will salvage things from the trash and then the Jack will try to sell it to the people he or she accosts. A Jack might sell some trinket worth ten cents for a buck. The buyer typically knows the item is not worth much, but buying it serves the purposes of giving money to this likable person and getting the person to go away. Some Jacks even turn to drug sales: selling soft drugs (cheap marijuana, hallucinogens, mild opiates) to tourists and young people.

Jacks are especially good at recognizing people new to the city. When they find a newcomer their goal is to both protect and exploit the person. Jacks do help people find their way around the city, give them interesting information about the city, teach them how to survive, and even protect them when necessary. The Jack's assistance is valuable, but also costs a lot (up to $20 a day). The new person in the city may become dependent on the Jack and sink a good portion of his or her income in to supporting the Jack.

Jacks are also good at finding people who have a hard time saying no. If the Jack does something for someone and gets a buck, it's not in the Jack's interests to simply go away. The Jack tries to find something else they can do for a buck. A Jack will never leave until a person stops paying them. As long as a person pays, the Jack will follow the person home and become a butler or maid. Jacks are so persistent and helpful that a lot of people let Jacks in to their homes. Typically, this kind of situation doesn't last long. Jacks are good at thinking on their feet and making friends, but they are seldom good at commitment and dependability. So, Jacks may have periods when they have a nice couch to sleep on and good food to eat, but in all likelihood they will be back on the street within a week.

Life as a Jack is all about uncertainty. Jacks can never know how much money they will get that day, where they will be sleeping or how they will eat. Some people would go crazy with anxiety and stress in this kind of lifestyle. The people who survive as Jacks are people who seldom think about the future and focus their minds only on the present moment. Jacks are classic extraverts, and many would be diagnosed with attention deficit disorder if they had ever been to a doctor. A few Jacks have bipolar disorder: when they are manic they beg and make money, when they are depressed they survive on whatever they have saved.

Social Structure- Jacks operate independently and autonomously, owing allegiance to no person. The only relationships or obligation that Jacks have are obligations to loyal customers.

Advancement- Jacks can increase their income tenfold in the course of a day if they run in to a person for whom they can make themselves indispensable. A small number of Jacks have left the streets after becoming personal servants to city Indies.

Population- There are about 1,500 Jacks in the city.

External Relations- No group prompts more varied opinions than Jacks. Some think of them as admirable, hard working and honest. Others think of them as liars, cheats and leeches on society. Jacks are out meeting and interacting with as many people as they can every day and almost every person in the city has had some experience, good or bad, with a Jack. That experience sets how they view Jacks.

   Street People: Most of the Street People who make a living via some skill or talent don't like Jacks. In their rush to say anything to make a buck, Jacks often claim to be Black Meds, Crackers, Insomniacs, etc. When they do this, Jacks don't just compete with other Street People, they hurt their reputations. For instance: when a Jack claims to be able to hack in to a computer and then fails, it is the Crackers whose reputations suffer. The Black Meds have even tried to make PR war against the Jacks: every time they see a poor stitching job they say "this looks like a Jack job."

Typical Weapon- Many Jacks invest in tools they can use to do odd jobs: hammers, crowbars, brooms, etc. These tools often double as weapons.

Turf- The Jacks have no turf, they wander around all of the city looking for people to accost They are found wherever people tend to be found: the major cross-town avenues, Broadway, subways and near the tourist hotels in the Northern part of the red light district.

Distinguishing Features- Jacks find that it helps to dress as nicely as they can. They are still obviously homeless people but they pay a lot of attention to their appearance. Street People who are attractive find it easier to survive by begging and so many Jacks are physically attractive.

Symbols- The letter J is a common symbol of jacks, and some Jacks even wear J patches or tattoos.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 8, CMBT 7, CRTV 5, INFO 10, INTL 13, MIL 10, PSY:X 25, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 9, THIE 4, SOC 8, STRT 5.

Income- $100 +$10/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Quick Improvisation: (Mandatory Advantage) Jacks are not necessarily smarter than other people in the city, but through practice they have become quite good at thinking improvisationally. What this mean in terms of game play is that GMs should afford players a bit more time to think about their reactions, even in time sensitive situations.

Suggested Skills- Acrobatics, City Knowledge, Fashion and Beauty, Cooking, Music, Seduction, Sleight of Hand, Storytelling, Trading.

Suggested Equipment- Carpentry Tools.

Suggested Reading- City Culture.

Runners

In Brief- Messengers and package deliverers for the black market and others. Experts at getting around the city quickly and cheaply.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest, hard working, reputable, quick, wary, trustworthy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Stupid, single-minded, servants with little free will.

Other Names- Riders, Errand Boys/Girls, Gophers, Delivery.

Origin- The modern black market formed during the Freedom Army occupation of the city from 2050 to 2054. Communications systems had been knocked out and the provisional systems set up to replace them were monitored by the Freedom Army. To keep their activities secret, the vast web of black market traders had to communicate in person or by handwritten messages. Children and homeless people were hired to carry messages, goods and money back and forth within the city. Street kids who were proficient with personal transportation (bikes, skateboards, roller blades) were especially valued.

After the Freedom Wars ended, the basic framework of the black market continued. Traders became more blasé about secrecy: they used encrypted voice communications and money transfers to conduct business. They still needed runners to carry physical goods. There was a growing population of people who had been born on the streets and who couldn't get any better job than running errands for black market Traders. There was stiff competition and only the fastest, most efficient and most trustworthy Runners got jobs. Other people in the city, however, started seeing how good these runners were. Soon, people all over the city were hiring runners regularly.

Timeline
2050- Freedom Army occupies the city
2053- Food shortages in the occupied city
2055- Freedom Army in the city destroyed
2075- Traders fight with Drug Lords over drug sales

Joining- Runners typically start very early in life, as homeless children with no other way to make a living who take minor items for quarters. As they grow and learn more about the city, they learn how to get a package anywhere in the city quickly. They gain the trust of Traders and they start making more money. At level one, adventure one, the PC is generally thought of as a young adult and has had several years of good history with Traders.

Lifestyle- For runners, each errand they run is significant to their career. Getting a job done quickly and getting the package delivered safely means they are likely to be given another job. The runners who are the fastest and most dependable are given the most important (and best paying) jobs.

Runners do most of their jobs for Traders, though they give their contact information to everyone they meet (any satisfied customer might someday hire a Runner). Most runners have cell phones or pagers that people can use to contact them. Some even hang outside in front of the building of the Trader most likely to hire them so that the Trader only has to shout out his or her window.

Whenever they can, Runners like to try to form relationships with shut-ins. This can be hard because Shut-Ins are very wary of talking to strangers. Once a Runner can convince a shut-in that they are trustworthy the shut-in will occasionally call on the Runner to do errands. These errands are usually easy because they don't require the Runner to go very far. The Shut-In typically wants something from a grocery, drug or liquor store and knows that hiring a Runner is cheaper than having the store send a delivery person.

Most Runners have some cheap means of transport. Those who do not have transport will only get local delivery jobs and don't make as much money. Bicycles are the most common. A bicycle is a Runner's livelihood and they often take it with them everywhere (even if that means carrying it up several flights of stairs). Most Runners become accomplished at bicycle repair and can fix most problems within a few minutes.

Runners get together in cooperative groups to do subway hand-offs. They take turns doing "running" and "riding." The Runner who is riding pays to get in to the subway system and stays there for days, riding the trains. Other Runners pass packages through the turnstiles to the Rider, who delivers them to other Runners on the other side. The riders get food and drink passed to them and most Runners enjoy their time riding as the only time they get to relax (and heal from injuries).

Runners survive by being fast. Criminals know that runners may be carrying money or valuable goods. Runners can usually outrun (or outride) any muggers, but muggers have been known to set traps for Runners. Runners try to stay anonymous, but it is hard when they are carrying a package under one arm and racing around the city on a bike.

Social Structure- Runners do the majority of their jobs for one to three traders that they know well. They are most likely to work with other Runners who work for the same Traders as they do. Runners seldom need anything big

from each other, but they do each other a lot of little favors. There is an assumption of reciprocity among Runners: a Runner asks for a favor expecting to someday return it.

Advancement- Runners advance by getting better transportation: a better bicycle, an electric bicycle, even a slipboard. Faster Runners get very important rush-jobs that pay significantly more. The best Runners in the city make almost three times as much as a starting Runner (up to $45/wk.).

Population- There are about 750 Runners in the city (about 1.5 per black market trader).

External Relations- Traders do well to present themselves as honest and friendly. When Runners meet someone it is usually because they are delivering something. Runners are usually appreciated and liked by the person they deliver to. Runners try to make contacts among every segment of city society: they are as happy running errands for Traders, gang members, street people families or shut-ins.

Traders: The majority (95%) of a Runner's business is given to them by black market traders. Runners depend on the trust and good graces of Traders for their very survival (and Traders depend on trustworthy Runners to run their businesses efficiently). Traders are notorious gossips and are quite willing to tell everyone they know what they think of a Runner. An accusation of theft, even if the Runner is completely innocent, can be disastrous. For the most part, however, Traders trust Runners implicitly. Some Traders grow to trust Runners so much that they will pay them to do non-Running chores like baby-sit their children. A few Runners have become diplomats, speaking on behalf of very powerful traders.

Turf Protective Gangs: Runners need to get places as quickly as possible, and this means ignoring the boundaries of turf. Gangs who don't like their turf invaded tend to be annoyed by Runners. This includes the Purists, Risen and Skin Borgs. Some of the Runners' shortcuts even involve briefly trespassing on the turf of the Roofers and the Keepers.

Typical Weapon- Although most runners carry a knife or some other weapon, their means of transportation (bike, skateboard, etc.) is usually the easiest thing for them to attack with.

Turf- Runners usually hang out where the black market traders are (see Traders, p.322).

Distinguishing Features- Runners try to dress like average street people, though they are typically more athletic and have better transportation. They often wear baggy clothing so that packages can be easily concealed on their person. A typical outfit would be stained shorts, a knit cap, and a baggy flannel sweater.

Symbols- Running stick figures are commonly used in graffiti to represent Runners.

Skills

Free Skills: Running (2).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 10, CMBT 6, CRTV 5, INFO 12, INTL 13, MIL 10, PSY:X 25, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 10, THIE 5, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Income- $200 +$15/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Geographic Familiarity: (Mandatory Advantage) The PC gets +10 to any City Knowledge roll concerning how to get somewhere or where anything is in the city.

Suggested Skills- Bicycle, Climbing, Information Smuggling, Mechanics, Mnemonics, Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Backpack, Bicycle, Vehicle Repair Tools: Portable.

Suggested Reading- Black Market, City Geography, City Infrastructure.

Sex Workers

In Brief- Sell their bodies in the city sex industry. Most have troubled pasts. Many form revenge pacts with each other.

Favorable Stereotypes- Survivors, good instincts, keep promises, empathetic.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Psychologically damaged, unambitious, weak willed, untrustworthy, hateful.

Other Names- Whores (derogatory), Hustlers (usually referring to male prostitutes), Street Walkers, Prostituted People (a term used by activists to emphasize that prostitution is a crime committed against individuals, not an identity), Hookers.

Origin- Throughout history, the status of female prostitutes (who make up the vast majority of prostitutes) has varied with the status of women, ranging from societies in which women were traded like cattle to societies where prostitutes could become entrepreneurs and gain wealth and status. In ancient India and the Middle East, prostitutes worked in temples, making money for them. Intercourse with these prostitutes was considered holy. Later, in ancient Greece, there were three classes of prostitutes: simple brothel workers, those trained in different forms of entertainment, and owners of salons who played hosts to the rich and

Warning: Not all character classes are equal. Most character classes have advantages and disadvantages that balance out to make them approximately as powerful as each other, but this character class is inherently unbalanced and will not be as powerful as starting characters from other classes.

powerful. In ancient Rome, widespread slavery led to a large class of slave-prostitutes, which Roman law gave even less rights to than normal slaves.

Early Christianity did little to stop prostitution in ancient Europe. Christian churches followed the teachings of St. Augustine. St. Augustine said that prostitution was an inescapable evil: if it were wiped out then there would be even greater sins committed (like rape). At the same time, corrupt government officials and even church leaders made fortunes on the proceeds of prostitution. It wasn't until the 16th century, when prostitution was linked to syphilis outbreaks, that major government and religious crackdowns on prostitution occurred. Punishments for prostitutes became increasingly harsh, while punishments for the men who visited them were light or non-existent.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the industrial revolution created huge cities. With the anonymity of city life, prostitution flourished. Many countries quit trying to stop prostitution, and instead implemented cruel and degrading medical inspection of prostitutes. The people running prostitution (usually men with criminal histories) found that foreign women would work for less and with less disobedience. An international trade in human beings

(mostly young women) began and flourished all over Europe, despite attempts by industrialized countries to stop it. This trade would only grow (encompassing the whole globe) in the 20th and 21st centuries.

In the mid 19th century, growing industry in lower Manhattan pushed prostitution up towards midtown (in between 34th and 59th streets). Broadway, always a major commercial thoroughfare, became the center of prostitution in the city. Many of the brownstones in this part of town became saloons, hotels and brothels where prostitutes operated. This part of town became quickly known as the Tenderloin, one of the country's many "red light" districts. Red light districts became popular in the late 1870s as a means of quarantining prostitution to parts of town where it would not bother "ordinary people." The tenderloin remained a red light district until a booming theatre industry forced it out. The tenderloin became "times square." With the theatre came a number of gay men. The bar at the Astor Hotel and the Metropolitan Opera became major tea rooms (places where men would go to pick up other men using pre-arranged secret signals). Gay prostitutes started appearing in the area.

When servicemen returning from World War two started frequenting midtown, there was a sudden market for pornography. Several adult bookstores sprang up in the Times Square areas. In the 1960s, attitudes and laws regarding sex and prostitution became more lax. Adult bookshops, theaters and peep-shows proliferated in the Times Square, and drug dealers and prostitutes (male and female) worked the streets. Times Square once again became known as a seedy and dangerous part of town. This changed in the 1980s with renewed attempts by legitimate businesses to revitalize the area. The city government made deals with large corporations (Disney, MTV) and by the end of the 20th century had virtually wiped out sex and pornography around Times Square (pushing it, instead, to other parts of the city).

After the Freedom Wars, there was a massive exodus out of the city. Most tourist class hotels closed and the only ones left were the former-luxury hotels built along central park South. With the city's only tourists and business travelers nearby, the sex industry once again concentrated in the area near Times Square. Prostitution, strip clubs, massage parlors and peep shows moved back in to the Times Square area, eager to earn tourist dollars. This part of town quickly became known to city residents as "the

red light district".

Despite the movements of the sex industry to different parts of town, the lifestyles of prostitutes in the city changed little from the mid 20th century to the late 2070s. Pimps (mostly male), kept prostitutes (mostly female) using psychological and physical bondage. Pimps took all the prostitutes' earnings and only gave back enough for the prostitutes to survive. Pimps, in turn, have often owed allegiances or paid tributes to whatever organized crime was currently ruling the city. Whenever there was a crackdown on prostitution in the city, it was usually the prostitutes that would suffer while little happened to johns and pimps. The pimps had it good and so this system of exploitation survived many attempts to wipe it out. The average voter knew little about the nature of prostitution: they only saw the scantily clad men and women and did not see their exploiters. The people who spent their time on the streets (the gang members, criminals, gutterpunks homeless people, etc.) knew the truth, but until recently they had very little power.

In 2076, a new gang formed called the Sexologists. The Sexologists were a psychic Indie gang that preached healthy loving sex. As the Sexologists grew in size and influence they decided to make war on the pimps. The Sexologists and their devotees would make regular trips in to the red light district, acting on knowledge gained from informants to find and beat up pimps. Although many Sexologists preached non-violence, they were not afraid to kill if a pimp refused to take his beating and fought back. Within a few months, the city's pimps had either fled, been killed, or had gone deep underground. The prostitutes of the city suddenly found themselves out from under the thumb of pimps.

The removal of pimps was good in a lot of ways: many people left the sex industry, others were able to become escorts and strippers. Many remained prostitutes but enjoyed increased income and more autonomy (especially an increased ability to choose what tricks to take). The removal of pimps has not, however, been a panacea for the problems of prostitutes. In the absence of pimps, Johns became more exploitative: paying less, demanding more, trading sex for things like shelter and protection. Worse still, johns started preying on prostitutes even more than before: refusing to pay them, beating them, robbing them, raping them and even killing them.

In response to this increased need for self-protection, many prostitutes taught themselves self-defense (even lethal self-defense). Many of the same prostitutes, taking a clue from the gang code of revenge, started forming revenge pacts. About a year ago, four prostitutes formed a pact, and got tattoos with a triangle of symbols to advertise that pact. Other copied this and the triangles quickly became common, almost a status symbol among prostitutes. The triangle also became a symbol that city prostitutes were coming in to their own, learning to defend themselves. However, hope for city sex workers is still limited: those who really become self-sufficient typically leave the sex industry, to be replaced by naïve and psychologically weak runaways.

Timeline

1500s- Syphilis outbreaks in Europe cause crackdown on prostitution.
1699- 1st US anti-prostitution laws.
1700s-1800s- Industrial revolution creates big cities, larger prostitution market.
1849- Term "hooker" (British slang for a thief) 1st used to describe prostitutes in US.
1863- Disreputability of Gen. Joe Hooker's soldiers helps popularize term "hooker".
1825- Anti-brothel riot in Lennox Pennsylvania
1870s- Creation of "red light" districts in order to hem in prostitution
1910- Congress passes "white slave traffic" act.
1910s- Broadway becomes home to the much live theatre.
1925- Charles Luciano, early Mafioso, gains control of all of Manhattan prostitution.
1945- Returning WWII soldiers create market for semi-legal porn shops in Times Sq.
1960s- Sex laws loosen, bring legal pornography to Times Square.
1984-1996- "42nd Street Development Project," MTV, Disney & city cleans Times Sq.
2055- Prostitution returns to Times Sq. as legal commerce dries up.
2076-2078- Sexologists form.
2079- Sexologists attack pimps.
2079- First "triangle" revenge pact.

Becoming- Most of the current sex workers were forced or coerced in to prostitution before the Sexologist war on pimps. Almost all had tragic childhoods and ended up on the streets of the city with absolutely no knowledge of how to protect or care for themselves. Runaways come to the streets every day, from every strata of society, and professional exploiters are always on the lookout for those who look especially lost and helpless. Some of these exploiters are from cults, some are from the pornography industry, and up until recently most of them were pimps.

Pimps are often sweet at first, but end up keeping prostitutes in line with physical intimidation and psychological abuse. Abuse keeps prostitutes' self-esteem so low that they seldom seek anything better in their lives. Pimps keep prostitutes totally dependent on them, never allowing them to learn to take care of themselves.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been working in the sex industry (primarily working the streets as a prostitute) for several years. The PC has been free of his or her pimp for several months. The PC has learned how to obtain food, clothing and shelter, but still has no non-sex industry skills which could be used to make a living.

Sex Workers and Childhood Sexual Abuse

A large portion of sex industry workers have been sexually abused as children (more than other city residents). There are two explanations for the high prevalence of childhood sexual abuse:

The sociopolitical explanation is that both the sexual abuse history and the current state of prostitution can be explained by one overarching cause: bad homes. Almost all prostitutes were raised in homes that were rife with mental illness, substance abuse and criminal neglect. These households made the children vulnerable to every type of victimization, including sexual victimization, as well as making them vulnerable to ending up on the streets, penniless, having never been taught any skills that could be used to make a living, with prostitution just about the only means for survival.

The psychologists' explanation is more subtle: sexual abuse has caused the person to grow up thinking of sex not as a pleasurable activity, not as an activity that strengthens a romantic relationship, but as an service that can be bartered. This unhealthy sexual worldview makes people more likely to seek employment in the sex industry.

Lifestyle- The most common transaction in the city sex industry looks something like this: *A male john walking down Broadway sees a female prostitute that he likes and that he thinks is within his price range. He walks up to her and offers a certain amount of money for a quick sex act. She quickly decides that he is probably not a serial killer and starts haggling with him. Whether or not a condom will be used and whether or not the john will pay up-front are just points in the negotiation. When the two come to an arrangement, the prostitute leads the john down an alley, to a nice quiet, private spot (that is within earshot of the prostitutes' friends if she calls for help). The sexual act is engaged, standing or on an old weather-beaten couch (placed there for just that purpose). The prostitute and the john arrange their clothing and the john pays. The prostitute has made $10 for an hour of waiting around, a few minutes of haggling and rarely more than a minute of sexual activity.* Countless variations exist on this basic scenario. Not all prostitutes are female and not all johns are male. Some situations are better, with the sex worker leaving happier and wealthier, and some are much worse.

Some johns are better than others: some are repeat customers who the prostitute knows and trusts, some pay more than the normal market price because they feel like it, some are socially isolated people who are paying for human interaction as much as they are for sex. Some Johns will buy presents or food for prostitutes, or will take them to a nice hotel (the prostitute may even get a cut from the hotel owner).

Some johns are worse than others. With no pimps to protect prostitutes, many johns believe they can do whatever they want. Some haggle quite viciously, knowing that the sex worker will work for next to nothing if pushed. At two or three AM, when many prostitutes are ready to go to sleep for the night, many Johns come by offering a place to stay the night in exchange for sexual services. A few johns are even evolving in to pimps: demanding both sex and a few bucks for a safe place to sleep for the night. Johns might seem perfectly nice but have some communicable disease that the sex worker may catch. Johns sometimes try to humiliate, beat or rob prostitutes. Serial killers often prey on prostitutes, and often use money as a lure to try to get the prostitute to come to an isolated place. This is why Sex Workers rarely go to an unfamiliar or isolated place without a friend.

"Happy prostitute? Sure, I've heard of them, but I don't know any. Maybe it's like back when slavery was legal and the white people would have one happy slave which they would bring out to show that slavery was okay."

-M'Rick Silva, Sex Worker

When things go bad, Sex Workers must be ready to defend themselves at a moment's notice. Many wear knives in sheaths that remain strapped to their bodies at all times. To gain further protection, many Sex Workers join a revenge pact with three friends. These pacts are known by their symbol: the triangle. The triangle is a solid black tattoo visible on the prostitute's body. The triangle has the Sex Worker's personal symbol in the center (symbols are used, rather than names, because many prostitutes are illiterate). On each corner of the triangle is a smaller symbol representing the other three prostitutes that participated in the pact. The pact is an oath to avenge the death of anyone in the pact (or die trying). Sex Workers take this oath very seriously, and they get very angry with any Sex Worker caught shirking revenge duty. When a Sex Worker is found murdered, other Sex Workers comb the streets looking for people with matching symbols so they can inform those people of their duty. Many Sex Workers memorize the triangles of those working nearby them so that they can identify the triangle symbols even if a killer removes the triangle. The threat of revenge represented by a triangle is not as fearful as the threat of revenge of killing a gang member, but is a great enough threat that it makes life as a Sex Worker significantly safer.

Why Men?

Ask any Sex Worker, male of female, to tell horror stories about johns and nine out of ten stories will be about male johns. It is a statistical fact that a majority of those who seek sex for money are men and that an even greater majority of those who engage in sexual violence are men. Many Sex Workers, both male and female, come to believe that all men enjoy hurting and humiliating women. Sexologists, and others, have gone to great pains to tell people that this is not true, that only a minority of men find sexual satisfaction from violence and cruelty. Those who have used psychic skills or other techniques to experience the consciousness of both men and women say that, with exceptions, sexual desire is different between men and women. This difference in how desire "works" means that men have a greater capacity than women to find violence or cruelty sexually stimulating. Evolutionary psychologists have many theories why a difference in male and female sexual desire would be selected for, but nobody knows all the details for sure.

Social Structure- Most Sex Workers start as prostitutes working the street, and few ever see any other segment of the sex industry. Most Sex Workers don't owe anyone and they work only to gain enough money to get by. Their only allegiances, if any, are with a small group of other prostitutes with which they have a revenge pact. With other prostitutes they are usually friendly (though there may be feuds). The most common source of friction between two prostitutes is a dispute over who "owns" a particular working corner.

A few prostitutes working the streets (about 1 in 20) still have pimps controlling them from behind the scenes. These pimps must keep themselves secret or face violence at the hands of the Sexologists. Since they must stay secret, they have less control over their prostitutes than they did a few years ago. Most pimps have 3 to 6 prostitutes working for them (usually all males or all females). There are a few pimps who have only one prostitute, and most of these are the spouses, significant others or parents of the prostitutes.

A small number of Sex Workers work as prostitutes, but do not work the streets. They advertise on the internet, receive calls on cell phones or pagers and go to wherever the potential john is. These Sex Workers have little contact with other Sex Workers.

Some Sex Workers operate out of escort services, brothels, strip clubs, pornography studios and massage parlors. Sex Workers in these establishments are typically employees of the owners of these businesses. Many of the owners are ex-pimps who expanded in to semi-legitimate business before or during the Sexologist war against pimps. A few of these are owned by Sex Workers or ex-Sex Workers. The largest and most profitable (including some of the strip clubs, most of the pornography studios and all four of the escort services) are owned by private investors from outside of the city. The Sex Workers that work in these establishments are typically free to leave whenever they want.

Even johns have some small amount of social organization. Multiple sex sites on the internet are visited by city johns, or people interested in visiting the city in order to meet a Sex Worker. On these sites, people describe experiences with prostitutes, give tips, tell what charges are reasonable, rate prostitutes and give information on how to find those prostitutes. One popular net site gives a list of street walkers who won't fight back if johns "slap them around a bit."

Advancement- The fastest and easiest way for a Sex Worker to improve his or her quality of life is to leave the business. A few Sex Workers escape with the help of friends, family or lovers and a few escape with the help of charity organizations, but most are on their own and have to teach themselves the skills they need to survive outside of the sex industry. Most people who have escaped from the sex industry are hard-working and dependable members of whatever occupation they end up in, perhaps because they feel so lucky to be doing anything other than prostitution.

There are many barriers to prostitutes leaving the life. Drug problems, distrust of people (especially men) and low-self esteem can keep a prostitute from seeking help, working for something better, and forming relationships with those who could help them.

Sex Workers can also advance within the Sex Industry. The first, biggest and hardest step is to stop working on the streets. There are many avenues available in the sex industry for street workers who are attractive and ambitious enough: they can sell sex as employees of brothels, massage parlors or escort services. Although

"Thank you drugs for keeping me numb and helping me forget a day as soon as it ended. Thank you distrust and hatred for keeping me from getting to close to anyone who might want to exploit my weakness. Thank you self-hatred for keeping hope and desire for something better from tearing me apart. Thank you all for helping me survive. Go now, in peace, to help someone else, for I no longer need you."

-"Prayer of the Ex-Prostitute" by Latina Kumatsa, Sexologist

they still have sex with johns for money, they are paid more and work in a safer environment. These workers often have an income nearly equivalent to that of a well ($75/wk.). Very attractive Sex Workers can get jobs in strip clubs or pornography studios. The safety and pay here is even higher, and many make more than the average well ($150/wk.). A few prostitutes in the city become "kept" by some rich person, which means they are given a steady income (which they can supplement with other forms of prostitution) but they are constantly "on-call" for sexual services. Kept prostitutes can make from $100 to $200/wk.

As a Sex Worker advances in the sex industry, the Sex Worker is increasingly likely to reach a point where he or she does not meet the physical requirements to advance any further. Exercise and artfully applied makeup can help, but only a little. Most Sex Workers who feel a strong need to advance end up getting plastic surgery. Some are able to save up enough money for plastic surgery, but most must get someone else to pay for it for them (which leaves them in another person's debt, sometimes a debt they can never get out of). Those who have had tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of plastic surgery done to them can make up to $300/wk. as high-class escorts, kept men and women or porn stars.

Compared to working on the streets, the jobs a Sex Worker can advance through are vastly more comfortable, safe and well-paying. Yet few Sex Workers find lasting satisfaction in these jobs. Some find themselves in a worse state: they are still plagued by drug and self-esteem problems but they do not have the day-to-day job of staying alive to keep them distracted. Many Sex Workers advance very high in the city sex industry only to end up committing suicide.

It Can Always Get Worse

Just as there are ways to advance or to leave prostitution, things can always get worse. There are still pimps in the city and an unlucky prostitute can find himself or herself under the control of a pimp. Another way to slide down is to keep working the streets but to lose physical attractiveness (due to injuries, age or other problems). These prostitutes make even less money and have to do even more dangerous and degrading things to survive. Worse still, there are small groups of people in the city who capture men and women and keep them complete prisoners, using their bodies to make money. These groups prefer to prey upon immigrants who know nothing of city ways, but prostitutes are considered the next best thing when immigrants can not be found.

Population- There are about 650 Sex Workers in the city (500 females, 150 males). About 130 (20%) are transgendered. The average age is 18. Of the 650, at any given time about 330 (51%) are walking the streets, 15 (2%) are working on-call via the internet, 55 (8%) work in brothels and massage parlors, 110 (17%) work for escort services, 75 (12%) work in strip clubs, 35 (5%) work in pornography studios, and about 30 (5%) are kept prisoner in three or four secret brothels throughout the city.

External Relations- Most people on the street see Sex Workers as another group of street people who have been forced to do something dangerous and unpleasant in order to survive. Only a small percentage of the population of people out on the streets are johns (about 2%, or 1,800). There are also a number of shut-ins who leave their homes in order to visit Sex Workers.

   Freaks: Many Sex Workers come to Freak territory during the quarterly Festival of the Freak hoping to make money. The Freaks tolerate their presence. There are some Freaks, however, whose "shows" appeal to mostly prurient interests and who might be considered by some to be Sex Workers. These Freaks often see Sex Workers as unwelcome competitors, and Sex Workers often feel that the Freaks set too high a standard with their kinky acts.

   Sexologists: The opinions of Sexologists towards Sex Workers are complex and voluminous. Several net sites owned by Sexologists expound on these opinions and could fill whole paperback volumes. Most Sexologists feel that Sex Workers are victims of a "plague". That plague is an unhealthy relationship with sex, a relationship that is spiritually and psychologically destroying the Sex Workers (and everyone else involved with the sex industry). Sexologists believe that Sex Workers can never be healthy and happy until they can leave the sex industry and spend significant time repairing the damage that has been done to their relationship with sex. Sexologists can be seen wandering around the red light district, looking for pimps and other exploiters to beat up and trying to talk Sex Workers in to leaving the sex industry. Some Sex Workers have left the industry with the help of Sexologists, and many have even become Sexologists. The majority of Sex Workers, though, don't think they can leave the sex industry at this time. They are annoyed by Sexologists coming around telling them to do something they can't or won't do.

   Hunters: A few Hunters have preyed upon Sex Workers, thinking of them as unclean things that need to be cleansed from the city. Sex Workers are understandably afraid of anyone who looks or acts like they might be a hunter.

   Night Shift: Since most things that Sex Workers do is a crime, the Night Shift feel an obligation to harass them. However, prostitution is fairly low on the list of crimes the Night Shift are out to stop and most Sex Workers have little to fear from Night Shift officers. A few older Sex Workers even like the Night Shift (they remember the corrupt cops that used to come around threatening to put Sex Workers in jail if they would not have sex with the cops). Night Shift officers will try to grab Sex Workers who are clearly underage (to send off to child welfare), and so these typically hide whenever they see a Night Shift officer.

Typical Weapon- Sex Workers like small thin knives which can be strapped to the body and be mostly inconspicuous. A few who advance in the sex industry even pay for Skin Knives (p.152).

Turf- A majority of Sex Workers operate within the area known as the red light district. The red light district has loose boundaries and tends to encroach on other city areas. The red light district lies South of the hole and goes as and South as 34th street. It is generally bounded on the West by 8th Avenue (where Tea Drinker and Sexologist turfs begin) and on the East by 5th Avenue (where Risen turf begins). Broadway, a major thoroughfare in the city, angles Northwest through the red light district and is where a majority of the action of the red light district can be found. The streets are crawling with johns, Sex Workers, cult recruiters, muggers, Sexologists and others. The businesses along Broadway are mostly pornography stores, strip clubs and liquor stores. Most sex takes place in alleys off of Broadway, though there are a few cheap hotels nearby that give hourly rates. Off Broadway are

old buildings currently being used as pornography studios, strip clubs, massage parlors, etc. Somewhere in the red light district there is known to be at least one secret brothel where people (mostly young immigrant women, smuggled in to the US) are kept prisoner.

Distinguishing Features- When working, Sex Workers wear clothing as revealing as they can get away with considering the weather. They wear clothing which is often quite uncomfortable: ultra-tight jeans for men, tight short skirts and high-heels for women. Many prostitutes wear black tattoos showing they are in revenge pacts. Recognizing an on-duty prostitute is not difficult, since they shout offers at nearly everyone who passes them.

Symbols- Black triangles are the most common (and the nicest) symbol used to represent sex workers.

Slang

Around the World: v., a sex act that Sex Workers may be asked to engage in.

Business, The: n., prostitution or the sex industry in general..

Half-and-Half: v., a sex act that Sex Workers may be asked to engage in.

Hustler: n., male prostitute (who typically gets male customers).

John: n., a customer who wants to pay for sex.

Pimping: v., forcing someone to have sex for money (through psychological manipulation and physical violence) and taking some or all of that money.

Trick: n., a transaction of sex for money.

Bad Trick Sense (Uses AWR)- There are a lot of very dangerous johns in the city, if a Sex Worker goes with the wrong one her or she can get killed. Sex Workers who survive for long are either very lucky or have learned to make split second decisions about a john. This skill is a snap judgement on a person, about whether there is a possibility that they are dangerous, based on how the person is dressed, how they look, how they carry themselves and how they speak.

Easy (10)- After chatting with a john for a few minutes, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Moderate (20)- After being greeted by a john, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Hard (30)- After looking at a john, tell whether he or she might be dangerous.

Legendary (40)- Tell exactly what kind of kinky stuff a john is in to just by looking at him or her.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 9, CMBT 7, CRTV 9, INFO 13, INTL 14, MIL 11, PSY:X 30, PSY:M 20, PSY:S 20, TECH 14, THIE 5, SOC 10, STRT 5.

Special Skills: The special skill Bad Trick Sense costs only 10 skill points per level.

Income- $100 +$10/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Pimped: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 10 Bonus Points. The PC is unlucky enough to be under the control of one of the few pimps still operating in the city. The PC is dependent on the pimp, who takes all the money the PC makes and provides for all the PCs needs. The pimp survives because the PC is completely ignorant about how to survive on his or her own (PC starts with no levels of the City Knowledge skill). The pimp uses physical violence and psychological abuse to keep the PC down. The only benefit to being pimped is that the pimp has a financial motivation to protect the PC, and the PC may get in a situation where the pimp will use force to protect the PC.

PK: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. Some prostitutes have joined the Sexologists in their war on pimps, helping chase away or even kill pimps. Prostitutes who are believed to have killed their own pimps are afforded extra respect by the prostitution community, and most get a "PK" or "Pimp Killer" tattoo to help advertise their new status. A PC with this advantage is widely known to have killed his or her pimp.

Triangle: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC wears the black tattoo of a triangle representing a mutual revenge pact entered in to with three fellow Sex Workers. The triangle is worn where it is visible as a deterrent against would be murderers. Although it acts as a valuable deterrent, it carries with it a dangerous duty: if one of the other Sex Workers is murdered, the PC will probably be tracked down and expected to avenge that death (or die trying).

Suggested Skills- Bad Trick Sense, Drug Resistance, Light Sleep, Seduction, Street Fighting: Unarmed.

Suggested Equipment- Dagger, Outfit: Clubwear, Pheromones.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, Medical Care: Plastic Surgery (p.132), Serial Killers, Sexologists (p.301).

Who is Better Off: a Sex Worker or a Drug Addict?	
The distinction between the two is not always easy to make. Most Sex Workers use drugs at some point and most addicts resort to prostitution sometimes. Here is a general comparison of the average life of a starting member of these two groups:	
Sex Workers meet friendly johns regularly.	Addicts meet good drug dealers occasionally.
Sex Workers are often beaten up or killed by johns or pimps.	Addicts are occasionally beaten up or killed by drug dealers or other addicts.
Sex Workers are common targets for cults.	Addicts are poor targets for cults because their addiction is usually stronger than the cult brainwashing.
Sex Workers can't trust johns or pimps, can usually trust other Sex Workers.	Addicts can't trust drug dealers or other addicts.
Many Sex Workers have mutual revenge pacts.	Few addicts have mutual revenge pacts.
Some Sex Workers advance by getting a better and safer job.	Addicts have few routes to advancement (becoming an errand runner for drug dealers is one of them).
The war on pimps by the Sexologists has been mostly successful.	The war on the Drug Lords by various city groups has been mostly unsuccessful.
Average life expectancy for a Sex Worker: 22.	Average life expectancy for an addict: 22
Percentage of people who escape from the sex industry (by a means other than death): 38%	Percentage of people who escape from addiction (by a means other than death): 11%

Thieves

In Brief- A member of one of many small street families that have survived, for generations, by stealing.

Favorable Stereotypes- Nonviolent, skillful, crafty, honest survivors.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, cowardly, remorseless victimizers.

Other Names- Burglar, Catburglar, Pickpocket, Sneak.

Origin- There is now, and always has been, two types of theft. The first is theft by force or threat of force, the second is subtle theft, stealing without the victim knowing about it. The second takes skills and techniques that are best developed over the course of several lifetimes. This requires a stable underclass of people who will be forced to resort to crime from one generation to the next.

The skill of thieves peaked in the cities of Victorian England. The state of society created a permanent criminal class. This class, generation after generation, perfected the arts of thievery and broke theft down in to multiple specializations, including pickpockets, "attic thieves," shoplifters, horse thieves and even dog thieves. The criminal class even had its own slang language which nobody else could understand. The Victorian thieves were some of the most skilled thieves ever, trained almost from birth in their particular arts. A wealth of knowledge was destroyed when social changes caused the criminal class to become unstable.

Welfare was one thing that kept cultures of theft from developing in many industrialized countries. Not everyone in the welfare age could or would live by welfare alone and many did turn to theft. Not every member of a family line turned to theft and thus there wasn't enough inter-generational stability to create a true criminal culture. The closest thing to Victorian criminal culture that the 20th century would see was prison culture. People in prisons and juvenile halls would receive training in criminal arts. Prison culture was brutal and dangerous and the best and brightest of the poor classes tended to avoid it.

In the first half of the 21st century, Several changes in American law, meant to combat illegal aliens and identity theft, made it progressively harder for people to prove they were US citizens and made it harder for people to get any kind of job at all without furnishing that proof. Shortly before the Freedom Wars, a new type of underclass began to show up in large inner cities: people born on the streets with no birth certificates. They would come to be known (after the Freedom Wars) as the Unborn, and they would become an underclass more likely to stay poor than even the Victorian criminal class. As early as the 2030s, families in New York have been making a living from theft and have been teaching the arts of theft to their children. The third or fourth generation members of these families are known simply as "Thieves".

Timeline
1837- Queen Victoria comes to the throne.
1838- Oliver Twist, by Charles Dickens, published
1901- Queen Victoria dies.
1932- Great depression in US, 1st major federal funding for welfare.
2030s- First thief families that still exist today.
2040s- First appearance of an "unborn" class.

2060- 320 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.
2079- 1000 children born this year in NY to homeless midwives.

Becoming- Most Thieves were raised to be Thieves. As small children, they were taught to provide distractions to help their parents and older siblings steal without getting caught. As young as five they were encouraged to learn to shoplift from stores. As young as seven, they might have been trained to pick pockets (and do quick hand-offs to their siblings in case the victim noticed). At around adolescence the young thief will have been taught the real tricks of the trade: picking locks, jimmying open windows, recognizing and turning off alarms, finding valuables hidden inside a house or apartment. When they reach their teenage years, Thieves are expected to be able to support themselves. At around fifteen, most Thieves leave home and soon start building their own families.

At adventure one, level one, the PC is an accomplished thief who has just left home. The PC still gets some support from his or her family (and supports them when they are in need) but the majority of time the PC is stealing only to feed himself or herself. The PC has not yet started his or her own family.

Lifestyle- For a Thief, everything is well-planned and well thought out in advance. Every contingency is thought of and a plan made for each. If they are seen, most Thieves have an escape route pre-planned, where they can run until out of sight and hide in a place they can not easily be found. Obstacles, from a confederate pretending to be a stumbling drunk to a tripwire, can be left behind to slow a pursuing victim. When a thief has confederates, valuables are almost always handed off to a confederate as soon as they are stolen. If there is no confederate, Thieves often hide the things they have stolen. That way, if the thief is caught he or she can protest innocence and show that he or she doesn't have the stolen item.

There are two places that people store their valuables: on their person, and locked up at a residence, business-place or storage facility. When Thieves go after valuables stored on someone's person, they use various forms of pocket picking. When Thieves go after valuables stored in a building or vehicle, they use burglary.

   Pocket Picking: Most people in the city know to check their pockets after anyone bumps in to or brushes up against them. Some people will grab or hit anyone who touches them in any way. So, thieves usually look for less recognizable forms of pocket picking. Some Thieves cut holes through the seats on subway cars so they can stick their hands through and pick the pockets of someone in a seat in front of them. Some Thieves simply follow people around, waiting them to get careless and set down a valuable item for just a second. In winter, Thieves often steal jackets left lying around in restaurants and bars. Crowds are also a favorite of Thieves, who can usually pick pockets without anyone checking their pockets. There are few crowds in the city. The largest public event is the quarterly Festival of the Freak, and Thieves are out in force at this event. Thieves may even try to manufacture their own crowds by doing things like staging fights. Thieves also have tricks to distract people so that those people don't realize that someone else is brushing up next to them. A common ploy is for one Thief to loudly accuse someone of some crime while another picks the accused's pocket.

Some Thieves hang out near ATM machines, waiting to see someone put in their pin number. When the person leaves, the thief (or a different thief) picks their pocket and uses the ATM card to take out as much as they can (most banks have a $200 per day limit).

Burglary: They key to a successful burglary is casing the place to be burgled. Casing allows Thieves to establish when the building will be unoccupied (or, save that, when the people occupying it will be asleep or in VR) and what security measures exist.

Getting in to a building is often the most hazardous part of burglary, because at that point the Thief is in danger of being noticed both by people outside and by people inside. A good approach is vital for a Thief, and Thieves love hedges and fences that can mask their approach to a building. Second best is a dark alley or a poorly lit street. The city is slow at replacing street lights and many security conscious building owners have their own lights installed on the sides of buildings. A thief might break one or two of these lights during the day to prepare for an unseen entry at night.

Some thieves have been known to cut holes in walls, ceilings or floors to gain entrance to a building. This is especially useful when an in-use building has a shared wall with an abandoned building. Most times Thieves enter through a door or window or skylight. Doors can be jimmied open, forced open or the locks picked, but are most likely to be alarmed. First floor windows are the most heavily protected (solid bars and alarms) and skilled Thieves usually try to enter through a window on an upper floor or a skylight on the roof. Even these windows have bars, but they are likely to be old bars that can be sawed or pulled off easily.

Once a thief gets in to a building undetected, the next trick is to grab as much valuable stuff as possible as quickly as possible. Thieves know the weight-to-black-market-value ratio of everything they might run in to. They know where people like to hide things and they have a standard search pattern. They know the quickest ways to break in to lock boxes. Some Thieves have the expertise that will let them get in to safes, but most ignore safes and focus on things they can grab easily.

Social Structure- The Black Meds were once separate families that practiced street medicine. These families eventually coalesced in to one large family. The same thing happened to the Crackers and Insomniacs. Thieves, on the other hand, have shown no signs that they are coalescing. Instead, there are hundreds of families spread throughout the city, most aware of the existence of only a few other families. This independence and anonymity suits the Thieves: they can live somewhere without their neighbors knowing that they are Thieves, and there is no place for an angry victim to go looking for revenge.

It does benefit a thief to get to know a few other Thieves. Fellow Thieves can get together to act as confederates or lookouts. Small teams of Thieves may assemble to take on very lucrative jobs where there is a lot of security to deal with. Despite the fact that they sometimes work together, there are no Thief "hangouts", no shared language (except among Thieves from the same family) and since they don't advertise that they are Thieves, meetings are uncommon. Thieves may even pay black market traders to hook them up with other Thieves.

Advancement- The easiest way to advance as a thief is to reinvest money in to better equipment which can help the thief take on bigger and better jobs. Having some money saved up can also let a Thief take a break from the normal day-to-day jobs while he or she plans something big. Money also allows Thieves to hire non-Thieves (especially Crackers) and to bribe security guards and people working inside a building. Thieves who have saved up some money usually try to rob from the homes of the city's wealthiest people (black market traders, hunters, Drug Lord kings) and from corporate offices. A very tiny minority of Thieves will gain enough money, skills, equipment and dependable confederates that they can become international super-thieves, stealing from institutions around the world. Many Thieves who gain enough money and experience to take on jobs in other cities are so tired of the stressful life of a Thief that they prefer to retire and live like a well.

Population- There are about 1,700 Thieves and members of small Thief families in the city.

External Relations- Thieves rarely steal from other street people: the potential profit is very low and the potential trouble they would get in to if caught is as high as if they robbed some Indie. Thus most street people feel relatively safe around people who they know are Thieves.

Con-Artists: For the last decade there has been a known rivalry between the Thieves, who steal by skill and stealth, and con artists, who steal by tricking people. Jacks sometimes con people, and Thieves sometimes go after them, but Thieves most love to go after wells and indies who run big moneymaking scams. There are many stories (probably exaggerated, possibly false) of Thieves ratting out con artists out of a philosophical objection to conning people. No one is quite sure how this rivalry started, but many Thieves have been happy to take on the rivalry: it improves the public's feelings towards Thieves and thus helps a caught Thief talk his or her way out of a beating.

Crackers: Thieves may hire other Street People to help them with jobs (and visa versa). The most commonly hired are Crackers. In some cases, the relationship is so strong that Thieves have married or been adopted in to the Crackers.

Night Shift and Security Guards: Thieves are the bane of the Night Shift and of private security guards. The Night Shift are only embarrassed by the huge number of unsolved crimes that Thieves cause. Security guards, on the other hand, can lose their jobs if a thief gets by them. For this reason, security guards are often very violent when they do catch Thieves.

Roofers and Siders: In their constant patrols, Siders and Roofers often come across Thieves climbing buildings or sneaking around rooftops trying to get in to buildings. Roofers typically beat up Thieves they find trespassing on their rooftops. Siders often alert the owners of the building the Thieves are trying to break in to. Although they would never admit it, Siders and Roofers are often pissed off to see someone moving on their turf at a level of skill and ease approaching their own.

Traders: Thieves work intimately with black market traders, selling stolen goods and procuring burglary tools. Some Traders have Thieves who they call to help with special jobs.

Typical Weapon- Knife.

Turf- Thieves are spread throughout the city, living in mostly in abandoned buildings.

Distinguishing Features- When they are not out stealing (or are out picking pockets), Thieves look just like normal street people. Many Thieves have a nice suit (probably stolen) hidden in their belongings in case they need to try to bluff their way past the front desk of an office building. When they are out for burglary, they tend to wear dark colored clothing that lets them hide in the shadows (but never full-black jumpsuits, which could make them look too suspicious if someone was to notice them hanging around).

Symbols- A keyhole with a lockpick sticking in it is a common symbol used by graffiti artists to denote a Thief.

Skills

Free Skills: Alarm Systems (1), Lock Picking (1), Pocket Picking (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 9, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 9, INTL 12, MIL 9, PSY:X 25, PSY:M 18, PSY:S 18, TECH 7, THIE 3, SOC 9, STRT 5.

Income- $300 +$25/wk.

Suggested Skills- Alarm Systems, Auto-Theft, Climbing, Escape Artistry, Forgery, Internet Browsing, Lock Picking, Microelectronics, Pocket Picking, Prowling.

Suggested Equipment- Crowbar, Bolt Cutters, Lock Picks: Professional, Nightvision Goggles: Cheap, Rope and Grapple.

Suggested Reading- Alarm Systems (p.372), Black Market, Criminals.

WELL GANGS

Favorable Stereotypes- Brave, athletic, sexually attractive, unique, resourceful, independent, heroic, principled, fun to have at a party.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Reckless, violent, anti-social, rebellious, war-like, drugged teenagers. Have an unfounded self-righteousness that justifies them doing anything they want.

When a city resident thinks of gang members, they typically think of teenage Wells. Wells pioneered the modern gang age and Well gang members far outnumber Indie gangs and the gang-like Street People 'families'.

The reason Wells are so likely to join or start gangs is because of their place in the middle of the socioeconomic hierarchy. Street People are discouraged from joining gangs because their poverty means they have to work all the time to survive. Indies are too tempted by the many pleasures and possibilities that money can buy. Wells have a lot of free time, but can't afford to do anything more expensive than doing pushups on the floor of a shabby apartment, drinking a few beers, hanging out on the corner with friends, exploring abandoned buildings, getting in to fistfights.

Most Wells choose one of three paths: being a shut-in, drugs and alcohol or a gang. The gang members are those with too much optimism to choose drugs and too much lust-for-life to choose being a shut-in.

Well gang members hold many ideals, but they are not ideals they hold lightly. Wells know that they may have to go against their families, society and they may have to fight and die to live the lifestyle they want to. Well gang members are known for being fearless: once they have accepted that they might die, it becomes a source of power for them.

Animalists

In Brief- Use mental programming to experience animal-like consciousness, believe that intelligence is only one tool for achieving instinctual desires.

Favorable Stereotypes- Passionate, willful, fast-reflexes, intense, self-aware, emotionally balanced, down-to-earth.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Primitive, barbaric, thoughtless, violent, oversexed, unpredictable, amoral.

Other Names- Animals, AnimalWarriors, Growlers.

Origin- In 2041 scientists discovered that they could selectively excite or inhibit neurons using a combo of chemicals and radio beams. The Food and Drug Administration quickly grabbed up the job of administering it. They administered it with an iron fist, making sure that only the most thoroughly tested and medically necessary applications of the technology were made available to the public. The appearance was that corps had unlimited access to this technology while the common citizen has none. This added to anti-corp sentiments that ultimately helped bring the US in to the Freedom Wars. After the Freedom Wars ended, the Restoration Committee created a new Food and Drug Administration with a specific mandate to be less restrictive. Even with this mandate, the FDA has been very reluctant to make any mental programming technology legal before making certain it is safe (this is usually about four years after Canada approves it and about seven years after Mexico).

There was a period of a few years when Mental Stimulators were legal for recreational use yet were too expensive for the average person to own or rent at home. It was during these years that Gatorland Enterprises became huge, opening up "parks" all over North America. If people wanted to experience the joys, wonders and novelty of full immersion Virtual Reality, they took a trip to a nearby Gatorland. Gatorland Enterprises pioneered much of the VR entertainment technology that people take for granted today.

One technology which Gatorland Enterprises developed was called "AnimalMind." The principle was fairly simple: the parts of the brain responsible for logical thought and self-control would be inhibited, temporarily turned off, while the rest of the brain would be left awake. The person undergoing this experience would have their bodies paralyzed while in their minds they roamed in Virtual Reality. This way, they could do anything they want without worrying about consequences. They could then explore, fight, escape from dangers, and even have sex while operating on a level of pure reactions. The players could play humans, or to enhance the experience they could even operate in a simulation of the bodies of animals. The company knew it had hit a gold-mine with this technology, and hoped to hold off a drop in profits they saw as home Mental Stimulators became cheaper.

Gatorland Enterprises successfully lobbied to make this technology available in the US. All over North America, AnimalMind "rides" became very popular. The most popular was the one they called AnimalWar, a game which pitted virtual animals against each other in an all out brawl. The success was brief, however. Competitors of Gatorland published papers showing that exposure to AnimalMind increased incidences of violence and crime in communities. Gatorland's competitors convinced the FDA to ban animal mind. At the same time, the home VR market was growing. Cheap at-home mental stimulators were beating out those at amusement parks. Gatorland Enterprises went bankrupt and all of it's patents and property were auctioned off to the highest bidder.

The AnimalWar program had already hit the black market, and as soon as it became illegal black market entrepreneurs modified the hardware of Mental Stimulators and started their own underground AnimalWar businesses. One business in the city, run by a trader named Eric McGee, became so big that Eric moved his operation to the ruins of Madison Square Garden to accommodate the numbers of people who came to play, watch the action on monitors, and bet on outcomes of fights. "Going to AnimalWar" became a nightly thing for a large number of Wells.

AnimalWar was so popular that even after Eric was arrested and sent to prison (for life), people kept showing up at Madison Square Garden. Now that they had experienced consciousness without the interference of thought, many found that they could make this happen outside of a mental installer. With no AnimalWar to play, they fought hand to hand, fighting as human animals. Other black market Traders soon moved in to fill the gab. They forming a pact to share the venue with each other. The AnimalWar scene had been changed forever though. It was no longer just a game, it was a way of thinking, it was a power.

The Animalists learned that they could do many things better when they shut off their thinking minds. As they developed these abilities, they also developed a philosophy and a group identity. Ganghood came swiftly: the Animalists were eager to prove that they were a group that absolutely should not be messed with. The Animalists became the "bullies" of downtown and midtown, picking wars with every other gang in the area. The Animalists' military superiority was only challenged when the Freaks appeared and pushed the Animalists back. Having meet an enemy they couldn't push around, the Animalists became a little more humble and a little less prone to violence.

Timeline
2041- Radio-Chemical Neural Stimulation developed.
2049- 1st FDA approved mental programs.
2061- First non-medical mental program available.
2061- Gatorland Enterprises formed.
2062- Gatorland Enterprises develops AnimalMind.
2064- AnimalMind approved for use in the USA, becomes very popular.
2065- Home VR companies growing rapidly.
2065- Evidence of violence in Animal Mind users published
2065- FDA outlaws AnimalMind.
2065- Gatorland Enterprises goes bankrupt.
2067- Eric McGee begins selling time on an AnimalWar machine.
2069- Eric McGee moves his operation to Madison Square Garden.
2074- Eric McGee arrested. Animalists fight without the Animal Mind machine.
2076- Animalists fight in gang wars.
2079- Animalists' first major defeat (by Freaks)

Joining- Most of the AnimalWar sessions in the city take place using a handful of modified Mental Stimulators in Madison Square Garden. Many people who have heard of AnimalWar but never seen it (or who remember it from Gatorland when they were kids, and remember wishing

they were 18 so they could play it) end up wandering in to Madison Square Garden. There is an excited air in the place and the person may end up cheering, placing bets and even forking money over to Traders (who charge non-Animalists more than they do their regular customers) to play the game.

If a young person, despite getting beaten by more experienced players, gets hooked on the game then they will come back night after night, getting to know the Traders and some of the other Animalists. It will be easy for a new Animalist to find some older Animalists willing to tell them all about Animalist philosophy (with their personal spin) and what states of consciousness to look for when training themselves to selectively release control of their instincts.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been playing AnimalWar long enough that they can easily beat any tourist who comes in and tries to play. They have strong ties within the group, are recognized by the Traders running the Mental Stimulators, and may or may not have had time to develop special Animalist skills.

Lifestyle- Animalist philosophy is that the thinking part of the mind is a tool, but that what the tool is being used by and being used to benefit is the "animal mind" with all it's basic drives and reactions. The Animalists feel that most people are confused, have come to the false assumption (probably because the acculturation process in which children are taught to control themselves) that they are the thinking part of their brains and that animal instincts and feelings are some part they need to repress. The Animalists believe that the thinking mind is completely useless, except when it directly furthers the instinctual desires of the animal mind. When this confusion is remedied by playing animal war (so one can remember what it is like to exist without the constant interference of the thinking mind) the Animalist can learn to see what circumstances the thinking mind is helpful in and under what circumstances it just gets in the way. Getting the thinking mind out of the way gives the Animalists a number of abilities that normal "confused" people just don't have.

With this philosophy, many in the city expect Animalists to be anti-government, anti-education, anti-technology, anti-culture and anti-ethics (in short, advocates of pure savagery). While there are a few who are this extreme, most Animalists are more moderate. They find a useful place for government, technology, education and sometimes even manners, even though they say that these things are only useful some of the time.

There was a time when many Animalists were of an extreme "pro-savagery" viewpoint. The Animalists' viewpoint has become more moderate in recent years. Once reason was for this change was the new street drug Mauler. Long-term mauler addicts had their brains permanently damaged by prolonged use of Mauler. As a result of this brain damage, they are much like the Animalists are while playing AnimalWar: the same parts of the brain are "off." The problem is that Mauler addicts are not happy, noble beasts. They are miserable, frightened, dangerous, short lived and diseased. Animalist philosophers started to say that the thinking mind was a tool, useful but inefficient if overused. A popular metaphor used to explain this argument is a bear trying to beat some prey animal to death with a pocket calculator. This image is meant to illustrate the absurdity of trying to use the thinking, rational mind in situations where the animal mind with its quick reactions, would be better.

Animalists spend much of their time, especially in the early evening, at Madison Square Garden. There are about thirty Animalists at the slowest time (around dawn) and about a thousand at the busiest (early evening). When Animalists go just to play AnimalWar for their own enjoyment and enrichment, they go during off hours. When they go to compete in front of an audience, and to try to make some money by betting on their performance, they go during the busiest times of day. Some Animalists own their own mental stimulators which have been illegally modified to let them play animal war, but the majority do not and they must pay a couple of bucks a pop to a Trader to play.

Playing AnimalWar is like a drug: fun and exhilarating experiences and experiences which are far different from normal consciousness. To most Animalists, however, AnimalWar is nothing more than practice which will let them achieve an animal state of consciousness on their own. Having experienced an artificially-induced dampening of thought centers, they have a goal in their meditations. Animalist philosophies only explain why turning off the thinking mind is useful, it can not actually teach someone to do it.

In behavior, Animalists range from those who act like normal wells (except when they are in some kind of danger, in which case they let their animal instincts rule), to those hardcore Animalists who attempt to make their 24-hour a day lifestyle more like that of an animal. A single Animalist may move back and forth between these extremes in the course of his or her life. It is up to each Animalist to decide which social mores they think are worth keeping, and which they will discard as useless artifacts of the thinking mind's dominance. One Animalist

may always say please and thank you, while another may communicate through growls and grunts whenever possible. Despite this wide range of behaviors, Animalists get along very well. They do not fight about philosophies because philosophies are stupid. Animalists do fight with each other, but it is because they are establishing dominance or competing for a mate. The fights are not often fatal and usually all-is-forgiven within a couple of hours (as opposed to most Wells, who can carry grudges for life based on small slights).

Animalists have an odd mix of hedonistic and ascetic tendencies. They may eschew material comforts such as comfortable clothing, personal vanity, personal property and entertainment, while at the same time indulging desires for sex, food, sleep and occasionally for violence. They are very active, spending a lot of time roaming through the streets of their turf (or, sometimes, wandering beyond the turf) scoping out what's happening.

Social Structure- Animalists tend to be against any organized form of leadership. Most are happy with each Animalist having complete autonomy. A few Animalists want the gang to be run like a pack, with the biggest and toughest members leading the others. The true social system is a bit of the compromise: the big and tough members have a little more persuasive power than the average Animalist, but so do those who have good social skills and those who are champions at AnimalWar. Bullies sometimes appear in the Animalists, but they seldom last long before a group of disgruntled Animalists jumps them.

There are five Traders who make money by bringing AnimalWar machines in to Madison Square Garden. Some come only during the peak hours, other have their machines there 24 hours a day. Traders are an important part of the Animalist community and lifestyle, but they do not identify themselves as Animalists. They do not get involved in inter or intra-gang politics. Most Traders have hired Animalists to run their rigs and collect money. That way, they can go about other Trader business and will not be fingered by police surveillance.

Advancement- Animalists advance by becoming stronger and more skilled in Animalist skills. Those who play a lot of AnimalWar can become good enough that they can make some extra money by betting on themselves in AnimalWar. Also, making friends with one of the Traders who run the AnimalWar machines can be advantageous to an Animalist.

Population- There are about 1,400 Animalists. 97% are wells.

External Relations- For a time, the Animalists were one of the most aggressive gangs around. They have calmed down a lot, though many still think of them as bullies and fight-starters. The Tea Drinkers, Mem Junkies and Needle Punks, who are nearby, have some unresolved grudges against the Animalists, and war occasionally flares up. The Animalists also tend to get in to wars with the Risen (who, although they are on the other side of town, are the most warlike gang around).

There has been off-and-on fighting with the Freaks, who the Animalists share a border with, since the Freaks became a gang. The Freaks are the only gang nearby capable of matching the Animalist's military might (the Needlepunks are good fighters, but are a much smaller gang). Peace never seems to last between the Freaks and Animalists, each gang has a large number of "loose cannons" who are likely to wander across the border and start a fight which will lead to a full-blown war. The problem is that neither gang has leaders who can enforce a truce, so any talk of peace is little more than empty promises. The situation seems to be getting worse: with each period of fighting leaving a lasting hatred that won't go away. At the current rate, the two gangs are only a handful of incidents away from finding it impossible to ever make peace.

South of Animalist turf is Christopher Street, the city's homosexual district. Although every major city group has homosexual and bisexual members, the Animalists have a slightly higher percentage because of their close proximity to where so many homosexuals live and hang out.

Madison Square Garden, where the Animalists go to practice AnimalWar, is in the Northeast corner of Animalist turf, in what most consider the Red Light district. The Animalists have come to accept the inevitability of prostitutes, johns and pornographers wandering around this part of their turf at all hours of the day. The Traders who own the AnimalWar machines like the fact that this part of Animalist turf is open because it means more people can wander in and spend money playing AnimalWar.

The Animalists were one of the first gangs to actually have a philosophy and to take that philosophy and develop useful skills (some would go so far as to call them "powers") that nobody else in the city had. As such, the Animalists have quite a few people admiring them from afar. These admirers sometimes wish that the Animalists weren't so gang-like so they could learn some of those skills without having to pledge fealty to the gang first. The Dragons, in particular, come sniffing around occasionally hoping to pick up something new to add to their ideology.

Military Style- The Animalists have a very disorganized fighting style. When they are mad enough at an enemy, a group of anywhere from 5 to 500 will spontaneously decide to go out to the enemy turf and take out as many of the enemy as they can. They attack with no leader and no concerted movements. They run at and attack the nearest enemy as soon as they see them. They retreat on their own when they are wounded or badly outnumbered. Because they use a lot of slashing weapons like claws, and because they go for the face and other high pain areas, battles with Animalists are bloody and leave a lot of people scarred for life, but they are only moderately deadly.

Typical Weapon- Claws, either implanted or built in to gloves, are the most common weapon used by Animalists.

Turf- Animalist turf is in the Northwest corner of Downtown. Animalist territory has moved South, losing ground to the Freaks, but the Animalists have has remained solidly in control of Madison Square Garden in the Northeast corner of their turf. The border between the Animalists and Freaks, which moves every time there is a war between the two, runs Northeast near Madison Square Garden to Southwest to the border of the sunken city. Animalist turf is bordered on the West by the sunken city, on the East by Seventh Avenue, and on the South by 14th Street.

This part of town has a lot of industrial buildings to the West near the sunken city. To the East there are many old brownstone apartment buildings that are used now as Well housing. Within Animalist turf, by the Southern edge, is the bombed out ruins of the New York State National Guard Armory. Near the East border is one of the city's few cemeteries, the Third Cemeteries of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue. Also in Animalist turf, the 12 story Hotel Chelsea, built in the end of the 19th century and now abandoned.

Distinguishing Features- Animalists wear affectations that remind them of their favorite animal. They wear clothing adorned with patches of (vat-grown) fur, feathers or scales. They have weapons that approximate the natural weaponry of animals: fangs, claws, horns. Some of these weapons are built in to armor (e.g. a glove with built in claws) while other weapons are actual biological implants. These affectations are not purely a matter of fashion: Animalists spend so much time in a simulation of being their animal that they feel more comfortable when they can feel the fur on their arms or scratch at a wall with their claws.

Symbols- Claws and fangs (especially when painted yellow, as opposed to the Risen who have fangs and claws dripping with red blood) are common symbols used by the Animalists.

Slang- Animalists are quite skilled at communicating through non-verbal signals: expressions, body language, gestures and growls. They have few slang terms because they are so often able to communicate without words.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 8, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 7, MIL 8, PSY:X 18, PSY:M 14, PSY:S 12, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Special Skills: Special Animalist skills (see sidebar) costs 6 Skill Points per level.

Income- $1000 +$75/wk.

Suggested Skills- Animal Training, Prowling, Swimming, Tracking, Wilderness Survival.

Suggested Equipment- Bloodhound Smell, Claws: Retractable, Fangs.

Animal Defense- The PC gives control of his or her body to animal instincts during combat situations, allowing for incredibly fast movements and reactions. Give the following plusses (see Combat Skills, p.67) only when using hands, claws or fangs:

+4 to initiative per level
+2 to drop
+2 to jump
+2 to blinding strike
+2 to slash
+4 to vital strike (bladed)

Animal Survival- Uses WIL. The PC learns to let survival instincts take over and guide both behavior and biology. Animalists in this state have incredible physical abilities and willpower, but are only capable of actions that help them out of danger. Animalists have only spotty memory of that happened while in survival mode. Animalists who have gone in to survival mode are often found scratching at the door of a friend, crawling in to an ER or curled up in a ball hidden beneath a pile of trash.

While in survival mode, the PC has +4 SPD, +2 STH, +6 END, +4 INCY, +10 to save vs. pain and +7 to all climbing rolls.

Easy (10): Go in to survival mode when BLD reaches 0.
Moderate (20): Go in to survival mode after taking 2 or more points of any kind of damage.
Hard (30): Go in to survival mode when great danger is perceived.
Legendary (40): Go in to survival mode with no real danger.

Animal Sensitivity- Uses AWR. The PC lets the instinctual mind interpret sensory stimuli and reach conclusions. Although this doesn't help with some things (the PC is no more likely to notice an error in the code of a computer program) it does help in many life and death situations. Gives plusses to dodging, initiative and any rolls concerning food, sex or death (e.g. the strange taste of poison in food, the smell of a member of the opposite sex or the danger of an assassin sneaking through the shadows).

Easy (10): +2 to dodge, initiative, food/sex/death AWR rolls for 1 hour.
Moderate (20): +6 to dodge, initiative, food/sex/death AWR rolls for 3 hours.
Hard (30): +10 to dodge, initiative, food/sex/death AWR rolls for 12 hours.
Legendary (40): Sense another person's disposition towards the PC (e.g. tell if they want to harm or help the PC).

Animal Rage- Uses WIL. The PC can put himself or herself in to a rage, giving over complete control of his or her actions to fight-or-flight instincts. The PC will attack anyone perceived as an enemy until one of three things happens: One, all enemies are knocked unconscious or killed. Two, all enemies make an obvious act of submission. Three, the PC goes down to 1 BLD or less (at which point the rage will end). While in a rage, the PC is at +10 to save vs. pain/fear/nausea/unconsciousness. For every action the PC makes bladed vital strikes with teeth or claws (at INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25) and for every reaction the PC makes simultaneous paired slash attacks with claws/fingernails (at 1d20+INL+AGY vs. 20).

Easy (10): Go in to a rage after failing a save vs. anger.
Moderate (20): Go in to a rage after someone killed the PC's friend.
Hard (30): Go in to a rage against someone threatening the PC's life.
Legendary (40): Go in to a rage with no real provocation.

Animal Sexuality- Uses CHM. To use this skill, the PC must be genuinely sexually aroused. The PC lets his or her core lust shine through unfettered by conscious control. The upside is that the PC becomes incredibly attractive. The downsides are, first, that the PC's desires become open for anyone to see, and second, the PC has less control over his or her desires: must make an opposed save vs. WIL to resist acting on any successful passive or active seduction roll directed towards the PC.

Easy (10): +4 to seduction rolls against a single person only for one seduction attempt.
Moderate (20): +6 to seduction rolls against one person and +4 to all passive seduction rolls for one minute.
Hard (30): +8 to all seduction rolls (passive or otherwise) for one hour.
Legendary (40): +10 to all seduction rolls, lasting as long as the PC wants.

Animal Sympathy- Uses CHM. The PC gains great empathy for the minds of animals and the animalistic parts of the human mind.

Easy (10): Befriend a stray dog.
Moderate (20): Handle a poisonous snake without being bitten.
Hard (30): Calm a violent psychotic with soothing tones and body language.
Legendary (40): By staring in to someone's eyes, the PC can "hypnotize" that person in to giving up control to their animal impulses (e.g. impulses to run, to fight, to have sex, etc.). The victim can make an opposed WIL roll.

Bleeders

In Brief- Exert psychic influence on others by using samples of peoples' blood.

Favorable Stereotypes- Ambitious, powerful, cautious.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Devious, back-stabbing, Machiavellian extortionists and assassins.

Other Names- Sanguines, Blood Tasters, Blood Psychics, Blood Lickers (derogatory), Tampon Eaters (derogatory).

Origin- The Bleeders began in 2074 With an ambitious corner gang called the 98th and 1st gang. The gang had several scams to gain money and power, but none were very successful. Then, one member of the gang heard from a relative living in an inner city in Toronto about a man who was teaching a new type of psychic skill unknown to anyone else, a skill that would give any group tactical superiority. They paid to have the person come out and demonstrate this skill. They found that if the man has a sample of someone's blood, he could exert psychic control over that person from anywhere in the city. The gang got together $10,000 and paid him to teach these skills to the gang. The gang then retreated, for the most part, from gang life. They went in seclusion to discover the best way to use their powers. They built upon these skills they had learned, discovering new techniques as well as technologies for keeping blood samples fresh.

When the Bleeders re-emerged they had renamed themselves "Sanguines" and they had a brilliant pyramid scheme of power. Each Bleeder would take on two or more disciples, teaching them the blood psychic techniques. The price for this learning was this: before any teaching would begin the teacher would require a large sample of blood, thus giving the master complete control over the student, forever. Each teacher would have what amounted to two or more slaves. And as the students got their own students, the power of the original teachers grew exponentially.

During the years from 2076 to 2078 the group grew very quickly, making a name for themselves in the city gang scene. Other city residents found "Sanguines" too pretentious a name and started calling members of the gang "Bleeders." This caught on so well that newer members of the gang started calling themselves this.

In 2078 the Bleeders started to suffer the fate of most pyramid schemes. They ran out of a steady supply of people willing to join. Those at the bottom found themselves having paid the price (having been enslaved to their teachers) with no gain (students of their own to enslave).

Science has yet to acknowledge that what the Bleeders do is possible, much less explain it. Some Bleeders have their own pet theories. The most popular theory is that blood contains some chemical messenger which allows nerve cells throughout the body to attune themselves to the same psychic energy frequency in order to communicate. With blood to taste, the Bleeder's psychic manipulations are heat-seeking-missiles rather than groping-in-the-dark.

Timeline
2074- 98th and 1st gang forms.
2076- Gang learns blood psychic skills, call themselves Sanguines.
2076-2078 – Bleeders grow rapidly.
2079- Bleeder growth declines.

Joining- People join the Bleeders by finding a Bleeder and apprenticing to him or her. Almost all Bleeder teachers require a sample of the potential student's blood (and can use that sample to make the student come in regularly and give fresh samples). As soon as the teacher has that sample the student is considered part of the social structure of the Bleeders.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has just completed the first and most extensive levels of training and the teacher is ready to send the student out on missions.

Lifestyle- A Bleeder may have several masters (a teacher, that teacher's teacher, etc.) who they serve, yet they typically only take orders from their teacher. The Bleeder teacher has a sample of the student's blood and uses the threat of psychic attack to make sure the student follows orders. Bleeders benefit from having powerful servants, and so most Bleeder teachers encourage the growth of their students. They encourage students to train in Bleeder and psychic skills, gain money, prestige, contacts, blood samples and take on his or her own students. Only a few teachers have found themselves trying to keep students from becoming more powerful than them.

More than half of Bleeders practice Blood Sampling, where they taste blood and feel the personality, talents and even the life history of the donor. Bleeders find this pleasurable, learning to appreciate the aesthetic qualities of the blood. They buy and trade blood samples of people with no strategic importance just for the joy of tasting. This is the only major leisure activities that Bleeders have in common, and not every Bleeder participates.

Most of the time Bleeders do much the same as members of other Well gangs. They hang out with friends, trade gossip, patrol their turf, go looking for enemies to beat up, explore abandoned buildings, etc. It is only every once in a while that a Bleeder's teacher gives him or her an order, but in those cases the Bleeder is expected to drop anything. Bleeder teachers usually send students on "missions." A mission might be to gather intelligence, deliver a package, get a blood sample or assassinate a person. Bleeder

teachers don't always tell students the reason behind a mission. Students sometimes don't even know if what they are doing is in furtherance of their masters' altruism, is for the sake of the gang or is to help establish the teachers' power within the gang.

When gang warfare comes, the most powerful masters stop infighting and work together. Working together, they make sure that every Bleeder is assigned a specific duty. Skilled fighters are sent to the front lines to protect Bleeder territory from incursion or are assigned to the houses of powerful Bleeders to protect them from harm. More stealthy Bleeders are sent out on "slinker" missions where they infiltrate the enemy territory and get blood samples of the enemy's leaders. These blood samples can be used to threaten and blackmail enemy leaders. It is only if the situation is very desperate that slinkers are asked to assassinate their targets.

Social Structure- There is no organized social system, instead there is a complicated web of masters, students and bonded comrades. This web is always changing as Bleeders seek to gain control of others and regain their own autonomy. Who controls who is often kept secret, so nobody really knows it all. In addition to the familiar bond of master-and-student, some close friends share a "Blood Bond." They share blood samples, which means they can communicate, find each other and help each other from a great distance. It is usually younger less-powerful Bleeders who make blood bonds.

Advancement- One way to gain power is to gain a student. Students are harder to come by nowadays, and Bleeders must have a lot to offer to gain one. The other way, now becoming the most common method, is what is euphemistically called "politics." In its most benign form, "politics" means doing favors for and forming alliances with other Bleeders. In its most malign form, politics means stealing blood samples from other Bleeders in order to enslave them.

Power among the Bleeders is fleeting. Bleeders who let their guard down can find all of their blood samples stolen and themselves owing blood-fealty to someone else (usually someone that they, themselves, once controlled).

Population- There are 1,300 Bleeders, about 85 (7%) control one or more Bleeders but are not controlled themselves, 395 (30%) are both servants and masters, 700 (54%) are controlled by a Bleeder and control nobody, and 120 (9%) are neither controlled nor control others.

External Relations- The Bleeders have never claimed to be anything other than a street gang. They wants what any street gang wants: complete control over what happens in their turf and swift vengeance against any person or group who wrongs them. The fact that the Bleeders adhere to these simple principles makes their behavior predictable and thus makes them easy to deal with, despite the fact that they

are a cruel and vengeful gang.

The Bleeders do not have a single leader. A gang may make an alliance with a single high-level Bleeder, but whether that compact is honored by other Bleeders depends on the state of intra-gang politics. Non-Bleeders may find themselves trying to make a deal with the Bleeders but may end up finding that they have "taken sides" in some intra-gang conflict. Many gangs know better than to let themselves get sucked in to Bleeder politics this way, but for some small gangs or gangs who are in trouble the aid of a powerful Bleeder is too tempting.

Powerful Bleeders often send their subservients out on missions to collect blood samples from the leaders of other gangs. Whenever possible, these samples are gathered in such a way that the victim does not know their blood has been taken (many Bleeders are master burglars and can draw blood so painlessly that it will not wake a sleeping person, other Bleeders have jobs in city hospitals and clinics). When Bleeders are caught doing this, war may result (especially if they are caught before they succeed). This behavior tends to start a lot of wars, but it also tends to finish a lot of wars. Bleeders are wary of dealing with anarchic groups that have no central leadership to threaten.

The bible's admonition against drinking blood has caused a lot of hatred against Bleeders by fundamentalist Christian churches and cults. The Bleeders recently had to fight off a cult who decided to take out the Bleeders violently, and this may not be the last such incident. A few Bleeders have been abducted by cult deprogrammers hired by their parents.

There are other groups in other major inner cities who have blood-psychic skills. Ambitious Bleeders occasionally travel to these other cities to trade knowledge with these groups, and visa versa. There has never, however, been an official alliance between any of these groups.

Military Style- In mass combat, Bleeders try to avoid actual combat. They race around the enemy, trying to draw blood but avoid one-on-one confrontations. Optimally, one Bleeder will race past and hit the enemy with a barbed whip, another Bleeder will race past and kneel just long enough to get a drop of blood on his or her finger. To Bleeders, battles on the streets only serve the purpose of holding the enemy at bay while the slinkers and Bleeder masters do the real work behind the scenes. Warriors fight on the front lines or guard the houses of Bleeder masters. "Slinkers" sneak in to enemy territory and get blood samples or assassinate enemy leaders. Powerful Bleeders coordinate their servants' activities and use blood psychic skills to terrorize and blackmail the enemy.

Typical Weapon- Knives and barbed whips (see Special Equipment, below) are the most common weapons among the Bleeders. Many Bleeders have become well known for their use of Ninas (see sidebar).

The Nina

Nina Shabazz, a third generation Bleeder, created an ingenious weapon. The mechanics are complex and only Nina knows how to make them. She sells them and trains people in their use (at a price). The weapon is known as the Nina.

The Nina- This weapon consists of a glove and a small throwing knife. The knife is designed to pierce armor and flesh (teflon coated edges). The flat of the blade has tiny indentations designed to pick up and hold blood. The knife is attacked to the glove by a thin line. The line is thin enough to be snapped (this is important, otherwise someone could grab one of the lines and yank the Bleeder around). The instant that the knife hits, it immediately reels in, slowing as it approaches the glove so that the thrower can catch it without hurting himself or herself. The catcher then has a sample of blood ready for his or her next action. The person who was hit with the knife can attempt to catch the knife as it retracts, but it is a 20 difficulty AGY feat (30 if the victim has only one hand free) and the catcher loses his or her next action.

Functional Range: 4 ft.
Maximum Range: 50 ft.
Damage: 1 bladed, pierces armor as 4 bladed.
Cost: $5000 (Nina only sells to Bleeders) +$200 for a replacement knife and line.

Nina Throwing- A Bleeder special skill. The PC is trained in throwing one or two Ninas. PCs with this skill can throw paired Ninas at no minuses and get the following special plusses (see Combat Skills, p.67):

Blinding Strike at +2
Wing at +4
Slash Attack at +2

Nina Shabazz
(Master Fighter, Inventor and Weaponsmith)

Level 5 Bleeder, Level 2 Pit Fighter

Attributes- AWR 11, AGY 15, CHM 6, END 10, SPD 9, INL 14, STH 12, WIL 16, BLD 3, BDY 2, INCY 2.

Appearance- Short female, African American features with dark skin. Hair worn in shoulder-length braids. Usually wears red-tinted glasses, black jeans, a red T-shirt, and a knee-length coat made of a quilt-like patchwork of different shades of brown and reddish-brown leather. Nina is often mistaken for a street person.

Social Status- Nina is one of the few Bleeders that neither seeks nor owes blood-fealty. As such, she is looked up to by many young Bleeders. She gives lessons (for a small fee) in Nina combat. Nina is known, even outside of the Bleeders, as one of the most deadly fighters in the city.

History- Nina learned fighting to protect herself from a physically and sexually abusive older sibling. When she hit the streets, she made a name for herself as a street fighter, but she wanted something more than just physical power, so she gave a blood sample to a skilled Bleeder in exchange for training. Her master realized her skills at combat and forced her to murder several of his enemies. Nina started using a throwing knife with a fishing line on it to get blood samples during combat, and slowly she improved this weapon in to the modern Nina. Seeing how powerful she was with it, other Bleeders offered to buy the Nina. Seeing a way to get out of servitude, Nina started producing and selling Ninas. She used the money she made to buy her blood sample back from her master. She continued selling Ninas and training people in their use.

Personality- Nina has few long term goals. Most of the activities she engages in (creating weapons, teaching Nina combat, fighting in gang wars) are simply something to "keep her busy." Nina is wary of taking sides or getting too close (emotionally) to anyone, though she can't help but empathize with those that desire to be out from under the control of other people. Nina is, in theory, an anarchist, yet she realizes that people have a lot invested in the status quo and she doesn't want to make enemies by trying to change it.

Special Equipment- Paired Ninas (see above), metal barbs in her hair and under the first layer of her jacket (anyone trying to grab her takes ½ bladed damage to hands).

Special Skills- Nina Throwing (5), Street Fighting: Unarmed (2), Street Fighting: Armed (3), Knife Throwing (2), Blood Reading (2), Blood Poisoning (3), Blood Attack (4), Blood Tracking (2).

Typical Attack- Nina pricks herself with her knives (butting her blood on them) then makes a paired Blinding Strike with her paired Ninas at INL (14) + AGY (15) –0 (no paired penalty) +18 (skill) –1/4ft.vs. 30 or 1d20 +17 –1/4ft.vs. 0. After hitting, Nina uses the Blood Poisoning skill to take over the victim's body and make the victim attack other enemies (the blinded victims attack with no minuses since Nina can still see). Victim can resist: Nina's WIL(16) + 1d20 +8 (skill) vs. 30 opposing Victim's WIL + 1d20 vs. 20.

Turf- Long thin strip of turf in East Harlem/Upper East Side. South of 120th St., North of 96th St., East of Third Ave., West of First Ave. In Southwest corner is Islamic Cultural Center, the largest mosque in city.

Distinguishing Features- Bleeders wear dark red and black clothing, covering as much of their bodies as possible (long sleeves, turtlenecks). Besides identifying them as Bleeders, this style of clothing also hides Blood stains so that when two Bleeders are fighting, one will not know when the other one is injured and bleeding.

Symbols- A dark, deep red color. A red drop shape.

Slang

Blood-Fealty: n., the servitude of a Bleeder to someone who has a sample of his or her blood.

Blood Bond: n, the bond between two Bleeders who trade blood samples.

Donor: n. euphemism for the person a blood sample was stolen from.

Politics: n., any attempt to gain power over other Bleeders.

Slinker: n., a Bleeder sent out to covertly steal blood samples.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 8, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 7, MIL 8, PSY:X 14, PSY:M 10, PSY:S 10, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Special Skills: Blood psychic skills cost 10 skill points per level. Nina Throwing costs 8 skill points per level.

Income- $1000 +$100/wk.

Special Equipment- PCs can buy the following equipment, invented and manufactured by Bleeders (including the Nina, see above).

Blood Cabinet (Small): A small wooden cabinet that can be locked with a padlock, rigged to keep up to keep up to ten vials of blood samples warm wet , sugared and oxygenated. Costs $100.

Blood Cabinet (Deluxe): A safe, converted in to a blood cabinet that can keep up to 100 vials of blood samples fresh. Weighs 100 lbs. Can be bolted to walls or floors. Has a combination lock. Costs $275.

Cryogenic Unit: This is a scientific device, designed for freezing small vials full of organic samples. It is about the size of a large refrigerator. Samples are dosed with chemicals and pressurized so that ice chemicals will not form as they are frozen, then they are stored in another section which keeps them cold. A final chamber thaws the samples. Requires quite a lot of power (about $10/week). Costs $5000.

Blood Samples: A tiny sample (one use's worth) of the blood of a level 5 or better in one of the following disciplines:

Discipline	Most Common Skills	Cost
Artist	Graphic Design, Music, Visual Arts	$15
Athlete	Swimming, Running, Climbing, Acrobatics	$20
Doctor	Emergency Medicine, Pharmacology, Surgery	$20
Gun Fighter	Pistol, Sniper, Rifle/Shotgun	$40
Hacker	Operating Systems, Internet Browsing, Sniffing	$25
Law Enforcement Investigator	Photography, Forensic Pathology, Law (Criminal)	$25
Linguist	Linguistics, Foreign Language	$20
Martial Artist	Tae Kwan Do, Wrestling, Fencing	$30
Mercenary	Automatic Weapons, Military Tactics, Demolitions	$25
Psychic (Attack Specialist)	Emotional Attack, Pain Attack	$50
Psychic (Sensory Specialist)	Psychic Sense, Psychometry, Mind Reading	$40
Psychic (Therapy Specialist)	Calm Attack, Physiological Control, Mind Reading	$35
Scientist	Physics, Geology, Botany	$20
Stunt Driver	Driving, Motorcycle, Offensive Driving	$25
Thief	Prowling, Lock Picking, Alarm Systems	$25

Blood Psychic Skills

All Bleeder skills (save Blood Poisoning) require that the Bleeder taste the blood of the "subject" of the skill. In most cases, Bleeders simply touch the tips of their tongue to a sample of blood (then they typically rinse their mouths out with antiseptic, like a flask of vodka). In combat situations, Bleeder may keep a larger sample in their mouths.

The usability of blood will start to decline as soon as it is removed from a host. If blood dries, freezes or cooks, it is completely useless. If it is kept warm, the difficulty of using a blood psychic skill increases by 1 for every 3 minutes. The Bleeders have developed special devices which keep blood warm, wet, oxygenated and provide glucose (blood sugar). In these conditions blood will stay usable for up to two months (the lifespan of a red blood cell). Blood can also be cryogenically frozen (requires special equipment) and it will be good when it is thawed out.

If a Bleeder tastes a sample of blood from someone who is dead, the Bleeder takes a bad shock (loses 10 END).

Blood Sampling- Uses AWR. Prerequisite: Blood Reading (3). By sampling a person's blood, the PC can create such a strong link to the blood "donor" that he or she can take on some aspects of the person being sampled. If the person being sampled is very talented in some area, the Bleeder temporarily gains a certain intuitive "feel" for that area. No specific knowledge is gained, only a feel for the right way to do things. This works on anything from a master martial artist to a master computer programmer. This is one of the most pleasurable things a Bleeder can do and may be psychologically addictive. Benefits last only while the blood is being sampled.

Easy (10): +4 on any skill that the donor has 4+ in.

Moderate (20): +8 on any skill that the donor has 4+ levels in.

Hard (30): +8 on any skill the donor has 3+ levels in.

Legendary (40): Temporarily gain a skill at 1 less level than the donor has.

Blood Memory- Uses INL. Except for Blood Poisoning, all Bleeder skills require that the Bleeder taste the blood of a subject. This skill allows Bleeders to taste a blood sample once and then "remember" the taste, so that they can perform Bleeder skills without currently tasting blood.

Easy (10): Perform a bleeder skill within 1 round of tasting blood.

Moderate (20): Perform a bleeder skill within 1 minute of tasting blood.

Hard (30): Perform a bleeder skill within 1 hour of tasting blood.

Legendary (40): Perform a bleeder skill within 1 day of tasting blood.

Blood Poisoning- Uses WIL. Unlike the other Bleeder skills, where the PC tastes the subject's blood, in this skill the PC must make a victim ingest his or her blood. This can be done through food (one teaspoon of raw blood in something the victim is eating or drinking) or by introducing the PC's blood directly in to the bloodstream (an injection or piercing skin with a weapon that has the PC's blood on it).

Easy (10): Cause vomiting (victim must make a save vs. nausea).

Moderate (20): Emotional attack (victim must make an opposed save vs. pain, fear, euphoria or dysphoria).

Hard (30): Take control of the victim's body (victim can make an opposed WIL roll).

Legendary (40): Cause a stroke (1d6 damage to BLD, no save).

Blood Communication- Uses WIL. Similar to the telepathy skill, the PC can communicate with someone whose blood they are tasting. The recipient of the communication knows that someone is communicating mentally with them.

Easy (10): Communicate emotions.

Moderate (20): Communicate single words.

Hard (30): Communicate spoken language, as if a conversation.

Legendary (40): Communicate sights, smells, tastes, sounds and sensations.

Blood Tracking- Uses AWR. By tasting a person's blood, the PC can gain information on where the donor is at the current moment. Some Bleeders use this skill to fight enemies in the dark. Distance penalties for this skill are -1/mile.

Easy (10): Taste what direction the subject is in, whether they are alive or dead (can hit in the dark at only –7).

Moderate (20): Taste what direction and how far away (within 1 block) and how fast a person's heart is beating (hit in the dark at –4).

Hard (30): Taste exactly where the person is and if they have any injuries. Hit in the dark with no minuses.

Legendary (40): Taste the exact position that every part of the subject's body is in.

Blood Attack- Uses WIL. The PC can cause pain and damage to the subject whose blood he or she is tasting.

Easy (10): Cause pain (victim must save vs. distracting pain, difficulty 10), swollen joints (-2 AGY). Takes 10 minutes.

Moderate (20): Cause pain (difficulty 20), swollen joints (-4 AGY), red blotches on skin and poor clotting (each 2 points of bladed damage does an additional 1 point of damage next round). Takes 5 minutes.

Hard (30): Pain (30 difficulty to save), swollen joints (-7 AGY), bruises and blood blisters on the skin, hemophilia (each point of bladed damage is done again next round) and 2 points of damage to BLD. Takes 1 minute.

Legendary (40): Spontaneous internal bleeding (1d6 points of damage to BLD), takes one action.

Blood Reading- Uses AWR. By tasting a subject's blood, the PC can learn something about that person.

Easy (10): Taste gender, age, general health.

Moderate (20): Taste general attributes, severe mental and emotional problems.

Hard (30): Taste a general description of the person's personality.

Legendary (40): Taste history of emotional events, strong allegiances, philosophy.

Barbed Whip: This is a leather whip with metal barbs pushed through. Easy slash, very easy pain/stun attack. Range 3. Damage: 1 bladed. Costs $75.

Special Bonus Characteristics
    Blood Fealty: (Mandatory Disadvantage) The PC owes Blood Fealty to his or her teacher. The teacher has a sample of the PCs blood and believes that he or she have the right (as the cost of teachings) to give orders to the PC.

    Bondless: (Optional Advantage) Costs 10 points. The PC starts the game owing blood-fealty to nobody. There are many possible explanations for this: the PC might have been lucky enough to find one of the few teachers who does not require blood fealty, the PC's teacher may have died or the PC may have stolen back his or her blood sample.

Multiple Masters: (Optional Disadvantage, Gives 5 points) Instead of just owing fealty to the PC's teacher, the PC owes blood fealty to another (equally skilled) Bleeder as well. This other master does not control the PC's teacher or visa versa, so the PC may get caught in the middle if the two masters want the PC to do different things.

Suggested Skills- Alarm Systems, Needles, Prowling, Razormouth, Sleight of Hand.

Suggested Equipment- Alcohol, Crate Cutter, Hip Flask, Shield (Hand-Nails), Spiked Armor, Worm Robot.

Suggested Reading- Diseases, Psychic Phenomenon.

Freaks

In Brief- Members of a chaotic freak show troupe that make money by holding wild carnivals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wild, entertaining, creative, truly odd with incredible willpower.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immoral, immature con-artists and wanna-be-psychopaths. Sycophants to Habey Cox (a narcissist windbag).

Other Names- Carnies, Showpeople.

Origin- In 2075, Habey Cox, a popular poet and performance artist (specializing in the grotesque) recruited many fellow performance artists to form a troupe and put on an old fashioned Freak show. He hyped the show greatly, sold tickets, and it was a big success. It was such a success that Habey kept doing it, and his troupe grew. Habey was always the main promoter and the personality of the show, and at the request of some of his fans he repeated some of his personal rants on stage. These fast-paced, train of consciousness rants, would focus on Habey's theory of "Freak Power." According to Habey, when people stop trying to 'fit in' with everyone else, they free up personal energies and are able to reach their true potential. These rants were popular and soon he ranted at every show. He complained that people who were not outcasts were complacent, boring and weak. Habey would claim that his own feats (primarily acts of pain endurance) were the result of his "Freak Power."

Many of Habey's most loyal fans attempted to imitate him by creating their own Freak show troupes. Instead of resenting this competition, Habey welcomed it, and he made every attempt to promote other shows along with his. With more acts came more variety and the Freak show became accessible to more people in the city. Once a month, Freak territory was the place to be for adventurous young people looking for entertainment. Hundreds, even thousands of young people would wander the streets of what used to be the Theater District looking to see something wild, weird and fun. The early Freaks were making money hand over fist. They had many black market and legitimate investors, hoping to get a piece of this profit. Even Freaks who were not good enough to sell tickets to a show could wander around the streets performing for change and could make quite a lot of money by the end of the day.

Habey's philosophy and attitude continued to permeate the growing legion or performers who would cluster around the Theatre District. It wasn't long before many started acting like the Freaks were a gang.

Habey's show became larger and more elaborate and grand, it became harder to do it every month. Habey persuaded the Freaks to change from nightly shows once a month to intense week-long carnivals (what he called "The Festival Of The Freak") four times a year. This turned out to be an act of marketing genius. Having to wait for the festival made people feel it was more special. Greater numbers of people came and when they came they spent more money.

Timeline
2071- Habey leaves his parents home to wander the streets.
2073- Habey's friends persuade him to read some of his poetry at a coffee shop.
2074- Habey's first "sideshow" themed performance art show.
2075- Habey forms his Freak show troupe, bringing his performance art to a wider audience.
2077- Freaks fight, as a gang, against Animalists.
2078- Freak Show changes to a seasonal format.
2078- Survivors from the Honeys take refuge in Freak territory.

Joining- There are no laws about who can come and go in Freak territory. Anyone can come in and try to do some sort of act. Some people create a successful act with no help from anyone else, but most people find that they need the help of other Freaks to create a good enough act. Hours and hours of practice, sometimes for more than a year, are necessary to increase some skill or learn some feat well enough to make money from it.

At level one, adventure one, the Freak has an act going that is entertaining enough to make money. The PC has performed for people wandering through Freak territory looking for off-season fun, but the PC has not yet performed at one of the Festivals of the Freak. The PC does not yet have a troupe: he or she performs the act alone, walking down the street, accosting tourists and talking them in to paying money to see the act.

Lifestyle- A Freak's lifestyle revolves around his or her act. For every minute that he or she actually spends performing a stunt in front of an audience, many hours were spent practicing. If something could be done with little practice, it wouldn't be rare enough (or seem impossible enough) to shock and entertain jaded city residents. Few Freaks are in it solely for the money: they enjoy being good at their act and they enjoy entertaining people. There are four basic types of acts that Freaks have:

Terrible: This is the stereotypical Freak act: the Freak does or shows to the audience something shocking. A Freak may show a pre-existing deformation or mutilation or an act which looks especially painful, frightening or disgusting.

Stunt: This is some special stunt, usually physical, that the Freak has trained to do amazingly. Some stunts involve resisting damage (I.E. lighting oneself on fire, jumping off a four story building) or some act of physical prowess (pulling a car using only teeth, climbing a wall while upside down). The Freak must expertly manipulate the observations and expectations of the audience to make them believe that what they are about to see is completely impossible. This does not necessarily mean illusions or lies (though it can) but simply controlling the context in which the audience views the situation. Audiences like stunt shows much more when they believe that there is some element of danger to the Freak.

Magic: These are tricks where the Freak appears to do the impossible. Slight of hand and special gadgets (invisible nanofilaments, marked decks, skin pockets) make these tricks possible. Charisma is important here because the magician needs to have the audience's complete attention so he or she can misdirect it at the right moment. An audience member who is only half paying attention might not look where he or she is supposed to look and might see how the trick is actually done. To impress the jaded and cynical audience, the Freak must play with an audience's expectations, making them believe one trick is going on and then do another. Most magic is close-up magic, where the magician interacts with the audience, and only a few Freaks become popular enough to do stage magic shows.

Sex Shows: There are some Freaks what are nothing more than prostitutes in Fetish costumes. These Freaks anger both the Sexologists, who feel that sex is seriously degraded, and normal prostitutes, who don't want to live up to this standard. Similarly, some Freaks are nothing more than over-hyped strippers or "eye candy" to help draw people to shows. Some Freaks, though, have taken literally Habey Cox's description of the festival as a celebration of differences and they truly enjoy sharing their unusual sexual desires and interests with an audience. Sometimes the audience is asked to participate in some way, in others the audience participates only by observing.

Every Freak show, no matter the type, has one thing in common: hype. Freaks never just show anyone anything, they spend up to fifteen minutes hyping it first. The Freak must make the audience excited, make their fight-or-flight system aroused. However amazing an act is, it is twice as shocking if it has been skillfully hyped. The audience members play an important part in this: once they have paid their money to see the act, they want to believe that what they have paid money for is going to be worth it, and they are willing to believe things they wouldn't have been willing to otherwise. Psychological manipulation of the audience is the key to a successful act.

Trickery is perfectly acceptable for the Freaks, but not getting caught. Each Freak who gets caught faking a trick gives people the impression that all Freaks are fakers, which makes them much less likely to pay to see other Freaks acts. The only thing worse than an obvious faker is a Freak who purposefully reveals Freak tricks. Some patrons of the festival are amateur debunkers, looking to unravel the tricks of Freak acts.

During the festival of the Freak, thousand of people pour through Freak territory at all hours of the night and day, crowding the streets, spending money. Freaks are out on the streets in their flashiest costumes, performing and hoping to make enough money to justify the cost and time spent forging an act. Freaks aren't the only ones hoping to make money: black market traders, Goods, pushers, Jacks, Sex Workers, Gamblers and legitimate businesspeople come to Freak territory selling every manner of illegal and legal entertainment.

Social Structure- Many gangs have no social hierarchy and each member is completely autonomous. The Freaks are one step more extreme: not only is anarchy the consensus social system of the Freaks, but most attempts to garner authority are met with violent resistance.

Most Freaks start working the streets: the Freak performs an act for random passer-bys and asks for donations, makes a bet with marks, or asks for money to do the act. Freaks who do well may move up to an inside show. Typically, a group of Freaks stake out an inside building. A barker stands outside, advertising the acts and charging $1 to $10 to get in. Freaks who do very well at inside shows may try "arena acts." These acts are typically held in theaters and the price to get in is $5 to $20. To succeed at am arena act, a Freak must have name recognition with the festival attendees. Arena shows are big, expensive productions, with music, lighting, fireworks, and multiple acts. Altogether, of all the money spent in a typical festival of the freak, about $200,000 goes to non-Freaks selling goods and services, $140,000 goes to street performers, $170,000 goes to inside-shows and $90,000 goes to arena shows.

Advancement- In the Freaks, advancement means making one's show more popular and profitable. Joining a troupe is usually necessary: several Freaks performing assorted acts has a lot more draw than a single Freak. There are also many kinds of acts which can't be performed without partners and confederates. If a PC and his or her troupe get good enough and well known enough, they can invest in an inside show, and if that works out then an arena-show.

Population- There are about 600 Freaks. Only about 400 ever participate in any kind of gang warfare.

External Relations- The Freaks are known as the most immoral of the gangs. What upsets people the most is not that the Freaks do bad things, but that there are no standards of behavior in the Freak community and thus no way to guess to guess whether a Freak will act by a certain moral standard or not. Some city residents see Freaks as con-artists. Others see them as anti-social and mentally ill. For a majority of the city, however, the Freaks are too much fun to hate.

The Sexologists claim that the Freaks practice and encourage every kind of unhealthy sexual behavior that ruins people's lives. Many Freaks (especially Habey) think that the Sexologists have a very limited view of what is healthy and should not impose their standards on others. Habey, and many other Freaks, do everything they can to provoke and annoy the Sexologists. The tension between the two groups rarely comes to war. Instead, the Sexologists try to persuade their lovers not to go and spend money on the Freak show, while many Freaks try to persuade their friends, lovers and audiences not to have sex with the Sexologists. Most city residents, however, ignore this propaganda war: they would much rather have the best of both worlds.

Freak territory is adjacent to the Red Light district, where the city's sex and pornography industry operates, and it is close to Christopher Street, the center of the city's homosexual district, and there has been a steady intermingling of culture with the Freaks.

Freak territory is a place where people go when they feel they cannot be accepted elsewhere. Transsexuals face significant discrimination in the city and many become Freaks or just live in Freak territory. Almost 100 Freaks (17%) are transsexuals or cross-dressers. The Freaks also have more of their share of fetishists, mentally ill people, murderers and addicts. Unlike eccentrics, who tend to distinguish themselves from other because of their beliefs, Freaks tend to distinguish themselves from others because of their actions. Many times people come in to Freak territory searching for enemies and fugitives. They may or may not encounter resistance, depending on who they happen to run in to.

The Freaks are too varied to be considered a "warlike" gang. Some Freaks will not fight on behalf of the Freaks, some will only fight in revenge for a significant wrong committed against the Freaks, and some will use any excuse to go to war. It is the most violent Freaks that get the Freaks in to most wars and keep those wars going. It is only a matter of time until some irresponsible Freak gets the Freaks in to a war with any of the nearby gangs, including the Tea Drinkers, Risen, Mem Junkies, and Needle Punks. The gang that the Freaks get in to the most wars with is the Animalists. When the Freaks became a gang, they found themselves right next to Animalist territory. The Animalists were the most violent gang in the area, and so war was inevitable. Although currently at peace, long periods of feuding have created a long hatred among many Freaks for the Animalists and visa versa.

When the small Indie gang known as the Honeys were defeated by the Skin Borgs, Habey (who had been a big fan of the Honeys' drug-filled alcoholic brews), offered the surviving Honeys asylum in Freak territory. Although there were only a few Honeys left, most of them moved in to Freak territory, where their main occupation now is to provide Habey Cox with exotic drugs for his parties. Among other things, the presence of Honeys have increased anti-Skin Borg sentiments among the Freaks.

Military Style- Freaks don't do organized warfare. When they are angry, the Freaks who feel like fighting (which there are always many of) go alone or in small parties to enemy turf and attempt to find an enemy. The Freaks are not the most skilled fighters in the city but their reputation for doing gruesome things to enemies makes up for it. Freaks are, first and foremost, showpeople, and their weapons are usually more frightening then they are efficient, including many improbably contraptions made with rusty nails, razor blades, barbed wire and other implements that look like they will tear and rip flesh. The Freaks are also frighteningly unpredictable in battle: every Freak has his or her own special skills are strategy, so people fighting Freaks have no idea what they will be attacked with.

Typical Weapon- Implanted body spikes are the most common weapon used by Freaks.

Turf- Freak territory is oddly shaped, constantly shifting as the Freaks do battle with the Animalists to the South between 8th and 11th avenues. Right now, the Southern line of Freak turf is a Southeast to Northwest diagonal. Freak Territory is South of 42nd St., East of 11th Ave. and West of 8th Ave. This is the part of town once called Hell's Kitchen. Theatre row, on the Northernmost border of the turf, contains the remains of several old recording and television studios and is used for some types of acts during the Festival of the Freak (including Habey Cox's stage show).

Distinguishing Features- Freaks come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes. While a few look completely normal, most have changed their appearance with bizarre forms of dress, tattoos and scarification, piercings and implanted spikes and bizarre surgical modification. Those with extremely bizarre body modifications, however, often keep their modifications hidden (only paying customers are allowed to look). "Fetish" clothing (leather straps, chains, corsets, masks, etc.) is also common among Freaks.

Symbols- Body parts with spikes or pierced by needles are common symbols of Freaks.

Slang

Beef: N., a complaint from a customer or authority figure.

Confederate: N., a partner in the act who pretends to be just a member of the audience.

Cutting Jackies: V., discussing past adventures and

"The Freaks think that people pay to look at their self-mutilations out of some sort of wonder or awe. The Freaks believe that they are capable of taking jaded city residents who have seen just about anything and actually amazing and surprising them. Nothing could be farther from the truth. We pay to see the Freaks because we are morbid people who can't resist a peek at a tragedy. It's like watching video of kids starving on raft cities in Africa, except it's right here in front of us. We don't think the Freaks are unique or special or unexplainable. We just want to see how far they're willing to screw up their own bodies in order to gain attention and make themselves feel special. The whole festival is a sad, sad thing that we can't stop watching because we are fascinated by anything more horrible than our own lives."
-from Frank Merril Bulanski's "Freak Secrets Unveiled" Netsite

Cutting Jackies: V., discussing past adventures and triumphs.

Gaff: N., anything faked, fixed or otherwise under the control of the Freak.

Grind: N., the hypnotic part of a speech intended to get people to pay for a show.

Mark: N., any person a Freak has targeted to try to get money from.

Nut: N., the costs of the Freak's act.

Strong: Adj., containing nudity or sex, esp. when referring to an act.

Trannie: N., transsexual.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 8, CMBT 8, CRTV 5, INFO 8, INTL 8, MIL 8, PSY:X 11, PSY:M 13, PSY:S 13, TECH 8, THIE 5, SOC 8, STRT 6.

Special Skills: The special Freak skills cost 5 skill points per level.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Joint Hypermobility: (Optional Advantage) Costs 2 Bonus Points. The PC has joints and tendons that allow much greater flexibility and range of movement. This occurs naturally in some, is created by surgery in others. While this makes amazing feats of contortion possible, it can cause medical problems. The joints tend to be hyper-extended (which can damage nerves) and dislocate easily. PC starts with -1 BDY and any Crippling Attack directed against the PC is -5 difficulty.

Congenital Analgesia: (Optional Advantage) Costs 3 Bonus Points. The PC was born with a nervous system which resisters pain less effectively. Gives +15 to save vs. pain. This is much like the pain blocker mental program, except it can not be turned off. Because the PC is unlikely to notice the seriousness of injuries and will not properly protect injured areas, injuries take twice as long to heal.

Character Concept: Act Type

Be sure to note what type of act the PC does and get the appropriate skills, equipment and bonus characteristics.

Terrible: Surgical Mutilations or Animal Parts (equipment), Freak Speech (skill).

Stunt: Freak Feat, Freak Contortion, Freak Swallowing (skills).

Magic: Freak Speech, Freak Magic, Freak Guessing, Freak Communication (skills).

Sex Show: Fetish Outfit (equipment), Physically Attractive (advantage), Freak Sex (skill).

Suggested Skills- Acrobatics, Disguise, Drug Resistance, Escape Artistry, Hypnosis, Impersonation, Mnemonics, Oratory, Pocket Picking, Sleight of Hand, Torture.

Suggested Equipment- Cloak: Fighter, Makeup: Theatrical, Pain Blocker, Nausea Blocker.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, Riots.

Habey Cox
(Founder of the Freaks and Most Popular Performer)

Level 8 Freak

Attributes- AGY 14, AWR 13, CHM 18, END 12, INL 16, SPD 11, STH 15, WIL 19, BLD 3, BDY 3, INCY 4.

Appearance- Habey has eastern European Jewish features. He is clean shaven with shaggy black hair cut like a rough bowl-cut. He wears round glasses and has black Maori-style tattoos on his neck and upper arms. He is pudgy but not obese. His normal clothing is a black leather T-Shirt and pants, though occasionally he dresses in drag, wearing tight strapless dresses and a variety of wigs.

History- Habey was a bright, somewhat nerdy child, with emotionally distant and very boring VR addict parents. As a young man, Habey was torn between his fear of the city and his desire to go outside and experience the world. Eventually it was Habey's hatred of his parents, and the way they feared the universe, that drove him to leave his home. On the streets, though, he found that he had a hard time making friends (especially since he was afraid to join a gang). He was attacked and spent a couple of years walking around the city on a cane. Habey felt isolated, like there was nobody else in the city like him. Eventually, Habey made some friends and his friends helped him build up his confidence to the point that he would read poetry at open-mike nights at Indie coffee-shops. His poetry made him even more popular, and widened his circle of friends. He also found that, as his self-confidence rose, so did his abilities at persuasion. He started doing performance art acts based on old-time freak shows. He quickly dropped the pretense that this was 'art' and assembled an authentic freak show. His philosophy of the Freak, expressed through, hypnotic, poetic rants, gained him followers who ended up being part of his huge Festival of the Freak.

Social Status- Habey is the founder of the Freaks, and although he denies being the leader, the philosophy he advocates in his rants is the personal philosophy of most Freaks. He is the head of the oldest and biggest Freak troupe in the city. In addition to being the main promoter, he is the announcer during the shows and he also does a geek act (eating and swallowing live animals and other disgusting things).

Personality- After years of practice, Habey has finally achieved what he has preached for years: not caring what anyone thinks of him. He is open about being bisexual, and about gaining sexual pleasure from dressing as a woman. He is also completely open about being rude and arrogant. People who are used to a level of dishonesty are often shocked and confused by Habey. One day he might be fascinated with a person and want that person around all the time, the next day he might find a person boring and ignore him or her. Habey hates anyone who is self-righteous because in his experience they are never as wise or moral as they say they are. Habey tries to enjoy life as much as possible, filling it with sex, drugs, good food and interesting people and avoiding any responsibility. Habey hates to have people depend on him or be able to predict him, and so he often does stupid things just to break his patterns.

Methods- Habey has few needs (he is rich, has many male and female groupies, and is seldom effected by the wars that the Freaks get in to). Habey's strong belief in personal autonomy prevents him from using the full measure of his persuasive power. Instead of persuading someone to do something, he waits until his advice is asked, then he smugly rants on for hours.

Typical Attack- Habey likes to grab both opponent's arms, lock his legs around their legs (a Grab: Wrestling at STH+INL+1d20+8 (skill) vs. 30 or 1d20 + 9 vs. 0), and vomits live scorpions on to him or her. The scorpions rarely sting (they are sedated), but it frightens most people in to giving up. If this fails he bites peoples' noses off (Pain/Stun at INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25 or 1d20 + 5 vs. 0) or head-butts them (Knockout at STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30 or 1d20 vs. 1).

Special Skills- Sleight of Hand (4), Feat: Resist Scorpion Poison (2), Freak Communication (2), Freak Swallowing (4), Freak Sex (2), Freak Mind (2), Freak Speech (5), Wrestling (2).

Freak Skills

Freak Contortion- Uses AGY. The PC has been trained to use either naturally occurring loose joints or body modifications that create flexibility (see the Joint Hypemobility advantage, below) to the most impressive level possible.

Easy (10): Bend over backwards.

Moderate (20): Escape from a straight jacket.

Hard (30): Get through a space as big as a human head.

Legendary (40): Appear dead (neck, back limbs appear broken) and spring up a second later.

Freak Feat- (Uses multiple attributes) This skill allows the PC to do one specific thing, in a very small range of circumstances, but to do it incredibly well. As opposed to other skills, which can be used to do a broad range of things, a feat lets the PC do one thing. The difficulty is typically thirty. Feats can be amazing, but not physically impossible. The PC can have multiple levels of this skill for multiple feats.

AGY Feat: Most commonly: balancing (e.g. balancing on a penny on top of a steel spike), catching (e.g. catching arrows shot at the PC), throwing (e.g. throwing knives at a target bound to a spinning wheel) or juggling (e.g. juggling ten knives with poisoned blades without getting cut).

AWR Feat: Very rare (noticing things seldom makes an impressive act). One exception is "Dr. Olaf" who claims to be able to smell what people had eaten in their last three meals.

END Feat: The PC has trained a part of his or her body to resist up to four points of a particular type of damage. List body part and source of damage (e.g. resist a sledgehammer to the belly, resist damage while chewing glass, resist cold damage from being frozen in a block of ice).

INL Feat: These are rare because they tend not to be very dramatic. The few examples are a man who solves a Rubix Cube to stop metal spiked from impaling him and a one-woman-band and claims to be able to play any song every written.

STH Feat: Up to twice the PC's normal STH for one specific act. Describe what muscles are used and what is done with them (e.g. bite through metal, lift a car).

WIL Feat: Most WIL feats involve putting up with an incredible amount of pain (if so, list the source of pain).

Freak Sex- Uses CHM. This skill, which can best be described as part hypnotism and part seduction, puts a willing subject in to a state of euphoria and central nervous system excitation comparable to that of highly addictive street drugs. The subject is put in to an altered state of consciousness where most strong emotions are interpreted (some would say "misinterpreted") as sexual excitement. Subjects find themselves being sexually excited by things they are, later, quite surprised and sometimes ashamed of.

In practice, this skill sometimes involves actual intercourse and sometimes it doesn't. The Freak must find and push the limits of what is too frightening or disturbing or weird for the subject to find sexually exciting. The more sexually adventurous the subject, the more extreme actions the Freak must take to induce the desired state of consciousness.

Freak Sex can be psychologically addictive, especially for people already suffering from mental problems. Many see practitioners of Freak Sex as nothing more than pushers, preying on the psychologically weak and damaged. Freak Sex has an addiction difficulty of 15 and a craving difficulty of 20 (see Addition, p.65). Because Freak Sex depends on pushing the subjects limit's, to get the same effect the Freak must do something more dangerous or degrading or disturbing than the last time. This has lead to the death of several addicts.

The effects of Freak Sex on a subject are: euphoria (must make easy save or be immobilized), distraction (-10 AWR, -5 INL), dissociation (feeling of events not being real or of not being oneself, +5 to save vs. fear/anger), loss of inhibitions (must make WIL or INL rolls to avoid acting on any impulse) and an endorphin rush (+2 STH, +5 to save vs. pain) lasting 90 minutes.

Anything which effects the difficulty of seduction rolls also effect the difficulty of Freak Sex rolls.

Easy (10): Put a 15 year old virgin in to an altered state of consciousness.

Moderate (20): Put a young gang member in to an altered state of consciousness.

Hard (30): Put an experienced fetish-scene veteran in to an altered state of consciousness.

Freak Mind- Uses WIL. The PC has trained his or her mind to think in unusual and alarming symbolism, even when thinking about everyday things. This makes any technological means of mind reading (e.g. subliminal analyzers, voice stress analyzers, mental stimulator based screeners) undependable and psychics who attempt to read the PCs thoughts (with Mind Reading, Mediumship or Psychometry) will not only be confused by what they find but may be frightened or shocked. See Psychological Shock Failure table, below.

Easy (10): Reduce accuracy of any means of mental analysis by 25%.

Moderate (20): Reduce accuracy of mental analysis by 50%. Psychics must save vs. Psychological Shock (see table) at 10 difficulty.

Hard (30): Reduce accuracy of mental analysis by 75%. Psychics must save vs. Psychological Shock at 20 difficulty.

Legendary (40): Reduce accuracy of mental analysis by 100%. Psychics must save vs. Psychological Shock at 30 difficulty.

Freak Speech- Uses CHM. The PC has trained in the methods of mass communication that preachers and carnival barkers have spent centuries developing to manipulate the emotional state of a crowd. The cadence of speech, "subliminal" messages sent by emphasizing certain syllables, emotion-provoking words and symbolism, and the human tendency of mass consensus are all utilized. Note that the changes to emotion and consciousness are temporary: this skill can not be used to create a permanent change in attitude.

Easy (10): Gain the rapt attention of 75% of a crowd.

Moderate (20): Gain the rapt attention of 99% of a crowd.

Difficult (30): Make a crowd oblivious to anything except the words of the PC.

Legendary (40): Make a crowd believe they are on psychedelic drugs.

Freak Swallowing- Uses AGY. The PC has trained the muscles involved in swallowing, regurgitation and moving things through the nasal passages to be able to do outstanding feats. This can be used for entertaining acts, but it can also be a useful way to hide objects.

Easy (10): Stick a sword blade down PC's throat without injury.

Moderate (20): Swallow a razor blade and regurgitate it with negligible injury.

Difficult (30): Swallow 2 golf balls and regurgitate them in any order.

Legendary (40): Swallow 5 poisoned razorblades, each with a number etched on them, and regurgitate them in any order without any injury.

Freak Magic- Uses AGY. Prerequisite: Sleight of Hand (4). This skill allows the PC to do spear to do something completely impossible. Sleight of hand, special devices ("props") and psychological manipulation of the crowd are utilized. In order for the PC to use this skill, he or she must have complete control over the situation, especially where the audience is standing and looking.

Easy (10): Tear a piece of paper and reassemble it.

Moderate (20): Float several inches off the ground.

Hard (30): Make a building disappear and reappear.

Legendary (40): Stab an audience member through the hand with a knife, but withdraw it to reveal no wound.

Freak Guessing- Uses AWR. This skill allows PCs to guess everything from weight to first name to what is in the pocket of a stranger the PC has never meet before. This skill utilized powers of observation and intuition. The real power behind the skill, however, is that the PC has memorized a huge store of statistical information. The PC knows, for instance, the 10 most common names of New York natives with mostly Puerto-Rican ancestry born between 2050 and 2055. Another trick that guessers use is to start to say something and gauge by the subject's expression whether it was correct or not, and if not then say something else. Despite all this, guessers fail as often as they succeed, but it is the successes that people remember (and that make money for the PC).

Easy (10): Guess someone's weight.

Moderate (20): Guess someone's first name and occupation.

Hard (30): Guess someone's weight just by hearing their voice.

Legendary (40): Guess the name of someone's childhood sweetheart.

Freak Communication- Uses INL. Many acts, especially "magic" or "mind reading" acts, require Freaks working together to be able to communicate secretly. Many schemes have been created to communicate secretly and the PC knows all of them. A PC with this skill can pay attention to any "conversation" between other Freaks and quickly pick up the "vocabulary."

Easy (10): Communicate one of 4 pre-arranged choices with a minor eye movement.

Moderate (20): Communicate one of 20 pre-arranged choices, each signified by a different sounding cough.

Hard (30): Communicate complex messages with different wording for a sentence (e.g. "what is your reading on this gentleman?" versus "now, what can you tell me about this fellow here?").

Legendary (40): Communicate someone's entire life story via nearly invisible changes in facial expression.

Live With Spikes- Uses AWR. This skill allows a PC with spikes (or other hazards permanently attached to his or her body) to do normal things (eat, sleep, walk around) without being injured by those hazards.

Easy (10): Go a week without being injured by hazards covering 1 or 2 body areas (see Body Spikes, below).

Moderate (20): Go a week without being injured by hazards covering 3 or 4 body areas.

Hard (30): Go a week without being injured by hazards covering 5 to 7 body areas.

Freak Modifications

Body Spikes: Have an AR, like armor, depending on how many spikes there are. If any attack against a PC has a success of less than the spikes' AR, then the object that hits the spikes takes spike damage. Costs $25/AR for light spikes (connected under the skin, do 1 bladed damage), $100/AR for heavy spikes (connected to bone, do 1½ bladed damage), $150/AR for barbed spikes (connected to bone, do 1½ ragged damage).

Animal Parts: The PC can pay to have a human or animal part matched to his or her DNA and implanted. Costs $500 for a small part (eye, cat paw, tongue) or $1000 for a large part (arm, cat head), +$200 if the part is prehensile or is a natural weapon (1 bladed damage), +$300 if it is a poisoned weapon (as per Poisoned Claws, p.103), +$300 if it is hooked to the PC's motor and sensory nerves.

Surgical Mutilation: Any change to make the PC's appearance look interesting, bizarre, shocking and grotesque. Gives the following permanently penalties (and reduces max. caps): -4 STH, -4 AGY, -2 BDY, -1 BLD. Any medical rolls dealing with that part of the body are at +10 difficulty. Costs $1000.

Shocking People

Some Freaks with terrible acts have learned that they can reveal whatever is terrible in order to shock and distract opponents and gain an advantage in a conflict. If the PC attempts this, he or she rolls CHM +1d20 vs. 30 and the victim makes an opposed save vs. Psychological Shock at WIL + 1d20 vs. 20 (see Psychological Shock Failure table).

The following modifiers can effect the PC's roll:

-The victim is already frightened (e.g. is a shut-in venturing outside): +10

-The victim is not expecting the PC to reveal something terrible: +10

-The PC has put the victim on-edge with a successful Freak Speech roll: +10

-The victim has seen the PC's terrible thing before: -20

-Each surgical mutilation: +10 (max. +20)

-Each animal part: +5 (max. +15)

-Extensive tattooing: +2

-Spikes covering most of the body (10+ AR): +3

-PC reveals he or she is a different gender: +3

Anything which gives the victim a plus or minus to save vs. fear will also effect saves vs. Psychological Shock.

Psychological Shock Failure

1-9: Loses one action, distraction (-4 to all rolls) for 1 hour.

10-19: Loses one action and reaction, Unconsciousness (10 difficulty to save), Distraction (-4 to all rolls) for 24 hours.

21+: Loses one action and reaction, Unconsciousness (30 difficulty to save). Nightmares and Distraction (-4 to all rolls) for 1 month.

Humankalorie

In Brief- Students of an alien culture and martial arts system, have adopted the lifestyle of and become part of the society of the Clowdian (Kalor) aliens.

Favorable Stereotypes- Proud, wise, believe strongly in duty, justice and order, always looking to prove and improve themselves.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Sad wannabes, pretend to be something they aren't, obtuse and inflexible.

Other Names- Clowdians, Human-Clowdians, Kalorophiles, Clowdian Wannabes (derogatory).

Origin- On the morning of May 25, 2052, as city residents headed for their Freedom Army appointed jobs, instead of the usual pro-Freedom Army announcements and propaganda, they heard something startling. The news was that a colony of space aliens had been living among humanity, posing as humans, for some time. City residents were warned that these aliens were loyal only to their species and requested that people report any immigrants from countries surrounding the Andes mountain range in South America. Many believed that this was a lie, that the Freedom Army had invented a false enemy in order to increase loyalty to the Freedom Army. Soon, Freedom Army newspapers and TV showed gruesome autopsy pictures showing people with inhuman viscera.

Day by day, the hunt for these aliens intensified. City residents learned little about the aliens except for what they were asked to watch for: strange food preferences, ownership of odd looking metal weapons, colored contact lenses, clothing that covers the neck, unusually long lower eyelashes, people speaking in a strange sounding language. Of all the calls to the alien tip line, most were false alarms. East Coast Freedom Army forces captured less than a hundred of these aliens and kept them in a guarded compound in Central Park.

Then, on November 18th, 2054, a white hot nuclear explosion rocked the city. The Freedom Army forces were in disarray, the people rioted and eventually US government troops returned from their inland strongholds to destroy the last of the Freedom Army forces. As city residents were herded out of the city, away from the nuclear contamination and in to refugee camps, they learned that a group of city rebels made up of psychics, hackers and aliens (all of whom had been persecuted by the Freedom Army) had been responsible for destroying the city Freedom Amy complex and killing Jeffrey Hernandez.

People were wary about these aliens, but the restoration committee seemed to think that they were no threat at all. Even while city residents were in refugee camps, restoration committee "public education" teams tried to undo the paranoia that had been caused by the Freedom Army. They explained that the Kalor aliens had come to Earth 992 years ago from some long-forgotten disaster or persecution. All their advanced technology had disintegrated centuries ago. They were not in contact with a home world (they didn't even know where their home world was or if it still existed). They had no choice but be born on Earth and they considered themselves residents of this planet as much as anyone else. The implication was that the aliens were just like every other immigrant group that made a home in the city: looking to better their lives, hoping to fit in to American society while remaining true to their own culture.

A significant minority had strong anti-Kalor feelings, but the average person accepted the Kalor as just another ethnic group. People were hungry for information about this new culture and everything about it. An era of general fascination with Kalor history and culture arose, and people made millions writing books about the Kalor, even though some were quite inaccurate.

At the same time that the world was eager to find out more about the Kalor, the Kalor themselves, now able to operate out in the open, were able to work as a single economic and political block, and they did so very efficiently. They made lucrative deals with several new agribusiness corps (selling them crops that the Kalor had been breeding intensely since their arrival). The Kalor were able to buy a large area of land in Mexico and to gain almost total autonomy over everything happening on that land. The Kalor empire created a "Kalor Jerusalem" and Kalor living all over the globe moved there. At the center of this land was Ciudad de la Nube ("Cloud City"), a huge building built to resemble the ship the Kalor came to Earth in. As they removed themselves from human society, the Kalor became more withdrawn and less willing to put their culture on display. The Kalor empire put a limit on the number of academicians who could come to Cloud City to study the Kalor (or, as they quickly became known, Clowdians).

By 2064 Information on the Kalor had reached a "saturation point" in America. Clowdian culture was the focus of VR games, pulp novels and movies. Americans had as much knowledge (and as many stereotypes and misconceptions) about the Kalor as they did about other cultures of the globe. Every college with anthropology and linguistics departments taught classes on Clowdian history, culture, law and language. The Clowdians had left the city completely by this point, so pulp novels and classes were all people had. A new class of "kalorophiles" appeared: young people who developed an intense interest in everything Kalor. For them, Kalor culture was new and exciting. Most importantly, it was different from their own culture, which they were wholly dissatisfied with. Stores and cafes opened to market to these young Kalorophiles, some of whom went so far as to dress like the Kalor and carry Kalor weapons. Many saved up to visit the Cloud City, but their applications to visit were rejected because the Kalor did not think a fascination with their culture was a sufficient reason to visit.

For many years the Kalorophiles went on admiring and emulating the Kalor from afar until one Kalorophile discovered a significant loophole in Clowdian law: if a group of humans went through the naming and adolescence rituals described in Clowdian law, they would be full citizens of the Clowdian empire, and not even the empress herself could stop it. Dozens of Kalorophiles underwent these rituals and wasted no time informing the empire of their new citizenship. The Kalor, surprised, called these young upstarts "humankalorie" which translates as "humans who are like kalor." The Kalor could not deny that these young people were citizens, yet they also didn't want any human being able to become a Kalor citizen and move to the Clowd City. Worldwide, there were more humans interested in Kalor culture than there were Kalor, so opening the floodgates would be disastrous. The empress herself gave orders to this new group of citizens. Although the wording was complicated, the orders were

basically for the Humankalorie to keep doing whatever it was they had been doing in the city. Each Humankalorie was allowed to sign up on to a very long waiting list to visit the Cloud City. Petitions to move there were denied outright.

The Humankalorie felt they had won a victory. Feeling that they were now an actual part of Clowdian society, they redoubled their obsession with being Kalor. They followed Kalor law strictly, including the mandatory Oht (sparring with traditional Kalor weapons). The Humankalorie turned their image in the city around: where people had previously thought of them as geeky wannabes, they quickly became known as accomplished martial artists and a group devoted to loyalty and duty. More and more people, even those who originally had only marginal interest in Kalor society, joined the group and received intense training on how to live life as a good Kalor. As their power as a military force grew, so did their influence on the gang scene. They quickly became known as one of the most powerful gangs in the city.

Timeline

1060- Kalor arrive on earth.
1075- Kalor physiology begins to change to look more like humans.
1217- Kalor cease enslaving humans.
1320- Kalor moon colony abandoned: too much Clowdian technology is irreparable.
1951- First Kalor, looking mostly human, infiltrate human societies in the Andes.
1969- First Kalor in NY.
1995- Clowdian physiology stops changing.
2046- Lisa Becker (a human) made Empress, immediately flees in to exile to avoid challenges.
2052- Freedom Army forces in New York capture a Kalor.
2052- Freedom Army announces the existence of Kalor, begin worldwide hunt.
2053 -10,000 Kalor in prison camps worldwide.
2053- Lisa Becker returns from exile to help the Kalor join with other rebels.
2053- Representative of the Kalor meets and joins a compact with other rebels.
2054- New York rebels attack Freedom Army complex, satellite.
2055- Last Freedom Army soldiers in New York killed.
2061- Empire ends negotiation with Mexico for purchase of semi-autonomous zone.
2064- Human fascination with Kalor culture peaks.
2075- Humankalorie become members of Kalor empire.

Joining- Adding to their ranks pleases most Humankalorie, and so most are happy to train and indoctrinate any person who seems to be serious about joining the empire. The first step to joining is for the young person to learn a lot about Kalor culture, society and law. They may learn some from talking to fellow Humankalorie, but a lot of independent studying is necessary. When the older Humankalorie feels it is time, the young person is invited to participate in the Beiana ritual. This ritual is relatively simple and doesn't require the young person to do anything (the ritual is supposed to be preformed on Kalor babies). The Beiana ritual names the person then makes that person's name and lineage known to the empire. The new Humankalorie comes out of this with a Kalor name and is now part of the Beiana age group.

Next the new Humankalorie must train with Kalor weapons and discover which they like. When they become capable of defending themselves, they go through the next ritual, the Tabul ritual. As part of the Tabul ceremony, the Humankalorie must commit himself or herself to training with either Olaninan (small stabbing) weapons or Olanidad (long, bladed staff) weapons for the rest of their lives. As part of the ritual, the Humankalorie must also survive a round of Oht (ritual sparring with Kalor weapons, which can be deadly for people who are unskilled). As a Tabul (roughly "adolescent" for real Kalor) the Humankalorie is expected to practice Oht on a regular basis and be ready at any point to fight and die for the empire.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has just gone through the Tabul ceremony. He or she has a Kalor name, has committed to one general class of weapons, and is expected to fight in gang warfare.

Lifestyle- The Kalor have few traditions or customs that aren't described in detail by the law. The law describes every Kalor's place in society and their duties during war and in day-to-day life. Much of Humankalorie lifestyle can be gleaned simply by reading the law, just as the lifestyle of the Kalor when they were living in the Andes mountains 900 years ago can be gleaned from the same document.

The law requires that all able-bodied adults practice Kalor martial arts daily and must be ready, at a moment's notice, to defend the empire. For the Kalor there is no military: from the time they are old enough to fight until they are too old to fight, every Kalor is a soldier. The Humankalorie take this duty very seriously (more so than most Kalor living in the Cloud City).

The law describes combat practice or Oht in great detail. In fact, the section describing duties and rules related to Oht is as large as the section describing criminal statutes, procedures and punishments. Concerning Oht, the law proscribes:

-How often and for how long Kalor must practice Oht.
-Where it can be practiced (i.e. what conditions make a place too hazardous to practice in).
-The configurations of combat (for one-on-one and paired fights).
-The exact physical dimensions of the weapons (see Oht Weapons, below).
-The fighters' choice of weapons (and at what age grades they must narrow their choices).
-Acceptable moves (those which simulate real combat yet are unlikely to kill).
-What types of strikes are considered "winning" strikes.
-Who judges Oht combat (and how two Kalor can referee themselves when nobody else available).
-Criminal punishments for avoiding Oht, cheating and being over-aggressive.

In Oht there are two types of weapons and two types of fighters: Olanidad (long staff weapons and the fighters who use them) and Olaninan (short stabbing weapons and the fighters that use them). In one-on-one Oht, an Olaninan must fight an Olanidad. In paired Oht, each team has one of each. The partnership of an Olaninan and Olanidad can be very strong, and many Oht partners marry. Even when they do not marry, the law gives Oht partners many of the same rights, privileges and duties as between Kalor mates.

There is another form of ritual combat, similar to Oht, which is used to resolve political or legal disputes that cannot be resolved in any peaceful way. It is like Oht, but opponents actually use deadly force against each other. This form of combat is reserved for high level legal and political conflicts and it is seldom that any Humankalorie would have recourse to it.

Normally, a Kalor's occupation will be dictated by the empire, but the Empress has dictated that the Humankalorie "participate in the local economy and avail themselves of social services of the local government." So, the Humankalorie live much like other Wells: they receive welfare checks, they get part time jobs when they can, they pay rent to live in little apartments. The Kalor have no native conception of religion, and so Humankalorie have the same variety of religious beliefs and practices as other Wells.

The Kalor empire is in a state of peace, and thus the Humankalorie are never officially "at war." Even in times of peace, though, the law allows Kalor to defend themselves out an attack known enemies and threats. It is through this provision of the law that the Humankalorie make war against other city groups.

The study of the law is a common past-time for Humankalorie. The Kalor have no legal professionals: every one is expected to know the law and argue on their own behalf (or to judge the legal disputes of others) with no preparation. Those who know the law well have a substantial advantage over those who don't.

Kalor law is designed to resolve disputes quickly, even in emergency situations and with limited people available. When a dispute arises, the parties shout "tho" (literally "controversy") and everyone who hears rushes to the scene. All the members of the oldest age grade represented share the responsibility of judging the controversy. The claimant makes a simple claim that the law compels the claimee to do something or have something done to them, and the claimee makes a counterclaim. Each claim can generate its own counterclaim. Kalor law requires fast thinking: participants must choose one legal strategy they are most likely to win with because they can not go back and choose another if the opponent pulls out a persuasive counter-

Olaninan and Olanidad Stereotypes	
Olaninans	**Olanidads**
Low Self-Esteem	Arrogant
Short	Obsessive
Vengeful	Patronizing
Bloodthirsty	Bullies
Sex-Crazed	Afraid of Pain
Unpredictable	Popular
Masochistic	Overconfident

argument. Each claim must be one statement (the Clowdian language equivalent of a sentence, which may be very long) and the speaker can not speak overly slowly in order to stall for time. When the last claim is made, the judges vote (ties are decided in favor of the accusee). Any decision can be appealed, though there are punishments to discourage frivolous appeals. For each appeal, more and more older Kalor are brought in. The highest level of appeal goes to a judge, ancient Kalor who come out of hibernation only to decide cases. Since judges usually kill any party they feel has wasted their time, few appeals are made to judges.

Social Structure- The Kalor have a strongly centralized government. There are no local governments, only appointed heads of official projects. There are no official projects for the city Humankalorie, and thus no leaders. The Kalor democratically elect members of the council, but the Humankalorie have never been a big enough voting block to matter.

The Humankalorie divide themselves in to age groups, each with different privileges and responsibilities. In addition to the prestige that comes with being in an older age group, people in older age groups can give certain types of orders to people in younger age groups. Many of these privileges do not apply in the city because no Kalor in the city are working on official empire projects (and many of the age groups' powers apply "on-the-job"). During combat, however, age group is very important. The Beiana are "children", they can give no orders and must move away from danger if ordered to by any other age grade. The Tabul are the young warriors and are meant to be a force of unrestrained violence. Any Tabul can compel another to charge a known enemy. The Brakana are the more seasoned warriors and should provide some restraint to the Tabul: they can compel any Tabul to retreat from battle or show mercy to an enemy. The Reiana are elders who use their wisdom to direct battles from afar. They can compel any other group to give them information about a battle and they can compel a group of fighters to move in any direction during battle. The reiana are also considered to be experienced enough with death (Reiana means literally "knows death") that they can compel any

A Clowdian Trial

Claimant: Tho!

Judges: We are assembled.

Claimant: Otana has killed a Kalor and must blind herself permanently.

Defender: Yes, but I need not blind myself because I killed to prevent my own imminent unlawful death.

Claimant: No, Otana's death was not prevented because there was no imminent unlawful death because Lho had no intention of killing her.

Defender: I have no counterclaim to that.

Judges (speak with each other, briefly question witnesses as to whether they believe that Lho intended to kill Otana)

A Majority of the Judges: We affirm the claim.

All Judges: The claim is affirmed.

means literally "knows death") that they can compel any younger Kalor to show mercy to an enemy, execute a prisoner or mercy-kill any Kalor who is wounded on the battlefield. A fifth class exists, the judges (or Reio, literally "dead-like"), but the Reio take part in Kalor society very often and it is unlikely that a Humankalorie will ever have contact with one.

Advancement- PCs start off as Tabul, which is roughly the Kalor equivalent of adolescence. The majority of Humankalorie are Tabul and working in becoming Brakana. To become Brakana , a Humankalorie must either be a veteran of war or have raised a child. To gain Brakana status through warfare, the Tabul must have at least five confirmed elimination of enemy threats during battle (killing, knocking out, crippling or scaring away an enemy). They must have been Tabul for at least 2.1 years (roughly equivalent to four experience levels). The ritual to become Brakana requires that the initiate defeat two Brakana opponents at once during Oht. While the opponents are not required to use the full measure of their skill, they never make it easy for the initiate and many people have had to attempt the ritual multiple times. When a Kalor becomes Tabul, he or she must commit to practicing Oht with one specific weapon for life.

The fourth age grade is Reana, this is an age grade that is usually only awarded to very old Kalor who can no longer participate in warfare and instead use their wisdom behind the scenes to help the Kalor. A veteran warrior, even if still young and able bodied, can be named Reana, and in this case the Reana gains privileges and duties much like a general. To be eligible to be a Reana, a person must have been a Brakana for 2.1 years and must have either killed 10 enemies in battle or had 10 people they had a special relationship with die (thus the literal translation of Reana: "knows death"). The ritual for Reana is not described in the law and the Kalor keep it secret, no Humankalorie knows what the ritual entails. Only five Humankalorie have traveled to the Cloud City to undergo the ritual, only three succeeded and all five are forbidden by law to speak about what the ritual entailed.

There is one final grade that a Kalor can achieve, though it is so hard that it is unlikely that a Humankalorie will ever achieve it unless human lifespan can be significantly increased. These are the judges: the half-dead, almost immortal final arbiters of the law, who have the right to slay anyone who displeases them. The minimum qualifications include more than half a century undefeated in Oht and on the field of battle, hundreds of confirmed kills, the approval of another judge and flawless knowledge of the law. In addition to this there is a secret regiment of training (that is so intense that it is said to have killed many) and a secret initiation.

Kalor History in a Nutshell

They came here about a thousand years ago on a generation ship. They probably had already forgotten why they left and where they came from. They had lost the knowledge and tech necessary to repair their own tech, and their ship was already starting to break down when they arrived on Earth. Knowing that they would soon be without tech at all, the Kalor did two things to ensure their survival as a unique people. First, they used their remaining genetic tech to put a series of changes in to motion which would make the Kalor look just like humans. Second, they wrote an all-encompassing, unchanging law to define Kalor society. The Kalor lived in the Andes for centuries, adapting to Earth and primitive technology, until they almost came to believe that they weren't really from outer space. When South America was colonized by Europeans, they became just another group of poor Indians, feigning Catholicism. Their society was strong and centralized, and they weathered wars, famines and political change with hardly a scratch. Not wanting to bring attention to themselves, they remained in the background, as humble peasants, as much as possible. The twentieth century and globalization gave them new ability to act with anonymity, and they began to create economic tendrils across the globe, and educate themselves in the best of Western academia. They were discovered by the Freedom Army during the freedom wars, hunted and put in concentration camps, but they joined the rebel movement and helped destroy the Freedom Army. The restoration governments trusted them because of their role in the Freedom Wars, and accepted their right to exist on this planet. They made money and bought their own "Kalor Jerusalem" in Mexico's Ciudad de Nube (Cloud City). Now free to "be themselves" they had a renaissance in which they renewed much of their traditional lifestyle and became known as "Clowdians."

Population- There are about 1,400 Humankalorie in the city, about 100 (7%) are Beiana, about 1,100 (79%) are Tabul, about 200 (14%) are Brakana and only 3 are Reiana.

External Relations- Although they are very well organized in battle, the Humankalorie have no leadership with the authority to speak for them in politics. The closest they have are the hundreds off Brakana who can order their inferiors to back down if they can make some to a truce with an enemy.

The Humankalorie are known in the city gang scene as violent but fair. Any crime against one of their own will be responded to with all-out warfare. Their standards of what crimes are worthy of revenge are stable and predictable and roughly in line with the standards of city gang culture. Despite being leaderless, they are quick to back down when an enemy makes retribution or makes a convincing argument that they committed no crime worthy of revenge. And when peace is achieved, it tends to stay peaceful, instead of letting hostilities linger.

Because of their proximity to the Skin Borgs, the Humankalorie have gotten in to a lot of wars with them. The Humankalorie are currently at peace with the Skin Borgs and have refused to help the Purists, Bleeders and Orphans in their blockade of the Skin Borgs. Both sides know that the addition of the Humankalorie would probably mean the Skin Borgs being driven back, if not defeated altogether.

The Humankalorie have an odd relationship with the Kalor empire. The empire wants to forget that they exist while the Humankalorie want to be recognized as part of Kalor society. The empire only has contact with the Humankalorie when they are legally required to and even then the contact is only with a grumpy, overworked Kalor bureaucrat. The empire would never come to the Humankalorie's defense in the case of some gang war (thought they may investigate any cases of Kalor bashing against the Humankalorie) and if the empire ever got in to a war, it is unlikely that they would trust the Humankalorie's loyalty enough to call on them for help. For the most part, the Humankalorie are not bitter, they feel lucky to have received as much recognition as they have.

Military Style- Any group of Humankalorie can initiate an attack (so long as it is "self-defense," see above) yet during gang warfare the Humankalorie tend to go attack in large groups. The goal is always to do whatever is necessary to eliminate the enemy as an immediate threat. The Humankalorie prefer multi-pronged attacks, splitting up in to groups of about 100 and entering enemy turf from multiple angles, converging on the largest enemy stronghold.

The Humankalorie fight in pairs of an Olaninan and Olanidad. The Olanidad stands in back and uses the long pole weapon to defend the Olaninan, to distract the opponent and keep the opponent's weapon busy. The Olaninan waits for an opening and then lunges to make a deadly strike.

Typical Weapon- All Humankalorie carry and use one of the regulation Oht weapons (see text box).

Turf- A Florida shaped piece of turf in the East Harlem part of the city. Humankalorie turf is South of Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., North of 106th St., East of Madison Avenue and West of Lexington Avenue. At the North end of Humankalorie territory, sticking out of the West side is Marcus Garvey Memorial Park. The park has an old cast-iron watchtower from 1857 which the Humankalorie use, in times of war, to watch for incoming enemies. Humankalorie turf centers on Park Avenue where many stores, restaurants and bars cater to Humankalorie and other people with an interest in things Clowdian.

Distinguishing Features- Humankalorie get tattoos under their eyes to simulate the long lower eyelashes of real Kalor. These tattoos are vertical parallel black lines going down to the cheekbone. Humankalorie carry their Oht weapons with them at almost all times. The Humankalorie also wear Clowdian style straps around their necks, upper arms, and thighs. These straps can be of any material, though they are usually black leather, and most contain round holes. The Clowdian straps are also often worn in other places: on wrists, as belts, sewn to the cuffs of shirts and pants, etc. Some Humankalorie wear colored contract lenses to simulate the recessive red-iris that some Clowdians have.

Symbols- An eye with vertical parallel lines under it is the most common symbol used by the Humankalorie. Also, rows of round holes.

Slang

Beiana: n., literally "knows the womb," the age grade of children.

Brakana: n., literally "knows war," and age grade for mature adults and seasoned warriors.

Clowdian: n., used to describe modern Kalor culture and society (especially, anything which has developed since the Kalor have moved to Cloud City).

Humankalorie (hyōōmônkālôrē): N., Literally "humans like kalor," used to refer to any human who has gained Kalor citizenship.

Law, The: n., the unchanging body of law that Kalor society is based on.

Oht Weapons

The law describes 6 weapons which are acceptable for Oht, and the exact dimensions of each.

Olanidad Weapons

Cardad: The cardad is a long staff with curved blades shaped like an X (or two crescent moons back to back) on either end. The curved blades facing outwards are good for blocking weapons and the blades facing inwards are good at catching and wrenching away weapons.

Pendad: The least popular Olanidad weapon. It is basically a human "shephard's crook" with a spike at the inwardly curved hooking end. The spike is not much good in actual combat, and is there only to kill an enemy who has been immobilized. The strength of the Pendad is its hook, which can be used to trap and wrench away enemy weapons or to hook legs and knock enemies down. Since the pendad is the closest thing the Clowdians have to a non-lethal weapon, pendad users are stereotyped as pacifists.

Sordad: The most popular Olanidad weapon. The pendad is a long, straight staff weapon with two moon-shaped curved blades (back to back) on either end. The Sordad is a wicked weapon: the curved blades are designed to rip through flesh, causing both pain and bleeding. The sordad's purpose is to do a lot of damage quickly, and while it is not the best weapon to have during one-on-one combat, during mass warfare the sordad fighters usually do the most damage.

Olaninan Weapons

Corinan: The most popular Olinan weapon. Features a long, thin blade (as much a spike as it is a blade) which sticks out from between the middle and ring fingers. The strength of the Corinan is that it is perfect for stabbing and is long enough to pierce any vital organ on a single strike. The weakness is that is it virtually impossible to block a blow with the Corinan's thin blade.

Oponan: The least popular Olinan weapon. The Oponan is a complicated series of curved blades which surround a closed fist. Although two bladed are longer and can be used for stabbing, the Oponan's greatest strength is it's ability to entangle an enemy's weapon or limb. A typical Oponan attack is to catch and enemy's wrist between the curved bladed, then stab the opponent with the other Oponan.

Pelsinan: The pelsinan has a wide blade coming out from the grip, with holes for the middle and ring fingers to go through. The blade is thin enough to be used for stabbing, but thick enough to be used to parry a blow. In this way, the Pelsinan is like a compromise between the Corinan and the Oponan.

Kalor (kālôr) n., the name the Clowdian aliens call themselves in their own language.

Oht (ôt like "ought") n. The ritual combat of the Kalor.

Olaninan: n., 1. A class of small, paired handheld weapons used in Oht; 2. Any person who devotes themselves to using this type of weapon.

Olanidad 1. n, 1. A class of weapons made from long, hollow metal pipes with blades or spikes at the ends; 2. Any person who devotes himself or herself to using this type of weapon.

Reiana: n., literally "knows death," an age grade for respected elders and seasoned war veterans.

Reio: n., literally "death like," these are the nearly-immortal ancient judges, final arbiters of the law.

Tabul: n., literally "approaching life," an age grade for Kalor who are old enough to fight but too young to make many decisions on their own (roughly equivalent to adolescence).

Tho: n., literally "conflict," this is shouted to begin an impromptu trial where the judges are the eldest Kalor around.

Skills

Free Skills: Kalor Language (1), Law: Clowdian (2), one level of either Olaninan or Olanidad.

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 8, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 7, MIL 6, PSY:X 21, PSY:M 16, PSY:S 16, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 6, STRT 7.

Special Skills: The skills Kalor Language, Law: Clowdian, Olanidad, Olaninan and Specific Weapon Training: Karits cost only 5 skill points per level.

Income- $1,500 +$100/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Visited Cloud City: (Optional Advantage) Costs 2 Bonus Points. Almost every Humankalorie, as soon as they become Beiana, sign up to visit Cloud City. The wait is long, several years for most, but some people are randomly put in a "faster line" and get to visit Cloud City. The PC has lived in Cloud City as a week, spending most of the time touring and meeting the Kalor. Those who have visited Cloud City are treated with a bit more respect by other Humankalorie and are constantly asked to tell stories about what it was like.

Suggested Skills- Olaninan or Olanidad, Staff Fighting or Knife Fighting, Law: Clowdian.

Suggested Equipment- A Kalor weapon (See Oht Weapons, above), nanoweave armor.

Suggested Reading- Clowdians, Freedom War: The Occupation, Freedom War: The Rebellion.

Hummingbirds

In Brief- Dance-club attendees who take drugs to enhance their metabolism and let them dance harder and faster.

Favorable Stereotypes- Athletic, artistic, passionate, energetic, attractive, life-loving.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Hyperactive, drug-addicted, impulsive, randomly violent, inattentive, sensation seeking, shallow, lookist.

Other Names- Clubbers, Club Kids, Dancers, Ravers

Origin- Dancing and drugs have been intimately connected since prehistory. One reason is because intense dancing creates endorphins which can modify and enhance the activity of many drugs. One of the reasons that early Christian groups prohibited dancing was that it was a religious activity in many competing shamanistic and pagan religions. The basic beat of shamanic dance was brought back to the US by slaves. The beat based music that was a necessary part of voodoo trances became intermingled with Creole music in New Orleans to create Jazz music, the first dance music to catch on with white America.

The creation of MDMA, or ecstasy, strengthened the connection between dance and drugs in Western culture. Ecstasy seemed the perfect drug to take while dancing: it gave seemingly unlimited energy, increased empathy for every other person, and acted as a psychedelic to increase the enjoyment of music and other stimuli. Evolving alongside the booming use of ecstasy, raves became the perfect place to go while on drugs: all night parties with booming music, roving drug sellers by the dozen, fantastic lightshows, hundreds or thousands of young scantily clad dancers, and music with qualities that appealed to those in altered states of consciousness. Despite being made illegal, ecstasy use and raves rose dramatically in the US. The price of ecstasy remained high, keeping it from becoming a drug of steady abuse (as crack cocaine was becoming at the same time).

A war against raves by law enforcement drove them underground. Raves were planned in secret, and one had to be part of the scene to know where they were going to be. Rave culture became smaller, more tightly knit. Despite this, rave promoters and ecstasy sellers continued to make themselves rich throughout the first half of the 21st century. The music styles changed, but there were no improvements on the basic combination of ecstasy and a dance party. There was even a rave held in the city during the Freedom Army occupation, despite the food shortages and long hours of forced labor during the day, and despite the fact that punishments would be severe if the Freedom Army was to find out.

After the Freedom Wars, as much of the city's population fled in to gated communities, private cities and corporate living centers, the underground dance party scene became less underground. The police force became smaller and more corrupt and drug sellers were able to operate openly in city dance clubs. Dance club owners permitted this because they could demand a take of the profits. Instead of a guerilla rave, held by trespassing in some warehouse, the raves were now held nightly dance clubs (often ex-warehouses) owned by the promoters.

Then, in 2074, a drug called Hummingbird hit the scene. No matter how pleasurable an ecstasy high was, the withdrawal was horrible: exhaustion, depression, irritability, insomnia, anxiety and anhedonia (loss of ability to feel pleasure) sometimes lasting several days. Hummingbird was a completely different kind of drug: it semi-permanently altered the human metabolism, which meant that there was no "coming down" from Hummingbird. Although the psychedelic and euphoric effects of Hummingbird were not very strong, the idea of a permanent high with no coming down appealed to so many club goers that by 2076 it was the most used drug in the club scene. In 2075, the city Drug Lords consolidated their power and attempted to create a vertical monopoly of the drug scene. The Drug Lords cut off most of the routes of Hummingbird and Ecstasy in to the city (they wanted people to use their drugs, which were much more addictive, instead). City club goers had already learned how to make Hummingbird at home, however. To the consternation of the Drug Lords, Hummingbird use actually increased in the city club scene as other drugs became harder to get.

The Drug Lords tried to send pusher gangs in to the clubs to find and take out the Hummingbird sellers in the dance clubs. The club goers, though, fought back en masse, and the Drug Lords quickly discovered that no team of pushers, no matter how well armed, could compete against hundreds of angry, hyped-up dancers. Since ecstasy had become less popular, he dance scene had become less about peace and love and more about the expression or raw emotions, including anger. The dance club scene had adopted elements from the more violent underground music scenes. The Drug Lords were forced to back down.

As the violent expansionist gang known as the Skin Borgs moved south, there were an increasing number of violent confrontations with Hummingbirds. Members of the Orphans and Purists meet with several influential club owners and Hummingbird artists, asking for their help in a blockade to stop the Skin Borgs. The club owners and performers found it easy to persuade Hummingbirds to participate in this blockade.

Timeline
1910-1920- Jazz, mixture of African and European music, developed.
1912- Ecstasy 1st synthesized by Merck Pharmaceuticals.
1919-1933- Prohibition of alcohol in US, drinking and dancing in illegal speakeasies.
1965- Ecstasy first tested on humans.
1980- First slam pit (later mosh pit) in California punk scene.
1987- Ecstasy becomes a central part of British rave scene.
1988- Rave scene establishes itself in NY.
1988- Ecstasy illegal in US.
2053- Rave held during Freedom War occupation of the city.
2065-2070- Rave promoters buy their own clubs.
2074- Hummingbird hits the streets.
2075- City Drug Lords consolidate.
2076- Hummingbird the most used drug in the club scene.
2079- Hummingbird join blockade against Skin Borgs.

Joining- It's easy enough to go in to a dance club, all one needs is a few bucks for the cover charge. It is almost as easy to find someone selling Hummingbird (though until a buyer finds a reliable dealer, he or she is wise to get it tested to make sure that's what it really is). After a few weeks of using Hummingbird nightly or almost every night, the change to the metabolism becomes semi-permanent and the person only needs to use it every once in a while to keep the metabolism in its excited state.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been seriously in to the club scene for about 6 months and has done enough Hummingbird to achieve a semi-permanent increased metabolism.

Lifestyle- The Hummingbird's entire lifestyle is made possible by the use of Hummingbird. Hummingbird changes the entire metabolism of the human body. A person on Hummingbird craves sugar constantly, and any calories they take in are converted instantly in to energy. A person on Hummingbird only needs to sleep a few hours a night, when they do sleep the sleep is very light, and when they are awake they constantly feel full of energy. Hummingbird by itself doesn't produce any euphoria or psychedelic effects, but is makes it possible for people to dance intensely for hours, which will create enough natural endorphins in the body to create euphoric and psychedelic effects.

Hummingbirds are always moving. They often have trouble keeping friends who are not using Hummingbird because few people can keep up with their frantic pace. Sleep is a chore to most Hummingbirds, and as soon as they are up they start to walk around the city, meeting other Hummingbirds, finding out who is playing at what clubs that night and who they might be able to meet at a club. Hummingbirds will typically swing by the Northern border of their turf with hopes of being able to jump a Skin Borg, but unless there is some battle going on they usually become bored and leave quickly, after exchanging greetings with whatever other Hummingbirds happen to be there that they know. For the Purists and Orphans, the blockade against the Skin Borgs has created a pitched battle front with gang soldiers on guard 24 hours a day, but for the Hummingbirds it has created just another fun place to hang out.

Sometimes Hummingbirds can't wait for the clubs to open, and some may bring portable sound systems out on to the streets and start dancing right there. Otherwise, most of the clubs start to open at nightfall. Hummingbirds may go home to change first: many want to look their best when they go in a club. Others are preparing for a round in the pit and go home to put on their heavy boots.

Not every night in every dance club is the same. Most clubs have a special style they cater to. Musical style is never a very big issue for Hummingbirds for two reasons. First, any music that can be danced to sounds good to a Hummingbird. Second, DJs blur the lines between musical styles by mixing things from every genre in to their mixes. Most clubs, no matter what they cater to on most nights, have at least a few specialty nights. This might be a night of music from the 2070s or 2060s, it might be a gay night (although only the biggest clubs can compete with the bars and clubs of Christopher Street), it might be an all grey night (everyone dyes their skin and hair shades of gray), it might be a love night (people looking to pair up with someone of the opposite sex), a fuzzy night (everyone wears furry or fuzzy clothes). There are even mud nights where the whole club is filled with mud for dancers to wallow in. There are some nights devoted exclusively to angry music and the entire club floor is one huge mosh pit. At each type of night, Hummingbirds and Goods make their way through the crowd selling (and giving away to friends) drugs which will enhance the experience of that particular atmosphere. On love night it might be aphrodisiacs, on grey nights it might be dissociative hallucinogens, on an angry night it might be combat drugs.

One thing that all clubs have in common, almost every night, is violence. In some clubs, on some nights, violence is rare, it begins as a conflict between two individuals and disappears quickly. On other nights, in other clubs, the majority of the dance floor is taken up by people stomping, elbowing, shoving and jumping in to each other. Most commonly, there is a spot of violence on the dance floor for most of the night. The spot moves around randomly like a swirling storm. Those who want to do some shoving or stomping move in to it, those who don't try to keep away. The spot is typically the least densely populated part of the dance floor, surrounded by a thick ring of people trying to repel randomly moving moshers and keep from being pushed in themselves.

Hummingbird is only the most popular drug of the group which has taken its name, it is not the only choice. Some hummingbirds use other drugs, from alcohol to hallucinogens to amphetamines. Some (about 10%) use these drugs instead of Hummingbird, but many more (40%) use them in addition to Hummingbird. There are even some Hummingbirds (10%) that don't use drugs at all. On any given night, about half the people in the club are on some drug other than, or in addition to, Hummingbird and caffeine. Goods, Hummingbirds and even a few Pusher gangs sell these drugs. They may also sell a service where they test a drug to see if it is what the buyer thinks it is. Sellers rarely have to advertise: when someone is selling, especially if it turns out to be something good, people tell their friends and word gets around.

In the end, for most Hummingbirds, it's not about looking good and getting laid, it's not about style and it's not about violence, it's about dancing. The right drugs and the right music can cause an intensely ecstatic experience that will keep a Hummingbird coming back again night after night. Many Hummingbird users report feeling that they are channeling energy through themselves and in to the universe. One popular DJ is quoted often by Hummingbirds as saying "Being alive is boundless joy and suffering, that joy and suffering is a type of energy, and for someone to be healthy that energy has to come out, and music and dance lets it come out. Dancing is like screaming in joy, sorrow and anger, all at once."

There is a definite toll from this lifestyle. Hummingbird hasn't been around all that long, but there is evidence that it causes several physical problems consistent with a long hard life. In addition to the effects of the drugs themselves, thousands of hours spent dancing can do serious damage to joints. In addition to Hummingbird, the Hummingbirds use many other drugs. Most Hummingbirds feel that a reduced lifespan is a fine price to pay for their intense experiences.

Social Structure- There is very little authority among the Hummingbirds, nobody can tell anybody else what to do. There are many friendships, some groups of friends who hang around together, a lot of friendly acquaintances and some Hummingbirds who are enemies. The most commonly hated are the Hummingbirds who go around selling drugs that aren't what the seller claims they are (they might be some weaker drug, they might be aspirin). People who "sell shit" must keep moving from club to club, and even then it is only a matter of time until enough people recognize them that they are in serious danger.

A single Hummingbird has little hope of convincing every Hummingbird to adopt some stance or plan. There are thousands of Hummingbirds and only so many people an individual can talk to. There are some members of the community who have more chances for persuasion of other Hummingbirds. The drug dealers, especially those who make their own Hummingbird and are known as reputable dealers, often have the luxury of an audience. DJs and live performers at clubs have even bigger audiences. Some DJs and live performers have grown in popularity enough to have loyal fans. Probably the most powerful are the club owners. Their choice or music styles, theme nights and DJs actually helps form the Hummingbird culture, and since they are the owners of the clubs they can make whatever announcement they want, whenever they want.

Advancement- There are several ways to gain power and prestige as a Hummingbird. One way is to become a drug dealer. If the PC makes good contacts and becomes

trusted, he or she can significantly increase his or her income. However, competition is stiff and there is always an inherent danger to selling drugs (see the section on Goods for more).

PCs who gain musical skills can get gigs performing or DJing in clubs. The PC must have 3 or more levels in Music and must own either a musical instrument or a portable computer with a music program and $500 worth of music files. The first gigs will be short and unpaid. If the PC pleases the crowd (both with musical skill and personal style) the PC can start getting paid gigs.

The real way to advance is if the PC can save up (or get investors for) the $10,000-$50,000 it takes to open up a club. Getting a club ready and then running it will take up a majority of the PC's time and the club is not guaranteed to succeed. There are a lot of clubs out there already and a new club has to do something very special to attract patrons.

Population- There are 2,200 Hummingbirds, making them the second largest gang in the city (the largest being the Skin Borgs).

External Relations- The Hummingbirds are almost too disorganized to be called a gang. There is not even a shared culture with codes of conduct or standards of revenge. Most other gangs see the Hummingbirds as poorly organized, unpredictable and too large and violent to bother messing with.

The Drug Lords do not like the Hummingbirds, but know they can not defeat them and leave them alone. Goods, on the other hand, are very important to Hummingbird life because they sell Hummingbird and other drugs. Goods often see Hummingbird dance clubs as refugees to go to when pursued by agents of the Drug Lords.

The Hummingbirds are at war with the Skin Borgs. It has become a part of Hummingbird culture to hang around near the border between Hummingbird and Skin Borg turf looking for a fight. Peace is probably not an option, but the Skin Borgs know that when they do not want a confrontation with Hummingbirds they can simply stay out of that part of town.

Military Style- Mass warfare is uncommon with the Hummingbirds. It takes some really horrible act to make the Hummingbirds angry enough that some club owner or performer can convince the crowd to spill out of the club and attack. The Hummingbirds do not believe in stealth: they rampage down the streets towards the enemy as a sort of moving riot. When in enemy turf (and sometimes before that) they smash and steal what they can. When they reach enemy turf they typically outnumber the enemy and they surround their enemy. They are a swirling mass of quickly moving fighters, each kicking, hitting or stabbing an enemy as they race by. The Hummingbirds are not especially bloodthirsty: when an enemy dies it is usually because the opponent was knocked down and was stepped on in a vital place.

Typical Weapon- The most common weapons are Steel Toed Boots and Boot Blades. Most Hummingbirds carry small knives, especially switchblades, which can be made ready and used even in very cramped situations.

Turf- There are dance clubs scattered throughout the city, but the biggest and most popular ones are centered around an area in Harlem. The borders of Hummingbird are very fuzzy (Hummingbirds don't care much about turf), except for the Northern border at 145th Street where the

Hummingbirds are participating in the blockade against the Skin Borgs. Hummingbird territory is roughly North of 125th Street, West of Fredrick Douglas Blvd and East of Broadway (with chunk out of Northwest corner taken by Purists). A large part of Hummingbird territory is taken up by long abandoned campus of City College of New York. There is a lot of residential housing here, with many high-quality row houses from the 1890s. A majority of the city's dance clubs are located here. They are mostly in converted warehouses and loft buildings with drab exteriors that seem like other old abandoned buildings except for the pounding bass beats coming through the walls.

Distinguishing Features- Few other groups in the city spend more effort on their appearance than Hummingbirds. Hummingbirds wear clothing appropriate for temperatures 10 to 30 degrees higher than the real temperature. Exposed shoulders, backs and midriffs are common. Hair is usually short, both on men and women (to help radiate heat better). Hummingbirds typically have water bottles and candy on their persons, usually visible. Hummingbirds tend to be skinny and muscular. Hummingbird style is usually a senseless mishmash of goth, gutterpunk, mod and old school gang. Some hummingbirds wear bright colors, mirrored clothing or patches, or flexible LEDs which show psychedelic patterns. Others wear all gray and semi-permanently dye their hair and skin grey. Although some clubs have "grey only" nights or "colors only" nights, this is simply an aesthetic consideration, it conveys no difference in philosophy or outlook.

Symbols- Hummingbirds are a common symbol on club flyers and hummingbird graffiti, as are psychedelic patterns and fluorescent colors.

Slang

Grey Night: n., a night where club goers wear grey clothes, dye skin and hair grey.

Mosh: v., violent dancing in which other dancers are rammed in to.

Sell Shit: v., sell fake drugs or drugs that are not what they're advertised as.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 8, CMBT 6, CRTV 4, INTL 7, MIL 8, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Special Skills: The combat skill Slam and the special skill Hummingbird Lightshow are available for only 5 points per skill level.

Hummingbird Lightshow (AGY)- Hummingbirds with this skill train in the use of dance, hand movements, moving lights, or flexible LCDs that show geometric patterns to mesmerize and entertain people who are on drugs.

Easy (10)- Distract a person on psychedelic or hallucinogenic drugs.

Moderate (20)- Distract a person on any mind altering drug or in any altered state of consciousness.

Hard (30)- Make a person on drugs pass out.

Legendary (40)- Make a completely sober and sane person believe they are under the influence of powerful drugs.

Income- $1,000 +$80/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Long Term Hummingbird Effects: (Mandatory Advantage): Semi-permanent +4 END, +2 STH, +2 SPD, +8 to save vs. hypothermia, double damage from starvation. Effects disappear within 1 month after discontinuing use of Hummingbird.

Suggested Skills- Fashion & Beauty, Music, Slam, Street Drugs, Street Fighting: Unarmed.

Suggested Equipment- Boot Blades, Instrument: Electronic, Nutrient Bar, Outfit: Clubwear, Steel Toed Boots.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification: Decoration, Fashion & Style.

Hungry

In Brief- Victims of a drug overdose causing permanent anhedonia (inability to feel pleasure), keep themselves going with artificially implanted hunger to seek revenge on the Drug Lords that created them.

Favorable Stereotypes- Strong, determined, well organized, singular in purpose, self-controlled, willful, hard to kill.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Dour, humorless, heartless, obsessed killers, empty shells, automatons driven by habit and artificial desires.

Other Names- Wendigos, Wendys, Black Leather Squad, Chomper ODs.

Origin- In the old times, the Drug Lords were independent agents, people who became rich and powerful by positioning themselves in the top levels of the city's drug supply chain. The Drug Lords were independent and sometimes even warred against each other. In 2075, though, a massive change happened overnight. A few of the Drug Lords were killed, the rest consolidated in to a single entity with a single plan: to make a vertical monopoly of the city drug trade. The street gangs that had sold drugs on the streets were cut out, replaced with employees of the Drug Lords who were loyal only to them.

The Drug Lords were obviously not satisfied with importing drugs like god-killer, methamphetamine and heroin, they wanted to be the producer. Someone working in a secret lab created a drug that the Drug Lords could manufacture entirely from sources they could get in the city. The Drug Lords created a massive shortage of street drugs. The city's addicts were in terrible pain, deprived of their usual drugs. The pusher gangs, the elite agents of the Drug Lords, offered an alternative: a drug which seemed cheap and plentiful: "Chomper". Chomper's powerful and thrilling mood swings were enough to take most addicts' minds off of their other withdrawals. The Drug Lords also started a new practice: the pusher gangs were encouraged to acquire new addicts by catching people, holding them down, and injecting Chomper in to them by force. Chomper users soon realized that they were much worse off than before. Chomper was much more addictive, the price rose steadily once they became addicted, and Chomper was incredibly easy to overdose on.

Emergency room doctors were mystified, at first, by the sudden plague of cases of endocrine collapse. Important parts of the endocrine system (which uses hormones to communicate messages from the brain to the rest of the body), were necrotized (dead and liquefying). The ER doctors were lucky enough to get a trial shipment of a brand new medical implant which would replace the

Behind the Eyes of A Hungry

All the little pleasures you hardly even noticed in your former life, now you miss them terribly. The pleasure of seeing an attractive person, of a hot cup of coffee on a cold day, or hearing a good story, of hanging out with friends, of putting on clean clothes fresh from the laundry. You expect them to be there, every time. Some part of you thinks there will be that pleasure and it is always a little shock when ti doesn't come.

Soon it becomes apparent that there is no reason to do anything. The effort you must expend to do anything seems terrible. You wouldn't even get out of bed if it weren't for the hunger. The hunger is always with you, even when you sleep. The only thing you look forward to is that victory that will let you turn off the hunger and, for however long you have, feel nothing.

You have many emotions: pain, sadness, boredom, fear, anger, but you learn to hide them all, all except for anger, which you exude as a cold hatred for the Drug Lords. The other Hungry act as if emotions are weakness. So, not wanting to appear weak, you hide your emotions, try to ignore them until it becomes such a habit that you are seldom intellectually aware of feeling anything except hate and hunger.

body's malfunctioning endocrine system. A few months after the ER doctors started seeing cases of Chomper overdoses, they were able to save a small percentage of the cases they saw.

The ER was only allowed to provide medical services for indigent people who were in immediate danger of death. After giving Chomper addicts the implants and stitching them up, the ER doctors had to send the addicts back out on the streets. They had no way of knowing what happened to these addicts after that. What happened is that the addicts found that nothing gave them any pleasure at all, nothing they experienced, no drugs they took. They wandered around in survival mode, doing only what they could to stay alive, but they felt increasing lethargy and inability to care about anything in their lives. In the end, they all died, most by suicide. Despite the expensive implants, Chomper overdoses turned out to be fatal after all.

Stenn Mann, however, was one man who refused to die. He hacked in to his implant, looking for some way to restore his pleasure centers. He could not find a way to do it, but he did find a way to give himself an artificial, insatiable sense of hunger. Stenn decided that if he could not be driven by pleasure, he would be driven by hunger. No food would satiate this hunger, Stenn would only allow the hunger to cease, temporarily, when he killed members of the Drug Lords' organization.

Stenn realized that he could accomplish more with help, and he set out to track down other Chomper overdoses that were near suicide and use his method on them. Most Chomper addicts, faced with death or life in perpetual hunger, chose the hunger. The ranks of the hungry grew quickly. With control of the implants, Stenn discovered that he could increase body size and strength and make other modifications to human physiology. He used this power to make his soldiers powerful warriors. They made war on the Drug Lords, and the Drug Lords fought back as best they could. The Hungry were a small, mobile group of guerilla fighters, staying hidden and making powerful and deadly strikes against the Drug Lords. People thought that the Drug Lords, who seemed unequaled in military might in the city, would quickly destroy the Hungry. Month after month, however, the Hungry continued to fight and win, with very few casualties.

Timeline

2075- Drug Lords consolidate in to a single entity.
2076- Drug Lords introduce Chomper to the city.
2076- First Chomper OD lives, kills himself soon after.
2077- Stenn Mann invents hunger technique.
2077- Mauler introduced to replace Chomper.
2078- Hungry make first military strikes against the Drug Lords.

Joining- The PC was a drug addicts back in the days when Chomper was the number one drug being sold (and forced on innocent people) by the Drug Lords. The PC

was either addicted to something else and induced to move to Chomper during a time of shortage, or was a non-addict who was held down and forcefully addicted to Chomper by a pusher gang. The PC lived for some time as a homeless drug addict, doing whatever he or she could to get some cash to buy Chomper with. Then the PC overdosed. It could have an unusually strong batch of Chomper, an accident, or a deliberate suicide attempt. The PC was lucky enough to make it in to an ER and get under the knife in time to get a life saving endocrine implant.

Some time after regaining consciousness as an anhedonic, the PC was have been contacted by a member of the Hungry (probably Stenn Mann himself) and informed of the options: wander around in a meaningless, unpleasant state until overwhelmed by depression, or, gain an unnatural hunger to avenge himself or herself by slaughtering Drug Lords.

Actually becoming a Hungry involved submitting to manipulation by Stenn Man. Stenn did minor surgery to gain control of the endocrine implant. Stenn set the implant to increase the PC's physical size and to begin an incredible hunger (yet, paradoxically, no extra desire to eat) that only Stenn or Juju could turn off.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been among the Hungry long enough to learn their lifestyle, grow as big as he or she can get (without serious health problems) and get to know all the other Hungry intimately. The PC has not been around long enough to score a major victory (in other words, a kill) on his or her own.

Lifestyle- Unsurprisingly, the Hungry live an ascetic lifestyle. They sleep on whatever they can find (often just a few blankets on the floor), they wear simple clothes that do not need to be washed often and they seldom bathe. They eat plain, cheap food that the hungry buy in large batches on grocery runs. Instant coffee, ramen noodles and protein powder is a staple for the Hungry.

One common misconception about the Hungry is that they have no emotions. In fact, the hungry feel displeasure based emotions, such as anger, fear, boredom, and loneliness. These emotions may be stronger in the Hungry because they are not balanced out by any positive emotions. The Hungry are discouraged from showing these emotions (except anger) by Stenn, who thinks of them as signs of weakness. The Hungry often have habits left over from when they were capable of pleasure. They laugh at things that are funny, even though they derive no pleasure from the humor. They are curious, although exploring and finding things out brings them no pleasure. Compassion and altruism are completely wiped out in some hungry, lessened but still present in others, as strong as ever in other, and in some it is stronger than before (since the Hungry have fewer personal needs to worry about). Street philosophers and amateur psychologists tend to say that this suggests that compassion and altruism have different and overlapping psychological sources.

The Hungry, for the most part, do not work or receive welfare. Whenever they can do so safely, they ambush pusher gangs, slaughtering them and stealing whatever money is on them. When the money made from this isn't enough, the Hungry rob liquor stores or armored cars taking cash to ATM machines. Any money made is given to Stenn, who buys communal supplies and divides whatever is left among the Hungry for spending money. The Hungry are generally considered wells because their amount of income is most like that of wells.

Social Structure- There is no advancement among the Hungry. Every Hungry is expected to be capable of participating usefully in every kind of mission and of being able to handle any solo mission, be it spying, assassination, diplomacy, etc. The Hungry is a small enough organization that a single Hungry's actions can increase the status and power of the entire group within the city community.

Advancement- There is no real advancement: Stenn is squarely in charge of the Hungry and Juju is next in line for command. If they both die, nobody knows the hunger control code and the Hungry would dissolve. Stenn has complete trust in the abilities of each Hungry to complete any task. The only way to go in the Hungry is down, by failing at some task and losing the confidence of Stenn.

Population- There are 100 Hungry.

External Relations- The relationship between the Drug Lords and the Hungry is simple, predictable and unchanging. Neither side has thought of any kind of truce or de-escalation of hostilities. The Hungry want to kill as many members of the Drug Lords organization as possible, the higher up the better.

The single-minded Hungry seldom spare time to think about any gang or other group if that group is not currently helping or hindering the war against the Drug Lords. Since few gangs ever purposefully help the Drug Lords, this means that the Hungry usually find themselves temporary allied with whatever gangs are currently fighting the Drug Lords. However, they can usually do little to help their allies: their strength is in ambush and massacres. They don't help an ally fight non-Drug Lord enemies, because that would take away time they could be out ambushing pusher gangs.

The Night Shift deplores the Hungry's methods (especially when they resort to robbing liquor stores and armored vehicles) yet the Night Shift likes the fact that the Hungry are waging an effective war against the Drug Lords. In the end, the Night Shift tries to pretend that the Hungry don't exist. The Hungry, who like this relationship, return the favor.

The Hungry have few friendships with non-Hungry, yet on missions they occasionally make useful contacts, especially with others who consider themselves enemies of the Drug Lords. Instead of friendships, the Hungry often decide that they "owe a favor" to someone who has helped them.

Military Style- The Hungry do not fight in "fair fights." When they do battle they are either ambushing an enemy or being ambushed. Because most Hungry can kill most opponents (even armored opponents) with a single blow, speed is the key to Hungry attacks. Unlike other city gangs, the enemies of the Hungry carry guns, and a gun can kill any Hungry with one well-aimed shot. So, the Hungry prefer to attack so fast that their opponents can not even reach for their guns. If they can not attack an enemy by surprise, the Hungry retreat and wait to attack again some other day.

Optimally, the Hungry have accurate intel about where the enemy is and what they are doing. The leader of the attack (usually Juju) assigns the hungry to different entrances.

Stenn Mann (Founder and Leader of the Hungry)
Level 6 Hungry, Level 2 Freelancer

Attributes- AWR 8, AGY 13, CHM 12, END 18, INL 14, SPD 17, STH 20, WIL 18, BLD 5, BDY 6, INCY 5.

Appearance- Large male, has mostly Vietnamese features (with a little African American influence), dark skin, thinning black hair slicked back, thin beard. He wears round, wire-rim glasses and black leather clothing.

Social Status- Stenn is the undisputed leader of the Hungry. The Hungry are fiercely loyal to him. Only Stenn and Juju have the code to control the Hungry's endocrine implants.

History- Stenn was a young well Freelancer who rarely did drugs. One day, a pusher gang broke in to his apartment, held him down, and injected himself with Chomper. He found himself addicted, and although he almost quit several times, each time a personal problem (mostly a result of the drugs) brought him back to using. Stenn still had his apartment when he overdosed, and a neighbor took him to the ER. Stenn was always a person who liked to be fully informed about everything happening to or around him, and when the ER doctors informed him about the implant he was given, he researched it thoroughly, even going so far as to try to track down other people who had gotten the implant. He found that they had killed themselves, and he could already feel why. Unwilling to accept death as a fate, Stenn created the artificial hunger as a means of self-motivation. Hoping to gain strength in fighting the Drug Lords, Stenn recruited other Hungry.

Personality- The anhedonia has not dampened Stenn's curiosity and his desire to thoroughly understand everything. He spends several hours a day reading, researching any topic he feels might help the Hungry. He often frustrates other Hungry be demanding to know every little detail when they give him reports. Stenn tries to keep himself too busy to feel any sorrow for the life he has lost. Stenn keeps his emotions hidden, but deep down he feels that he is partially at fault for his condition, that he had the opportunity to quit using Chomper but made a mistake but not doing so. He really misses his ability to feel pleasure, and he feels terrible about having lost it.

Motivations- Besides a lingering curiosity, Stenn is motivated by his hunger. He only allows himself a respite from the hunger when he or his Hunger score a major victory against the Drug Lords.

Methods- Stenn is a thoughtful and meticulous planner, insisting on planning out even the most obvious and simplest actions and discussing all alternatives. Even when a solution seems obvious and all other alternatives seem stupid, he insists on talking them over. When the talking is done, however, Stenn requires that his decisions be followed quickly and without question. Stenn is not afraid to make decisions that are violent, illegal, pose a risk to innocent people or to his Hungry.

Special Equipment- Motorcycle Outfit (AR 10 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt 5 knockout), Sword: Broadsword (Range 1-2. Hard strike. Does 5 bladed damage. Pierces armor as 7).

Typical Attack- Stenn waits for an enemy to come in to range, then makes an extended Strike with his broadsword at STH (20) + AGY (13) -4 (weapon has hard strike) +5 (extended action) vs. 25 (or 1d20 +9 vs. 0). He suffers a -10 penalty to his next reaction and as a reaction he typically makes a Simultaneous Strike at STH (20) + AGY (13) + WIL (18) -4 (hard strike) -10 (previous extended action) vs. 25 + 20 (simultaneous action) or 37 (or 1d20 vs. 8).

Juju Mann (Second in Command of Hungry and Top Fighter)

Level 5 Hungry, Level 2 Addict

Attributes- AWR 15, AGY 19, CHM 2, END 19, INL 8, SPD 20, STH 23, WIL 13, BLD 6, BDY 6, INCY 4.

Appearance- Juju is almost seven feet tall, with very broad shoulders and powerful muscles. She is multiracial, with olive colored skin. She has short, thinning brown hair which she keeps covered with an old black beret. Her skin is badly pockmarked. She is missing several teeth, and what remains makes her strongly buck-toothed. Juju wears black leather boots, pants and jacket.

Social Status- Juju is the wife of Stenn Mann, founder and leader of the Hungry. Although he does most of the planning, she leads the Hungry in battle, and if anything were to happen to Stenn, she would take over the Hungry without question. Juju is also known throughout the city as one of the most skilled and powerful fighters.

History- Juju grew up on the streets as a non-family unborn. She was made in to an addict at the age of 13, and she survived on prostitution and on seducing and killing pushers and stealing their drugs. She has done just about every drug there is, and when Chomper came out and was cheap and plentiful she quickly became addicted. When she overdosed, she managed to crawl to an ER and get an endocrine implant. She wandered the streets for days, unsure what to do with her life without being driven by a need for drugs, as she had for more than a decade. Her lack of pleasure was not much different than her life before the overdose: she had always lived largely in survival mode. However, not being on drugs gave her time to think about her life and imagine the possibility of living in this manner forever. She was looking for a suitable way to kill herself when she meet Stenn, who easily convinced her to be the first convert to his "hunger." They soon fell in something like love ("in comfort" might be a better word, since neither could feel the pleasure usually associated with love) and considered themselves married. Together, they recruited new Hungry and fought against the Drug Lords. Juju had already been a ruthless and fearless killer, but with her increasing size and strength she became an incredible and frightening fighter.

Personality- Juju has survived a life of horrible situations by never thinking about anything other than what it takes to meet her most basic and current needs. She has no philosophy of life, she has little "self-identity," she has no hobbies, does not appreciate art, and the relationships she values most are relationships of trust. Despite her power and the respect afforded to her, Juju has problems with self-esteem and is slightly uncomfortable dealing with non-Hungry.

Motivations- Juju is driven by a hunger than can only be satiated when she kills Drug Lords. She does not enjoy killing, usually she sees it only as a means to an end, though she find challenging fights to be a relief from boredom.

Methods- Juju has no moral problems with anything the Hungry do. She has little patience for planning and strategy, which she leaves to Stenn, she only wants to know who to attack and when. She moves in with ferocious speed, kills as many as possible (most she can kill with a single blow) and then leaves before backup can arrive.

Special Equipment- Four Dogs with Attack Mental Programs (END 10, SPD 15, BDY 2, BLD 2, INCY 3, 2 bladed damage bite at 1d20 vs. 6), Extra-Heavy Mace (Range 2 to 3. Damage 4 blunt 2 bladed - pierces as 7 blunt 4 bladed.)

Special Skills- Assassin: Unarmed (3), Club (3).

Typical Attack- When she appears on the scene, it is almost always the Hungry ambushing an enemy. Her dogs attack first, distracting the enemy. She leaps long distances in to range, simultaneously striking a blow with a large heavy mace. The mace is so heavy, with sharp metal edges, and Juju is so strong that a normal swing can kill most opponents. Attack is a Split Action Jump and Strike. The Strike is at STH (23) + AGY (19) -10 (split action) +8 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 or (1d20+15 vs. 0). With her +2 bonus to blunt damage from her STH, a successful strike does 6 blunt 2 bladed and pierces armor as 9 blunt 4 bladed.

Hungry synchronize clocks and move to their given entrance. At the appointed time, the Hungry race in, hitting the enemies from multiple angles. They go straight to the closest enemy, kill or incapacitate them with one strike (if possible) and move on to the next. The whole thing is so quick that there are many friendly fire deaths and innocent bystanders are often killed.

Typical Weapon- The majority of hungry use maces (made out of old construction parts welded together), clubs and heavy chains. The Hungry have a few guns stolen from pushers, which are typically given to the group's worst fighters.

Turf- The Hungry have no set turf. They keep their location hidden and move around a lot, especially when they feel the Drug Lords might be close to discovering their location. They tend to take over small abandoned buildings (larger ones are too hard to secure) which they turn in to fortresses, guarded and watched over 24 hours a day. The Hungry live together as roommates, sharing resources.

Distinguishing Features- The most prominent feature of the Hungry is their size: they are all huge and muscular. Many have old signs of addiction: bad skin, missing teeth, needle tracks. They all have a tendency to wear black leather.

Symbols- Black leather jackets and teeth (from Chomper) are common symbols of the hungry.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 7, CRTV 8, INFO 9, INTL 9, MIL 6, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 8, THIE 6, SOC 9, STRT 6.

Special Skills: The skill Street Drugs costs only 5 skill points per level.

Income- $750 +$50/wk.

Special Equipment

Extra-Heavy Club: A very large pipe or piece of metal, perfect for someone with incredible strength. Requires a Hard (30 difficulty) STH roll to use without penalties. Range 2. Damage 4 blunt. Weighs 65 lbs. Costs $50.

Extra-Heavy Mace: A huge piece of metal with steel spikes welded on the end. Requires a Hard (30 difficulty) STH roll to use without penalties. Range 2 to 3. Damage 4 blunt 2 bladed (pierces as 7 blunt 4 bladed). Weighs 50 lbs. Costs $250.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Permanent Anhedonia (Mandatory Disadvantage)- The PC's pleasure centers are gone, killed off by the same Chomper overdose that destroyed major portions of his or her endocrine system. The PC can not feel pleasure or "positive" emotions: can not appreciate beautiful art, good tasting food, sex, a funny joke or an entertaining story. They are driven only be negative emotions: hunger, fear, pain, boredom, anger, sadness tiredness, longing. This makes the Hungry not very fun people to hang out with. The Hungry automatically succeed against any saves vs. euphoria, are +20 to save vs. psychological addiction to any pleasure-causing drug and are at -10 to save vs. depression, dysphoria and sadness.

Hacked Endocrine Implant (Mandatory Advantage)- Stenn Man has hacked the implant the PC was given to take over the jobs of the damaged portions of the endocrine system. The implant has been set to make the PC bigger, stronger and healthier: gives +7 STH (max. 25), +5 END, +3 SPD, +4 BDY, +2 BLD.

Hunger Program (Mandatory Disadvantage)- The PC's endocrine implant has been programmed to send out constant hunger signals. It is controlled remotely by Stenn or Juju, who have a password to turn off the program for a period of 1, 2, 4, 8, 16 or 24 hours. There is no way to turn the program off, save hacking in to it.

Suggested Skills- Assassin: Unarmed, Club, Demolitions, Prowling, Running, Street Fighting: Armed, Torture.

Suggested Equipment- Motorcycle Outfit, Extra-Heavy Mace, Nightvision Goggles: Cheap.

Suggested Reading- Drugs.

Immortals

In Brief- Young students who speed their acquisition of psychic skills by absorbing the memories of powerful psychics. Achieve "immortality" by passing down their memories through generations.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, always concerned with the bigger picture, unafraid of death, broadly experienced with many psychic skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Living vicariously through others, pretend to be wise, enslaved to hundreds of debts, promises and grudges.

Other Names- Progenitors, Students of the Seven.

Origin- When psychic energy was discovered by scientists, it made for a lot of good news stories, but it did little to effect the lives of ordinary people. The equipment necessary for people to learn psychic skills (electrochemical biofeedback machines) cost millions. Only governments, corporations and large universities could afford to train people in psychic skills. Around the world there were only a handful of people who could be considered "powerful psychics." Most of them were scientists and academicians working on the theory and science of psychic energy, and most of them new each other. Except for the odd paranoiac, people had no fear of psychics invading their minds: for most people, meeting a psychic was like meeting a celebrity.

In 2050, a group calling themselves the Freedom Army manipulated news broadcasts to stoke anti-corporate and anti-government riots in to full-blown wars. Organizing the rampages, the Freedom Army soon came in to control of major portions of the Unites States and many other countries. Those psychics who were caught in the wrong parts of the country ended up prisoners to the new socialist state being created by the Freedom Army. Psychics were herded around just like everyone else: forced to work as laborers, live in camps and scrounge for food.

Having finally gained control, Jeffrey Hernandez, the head of the Freedom Army, became immediately paranoid about losing control. A terrorist at heart, Hernandez worried about threats from inside Freedom Army controlled areas. More than a quarter of all of the New York Freedom Army's resources were devoted to various internal security measures, from building a new "terrorist proof" subway,

to performing random loyalty checks on individuals. As people were living in the city were assigned jobs and living quarters, Jeffrey Hernandez requested that all psychics be documented and kept track of. The word went out: anyone with any psychic skills had to register themselves. Many of the city's psychics refused to register themselves, they hoped to stay hidden and blend in to the background. This non-compliance, however, only fueled Hernandez' paranoia: he became convinced that a group of city psychics were planning something. Hernandez escalated the search for psychics. Now, anyone who was found to have psychic abilities was given a choice: become a full time psychic for the Freedom Army (and pass repeated loyalty checks) or be executed.

A group of psychics who had been trapped in the city secretly meet with each other to discuss the situation. They worried that the Freedom Army hunt for psychics would turn in to a holocaust. Besides fearing for their own personal safety, they feared that years of research and experience would be destroyed if they were killed. Some of these psychics had discovered psychic techniques that nobody else in the world knew how to do. One of the psychics new about a recently written mental program that could let memories be "transferred" (not verbatim, but close enough) from one person to another. They hoped they could, first, safeguard the psychic's collective wisdom against being destroyed, and second, create a small army of psychics who were capable of fighting back against the Freedom Army.

The psychics gave it a try and the technique worked better than they had expected. Knowledge itself could not be transferred, but when a student gained memories of how his or her teacher learned, the student could learn much more easily. The secret students of these psychics were able to learn, in months, skills that had taken the teachers years to discover and learn. The psychics' numbers grew, and soon even the students were taking on their own students. The process had one side effect that the psychics had not expected: after reliving their memories to another, the psychics found themselves less afraid of death. They knew that even if they were killed, the most important experiences of their lives would live on in the mind of another.

The psychics formed an alliance with a group of hackers and Kalor aliens, who were also being persecuted by the Freedom Army. Working together, their various skills allowed them to topple the city Freedom Army, and even to kill Jeffrey Hernandez. Having lost both its leader and one of its most important cities, the US army soon took the country back from the Freedom Army. The Freedom Army was eventually wiped out completely, only 5 years after its first attacks. Most of the original seven psychics were killed in these battles.

During the reconstruction, many of the psychic students of the original seven went on to leave the city to help rebuild the new society. Some became pillars of the new Utopianist and Gated Community movements. A few, however, could not give up on the sense of immortality they felt when their memories were transferred from person to person. They did not want their memories to ever die, nor did they want the memories they had inherited to die, so they stayed in the city and continued to seek out students. Still, the city was becoming a worse and worse place to live, and many students of "immortalism" left the city to go someplace better, but enough stayed to keep immortalism going. The Immortals watched as the city became dominated by drug gangs. The Immortals kept mostly to themselves, knowing that few people were stupid enough to mess with a group of known psychics. When these old drug gangs fell they were replaced with a new generation of gangs that the Immortals felt they had more in common with. Gangs were a means of self-protection, and many young people saw the Immortals as another gang they might join. Slowly, the Immortals adapted to being a part of the new gang scene.

Timeline

2041- Mental programming developed.
2046- Psychic energy receptors first discovered.
2046- 1st documented example of one human psychically influencing another.
2047- Less than 100 worldwide with "useful" level psychic skills.
2049- "Ghosts" discovered by psychic scientists.
2050- Memory transference technique mental program.
2050- Freedom Army attacks, rioting in major cities worldwide.
2051- Freedom Army requires registration of all psychics.
2051- The original 7 psychics first meet.
2052- Freedom Army trains a group of specially equipped psychic hunters.
2053- Original 7 begin transferring their memories to students.
2053- Psychic rebels join forces with Hackers and Kalor aliens.
2054- There are now 22 psychic rebels in the city, including remnants of the original 7.
2054- City rebels destroy Freedom Army complex, board Hernandez' satellite and kill him.
2054- Freedom Army rapidly losing ground worldwide.
2055- Last Freedom Army forces in NY destroyed.
2065- Large exodus from the city in to gated communities.
2077- Immortals fight in first gang war.

Joining- To join the Immortals, a person must seek out a prospective teacher and convince that teacher to take him or her on. Many more people want to become Immortals than there are teachers available, and teachers can afford to be very picky about who they train. Teachers want students who they think will take good care of the memories they will inherit. Teachers tend to choose students who remind them of themselves.

To train, a PC must get a Memory Transfer mental program (p.96). The PC uses this program as the teacher describes his or her memories in vivid detail. The program synchs up the student's state of consciousness to that of the teacher, so to the PC it feels almost like the story is happening to him or her. The storage of memories is boosted so that later these memories are as strong as anything from the PC's real life.

The memories the student receives contain many memories of people learning psychic skills. Although a student can not learn by experiencing another's memories alone, the memories do make it much easier for a student to learn during psychic training. In addition to transferring memories, the teacher also trains the student in psychic skills. Just as a baby can't learn to walk without first learning to wiggle its legs, a student must spend hours learning (with feedback from the teacher) to make minute, imperceptible changes to their nervous systems.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has undergone quite a bit of psychic training, and has had most of the important memories of his or her teacher and every previous teacher transferred over. The PC has been given enough memories that he or she is generally considered to be part of the family, part of the network of relationships, responsibilities and promises that is beyond the life of any one individual. In a sense, the PC has just become a true progenitor because he or she has taken on the debts of the primogenitor. The PC may still come to the teacher for more memories and training, but at this point it is optional.

Lifestyle- The Immortals have something that nobody else in the city, save Colin, has. Once Immortals have enough progenitors, they feels that no matter what happens to them, their experiences will live on. The relationships of an Immortal take on special meaning. Sayings like "I will love and honor you forever" are no longer meaningless platitudes, they are quite possibly true. The Immortals thus take every relationship very seriously: every love, every friendship, every oath of allegiance, every promise, every debt, every oath of vengeance is not just theirs, but belong to a potentially unlimited number of descendents. This can lead to a sense of self-importance that sometimes annoys non-Immortals. Most Immortals fear death, but not very much.

The price that the Immortals pay for this immortality is that they must bear the burden of every debt and responsibility from five to ten generations of primogenitors. Some of these debts are old enough that they will probably never effect the lives of a current Immortal. It is always possible that some grandchild of someone an Immortal owes a life debt to will show up asking for help. Because of possibilities like this, Immortals are often obsessed with genealogy. When dealing with another Immortal, they will want to know the identity of each one of the Immortal's primogenitors. When dealing with a non-Immortal, they will want to know the names of the person's parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents.

The Immortals spend much of their day as their progenitors did: training to learn new psychic skills, practicing to perfect the ones they have now, doing research and experiments to find out more about psychic energy in general. A new addition to the Immortal lifestyle has come with the Immortals defending themselves as a gang. Now, Immortals must spend time patrolling their turf, forming war parties to go fight battles, and trying to engage in diplomacy.

Social Structure- The only formal bond within the Immortals is the relationship between progenitor and primogenitor. Progenitors must follow the wishes of the primogenitor if they wish to keep receiving lessons. The primogenitors are likewise responsible for doing anything they can to keep progenitors alive since the progenitors are the best hope for the primogenitor's memories stay alive.

The Families

The Cuarto family- Maria Cuarto was a doctor who learned to use psychic skills in medical situations. She often combined her psychic medicine with the style of Mexican folk medicine. She was a guest lecturer, staying in New York when the Freedom Army riots started. She was trapped in the city and for some time she was homeless, trading psychic healing for food and clothing. At some point or another, Maria ended up saving the life of someone from each of the seven families (one of the originals or one of their students) and no family has more life-debts owed to it than the Cuarto family.

The Albright family- Cape Albright was a college professor, a psychic and historian who used psychometry to aid archeologists. She was a prolific writer, writing even during the Freedom Army occupation (there are 15 books on historical psychic phenomenon written by her). Cape was the oldest of the psychics in the original seven, a grandmother at the time. She transferred memories from as far back as 2005 to her progenitors. Cape died of tuberculosis in a refugee camp shortly after the Freedom War ended.

The Yee family- Thomas Yee was a scientist working for a corporate research lab before the war. He was the person who first proved the existence of ghosts, and in the short time between his discovery and the war he had become an accomplished medium. Yee was the most famous of the original seven (before the war he had been on TV many times and even had "groupies"), and thus stood the most chance of someone recognizing him and turning him in for a reward. Yee spent most of the war with a beard, long hair combed in to his face, and wearing a foul smelling trench coat that he hoped would make people avoid getting too close to him.

The Chendra family- Saile Chendra was a manager of a psychic research lab for the National Institutes of Health. Although she was not supposed to, she trained herself on the lab equipment. She also experimented with powerful, and illegal, hallucinogens that she believed might speed her learning curve and make her a more powerful psychic. Some claim that Saile was mentally ill, suffering from some personality disorder that caused her to have odd beliefs and poor relationships with other people. One of her beliefs was that people of African descent had different neurology and that they should all return to Africa and make it in to a single empire (Saile was African American). Her progenitors claim that she was not crazy, she was merely an eccentric genius.

The McCaffrey family- Henry McCaffrey was part of a US Military pilot project to train soldiers with psychic skills, but he was discharged from the army because of uncontrollable emotional problems (including many angry outbursts and stalking a female officer he had fallen in love with). During the Freedom War, he became obsessed with killing as many Freedom Army officers as he could. After killing several high-level Freedom Army officials, he was gunned down by Freedom Army soldiers (many of his students suffered from the same fate before the war was over).

The Chambers family- Karl Chambers was a young college professor working in the psychic research department at Columbia. He was a devout Buddhist and believed in pacifism (though, during the Freedom Wars, he succumbed to the temptation to use violence in self-defense more than once). Karl had incredible psychic sensory abilities and he used them to provide the rebels with intelligence about the Freedom Army. Karl survived the war and left the city to become a monk at a Buddhist monastery in Japan.

The Archer family- Dale Archer had gained some psychic skills as a subject in a corporate program. When the Freedom Wars began, he decided that the Freedom Army was on the side of right and he joined them. At first he was just a soldier, but the Freedom Army supplemented his psychic training with their own, and he soon became one of the Freedom Army's most skilled psychic interrogators and torturers. Even as the Freedom Army became worse and worse, Dale made excuses that it was a necessary evil, but then there was one incident that happened during an interrogation that changed his mind. Dale refused to remember this incident for any of his progenitors, and so nobody knows what it was that made Dale defect from the Freedom Army and join the rebels. Dale did much the same thing for the rebels that he did for the Freedom Army: kidnap enemies and force important intelligence out of them.

A less formal organization keeps the Immortals as a gang together: every member owes or is owed, through the actions of their primogenitors, a life debt. Each of the originals had complex relationships with each other, and the complexity of relationships grew with each generation. Of course, primogenitors have done bad things to each other as well, but it was decided early on that hatred against another Immortal could not be carried across generations or the gang would be torn apart within a few years. Immortals have only vague memories of what they have done wrong to each other, but they have strong, passionate memories of the good things they have done for each other and the bad things that non-Immortals have done to them.

Advancement- The ultimate goal of most Immortals is to insure that the important things that have happened to them will live on even after their own deaths by transferring their memories in to a progenitor. Having a progenitor also gives an Immortal a lot of power: there is suddenly another person in the city with the same debts, allies and enemies as the Immortal. Although the teacher has no authority over this student, authority is seldom necessary, all the primogenitor must do is inform a progenitor that an old enemy has arisen again, or that an old ally needs help, and the progenitor will show up immediately, ready to help. If a progenitor goes on to gain his or her own progenitors, then there are even more people carrying the Immortal's debts. Some of the oldest Immortals still living in the city have nearly a hundred descendents they can call on.

To be a psychic teacher requires a high amount of skill (more than most level one Immortals start with) or a lot of very expensive training equipment. Thus, in order to gain a student, a PC must either gain a lot of skills (and only practice and time can do this) or get a lot of money to buy training equipment (which, especially for a Well, is much harder than gaining psychic skill through practice). The Immortal will surely know when he or she is ready to take on students (they have the memories of several Immortals who became teachers) and as soon as they advertise the fact they are likely to have many young applicants. It is important that the Immortal carefully screen the applicants, to make sure that they can trust their memories will be used well.

Population- There are about 500 immortals. A little less than half (about 220) have not yet had a progenitor. 200 have has one generation of progenitors. About 60 have had two generations of progenitors. There are only about twenty with 3 generations of progenitors, most of these are old enough to remember the originals and have retired, for the most part, from active street life.

External Relations- The Immortals are big believers in diplomacy. In a gang war, they are usually the first to seek peace, and they do so in a very formal manner. They are also most likely to seek alliances or trades with other groups. The Immortals are known as good negotiators, never letting personal feelings get in the way of building an understanding which will benefit the whole group.

The Immortals are not very aggressive, and there are few gangs who want to make war against a psychic gang. The Immortals thus have few conflicts, and most are short lived skirmishes and not full-on wars. The Skin Borgs have many anti-psychic suits which can protect them from Immortal attacks, the Drakes have their psychic disrupting burned plastic, and the other psychic gangs (Tea Drinkers, Bleeders, Insomniacs) can defend themselves with psychic skills. These gangs are the ones most likely to carry on any prolonged warfare against the Immortals.

After the Freedom War ended, a lot of the early Immortals gave up Immortalism to help found gated, neocultural and utopianist communities near the city. The Immortalists thus often feel ties to members of these communities, and they can often find some common point of ancestry with many of the Neos and Utopia Children they meet within the city.

Military Style- Although the original psychics were part of a guerilla rebel organization, they were not the military branch and rarely let themselves get caught in combat. After the war, city Immortalists experienced a long period of peace, only needing to defend themselves every once in a while. People were more afraid of psychics back then, and anyone who could demonstrate any sort of psychic powers could easily get almost anyone to back down. The Immortals only started really needing to defend themselves in the past few years when they became part of the city gang scene. The Immortals have no leadership during combat, and no real strategy. Their weapons and armor are typically quite poor, they depend on their psychic skills to give themselves an edge during combat. The use of psychic skills is the only thing that make the Immortals intimidating during warfare: opponents have no way of knowing when or how they may be attacked. Psychic skills alone, unless they can scare an opponent into retreating, rarely win a battle. Instead, psychic skills are mostly used to disorient opponents so that Immortals can attack them (usually with knives) without much fear of getting struck back.

Typical Weapon- The luckiest Immortals have a bone knife made from the bones of an ancestor. Others use normal knives.

Turf- The Immortals have a small block of turf between the Upper West Side and Harlem. Immortal turf is South of 122nd St., North of 105th St., East of Riverside and West

Turf- The Immortals have a small block of turf between the Upper West Side and Harlem. Immortal turf is South of 122nd St., North of 105th St., East of Riverside and West of Columbus. Directly to the West of Immortal turf is a thin strip of sunken city, to the North is Hummingbird territory, to the East is Math Addict Turf, to the Southeast is the Hole and to the South is Sexologist territory.

In Immortal turf is the abandoned campus of Columbia University, nearby is Riverside Church (a gothic style church with a tall tower and the largest bell tower in the world, containing 74 bells). Also in Immortal turf is the Church of St. John the Divine, started in 1892 and completed in 2016, it's 300 ft. high towers make it one of largest cathedrals in the world. Besides these landmarks, there are many residential buildings in Immortal turf, and a lot of residential buildings with commercial frontage along Broadway, which runs through the middle of Immortal turf.

Distinguishing Features- Some immortals wear cloaks (an affectation of psychics from before the Freedom Wars), others wear normal street clothes. Most wear jewelry made from the bones of their primogenitors, and the lucky ones have bone weapons (usually daggers carved from thigh bones).

Symbols- Bones are common symbols of the Immortals, as is a black triangle point down (a common symbol of the city rebels during the Freedom Wars).

Slang

Original: n., one of the original seven psychics who started Immortalism.

Progenitor: n., the receiver of memories from a teacher.

Primogenitor: n., the giver of memories to a student.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 6, CMBT 7, CRTV 5, INFO 7, INTL 6, MIL 7, PSY:X 11, PSY:M 9, PSY:S 9, TECH 7, THIE 6, SOC 6, STRT 6.

Special Skills: The skill History: City costs only 4 skill points per level.

Income- $1,000 +$125/wk.

Special Equipment- PC starts with the Memory Transfer mental program (p.96).

Special Bonus Characteristics

Ancestor Knife (Optional Advantage)- Costs 3 Bonus Points. The PC owns a "knife" made from a hardened shard of bone (typically thigh bone) in a leather sheath. This bone belonged to one of the PC's long dead ancestors (possibly even one of the original 7). For some reason unexplained by science, the bone knife acts as a sort of channel for psychic energy. The PC gets +4 for any psychic roll targeted against a person being touched by the knife. The knife has range 0 and does 2 bladed damage.

Orphan Immortal (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 2 Bonus Points. The PC's teacher is dead and the PC is the only one who holds the teacher' memories. The PC is at +6 to psychic skill costs for any skills bought after character creation until the PC can find another teacher. The PC also feels a considerable duty to safeguard the teacher's memories.

Suggested Skills- Calm Attack, Mind Reading, Physiological Control, Psychic Immortality, Psychic Invisibility, Psychometry, Self-Image Projection,

Suggested Reading- City Culture: Origins, City History: Freedom War, City History: Old Times, Freedom War, Psychic Phenomenon.

Math Addicts

In Brief- Use mental programming to become human calculators with incredible powers of prediction, accuracy and analysis in everything from politics to combat.

Favorable Stereotypes- Intelligent, insightful, spiritual, precise, analytical, logical, full of useful info.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Mystical, eccentric, obsessive compulsive, head-in-clouds, intellectual snobs.

Other Names- Math Junkies, Mathies, Numberpunks, Calculators.

Origin- The discovery of Radiochemical Neural Stimulation and Neural Restructuring let scientists play around with the neural connections of living creatures and learn incredible amounts about how the minds of animals and humans work. It also had medical applications: doctors could force important neural pathways to reroute around damaged portions of the brain. It wasn't until the technology fell in to the hands of criminal computer hackers that its full utility became apparent. The hackers found that they could build circuits within the brain that mimicked the logical circuits found within computer chips. In essence, the brain could be "programmed" like a computer. Embarrassed in to action, corporations pressured the FDA in to letting them test non-medical applications on humans.

During the Freedom War, both the Freedom Army and the rebels had unlimited ability to experiment and use neural restructuring technology (or mental programming, as it had come to be called). The Freedom Army created full artificial intelligence programs that they hoped could make vat-grown humans and animals in to robotic soldiers. The rebels created small applications to help them survive: programs to help them aim weapons, programs that would automatically react in a fall, programs that would let them communicate encrypted messages to each other through the timing of eye-blinks, etc.

After the Freedom Wars ended, Mental Programming once again became regulated by the FDA. They were pressured, however, to make non-medical mental programs available. The FDA reacted slowly, but program after program became approved. The first non-medical program made available in the US was a simple calculator, in 2061. When the calculator was evoked, a calculator would appear floating in midair in the user's field of vision. With the tiniest movements, the user could press buttons on the calculator and the little display would show them the answer. Since then, the code for a calculator has become a first project for countless mental programming classes. It is the archetype of a simple mental program: it has a simple visual interface and does simple calculations.

In the meantime, academicians and corporate research labs have been trying to figure out how to better integrate the mathematical capabilities of mental programming with the user. The goal was a "seamless calculator": the user only has to think about a mathematical problem and they instantly know the answer. For corporations, such a program would mean that mathematical skill, a very rare and precious resource, would become plentiful.

In 2074, the code of a math program a major corp was working on for the US military was leaked out on the internet. People realized that this was the most radical advancement in math programs since the first mental calculator was created. The program connected language centers of the brain to an advanced math processor. All a user had to do was think of two numbers and they would automatically know every relationship between those two numbers. The short term memory was also augmented, giving the user the ability to keep whole sets of numbers in their attention indefinitely. In other words, the user could think like a calculator. Despite the government trying to destroy all the leaked copies of the program, many people installed the program in their own brains just to experience what it might be like. Hackers around the world came up with many of their own improvements to the programs and released them on the net, each with named after a different color to distinguish it from the other versions. The hacker improved versions were, themselves, taken and improved, until there were dozens of versions floating around on the net packed with all kinds of features.

The math program gives mathematical ability greater than the best natural prodigy, but it doesn't give the user knowledge of how to do math. Users had to spend a fair amount of time practicing to learn to use the program well. So, it wasn't until a couple of years after people around the world started installing nethack versions of MathEnhancer in their brains that people began to see just what could be done with the program.

A small group of eccentric math aficionados in the city suddenly started attracting attention by doing amazing tricks. They ruled the city pool halls, beating even people who had mental programs specially designed to let them win at pool. In some cases they were mistaken for psychics for their ability to predict outcomes of events and figure out details of a situation from only a few details. What caught the most attention, however, was their ability to defend themselves. Like a master martial artist they could easily deflect blows, using opponent's momentum to flip them or break their bones. They were also flawless shots with any thrown or projectile weapon. Just as they could do trick shots in pool, they could do trick shots with ricocheting projectiles. When people saw what great abilities these math geeks had, they looked in to why and many people with not much interest in math installed the program to see what it could do for them.

A community of city MathEnhancer program users coalesced around the pool halls in an area of Harlem and East Harlem. No matter the reason they got the program installed, users found that after learning to use MathEnhancer, math was easy and fun. A community of people who loved to explore the possibilities of math, both theoretical and practical, developed. With community came a need for self-preservation and almost as soon as it formed, this community found itself fighting to protect against itself from various groups. Many people saw how well the Math Addicts defended themselves and wanted to join. The numbers of the gang rose steadily.

Timeline
1656- John Wallis invents the infinity symbol (an 8 on its side).
1963- First transistor calculator.
1966- First handheld calculator.
2041- Mental Programming invented.

2061- FDA approves first non-medical mental program (a calculator).
2074- MathEnhancer illegally released on the net.
2075- 1st hacked version of MathEnhancer (MathEnhancer Gold) released.
2077- MathEnhancer users in the city gain attention.
2078- Math Addicts fight first war as a gang.

Joining- Some people just find a version of the MathEnhancer program, or buy one from a black market trader, and have it installed. Wiser people seek out the advice of experienced users who can give some insight about which versions are best. A friend who knows the program can also give the user some tips on how to use it, but only practice can make someone good at the program. There is no entrance exam to be a Math Addict: someone is a Math Addict if they hang around with other Math Addicts and help defend the gang against its enemies.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has had MathEnhancer and trained with it long enough to be better at it than any non-Math Addict. The PC has an equivalent to a professional level knowledge of math (even though he or she may have known nothing a year ago) and can do many "tricks" unique to Math Addicts. The PC still has quite a bit left to learn. The PC knows many Math Addicts and consider many to be friends. The PC has not yet fought to protect the gang in war, but will be expected to next time a war occurs.

Lifestyle- For Math Addicts, solving mathematical problems is fun. Depending upon the type of problem, mathematical work can be like a challenging sport or puzzle, like exploring a mysterious world, or like creating something beautiful. Math Addicts typically spend hours a day working on math problems. Sometimes they work by themselves. They can typically be seen in the bars and pool halls of Math Addicts territory, sitting back in easy chairs staring off in to space or scribbling little notes on pads of paper. For those involved in a very complex problem, they appear to be in deep meditation, almost oblivious to the world around them. Sometimes math addicts work in groups, and they can be seen sitting around tables, furiously scribbling out page long equations which they pass to each other. When Math Addicts run in to problems they just can't solve, their usually seek out more experienced Math Addicts, who are likely to teach them a good deal about math in showing them the answer. Like a good riddle, when a Math Addicts discovers a challenging problem he or she passes it along to friends. A Math Addict may even show off a very elegant solution to a problem to his or her friends. An unexpected and quirky solution can even prompt laughter from fellow Math Addicts. Throughout Math Addict territory equations have been spray-painted on the walls.

Younger Math Addicts enjoy playing pool. Rather than just trying to sink balls, they often amuse themselves with incredibly complicated trick shots. Older Math Addicts often find that pool is no longer any challenge to them. Some older Math Addicts have tried to create "chaos games" (e.g. dropping ping pong balls in to a tub of bubbling water in an attempt to get them to move to pre-determined quarters of the tank) but so far none of the games have really caught on. Math Addicts sometimes find themselves playing with just about anything in an attempt to learn and manipulate the mathematical systems involved. Like kids, they may be found poking at ant-hills, peeling paint off of walls or kicking stones along the street.

MathAddicts like to investigate things, especially important events. Other groups often send people to investigate mysteries because they feel their well-being may rest on knowing what is going on, but the Math Addicts do it for fun. Any investigation of real-world events begins with taking a statistical sampling. They wander around the city, interviewing random people or taking random measurements. When it is a very important project (e.g. tracking Colin population changes) several Math Addicts will investigate and combine their data. From the moment they begin collecting data, mathematical models of dynamic systems form in their heads, and these models grow more detailed and accurate the more samples they take. Math Addicts like to think that their investigations are very useful. The most receptive audience is other Math Addicts, who take in every detail and feel it helps them understand the city better. Non-Math Addicts also like to hear what the Math Addicts have concluded, but in exponentially less detail. Recent important studies by the Math Addicts have been about Colins (see p.366) and about the approximately 500 people who disappear every year (p.359). In a way, the Math Addicts would do what a good city government would: measure and quantify various city problems, put them in perspective and determine what would be necessary to solve the problems. Like many other in the city, Math Addicts love to make up theories and argue about city mysteries (e.g. who runs the Drug Lords, what the Moles are really like, etc.)

Social Structure- Even the youngest and newest Math Addict consider themselves independent entities owing obedience to no other person. The Math Addicts perfectly understand the advantages of systems of leadership, but there are too many eccentrics, individualists and anarchists in the group. Since the Math Addicts are good at statistical sampling, the Math Addicts usually have complex information on the distribution of opinions among the Math Addicts about any controversy. Thus, the Math Addicts often act as a sort of leaderless democracy: Math Addicts know the value of acting as a group and will often go with the most popular opinion, unless they think there is a very good reason to depart from the policies of their fellows.

The Math Addicts like to believe that the persuasive power of an individual Math Addict is limited only by the strength of their argument. In theory, any Math Addict could make a persuasive argument, and those convinced would help spread the argument to other Math Addicts until the average Math Addict adopts it as policy. In truth, though, there are "elders" in the gang, who younger Math Addicts often come to for training or help with individual math problems. One of these elders is more persuasive than the same argument would be coming out of the mouth of a younger Math Addict.

Advancement- For Math Addicts, personal accomplishments (gaining skills, solving problems) are more important than interpersonal accomplishments. There is little structure in the gang and the only way to gain any fame or power is years of consistently being able to offer good help and advice. Math Addicts are thus on a personal journey. For some, this journey is more utilitarian: they want to become good at math because it makes them more powerful and useful. For some, the personal journey is simply a way to entertain themselves by constantly seeking problems that are advanced enough to challenge them. For many, the personal journey ends up being vaguely mystical: they feel that they have experienced something beautiful about the nature of the universe, something which can not be expressed in words nor numbers, and which makes them feel good about the universe. Some have tried to equate this experience to religious concepts such as god, others do not. The infinity symbol worn by Math Addicts once was worn by those who felt they had grasped this ultimate concept (but now everyone is wearing them and it signifies nothing except membership in the Math Addicts).

Population- The Math Addicts are one of the city's larger gangs, with around 1,400 members, 95% of which are Wells between the ages of 16 and 23.

External Relations- Not only are the Math Addicts skilled at fighting, they are also larger than most other gangs. They are the prototypical Well gang in terms of violence and aggression: they do not seek out war, yet when someone hurts one of their own, they strike hard against the enemy, keep striking until they are certain that the lesson has been learned, and strike a little bit more for good measure. The Math Addicts do get in to prolonged wars, and can hold their own, but they also enjoy periods of peace. The Math Addicts have no desire to expand their territory and have no special interest in destroying other gangs.

Many throughout the city think of the Math Addicts as a resource. The Math Addicts often gather statistics and release results that are useful to the whole city. For instance, the Math Addicts are constantly studying Colin activities and populations, and the results of these studies are carried, by word of mouth, all over the city. It is not uncommon to hear two winos who know nothing about the city gang scene talking about their chances of being turned in to Colins. Some people new to the city assume that "Math Addicts" is slang for some government agency that offers advisories. Much of the city population enjoys testing their skills and intelligence against some mystery (and there are more than enough mysteries in the city to go around) but the Math Addicts are known throughout the city as loving mysteries and they sometimes volunteer to investigate things that have nothing to do with them.

Most people refuse to gamble with Math Addicts under any circumstances.

Skin Borgs: The Math Addicts have seen the Skin Borgs coming for quite a while, having predicted the Skin Borgs' massive population growth and destruction of other gangs. The Math Addicts don't know if the unlikely combinations of Purists, Orphans and Hummingbirds will keep the Skin Borgs blocked in at the Northern tip of the city. They foresee a time when they may have to battle to keep the Skin Borgs from taking over their turf. The Math Addicts don't want to start a war with the Skin Borgs prematurely (even though there have been some skirmishes) and so they haven't openly declared war on the Skin Borgs, yet they are open to little (non-military) things they can do to aid the Purists, Orphans and Hummingbirds.

Arcadians: The Arcadians sometimes try to subtly influence city politics, and (second only to Omniscients) the Math Addicts are likely to realize what is going on. The end result is that Arcadians and Math Addicts are very wary of each other. Arcadians know how much the Math Addicts can hurt them and Math Addicts know how close they are to being caught up in the Arcadian's many invisible wars. The Math Addicts feel that the Arcadians are too manipulative and amoral while the Arcadians feel that the Math Addicts are too righteous and violent.

Math Addict Special Skills

Math Communication- Uses INL. Although all Math Addicts have a tendency to throw numbers in to their conversations, Math Addicts with this skill learn a simple cipher in which numbers are translated in to pronounceable syllables (e.g. mrutana = 368971378) allowing for pure mathematical communication. There is no faster way for Math Addicts to communicate with each other or with computers. It can also be used to encrypt speech.

Easy (10): Communicate encrypted text with a one-way cipher at 20 difficulty to break at a rate of one word per second.

Moderate (20): Communicate encrypted text with a public-key cipher at 20 difficulty to break and a rate as fast as normal human speech.

Hard (30): Communicate the topography of a three dimensional object, using public-key cryptography (20 difficulty to break).

Legendary (40): Communicate a public-key encrypted (30 difficulty to break) black and white photograph with another person with the skill (this would also require Math Memorize).

Math Estimation- Uses INL. The PC has learned how to use the special MathEnhancer functions for quantifying sensory input. Because most calculations are done by measuring the percentage of optical field and object takes up, the PC has to use complex trigonometric functions and remember long tables of properties (e.g. the weight of water) to fully estimate every aspect of an object.

Easy (10): Estimate the size of a book, held at arm's length, accurate to one twentieth of an inch.

Moderate (20): Calculate the exact angle and force to use win a game of pool on the first shot.

Hard (30): Estimate the exact speed one would have to throw a rock in order to break through a wall.

Legendary (40): Determine the chemical makeup of a rock by kicking it (thereby judging its mass and density).

Math Fighting- Prerequisite: Math Estimation (3), Computer Modeling (2). The PC has memorized volumes of anatomical data and physics equations modeling the movements of bodies during a fight and the PC can calculate, in real time, exactly how to move to achieve the desired results. This skill is especially useful when it comes to projectile weapons, which the PC can learn to throw or shoot perfectly. Gives the following actions (as per a normal combat skill, see p.67):

+0 to Disarm
+4 to Flip
+4 to Knockdown
+0 to Knockout
+0 to Parry
+0 to Strike: Handheld
+4 to Strike: Projectile
+0 to Vital Strike Bladed
+4 to Vital Strike Blunt

Special Attack: Trick Shot. Roll INL+AGY vs. 30. Requires projectile weapon. If successful, a thrown or projectile weapon bounces off one solid object (doing half damage to it) and hits another object (doing half damage to it). This can be used, for example, to hit people behind cover, or hit two people with one shot by bouncing a bullet off one person's skull.

Math Memorize- Uses INL. Prerequisite: Math Estimation (2). The Math Addict learns to utilize the Math Enhancer's special facilities to remember numbers. The Math Addicts learns to turn anything: words, the floorplan of a building, a picture, etc. in to numbers so that it can be memorized and communicated to others. Information memorized in this way lasts forever with perfect clarity.

Easy (10): Memorize a paragraph.

Moderate (20): Memorize the floorplan of a building.

Hard (30): Memorize every detail of a photograph.

Legendary (40): Memorize the feeling of a lover's touch.

Math Prediction- Uses AWR. Prerequisite: Computer Modeling (3). The PC can take any complex system of interactions (the stock market, the weather, important events happening within the city) and create a simple model of it. The PC then takes anecdotal events as samples representative of global variables within the situation (e.g. order, randomness, speed-of-change, strength and depth of interactions, number of major external factors, etc.). These samples are constantly, as matter of habit, being added to the PC's model of the situation. The PCs will occasionally be able to predict changes to the global system. These predictions are provided by the GM and talk about global variations in the situation.

Easy (10): "This situation is becoming increasingly chaotic."

Moderate (20): "We are entering a pocket of slow change to the system, it will last a few hours."

Hard (30): "A new factor has entered the situation, it is creating more stability, it is a factor we have not yet encountered."

Legendary (40): "In two minutes, something is going to happen which will change the city forever."

Math Triangulation- Uses AWR. Prerequisite: Math Estimation (2). PCs with this skill learn to do lightning-fast calculations based on the tiniest sensory input (such as an echo) and to calculate the position of an object in space.

Easy (10): Use a loud clap and the resulting echoes to determine the position of a large object (like a person) in the dark (hit with only -7 from blinded or darkness).

Moderate (20): Use the tap of a foot (and the resulting echoes) to determine the position and direction/speed of movement of a person in the dark (hit with no minuses).

Hard (30): From changes in air currents and ambient temperature, determine the exact position and direction/speed of movement of someone in the dark.

Legendary (40): Drop a pebble and use the echoes to determine the size, location and density of every object in the room.

Military Style- The Math Addicts are very precise fighters, and their precision in battle is only hampered by their lack of leaders. They are good at mass combat, capable of keeping their heads, not killing each other with friendly fire, not getting separated or ambushed from behind. Math Addicts usually spontaneously form in to teams of two to four who can spread out to surround and enemy, or put their backs to each other if they are surrounded. These groups act independently, but always with an eye on the bigger picture of the overall strategy of the battle. Tactics which work well on other leaderless gangs (isolate and destroy, push the enemy into a disadvantageous position) rarely work on the Math Addicts.

The Math Addicts are incredibly skilled with projectile weapons, which they use to kill their enemies. Hand to hand weapons, like clubs and swords, are used mostly to push and corral enemies in to configurations where they can be most efficiently slaughtered. Math Addicts are known as very deadly in battle, causing very many deaths. This is true, but not because the Math Addicts are bloodthirsty or enjoy killing, they just seek the most efficient way to end the battle, even if it means killing so many enemies that the rest surrender or run away.

Typical Weapon- Crossbows are often a favorite weapon for Math Addicts.

Turf- The Math addicts have a fair sized chunk of turf in the part of town known as Harlem (partially in East or "Spanish" Harlem) South of Martin Luther King Blvd, North of the Hole (Central Park), West of Morningside Ave. and East Malcolm X Blvd. (a.k.a. 5th Ave.).

Distinguishing Features- Math Addicts vary greatly in appearance. Math Addicts tend to be either very in to fashion and style (very precise mord/corp style, see p.343) or not in to it at all (homeless/grunge stye, see p.343, often with sandals). Lately, light brown has become an unofficial gang color of the Math Addicts and many wear beige clothing. Math Addicts almost always wear something (patch, tattoo, broach) with an infinity symbol on it.

Symbols- Light brown, any mathematical symbol (especially the infinity symbol, which looks like an 8 on its side).

Slang- Math Addicts tend to use mathematical and statistical terminology when referring to every day events. In addition, they try to quantify just about everything in to numbers (e.g. "I'm in my top 2 percentile of anger right now!").

Absolute: adj., the value if positive and negative were ignored.

Boolean: adj., Anything dealing with true/false functions like and, or, not.

Correlation: n., how much one value tends to change with another value (e.g. temperature has a strong negative correlation with the amount of clothing people wear).

Deduction: n., the act of discovering general principles by examining specific details.

Exponentially: adv., anything increasing by an exponential factor (e.g. it's rate of increase, on a graph, would appear to curve upwards and shoot off the top of the graph).

Extrapolation: n., Determine what will happen before of after the given data (e.g. given what you have seen of Zeke and Samantha's relationship, what will happen to them in the future?)

Heuristics: n., The study of improving the speed of problem solving by making certain assumptions up-front based on past experience.

Induction: n., the act of discovering specifics by examining general principles.

Infinite: adj,. Without end or of unlimited and immeasurable value.

Interpolation: n., Determine what has happened in missing segments of a data set by examining the data around it (e.g. take two frames from a security camera video and figure out what a frame between them would have looked like).

Normal Curve: n., a normal distribution of variance, with most instances within two standard deviations of average.

Non-Zero Sum: adj., a situation where everyone might "win" or everyone might "lose" (e.g. nuclear standoffs).

Probability: n., the likelihood of a given outcome on a scale from 0 (impossible) to 1 (certain).

Ratio: n., a linear relationship between two numbers.

Reciprocal: n., One divided by the value (e.g. half is the reciprocal of two, and visa versa).

Regression: n., A straight line which represents the closest linear relationship between X and Y on a graph of scattered points.

Standard Deviations: n., a measure of the variance of a population (e.g. the amount of variance in height between schoolchildren).

Variable: n., an unknown value.

Vector: n., a combination of specified direction and force.

Zero-Sum: adj., a situation where one side will win everything and everyone else will lose everything.

Skills

Free Skills: Math (3)

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 7, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 5, INTL 7, MIL 8, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 6, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Special Skills: Math Addict skills, see below, cost 7 Skill points per level.

Income- $1,000 +$150.

Special Equipment- MathEnhancer NetHack Version (see p.96). The program gives +7 to all Math based skill rolls (does not include special Math Addict skills).

Special Bonus Characteristics

Math Improv (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC can make legendary (40 difficulty) Math skill tolls to use a math based skill the PC doesn't have (computer modeling, cryptography, info smuggling, mnemonics, music, physics). What the PC is doing is, in effect, inventing the whole discipline for themselves as they go along.

Suggested Skills- Cryptography, Info Smuggling, Internet Browsing, Knife Throwing, Linguistics, Money, Music, Programming: AI, Programming: Applications.

Suggested Equipment- Palmtop: Communicator, Dagger: Throwing.

Suggested Reading- Frontiers of Science, Mental Programming.

Mem Junkies

In Brief- Addicts to mental programs that enhance the emotional recall of memories. Mem-junkies seek out emotional experiences as if they were drugs.

Favorable Stereotypes- Unfortunate addicts, yet wise about memories and emotions.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Damaged, desperate, dangerous addicts; aliens in the real world.

Other names- Rememberers, Gramercy Park Junkies

Origin- In 2049, mental installer technology was finally being made available to the general public (though at this time only for medical purposes). One political party, trying to create an "issue" they could win on, invented the idea that mental programs designed to have the same effects as drugs would pose a serious problem to the country. The hypothetical was that drug cartels would get a hold of mental installers and install "drug programs" in the minds of teenagers. These programs would be undetectable with urine tests and the users could get high as much and as often as they wanted. People were still wary of any laws which would limit access to technology (the Freedom Wars having just ended) so the solution was to impose stiff penalties on anyone found writing, distributing or using "drug programs." The Federal "Anti-Mind-Drug" law was passed in 2061. Of course, in response to this law, several unknown individuals wrote drug programs and posted them to non-US websites.

In America, because there were no mental installers available on the black market, people could only get mental programs in clinics. These clinics were heavily monitored by the government and there was no way that anyone could get a "drug program" installed. Eventually two young Indies, who had nothing better to do than try to find loopholes in mental programming laws, discovered a fatal flaw in the "anti-mind drug" law. The FDA has recently approved programs that would enhance the storage or memories and programs that would enhance the recall of memories (these were the same programs that the psychic rebels used during the war to transfer their memories of psychic training on to their students). What the two discovered was that the two programs could be used together, at full power, to recall and re-store a memory at a stronger level than it had been stored at. So, they could remember a happy memory again and again and after the twentieth time they remembered is, recalling the memory was more vivid than real life. After the hundredth time they remembered it, the happiness was more intense than any experience they had ever had. The two had effectively discovered the "drug program" of everyone's fears.

With no motivation other than pride in their discovery, the two Indies spread their technique throughout the city. The technique appealed a lot to junkies, who saw that they could replace a costly and dangerous habit with one that was safe and (after the initial investment in mental programs) free. A large group of Mem Junkies formed. Mem Junkies found that they needed little from the outside world and they quickly started to seclude themselves. Realizing that they would benefit from staying together for protection, the two discoverers convinced several hundred Mem Junkies to rent out all the apartments in a complex overlooking Gramercy Park.

There the Mem Junkies lived in seclusion. Welfare more than provided for their needs and they built some nasty traps to protect themselves from anyone who might try to invade the complex. Since they weren't out on the streets, the city more or less forgot about their existence. The Mem Junkies only stayed in the present long enough to keep themselves alive. The rest of the time they spent sitting or lying motionless, reliving amplified memories. Several Mem Junkies, including the two "founders" died of TB in the unsanitary conditions in the apartments.

Not too long after their seclusion, the Mem Junkies discovered that memories, even when amplified to the maximum possible degree, would eventually cease to elicit an emotional reaction, just as a painting, no matter how beautiful, ceases to cause a reaction when one has looked at it for the thousandth time. The Mem Junkies quickly burned out their happy memories, then they started amplifying those memories that were part good and part bad. When those burned out, they discovered that they could get high even from the purely bad memories. Within six years, the first Mem Junkies started to burn out all of their memories. Since they had few expenses the Mem Junkies had a lot of spare cash and they invested in psychic training and in mental transfer technology so that they could share memories between themselves. The memories they shared amongst each other were already mostly burned out, but better than nothing. The sharing of memories at least slowed the speed at which they burned out their supply. Within about four years, most Mem Junkies had exhausted even this increased supply of memories.

The Mem Junkies began to realize, with some desperation, that they needed new memories from outside of Gramercy Park. So, some of the oldest surviving Mem Junkies, who had burned out first, hit the streets in search of new and intense memories. City residents began to see people they had never seen before, wearing clothes that had been out of style for a decade, pale and emaciated, stalking the streets like predators. Every day there were more on the streets.

It was inevitable that a Mem Junkie would get in to trouble with a gang and that the gang would strike against the Mem Junkies as a whole, forcing the Mem Junkies to defend themselves as a gang. Despite their poor physical condition, the Mem Junkies found themselves quite capable of defending themselves: many Mem Junkies had psychic skills and all were virtually immune to pain or fear. The Mem Junkies had also spent so many years receiving welfare but spending next to nothing that they had a lot of money to spend on high-tech armor and weapons. The surrounding gangs quickly backed off and the Mem Junkies were suddenly in the possession of a piece of turf.

Timeline

2041- Mental Programming Developed.
2049- 1st FDA approved use of mental programs.
2061- First non-medical mental program available.
2061- Federal "Anti-Mind-Drug" law passed.
2068- Memory enhancer programs available.
2068- Memory "abuse" discovered by 2 city teens.
2069- Mem Junkies seclude themselves in Gramercy park.
2073- Mental Installers appear on city black market.
2075- Mem Junkies start to "burn out," learn to share memories.
2079- Mem Junkies start to appear on the streets.

Joining- The PC will is one of the original Mem Junkies who went in to seclusion approximately ten years ago. Back in those days, joining was simple: you start hanging out with Mem Junkies, save up for the installation of the two mental programs, then learn how to use them. Anyone who was addicted to amplified memories was considered part of the group.

Today, not many people want to become Mem Junkies. Those few who do are mostly Well addicts who don't have much hope of giving up their addictions, but think that memory addiction will be safer and easier than addiction to physical drugs. The Mem Junkies are not opposed to new membership but they do no recruiting either. Right now, the Mem Junkies are slowly shrinking: members are killed faster than new ones join.

A PC at level one has spent approximately a decade in seclusion and has just started going back out on to the streets.

Lifestyle- Like most addicts, Mem Junkies' lives are divided in to periods of withdrawal and intoxication. Intoxication is when they have new memories that they have not burned out yet. At these times, Mem Junkies like to withdraw in to seclusion of their Gramercy Park apartments. There are usually four or five Mem Junkies to an apartment. The apartments are usually very messy: piles of dirty clothes, rotting piles of garbage, dishes lying dirty around the apartment and each dish being washed only when needed, half the light bulbs burned out, and infestations by rats and cockroaches. The people living there rarely notice the mess, they spend most of their hours in the apartment sleeping or reliving memories. For a visitor, the apartment is extremely boring: The apartment is completely quiet except for the occasional giggle, gasp or sob of someone reliving a memory. The residents sit for hours on end with their eyes closed, only getting up when they absolutely have to in order to relieve themselves, drink tap water directly from the tap or fry up an egg in a crusty frying pan to give themselves enough protein to survive.

As terrible as it seems to outsiders, for Mem Junkies this is contentment. It is only when they burn out their current memories do their lives become (from an outsider's point of view) interesting. For a Mem Junkie with no good memories, life is flat and boring. Nothing in their day-to-day life is capable of causing them noticeable pleasure or pain. Nothing is interesting to them, yet their attention is steady and unwavering because there is nothing interesting enough to provide a distraction. This state is so miserable that the Mem Junkie must leave to get new memories. Most Mem Junkies who have returned to the streets are forced to go out every night in search of new memories.

The Mem Junkies have several techniques for getting new memories, and most Mem Junkies favor one technique over the others. Mem Junkies classify each other by the techniques that they favor, but most Mem Junkies use multiple techniques:

Extremists: This was the first technique that the Mem Junkies came up with for getting new memories. The idea is simple: go out and have some extreme sort of experience. Experiences one has never had before make the best memories. There are two problems with this method. First, even in the city it is possible to become jaded to all of the easily available experiences. Second, most of the experiences intense enough to be useful to a Mem Junkie involve substantial risk to the Mem Junkie. Many Mem Junkies have died doing some dangerous stunt.

Eulogists: This is the second oldest technique. Some Mem Junkies have discovered a population of people who are more than happy to share their memories: dying people. Eulogists hang around in hospices offering to "keep" people's life memories. The people who are lying in hospices have nothing better to do than have a Mem Junkie hook up equipment to their heads and make them relive all their memories. The problem with this method is that people who are dying often have pain and sickness clouding their memories. Many Eulogists become drawn to the experience of death more than the life memories of the individuals. This can lead to the next technique.

Grabbers: These are psychics who travel around the city interjecting themselves in to people's lives during dramatic moments in those lives. They use their psychic senses to experience what the people they are observing experience. Grabbers tend towards those fresh on the streets, for whom almost every experience is new.

Mem-Rapists: This is simply a form of Grabbers that do things that most Grabbers are unwilling to do (because it's unethical or likely to get them in a lot of trouble). Rather than waiting for drama to happen to people, these Mem Junkies manufacture intense drama. The worst Mem-Rapists kidnap people and make them play terrible games. A game gives the widest range of emotions: fear and excitement when people are playing the games, anger and dread when they lose and joy when they win. Since so many Mem Junkies have serious objections to this kind of behavior, Mem-Rapists must keep their activities secret.
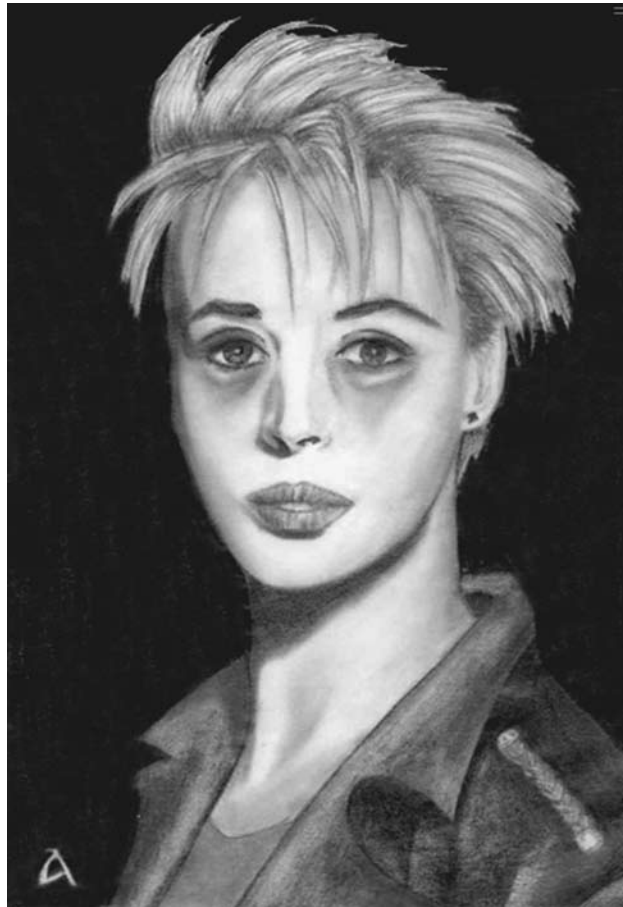
Insanists: These Mem Junkies seek new experiences by using programs which induce or simulate mental illnesses. There are a number of these programs that have been created for scientific studies. In theory, having a simulated mental illness is safer than having a real one because a mental program can be turned off (either by the user, by a timer or by a password the user gives to his or her friends). In practice, though, many Insanists have gone "over the edge": become too mentally ill to turn off their programs or have become mentally ill in such a way that they will seek to keep the programs turned on.

Amnesients: Some Mem Junkies seek to overcome the jadedness that keeps them from forming strong new memories by blocking out their own pre-existing memories using a mental program. The program removes the user's access to old memories. The program has many options that can be set, including time limits and passwords. The Amnesiest still suffers from memory addiction, but finds it easier to form powerful new memories.

Social Structure- The Mem Junkies have no system of leadership. The two who discovered the technique were the only ones who had any persuasive power over the group but they are now dead.

Most addict groups are torn apart by constant distrust that prevents them from taking advantage of collective action. This mistrust is rational: addict life is full of moments of desperation and desperate addicts take advantage of each other. Mem Junkies, however, do not buy their drugs, thus they have few reasons to rip each other off and thus they trust each other more than other addicts. The Mem Junkies benefit from this trust and from collectivism in several ways. They share the costs of rent, mental installer technology and on psychic training. Most importantly, they all participate in self-defense (See Military Style, below). In the rare case that a Mem Junkie doesn't pull his or her weight, the Mem Junkie's roommates kick him or her out. The Mem Junkies can try to find other roommates, but if he or she has burned too many bridges (gotten a reputation) the Mem Junkie will not be able to find a roommate and wil have to leave Gramercy Park.

Mem Junkies have a paradoxical closeness to and distance from each other. In those years after they discovered their memories were burning out they sucked whatever emotion was left out of the dregs of each others emotions, and they got to know the most intimate details of each other's lives. Despite all this, the Mem Junkies are rather cold and distant to each other. Their disinterest in each other is precisely because they know each other so well. Mem Junkies are as bored with the lives of other Mem Junkies as they are with their own.

Mem Junkies classify themselves by those who have burned themselves out and those who haven't. The Mem Junkies who have burned themselves out are forced to wander the city in search of new memories, while those who haven't stay at home all day. The burned out are generally subclassified by the method they use to gain new memories. There is no special solidarity among the group: Eulogists don't hang out with Eulogists any more than with Extremists or Amnesiests. Nor is one group considered any better than the others, except for the Mem Rapists. The Mem Rapists are careful to keep their activities hidden from other Mem Junkies (for fear of being labeled as a threat to all Mem Junkies and kicked out or lynched).

Behind the Eyes of An Amnesiest

You wake up in a messy, dimly-lit, shit-hole apartment. Everything around you is so familiar that it takes you a minute to realize that you remember nothing about yourself or your past. You run around in a bit of a panic (though you don't feel as scared as you think you should be) before you find a handwritten note. The note explains that you are an addict to memories, that you have been blanked so you can form powerful new memories. The note explains that if you grow to weary and bored of life you can use mental programs in you head to re-remember the memories until they become pleasantly strong. The note says that the program will terminate after six months, giving you back all your memories. If you say "mammal dry-wall" you can gain your memories back temporarily, but saying the password will require putting up with quite a bit of pain (so you don't use it frivolously). The note goes on, for several pages, to give a quick rundown of the details of your life: name, friends, enemies, who to pay the rent to, how to stay on welfare, what parts of town to avoid and suggestions for places to hang out that might provide for some good memories. The whole note is exceedingly "familiar" and you know the handwriting is yours without having to test it. You make yourself some food and you realize that everything feels very cold, very meaningless. You know that the note is right, you can't live like this, and so you get your knife and keys and go out to find some memories.

Advancement- Since there is no social stratification within the Mem Junkies, there is no real way to advance. A Mem Junkie who gets very good memories may share them, but the value of second hand memories like this is small and will rarely earn the PC any more than the weak promise of a favor.

Population- There are about 400 Mem Junkies out on the streets and about 400 who have not yet burned out their memories. A new Mem Junkie hits the streets about once every two days. Of the 400 Mem Junkies out on the streets there are about 48 (12%) Extremists, 40 (10%) Eulogists, 260 (65%) Grabbers, 12 (2%) Mem Rapists, 24 (6%) Insanists, 20 (5%) Amnesiests.

External Relations- Most people in the city have a distaste for the Mem Junkies. Many fail to recognize any difference between them and other addicts (save that the Mem Junkies live in a larger collective). Most city residents have "don't trust an addict" drilled in to them in the early days of their lives on the streets. Some think of Mem Junkies as morbid scavengers, taking advantage of other people's hardships and misery. They associate Mem Junkies with the death, pain and danger that seems to be

Kicking the Memory Habit

It is possible to quit being a Mem Junkie, but more difficult than for most other drugs. It is more difficult for two reasons: First, since the means of abuse are in the PC's own head, a MemJunkie can give in to a craving as soon as it appears without any chance to change his or her mind. Second, there are no social support mechanisms (12 step meetings, volunteer counselors, self-help books, friends who have quit and can offer advice) to help a Mem Junkie quit, unlike virtually any other addiction around.

The problem a Mem Junkie faces is that their memories seem more "real" than the present. They are so desensitized to every emotion that real life seems like a poorly written story involving characters that the Mem Junkie doesn't care about. The only thing that can help this desensitization is time. A Mem Junkie must resist cravings for weeks or months before they start to feel any involvement in the events of day-to-day life.

Memory Addiction has a Craving Difficulty of 20 and cravings triggered by boredom (see addition, p.65).

History of Gramercy Park

The Gramercy Park area has been carefully cultivated for centuries to be a quiet residential neighborhood for the upper class. An oasis from the city within the city. For many years, Gramercy park was the only private park in the city. Only residents of the apartments and townhouses surrounding the park were allowed the key to get in (a key that was, at one time, made from solid gold). The streets and the placement of the park were designed to limit through traffic. The Gramercy Park area is quiet, the streets are lined with large trees and the buildings are relatively short. The buildings were mostly built in the 1820s to resemble a European residential neighborhood.

These are the qualities that made the Freedom Army choose these apartments as the homes for the top generals of the Freedom Army and their families. The last remaining Freedom Army soldiers barricaded themselves in to these building until a prolonged siege forced them to surrender. The Gramercy Park apartment buildings sustained heavy damage during this fighting and the real estate market never got good enough after the war to justify massive repairs. Instead, the damaged apartments and floors were walled off and the other apartments were opened up for rent. The apartments were too good to appeal to the welfare market and not good in good enough shape to appeal to the luxury apartment market. The problem was that they were essentially middle-class apartments in the city with no middle class. The company that owned them was considering selling them when the Mem Junkies took over.

The Mem Junkies intimidated the few non-Mem Junkie tenants in to leaving. The landlords, who lived off-site, were so happy that they were making a profit that they looked the other way as the Mem Junkies tore up the apartments and filled them with death traps.

going on whenever the Mem Junkies are around. Few people have had close enough dealings with Mem Junkies to see beyond broad stereotypes.

Drakes and Insomniacs: The Drakes and Insomniacs, two Street People families, live nearby. They have had more contact, both good and bad, with Mem Junkies. They are always wary of a strange Mem Junkie who appears with unknown motive or plans, but on the other hand they have learned that some Mem Junkies can be trusted an can even be useful.

Needle Punks, Animalists and Risen: These are thee warlike gangs which are nearby the Mem Junkies. Each has tried to make war against the Mem Junkies and although they killed many Mem Junkies, each have backed down. Now they have nightmares about being in apartment buildings surrounding Gramercy Park: wading through piles of rat infested trash, being stalked in dimly lit hallways, falling through holes in the floor, Mem Junkies appearing out of nowhere to stab them with rusty kitchen knives, and the horribly dull look on the faces of the Mem Junkies as they killed and were killed. These three gangs have reached the same conclusion about fighting the Mem Junkies that many groups have come to about the Moles: that there is no glory or honor in fighting them, only an ugly and painful battle. They are willing to fight for revenge if a Mem Junkie messes with them, but are unlikely to want to engage in prolonged warfare.

Military Style- Only a small percentage of the Mem Junkies engage in any sort of military strikes against enemies. When they do strike, they do so quickly and then fall back to the safety of their apartments. The Mem Junkies' main strength is defensive: the Gramercy Park apartments they live in are filled with simple but effective booby-traps (see Turf, below) and secret passages. The Mem Junkies have memorized the location of every trap and passage. When an invading army enters the Gramercy Park apartment buildings, every Mem Junkie will fight in defense, even those who do not go out on the streets. Enough Mem Junkies have psychic sensory skills that the Mem Junkies are almost never surprised. The Mem Junkies fight fearlessly, often continuing to fight after sustaining lethal injuries. Their knowledge of their surroundings, many traps, cramped quarters and relentlessness act as a leveler, allowing them to force much larger and stronger gangs to retreat and to think twice about going back in.

Turf- Mem Junkies have a small sliver of turf (dwarfed by the nearby gated industrial complex to the East) South of 28th St., North of 14th St., East of Park Ave. and W. of 3rd Ave. in the Gramercy Park district. The Mem Junkies do little to protect this turf, but there are no other gangs nearby (the closest being the Risen six blocks North). The core of Mem Junkie territory is the complex of apartment buildings surrounding Gramercy Park, which is home to nearly all of the Mem Junkies and the area they can and will defend against all incursion.

Gramercy Park is a small gated park. It is seldom used and full of trash (which the gates keep from blowing out). Surrounding the park are several large apartment buildings (and the Gramercy park luxury hotel, abandoned since the Freedom Wars) with brownstones (mostly abandoned) sandwiched between them. The gramercy park apartment buildings have beautiful 19th century architecture (including a few gargoyles). The apartments are large but poorly kept up. During winter, cold air whistles in through holes in to the abandoned floors, making the whole building cold. When it rains, water fills the building and leaves a stench of mildew. Beyond the grand, arched wooden doors to the apartment buildings, the lights are purposefully kept dim (to hide traps). The most common traps are pits covered up by carpets or weakened floorboards. The elevators are long since broken and the stairs contain many false steps. There are a few tripwire traps that trigger rusty knives lashed to boards and propelled by gravity or a spring. The Mem Junkies have also made and hidden hundreds of the holes in the walls and floors that lead to the walled off parts of the complex. These passageways allow Mem Junkies to hide from or ambush invaders.
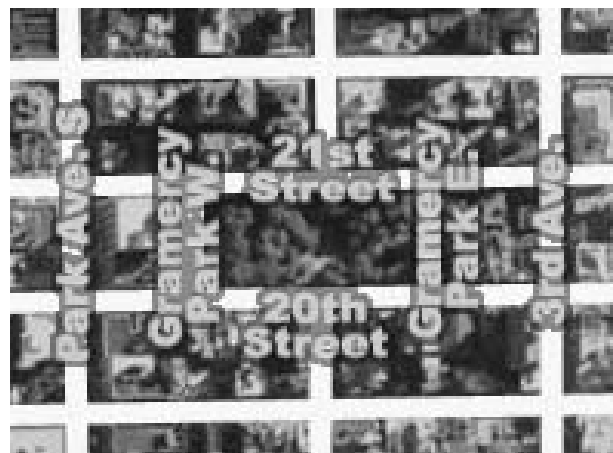
Distinguishing Features- Mem Junkies are, on average, ten years older than other gang members. They tend to be thin and pale (from years spent inside with not enough exercise and poor nutrition). Many wear a style that went out of fashion years ago (a sort of military goth look with a lot of olive colored military dress coats with pointy shoulders). To signify themselves, many tattoo on their bodies or write on their clothing with black pens the names of emotions. Many have long hair, beards and other signs of poor attention to personal grooming. Many are not used to bright lights and wear sunglasses.

Symbols- Mem Junkies have no symbols for themselves, but graffiti artists use a squat rectangle with a line coming out of the top and bottom middle. This symbol is taken from the streets that surround Gramercy Park.

Slang

Amnesiest: n., a Mem Junkie who wipes his or her own memory.

Burned Out: 1. adj. a memory that has been remembered so many times that it has lost it's emotional effect; 2. adj. a Mem Junkie for whom all available memories are burned out.

Eulogist: n., a Mem Junkie who hangs around with dying people.

Extremist: n., a Mem Junkie who tries to form new memories by getting in to extreme situations.

Grabber: n., a Mem Junkie who leeches off of dramatic things happening in the lives of others.

Insanist: n., a Mem Junkie who makes himself or herself temporarily mentally ill.

Mem Rapist: n., a Grabber who created drama in the lives of others to leech of it.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 8, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 9, INTL 8, MIL 8, PSY:X 18, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 13, TECH 8, THIE 6, SOC 7, STRT 6.

Income- $2,500 +$100/wk.

Special Equipment- PC gets Memory Storage Booster (p.96), Memory Recall Booster (p.96). Other mental programs can be purchased for half-off the installation price (the Mem Junkies once bought a "share" in a mental installer owned by a local black market trader).

Special Bonus Characteristics

Poor Health: (Mandatory Disadvantage) Since the PC's lifestyle has, until recently, been very sedentary and the PC has not taken very good care of himself or herself, the PC starts with the following penalties: -5 STH, -3 SPD, -3 END, -1 BDY.

Flattened Affect: (Mandatory Advantage) The PC has become tolerant of intense emotions, just like a drug user becomes tolerant of drugs. Normal emotions are nothing to the PC, in order to feel anything at all he or she must get and amplify new memories. The PC gets +10 to save vs. pain and +20 to save vs. fear/anger/euphoria/ dysphoria or any other emotion or psychological shock based saves. Technological methods for reading the PC's mind (e.g. subliminal analyzers) will show no results.

Psychological Shock Failure

1-9: Loses one action, Distraction (-4 to all rolls) for 1 hour.

10-19: Loses one action and reaction, Unconsciousness (10 difficulty to save), Distraction (-4 to all rolls) for 24 hours.

21+: Loses one action and reaction and must save vs. Unconsciousness (30 difficulty). Nightmares and distraction (-4 to all rolls) for 1 month.

Powerful memories: (Mandatory Advantage) If a Mem Junkie has succeeded in gaining and amplifying new memories, there are situations in which these memories can be used as a weapon. If the PC has the skill Emotional Attack, the PC gets +10 to his or her skill roll while reliving an amplified memory. Even PC's without psychic skills get a passive emotional attack: anyone trying to read the PC's mind is hit with an intense blast of emotions. The would-be mind reader must make a save vs. psychological shock (WIL + 1d20 vs. 30). See Psychological Shock Failure Table.

Smell Vulnerability: (Mandatory Disadvantage) Although most of a Mem Junkies' memories are "burned out," occasionally a smell will bring back a memory with some of its former glory. The strength of such a memory can be enough to distract or paralyze Mem Junkies and more than a few Mem Junkies have died while caught up in a smell-evoked memory. The PC will never know what smells will set off a memory, and once they smell the odor they only have one round before the full effects hit. When they hit, the PC must make a save vs. psychological shock at 50 difficulty.

Amnesia Program: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 7 Points. The PC has used a program on himself or herself that blocks access to previous memories, causing an artificial retrograde amnesia. It is important to tell the GM what the PC has learned (from his or her "note") about the PC. The GM is free to make up details of the PC's personal history so long as they don't contradict what the player has already established. Also, note when the program will end (must be at least six months) and what special circumstances can cause the program to end prematurely.

Suggested Skills- Emotional Attack, Mind Reading.

Suggested Reading- Mental Programming.

Mem Junkie Aesthetics

Some Mem Junkies feel that the one thing that makes them better than other addicts is a deep aesthetic appreciation for the source of their addiction. A hardcore alcoholic doesn't care if he or she is drinking merlot or mouthwash. A Mem Junkie knows that there are countless possible combinations of emotions. Each emotion has its own unique "flavor" and the Mem Junkie appreciates even the most subtle motional undercurrents. Not only do Mem Junkies appreciate this variety, they depend on it: a memory wouldn't get them high if they've already burned through one that felt exactly like it.

Needle Punks

In Brief- Gang of young pharmaceutical artists who experiment on themselves with drug cocktails and have learned to deal with potentially lethal side-effects.

Favorable Stereotypes- Creative, fearless pharmaceutical geniuses with encyclopedic knowledge of drug interactions and effects, who can push their bodies to do almost anything.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Reckless, self-destructive, suicidal junkies and criminals with no respect for health, longevity or nature.

Other Names- IVs, Pharmos, Cocktailers, Suicidals.

Origin- There was a time after the Freedom Wars when selling drugs in the city was a free-for-all. All kinds of drugs were available, from meth brewed in apartments to God Killer imported from biker gangs in the west, to opiates stolen from hospital pharmacies by corrupt staff and sold on the black market. There were many kinds of dealers, and a drug changed hands within the city an average of 5 times before getting to a user, with each of those five people getting a cut.

One group of reckless young teens' self-experimentation with any drug they could get a hold of earned themselves the nickname "suicidals." They were specialists in drug cocktails: they would buy drugs (usually from corrupt hospital staff) and combine them to maximize certain effects. One drug which became especially popular was a drug they called "thor-o-zine" which they promised would make any gang win a war. Thor-o-zine was a combination of anxiolytics (fear reducers), analgesics (pain killers), strength and speed enhancing agents. Despite its high cost and its debilitating after-effects, the drug worked as advertised: a gang who dosed up en-masse on thor-o-zine before going in to battle was almost assured a victory. The Suicidals grew from a small drug-selling corner gang in to a drug gang that, briefly, held the spotlight. Then, other people learned how to manufacture thor-o-zine and the Suicidals went back to obscurity.

This was not the worst that would happen to the Suicidals. The city's most powerful Drug Lords formed together in to a single organization in 2075 and made a bid to become the only people in the city selling illegal drugs. The Drug Lords killed the supply lines of illegal drugs in to the city, they stopped supplying the street gangs who had once dealt for them, and they made war against anyone who tried to continue selling drugs in the city. Some people were smart enough to get out of the drug selling business at this point, but the Suicidals had never been good at wisdom, safety or restraint. The Suicidals tried to continue selling their drug cocktails in the small piece of turf they controlled, and the Drug Lords hit them hard. In 2075, when the Drug Lords consolidated, there were 30 people in the Suicidals. Two months later, 12 had been killed and 11 had fled the city, leaving seven Suicidals left. These Suicidals found themselves hunted by the Drug Lords night and day, even though they had stopped selling drugs. The Suicidals were to be an example to the city, the Drug Lord's way of saying "there are no second chances: if you cross us then you die."

The only thing that saved the Suicidals during these dangerous times was that they liberally dosed themselves with their own drug cocktails, including some of the best combat drugs on the market. The Suicidals were often forced to use combat drugs day after day (instead of using them one day, and then crashing and recovering for the next several days). The Suicidals dealt with the debilitating effects of these drugs with even more drugs. During one week, every single member of the Suicidals was on stimulants every day, just because they couldn't afford the inevitable crash that would come when they stopped taking the stimulants. The Suicidals ran through their own impressive supply of illegal pharmaceuticals and were forced to make an armed assault on a pharmacy to refill. The Suicidals were popping pills night and day, most of them just to deal with the side effects of the other drugs they had already taken. They called this "wave riding."

One day, during a battle with the Drug Lords, one member of the Suicidals, Lez Newberry, was stabbed with a poisoned knife and was last seen limping down an alley shouting "stimulants!" She was presumed dead by her comrades, but she showed up two days later, disheveled, manic, dirty, covered in blood - but alive. After crashing, she explained that she had countered the lethal dose of poison with an equally lethal dose of stimulants, which she had countered with yet other drugs. The Suicidals realized that Lez had taken "wave riding" to a whole new level and had survived what every doctor and poison dealer in the city would say was a lethal dose of poison.

The Suicidals kept themselves hidden, and eventually the Drug Lords decided that they all must have died. The Suicidals kept a low profile, but slowly began selling some of the new drug cocktails they had discovered during their persecution. They dealt on the black market, selling under pseudonyms. They invested the money on what they thought would be a good weapon to defend themselves with: a device called a pharmosynth. Created for military field medical units, the pharmosynth was a miniature drug factory, that could assemble chains of peptides in to hundreds of protein based drugs. The price tag was high (the thing was seriously illegal in civilian hands, and only a few had been stolen and put on the black market). For the Needle Punks it was worth it: the devices could be rigged with a data jack, strapped on to an IV on a user's arm, and the user could do nothing more than think and have some drug end up in their bloodstream seconds later. It was also a good investment: it let the Needle Punks speed up their production of drugs for sale exponentially. Slowly, secretly, the Needle Punks recruited more and more people in to their organization. The people who joined knew that they were joining an enemy of the Drug Lords, but the idea of learning wave riding was hard to resist. People who knew them started calling them Needle Punks.

The Needle Punks had given up much in order to survive: their numbers had dwindled, they had sold their guns, many were hopelessly addicted to homemade pharmaceuticals, each had their lifespans permanently reduced by liberal use of dangerous drugs. They had also become quite a bit smarter and tougher. They had obtained a few pharmosynths, and shared the drugs created from them. When the Drug Lords realized that this old enemy had survived, the Needle Punks were ready for them. Instead of running, the Needle Punks struck hard, using every new skill they had learned. The Drug Lords quickly ceased their attacks, and the two came to a silent agreement: the Needle Punks would not sell drugs of abuse, only high priced cocktails or "utility drugs" (smart drugs, psychic drugs, combat drugs, aphrodisiacs, etc.).

By forcing the Drug Lords to back down, the Needle Punks made quite a name for themselves in the city. The Needle Punks found many young people coming to them hoping to learn wave riding and how to make drug cocktails. The elder Needle Punks turned this to their advantage, turning the new students both in to loyal gang members and in to regular purchasers of pharmosynth manufactured drugs. For the first time in five year, the elder Needle Punks were once again in a comfortable position.

Timeline

2068- The young people who would become the Suicidals start hanging out together.
2069- Young corner gang become known as the Suicidals.
2071- The Suicidals invent "thor-o-zine."
2072- Other groups learn how to make thor-o-zine.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate, form vertical monopoly.
2075- Suicidals sell drugs in opposition to Drug Lords, are almost wiped out.
2075- Lez Newberry survives attack by poisoned blade.
2075- Drug Lords think suicidals are now dead.
2076- Lez Newberry dies of systemic cancer.
2077- Suicidals buy pharmo-synths.
2079- Needle Punks win battles vs. Drug Lords.
2079- Needle Punks come to an agreement with the Drug Lords.

Joining- It costs money to join the Needle Punks. A student pays an older Suicidal to teach him or her about pharmaceuticals, the secret ingredients of drug cocktails, and the arts of wave riding. Most teachers charge both for training and for the drugs the student will need to complete the training. Students are encouraged to experiment on themselves as much as possible, to learn how to "feel" a side-effect coming before it hits full blast. The student must spend hours a day memorizing facts about pharmaceuticals. They are often given surprise quizzes by their teacher. When students get quiz questions wrong it is not taken lightly: during wave riding a mistake can kill.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has spent thousands of dollars and has done enough pharmaceuticals to take years off his or her life. The PC has learned a lot about drugs, more than most medical students (though he or she knows little about use of drugs to help cure actual diseases). The PC has an intuitive feel for overdoses and side-effects, and can reach for a drug to treat a side-effect before he or she can even put a name on what the side-effect is called. The PC has been given a large selection of drugs which he or she keeps ordered in a series of colored syringes. The PC does not yet have a pharmosynth and still has to pay an older Needle Punk every time he or she needs to replenish supplies.

Lifestyle- Needle Punks make some money selling drug cocktails to the black market. As per the silent agreement with the Drug Lords, the Needle Punks only sell drug cocktails with some legitimate utility. The most commonly sold cocktails are battle drugs, most of which are subtle variations on Thor-O-Zine. Some Needle Punks take commissions to make "custom cocktails." They mix a cocktail precisely to match the size, health, tolerances, sensitivities and desired effects of a customer. The Needle Punk must complete a long interview process (mostly asking "have you ever tried X? what did it do to you?") before they can even start to create a custom cocktail. The Needle Punk delivers a pre-filled syringe with instructions on exactly when and how to use it.

The money Needle Punks makes from selling drug cocktails to the black market is typically only enough to pay for the drugs they use personally. Needle Punks only really gain wealth when they invent some new cocktail that becomes popular. To this end, Needle Punks spend a lot of time trying to invent new commercial cocktails. They often experiment on themselves, but the type of cocktail a Needle Punk would sell on the black market is "weak" compared to the cocktails Needle Punks use on themselves, and so most Needle Punks seek out a non-Needle Punk to try their creation. They also experiment on themselves with drug cocktails that are too strong for anyone but a Needle Punk versed in Wave Rising to use.

No matter how skilled they are, Needle Punks are always risking their lives. They do not follow scientific principles in their self-experimentation, they follow aesthetics and "gut-feelings." Needle Punks die all the time from mistakes made while during self-experimentation: getting two drugs confused, an unpredictable and deadly interaction, using too much, not being able to react quickly enough to a side-effect or hitting a side-effect which they know no treatment for. Some Needle Punks who make a mistake die instantly, others face lingering painful deaths after having destroyed their internal organs.

In some ways, the Needle Punks are beholden to their reputation as being reckless and suicidal. They know that this dangerous reputation keeps people from messing with them, and that their cavalier self-experimentation is the source of their power. However, most have at least a little fear of death and they do take some safety precautions, even if they don't talk about them. They only use the full extent of their Wave Riding skills when they are in serious danger. Most get medical monitoring software installed in their brains that will alert them if something bad is happening to their bodies. They try to take breaks from using drugs so their bodies can detox.

Needle Punks spend a lot of time sick, either from side effects at the end of a wave, from withdrawal while trying to detox, or from some virus or bacteria they caught while their immune system was temporarily weakened. Most have set up their apartments for the sole purpose of crashing when they are sick: all within arm's reach of the bed are a box of kleenex, cans of sports-drink, protein bars, a pot to vomit in and towels for wiping their mouths. The daily routine of a Needle Punk usually includes at least one visit to a sick friend.

Some Needle Punks suffer from a fate they call "polyaddiction." A polyaddicted Needle Punk is physiologically addicted not just to one drug, but to drugs in general. It's like the Needle Punk is riding one long, unending wave. The body is so full of drugs so much of the time, that the body has no hope of achieving homeostasis. The Needle Punks ends up regulating virtually every aspect of their physiology using drugs. They use drugs to get their body temperature where it should be, to force their immune systems to work, to induce hunger so they can eat, to put themselves to sleep and wake themselves up in the morning, even to regulate the speed of their heartbeats. No Needle Punk has survived this way for more than a few months. In some cases they die in bed: their hearts just stop beating because they never injected a drug to tell their heart to beat.

Social Structure- The relationship between the older and younger Needle Punks is almost, but not quite, one of exploitation. The elder Needle Punks own pharmosynths, which they use for their own wave riding and for manufacturing the pharmaceuticals they sell to the younger Needle Punks. If the elder Needle Punks charged a little bit more for the drugs they sell to the younger Needle Punks, or if they used threats of not selling drugs to make the younger Needle Punks do what they want, or if they let younger Needle Punks have a tab and then charged exorbitant interest rates, then the relationship would be completely exploitative. As it is, the older Needle Punks make a lot of money selling to younger Needle Punks, but they never get rich and they do, for the most part, like their students and want them to succeed and do well. The elder Needle Punks generally don't abuse their power (in part, because they know they are outnumbered by the young students who are just as reckless as they were). The younger Needle Punks are also free to shop around when buying drugs, so an elder who gives unreasonable rates will soon lose customers.

Most of the time, the Needle Punks strike back reflexively against some group that has wronged them – no official decision is made, the Needle Punks just attack. In those few cases that there is a controversy about what the Needle Punks should be doing, the elder Needle Punks meet and try to reach some sort of consensus which will become the will of the gang.

Advancement- The only way to really get ahead in the Needle Punks is save up the $10,000 for a black market pharmosynth and be lucky enough to be on the right Trader's good side when one comes in to town. Most Needle Punks hope to make enough money by inventing some new drug cocktail which will become wildly popular and which they can sell at an incredible profit (until other people do a chemical analysis and figure out how to make it themselves).

With a pharmosynth, the Needle Punk no longer needs to buy drugs from the Needle Punk elders. Instead, the Needle Punk can start selling drugs to his or her juniors, and can even take on paying students. The pharmosynth pays for itself quickly, and also makes the Needle Punk more powerful at wave riding (gives +15 to Wave Riding skill rolls).

Population- There are around 400 Needle Punks in the city. Only about 20 own pharmosynths.

External Relations- The Needle Punk's reputation as a bunch of crazy, suicidal bastards carries far in the city. Just a description of wave riding is enough to convince most city residents that the Needle Punks are too unstable to be dealt with. Few groups seek alliances with the Needle Punks, and most are careful not to upset them, but they do know that the Needle Punks are the ones to go to when one has a special pharmaceutical need.

Drug Lords: The Needle Punks and the Drug Lords are at peace, but it is not an easy peace. The Needle Punks still hate the Drug Lords with a passion and the Drug Lords still see the Needle Punk's existence as an advertisement telling people it's okay to cross the Drug Lords. The Drug Lords would destroy the Needle Punks if they thought they could do so without making themselves vulnerable to their other enemies and the Needle Punks would attack the Drug Lords if they didn't think they'd be completely wiped out.

Enemies of the Drug Lords: The Night Shift, Hungry and Goods (and any other gang who happens to have a grudge against the Drug Lords) sees the Needle Punks as a group that might someday be prodded in to joining in an attack against the Drug Lords. They know that if they come around Needle Punk territory looking to buy a drug cocktail and mention "it's for fighting the Drug Lords" they are likely to get a significant discount.

Goods: The Needle Punks and Goods have a lot in common and there are many contacts between these two groups. Goods and Needle Punks often refer customers to each other (the Goods get the customers who want something safe and pleasant, the Needle Punks get the customers who want something dangerous and powerful).

Addicts: Needle Punks are often annoyed at the number of addicts who come in to Needle Punk territory looking for a fix or hoping to hide from some pusher gang they've pissed off. The Addicts know that the Needle Punks could fix them up if they wanted to, and some refuse to take no for an answer. The Needle Punks try not to be too hard on addicts: they know that they are victims of the Drug Lords too.

Black Market: Traders are a vital part of the Needle Punk's social system. Both a Needle Punk and a Trader enjoy and benefit from a working relationship. Traders often call on Needle Punks when someone sells them (or is trying to sell them) some stolen bottle of meds the Trader's never heard of. Needle Punks try especially hard to be the "favorite" of a Trader, hoping to be the first one called should a new pharmosynth find its way to the black market.

Nearby Groups: The Animalists are the most warlike gang nearby and the Needle Punks have had a number of battles with them. The Technophiles, Drakes and Mem Junkies nearby gangs that typically try to ignore the Needle Punks (and visa versa). The Drakes know that the Needle Punks are one of the few groups in the city that have any chance of surviving a Drake poisoning, and so the Drakes are especially careful not to step on Needle Punk toes. Christopher Street, center of the city's homosexual district, is nearby and quite a few people from that district are loyal customers of the Needle Punks.

Military Style- When Needle Punks find out they are going to be in a fight, they immediately inject themselves with a powerful batch of combat drugs (the dosage is usually based on how much danger they think they are in, since the more they give themselves the more likely they are to die from some side effect). The combat drugs take effect almost immediately, pumping up the Needle Punks, making them fearless, strong and immune to pain. The Needle Punks take out their poisoned syringes, and with great speed and ferocity they leap on and inject the enemy, hardly caring if they take a few injuries in the process. The injections usually cause immediate incapacitation, usually in a painful and dramatic way that will frighten those enemies that aren't hit.

Wave Riding- Uses INL. Prerequisites: Pharmacology (3), Needles (1).

Included in this skill are

-Detailed knowledge of the PC's own body's particular reactions to many pharmaceuticals.

-The ability to "feel" a side-effect coming before it hits.

-Lightning fast ability to choose and inject a drug to deal with a side effect before it kills or debilitates.

-The ability to consider pharmacological treatments that are literally "worse than the disease/"

Legitimate doctors do this to a very small degree: they might inject a drug to stimulate heartbeat, and also inject an anti-spasmodic to deal with the seizures that high doses of the heart drug are known to cause. Legitimate medicine's shallow exploration of this area of pharmacology is limited by the boundaries of the scientific method. When too many drugs are administered, the human body stops being an orderly system with reactions that are easy to predict. At the point that science stops being able to tell doctors what to do, the Needle Punks keep exploring further.

The PC can use wave riding on other people, but because the PC can not feel what the patient is feeling, the wave riding is at +20 difficulty. Needle Punks with the Body Control mental program get +7 to this skill.

If the PC survives a Wave Riding experience, the PC suffers from side effects lasting 2d6 hours. Roll once on the random side effects table for each 10 difficulty. For each 10 difficulty, the PC utilizes $20 worth of pharmaceuticals which must be replaced ASAP (or the PC suffers from -2/ea. on any Wave Riding or Pharmacology skill rolls).

If a PC fails a Wave Riding skill roll by 1-10 points, the PC is debilitated by seizures, unconsciousness, hallucinations/delusions, etc. for 24 hours but will not die. If the PC fails a Wave Riding skill roll by more than 10 points, death is quick and completely unavoidable.

    Easy (10): Survive 2 BLD damage and 20 difficulty side effects (in one round).

    Moderate (20): Survive 3 BLD damage and 30 difficulty side effects (in two rounds).

    Hard (30): Survive 6 BLD damage and 40 difficulty side effects (in three rounds).

    Legendary (40): Survive 8 BLD damage and 50 difficulty side effects (in four rounds).

Example: *Lenora the Needle Punk is in the middle of a battle when she gets stabbed in the shoulder with a shank. She can feel immediately that there is poison on the blade. She slinks off in to a corner to treat herself. Lenora takes stock of the oncoming symptoms of the poison and makes a Pharmacology roll to determine what drug or combination of drugs on her person can save her from the poison. The GM assigns a 20 difficulty and she is successful – to a degree. The GM rules that there is no treatment for this poison that is not, itself, lethal. This is no surprise to Lenora and she goes ahead and injects herself with the necessary drugs. The shooting pains in her chest which were her heart about to give up subside. Almost immediately, though, she starts seeing blind spots: blood is coagulating in her brain, shutting off blood and oxygen to different brain areas. She has only seconds to act before she loses the ability to think and the choked off parts of her brain start to die. The GM rules that the side effects of her cure are Stroke at 30 difficulty (something not quite as bad as the poison's Heart Attack at 40 difficulty). So, he sets the difficulty of her Wave Riding to 20. This is the difficulty to take potentially fatal side effects and treat them (and subsequent side effects from those treatments) until they are non-lethal and non-debilitating. Lenora makes her roll and beats the 20 difficulty. Her hand flies to her jacket, finding a powerful anti-coagulant and injecting it. Blood starts to spurt from her shoulder wound as coagulated blood throughout her body breaks down. This is just one of the many problems she has to deal with – she also feels a wave of light-headedness and nausea coming. Before she can fall unconscious and bleed to death (or choke on her vomit) she quickly administers several more drugs. She is confident that the side effects from the drugs she just injected will not pose a serious risk. The whole experience lasted three rounds (one for the initial Pharmacology roll, two for the Wave Riding roll). Lenora must roll twice on the random side effects table. She gets Sensitivity to Lights (which is good, since it is nighttime) and nosebleeds. She has also used $40 worth of pharmaceuticals (which gives her -4 to rolls until she replaces them). Her pupils dilated and blood streaming from her nose, she grabs a syringe of something nasty in each hand. She jumps back in to battle, pissed off, still high on Thor-O-Zine and looking for the bastard that stabbed her.*

Some Cocktails

Good Cocktails

These are cocktails that the Needle Punks do not sell on the black market because they know only a Needle Punk could survive the effects. These cocktails are useful because the side effects have a delayed reaction: the Needle Punk has some time to act before they must start Wave Riding. Wave riding is always a risk, the Needle Punks never use these cocktails without a good reason.

Athlitrix: Uses $30 worth of pharmaceuticals. Gives +6 END, +4 STH, +4 SPD, +3 AGY, +2 INCY for 2 hours. Within 4d6 minutes: Paralysis (40), Heart Attack (30).

BrainBomb: Uses $70 worth of pharmaceuticals. Gives +7 INL, +3 AWR, +3 AGY, +2 CHM, +2 WIL for 30 minutes. Within 2d6 minutes: Seizures (40), Hallucinations and Delusions (30).

MegaWar: Uses $45 worth of pharmaceuticals. Gives +10 to save vs. fear/pain/unconsciousness, +10 to simultaneous attacks, +2 AGY, +3 END, +3 STH, +2 SPD, +2 BLD, +4 INCY for 30 minutes. Within 3d6 minutes: Heart Attack (30), Anterograde Amnesia (30).

Psychrin: Uses $100 worth of pharmaceuticals. Gives +3 INL and +7 to any psychic skill roll for 10 minutes. Within 1d6 minutes: Stroke (30), Unconsciousness (20), Dysphoria (30).

Bad Cocktails

These are reserved for injecting in to enemies.

Confusimide: Uses $120 worth of pharmaceuticals. Within 2 rounds, the victim suffers from Obfuscating Hallucinations (30), Rage (30), Muscle Cramps (-10 AGY) and Confusion (-15 INL, -10 AWR). Victims of this drug typically stagger around screaming and attacking anyone they come across.

FryingFishAmine: Uses $30 worth of pharmaceuticals.   The victim immediately suffers from Seizures (20), Distracting Pain (40) and +10 to save vs. unconsciousness for 1 hour. The victim will suffer Pulmonary Arrest (30) within 5 minutes if medical attention is not given. The drug is designed to make for a horrible scene: the victim flops around on the ground screaming in pain, unable to be easily sedated or knocked out.

Killitin: Uses $40 worth of pharmaceuticals. This is what Needle Punks use in the rare occasions when they want a quick, silent and permanent take-down of an enemy. Within 1 round, the drugs cause Paralysis (30), Heart Attack (40), Pulmonary Arrest (30) and Unconsciousness (30).

Random Side Effects:

01-10: Shortness of Breath (-7 END)

11-20: Weakened Immune System (-7 to save vs. disease contraction and mortality)

21-30: Anemia (-4 END, -1 BLD)

31-40: Skin Rash (-7 to seduction rolls)

41-50: Sensitivity to Light (-7 to all actions/reactions in bright lights)

51-60: Headache (30 difficulty)

61-70: Nausea (will throw up anything in stomach at 20 difficulty)

71-80: Tinnitus (-7 to hearing based AWR rolls)

81-90: Vertigo (-10 to save vs. loss of balance)

91-00: Nosebleeds

The Needle Punks are usually able to hold their own against much larger groups. They inject the enemies with drugs that incapacitate but do not kill right away. The enemies can live to fight another day (after weeks or months of recovery) but only if their comrades seek treatment for them right away. Enemies may be screaming in pain, flailing with seizures or attacking their friends in a deranged psychotic state. Either way, when the enemies take time out to deal with (and try to save the lives of) their comrades, the Needle Punks have effectively incapacitated two or three enemies with a single strike.

Typical Weapon- A pair of syringes filled with a fast acting poison, one in each hand, is a common weapon for Needle Punks.

Turf- A roughly rectangular piece of turf with Washington Square Park as a bump sticking out on the East side. Needle Punk turf is South of 14th St., North of Houston St., East of 7th Ave. S, East of 5th St. in the area of the city known as Greenwich Village. Part of the Western side of Needle Punk territory coincides with the homosexual district. Washington Square park is a large park where many mentally ill and drug addicted homeless people live. The park features a large stone arch built at the beginning of the 20th century. There are many loft buildings in this part of town, especially on 14th Ave. on the North edge of the turf. Many of these buildings were built long ago for light manufacturing, then they were converted in to loft apartments, and now many of them are being converted back in to small industrial complexes. The abandoned New York University campus is directly to the East of Needle Punk turf.

Distinguishing Features- Younger Needle Punks can be recognized by rows of pre-filled syringed strapped to their bodies. The syringes are laid out this way so the Needle Punks always has them at hand, can instantly find and pull one off to use as a weapon or for self-medication. The syringes are often color-coded (in a color scheme that only the Needle Punk understands). Needle Punks also show many signs of poor health and long-term damage done to their bodies, including: pale skin with acne, sunken eyes, skinny (loss of fat and muscle tissue), missing teeth, thinning hair, slightly cloudy eyes. When the Needle Punks show much skin, needle marks all over their body (especially at the veins) can be seen. Older Needle Punks who have purchased pharmosynths have done away with the need for syringes (except as weapons). They wear the pharmosynth on their belt, and an IV travels from the pharmosynth (usually under their clothing) to a vein in the arm.

Symbols- The most common symbol of the Needle Punks is a pair of syringes.

Slang

Antagonist: n., a drug that blocks the action of another drug.

Cocktail: n., an admixture of drugs designed to have an effect that cannot be obtained with a single drug.

Half-Life: n., the amount of time it takes for the amount of drug in a bloodstream to be cut in half.

Homeostasis: n., the body's attempt to keep itself in balance.

Idiosyncratic: adj., very different from normal reaction to a drug (caused by unique physiological properties of the individual).

LD_{50}: n., the dose of a drug (usually expressed as an amount per kg of body weight) that will kill 50% of people.

Polyaddiction: n., addiction to self-regulating the body with multiple drugs.

Synergistic: adj., when the effects of drugs interact to create an effect greater than the sum of its parts (e.g. two doses of mild sedatives may interact to have a very strong, even lethal, sedative effect).

Wave Riding: v., the act of taking lethal doses of drugs and treating the deadly side-effects with more drugs.

Skills

Free Skills: Needles (1), Pharmacology (3), Wave Riding (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 4, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 7, MIL 8, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Special Skills: The special skill Wave Riding costs 15 skill points per level.

Income- $1,250 +$150/wk.

Special Equipment- PC has nearly unlimited access to syringes (the Needle Punks pool money and buy them by the crate). The PC starts with $5000 (black market value) worth of various pharmaceuticals in pre-loaded syringes. The PC has many that only have medicinal (or wave riding) value and close analogues of Amphetamines, Anesthetic (General), Anesthetic (Local), Antibiotics, Anti-Nauseant, Anti-Psychotic, Anti-Shock, Anxiolytic, Caffeine, Hallucinogen, Opiates, Sedative and Smart Drugs. The PC has drugs which will cause seizures, hallucinations and delusions, paralysis and pain, each at 50 difficulty to save.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Side-Effects: (Mandatory Disadvantage) At any given time, the PC is suffering from some side effect from self-experimentation with drugs. At the beginning of each adventure, roll to see what side effect the character is suffering from on the Random Side Effects table, see above.

Shortened Lifespan: (Mandatory Disadvantage) The PC's body has been damaged beyond its ability to repair and artificially aged by drug abuse. The drugs the PC has done so far will reduce the PC's lifespan by an average of 10 years. Each additional experience level that the PC spends using drugs regularly will cause the equivalent of one level of the Old disadvantage (see p.51).

Polyaddiction: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 7 Bonus Points. The PC is physiologically addicted to controlling their every body function with drugs (see Lifestyle, above). The PC must make a moderate difficulty Wave Riding roll every day to keep himself or herself alive over the course of the day. Quitting is not easy: going cold-turkey will kill the PC – the PC must spend at least 48 hours debilitated by side effects as they slowly come down and must make craving rolls at 20 difficulty to avoid starting using again (see Addiction, p.65).

Suggested Skills- Chemical Analysis, Diagnosis, Emergency Medicine, Needles, Poisons, Production Chemistry, Psychopharmacology, Street Drugs.

Suggested Equipment- Auto-Blood Test, Backup Heart, Body Control, Book: Pharmacology, First Aid Kit: Semiprofessional, Vital Armor.

Suggested Reading- Addiction (p.65), Black Market, City History: Old Times, Drug Effects (p.65).

Night Shift

In Brief- Young cops with gang-attitude. Refuse to become corrupt. Break the rules in order to punish criminals.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brave, honorable, willing to take on evil no matter how powerful it is, with a strong sense of justice.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- A hypocritical, xenophobic, arrogant, self-important lynch mob.

Other Names- NYPD, Rogue Cops, Children of Justice, the Blue Line.

Origin- As restoration peacekeeping forces left the city at the end of the Freedom Wars, a police force was quickly pieced together. With the rise of gated communities and corporate living centers outside of the city, many of the best police officers were courted and enticed to leave. The people who were brought in to replace them were more interested in getting benefited city government positions than they were in law and order. Corruption grew within the department. Soon there was a massive system of bribes in place, much like in many other government offices in the city. Promotions and hiring was based on bribes, not skills or job performance. Incidents such as skipping work, brutality and even theft from the public while on duty would be ignored if the supervisor was given a big enough bribe. Those who tried to fight the corruption were forced out: fired, framed, intimidated and sometimes even killed.

When citizens groups (made up of frightened shut-ins who felt a lack of protection from violent smash-and-grab burglars) complained to the city council, the police department's PR officer stated that the police were doing the best they could but there just weren't enough cops. The citizen's groups bought this story and crusaded for more cops. The city council knew that corruption and officers unwilling to do their jobs was the real problem, but they were eager to placate the citizen's groups. In order to get more cops, the city council lowered the starting pay of police officers to little more than minimum wage. They also drastically lowered the qualifications: all one needed was to be 18, have a high school diploma or GED, and go through a two week training course.

The city council hoped that an influx of new blood to the bottom and the top of the department might break the entrenched system of corruption. They did a complete restructuring of the department hierarchy to give them an excuse to recruit a new shift commander. They wanted someone with as few ties to city interests as possible, and their hiring decision shocked everyone: Marie Bell, a French expatriot and psychic whose only law enforcement experience had been a brief stint on a French anti-terrorist squad. The City Council wanted her because she was a perpetual wanderer, changing jobs and countries every few years and who did not seem interested in money or power.

The lowered requirements brought in hundreds of young new police officers. The new police officers were a vastly different breed: they had interests other than wealth, power and an easy job. They had ideals and they wanted a battle worthy of them. These were young people who probably would have joined gangs if they hadn't gotten in to the police department. These young police officers refused to participate in the system of corruption. Furthermore, they wouldn't let themselves be intimidated.

There was a polarization between the day shift and the night shift. The day shift officers knew that the day shift was safer than the night shift and they used their seniority to get transferred there. The night shift became a haven for the newer, non-corrupt cops. Horse Pantanwin, the old commander was in charge of the day shift and Marie Bell was in charge of the night shift.

The night shift cops quickly created a culture of disdain for police rules and bureaucracy and for the ineffective criminal justice system. They blatantly ignored things like probable cause, search warrants and Miranda rights. They knew that if they handed criminals over to the court system, the criminals would be let go with a fine (due to prison overcrowding). So, instead they started locking away criminals in holding cells in basements of their precinct offices. As time went on they became more open and blatant in their disregard for the justice system: they would often just beat up a criminal and leave them. The Night Shift's numbers, if not its tactics, was effective and life became incrementally safer for Well shut-ins. The new police department was so much better than the city council decided to take the struggling city fire department and make it a sub-department of the police. The Fire Department quickly conformed to the Day Shift/Night Shift paradigm. The old, corrupt firefighters who spent their working hours hanging out in bars and would never go in a burning building joined the day shift. The new, idealistic teenage fighters joined the night shift and actually fought fires. Before, the city had lived in fear of arsonists, but quickly arsons dropped by more than half (not counting unsanctioned training fires set by the young firefighters in abandoned buildings).

In the Old Times, the city Drug Lords would keep the police off their backs by means of generous bribes. When the Drug Lords consolidated in 2075 their attitude changed: they kept the police away by force of sheer intimidation alone. The new Night Shift was unwilling to bow down to intimidation, and officers started fighting with pusher gangs. The Drug Lords fought back, executing and forcefully addicting Night Shift officers. The effect was quite opposite than intended: the Night Shift made it their number one priority to hurt the Drug Lords by any means possible, and they became effective guerilla warriors, completely unfettered by rules or codes of ethics. Even worse, their taking on the Drug Lords, the largest military power in the city, made the Night Shift very popular, and even more young people started to join the group.

The Drug Lords were wary of full-scale warfare against the Night Shift: they didn't want to attract the attention of Federal Investigators, who had (for the most part) failed to recognize the existence of this new and powerful organized crime agency. The Night Shift backed the Drug Lords in to a corner, and the Drug Lords found that they had to respond with significant force or face the possibility of destruction. The Drug Lords ordered the fire bombing of one police stationhouse after another. Only the presence of the Firefighters and Marie Bell's precognitive powers spared the Night Shift from massive casualties. Marie Bell wanted to go to the city, state and federal government with pleas that they were fighting a losing war against organized crime, but Horse Pantanwin, the corrupt day shift officer, sabotaged her efforts. Before Marie could even complain, Horse told the city council that Marie was exaggerating the problem and that his detectives had determined that the firebombings were random acts, not committed by

committed by some organized crime agencies. Horse did this to save his job, but the effect was a major victory for the Drug Lords. Burned out of most of their precincts, the city police moved themselves to a precinct house in East Harlem which they found most easily defensible. Even the precinct houses which were not bombed were abandoned by officers who felt they were too vulnerable while in them.

The Night Shift also got in to wars with city gangs, and these wars were undoubtedly gang wars. So, the city began to think of the Night Shift as just another large gang in the city gang scene.

Timeline

1826- 200 police officers in New York.

1845- First police force made up of full-time professional police officers.

1857- City and State police officers battle each other on Broadway (see p.405).

1914- Police bomb squad forms.

1971- Officer Frank Serpico shot in the face during a drug bust, fellow officers do not call for help.

2058- Reconstruction committee organizes first post-Freedom War police force.

2064- Gated communities and corps lure away many good cops.

2065- Horse Pantanwin becomes head of the police force.

2074- NYPD reorganized, Marie Bell night shift commander.

2075- Drug Lords consolidate.

2078- Fire department incorporated in to the police department.

2078- Fire bombing of police precincts.

Joining- All a person needs to join the Night Shift is to be 18 or over, have a GED, pass a basic physical test, have a US birth certificate or a US work visa, have a relatively clean criminal record, and a medical record free from serious physical or mental illness. If the applicant meets these requirements, the person must invest a small amount in a VR course. The VR course takes about 2 weeks to complete, and teaches basic self-defense, criminal justice, police codes and procedures, and tips for dealing with different situations.

Lifestyle- The majority of Night Shift cops are on foot patrol. Any given night there are about 800 officers on foot patrol, that's about 200 teams which are each assigned an approximately 10 city block area to patrol. The officers are supposed to walk around this area looking for anyone doing anything illegal. What they actually do is not as predictable: they may stay in their assigned area, or they might leave to go somewhere that they think something exciting might happen or where an enemy might be. They have free subway passes and can be frequently be found riding in the subways looking for trouble. They rarely tell the dispatcher where they are going. Even when they stay in their patrol areas, they do not passively walk around waiting for trouble: they interrogate homeless people, break in to abandoned buildings and peer in to windows trying to find crimes they can stop and criminals they can catch. They take their breaks whenever they feel like it (instead of at scheduled times) and they often spend their breaks eating in fast food restaurants where they know they will receive a discount or free food.

When a riot or natural disaster happens, or when a wanted fugitive is loose in the city, the Night Shift start doing what the dispatchers tell them to. The dispatchers, at the direction of the Sub-Lieutenants or Marie Bell herself, put the patrol officers exactly where they need them. Officers might be told to comb through the streets, checking every possible hiding place for a fugitive, or form a net to encircle and enclose upon a known enemy.

Whenever they are on duty, Night Shift officers keep their radios on, waiting for a call to investigate some emergency call or assist a fellow officer. Most Night Shift officers keep their radios on during the hours they aren't working and are ready to go at a moment's notice if it sounds like they are needed.

Emergency calls are routed through dispatch. Dispatchers must make quick decisions as to how urgent a call is (do they send a patrol car or ask the nearest foot patrol team to jog over?) and how many officers are needed to handle the situation. An officer who calls in for help always gets at least one patrol car and every officer nearby comes running.

Besides patrol officers, there are several divisions dedicated to different aspects of keeping the city safe. The Fire Squad fights fires and investigates arsons, the Bomb Squad deals with explosives, the Psychic Response Team deals with psychics and the Investigative Division solves mysteries deemed worth solving. Ordinary officers respect their elders, but they feel free to try their hand at subduing the psychic, grabbing a fire extinguisher to put out a fire or solving a crime. Many foot patrol officers quit patrolling for the night when they come across some mystery that interests them.

Night Shift officers hang out together a lot when off-duty. Many can be found hanging out in the lobby of police headquarters, chatting and drinking coffee. There are several bars near police headquarters where they go after their shifts to unwind and tell stories. Officers may tag along with their friends on patrol even though it is their day off. Some think all this off-duty volunteering marks the officers as obsessed, but the pattern is much like that of other Well gangs: the Night Shift is their job, their family and their hobby, and so they spend up to 100 hours a week (in various levels of activity) at it.

Social Structure- At the head of the police is Horse Pantanwin, the senior shift commander (who answers to the mayor and the city council) and Marie Bell, the Night Shift commander. Since Horse is Marie's senior, he can give her orders but he doesn't have the authority to fire her. The staff services (public relations officer, department counsel, etc.) usually work during the day and are thus under the control of Horse.

There are six major departments: Investigative (who investigate crimes deemed worthy of investigation, such as murder, missing persons, etc.), Dispatch (who take calls and coordinate officers), Fire (who fight fires and investigate arson), Psychic Response Team (a small but prestigious team that deals with psychics), the bomb squad (another small department) and the Patrol Department (the largest department, which has patrol cars and foot patrols). There are other departments, but the members are all corrupt, the office spaces have been taken over by the night shift long ago and they are usually referred to jokingly (e.g. "Oh yeah, I'll turn that over to the Gang Squad right away.") Internal Affairs is one of these divisions: it doesn't actually to anything, and its employees pay regular bribes to Horse Pantanwin for their cushy jobs.

Marie Bell (Night Shift Commander)

Attributes- AGY 9, AWR 18, CHM 14, END 7, INL 14, SPD 9, STH 10, WIL 17, BLD 4, BDY 3, INCY 2.

Appearance- Marie is in her late thirties. She is short, slightly overweight, with long brown hair worn in a bun (often with chopsticks). She has many piercings. She dresses casually, wearing dark-blue silk blouses and black slacks, accenting it with plaid flannel jackets when it gets cold. She walks to and from work every day, carrying a canvas knapsack with her. She speaks clearly but with a strong French accent.

Social Status- Marie is the new commander of the Night Shift. She only has one superior on the force (Horse Pantanwin) although even he doesn't have the power to fire her (only the mayor and the city council can do that). Marie is the one person in a position of power who respects the Night Shift and tries to help and protect them. Still, she is often quite critical of their methods and is generally considered a friendly outsider to the siblinghood of the Night Shift. Although not beloved, she is respected by the Night Shift. She also gets along reasonably well with the corrupt Day Shift people: she has adopted a "live-and-let-live" policy which they respect (even if she can't always get her officers to abide by it). Although they were quite unhappy when she showed up, Marie has convinced them that it could be a lot worse.

History- Marie was born in 2042, a time of great turmoil and ecological changes. She was only eight when the Freedom Wars began. She lived in the mountains for some time, and when the wars ended her parents returned to civilization and became successful businesspeople. She spent her teenage years in a private girl's school, and spent some time in college studying political science. She soon dropped out and wandered around Europe doing odd jobs and looking for psychic training. Marie did well at everything she tried, and she was constantly being hounded by corporations who wanted her to join. However, after a few years at each job she would grow bored and try something else. She eventually got her license as a psychic and worked briefly on a French anti-terrorist team. During her years wandering around Europe she married and divorced thee rime, giving birth to two children. Eventually she grew bored with Europe and moved to America. A net search uncovered the Night Shift Commander position. Marie had little knowledge of law enforcement, but the position called for someone with "fresh ideas about running a police department" so she applied, and was surprised when she got the position. As she came on board, so did a bunch of new young cops who were ready to shake up the department. Interested to see how they would change the department, Marie didn't try to interfere with the new Night Shift.

Personality- She likes to joke with people she likes and has made almost everyone on the Night Shift laugh at some time or another. She tries to be friendly and easy-going, but like a parent she is not afraid to be harsh when she is displeased. She is slightly eccentric: sometimes forgetting important meetings or saying inappropriate things.

Motivations- Marie always tries to do the best at any job she takes, and in this case she really likes the young Night Shift officers. Their methods are not the methods she would use, but she admires their energy and courage. As long as the job holds her interest she is completely loyal to it, and when she grows bored she plans to move on. Marie worries that the Drug Lords might try to threaten her two sons and she tries to keep their location secret.

Methods- Marie sees her job as mostly trying to keep a lid on the chaos of the Night Shift. Her main way of doing this is in promoting young Night Shift officers who she feels are intelligent and mature enough to keep their fellows in line. When she has to use her authority, she uses the Self Image Projection skill to make herself appear as tough and intimidating as possible and she dresses down the person in front of as many witnesses as possible. Marie is always keeping her mind open to precognitive visions of dangers to the Night Shift (especially another bombing attempt by the Drug Lords). She will rush in to the office from her nearby apartment any time she has a vision.

Special Skills- Clairsentience (2), Precognition (3), Mind Reading (2), Emotional Attack (2), Self Image Projection (1), Suggestion (2), Bomb Disarming (2), Demolitions (1).

Each of the six major departments has a separate day shift and night shift, each with a lieutenant and sub-lieutenants. Most of the lieutenants and sub-lieutenants of both shifts are corrupt bureaucrats loyal to the day shift who don't give a damn what the officers under their control do. Rather than try to get them thrown out, Marie Bell ignores them and communicates directly with the loyal sub-lieutenants and with group supervisors.

Group supervisors are senior officers within a group of officers. They have the same duties as everyone else in their group, but also have the additional duties of giving assignments to, supervising and writing performance reports on the other members of their group. Only the lieutenants and Marie has the ability to officially reprimand or fire officers.

In the lower ranks, especially in the large patrol department, the social structure of the night shift resembles that of many gangs. Administrative punishments and commendations are uncommon. When officers do things that go against the values of the Night Shift, punishment comes unofficially from other officers. These punishments can be as subtle as a lack of trust and respect or as blatant as being publicly yelled at or even beaten up. Similarly, when an officer does something good, word gets around and the officer enjoys additional respect and status.

Advancement- Among the officers who consider themselves allied with the Night Shift, seniority and heroism is respected. Those who are on the streets and survive for a long time and thought of as wise and deserving of deference. There are only a limited number of promotions to go around, but Marie tries her best to give anyone who has had a good record for more than two years either a promotion, or a 10% salary increase, or if she can't do that some sort of award and public recognition. If she can't do anything else, she takes the officer out to lunch. Marie Bell handles all promotions personally, she typically is told by one of her supervisors that someone deserves a promotion, then she looks in to the person's service record and makes it a point to meet and talk to them at least once (to size them up).

When a Night Shift officer does something especially heroic or otherwise spectacular (saving a fellow officer single-handedly, finding a serial killer, taking on a pusher gang, etc.) word gets around as the story is told among the Night Shift. The officer is afforded extra respect by his or her peers and is much more likely to be mentioned to Marie as a possible candidate for promotion.

Starting Weekly Income Per Position
Foot Patrol Officer: $250/wk.
Fire Division Officer: $250/wk.
Car Patrol Officer: $275/wk.
Investigative Division Detective: $300/wk.
Foot Patrol Supervisor: $315/wk.
Fire Division Supervisor: $315/wk.
Psychic Response Team Officer: $350/wk.
Investigative Division Supervisor: $350/wk.
Car Patrol Supervisor: $375/wk.
Bomb Squad Officer: $400/wk.
Psychic Response Team Supervisor: $500/wk.
Bomb Squad Supervisor: $550/wk.
Sub-Lieutenant (any department): $600/wk.
Lieutenant (any department): $1000/wk.
Shift Chief (currently Marie Bell): $1500/wk.
Senior Shift Chief (currently Horse Pantanwin): $2000/wk.

Hot Jobs
The most desired and sought-after promotions in the Night Shift are in to the following three positions:

Bomb Squad Officer- PC gets Bomb Disarming (2) free. PC gets a free Shield: Blast (p.150) and Electronics Repair Kit (p.135).

Investigative Division Officer- PC gets Forensic Pathology (1), Interrogation (1), Internet Browsing (1) free.

Psychic Response Team- PC gets a PRT Skin (p.119) and

Jackson Morales (Police Quartermaster)
Level Three Trader
Attributes- AWR 12, CHM 9, END 5, INL 14, SPD 8, STH 4, WIL 7, BLD 3, BDY 2, INCY 1.

Appearance- Tall, thin older man with mostly Caucasian features. He wears glasses, a shirt and tie, and has curly grey hair.

Social Status- In power, Jackson Morales rivals anyone else on the force, including Horse Pantanwin. He is a Lieutenant who answers directly to Horse Pantanwin. With the help of a few loyal helpers he runs the department evidence room and supply room, and he is responsible for ordering and receiving every supply the department has, from nightsticks to pens. He controls the disbursement of supplies to the department, and if he doesn't like someone then they don't get any supplies. He has made himself quite wealthy by making many under-the-table deals. He also works the political system quite well and has ruined the careers of several officers who have attempted to circumvent his control over supplies. Although he would never want himself associated with black market traders, that is his main occupation and he is one of the biggest, busiest and wealthiest traders in the city.

History- Jackson joined the force in 2060. After only a few months as an officer, he was bitten by a rat and contracted an incurable disease. He was forced to give up active duty, and was transferred to being a clerk in one of the evidence rooms. He quickly started participating in the illegal sales of drugs and other things taken from the evidence room, and he used the money to buy himself promotions. Eventually, as his superiors retired, he became the head quartermaster. Jackson felt hostility from the new Night Shift officers and so he decided to change the way things were done. He put an end to selling drugs, and rather than selling non-drug items on the black market he started selling them to the officers. He convinced the officers that it was okay for them to buy confiscated weapons, armor, etc. because they would use them to fight crime. Soon, Jackson had become the department's official black market trader: officers would go to him to buy, sell, or trade confiscated goods. The consolidation of all the precinct houses in to one fortress has been a blessing for Jackson: rather than trying to control an empire from afar, he can personally watch over his hoard of evidence and police supplies.

Personality- Jackson considers himself smarter than most people, and he makes a regular habit of talking to people as if they are idiots. He is a man with few friends who does not expect to be liked but he does expect to be respected, especially when he is in "his kingdom."

Motivations- Jackson has an HDNA auto-immune virus which there is no cure for. His health is currently fairly good, but it could get worse quickly if he is not careful. Jackson uses the money he makes to import the best drugs that can slow the virus. He is saving up money, thousands per month, hoping to someday buy a new body and have his mind transferred in to it.

Methods- Jackson avoids taking sides in the struggle between the Night Shift and the Day Shift. He tries to be an honest and fair trader, and to make each customer feel he is "on their side." He is very organized, spends hours a day in the evidence room sorting and cataloguing, and knows his inventory inside-out (one reason his assistants never try to steal from him). He is quite vengeful when he feels crossed, though he avoids physical confrontation.

Special Skills- Trading (3).

Population- There are about 1,800 people who consider themselves true "Night Shift" officers (even though a few of them work on the day shift). For those who consider the Night Shift a gang, this makes them the third largest gang in the city (below the Skin Borgs and Orphans). Of the 1,800 Night Shift officers, 1000 are on foot patrol, 70 are in 20 patrol cars, 450 are in the fire division, 250 are in the investigative division, 12 are in the PRT and 18 are in the bomb squad.

Aurelia Lepe (Night Shift Lieutenant of the Fire Division)
Level Four Night Shift
Attributes- AGY 9, AWR 18, CHM 14, END 7, INL 14, SPD 9, STH 10, WIL 17, BLD 4, BDY 3, INCY 2.

Appearance- Aurelia appears to be in her mid-twenties. She is tall and thin with Hispanic features and short blonde hair. She dresses in tailored black suits and wears sunglasses nearly everywhere.

Social Status- Aurelia is the Lieutenant in charge of the Fire Division during the night shift. She is one of the few Lieutenants loyal to the ideals of the Night Shift (if not to Marie Bell). She is respected by the officers under her. Even though many dislike her as a person and feel she is selfish, they do know that she does a good job advocating for the department.

History- Aurelia was a young firefighter in the city's floundering fire department. She was corrupt, but spent her time actually fighting fires. When the fire department was reorganized as a sub-department of the police, she made a bid for power. She ratted out her supervisors, giving the city council evidence she had collected about their corruption. Now that there were management positions available, she appealed directly to Marie Bell to be given a management position. Marie decided to take a chance on Aurelia and give make her a lieutenant. Fearing reprisal from corrupt Fire Division members, Aurelia surrounded herself with the young new recruits and she soon found herself taking pride in their willingness to fight fires. She championed for them, making appeals directly to the city council to get them the best equipment (to the detriment of the other divisions of the police department).

Personality- Aurelia is spoiled but patient. She is used to getting her way but she is not fickle: when she wants something she keeps wanting it. She has little patience for subordinates, but finds powerful people genuinely fascinating. Aurelia doesn't get very close to anyone and never talks about her home life while at work.

Motivations- Aurelia fills her days with the relentless, unexamined pursuit of whatever she happens to want. Aurelia wants respect, money, comfort, a powerful position and for her fire division to do well. Aurelia likes hunting down arsonists an takes pride whenever her division catches one. Aurelia also takes pride in the automobile she owns and she spends hours cleaning it, tuning it up and adding on special parts. Aurelia is married to a VR addict who she cares about deeply and who worries about he when she is at work.

Methods- As a child, Aurelia would gain the praise of her parents by ratting out her brothers and sisters, even if that meant lying and making up bad things they had done. Aurelia got everything she really wanted and as she grew up she learned patience but her methods remained the same. When someone is in her way, she tries to get them in trouble. If possible she will use the truth to get a person in trouble, and she records all her conversations (even with friends). When the truth is not available, Aurelia will lie outright, trusting that she will be believed over her opponent. Aurelia would never use violence (even performed by another at her suggestion) except in self-defense.

Special Skills- Driving (3), Offensive Driving (2), Mechanics (3).

Special Equipment- Aurelia has a Car: New with Bullet Proofing, Fire Suppression Grenades, a Floodlight, GPS, Intelligent Suspension, Live Tires, Mirrored Windows, a Nightvision Windshield, Ram Spikes and a Theft Alarm: Aggressive.

External Relations- The Night Shift starts wars over relatively small transgressions and it is very hard for peace to be made. They also like to harass and pick fights with any gang known to commit a lot of crimes, such as Dragons (vandalism), Boarders (trespassing), Freaks (multiple crimes), Needle Punks (controlled substances), Drakes (selling poisons), Crackers (hacking) and Water Rats (petty theft). The police station is close enough to Skin Borg territory that the Night Shift has had several battles with them and the Night Shift is always on guard when dealing with the Skin Borgs. They also heavily harass non-gang members who commit crimes such as Hunters (assault), Traders (selling stolen goods), Addicts (multiple crimes), Gamblers (conning people out of money), Jacks (multiple crimes), Sex Workers, Runners (transporting stolen goods) and Thieves. Despite this general animosity, individual officers will often find themselves working with members of any of these groups to fight some greater evil.

Day Shift: The Night Shift has a constant rivalry with the day shift. This rivalry rarely turns violent, but there are constant attempts by either side to get the other in trouble. Two things keep a full-scale war from developing: First, Marie Bell and Horse Pantanwin have a live-and-let-live attitude towards each other, they are both content to let the other shift go on acting as it has been. Second, both shifts would be in trouble if there was a serious federal investigation of their activities.

Drug Lords: The Night Shift is in a constant and bloody war against the Drug Lords. This war has been going on as long as the Night Shift has been around. Both sides want to kill as many members of the other as possible and will try to disrupt the other side's activities in any way possible.

Enemies of the Drug Lords: For anyone else who is currently at war with the Drug Lords, the Night Shift will "look the other way" about that group's activities. This is the closest the Night Shift comes to making alliances with other groups. They even tend (depending on what mood they are in) to ignore Goods they catch selling drugs or Hungry who rob liquor stores. Often their attitude is: as long as you don't do it in front of an officer, it's okay."

Military Style- Night Shift officers typically outnumber their enemies, and their fighting style is designed to minimize the possibility of officers getting hurt. They try not to fight until they outnumber the enemy, they will retreat in to alleys or abandoned buildings (where they can beat off anyone trying to come through) while they call for backup. When they outnumber an enemy, they typically try to surround them in tight circles, spray them with tear gas and beat them with nightsticks until they lie down on their stomachs. Then officers pin the enemy down with their knees, wrench their arms behind their backs and handcuff them.

When the Night Shift are outnumbered and backup will not appear in time, the Night Shift stand back to back and try to form a wedge with their shields that they can use to push through to safety. Night Shift officers are given orders to retreat by dispatchers all the time: typically they ignore them, but when they are outnumbered following orders is a good way to save face while running away.

Typical Weapon- A nightstick is the normal weapon for the Night Shift officer. Many officers tie leather straps with nails or metal spikes on them around their nightsticks. Police officers are not allowed to carry guns (the city council believes that there are no guns in the city and say that should any ever show up the National Guard can be called).

Turf- Police headquarters is a large building that takes up most of the block of 128th Street and 2nd Avenue. This building was originally a hospital, built in the 2040s over what was once Harlem River Park. This building is the only stationhouse still in regular use by the city police. There are a few stationhouses scattered throughout the city that weren't burned. Many have been broken in to and looted, but the police still do a little bit of upkeep (keep the light bulbs replaced, etc.) in case they ever need to use them in an emergency.

The stationhouse has several tactical advantages. It is the largest building around, with lookouts posted on the roof. Every other lot nearby has either been demolished or contains abandoned buildings (which also contain Night Shift lookouts). Basically, nobody can approach the building without being seen. In front of the building, the Night Shift has dug a short (three foot) trench in front of the building, then laid boards over it. If enemies should arrive in vehicles (such as drug lord dagger teams on motorcycles) the boards can be quickly removed.

The building has an underground garage where police vehicles are kept, fuelled and maintained by a tiny mechanical staff. Towards the rear of the building there are basement service rooms which have been converted in to holding cells (and which the Night Shift uses as a makeshift prison). There are five floors to the building, with a lot of locked offices that nobody ever uses. Horse and Marie both have offices on the top floor, as do the lieutenants. The actual division offices, with meeting rooms, training gyms, shower and locker rooms, and offices for the sub-lieutenants, are on the lower floors. In the lobby, vendors are allowed to bring in food carts and there are several vending machines, and a lot of Night Shift officers can be found hanging out in the lobby at any given time of day having a snack.

Distinguishing Features- Night Shift members wear cheap dark blue uniforms with chrome buttons and yellow "NYPD" lettering, black leather boots, and gold-colored badges in clear plastic envelopes on hips, chests or on a chain around the neck. Night Shift officers also adorn their uniforms with other add-ons, mostly military surplus: camo jackets and hats, non-issued armor and helmets, web belts, etc.

Symbols- The color blue, the letters NYPD (especially when yellow), the kite-shield shape of a badge or the phoenix found on the NYPD badge.

Slang- The Night Shift uses a lot of radio codes, even when they are not communicating on the radio.

10-4: Acknowledged.

10-10: Investigate.

10-13: Officer in danger.

10-71: Citywide emergency.

10-97E: Mentally ill person.

Perp: N., perpetrator, the person who committed the crime.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 7, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 7, MIL 7, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 7, THIE 8, SOC 6, STRT 7.

Income- $2,000 +$250/wk.

Special Equipment- Free Cellphone (Used), Nightstick, NYPD Uniform, Pepper Spray, Radio, Subway Pass. If the PC pays for his or her own Geoinfo Goggles, the PC can get the Cop Data Chip for free.

Special Bonus Characteristics- Choose one of the following Night Shift positions:

Day Shift Officer (Gives 4 Bonus Points)- Occasionally, the management asks a new cadet (as a favor), to join the day shift instead of the Night Shift. The disadvantage is that the PCs will have fewer comrades available as backup during working hours, and they can expect nothing more than hostility from their supervisors.

Foot Patrol Officer (Costs 0 Bonus Points)- The character is assigned to a small group to patrol a part of the city on foot. This is how most officers start.

Car Patrol (Costs 5 Points)- The character has been randomly assigned to a small group of officers who drive around in pairs in old used automobiles, answering the most urgent cars. The PC will be rotated out of this shift (and probably back in to foot patrol) in about 6 months. PC gets Driving (1) free. PC makes $275/wk. income.

Fire Division Officer (Costs 0 Points)- The PC is a member of the fire suppression and investigation division, what was once the Fire Department. The PC is expected to prevent any crime, but is specifically trained and equipped to fight fires and investigate arsons. The PC gets the following free equipment: Fire Axe (p.151), Gas Mask (p.118), Fire Suit (p.118), and 4 Fire Suppression Grenades (p.136) +1/wk.

Suggested Skills- Club, First Aid, Immobilization, Interrogation, Law: Basic, Law: Criminal, Self-defense Weapons, Street Drugs, Tracking.

Suggested Equipment- Dog: Trained-Attack, Entry Tool, Flashlight: Large, Geoinfo Goggles, Hearing Aide, Lockpick: Auto, Kevlar Vest, Plastic Restraints, Sterilization Spray, Tear Gas Keyholer.

Suggested Reading- Black Market, City Government, Colin, Criminals, Drugs, Employment: Illegal, National Guard, Riots.

Horse Pantanwin (Day Shift Commander)
Level Four Freelancer
Attributes- AGY 6, AWR 12, CHM 9, END 6, INL 14, SPD 4, STH 11, WIL 12, BLD 3, BDY 5, INCY 1.

Appearance- Horse is a tall man (6'3") with a large chest. He has salt-and-pepper grey hair, combed back. He always wears a grey suit with a red tie. He looks like a cross between Middle Eastern and East Indian, with dark skin and a large nose.

History- The child of immigrant parents, Horse grew up in the city and worked in construction during the Freedom Army occupation. After the reconstruction he joined the police and rose quickly through the ranks, bribing his managers for promotions.

Social Status- Horse is the senior person in the city police department and is the commander of the day shift. He can give orders to anyone in the department and has the power to fire anyone on the day shift.

Motivations- Horse cares little about law and order (his thinking is that the Night Shift will handle keeping the city safe). He comes to work most days, but what he does in his office is manage a massive web of kickbacks (a percentage of every corrupt officer's paycheck ends up going to Horse) and spend hour issuing statements (most of which are downright lies) designed to placate the city council, mayor's office and citizen's groups. Horse's main interest is in preserving the status quo. He wants to stay in power, to continue receiving money and to avoid the attentions of federal law enforcement.

Methods- Horse has been accruing political power since he joined the department in 2058. He has dirt on almost anyone that there is to have dirt on. He will directly threaten to "make life difficult" for people who get in his way and he has several loyal lieutenants who will carry out these threats for him. He has never killed anyone or had anyone killed, and he probably never will (the risk is too great). When dealing with people in person, he tried to use his size to intimidate them.

Orphans

In Brief- Once kids in an orphanage who revolted against abusers, now adults sworn to protect children.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, wary, brave, dutiful, at every age they are willing to die to protect those younger.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Paranoid, cultish, homophobic, unreasonably afraid of adults, willing to turn small children in to soldiers.

Other Names- Babysitters, Adult Killers, Juvies.

Origin- Directly after the Freedom Wars, there were thousands of orphaned children wandering around in refugee camps unattended. As soon as the cleanup of the city ended, a block of land was dedicated to a home for orphans. The place was run much like the refugee camps. Kids slept on cots in warehouses and ate poor quality food. There was only minimal education and no activities outside the orphanage. The orphanage was little more than a prison for children. Within a few years, the government re-instituted the foster home system (wherein families could make extra money by taking in orphans and other wards of the state) and juvenile prisons. The state even created a novel system where children with parents in prison could live with their parents in prison (in special, electronically segregated areas). The population of the Orphanage decreased.

Corruption among government workers grew in the 2060s at the same time that people were leaving the city in droves to join gated communities and corporate living centers. The orphanage's most dedicated and altruistic workers either left the city or were forced from the orphanage by corrupt orphanage employees. Social workers who tried to uncover corruption were accused of abusing the children, most were fired and a few ended up in prison. By 2065, the last of the non-corrupt employees had been forced out, and there was nobody left to protect the children from those who wanted to abuse them.

Most of the orphanage's 50 or so employees only wanted to get paid for doing nothing, and they spent as little time in the orphanage as possible. A minority of employees, though, were there because they liked to abuse the children, emotionally, physically or sexually. Some of the employees even let city pedophiles pay to get access to children. The children in the Orphanage, from the youngest to the oldest, lived in fear of the adults. They believed that they would be murdered if they tried to tell anyone. The children who were old enough escaped and lived homeless on the streets, leaving the younger children with nobody to protect them.

This miserable state of affairs continued for about four years until the children started having secret meetings. They talked about fighting back against their abusers. They had worried that if they did anything to the adults they would be sent to prison, but some of the children in the orphanage had been in prison and they said that it was better than living in the orphanage. The children snuck out of the orphanage in small groups, stole railroad spikes from nearby railroad construction sites, then sharpened them by rubbing them vigorously on concrete. They stood up their cots and practiced leaping on and stabbing them. They had to do this in the few spare hours that adults were not watching or taking advantage of them.

On September 8, 2069, the children attacked. One at a time they hunted down and slaughtered the orphanage employees. Some employees managed to escape, a few who hadn't been especially cruel to the children were allowed to flee, many more heard about the trouble and never came in to work. The children buried the bodies in the orphanage's (unused) garden plot (this is what one of the adults had threatened to do to them).

The police come in but are unable to get past a line of armed children. After several day's standoff, police chief Horse Pantanwin orders his people to retreat. He sends out press reports saying that the riot has been put down and orphanage employees have been put back in charge. The orphanage employees play along: they don't want to risk getting caught in an investigation, so they simply stop going in to work. Some get other jobs, but most stay on the payroll. The Orphans were left to survive by themselves. Fortunately, the adults had made them do most of the labor around the Orphanage, so they knew how to do just about everything: cook meals, take deliveries of supplies, do laundry. Anything they didn't already know how to do they were able to figure out.

The years after this were a time of prosperity for the Orphans. They lived in fear of being caught by the police, but the police never came. They cared for each other in every way the adults didn't, and they made the Orphanage in to a fortress that no person could invade. People around the neighborhood quickly learned not to try to enter the orphanage. The Orphans created their own culture, a culture based on the duty of everyone to protect those smaller than them. They started cutting off the end of their little fingers as a symbol of their devotion to this duty. As the children grew and became older, some left the Orphanage to go live normal lives, but the majority stayed in the Orphanage to continue raising and protecting the children of the Orphanage. Like the children, the adult Orphans violently protected the children and each other from invaders. Mostly this took the form of fighting against kid gangs, cults and lone would-be exploiters of kids.

The Orphans were largely unaware of the gang scene until they started to hear rumors of a gang called the Skin Borgs which had been expanding South and would soon engulf Orphan territory. Early encounters with adult Orphans were not hopeful (the Orphans were largely crushed). Then the Skin Borgs made a massive push in to Orphan territory. They were able to make it in to the buildings of the Orphanage (this is the first and only time any group has gotten this far). The Skin Borg claim that they thought the Orphans were some cult, that the children were languishing and the Skin Borgs planned to take them and raise them as Skin Borgs. Many Orphans believe that the Skin Borgs wanted to kidnap Orphan children, use them as hostages and force the Orphans to give up their turf. Either way, the Skin Borgs were demoralized by the ferocity with which even the small children attacked them. The Skin Borgs were unwilling to fight back against small children and were forced to retreat without taking any prisoners. The Orphans were shaken and frightened by the sophistication and strength of the Skin Borgs. Seeking some means to protect themselves, they made a compact with the Purists and Hummingbirds (two other gangs at war with the Skin Borgs) to blockade the Skin Borgs at 145th Street.

Timeline

2056- Children wander parentless in refugee camps.
2057- City orphanage founded
2059- Foster home system reinstated.
2065- Last of the "good" employees leave.
2069- Children attack and kill abusive employees.
2076- First "revolt" Orphans turn 18, stay in the orphanage.
2079- Skin Borgs invade Orphanage.
2079- Alliance with Hummingbirds and Purists.

Joining- Most likely, the PC was one of the orphanage children who manufactured weapons, learned how to use them, and ultimately slaughtered the abusers. After the revolt, the PC had no authority figure and only a sense of duty kept him or her in-line. As a child, the PC helped to create a shared culture among the Orphans, along with duties and traditions. The PC would have been one of the first to have his or her finger severed. When the PC grew old enough, he or she started venturing outside of the Orphanage to learn about the city and its many possibilities, but the PC always came back to the Orphanage to protect the children there.

Orphans become "adults" in the eyes of the gang when they choose to declare themselves adults. Most Orphans become adults somewhere between fifteen and eighteen. It is a solemn event when an Orphan declares adulthood. The Orphan must have the end of the little finger of one hand cut off. Some Orphans do this themselves, others need friends to help. After cutting off the finger, the Orphan writes his or her name on a piece of paper and sticks it in the box from which leaders are chosen. Once an Orphan is an adult, he or she is expected to fight in gang wars and stands a small chance each day of being chosen at random to be the leader of the Orphans.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has officially declared himself or herself an adult within the Orphans. The PC is legally an adult and in on public assistance, but he or she still lives inside or nearby the Orphanage. The PC is one of the oldest of the Orphans, and has participated in every war or battle the Orphans have been in. The PC has been out in the city long enough to become familiar with the adult world of the streets.

Lifestyle- The Orphan culture was created by children, and it tends to place childhood in the center of everything. Orphans swear an oath to protect anyone smaller than them, and they cut off part of their little finger to prove their commitment to this oath. Even very young Orphans are willing to die to protect anyone smaller than them. The Orphans do not only protect other Orphans, they will protect anyone. "Bigger" and "smaller" are fairly simple ideas within the Orphanage, but in the city at large they become more complicated (e.g. a Colin in a child's body, or a very small person with an automatic weapon bullying much larger people). Orphans must trust their own gut in deciding how best to uphold their oath. Even outside of the Orphanage, the oath continues to be the guiding principle of their lives. The oath compels them to stay within the orphanage and protect the younger Orphans, even when they could move on and do something more ambitious with their lives.

Orphans take the oath as soon as they can be reasonably expected to understand what it means. They know that although they have made a sacrifice, they are being paid back by the protection of those bigger than them in the community. A six year old might risk her life to protect a baby, but that six year old knows that some twelve year old would risk his life to protect her. Adult Orphans, who have nobody bigger to protect them, feel that they are paying back the debt they owe to the community that raised them.

Orphans spend most of their time watching over children. A group of young adults can be seen in every corner of the Orphanage hanging out, talking, sparring, drinking, flirting, etc. Having grown up with total freedom, they are slow to impose rules or discipline. They keep half an eye out on the kids and only interfere if the kids seem in immediate danger of serious injury. There are no rules, the adult simply stop (usually by words, but by force if necessary) anything that they don't like. Children are allowed to fight, for instance, and only stopped if they start seriously damaging each other. Most of the time the adults have little work to do because the children generally watch over each other, older children keeping younger ones out of trouble. Orphans are allowed to get up and go to sleep whenever they want. There are no shared mealtimes: hungry children scrounge from the kitchen. Children are allowed to be as dirty and unkept as they please (so long ads they do not become unhealthy). The whole Orphanage is a mess: nobody cleans anything up unless it is issuing noxious odors. The mess is only limited by the fact that the Orphans have few physical belongings to leave laying around. Small children are not allowed to leave the Orphanage by themselves, adolescents are sometimes allowed to leave if they travel in groups.

Despite the free-reign the children are given, deaths and serious illness are rare in the orphanage and most young Orphans grow up to be stable, mature and responsible adults. Orphan children grow up tough and hardy, when they do become injured or ill an adult notices and bring them to the clinic. The clinic is kept well stocked and operated by Orphans who have trained themselves in medicine. The children also tend to protect each other: the oath is ingrained in them so strongly that there is virtually no bullying or victimization of any kind going on in the Orphanage.

Besides the duty to protect smaller children, the Orphans also have a duty to learn how to defend themselves. At around four years old, children are given a pair of sharpened railroad spikes to defend themselves with. Older Orphans often draw human figures on upturned mattresses and tell children to take turns practicing stabbing it. Adult Orphans may randomly pull a child out of play and begin an intense self-defense lesson. The young Orphans are often chided if they don't fight back hard enough to bruise or cut their instructor. Orphans will often grab children by surprise and not let the children go until the children wrestle, claw or bite their way out of the hold. Adolescent children are given actual lessons in strategic fighting, they practice the Orphans four-fighter ambush technique (see Military Style, below) with adult Orphans playing the enemy. Children are also encouraged to wrestle and spar with each other.

Many adult Orphans are obsessed with finding the surviving adults who abused and punishing them. The Orphans have indulged in an impressive amount of detective work throughout the city and have tracked down quite a few former abusers, as well as other pedophiles who never abused an Orphan but were unlucky enough to be tracked down by one. Some Orphans with computer skills scour the internet looking for child porn originating in the city so they can hunt down its source. Orphans are also quite willing to investigate reports of child abuse and are comfortable being judge-jury-and-executioner when it comes to a child's welfare. Some black market traders have teamed up with the Orphans and report to the Orphans any unethical requests or offers concerning children.

If someone offers to sell some child pornography, for instance, a black market trader may call an Orphan and tell the Orphan when and where they can find the person.

Social Structure- Each day, the leaders pull a piece of paper out of a box. That piece of paper has the name of an adult Orphan on it, and for that day the Orphan is the one person in charge of the Orphans. When new Orphans come of age, their names are put in to the box. Once every name in the box has been exhausted, they are all put back in the box again for a new cycle. Every Orphan, no matter how small, has to follow the leader's commands. Three advisors, who are some of the oldest, wisest and most respected Orphans, follow the leader around at all times. They keep the new leader up to date on everything that has been happening lately, and they give a lot of advice (which is almost always taken). Despite having a new leader every day, the system works surprisingly smoothly.

Advancement- The Orphan social system leaves little room for advancement: leaders are chosen at random, the process is guarded over by people who believe in keeping it fair. There are three elders who advise the current leader, and they hold a lot of sway. If one of the advisors died, and if the PC was currently one of the oldest and most respected Orphans around, then there would be a significant chance for advancement. With advancement would come a lot of responsibility: it is a full time job to follow the current leader around and explain every little thing to him or her.

Population- There are about 1,600 Orphans. About 700 (44%) are considered adults, and they range in age from 15 to 23. About 500 (31%) are adolescents and about 350 (22%) are prepubescents and toddlers. About Only about 50 are too small to walk (babies are more often put in to foster care homes and so are underrepresented in the orphanage) and of those fifty, about half are the children of adult Orphans. Of the 1,600 Orphans, 95% carry a weapon and 85% have taken the oath.

External Relations- The Orphans have been wary of dealing with adult organizations for quite a while and are only now starting to relate to them as equals. Until recently, the Orphans would rarely deal with anyone other than children. Many city street kids new of the Orphanage and have spent many nights there (leaving only when they felt pressured to take the Oath). Many kid gangs have used the Orphanage as a sanctuary, escaping from whomever they have pissed off within its gates. Some adult gang members have fond feelings for the Orphans when they remember times they found protection there as children.

Skin Borgs: The Orphans are in a constant war against and blockade of the Skin Borgs. Tensions are bad but they could be worse (the Skin Borgs have not yet made the mistake of killing any small Orphan children). Adult Orphans patrol the border between their territory and Skin Borg territory. Skin Borg assaults come day after day and seem limitless. Some Orphans feel that the Orphans should not be fighting the Skin Borgs. A few Orphans have gone so far as to declare that next time they are made leader they will order the Orphans to flee Harlem leave the Hummingbirds and Purists to fight the Skin Borgs alone. The Hummingbirds and Purists (and, to a lesser degree, the Humankalorie, Bleeders and Math Addicts, who would be the next to be attacked if the Skin Borgs took over Orphan turf) do everything they can to encourage the Orphans to hold their ground. These groups try to protect the Orphans from other wars (they don't want the Orphans trying to fight on two fronts at once) and give them little bits of aid in any other matter that comes up.

Street Families: In temperament and outlook, the Orphans are more like an unborn family than most Well gangs, and the Orphans tend to get along well with street families. Orphans tend to see Well and Indie gangs as too focused on philosophies and not focused enough on survival. Both Orphans and the unborn understand that ensuring the safety of their families is more important than petty political squabbles. The street families are not afraid to stick their children in the Orphanage in times of trouble and Orphans are not afraid to ask favors in return.

Volunteers and Night Shift: The Orphans fear and shun people coming in looking to help them, especially people connected with the government. They turn away Night Shift officers and Volunteers who try to come in to the Orphanage.

Red Light District and Sexologists: Like the Sexologists, many Orphans think of the red light district as a very evil place. The red light district is a place where all manner of prostitution, strip clubs, pornography trade and pornography creation takes place. The Orphans have had some very bad experiences with the city sex industry, and most either want to avoid it or want to destroy it violently. The Orphans are aware that in secret alleys and buildings of the red light district there is still child prostitution and child pornography being made and sold. Adult Orphans sometimes take trips in to the red light district looking to find and destroy those that perpetrate these activities but these trips are rarely fruitful. Unlike many other city residents, the Orphans did not think that the Sexologists were "getting out of hand" when they started trying to destroy the city sex industry. For some time the Orphans have been wanting to join with the Sexologists for a massive raid on the red light district, but the Orphans have always been too busy fighting the Skin Borgs.

Homosexuals: Respect for people who are different is something that has to be learned. Like the rest of the adult population of the city, homophobia is rare among adult Orphans. There are a few adult Orphans who are openly homosexual or bisexual and try to teach the younger Orphans tolerance. There are also a few adult male Orphans who were sexually abused by male abusers and secretly associate all homosexuals with this abuse. Homophobia is common among younger Orphans. Although their oath protects children showing homosexual tendencies from being picked on physically, such children are often psychologically abused and many end up running away from the Orphanage. The lucky ones are able to find adults willing to take them in (often adults from the city's homosexual district), the unlucky ones become sex workers. Many homosexuals in the city have ill feelings towards the Orphans.

Military Style- The Orphans usually only fight defensively. When they strike out it is quick strikes designed to annoy the enemy in to following them in to Orphan territory where ambushes await them. The Orphans fight by means of ambush and they have never really learned any other tactic. Orphans attack using the exact same style that the Orphans used to kill their adult abusers more than a decade ago: Two to four Orphans will surround an enemy. The Orphan in front will keep the enemy's attention, jumping in to weapons range and striking should the enemy try to turn. If there are Orphans on the side, they attempt to strike or grab the enemy's arms, or kick their legs out from under them. The Orphan who can get behind the enemy is the most important one: he or she leaps on the enemy's back and stabs the enemy in the neck or any spot unprotected by armor. The Orphans are so dependent on this ambush style

that even when they are outnumbered they will ambush enemies, one at a time, even though it leaves their backs exposed to the majority of the enemies.

The Orphans have well rehearsed contingency plans should a group ever try to enter the Orphanage to gain access to the children. Adult Orphans will stand outside the gates, protecting the orphanage. Any enemy who manages to make it over the gates will find adolescent Orphans waiting to stab them with sharpened sticks and railroad spikes as they come over the fence. Any enemy that makes it past these adolescence will find that the children have congregated in one of the massive dormitories. When the enemy tries to enter the dormitory, the lights will be off and grade-school aged children will leap on them from stacks of furniture. Should they survive this assault, they will find the youngest children inside a massive "fort" of furniture piled together in the center of the room. Enemies who try to crawl inside the fort or take it apart will be attacked by kindergarten and pre-school aged children who are willing to fight to the death to protect the toddlers and babies in the center of the fort.

Typical Weapon- At a very early age, all Orphans are given sharpened railroad spikes, stolen from railroad sites and sharpened on concrete.

Turf- An oddly shaped piece of turf in East Harlem, bounded on the North by 145th Street, on the South by Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., on the West by Fredrick Douglas Blvd. (NW) and Malcolm X Blvd. (SW) and bordered on the West by the sunken city. A large chunk of the turf is taken up by two industrial complexes in the Southwest Corner. The orphanage takes up a whole block at the corner of Lenox and 135th Street. The whole block is surrounded by a barbed wire fence with only a few entrances which are locked up at night. Inside are several buildings: a cafeteria with an industrial kitchen, a large warehouse-like dormitory, an administrative building with a small clinic. Between the buildings are blacktop playgrounds with small jungle-gyms. A few blocks up from the orphanage (at Lenox and 138th Street) is the Abyssinian Baptist Church, a very large and old protestant church, opened in 1923 by black parishioners who left the First Baptist church because it would not integrate its seating. The Abyssinian is still used, with nightly services. Also in the neighborhood are a lot of large housing developments ("projects") from the late 20th century.

Distinguishing Features- Younger orphans wear the cheap uniforms provided by the state: two piece, grey, with a red trim. These uniforms are often ripped, stained, scrawled with graffiti and patched up. Even young adult still have old shirts, threadbare and mostly patches, which they wear as jackets over their normal clothes. All "adult" Orphans have the end of the little finger from one hand chopped off, as a sign of loyalty to the other Orphans.

Symbols- A four fingered hand, the rough shape of a railroad spike, and the colors grey and red are common symbols of the Orphans.

Skills

    Free Skills: Shiv (1)

    Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 7, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 8, MIL 8, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 6.

Income- $750 +$100/wk.

Special Equipment- 2 Railroad Spikes (p.152) free.

Suggested Skills- Emergency Medicine, Prowling, Street Fighting: Armed, Wrestling.

Suggested Equipment- Phonebook Armor, Skull Crusher, Tracking Bug.

Suggested Reading- Children, Red Light District.

Roofers

In Brief- Own the rooftops, which they can travel quickly and leap between fearlessly. At constant war with the Siders.

Favorable Stereotypes- Proud, fearless, party-loving daredevils and expert acrobats.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, territorial, selfish, warlike, think that might-makes-right.

Other Names- Sixty-Nines, the New Sixty-Nines.

Origin- In what is now called the old times, a blossoming post-war drug trade made being a gang member very lucrative. Street gangs sold more drugs than anyone else in the city, and gangs sprung up all over the city with no real purpose other than to violently force themselves in to the drug market. The Sixty-Nines were one such gang that sprung up in the Upper West Side of the city and grew quickly. They were also known as the Caltrops, Death Pigs or OSF (short for Oral Sex Fiends). They sold god killer to homeless addicts, bought smuggled firearms for thousands of dollars each, and fought bloody wars with other gangs over territory. The Sixty-Nines were a moderately successful gang: there were a lot that were larger and more powerful, and a lot that were smaller and less powerful. They had little to distinguish them, except for their sexual proclivities (which were mostly mythical) and their love of wild rooftop parties. In setting up for these parties, a few members of the gang had explored many city rooftops.

In 2075, the Drug Lords made an unannounced and unexpected death-blow to the drug gangs: they consolidated and stopped selling drugs to street gangs (instead they recruited their own loyal pushers). The drug gangs started to violently self-destruct. Some fought against the Drug Lords and were slaughtered, others continued to fight with each other even as they depleted ammo they could no longer afford to replace. Some, needing money for drugs, went on wild bonanzas of robberies until they were defeated by private security guards or (in one case) the National Guard. Some gangs became subservient employees of the Drug Lords and lost their identities as gangs altogether. The leaders of many gangs took all the money, guns and drugs they had left and moved out of the city to try their fortunes elsewhere, leaving their gangs leaderless. Members of some gangs, now that the profit motive and constant haze of drug use had been removed, realized that they didn't much like each other, and the gangs dissolved amidst petty infighting.

The Roofers were fairly peaceful in their self-destruction. There was a little fighting, a few people absconded with gang property, but for the most part there were solemn discussions of disbanding the gang. The four gang members who had been responsible for exploring rooftops and setting up parties there planned one last, huge rooftop party before the gang disbanded. The powerful gang elders did not attend: they were too busy trying to salvage

their fortune. The attendees were the younger Sixty-Nines, who had seen a lot more battle than profit. At the party, a lot of alcohol was consumed, along with a little God Killer, and suddenly the organizers of the party were proclaiming that the Sixty-Nines would not disband, that they would rule the city from the Rooftops. Through a haze of drugs the party organizers had remembered something they had discussed many times: that the right rooftops would make great fortresses from which to defend against enemies.

When morning and soberness came, most of those who had attended the party decided that ruling the city from the rooftops was a stupid idea, but the four organizers kept throwing parties and the young Sixty-Nines kept attending. They also continued to think and act like a gang, even though the old leaders had long since moved on and their old turf was now occupied by other groups. If someone messed with a Sixty-Nine, the other Sixty-Nines would fight back, with the four party organizers leading the Sixty-Nines across rooftops to surprise-attack their enemies. Slowly their identity began to change: they no longer sold drugs, they no longer had turf on the streets. They began to call themselves the Roofers, and they began to call the four party organizers the "founders" of their new group. Young people saw these gang members bravely jumping across alleyways and defending their turf, and they wanted to join. The Roofers enjoyed a rapid growth.

Bren Tate, one of the Roofers, had some personal difficulties with the other founders. He founded a special group within the Roofers called the Siders. The Siders did to the sides of building what the Roofers had done to their tops: outfit them with means to move around, learn how to travel on them, map routes of movement, and use them as a means to surprise attack enemies. The Siders started acting like they were somehow better than other Roofers, like they were privileged because they knew how to climb around on the sides of building. Andrea and Clement (two of the founders) gave Bren a good talking-to, ordered him to disband the Siders, and Bren responded with a surprise attack on the Roofers. Suddenly, the Siders and Roofers were two different gangs in war with each other, and they have stayed in a state of constant warfare ever since.

Timeline

2065- 69s form.

2073- 69s at its peak with 700 members.

2075- Drug Lords consolidate, 69 leaders move on, founders throw parties.

2076- Name "Sixty-Nine" replaced with "Roofer."

2077- Bren Tate starts his "Sider Squad".

2078- Siders attack Roofers.

Joining- To join, a young person must be invited to come up to the rooftops by another Roofer. The Roofer must hang around with this mentor (it would be bad for them to be caught on the rooftops by themselves). There is no one ritual or moment of membership: the young person simply makes friends with other Roofers and becomes involved in Roofer society. As the Roofer becomes known by other Roofers, he or she begins to dress like a Roofer. By following other Roofers around, the young person learns the secret "highway" routes across the rooftops of the city (and learns to balance and leap long distances).

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been in the Roofers for several months, has attended dozens of Roofer parties, has many friends among the Roofers and knows most of the major highways by heart.

Lifestyle- Many Roofers live in apartment buildings connected to one of the Roofer highways. In the morning they simply walk up the stairs, exit out on to the Roof, and go to meet their friends. Roofers spend much of their day traveling across the "highways" made up of ropes, makeshift bridges and jumpable gaps between buildings. They travel to check out their turf, to see what is going on in the city below them, and for the sheer fun of traveling in this manner. The also enjoy exploring: finding out which new rooftops they can get on to. Roofers do not mind stealing, especially if someone leaves something nice lying around on a rooftop patio.

Many Roofers carry ropes and tools with them. They repair damage done to bridges by Siders. They also create new bridges to design new highways. Bridges are made most simply by connecting a rope from one rooftop to another. When a path will be used often, the Roofers scrounge whatever materials happen to be available on the rooftop to make footbridges. A new highway that goes someplace the Roofers previously couldn't get to (or gets there much quicker) is lauded by all Roofers and a team of highway makers can gain a lot of friends as they take various Roofers on tours of their new highways.

Every evening, when the weather is good, bonfires blaze on the city rooftops as several parties come to life. On any given night, there are an average of four parties going on, and most Roofers will try to hit all of the parties before the night is over. At the parties, loud music blasts in to the night, people dance, people mingle and tell battle-stories, people drink and use drugs. Party throwers spend considerable time and money throwing a party, but it is paid back in the social contacts it makes them.

All Roofers are expected to help protect Roofer turf by spending some portion of their day on the tallest rooftops that Roofers have easy access to. From here they look out over the rooftops of the city looking for anyone invading Roofer turf. When they see someone they call Roofers teams they know are out on patrol to deal with the interloper. During Roofer parties the Roofers are especially susceptible to Sider ambushes (they are gathered together and many are intoxicated). It is at these times that lookouts are especially important. Lookouts must not be distracted from a party, and it has become a tradition for partiers to try to provoke a reaction from a lookout by doing whatever they can (save pushing the Roofers off the roof). If a Roofer so much as flinches or giggles, they are ridiculed for weeks, if they keep their attention on their lookout duties they are rewarded with pats-on-the-back and people saying "good-job" for days. No one person is singled out to be a lookout (though sometimes people volunteer if they feel they need to penance or owe the party organizer a favor).

For Roofers, crossing buildings is not just a means of transportation, it is a sport. Roofers delight in the thrill of dangerous crossings and enjoy showing off their skills in front of others. They even make jumps when they are intoxicated at a party (unless someone decides they are too intoxicated and pulls them back). Roofers are hard to convince that a jump is too dangerous. Every once in a while a Roofer dies or is crippled for life in a jump, and the Roofers are a little more cautious for a few months before returning to their reckless selves. Roofers enjoy simple long-jumps, swings and even running jumps from slanted rooftops. Wise party throwers make some sort of sporting jump available from the rooftop they choose (and even wiser party-goers make sure it is a jump that it unlikely to be lethal if someone misses).

Social Structure- The Roofers are ruled by a triumvirate of the three "founders" still in the gang: Carl Finnix, Andrea Popall and Clement Zyre. Carl leads the gang in to battle and has little or no say over inter-gang or intra-gang politics. Andrea Popall has the most ability to persuade Roofers to do whatever she wants, and she usually handles conflicts within the gang (although her idea of 'law and order' is to reward those who please her and add to her power and punish those who don't). Clement Zyre is the most knowledgeable about the state of affairs in the city below and he is typically the one to deal with other gangs.

Carl Finnix (Roofer Founder and Battle General)
Level 10 Roofer

Attributes- AGY 13, AWR 12, CHM 9, END 17, INL 1, SPD 13, STH 17, WIL 17, BLD 3, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- A large, beefy man, appearing to be in his late thirties. Caucasian, balding with dirty-blonde hair he keeps combed back. Carl wears loose, comfortable clothing (usually denim, but he has a dark blue velvet jacket he wears to parties). Carl always has his sword on him. Several old battle scars can be seen on Carl's face and hands. He moves with the slow, careful gait of someone with a bad back or other injury.

Social Status- Carl is one of the triumvirate of remaining founders that control the Roofers. Carl has little say in gang politics (either internal or external) but he is in charge of leading every battle. Of all the founders, he is probably the most beloved.

History- Carl was a child of alcoholic wells living in a large housing project in Harlem. As a child he was fairly large and athletic and he became a consummate bully, intimidating and beating up other children in his housing project just because he could. In 2066 he joined the Sixty-Nines (he was only 16). He was a brave fighter, but not very smart and didn't advance quickly. When the other founders joined a few years later, Carl acted almost like a mentor to them, keeping them safe. Together the four planned wild rooftop parties, much to the enjoyment of the Sixty-Nine leaders. Carl was quite upset when he heard the Sixty-Nines were dissolving: they had been a family to him. Carl was happy with the idea of the Roofers and became the groups expert battle strategist. Over the years fighting as a Roofer he was always the first to rush in to battle and he has taken many injuries, sometimes disabling him for months. Carl missed most of the tension between Bren Tate's Siders and the other Roofers, and although he joined the other founders in demanding that Bren disband the Sider Squad, it was only because Clement and Andrea had talked him in to it.

Personality- Once a bully, years of experience (including periods of being bedridden with painful injuries) have changed Carl and turned him in to a calm, wise and genuinely nice person. Carl is not very intelligent and he knows it. To make up for this deficit, he insists on thinking through any important matter for a very long time. Carl never makes snap decisions about anything, he carefully considers every decision and often has to retire to seclusion for the evening or "grill" other Roofers (he asks them several questions, repeating some several times over the course of the conversation). Carl enjoys the rooftop parties, but he sometimes feels a bit overwhelmed by them. He is good for about fifteen minutes of mingling before he retires to the nearest couch with a few of his cronies to drink beers and watch the party happen.

Motivations- Carl believes he has been given a great privilege and responsibility to be one of the Roofers. He tries to pay back the Roofers by being a good mentor to them, teaching them anything he has to teach, and by being a good leader in battle.

Methods- Carl thinks through every decision thoroughly and will spend hours working on a battle strategy. He sketches his battle strategies on pieces of paper and gets help whenever he cannot remember a route. Carl is the first in to battle and he leads by example (when he attacks, the other Roofers attack, when he retreats they retreat).

Special Equipment- Two Katanas, Chainmail Armor (AR 7 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt), and Arm Guards (+4 to block).

Special Skills- Acrobatics (3), Florentine Sword (5), Military Strategy (3).

Typical Attack- Carl is not as strong, fast or agile as he once was, but he is still one of the top fighters in the city and leads almost every battle. When he attacks he moves in to range, then hacks at people with both swords (a paired strike at no penalty because of the Florentine sword skill at STH (17) +AGY (13) +24 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 29 + 1d20 vs. 0). If successful, each sword does 5 bladed damage. When defending, he makes a split reaction parry and simultaneous strike with the parry at STH (17) + AGY (13) + WIL (17) +28 (skill) -10 (split action) -20 (simultaneous action) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 20 + 1d20 vs. 0) and the strike at STH (17) +AGY (13) +28 (skill) -10 (split action) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 23 + 1d20 vs. 0).

There is a system of social status among Roofers that is unspoken and unofficial. Those who are friends with the founders have higher status within the gang than those that aren't. The closer the friendships and the more founders a Roofer is friends with, the more power they have. People can tell who is a friend of the founders by seeing who gets invited to parties thrown by the founder. There are a core of about twenty gang members, most of whom were original Sixty-Nines, who get invited to every founder party and spend most of their days hanging around with one of the founders. These Roofers have no official power but can get a younger Roofer in a lot of trouble if they feel like it.

Advancement- The primary way to gain power in the Roofers is to move through social circles. Roofers attend parties and throw their own parties so they can meet other Roofers. The goal is to someday get to know the founders and become regular invitees of their parties. Even very new Roofers can sometimes luck out if they throw a party and one of the founders attends. Things that benefit the gang, like bravery in battle, gathering important intelligence or solving some problem can get a young Roofer an invite to a founder party or can convince a founder to drop by one of the Roofer's parties.

Population- There are about 1,200 Roofers, about 150 were members of the Sixty-Nines in their old drug-selling days.

External Relations- The founders and many of the older members of the Roofers were once members of the Sixty-Nines, a gang that sold drugs. Some older city residents still associate Roofers with the actions of the Sixty-Nines and hold old grudges. For most young people in the city, the Roofers are one of the oldest of the new-generation gangs. They are often admired as they are seen leaping fearlessly from rooftop to rooftop.

Trespassers: Roofers dislike anyone who thinks they can trespass on their territory. The Boarders are the worst offenders, often going up on to rooftops to jump their boards. The Roofers often have a bone to pick with Boarders when they see them on the ground. Thieves also like to trespass on the rooftops to break in to buildings, and often get in to trouble with Roofers. When Roofers find trespassers, they usually beat the people up and carry them down to the ground. If some group doesn't seem to get the point, or if the Roofers are in an especially bad mood, they throw people off of rooftops.

Siders: The Siders and the Roofers are in an unending war. Sometimes the war wanes and there are only a few attacks a months, sometimes it intensifies to the point that there are several assaults nightly and casualties every day. The Siders are usually the aggressors, making surprise attacks against the Roofers. The only time the Roofers get a chance to attack is when they run in to Siders on the streets or in subway cars.

Military Style- When fighting an enemy that is on the ground, the Roofers use lookouts on high rooftops to gather information on the enemy. From a vantage point near enemy turf, drawing out the intelligence given to them on a city map, the three founders typically plan when and where they will strike. It is Carl Finnix that leads the strike, moving the war parties as stealthfully as possible in to the enemy turf. About 750 Roofers show up to most major battles. They enter the enemy turf and arrange themselves about 50 to a rooftop. They communicate by hand signals and when they are all ready they enter in to the buildings, race down the stairs, and rush out of the buildings on to the streets. If they are very lucky, they will catch the enemy off guard and have them surrounded. If they are not so lucky, the enemy will know they are coming and attack them as they gush out of the front entrances of buildings. Either way, every Roofer rushes in to the middle of battle, hoping to earn glory by taking out an enemy. If the battle does not go well, the Roofers can retreat through the same buildings and up on to the rooftops. Retreats are often slow, though: many Roofers want to gain glory by being the last one to retreat from a battle. Whenever they do battle, the Roofers are always aware that the Siders might appear and decide to help the Roofer's enemy's by picking off Roofers with crossbows. There is little the Roofers can do about this except to be so thoroughly intermeshed with the enemy that it is hard for the Siders to get a clean shot.

Typical Weapon- A sword, paired swords or machete are the standard weapons of the Roofers.

Turf- The Roofers consider every rooftop in the city, from the tallest to the smallest, including the rooftops of the abandoned ruins of the Sunken City, to be their turf. For all that they claim that the rooftops are their turf, the rooftops are a virtual desert bereft of human life. There are close to 75,000 rooftops in the city and only 1,200 Roofers. Most Rooftops have never had a single Roofer on them. Some are too hard to access (especially the skyscrapers, who vary in height by many floors from all of the other building around them), some building are burned out hulks with no real roof, and some buildings are out of the way, can not easily be jumped to, and have never looked interesting enough for the Roofers to waste valuable rope building a bridge to. There are large portions of downtown and midtown where the Roofers can not travel because the sizes of the buildings are too uneven. In the Inwood/Washington Heights area at the Northern tip of the city, the buildings are too far apart for the Roofers to be able to travel. The hole (aka Central Park) in the middle of the city is a large void in the middle of the rooftop landscape that must be traveled around (the same is true of several smaller parks that somehow made it through the 2040s without a hospital being built over them). The average rooftop that one can find Roofers on is about 6 stories high.

What the Roofers do have is a number of "highways". The city rooftops are covered with dozens of twisting, maze-like routes that let Roofers get from any one point in the city to any other. Roofers travel by leaping over alleys (often making jumps that only trained long-jumpers could make), climbing across ropes or chains that have been strung between rooftops, or walking across ancient iron fire-escapes that have been ripped out of walls and turned in to makeshift bridges. These routes only exist in the heads of the Roofers, they are never written down. Such trips are tiring and time consuming. Most Roofers will make a cross-city trip at least once in their lives, but it will be to test their endurance, not because it is an efficient means of travel. When the Roofers need to cross the city without being exhausted when they get there, they are forced to come down and ride the subways just like everyone else.

Rooftops in Harlem, the Upper East Side and the Upper West Side are the most common rooftops to find Roofers on. A majority of Roofers live in buildings in these areas, they meet up with their Roofer buddies in this area and Rooftops in these areas are where they hold most of their parties.

Distinguishing Features- Roofers like to wear things that will flap in the breeze when they jump: capes, trinkets on strings, ribbons, etc. They also distinguish themselves by wearing checkerboard-patterned patches or clothing.

Symbols- Checkerboard patterns and crossed swords are typical symbols of Roofers.

Slang

Highway: n., a route to get from one part of the city to another via rooftops.

Skills

Free Skills: Acrobatics (2)

Skill Costs: ATH 5, BIO 8, CMBT 6, CRTV 5, INFO 8, INTL 7, MIL 8, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Income- 1,500 +$100/wk.

Suggested Skills- Climbing, Florentine Sword, Lock Picking, Running.

Suggested Equipment- Binoculars, Climbing Rope, Rope and Grapple, Sword: Katana.

Suggested Reading- City Infrastructure: Buildings, Gangs.

Risen

In Brief- Violent gang with much infighting. Many members faked their own death, many get implants, all are infected with mitochondrial vampirism.

Favorable Stereotypes- Hard-to-kill, fearless, lustful, seeking intense experiences and willing to change.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Amoral, violent, remorseless, bloodthirsty criminals and fugitives.

Other Names- Vamps, Fangs, Reborn.

Origin- 12,000 BC, the ice is starting to retreat and human tribes follow game animals northwards in Europe. They have recently domesticated dogs but their dogs seems to be catching something from local wolf packs. Dogs with the disease want to eat all the time and since the tribe can't feed them enough they are put down. At some point, however, humans start to catch the disease. Humans suffer from the same hunger, but they also find that there are beneficial effects. Those infected can run faster and longer without tiring and can survive injuries that would kill most of their tribe. Those infected become master hunters, single-handedly bringing down mastodons and other prey animals. For a few centuries the tribes flourished, growing in size and learning how to purposefully spread the disease to select members of the tribe. Eventually, though, they over-hunted the prey animals in Northern Europe, driving some of them to extinction. The age of plenty that could support these great hunters had ended. Within 500 years after it had jumped to humans, the disease died out.

In 2068, archaeologists and paleontologists around the world were using nanobots to dive into the earth and bring back information about what was contained there. The goal of archaeology had changed from finding things in the ground to finding things in the terabytes of data that had been returned. Archaeologist Gustav Lindgren was doing a statistical study of bone breaks in paleolithic humans trying to see what types of injuries happened to ancient people and which ones they lived through. Gustav found a group of "hearty" humans in Northern Europe who seemed to be able to live through anything. After publishing his results, other scientists went back to the sites and found that certain individuals had been infected with a virus that sat inside the mitochondria of human cells. Mitochondria are organelles that take sugars and oxygen and turn them in to ATP, the chemical that the cells use as energy. The virus' presence created a new secondary metabolic cycle that could create ATP with virtually no oxygen (but a lot of sugar). Scientists hypothesized what the result would be: an animal that could deal with periods of oxygen deprivation and blood loss, so long as it followed them with a sharp increase in blood sugar. Scientists called this the first ever symbiotic virus found in a human.

One scientist was unlucky enough to mention to a media person that it was possible that vampire myths might have originally come from instances of this disease. The media immediately picked up on this and started claiming that real vampirism had been discovered. The scientists working on the disease later collaborated with mythologists and recanted (their argument was that vampire myths had more in common with the standard ghost myth than with any aspect of the disease). This recanting came too late: the public had already associated the disease with vampirism and no amount of scientific evidence could shake that belief. The scientists had already named the disease "mitochondrial vampirism."

It was mostly the association with vampires that made mitochondrial vampirism a hot black market item. Before it ever hit the black market, traders were selling genetic modification viruses and calling them vampirism. When real vampirism hit the streets, it didn't do what people expected it to and many traders found themselves adulterating it with genetic mods to make it seem more authentic.

In 2072, a powerful gang leader paid a lot of money to make sure that his gang would be the first and only people to receive mitochondrial vampirism in the city. While the gang had the virus and gave the virus freely to its members, it had an incredible marketing tool to attract new members. The vamps (as they renamed themselves) became the most powerful street gang in the city, not because of the vampirism but because of their sheer numbers. The Vamps controlled the largest territory, bullied around other street gangs, sold the most drugs, and the gang's leaders were rich and powerful.

Then, in 2075, the Drug Lords consolidated in to a single entity and stopped selling drugs to the street gangs. Before most people had even found out the news, the leader of the Vamps disappeared from the city with a fortune of the gang's money. Many of the other high-level leaders of the Vamps joined the Drug Lords, becoming Kings. They took their most trusted gang members with them as pushers. The rest of the Vamps began to fight violently for leadership of the gang. The Vamps split up in to factions. Meanwhile, many Vamps were leaving the gang, feeling that if there were no profits to be made from drug sales, there was no reason to stay in the gang. The biggest of the warring factions reached a temporary peace and started secret negotiations with each other. Rumors started to circulate that a major reworking of the gang was coming.

On New Years Eve, Dec 31, 2075, many elder members of the Vamps met in St. Bartholomew's church. What many thought was just a meeting turned out to be an ambush by

the new majority faction within the Vamps. Those who were not immediately slaughtered were tried: they were given a chance to either leave the gang or adopt the gangs new philosophy. Members who swore to adopt the gang's philosophy were judged (by gang members who were amateur psychics) and the liars were killed.

After this, the Vamps closed themselves off from the rest of the city. They refused to let outsiders in their turf, they wouldn't tell anyone about the gang's current lifestyle, and they turned away many (if not all) new applicants for membership. Rumors slowly started to leak out: that the Vamps spent much of their time fighting each other, that they were in to heavy body modification, that they had forced many applicants to fake their own deaths in order to join.

Slowly, the gang became slightly more open. They let it be known that they now liked to be called the Risen. They admitted that many of their members had faked their own deaths (with help from other Risen). Perhaps because of their mysteriousness, increasing numbers wanted to join, and the Risen began to turn away less and less.

Timeline

25,000 BC- Mitochondrial Vampirism first appears in wolves in the circumpolar region.
12,000 BC- Dogs first domesticated.
11,500 BC- Mitochondrial Vampirism jumps to humans.
10,000 BC- Mitochondrial Vampirism extinct.
1897- Dracula by Bram Stoker published.
2054- True nanotechnology developed.
2065- Nano-archeological surveys of Northern Europe.
2068- Gustav Lindgren publishes a paper on "hearty" pre-historic humans.
2070- Mitochondrial Vampirism discovered, in vitro studies on human cells.
2070- Fake Mitochondrial Vampirism sold on the black market.
2072- True Mitochondrial Vampirism hits the black market.
2072- Gang leader buys Mitochondrial Vampirism, stalls to call his gang the Vamps.
2073- First dogs infected in a lab situation.
2075- Vamps largest gang in the city.
2075- Vamp monopoly on vampirism broken.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate, Murder Zane absconds with millions.
2075- Risen faction holds massive trial in St.Bartholomew church.
2078- Rumors start to leak out about the philosophy and lifestyle of the Risen.

Joining

Joining- Not everyone who tries to join the gang is allowed in. A PC must find a pack that is willing to take the PC as a new member. Next, the PC must convince the pack that he or she is willing to give up every aspect of their old life, to start life again as a Risen. New members must sell all their belongings, move to Risen territory, change their hairstyle and clothing, start going by a different name and several all ties to their former lives. Applicants with obligations that they can not easily leave are given help by their pack. Sometimes the pack kills all the people who the PC has an obligation to, sometimes the pack helps the PC fake his or her own death. To fake a death, the applicant is given mitochondrial vampirism and is then attacked (by Risen in disguise) in public. Paramedics and people working in the city morgue who are Risen (or take bribes from the

Risen) help make the death appear real. An actual death certificate is not issued, and the applicant continues to receive public assistant under his or her real name.

The Risen are expected to give up everything about their old lives, not just physical belongings and social connections. The Risen are supposed to give up every grudge, every favor, every bit of guilt about their old lives. They are asked to admit that they failed at their old lives and need another chance.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been a member of the Risen for several months. The PC is just starting to build a life under his or her new name and identity. The PC is a full (although junior) member of the pack.

Lifestyle- The Risen are driven by a shared philosophy. Their philosophy is that everything one does or experiences, good or bad, right or wrong, painful or pleasurable, is a learning experience if taken as such. The Risen believe that they are getting a "second chance" at life, with the slate wiped clean (except for whatever wisdom they've gained). Most Risen come off as quite immoral, simply shrugging off horrible things they and their fellow members have done in the past. Some Risen are completely amoral with no sense or right-and-wrong or conscience, other simply believe that true morality must be earned as a matter of experience and through a lot of mistakes.

The Risen spend a lot of time enjoying their new lives, doing all the things that the old them would never have done: experimenting with drugs, engaging in promiscuous sex, committing crimes, getting in to fights. They have little fear of death, not just because they have mitochondrial vampirism, but because they feel that they have died. The Risen enjoy meeting new people: they have just created a new identity for themselves and interacting with people as the new them is fun.

The Risen live in a near anarchy, there are only a few simple rules they must live by: They must spend part of the day patrolling for intruders on Risen turf and they must seek revenge for wrongs committed against the Risen by non-Risen. Most packs discharge these obligations by spending the evening wandering within Risen turf looking for intruders or, when at war, wandering the city outside of Risen turf looking for enemies. Few packs have set routines: they go where it pleases them.

There is no rule about violence between Risen. Many packs get in to fights with each other, and some are engaged in blood feuds. Some pack wars grow so large that several packs are drawn in on both sides. A few old and powerful packs are willing to step in if a pack war starts threatening to tear apart the gang as a whole. A pack may patrol their turf looking for intruders, but they are also looking for members of enemy packs. Packs are not always at war: many packs are friends and it is a happy occasion when two meet, time for trading stories and jokes. Sometimes two packs meet for the first time and a relationship (good or bad) is formed.

Most Risen live Spartan lives: they have sold all their old worldly possessions and live in barren apartments. Rather than spend their money on buying new possessions, the Risen typically spend every bit of money they get on body modifications. Risen like to have claws, fangs an other built-in weapons that can help them fight in the Risen's version of unarmed combat (see Social Structure, below). Some Risen become desperate enough for cash that they rob stores or restaurants.

Social Structure- The Risen have no internal government. Risen are arranged in to small packs, each with around 4 to 8 people. Some packs (typically older ones) are very powerful, others are quite weak. Powerful means they are good fighters (because of implants and skill) and have many allegiances with other packs. Nothing regulates what the packs do to each other, and nothing regulates what individuals within a pack do to each other. The Risen are only organized when it comes to how they deal with other gangs.

Meetings of the Risen are held every Sunday night at midnight, in the St. Bartholomew Church, where the original "trials" took place. Each pack sends one representative to the meeting. Every representative has equal say. Any representative can go down to the floor of the cathedral and argue what the gang should do concerning other non-Risen groups. Once a Risen has made an appeal it will become law unless is it "challenged." Risen often shout down arguments from their balconies, but the only way to officially challenge the speaker is to go down and engage the speaker in one-on-one combat. The combatants can fight only with the weapons that are part of their flesh (no external weapons) and the fight continues until one fighter is clearly incapacitated (though typically not killed). If the speaker is defeated, their proposition is defeated. Any number of people can challenge a proposition, and a Risen might need to fight off several opponents before their appeal becomes law.

Advancement- Some packs send the smartest or most charming member of their pack to the Sunday night meetings as their spokesperson, but the vast majority send their best fighter. Thus, to advance a Risen must become a superior unarmed fighter. Physical exercise and martial arts training are always important, but the most important thing is to gain expensive implants (especially poisoned or teflon coated claws and fangs).

Population- There are about 1,500 Risen in about 300 packs.

External Relations- Many gangs think that some old enemy is hiding out among the Risen. Many gangs have started rethinking the violent deaths of their old enemies, trying to figure out whether someone with mitochondrial vampirism could have survived. The truth is that usually the enemy is not actually among the Risen, but this does not stop the gangs from imagine some hated enemy is among the Risen and letting this color their perception of all Risen. People who have had little contact with the Risen tend to describe them as having all the qualities of their worst dead or missing enemy. They assume the worst about any Risen they meet. Some powerful gangs (and sometimes the Drug Lords) will mount an expedition in to Risen territory to find some enemy, and usually fierce attacks by Risen is all they find. Many groups who tend to be "moralistic" (Purists, Sexologists, Eccentrics, Volunteers, Immortals, Night Shift officers and Orphans) think that by covering up the evil deeds of their fellows, the Risen are all co-conspirators to their horrible crimes. The Night Shift in particular look for any opportunity to grab a bunch of Risen and take DNA samples from them, hoping to find a wanted fugitive.

Trespassers: The Risen also gain many enemies by being fiercely territorial. If someone wanders in to Risen territory, they are most likely to meet a pack that tries to scare them out of Risen turf with threats of violence (there is a smaller chance that they will meet a pack that wants to slaughter them immediately, or a pack that wants to have an interesting conversation with them and then let them go on their way). The Risen rarely go out looking for trouble, but enough trouble comes to them to keep the Risen at war with one or more enemies most of the time. They are known as a bloodthirsty gang that is slow to achieve any kind of peace. The Risen are also patient: they are willing to wait for their enemy to come to them, or to run in to the enemy on some random tramp through the city. The easiest way for a gang to achieve peace with the Risen is to stay away from the Risen until they forget about the war.

Nearby Gangs: Dragons, Mem Junkies, Freaks and Animalists have all seen conflicts with the Risen because of their proximity. The Boarders get in to a lot of fights with the Risen because they like to trespass on their territory, though the fights never grow to the point of organized warfare. The Omniscients are close too, but they generally know how to avoid conflicts with the Risen.

Military Style- The Risen prefer to use their increased speed, strength and claws to climb up on to buildings and attack enemies from above. They can leap from a story high, or more, without getting hurt and they like to shower down upon their enemies. They typically fight using only implanted claws and teeth, leaping on enemies and tearing in to them. They can continue to operate even after injuries that would be fatal to most people, but they cannot operate for very long before starvation begins. Thus, the Risen like to get the battle over as quickly as possible, never pausing for anything until the battle is over. Calls for truce are usually ignored (as they may be ploys to make the Risen pause until they start starving). When the Risen go in to battle they typically want to kill every single enemy and will often not let enemies retreat.

Typical Weapon- The Risen typically fight unarmed with implanted weapons like claws and fangs.

Turf- The Risen have a rectangle of turf in Midtown and the Murray Hill district, South of 57th St., North of 34th St., East of 5th Ave and West of 5th Ave. The sunken city is on the East of this turf and a section of the eastern border of the turf is taken up by a gated industrial complex. Many industrial buildings devoted to light manufacturing, some in use and some not, are in the area. This part of town has many tall old buildings. In the middle of the turf is the Chrysler Building. This was once the tallest building in the world. It has four gargoyles on the corners near the top and an intricate spire rising above them. The Pan Am building, nearby, is a large 59 story building. It is blocky, looking much like a large slab, with plenty of square footage. The Waldorf-Astoria hotel, also squarely in the middle of Risen territory, takes up nearly the entire block. It was built in the 1930s and has two towers and 2,000 rooms. The hotel is abandoned, but many Risen live in it.

St. Bartholomew's church, built early in the 20th century, is on Park Ave. between 50th and 51st streets. This large, ornate building was long abandoned and is now used as the meeting place for the Risen. St. Patrick's Cathedral on the Westernmost border of the turf, near the red light district, one of the largest churches in the world, is still used by the Catholic church and most Risen allow non-Risen to enter their turf while mass is in session, allowing that they go straight to the church and leave immediately afterwards.

The United Nations building was once near here but it was a major bombing target. The ruins were razed and an industrial complex built after the Freedom War ended.

In the Northwest corner are the Museum of Broadcasting and the AT&T Headquarters. Along the Northern edge is

the Central Synagogue and the city's first mosque. The Citicorp building is a large skyscraper in Risen turf which is unique: it was built with huge stilts that make one corner of it hover over St. Peter's Lutheran church (which refused to sell when the center was being constructed in the 70s). Grand central station, once a major train and subway station, is near the middle of the turf. It is now boarded up and the tunnels have been collapsed.

Distinguishing Features- Most wear tight black clothing, often with holes from battles and other injuries. Most have low-light vision implants and wear sunglasses even at night. Most have visible implants such as fangs and claws.

Symbols- "RIP", gravestones, claws and fangs dripping with blood.

Slang

Appeal: n., a proposition made by a speaker at the Sunday night Risen meeting.

Challenge: v., to combat a speaker to defeat their appeal.

Pack: n., a small group of Risen that are loyal to each other.

Skill

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 7, CMBT 5, CRTV 5, INFO 8, INTL 8, MIL 8, PSY:X 16, PSY:M 11, PSY:S 12, TECH 8, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Income- $2000 +$10/wk.

Special Equipment- There are several Risen who have been trained as black market doctors and can install implants and do simple cosmetic surgery. The PC gets 30% off any surgery costs before or after character creation.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Vampiric Metabolism (Mandatory Advantage)- Because the PC's body processes oxygen and sugar to make energy in a different way, the PC gains increased physical ability and ability to live with extremely low oxygen or blood supply, but the PC has an increased need for glucose.

The PC gets +4 INCY, +4 BLD, +4 END, +2 STH and +2 SPD.

The PC must eat 10 times the amount of sugar that other people do, more if he or she has been doing heavy activity or has been oxygen deprived. For computing hunger damage, six hours of "normal" activity -or- 15 minutes of heavy activity -or- 1 minute of oxygen deprivation each counts as one day without food. Note that fats and carbohydrates can be converted by the body in to sugars, but this takes so long that the PC may starve to death in the meantime. Sugary food is converted in to glucose (blood sugar) faster, and eating or injecting glucose is faster still.

Suggested Skills- Acrobatics, Climbing, Disguise, Street Fighting: Unarmed, Wrestling.

Suggested Equipment- Boot Blades, Claws: Poisoned, Fangs: Teflon Coated, Motorcycle Outfit.

Suggested Reading- Fashion & Style, Implants, Old Times.

Siders

In Brief- Split off from Roofers, now at war with them. Expert climbers with high-tech gear who travel on the sides of buildings.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brave, innovative, pioneering, self-reliant, highly-skilled, proud.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Vengeful, myopic, obsessed, impractical, stubborn, violent gang with an inferiority complex.

Other Names- Windows Washers (derogatory).

Origin- The story of the Roofers is well known: in 2075 the era of large, powerful drug gangs was ending. The city Drug Lords had formed themselves in to a new, more efficient organization and they didn't need street gangs to sell drugs for them anymore. The Sixty-Nines were celebrating their demise with one last rooftop party when four intoxicated party organizers had the idea to form a new gang that had the rooftops as its turf. Many members of the old Sixty-Nines joined them in this venture, and this odd new gang found that there was actually power to be had in exploring and dominating this new turf. The Roofers grew more quickly, becoming one of the city's more powerful gangs. The four party organizers became the gang's founders and leaders.

Bren Tate was one of the four founders. Of the four, he had always been the "idea man." When he and his friends were junior gang members leaping from rooftop to rooftop in search of good party locations, it was his idea to try to build permanent bridges across the rooftops to create highways above the city. Without

Bren's ideas, there would be no Roofers. Although he has had no formal education, Bren was always the chief engineer for the Roofers and led the creation of most of the current infrastructure the Roofers use to get around. Bren continued to think up and experiment with new ideas to make the Roofers a better gang. At first, the other founders were happy with his enthusiasm, but they quickly became complacent. Within a few years after its inception, the Roofers were big enough to be able to fight off every enemy they had encountered, and they never wanted for members. The founders were the rulers of a powerful gang and had many younger members ready to do anything to please them. They began to feel that there was no need for the kind of "improvements" that Bren entertained himself with.

At the same time, Bren started to see the shape that the roofer social structure had taken. Power within the Roofers was not achieved by merit or intelligence, but by being popular enough to be allowed in to the personal circle of friends of one or more of the founders. Bren saw that, while he was busying himself with projects, the Roofers had become a huge popularity contest of the type which Bren detested. Carl Finnix was the only other founder whose beliefs leaned towards a meritocracy, but he had suffered from repeated battle injuries that had taken him out of the loop of power over the Roofers. Bren complained to Andrea and Clement that good people were being ignored just because they weren't good at schmoozing at parties. Andrea and Clement ignored his complaints, and so he decided to start his own subgroup of the Roofers that would reward the brightest, bravest and

His new group he called the "Sider Squad" and he invited to join all those who he felt had been left behind in the popularity contest of the Roofers. The purpose of the group was to find ways to incorporate the sides of buildings in the territory that the Roofers could travel over and fight from. Together he and his squad experimented with climbing technologies, with building "highways" along the sides of buildings, and they experimented with battle strategies to let them attack from the sides of buildings. The Siders were eager to prove their worthiness, and they trained hard and became skilled climbers. In battle, the Sider Squad showed their usefulness to the gang.

At some point the Siders began to feel that they were better than ordinary Roofers. They started to wear different clothing and to eschew Roofer parties, even when invited. What's more, they started to act like they deserved more respect than the other Roofers. There were a few fist fights between Siders and Roofers. Bren didn't purposefully encourage the Sider's feelings of superiority, but the way he talked to his Siders couldn't help but stoke the fires. Andrea and Clement dropped hints to Bren that he should keep his Sider team under control. He ignored the hints. Later, Andrea, Clement and Carl cornered Bren, gave him a dressing-down and ordered him to disband the Siders immediately. Bren was silent and left without responding.

Bren Tate (Leader of the Siders)

Level 4 Sider, Level 5 Roofer

Attributes- AGY 16, AWR 13, CHM 11, END 15, INL 20, SPD 15, STH 14, WIL 10, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 2

Appearance- Small, middle-eastern features, shaved head, thinly trimmed goatee. When he is out on the sides of buildings he wears wraparound sunglasses, a tight armored bodysuit and expert climbing pads.

Social Status- Creator and unquestioned leader of the Siders.

History- Bren joined the Sixty-Nines as an awkward, angry fourteen-year-old. He wanted to make money selling drugs, but he found he was mostly just a solider. He found his niche planning wild rooftop parties with three other junior Sixty-Nines. Together, these friends explored the rooftops and later formed the Roofers. He created the Sider Squad and was the one that ordered them to split off from and attack the Roofers.

Personality- Bren thinks of himself as an "idea man." He is not a very social person and he entertains and occupies himself by working on various projects and thinking up new ideas. Bren makes a conscious effort to keep himself open to the ideas of others and to reward people based on merit, not on how much he likes them. The only thing that ever really angers Bren is when he has to explain something to someone multiple times and they don't get the point.

Motivations- Bren is very proud of his Siders and he would do anything to protect his accomplishment and see it thrive and succeed. He sees the Roofers as his second most successful experiment, and someday he would like to take over the Roofers and turn it in to something he can be proud of. He has a righteous anger against the other founders: he feels they owe him a debt for creating the Roofers and they have been slowly ruining "his project."

Methods- Bren is a big fan of brainstorming. When a problem comes up, he brainstorms solutions, taking input from anyone who wants to give it. He is not afraid to use military force as a solution to a problem.

Special Equipment- Nanoweave Armor, Nanopadded Armor, Climbing Pads: Elite, Crossbow.

Special Skills- Climbing (5), Archery (3), Carpentry (2), Mechanics (2), Microelectronics (1).

Typical Attack- Double aim (2 actions, gives +10) then a Vital Strike at INL (20) + AGY (16) +10 (double aim) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 35 +1 per 7 ft (functional range) or 23 + 1d20 vs. 1 per 7ft. The bolt does 3 bladed damage (pierces armor as 5) and because it is a vital strike, any damage that gets through is doubled.

Later that night the Siders surprise-attacked a party that the founders were at. They killed several Roofers, and nearly killed the founders, before being beaten back. The Siders continued to attack, night after night. Many Roofers defected from the Roofers to join the Siders. Tales of the Siders were spread, by word of mouth, through the city. People were impressed that a tiny gang was able to do so much damage to a much larger gang. Young people began to start applying directly to the Siders for membership.

Timeline

2065- 69s form.
2073- 69s at its peak with 700 members.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate, 69 leaders move on, founders throw parties.
2076- Name "Sixty-Nine" replaced with "Roofer."
2077- Bren Tate starts his "Sider Squad".
2078- Siders attack Roofers.

Joining- Those interested in joining the gang must meet with Bren Tate. Bren interviews the person, tries to determine whether he or she is serious and would be an asset to the gang. If Bren likes the person, he invites him or her to join as a probationary member and start training immediately. The Siders train constantly, and the new Sider will often be assigned to a training group. He or she will have to purchase climbing equipment, and will have to put in many, many hours of training until he or she can move around buildings skillfully enough to join the Siders in an attack.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has just become skilled enough that he or she is expected to join in on battles.

Lifestyle- While Roofers move around Rooftops for enjoyment, climbing on buildings is more dangerous and tiring and Siders can only be seen on the sides of buildings when they have some specific purpose: practice, finding/making routes or attacking an enemy. The average Sider spends about four hours a day climbing on the sides of buildings.

Siders spend a lot of time finding and making their own "highways": ways to get from one place to another. They build highways by building bridges (or stringing ropes) between buildings and by creating handholds and footholds in otherwise smooth building surfaces (by hammering in pitons or gouging out holes). The purpose of Roofer highways is to let Roofers cross long distances relatively quickly. Sider highways, on the other hand, do not go very far and they aren't very quick. Their purpose is to lead in and out of an area where the enemy is, at a height that the enemy is unlikely to see them and can't attack them if they are seen. For long trips, the Siders walk along the ground or ride subways. Climbing is usually involved in navigating a highway, but the best highways have few actual climbs (because climbs are slow and tend to expose Siders). Instead, Siders run along ledges, run up and down fire-escapes, cross lines or rope-bridges between buildings, crawl in through broken windows on abandoned floors and exit out a window on the other side, and even climb up on to the rooftops to use Roofer highways. The Siders are not afraid of trespassing on Roofer turf: they know all the Roofer highways almost as well as the Roofers do and know not to stay on them long enough for a Roofer patrol team to get to them.

The Siders have access to a part of the city that few see: the upper floors of tall buildings. It is more expensive to maintain any floor over the fifth (because special water pumps, elevator equipment, etc. are needed) and when the

city's economy went bad these floors were the first to be abandoned. Of all the abandoned spaces in the city, these are the least used. Some are in buildings where the lower floors are still in use (and may have a security guard), others are unused simply because nobody wants to climb the stairs to get to them when there are plenty of unused spaces on the first floors. Siders have easy access to these spaces: they simply kick out the boards and pop in to the nearest building and they have a private space all to themselves. Siders spend a lot of time hanging out together in these abandoned spaces and they often build "clubhouses" where they can sit, relax, talk, clean and fix weapons, eat and drink. Some Siders save money by living in these abandoned rooms, living like Street People (see p.155) instead of paying rent. Others crawl through the windows of occupied buildings to steal. Either way, most of the money young Siders save goes towards buying better climbing equipment.

Some Siders take on large graffiti projects. They know that anything they scrawl on the sides of buildings will be nearly impossible to deface or clean up. They use their graffiti mostly to taunt enemies and a number of city walls have several-story high offensive cartoons of the Roofer founders. These projects cost hundreds in stolen spraypaint, but are considered well worth the money by the Siders who made them.

Most of what the Siders do relates in some way to their making war against the Roofers. When they are practicing climbing it is so they can make better attacks against the Roofers. When they seek out new highways, they are typically going to a building where the Roofers might have a party. They sabotage Roofer bridges, gather intelligence on what the Roofers are doing and Bren Tate plans attacks against the Roofers. Anything a Sider can do on his or her own to hurt the Roofers is lauded by the other Siders.

Social Structure- Bren Tate is the unquestioned ruler of the Siders. Most Siders are fiercely loyal and would never think of disobeying one of his orders. He leads them in combat and he decides every other matter concerning the Siders as a whole. When a Sider has done something bad, Bren hears the case and makes a decision (usually banishment from the gang). When there is some matter that Bren can not take care of personally, he puts another Sider in charge, and all other Siders are expected to do anything they can help the project leader complete the project.

Advancement- Bren desperately wants the Siders to be a meritocracy where members are rewarded for bravery, skill, loyalty and, especially, for good ideas. He makes it a point to know about every Sider, and keep track of every impressive act each of them has done. He is always open to any Sider, even the most junior, coming to him with a plan or idea. He considers every idea but is not afraid to tell a Sider every single thing that is wrong with their plan. If he likes an idea, he not only uses it, but he is careful to let everyone know who thought of the idea. If Bren thinks a person is talented, he will assign them to various projects (anything from building a bridge to seeking intelligence on an enemy). If the Sider

to various projects (anything from building a bridge to seeking intelligence on an enemy). If the Sider completes those projects, they will be given more and more important projects. Bren's most trusted Siders are put in charge of vitally important projects and missions. Bren tries not to let his personal feelings about a person get in the way of how much he trusts them to complete projects, though he often can't help but like people who serve the gang with loyalty and cleverness.

Buying better climbing gear (Climbing Pads or Climbing Pads: Elite) will make the Sider a more efficient and skilled climber and will make them eligible for missions that require difficult climbs.

Population- There are about 500 Siders (as compared to the 1,200 Roofers). About three hundred of the Siders were Roofers at one point. About 300 climb using bare hands, rock climbing equipment and homemade climbing supplies. About 150 use secondary-nanotech climbing pads. Only about 50 (typically the oldest and most experienced Siders) use the top-of-the line elite climbing pads (see p.139).

External Relations- Other gangs in the city are often irrelevant to the Siders. The Siders rarely have the time or hatred to spare on fighting with another gang, and they rarely form alliances with other gangs. Most gangs think of the Siders in the same way: as an irrelevant force that is of no important to anyone other than the Roofers. Unlike the Roofers, the Siders rarely have to worry about other people intruding on their turf. The only people with any propensity to "trespass" on the sides of buildings are unborn cat burglars, and the Siders are too overextended as it is to give a damn about them. The Risen occasionally climb up on to ledges and fire escapes to ambush enemies from, and the Siders don't usually care unless the Risen get in their way.

   Roofers: The Siders hate the Roofers. They think of the Roofers as complacent, power-hungry, arrogant bullies. They think of the Roofers as a good idea (Bren's idea) that was hijacked by a bunch of worthless "popular kids." Their goal is to destroy the founders and everyone loyal to them, then to take over the rooftops (and the remaining members) with a new sort of organization. To this end, they attack the Roofers. Their hatred of the Roofers waxes and wanes: sometimes the Roofers have done little to offend them and they only attack every once in a while, other times a Roofer murder of a comrade is hot on their minds and they attack several times a night.

   Security Guards, Night Shift, Y1s: The Siders engage in quite a lot of burglary. They crawl in through the windows of office buildings and taking off with anything they can, leaving before security guards can even get to them. They typically sell or trade what they steal in order to buy better climbing equipment. Their frequent burglaries get them in trouble with well freelancers working as security guards (and, to a lesser extent, with Night Shift officers and Y1s).

Military Style- Each major attack has a specific battle strategy authored by Bren Tate. The Siders are carefully coordinated, all attacking at exactly the same time. The Siders stealthfully move to the sides of a building or buildings where the enemies are. They crawl in to open windows and wait for the right time to attack. Then they crawl out and move as quickly as they can either up (if

they are attacking Roofers) or down (if they are attacking ground enemies). They move in to weapons range (poking their heads up on to a rooftop or climbing down until they are close enough to fire at targets on the ground). Then, they use their crossbows to pick off one or two targets. Before the enemy can organize a counter-strike, the Siders climb away and escape from the area. They never seek to destroy an enemy in a single battle. The perfect battle for the Siders is one in which they lose none of their own soldiers and take out at least one enemy soldier. If they can achieve this they will attack again and again every night (sometimes several times a night if they are really mad) until the enemy's numbers and morale weaken.

Typical Weapon- The Siders carry crossbows (which they keep attached to their backs when they are climbing).

Turf- The Siders consider the sides of all building to be their turf, though they rarely hang out there. They hang out in abandoned rooms on the upper floors of tall buildings. When they move around the city they use a combination of ground travel (including riding the subways), moving around on the sides of buildings and running along the Roofer's rooftop highways.

Distinguishing Features- To distinguish themselves from Roofers, Siders wear clothing with black and white stripes (rather than the checkerboard patterns of the Roofers). They are also usually seen wearing climbing gear: from the most primitive (ropes, pitons, hammers) to the most complex (gloves and shoes that use secondary nanotech gels to climb walls). Almost every Sider carried a crossbow.

Symbols- Horizontal stripes are a common symbol used by the Siders. A column of horizontal stripes represents the stories of a building and are often used in quick maps scrawled by Siders.

Slang

   Belay: v., to secure a climber to a rope.

   Chimney: v., to move up and down through a crevice with ones back pressed against one wall and hands and feet pressed against the other.

   Façade: n., (pronounced fə-säd) the front or 'face' of a building.

   Free Climbing: v., climbing using only hands and feet.

Skills

   Free Skills: Climbing (3), Archery (1).

   Skill Costs: ATH 4, BIO 8, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 7, INTL 7, MIL 7, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 7, THIE 6, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Income- $1,250 +$155/wk.

Special Equipment- Free Crossbow and 10 bolts, $200 in climbing equipment (e.g. Rock Climbing Kit, Rope: Climbing, Rope and Grapple, Climbing Pads, Climbing Pads: Elite.

Suggested Skills- Acrobatics, Alarm Systems, Archery, Carpentry, Climbing, Linework, Military Tactics.

Suggested Equipment- Autofall, Climbing Pads, Protective Gloves, Rope: Climbing.

Suggested Reading- City Infrastructure: Buildings, Roofers (p.254).

Skin Borgs

In Brief- Warlike, expansionist gang. Wear multiple layers of high-tech armor. Social structure of violence and intimidation.

Favorable Stereotypes- Strong, unashamed, willful, honest, know what they want, don't justify their actions with ideologies.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Violent, brutal, stupid, prejudiced, ignorant, paranoid, small-minded throwbacks and conquerors.

Other Names- Skins, Armor Borgs, the 181st Street Gang, 181AMs.

Origin- The Skin Borgs started as a small corner gang in the Inwood/Washington Heights section in the Northern part of the city. The gang had little to distinguish it and they were not known by any name other than the name of their corner (181 and Amsterdam or "181AM"). They sold drugs when they could get them, but this was never a regular thing. In 2074, the gang intercepted a shipment of high-tech armor. This armor was military surplus, recovered from a secret Freedom Army cache, and was being moved through the city black market on its way to be sold to parties unknown. This armor, although nearly 20 years old, was some of the first armor ever created using secondary nanotechnology (materials built, molecule by molecule, by nanobots) and was incredibly light, strong and flexible. They came to be known as "skins" in city slang. The corner gang decided to keep the armor they had stolen, rather than selling it, and suddenly they had an advantage over other corner gangs. Donning the armor (sometimes more than one suit at a time), they did battle with other corner gangs as well as robbing convenience and liquor stores. As they wiped out the other nearby corner gangs, they absorbed more turf and gained more members. Unfortunately, there wasn't enough armor to go around, but the 181AMs had grown to like having better armor than anyone else around them, so they created a new rule: nobody could join the gang without first procuring themselves a good set of armor. "Good armor" was defined simply: if the person could take a no-holds-barred beating by the other members and survive, the armor was good enough.

The 181AMs were growing to be something more than just a corner gang (and started being called Skin Borgs). At the same time, the Drug Lords stopped selling to the large drug-selling street gangs. The Skin Borgs had always been dwarfed in size and military might by the large drug gangs, but now they sensed a weakness and they pounced. Even as the Inwood/Washington Heights drug gangs were self-destructing, the Skin Borgs made war against them, stealing as much as they could from their dying enemies. The Skin Borgs sold what they stole and reinvested it in more and better armor. They also continued to rob convenience and liquor stores, and even started successful protection rackets in some areas.

The Skin Borg's rate of growth steadily increased starting in 2075. The more they grew and the more territory they held, the more young people were exposed to the Skin Borgs. Young wells who were just starting to explore the streets saw a group of people who seemed completely untouchable. Knowing they would benefit from more applicants, the Skin Borgs encouraged their admiration by young people. In the years between 2075 and 2079 the size of the Skin Borgs doubled once of twice a year. In 2074, there weren't even a thousand secondary nanotech skins in the city, by 2078 there were a thousand Skin Borgs, each with one or more skins. The elder Skin Borgs continued to upgrade, buying more and more skins and giving hand-me-downs to siblings or selling them at cheap prices to wanna-be Skin Borgs.

The Skin Borgs continued to wipe out corner gangs and the remnants of old-time drug gangs. The first "new style" gang they encountered was the Honeys. The Honeys were an Indie brewers club who sold psychoactive drinks and defended themselves with genetically engineered bees (among other things). The Honeys were typical of the new style gangs: they did not sell addictive street drugs, they had access to skills and technology, and they found unique and innovative ways to do battle. The Honeys were the first gang that was actually hard for the Skin Borgs to defeat. They matched the Skin Borgs in person-to-person military effectiveness, but the Skin Borgs had greater numbers and within a few months they had wiped out the Honeys and looted their territory. In the five years that there have been "modern gangs" this is the first gang of any importance to be completely wiped out by an enemy (unless you count the Sat Jumpers' aborted experiments with ganghood).

The Skin Borgs continued to expand Southwards. In 2079, only a year ago, the Skin Borg's rapid expansion was halted. They ran in to three new-style gangs: the Purists, Orphans and Hummingbirds. The three gangs joined together to form a blockade against the Skin Borgs and they have been able to fight off the Skin Borgs without losing more than a few blocks of their turf. The Skin Borgs have also discovered a thorn in their side: the Lumens. The Lumens are a large cult living in the Cloisters inside Skin Borg territory. When the Skin Borgs discovered that the Lumens were operating in their turf they attempted to wipe the Lumens out, but the Lumens fought back so viciously and so effectively that the Skin Borgs have decided to leave them alone, for now.

Timeline

2072- 181st and Amsterdam corner gang forms.
2074- 181AMs steal a shipment of high-tech armor (skins), conquer nearby corner gangs.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate, weakening old-time street gangs.
2078- Skin Borgs number 1000.
2078- Skin Borgs fight and destroy Honeys.
2079- Skin Borgs make peace with the Lumens.
2079- Skin Borgs hit the Purist-Hummingbird-Oprhan blockade.

Joining- The first step to joining the Skin Borgs is to get a good Skin. Most applicants are young Wells who have just escaped from their parents' apartments who can't afford to buy a used skin on the black market. Some engage in theft or drug selling until they make enough money to buy a Skin on the black market. Others steal skins (one common approach is to find a person walking the streets with a skin, ambush them and steal their skin). Others follow around Skin Borgs, stealing skins off of dead bodies.

Lifestyle- The Skin Borgs do not attack mindlessly or without motivation. The majority of Skin Borgs are driven by a simple and unspoken philosophy: weakness equals pain. Most people who grow up to become Skin Borgs were abused in some way as children and are looking for ways to never experience that kind of pain again. Donning several layers of armor and never taking them off is only the most visible means of avoiding pain: Skin Borgs learn

never to trust, show weakness, express emotions (other than hate) or let down their defenses against anyone. Many Skin Borgs take it upon themselves to point out to another Skin Borg when he or she has a weakness by using that weakness to hurt the person. For the Skin Borgs, hurting someone is showing them love if it teaches the person to avoid being hurt that way in the future.

Skin Borgs are the uncontested rulers of the neighborhoods they control. They feel free to steal from whatever stores they want and they often charge protection money. They beat up anyone who shows them disrespect. In exchange they do try to keep non-Skin Borg threats to a minimum. They act almost like neighborhood police: chasing out addicts and pushers and hunting down violent criminals. They patrol the turf they own, looking for people who do not belong there. The Skin Borgs are always on the defensive against any enemy that might try to penetrate their turf.

The Skin Borgs are also always on the offensive: always probing their enemies for any weakness. Skin Borgs relentlessly patrol 145th Street, looking for a weakness in the blockade or a group of enemies that look like they might be easy to take. They also travel past the blockade via the subway and wander around the city in small groups looking for trouble. They try to intimidate anyone they can meet: their goal being to show the entire city that the Skin Borgs are the toughest ones around.

Groups of Skin Borgs will lay claim to a corner in Skin Borg turf and will behave much like corner gangs: they hang around on the corner together day after day, drinking alcohol, joking and telling stories, watching what goes on in the city.

Social Structure- Among the Skin Borg, the ability to intimidate means the right to give orders. Any Skin Borg will give orders to any other Skin Borg they think they could take in a fight. In situations where both Skin Borgs think they can take each other, a fight is necessary to establish the social order. Fights are typically hand-to-hand and between the two opponents, and end when one opponent stops fighting. Broken bones, concussions, internal bruising and heat exhaustion are usually the worst that can happen in a Skin Borg fight, although a handful of deaths have occurred. Every day the social order is remaking itself as some Skin Borgs become weaker due to battle injuries and others become stronger thanks to training, muscle implants and better skins. Since Skin Borgs spend most of their day on their corner, the social order around them is well established, but then they go someplace else and meet with Skin Borgs they do not know, then combat is usually necessary to establish dominance.

There is a core of about 20 older Skin Borgs who have been buying newer and better skins since the 181AMs donned their first armor. These Skin Borgs have skins so advanced that not even the toughest, meanest, strongest young Skin Borg can best them in battle. Among the layers of skins they wear, they have strength skins and temperature skins. These skins allow them to wear an almost unlimited number of skins without being burdened down or being prone to heat exhaustion. Leadership is not often needed among the Skin Borg: every Skin Borgs knows to attack their enemies and grab turf without being told.

In those rare cases when the Skin Borgs are at some sort of impasse or fork in the road, these elder Skin Borgs meet and decide what the gang will do.

Advancement- One of the fastest ways to get ahead is to get some new skin that can be worn instead of or in addition to other skins. There are many types of skins that provide different advantages to Skin Borgs, but most at least help shield the Skin Borg from damage. Skins can be bought, stolen or retrieved from the bodies of dead Skin Borgs. Physical and martial arts training can also help. Advancement is also a matter of personality: some people just don't have it in them to challenge every Skin Borg they come across, others do. Developing the right attitude can do as much for a person's place in the gang as anything else.

Population- There are about 2,700 Skin Borgs.

External Relations- For the Skin Borgs, the formula is simple: Strength, the only cure for weakness and suffering, is best achieved by obtaining secondary nanotech armor. To gain this armor requires money, and the best way to obtain money is to force a gang out of their turf and then loot it. Thus, the Skin Borgs are constantly driven to make war and destroy other gangs. Ideally, they like to destroy a gang and incorporate many of that gangs members in to their ranks. Their current stalemate has been quite troubling for the Skin Borgs: they have been unable to expand territory (even while their population had increased) and this means less money and less access to skins per Skin Borg. The Skin Borgs have continues to relentlessly hammer their enemies at 145th Street, and have become so frustrated that they have started looking for more creative strategies. The Skin Borgs have never made an alliance with any other gang, but now the elders are seriously discussing such possibilities.

Nearby Gangs: Every gang in the city knows that the Skin Borgs would attack them if they were the next gang whose turf the Skin Borgs wanted. Most gangs hope that the Purists, Orphans and Hummingbirds will continue to hold back the Skin Borgs so the other hangs won't have to deal with them. Other gangs nearby the Skin Borg's southern border know that if alliance were to fall, they would be the next victims of Skin Borg aggression. The Night Shift and Humankalorie are not afraid of prolonged war with the Skin Borg. They have fought with the Skin Borgs before and think they know how to handle them. The Math Addicts and Immortals are less confident of their ability to stand up against the Skin Borgs and try to do what they can to aid the Hummingdbird-Orphan-Purist alliance without actually getting in to a war with the Skin Borgs.

Corner gangs: Corner gangs are the most likely potential victims of Skin Borg aggression. The Skin Borgs typically offer a corner gang two choices: get skins and join us, or be wiped out. Many corner gangs have moved or retired just because the Skin Borgs were looming close.

Other City Gangs: In the last few years, nearly one third of the city's 28 major gang and street people families have fought in wars against the Skin Borgs, most of these wars have been spawned by chance meetings with Skin Borgs in which the Skin Borgs provoked violence by trying to intimidate the other gang members. These wars are never as intense as the war with the Purists, Hummingbirds and Orphans, but they do drain some of the resources that might otherwise let the Skin Borgs gain some ground.

Trespassers: The Skin Borgs are fiercely protective of their turf and don't like anyone entering it. For a while, the Boarders were trespassing on Skin Borg turf just because they knew it annoyed them. The Skin Borgs organized a bloody ambush and now even the Boarders are wary of entering Skin Borg turf. Several of the Skin Borgs now own nice slipboards.

Freaks: Many of the ex-members of the Honeys have fled to Freak territory and have been given sanctuary there by Habey Cox. They have influence over Habey and many other Freaks and the Freaks have taken on an anti-Skin Borg position.

Military Style- In battle, the Skin Borgs have little skill, organization or special abilities. Their primary advantages are large numbers and superior armor. Each Skin Borgs acts independently, finding enemies and trying to incapacitate them. The Skin Borgs enter a battle with one goal in mind: to do as much damage as possible to the enemy army. The Skin Borgs are not especially bloodthirsty: most Skin Borgs are perfectly satisfied with breaking someone's legs. The Skin Borgs can usually keep up a fight for much longer than an enemy can and will often try to out-endure an enemy army. The main thing the Skin Borgs have to worry about is an enemy that tries to "get creative" and use some alternate form of weapon (noxious gasses, slippery foam, psychic attacks) that not all Skin Borgs have protection from.

Typical Weapon- The majority of Skin Borgs fight with clubs or pipes (although many fight with fists alone).

Turf- The Skin Borgs have the largest block of turf in the city, their control is over the whole Northern tip of the island, including parts of town that were once known as Inwood, Fort George, Washington Heights, Hamilton Heights and parts of Harlem. Skin Borg territory is currently ends at 145th Street, though this border shifts as the Skin Borgs gain and lose ground.

Within Skin Borg territory are two out of twelve subway stops, the George Washington Bridge (one of the three operating ways in and out of the city), and what was once some of the wealthiest and some of the poorest neighborhoods in the city. Inwood, to the far Northwest of the island, is a very hilly section with expensive houses built atop the hills. This was the part of town once ruled by the Indie gang the Honeys before they were destroyed by the Skin Borgs. This part of Inwood is very green and contains the last bit of untouched woods from before the arrival of Europeans. To the East, in a flatter section, is a large railroad yard used cooperatively by several corporations. This railyard is surrounded by several industrial complexes, each spewing pollution in to the air.

South of Inwood, starting at Dyckman Street is the neighborhood of Washington Heights. Washington Heights has been typically divided by Broadway. They upper-lower class live in nicer residential neighborhoods West of Broadway and poorer working people live in slums to the East. Washington Heights became mostly black in the 1960s, then during the 1980s there was a large influx of Latin Americans, mostly Dominicans. By 1990, Washington Heights (and part of Inwood) had the largest Dominican community in the US. Even today, most of the people living here (including a large number of Skin Borgs) are of Dominican descent. This part of town contains the original corner that the corner gang which would eventually become the Skin Borgs started on, at 181st Street and Amsterdam Avenue, and it is still an important gathering place for the oldest and most powerful members of the gang. Washington Heights has a few parks (including Fort Tyron Park) and Yeshiva University, an Orthodox Jewish college and seminary started in 1886. Yeshiva University is still in use part of the year. Also in Washington Heights, at 165th to 168th Streets is the ruins of Columbia Medical Center, once one of the country's most prestigious medical complexes.

In the West part of Washington Heights, in Fort Tyron Park, are the Cloisters. The cloisters were built as a museum using parts of five French monasteries (and other European ruins) which were brought over to America and assembled (with financing by John D. Rockefeller). It contains several exhibit halls and a replica medieval European garden. The Cloisters have been taken over by the cult known as the Lumens who are a constant thorn in the side of the Skin Borgs. The Lumens have been using the Cloisters as a castle: it is their main living space and their main defense against enemies.

To the South of Washington Heights, starting at 155th Street, is a neighborhood known as Hamilton Heights. Most housing in this neighborhood dates from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In the 1960s many brownstones were built for middle class blacks. In the Northwest of Hamilton Heights is Trinity Cemetery, one of Manhattan's few (and largest) cemeteries, containing the remains of several noteworthy New York historical figures. To the East of Washington Heights is a neighborhood once known as Sugar Hill, traditionally a neighborhood of wealthier blacks and once the home of important founders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

South of Hamilton Heights, starting at 175th Street is a subsection of Harlem known as Morningside Heights. The Skin Borgs only control a portion of this neighborhood. This is mostly a residential neighborhood with many pre-WWII shops, restaurants and apartment buildings built along Broadway.

The Skin Borgs do significantly change the neighborhoods that they control. The Skin Borgs are one of the most intimidating looking gangs and their mere presence drives out many people, from homeless addicts to Indie home-owners, leaving behind a depressed economy and many vacant buildings. Those businesses that remain open are constantly being either robbed by Skin Borgs or coerced for protection money.

Distinguishing Features- The Skin Borgs wear one or more skins: high-tech armors made of materials so thin that they resemble jumpsuits. Some Skin Borgs wear helmets, others wear armored masks (looking much like ski masks) and some let their heads go unprotected. Powerful Skin Borgs wear several layers of armor on top of each other. The outer skin is usually spray-painted black with personal decorations and symbols in brighter colors. Some Skin Borgs wear old leather belts wrapped around waists, biceps and thighs. Many have taken steroids or gotten muscle implants and are physically large.

Symbols- The most common symbol for the Skin Borgs is the shape of a ski-mask with round eyes and a gaping-mouth hole.

Slang

Skin: n., a thin, tight fitting secondary nanotech armor suit.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 9, CMBT 6, CRTV 7, INFO 8, INTL 9, MIL 7, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Income- $1,000 +$125/wk.

Special Equipment- Since the Skin Borgs have so many contacts, they can get skins 25% cheaper than other city residents. The PC starts with $2000 worth of armor.

Suggested Skills- Boxing, Light Sleep, Poison Tolerance, Running, Subway Fighting, Street Fighting: Unarmed, Wrestling.

Suggested Equipment- Anti-Psychic Cap, Gas Mask, Nanoweave Armor, Modern Chainmail, Pipe, Spiked Armor: Poison, Thor-O-Zine.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, Gangs: War.

Technophiles

In Brief- Small, loose group, obsessed with the art of technology, favoring a hands-on approach to tech.

Favorable Stereotypes- Smart, funny, altruistic, knowledgeable, intuitive, always looking for a challenge.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Physically and emotional weak, impractical, obsessive, easily distracted geeks with poor social skills.

Other Names- Techies, SoHo Techies, Tech Geeks, Engineers, Monkeywrenches.

Origin- In the 1960s, artists found something wonderful in the economically depressed district of SoHo: cheap loft space that they could use for live-in studios and galleries. The SoHo art scene boomed and SoHo became trendy, soon too trendy for most artists to afford to live there. SoHo remained one of the city's more gentrified neighborhoods until the Freedom Wars changed everything.

After the Freedom Wars, a new crowd discovered the same thing that the artists had discovered nearly a century ago: cheap loft space that was perfect for any kind of personal project. Many of the new SoHo crowd were traditional artists in the new post-War art scene, but many more were techies. Some techies were engineers working for the nearby subway maintenance center, others worked on repairs to the nearby Holland Tunnel or the construction of new industrial complexes nearby. Others were students of architecture, attracted to the unique building styles of the area. SoHo gained a reputation as a place where young techies were and more techies came to the neighborhood.

Before the Freedom Wars, modern technology was strictly controlled by the large corporations, and the only people who really got to explore its possibilities were elite corporate R&D scientists and daring tech criminals. After the Freedom Wars, most pre-War patents and corporate research fell in to the public domain. Secondary nanotech also revolutionized tech, making many devices and machines that had been top-of-the-line only a decade ago practically obsolete. Together, the idealized vision of the old tech criminals, the unprecedented public access to technology information and old (but still perfectly good) technology and tools being sold dirt cheap made the city tech scene in to the "new art scene." There was a growing feeling among Indies and Wells that technology was more art than science and that aesthetics alone were a good enough reason to mess with technology. Money could sometimes be made off of being a techie, but most people living in the area worked with technology for the love of technology alone.

The neighborhood had a vibrant and closely-knit community. The techies needed audiences that could appreciate the clever things they were creating, and they expanded their contacts within the community as much as possible. Most of the techies were internet-savvy and there were dozens of SoHo message boards concerning every kind of technical interest. A constant topic of discussion on these boards was how to the neighborhood could defend itself against violence. The community had grown up with the problem of violent drug gangs and drug addicts, and they had managed to get by. In 2075, however, things seemed to be getting worse. Instead of constant infighting, the drug pushers seemed suddenly organized, and they were armed with new drugs that could addict someone with just one dose. The drug pushers started holding people down and injecting them. The drug pushers seemed willing to go after anyone in the city except members of powerful street gangs. For some technophiles, the solution was immediately obvious: become a street gang. Many, however, still remembered with great distaste the actions of the old drug-selling street gangs, and the idea of becoming a gang was disgusting and even insulting to them.

The technophiles slowly became more and more oriented to self-protection. It started with a few technophiles sticking cameras out of their loft windows and setting up sites where technophiles could monitor the neighborhood and keep track of who was wandering around in it. Pusher gangs found that when they entered the area the streets were mostly empty. From this point, it wasn't long until small parties of techies were getting together to chase criminals out of their the neighborhood. The city began to see the SoHo techies as a gang, and they responded as if they were a gang: if a techie did something to a gang member, that gang member's gang would respond with violence against any SoHo techie they could get a hold of. Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, being treated as a gang forced the SoHo techies to take the final steps to being a full gang: with a code of revenge and fighting wars of self-defense against other gangs.

Timeline

2057- City re-opened to habitation.
2057- Subway Service Center hires young people to repair subway cars.
2063- First "SoHo Tech" internet message board.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate, become larger threat.
2076- "SoHo Action Squad" chases violent criminals out of the neighborhood.
2077- Technophiles in first real gang war.

Joining- There are no real qualifications for joining the Technophiles, and nobody really keeps track of membership. Most Technophiles rent loft apartments in Technophile territory, but a few live in other parts of the city. About the only universal of membership is hanging out on Technophile internet message boards and communicating with other Technophiles about common interests and gang defense. One might be considered a real Technophile as soon as other Technophiles recognize one's internet handle.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has probably rented loft space in Technophile turf for about a year, is known on Technophile message boards (especially those devoted to whatever type of tech the PC is interested in) and the PC has probably had at least one open-house showing of some technological project.

Lifestyle- The Technophile scene is a lot like the art scene, except instead of art the Technophiles create technological masterpieces. The technophiles do a lot of research on the internet, learning about technologies they've never used before and tracking down the answers to obscure technical problems, often by posting on SoHo tech message boards. Technophiles also spend a lot of time shopping for parts that they need. They shop for used parts on the internet, they scavenge from abandoned buildings and trash heaps, they hunt through thrift stores and they trade with black market traders and homeless scavengers. Technophiles spend much of their day actually assembling their projects: putting things together, fixing things, tuning things up, adding on new components. Technophiles work slowly because they learn as they work, they are constantly teaching themselves and figuring out new methods. They learn to use a number of tools, from pulleys to blowtorches.

What the Technophiles build is often on a whim. Some projects have a real-world utility, others are designed just to be "cool." Some projects involve programming, but most have some physical component. Technophiles enjoy learning about and using older technologies. They have an appreciation for the genius that it took to do things using older tech: in some ways, modern tech is to easy. A Technophile may choose to limit himself or herself to using only computer parts from forty years ago, or may use technology like steam engines and clockworks. Technophiles often build things just to prove they can, and for any given piece of tech there is probably a Technophile who has built one. Most Technophiles work in loft apartments where the size of their projects is limited only by the size of the loft. Many Technophiles build machines that are too big to fit through the door and stay in the loft apartments until the Technophile decides he or she needs the parts for something else and breaks it down.

Some of the Technophiles living in SoHo make some money off of their technology: they run internet servers on scrounged-parts machines, they run freelance appliance repair shops, they patent inventions and sell them to corporations. Every once in a while, a rich technology collector might come through and buy some of the Technophiles' creations for pure aesthetic value. Any money they do make is typically re-invested in to more technology. Many Technophiles work minimum wage jobs or save every penny they can from their welfare checks and sink it in to technology. In all cases, the money is simply seen as a means to get a hold of more tech.

People who know about Technophiles' facility with tech (especially old tech) often come to Technophiles looking to repair things. Friends and relatives of Technophiles can often be seen carting appliances in to Technophile turf for repair. Many Technophiles make extra money doing repairs, and a few even own legitimate businesses.

Technophiles enjoy showing off their tech, and when they build something they are especially proud of they have showings, inviting every other Technophile they can to come look at the thing in action. Technophiles enjoy viewing technology. They have endless curiosity about how things work and any time they run in to a new or very old piece of tech they've never seen before, they have to figure out what it does. In some ways the love affair isn't really with tech, it's with the creative process behind the engineering of technology. Technophiles don't enjoy impressive machines, they enjoy clever solutions to engineering problems. Technophiles are so well acquainted with the creative process that they sometimes seem to have a "mystical" understanding of technology, almost as if they can look at a piece of technology and know what was going on in the mind of the person or people who designed it.

Social Structure- The Technophiles are people brought together by mutual interests. There are dozens of internet message boards where Technophiles talk about any kind of tech. As usually happens on message boards with a population of regulars, talk often turns to personal matters and close friendships often form. Technophiles may meet in person for the first time when they go to view the unveiling of a completed project, help with a shared project, or trade homemade equipment. Technophile society is thus a mass of acquaintanceships and friendships. Typically, no Technophile is more than a friend-of-a-friend away from any other Technophile.

There is no leadership among the Technophiles. The Technophiles are individualistic, sometimes arrogant, and wouldn't like being told what to do. The community does have acknowledged gurus. Say a Technophile is having a problem with a certain valve design, he or she will find the valve guru of the Technophiles and ask him or her for advice. The asker is honor-bound to do everything he or she can to find the solution before going to the guru, the guru is honor-bound to research the problem until he or she finds a solution, and the asker if honor-bound to follow the advice of the guru. Helia Lee has been acknowledged for some time as the guru of battle strategy, and when the Technophiles decide by mass consensus that they are going to go to battle, they typically consult Helia for a battle plan (unless they outnumber the enemy to a degree that they don't think they need a special plan).

Advancement- The only way to advance in the Technophiles is to be known as the Guru of something. Gurus rarely give up their position. Most see it as an honor and study hard to remain the top expert in that field. Practically the only times when Guru positions become available is when Gurus die or leave the city or when the Gurus themselves acknowledge that someone else knows more than they do. It is much easier to become the Guru of something that nobody else is a Guru of yet. New technologies are appearing all the time that do not yet have Gurus and there are some technologies that there is not as much interest in (there is a Guru of VR Programming, there is not yet a Guru of Furniture-Making). A Technophile can become a Guru either through consistently giving good advice over several months, or by doing something really spectacular that convinces people that the Technophile is a genius in that particular area. There is not always one specific event that marks someone a Guru, and sometimes a person might not even be sure if he or she is a Guru.

Population- There are about 1000 Technophiles.

External Relations- The Technophiles are a reluctant gang. Most Technophiles refuse to have their personal relationships controlled by gang politics and they try to get people to relate to them as unique individuals and not as members of a gang. There are a lot of people who are lotal to the Technophiles but consider themselves a member or ally of some other city group.

    Indie Techs: Many Technophiles have worked or would like to work as a Sat Jumper. Technophiles hang out on a lot of the same internet sites that Omniscients do and there are many Omniscient and Technophile friendships. The Arcadian's interest in old technology (specifically in old arcade games) often put them in contact with

Technophiles, and some of the Arcadian's most beloved games have been created by Technophiles. Despite all these connections with these groups, it is usually a class difference that keeps the Technophiles separate from the Indie Techs: the Technophiles are proud that they buy their tech from thrift stores or scrounge it from junk heaps, while most Indie techs would see that as silly and distasteful.

Crackers: The Crackers and Technophiles both scavenge tech, but for very different reasons. Technophiles find the Cracker's utilitarian attitude towards technology to be distasteful and disrespectful of the tech. Technophiles see Crackers as exploiting tech, destroying as much as they create without any real understanding of how it works. Crackers, on the other hand, see Technophiles as a bunch of idealistic dreamers who are likely to get in their way by appropriating some tech they need or taking over some business opportunity. Though the two often annoy each other, there is never any attempt to hurt each other.

Scavengers: Homeless scavengers (including Water Rats) often come through Technophile territory looking to sell old tech that they have rescued from dumpsters, abandoned buildings or houses with poor security systems. Technophiles, with their hands on approach to technology, are not afraid to meet with these scavengers, look over their wares and haggle over prices. The Water Rats and other scavengers often think of Technophiles as their nicest customers. Technophiles also get to know their local black market traders quite well. Technophiles sometimes have to teach the traders short courses on technology so that the traders know what to look for when acquiring tech. Traders in Technophiles territory are known as some of the most technologically savvy in the city.

Colin: Many Technophiles build their own mental installers. Since these rare devices is what Colin (p.366) uses to reproduce himself, Technophiles have to be on guard for Colins trying to infiltrate their neighborhood. Of all the gangs the Technophiles are the most law abiding and the Night Shift doesn't mind coming in to Technophile territory to investigate some suspicious activity that might be a Colin.

Military Style- The Technophiles' biggest advantage in warfare is homemade equipment created and owned by Technophiles. One Technophile has a hot air dirigible that she is always willing to take out to spy on the enemy or drop things on them. One Technophile owns three homemade cannons which he pulls with three refurbished lime-green station wagons. Another Technophile has a trebuchet (a type of catapult) that, when it is working, can hurl huge chunks of concrete with incredible accuracy. Many Technophiles have homemade one-shot pistols.

When the Technophiles are fighting defensively, they usually try to flee and escape back in to their homes (where many have home defense devices that discourage attackers from following them). They wait in their homes until they can organize an offensive counter-strike. Helia Lee is generally contacted and asked to draw up a battle plan. This battle plan is shared, via the internet, with other Technophiles and the forces assemble. The Technophiles usually depend on some clever strategic maneuver to give them an advantage over their enemy, and when Helia Lee can't create a battle plan that Technophiles feel is clever, most would rather not even attack.

Helia likes to vary her battle plans so they will not be predicted, but the most common plan works like this: a Technophile in a hot air balloon radios down the exact location of the enemy. Canons, the trebuchet and the balloon are used to lob projectiles in to the enemy mass from afar. When the enemy breaks up to avoid being hit, one small piece of the enemy is isolated, ambushed and incapacitated. The Technophiles fire off their one-shot pistols, hoping to weaken the enemy, try to take the rest out (if they can) with handheld weapons like pipes and wrenches, then take off. The Technophiles are not bloodthirsty and do not take out any more of the enemy than they think they need to in order to prove their point.

Typical Weapon- Homemade one-shot pistols are the most common weapons used by Technophiles.

Turf- A small block of turf taking up most of the SoHo neighborhood. Technophile territory is South of Houston St., North of Canal St., East of Hudson Ave. and West of La Guardia Place. This part of town has seen quite a lot of changes over the centuries. In 1825 it was the most densely populated residential area in the city, then retail stores, hotels, music houses and other businesses came in, building large cast-iron, marble and brownstone buildings. These buildings were often built with large commercial first floors and offices, storage rooms and manufacturing spaces in the upper lofts. Later, these trendy businesses moved out and up to Fifth Avenue. As industry changed in the mid 20th century, fewer and fewer of the area's industrial spaces were useful and the area fell in to a slump until the 1960s when artists found that the area had cheap loft space they could use for studios, galleries and homes. The artists made the area trendy, bringing many shops, cafes and restaurants (many of which have been reopened in modern times to serve Technophiles).

Distinguishing Features- Some technophiles like to make their own clothes. Natural fabrics, undyed, are common. The clothing is fairly simple, much of it looks like something peasants might have worn during the renaissance or middle ages. Those who do not wear homemade clothing usually wear old ripped jeans and torn t-shirts from thrift stores with a lot of grease stains on them. Technophiles rarely go anywhere without either tools or a portable computer. Many wear patches with gears or wrenches to let people know that they are technophiles.

Symbols- Wrenches and gears are common symbols used by Technophiles.

Slang- Much of Technophile slang is taken from old computer geek slang that dates back to the 21st century computer geek scene (and sometimes even to the MIT Tech Model Railroad Club, many of whose members went on to become the first real hackers).

Bletcherous: adj., disgustingly designed.

Bum: v., make more efficient.

Crufty: adj., messy.

Dogwash: n., something of low priority.

Droid: n., person who follows rules blindly.

Frob: v., random manipulation.

Grep: v., look for something.

Handwave: n., distraction.

Kluge: n., a ridiculous or poorly designed quick fix.

Mongolian Clusterfuck: n., A project with too many people working on it.

Right Thing: n., The best possible solution to a technical problem.

Scrog: v., Damage.

Snarf: V., Grab or eat.

Skills

Free Skills: Technological Sympathy (1)

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 8, CMBT 8, CRTV 4, INFO 5, INTL 6, MIL 8, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 4, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 7.

Special Skills: The special skill Technological Sympathy costs 7 skill points per level.

Technological Sympathy (INL)- This skill represents knowledge of the creative process of engineering and technology (not knowledge of any specific technology). This skill is gained by being around creative, technical people and learning the problem solving process so well that the PC can "see" it operating in any technical design.

Easy (10): Judge the skill and creativity with which a piece of technology was created.

Moderate (20): Recognize when two pieces of technology have the same creator.

Hard (30): Tell whether the design for a piece of technology is flawed in any way.

Legendary (40): Gain a temporary level 1 in a technical skill simply by examining the components, plans or source-code for a piece of that technology.

Income- $1,000 +$200/wk.

Special Equipment- $2500 in pirated data. $2000 in tools, repair parts and homemade tech (computers, communication equipment, robots, sensory devices, vehicles and weapons).

Homemade Equipment

Homemade equipment always has the following disadvantages:

-It is never state of the art. Homemade technology is never as good as that coming out of corporate R&D labs. Even the best of homemade tech is usually equivalent to what was on the market 2 or 3 years ago.

-More difficult to repair. When a part goes bad on homemade equipment, it might be impossible to ever find a replacement part, and if it is possible it will probably take quite a bit of scavenging (as opposed to store-bought equipment, for which a replacement part can be online and delivered the next day).

-Increased rate of breakage. Rather than store-bought tech, which is manufactured by AIs to conform to exacting standards and work perfectly, homemade tech can break quite easily. The breakage rate for homemade tech is usually around 20 times the breakage rate for store-bought tech.

Suggested Skills- Blacksmithing, Carpentry, Genetics: Cellular, Internet Browsing, Jellynailing, Linework, Network Protocols, Mental Programming, Operating Systems, Mechanics, Microelectronics, Programming: Applications, Robotics.

Suggested Equipment- Computer Repair Tools: Portable, Duct Tape, Electric Bicycle, Flying Camera, Laptop: Used, Linetap: Direct, Mini Blowtorch, Swiss Army Knife: Electronic-Large.

Suggested Reading- Information Technology, Scicnce.

Helia Lee
(War Guru of the Technophiles)

Level 2 Arcadian, Level 2 Technophile

Attributes- AGY 6, AWR 15, CHM 11, END 6, INL 19, SPD 8, STH 10, WIL 9, BDY 3, BLD 4, INCY 3.

Appearance- Caucasian with pale skin, pudgy, glasses, short curly light-brown hair. Helia tends to wear holey old cotton sweaters from thrift stores and faded jeans.

Social Status- Helia is the acknowledged Guru of strategic battle plans for the Technophiles and they go to her for advice (which they are bound to follow) for every major upcoming battle.

History- Helia is an Indie who joined the Arcadians as a teenager. She did moderately well as an Arcadian but got bored. She wanted to do something "constructive" and she left the Arcadians and joined the Technophiles. Among the Technophiles she found that Technophiles had created some really incredible weapons but were not using them effectively. Under her battle plans, the Technophiles first used their cannons to help them win a battle, and Helia quickly became the guru of war.

Personality- Helia is not quite sure who she is or what she should be doing with her life. She thought being an Arcadian would be great, but she found it just wasn't for her, and now she is not sure whether she will ever make a good Technophile. She enjoys casual sex and has thought about joining the Sexologists. She is always cheerful and confident when in public, but she usually feels like she doesn't belong, and when she can't keep herself busy this makes her mildly depressed. She is happiest when truly engrossed in a problem.

Motivations- Helia likes the Technophiles and thinks they are good people, and she wants to protect them. She knows that she knows more about planning battles than anyone else in the group and that they need her to hold their own during battle. She doesn't much like fighting, though she does insist on being on the front lines, feeling the consequences of her plans.

Methods- Helia likes to model battles in 3D, writing programs to simulate the behavior of soldiers in an army. When working on a problem she stays up all night, modeling every possibility. She creates packages of data describing a strategic plan with maps, text, and even video of her VR battles, none of which anyone has time to look through thoroughly.

Special Skills- Military Strategy (4), Mnemonics (3), Programming: AI (3), Programming: Application (2), Programming: Virus (1), Programming: VR (3), City History (2), Linear Modeling (2).

Special Equipment: Shield: Riot, Single Shot Gun, Stun Baton.

Typical Attack: On her action she tries to wing the opponent with her baton at INL (19) + AGY (6) + 1d20 vs. 20 (or 5 + 1d20 vs. 0). If successful, she does 1 ½ blunt damage and 5 electrical damage. For her reaction she parries with her riot shield at STH (10) + AGY (6) +10 (shield) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1 + 1d20 vs. 0). If the baton isn't working because of an enemy's armor, or if she runs out of charges (she only has two) she will pull out her Single Shot Pistol.

NON-GANG WELLS

Favorable Stereotypes- Strong willed, tough, ambitious, independent, resourceful.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Greedy, morally flexible, antisocial, violent.

When young wells first decide to leave the safety of their homes and hit the streets, the majority of them decide that the city is full of too many dangers and they need to join a large gang for self-defense. The idea of being a "gang member" may be distasteful to them at first, but this usually goes away when they meet some of the smart, vibrant, independent, nice people who have made the decision to join a gang. A minority of wells, however, decide not to join a large gang. Correct or not, these are typically people who think they can take care of themselves.

Being in a gang takes up a lot of a person's time, and non-gang wells have time for pursuits that well gang members can only dream of. There are quite a lot of good-paying jobs available in the city for someone who doesn't mind a little danger and doesn't have too many loyalties. These jobs are both above board (security guards), below board (mercenaries and assassins) and several shades of grey in between. For someone who wants to gain power quickly, this is the way to go: become a security guard, reinvest the money on making one a better fighter (armor, weapons, implants, training) and then get a better paying job.

Non-gang wells are often the focus of a lot of suspicion from well gang members. Well gang members want to know why someone is unwilling to join a gang and often assume the worst. They often assume that the non-gang well can't get along with others well enough to join a gang or is too selfish to care about anyone other than themselves.

Cornerpunks

In Brief- Members of gangs too small to make a name for themselves on the citywide gang scene.

Favorable Stereotypes- Unambitious, humble, with simple needs and strong friendships.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Ignorant, lazy, small time bullies, thugs and drug addicts with delusions of grandeur.

Other Names- Cornerboys, cornergirls, cornergangers.

Origin- Corner gangs are as old as the city itself. During the end of the eighteenth century, off-duty apprentices, all single young men with little hope for upward mobility, started forming gangs with memberships based on neighborhoods or streets of origin. Childhood friends would hang out, make trouble, and defend each other. In the mid 1800s, the gangs became more violent as organized crime (this time it was corrupt political machines) used them as pawns to manipulate elections. After the civil war, the corrupt leaders of these political machines became increasingly involved in prostitution and racketeering, and so did the gangs. The mafia, which ruled New York for more than half a century, was once nothing more than young cornerpunks from Italian neighborhoods who got jobs working for the corrupt political machines. The mafia made it big when prohibition made it possible to get rich quick selling bootlegged liquor. The mafia took over these rackets, and from the 1900s to the 1960s the simple corner gangs were fairly quiet. There were corner gangs, but they stayed small and seldom took trouble beyond the confines of their neighborhoods. In 1957, the musical West Side Story spread the image of gangs as knife wielding, territorial, but little danger to anyone except each other.

In the 1960s, however, the mafia monopoly over city rackets fell apart, and corner gangs started to become more involved in crime and more violent. In 1985, crack spread through the city like wildfire, and gang membership grew quickly. Young people growing up in poor (mostly black and Hispanic) neighborhoods saw that they could become rich selling crack and joined the street gangs that were the primary sales arm of the crack empire. Rather than modern-day swashbucklers with switchblades, the new image of gang members were of hardened criminals, a little crazy from using too much of their own product, carrying automatic weapons. Rather than tiny gangs made up of friends from the corner, these gangs were huge organizations with nationwide franchises. Street gangs and hard drugs remained synonymous in the city up until the drug trade was shattered by the Freedom Wars. As soon as the Freedom Wars ended, however, organized drug trade resumed and huge and powerful new street gangs rose up to sell those drugs. Then, in 2075, the Drug Lords consolidated in to a virtual monopoly, pulling the profit motive out from under the large street gangs. The large street gangs quickly self-destructed, even as a new type of gang was being created. The new gangs were based on shared ideologies and interests, and they attracted a far larger range of the population.

Without aggressive recruitment by large street gangs, small corner gangs once again became a popular means of self-defense. Tiny groups of friends from the same neighborhood, who liked hanging out together, would pledge to defend each other. There were fewer vices than ever to tempt the corner gangs to take up violent crime: selling drugs without the permission of the drug lords was difficult and dangerous, pimping was made equally dangerous by the Sexologist's war on pimps in 2079, and the growing population of low-wage well freelancers made "protection" racketeering less profitable. Corner gangs in modern times have had little access to profit from organized crime and thus little reason to grow. They stay small, they don't make a name for themselves on the city scene, yet to their members the corner gangs are still the most important things in the world.

Timeline

Late 1700s- First real street gangs in the city.
Mid 1800s- Street gangs become tools of corrupt political machines.
1920- Prohibition, mafia gains monopoly on city rackets.
1957- West Side Story opens.
1960s- Mafia loses its grip on city rackets.
1985- Crack cocaine revolutionizes crime and addiction.
2050- Freedom Wars end drug trade and street gangs.
2058- New post-war street gangs form.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate.
2079- Sexologist war on pimps.

Joining- Like street people families, most people grow up in a corner gang rather than joining. Most corner gangs around today are about 5 years old. Young teenage wells sneaking out of their apartments meet up with others from the neighborhood and became both friends and each other's protectors. Most cornergangers never made a conscious decision to join a gang, or for their small group of friends to become a gang, that's just how it worked out.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has typically been in the corner gang for about five years (as long as the gang has been around). The group's membership and lifestyle has been stable for some time, although the members have matured and become more world-wise.

Lifestyle- Some gangs have members who spend money on prostitutes, implants, gambling and other vices. These corner gangs constantly need money and they commit crimes to get money. These corner gangs give corner gangs the bad reputations they have as violent and immoral young killers. The majority of corner gangs, however, do not have expensive vices and do not commit violent crimes.

Corner gangs do not often last long, about seven years on average. They may dissolve as the members are killed or go on to other pursuits. The gang as a whole may join some larger gang, or the Drug Lords, en-masse. Rarely, a gang may grow and become more than just a corner gang. Although most corner gangs simply fizzle out, a few go on to greater glory and many of today's powerful gangs were once lowly corner gangs (Bleeders, Needle Punks, Roofers, Risen, Skin Borgs).

Corner gangs have no political power among the powers of the city. They are seldom known by anyone except people living within a few blocks of the gang's corner. While the gang may attempt to name themselves, most people will know them only by the gang's intersection. Most corner gangs have a "uniform." Very few people they meet will know what membership is signified by their uniform, although most people can guess that the person belongs to some form of gang.

Like members of larger gangs, corner gangs seek mutual-self protection through a code of revenge. If someone hurts one of theirs, the members are duty bound to seek revenge. Unlike the larger gangs, not everyone cares about the threat of revenge from a corner gang. For some people it is a serious enough threat to keep them from messing with members of corner gangs, for some it is not. The Drug Lords have orders to their pushers not to mess with members of most large gangs, but there are no such orders about the corner gangs. Whether pushers will mess with a member of a corner gang is decided by the pushers on a case-by-case basis.

The corner gang lifestyle can often be boring: it usually involves nothing more than hanging out, gossiping, watching people pass by, making vague threats against other corner gangs, and little else. Cornerpunks do not often have reason to leave their corners, unless they invent some sort of mission. Many cornerpunks use alcohol or other "soft drugs" to help them pass the time and cornerpunks have gotten a reputation as being lazy. Very often, drug use intensifies and slowly goes from softer to harder drugs. Many corner gangs, as a group, have fallen prey to addiction to drugs like God Killer. This "dark path" has turned many corner gangs from friendly and respectful community resources in to violent killers.

Some corner gangs have ambition to do something more with their lives than simply hang out on the corner. Some are waiting to be old enough to leave and join a corporation or gated community, some want to learn skills and become powerful psychics, fighters, hackers or thieves. Some have ambitions to become large sized gangs or to become pusher gangs working for the Drug Lords. For some these ambitions are low in intensity, they give the gang something to talk about and something to do on boring evenings. For a minority, these ambitions are quite intense.

Corner gangs usually have some members who are members but are not as involved with the gang as others. As people move on to different ambitions in life and move to different locations in the city, they may spend less and less time hanging out on the corner with their old friends. Most corner gangs that have been around for more than a few years have at least one "member" who shows up on the corner only once a week or less.

Social Structure- Corner gangs are too small to need any sort of established social structure. They may have rules, but these rules are little more than pacts between friends to act in a certain way or to avoid certain behaviors. For example: members of a corner gang may have an understanding that they will never use hard drugs or that they will never speak ill of each other in front of outsiders. When there is leadership, it is often unspoken: one person is simply more dominant and tends to lead the group.

Advancement- It is possible to advance within a corner gang by becoming the unspoken leader, but that is typically only a very small step of advancement. The real way to advance as a cornerganger is to make one's gang more powerful. The more well known the gang is, the more resources it has, the more it proves its ability to effect the city, the more influence a member of that gang has.

The goal of some corner gangs is to become a large gang, able to interact with the other large gangs as equals, able to attract members from all over the city. Although many corner gangs have this ambition, few actually succeed. There are many reasons that a corner gang's ambition can fail. Sometime only some of the members have this ambition. Often drug use gets in the way of ambition, keeps gang members poor and committing petty crimes. Often corner gangs seek to make a name for themselves through warfare, but they are quickly beaten down by a gang with greater military might than themselves. Often the corner gang doesn't have anything special to distinguish them and make other people want to join.

Population- There are around 150 corner gangs in the city at any given time, with an average of six members each (about 1000 total). Corner gangs rise and fall quite often, with an old corner gang dissolving and a new one forming about twice per month.

External Relations- The smart corner gangs stay out from underfoot of the larger street gangs, and those who are stupid enough to do otherwise usually end up being destroyed, forced to move to another side of the city, or incorporated in to the larger street gang.

    Other Corner Gangs: Instead, corner gangs spend much of their time dealing with each other. Corner gangs have many relationships with the other corner gangs that exist nearby, and they may have alliances, wars, distrust and agreements between them, just like the city's larger gangs do with each other.

Kid Gangs: Corner gangs are also one of the few adult organizations that have relationships with kids gangs, usually because the corner gangs once were kid gangs only a few years ago and know not to take kid gangs for granted.

Drug Lords: Cornerpunks are fair game for pushers to try to ambush and turn in to addicts. Like any other non-gang members, pushers decide on a case-by-case basis if a Cornerpunk is too much of a risk to mess with. When a corner gang seeks revenge for crimes committed against a member they typically try to attack the individual group of pushers that committed the crime (as opposed to the larger gangs who typically try to attack the Drug Lord organization as a whole).

Freelancers: Many cornerpunks leave their corners to become Freelancers, and may occasionally be called back to help their old neighborhood gangs in times of great need.

Military Style- Most corner gangs have little combat experience and when they fight it is usually clumsily. Their biggest advantage is that they watch each other's backs during battle. When one member is seriously hurt they typically grab that member and flee to get medical care.

Typical Weapon- Knives are the most common weapon among corner gangs. Also common are cheap clubs (made out of things like table legs and pipes).

Turf- Corner gangs are spread all over the city. A few exist within the established turf of larger gangs, but the majority are in non-gang territory. Most corner gangs literally have a corner that they have staked out as theirs. Corners are chosen because they have higher traffic than ordinary streets, and more possible interactions for the cornerpunks.

Distinguishing Features- Most cornerpunks are easy to recognize because they are seldom seen on the street without a small group of friends with them. Corner gangs may use an abbreviation for their corner (see symbols, below) to identify them, others may choose some affectation, like a red and green ribbon sewn on the arms of a jacket, or a brown dragon patch.

Symbols- Rather than symbols, most corner gangs use a shorthand for the cross streets of their corner. For instance, "Amster 123" might be the symbol for a gang from the corner of Amsterdam Avenue and 123rd Street, and "Amster 123" might be tattooed on their arms, written on their clothing and spraypainted on walls.

Slang- Some corner gangs have words and terms which have personal meaning to them. E.g. "let's do a Julio" might mean something special to members of one corner gang.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 8, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 8, MIL 7, PSY:X 21, PSY:M 16, PSY:S 16, TECH 7, THIE 6, SOC 8, STRT 6.

Income- $1,500 +$125/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Addicts (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 5 Bonus Points. Most of the members of the PC's corner gang are addicted to God Killer or other hard street drugs.

Ambitious (Optional Advantage)- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC's corner gang has ambitions to someday become a large, full-fledged gang. They are actively trying to recruit new members, expand their power, participate in the politics of big-gangs and even try to absorb other corner gangs.

Leader (Optional Advantage)- Costs 15 Bonus Points. The PC is currently the recognized leader of the corner gang. The PC does not rule absolutely, and if the PC does not show loyalty and wise leadership, he or she will quickly lose power.

Led (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 3 Bonus Points. The PC's corner gang has one member who considers himself or herself to be the leader of the gang. Most of the other members of the gang agree and will follow the gang's leader. Even if the leadership is not stated aloud, everyone knows who the one person is.

Old Gang (Optional Advantage)- Costs 2 Bonus Points. The corner gang has been around for quite a while and it has a history, good or bad, in the city and with other power structures within the city. These old corner gangs are fairly rare and they break the general rule that no one has heard of a corner gang outside of a few blocks from where the gang operates. Old corner gangs may have relationships with the larger street gangs from their days as corner gangs.

Size: Average- Costs 0 Bonus Points. The PC's gang has six people, including the PC.

Size: Large (Optional Advantage)- Costs 3 Bonus Points. The PC's gang has 8 members, including the PC.

Size: Very Large (Optional Advantage)- Costs 4 Bonus Points. The PC's gang has 12 members, including the PC.

Size: Small (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 3 Bonus Points. The PC's gang only has four people, including the PC.

Wannabe Fighters (Optional Advantage)- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC's corner gang has an interest in fighting. They seek out weapons, pool money for VR training programs, and spar with each other regularly. The PC gets -4 to Combat skill costs (min. 3).

Wannabe Hackers (Optional Advantage)- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC's corner gang has an interest in technology. They buy, trade and share technology as well as trading information. The PC gets -7 to Technical and Information skill costs (min. 3) and $250 worth of computer technology.

Wannabe Psychics (Costs 5 Bonus Points)- The gang has a desire to become powerful psychics. They pool resources, purchase psychics training and cross-train whenever possible. Gives –6 to Psychic: Exotic, Psychic: Manipulative and Psychic: Sensory skill costs (min. 10).

Wannabe Thieves (Costs 5 Bonus Points) –The PC's corner gang has an interest in crime. They look for or make burglary tools, cross-train in theft skills and plan small jobs. Gives -4 to Thief/Espionage skill costs and $50 in burglary tools (bolt cutters, lock picks, lock breaking kits, prowling suits, trash suits).

Warlike (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The PC's corner gang likes being at war: it will pick fights with other corner gangs for no good reason and they are reluctant to ever make peace, satisfied to let some conflict continue as a long, drawn out, low-intensity bloodfeud.

Young (Gives 3 Bonus Points)- All of the members of the PC's corner gang are between 13 and 17, making them rate just barely above kid-gangs in the minds of most adult city dwellers.

Suggested Skills- Gambling, Graffiti, Street Fighting: Armed, Trading.

Suggested Equipment- Knife: Combat, Phonebook Armor.

Suggested Reading- City Culture, City Population: Children, Criminals.

Freelancers

In Brief- Young Wells with no particular allegiance to any gang, philosophy or lifestyle. Commonly security guards or mercenaries.

Favorable Stereotypes- Tough, self-sufficient, unique, free from attachments and willing to experiment with just about anything.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Greedy, unintelligent, un-empathetic, un-loyal, morally flexible bullies living pointless "unexamined lives."

Other Names- Neutrals, Wells, Loners.

Origin- The post-Freedom War exodus from the city started slowly, but as it built it reinforced itself. As more wealthy and skilled people left the city, the city's tax base decreased and its social services deceased. Crime got worse, a larger percentage of people in the city were mentally ill or addicted to drugs, and people became more desperate to find a way out of the city. Irresponsible news reporting made people even more scared of the city than was realistic, and those who couldn't get in to a community outside the city locked themselves away in their apartments and submerged themselves in VR fantasy worlds (fantasy worlds owned by the same companies that did the irresponsible news reporting). With even less "normal" people on the streets, the streets became even more dangerous.

The danger increased yet again in 2075, when the city Drug Lords consolidated in to a single organization. The Drug Lords created highly addictive (though not very recreational) drugs. They made a regular practice of capturing random people on the street and forcefully injecting them with these drugs. The consolidation also pulled the profit away from the street gangs, who violently self destructed in a few years. This opened the field for a new type of gang. Members of the old drug gangs were mostly violent, illiterate drug addicts and sociopaths. Members of the new gangs were, in increasing numbers, people who believed in ideas like philosophy, altruism and self-improvement. These new gang members made gangs accessible to more and more people and made gang membership the number one means of self-defense among Wells and Indies. Today, two thirds of Wells and half of Indies who are regularly out on the streets are members of some organization that is more or less a gang. As a young Well out on the streets, to not be in a gang is to be a minority.

Timeline

2055- Freedom War ends.
2057- Nuclear cleanup of the city ends, refugees moved back in.
2058- Utopianist/gated community movement begins.
2061-2065- Massive exodus out of the city.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate.
2067- Last of the old-time drug gangs disbands.
2078- Non-gang members a minority on the streets.

Joining- Most Freelancers are the children of well VR addicts. Most were kept locked up inside by paranoid parents, but their need for adventure drove them to escape from their apartments, usually in their teenage years. On the streets they quickly had to learn about and come to terms with the dangers of the street. Very quickly, young Freelancers had to decide whether to join a gang or try to survive by their own skills and luck. There are many different reasons why Freelancers decided not to join a gang. Among all the various reasons, the most common is not wanting to be held responsible for the actions of another. In other words, they don't want to be attacked just because some gang brother or sister did something stupid.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been out on the streets for about three years and has become comfortable protecting himself or herself from the dangers of the streets.

Lifestyle- At any given time, about one thousand (about a fourth) of Freelancers are employed as security guards, and a little more than half of Freelancers have worked as security guards at some point or another. One reason that so many Freelancers work as security guards is that it is a job that gang members really can't work. There are too many confrontations between gang members and security guards, and either security companies or gangs stop gang members from getting jobs in security. Security guards are hired by and work out of dozens of private security offices in the city (almost all of which are chains run by corporate offices outside the city). Security guards are minimally screened, put through a short VR training class. Security guards typically pay for their own uniforms and equipment. Security guards are posted to three basic type of assignments:

-Watch: The most common type, and the type of assignment that Freelancers with no experience are given. The security guard spends his or her day or evening watching an office building, store, business district, industrial complex, condo or luxury apartment building. The guard may work from a guard shack, a front desk, a surveillance room, or the guard may simply be assigned to stand and walk around the area.

-Escort: Riding along with and following around delivery trucks, armored cars, couriers, or any private individual who can afford security. The security guard's main job is to make sure the person or people they are following are not attacked or robbed as they do their business in the city.

-Rapid Response Team: The PC rides around in a car (typically a refurbished jeep) answering alarms, panic buttons and calls for help from subscribers to security services. Offices and businesses often pay for this kind of protection while they are closed, and many Indies and Wells pay for security services for their homes.

Security guards encounter every kind of situation: a person suffering from an epileptic seizure in the middle of a grocery store, smash-and-grab burglars breaking in to a private apartment, couples fighting and throwing furniture at each other, wild animals that wander in to the lobbies of apartment buildings looking for a warm place to sleep, psychotic homeless people banging on the doors of apartments, kids who are suspected of shoplifting, and many false alarms caused both by human and computer error. Security guards have handbooks about what they are supposed to do in each situation. They are not supposed to provide any medical services, they are not supposed to do anything about crimes happening to non-customers on property not belonging to the customer. They are supposed to prevent crimes, ensure the safety of customers and detain criminals until the police can get there to pick them up.

Security guards have a wide variety of experience, pay and quality of equipment. Beginning security guards are paid

minimum wage, pass only minimal screening and must provide most of their equipment. The most experiences security guards have been working for years, have special training, have high-tech equipment and tremendous amounts of backup and support. They are in constant communication with a dispatcher at headquarters who has access (via security cameras) to anything the security guard can see and can call for backup whenever they are needed. The lowest class of security guard might be assigned to guard liquor stores from shoplifters, while the highest class might accompany armored-car shipments of cash to the city ATM machines.

Some Freelancers find that they can make more money working as unlicensed bodyguards, mercenaries or even as assassins. These Freelancers get clients referred to them through black market traders (the traders get a commission). Freelancers who work in the black market usually do so because they have less moral qualms about breaking laws and hurting or killing people.

The reason so many Wells turn to quick and temporary work is that they need money to buy the means of personal self-defense. Many Wells buy high tech weapons, armor and implants that help them stay alive on the streets. Unfortunately, their work often makes them powerful enemies, which means they must gain more defenses, which means they must work more.

Other Freelancers do not fit this mold at all. Freelancers are a catch-all category for wells who don't fit in to any of the other categories that exist in the minds of city residents. Some work non-security related jobs, some simply exist on welfare. They have many different strategies for surviving on the streets, and a few have no strategy at all.

Social Structure- Freelancers have no social structure. Some Freelancers know each other, some don't. The only people who have influence over Freelancers are people with the money to employ them, although most Freelancers will quit on a moment's notice if their employer does something they don't like.

Advancement- For most Freelancers, advancement means making money. Money can be used to purchase psychic training, martial arts training, weapons, high-tech armor, and implants. The fastest and easiest way for a Freelancer to make this money is to work as a security guard or as a mercenary or assassin on the black market. Either way, the more experience the more money the Freelancer makes (though there is a ceiling on the amount of money a Freelancer doing legitimate security work can earn, with few jobs in the city paying more than $35/hr.).

Population- There are about 4000 non-gang Wells who don't count as Cornerpunks, Goods, Neos or Workers. By default, these wells are considered Freelancers by the majority of the city population. A majority of these people would self-identify as Freelancers, though many would not.

External Relations- Freelancers vary greatly, but people often have broad stereotypes about them that effect the way Freelancers are treated. Indies, who sometimes have money and reason to hire Freelancers, see Freelancers as nothing more than employees of whoever pays them the most. Indies rarely think about Freelancers as having any motivations other than those of their employers. Well gang members often have a distaste for people who have chosen the other path. They see Freelancers as selfish and unable to be a productive part of a community. Street People associate Freelancers with the security guards who harass them.

Non-Gang Wells and Indies: There isn't a clear line between Freelancers and other non-gang wells, and many people move between different well groups. A person might work part-time in a factory, work security on the weekends and sell drugs in his free time and it wouldn't be clear what category this person would fall in to. Freelancers are also the most upwardly mobile of wells. They are the most likely to become Indies and often become Hunters, Night Walkers, Sat Jumpers, Traders and Y1s.

Thieves and Night Shift: Thieves are the natural enemies of Freelancer security guards. For the same reasons, Freelancer security guards tend to get along well with the Night Shift. The Night Shift is always a little wary of security guards though: they tend to think of security guards as good people 8 hours a day and random city scum the rest of the time.

Typical Weapon- A fiberglass nightstick is the most common weapon for a Freelancer to use, with a high-power pepper spray being the next most common.

Turf- Freelancers can be found all over the city, but those who work as security guards can be found on the major avenues (where all the shops are) or in the financial district where most of the in-use office buildings are.

Distinguishing Features- Since they have no symbols of gang membership to make people think twice about messing with them, Freelancers are forced to display whatever they do have in full view: weapons, armor, implants and even muscles are purposefully exposed.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 7, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 7, INTL 7, MIL 7, PSY:X 16, PSY:M 13, PSY:S 13, TECH 7, THIE 7, SOC 7, STRT 7.

Income- $2,500 +$215/wk. ($125/wk. if the PC does not have a good job)

Suggested Skills- Club, Self-Defense Weapons.

Suggested Equipment- Flashlight: Large, Modern Chainmail, Nightstick, Pepper Spray, Plastic Restraints.

Suggested Reading- Body Mod: Implants, Employment.

Goods

In Brief- Drug dealers who believe that they are making the world a better place by offering addicts cheaper and safer drugs than the Drug Lords do.

Favorable Stereotypes- Compassionate, humble, utilitarian, realistic, brave, friendly, knowledgeable, helpful, non-preachy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Selfish, greedy, cowardly, exploitative, hypocritical, two-faced criminals.

Other Names- Good Drug Dealers, Pager Rats, Independents.

Origin- During the Freedom Wars, a massive disruption of international trade broke the backs of most international drug cartels. Then, the Freedom Army legalized drugs, making them available to registered addicts from medical clinics. This final blow destroyed most traditional organized crime organizations in the country (except for a few God Killer selling biker gangs who operated in US

military controlled areas in the Midwest). When the Freedom Wars ended and drugs were re-criminalized, drug sales had to start again from scratch. A piece-meal organization of drug sales quickly developed in the city. By 2070, 15 years after the end of the Freedom Wars, drug sales had formed themselves in to a stable, if disorganized, industry.

There were a small number of Drug Lords. These were rich and powerful criminal entrepreneurs with small and loyal organizations. These people had the cash to buy drugs in bulk from other parts of the country and from international drug rings. They cut the drugs and sold them, mostly to street gangs. The street gangs sold drugs to finance their arms proliferation and their unceasing wars with each other. The street gangs generally sold cheap, highly addictive drugs to the poorest segments of society. They sold god killer, meth and black-tar heroin to homeless and almost homeless addicts. The gang member drug dealers were dangerous and unpredictable, and when middle and upper class people needed drugs they did not go to the gang members, they called their favorite pager-rat. These were small, independent drug-sellers, who bought drugs wherever they could and sold them directly. While the drug gangs were fighting wars to gain territory (and therefore addicts to sell to) the pager-rats were slowly but surely gaining a clientele of loyal customers. People who wanted cheap drugs went to drug gangs, those who wanted quality drugs called pager-rats.

Then, in 2075, the city Drug Lords consolidated in to a single entity and sent out a message to everyone in the city: either join us and become part of our organization, or stop selling drugs entirely. This rocked the world of drug sales. Many pager-rats became pushers for the new Drug Lords, though many others were put off by the drug lord's violent and exploitative policies. Life as a pusher was cruel, dirty and dangerous, and many pager-rats could not stand this new way of life. Some threw away their pagers and quit selling drugs altogether. Others continued to sell drugs independently, despite the threat of being killed by Drug Lords if they got caught. It was not hard for those who continued selling independently to find a nice stable niche: everyone with enough money wanted to buy drugs from someone more predictable, sell violent and less prone to cheating them than the Drug Lords' pushers.

At the same time, the Drug Lords started a campaign against the few charity organizations in the city that were actually helping people get off drugs. The majority of these organizations were clinics that gave out drugs like methadone, a less addictive and less harmful substitute. These "replacement therapy" clinics were not always able to get people to stop using drugs entirely, but they helped addicts live longer and better and (worst of all) they took profits away from the Drug Lords. The Drug Lords did not want to attract the attention of federal authorities, so they kept their violence subtle: one by one these clinics were burned down, condemned by bribed health inspectors, or the doctors killed in acts of "random street violence." Those who were truly committed to helping addicts took their replacement therapy drugs and their clean needles and hit the streets. Without funding, they soon found themselves charging for their replacement drugs and they had to adopt much of the lifestyle of the independent drug dealers. Getting caught up in the world of drug selling, many of these former charity-workers decided that if they could not get someone to accept a replacement therapy drug, the next best thing would be to sell them a small,

pure dose of the real thing. In the minds of the charity-workers turned drug dealers, giving an addict a dose of drugs that they knew were safe was much more humane then sending them to try their luck on the violent and uncaring pusher gangs.

In the last few years, the culture and practices of these two groups (the charity-workers turned drug dealers and the drug dealers turned community resources) have mingled and become virtually indistinguishable from each other. The group as a whole started to be called "good drug dealers" to distinguish them from the "evil" pushers. The ideal of a "good drug dealer" who made money, helped people, and took money away from the Drug Lords, appealed to many people and many joined the ranks of the Goods.

Timeline

1962- Ibogaine, an African hallucinogen, found an effective treatment for heroin and cocaine addiction.
1963- Doctors at a New York university find methadone one of the most effective addiction treatments.
1973- Methadone Control Act licenses methadone use.
1980s- AIDS epidemic spread, in part, by dirty needle use among addicts.
1986- First needle exchange in the US.
1988- First US government sponsored needle exchange opens (in NY).
1990- NY needle exchange closed due to public concerns.
2046 - God Killer introduced.
2061 - God Killer replaces methamphetamines as the most abused street drug.
2075 - Drug Lords consolidate power. Drug gangs that will not join are destroyed.
2075 - Drug treatment clinics burned down.
2076 - Drug Lords offer $500 bounty on independent drug dealers.
2078 - Term "Goods" becomes common.

Joining- Before the Drug Lords consolidated, the PC was probably either dealing drugs independently or working at a replacement therapy clinic. After 2075 and the Drug Lords' attempt to wipe out both, the PC had to make a decision: quit, join the drug lords, or deal drugs on the streets as a hunted person. Customer loyalty kept most Goods on the streets: they could stand the idea of their customers or patients going to violent, reckless, uncaring pusher gangs to get their highs.

At level one, adventure one, the PC had been dealing or helping addicts for more than five years but the PC's lifestyle has change greatly in recent years, and it has only been very recently that the PC has come to feel like he or she is getting used to his or her current lifestyle.

Lifestyle- The one thing that every Good has in common is that they sell drugs and their customers like them. There are even one or two pushers (out of thousands) whose clients would call them Goods. There is a wide variety of morals, motivations and behaviors among the Goods. Some Goods are in for profit alone and they are honest and give good deals only to the level necessary to keep most of their customers coming back. They don't deal with poor people or in poor people's drugs because it is not worth their time. They never try to get people off drugs: this would eliminate potential customers. Even these bad Goods are much better than the average pushers and well or indie drug users consider themselves lucky if they know the pager address of one. These Goods do not try to justify their lifestyles with ethical or political arguments.

On the other end of the spectrum are the Goods who don't mind losing money, so long as they get to help people. They will sell to everyone, but will tend to focus on the poorest addicts who need the help most. These Goods will always try to talk customers in to abstaining from drugs, or if not that then using some less-harmful and less-addictive substitute drug which will still satisfy the person's cravings, or if not that then only a small dose of the addict's drug of choice. These Goods often have complex ethical and social-policy arguments they are ready to reel off at any moment to explain why they do what they do.

Most Goods fall somewhere in the middle. They make a living by selling drugs, but they also try to do right by their buyers and they encourage them to get off of drugs whenever and however possible. For the most part, though, they figure that giving drug users a good honest deal is as much they can do to improve the world.

Although there are many more efficient communication technologies, Goods prefer pagers. The typical Good gives out his or her pager number to every drug user her or she meets. If the user wants to buy drugs, he or she calls and leaves a number. Goods call back from a video payphone so they can see and remember the caller and see if they look like they are being coerced in to calling. Only if Goods feel that a call "feels right" do they arrange a meeting place, usually in the user's home or, if the user is homeless, some place private. The Goods will bring only the drugs they intend to sell (so as to not invite a robbery). If a Good were to use a more efficient means of communication they would be easier to track. A Drug Lord who knew a Good's cell phone number could call and get an instant location on the Good as soon as he or she answered.

Goods put a considerable amount of effort in to being likable. They wan to create loyal customers who think of them as friends who are always looking out for the customers' best interests. Goods also gain a reputation as invaluable consultants, with knowledge about drugs, medicine and even psychology. Novice drug addicts, more than anyone else, often depend on Goods for their survival. Addicts consider themselves lucky to know a Good and will try to do whatever possible to guard that Good from harm. Some Goods have become so popular that addicts have sought revenge for their deaths. For every addict who decides to give up a Good, there is often another addict who overhears (addicts have little privacy) and decides to call up and warn the Good.

Like drug dealers always have, Goods leave dangerous lives. They deal with criminals and desperate people and many Goods are killed. Goods who survive are both tough

"I need to buy some drugs."
"I know someone. I've been buying from her for a while now and she's never done me wrong."
"Cool. Give me her phone address."
"No, I gotta page her. She'll only come if I answer the phone when she receives the page."

and wary, with good instincts. Like any drug dealer, they are careful about who they trust. They can be robbed or killed for their drugs or money, or they can be killed by someone looking to gain a reward from the Drug Lords. The Drug Lords offer $500 for the death of a Good, and pusher gangs looking to capitalize on this reward often offer $20 to $100 to addicts for information that will lead them to a Good. Other criminals, often small group of well freelancers addicted to God Killer, will hunt Goods for the bounty (and whatever drugs they have on them).

One of the hardest thing for a Good is finding suppliers. Goods often have to travel outside the city to meet suppliers and get drugs. Only a few Goods have the knowledge of chemistry to manufacture any drugs themselves. Goods test the drugs they sell, usually with small chemistry sets and portable test-kits. Some even sell test kits. Most hand out clean needles for free with injectable drugs.

Social Structure- Goods rarely get together in any sort of group: doing so would make them conspicuous and the meeting would be a potential target for a strike by one of the Drug Lords' dagger teams. Still, Goods need contacts, and they often keep the pager numbers of every other Good they run across so that they can call them if they ever need to make a trade or buy some supplies. Many Goods communicate with other Goods exclusively through messages sent to pagers, they never meet in person.

Advancement- As long as they sell drugs (or anything else that can help deal with cravings) at a reasonable price, Goods will continue to gain new contacts every week and will get more and more calls for drugs and more and more income. In the end, the only thing that will limit the Good's advancement is how many hours a day he or she is willing to work. A few very successful Goods have tried to expand their operation by hiring employees to sell drugs for them. They increase their profits dramatically but make themselves easier to find by the Drug Lords. No Good who has tried to expand in to an organization has lasted more than a few months before being killed by agents of the Drug Lords.

Population- There are around 750 Goods in the city. 100 started in clinics or needle exchanges, the rest started as independent drug dealers.

External Relations- Goods tend to have a wide circle of contacts in every sector of the city, from shut-ins addicted to pain killers, to well gang members who use God Killer occasionally, to half-crazy homeless mauler addicts. Goods have good relationships with most people they know, though many Goods never form close friendships with any of them.

Addicts: Goods tend to know more addicts than anyone else and Goods are keenly aware of important happenings in the world of addicts. Many addicts consider the Goods their friends and a few addicts would go so far as to avenge the death of a Good.

Drug Lords: The Drug Lords see the Goods as harmful competitors that should be wiped out as quickly as possible. Pushers have standing orders to kill any Good they can find, and they receive a handsome cash reward if they can prove that they have done so. The pushers pay addicts to lure Goods in to traps, and many Goods have been killed when addict friends have betrayed them.

Hungry: As enemies of the Drug Lords, the Goods feel a certain kinship with the Hungry. The Hungry realize that the continued activities of the Goods hurts the Drug Lords, and they do whatever they can to protect Goods.

Night Shift: The Night Shift, on the other hand, sees the Goods as criminals. Some Night Shift members don't distinguish between Goods and pusher gangs working for the Drug Lords: they are all drug dealers to be punished. Some Night Shift members, on the other hand, realize that the Goods are hurting the Drug Lords and are willing to cut them a little slack, lumping them in the "harass but don't arrest" category, along with graffiti artists. No Night Shift officer has ever gone out of his or her way to protect a Good, even from the Drug Lords. In the Night Shift way of thinking, it is a risk that the Goods assumed and should be willing to live with.

Volunteers: Some Goods self-identify as outreach volunteers and charity workers. The try to keep up on all the news in the Volunteer world and try to get to know other Volunteers. Most charity groups, on the other hand, are afraid to deal with anyone who breaks the law so flagrantly, and try to avoid any relationship.

Traders: Goods occasionally find themselves in economic competition with black market traders brave enough to sell drugs. For the most part, however, the Goods sell what Black Market traders can not, and the two get along well, traders will refer people to Good contacts and visa versa.

Hummingbirds: As a general rule, after 2075 selling drugs independently has been so dangerous that only those really committed to helping addicts have kept doing it. The one exception to this rule is in the Hummingbird dance clubs. Hummingbirds use a lot of drugs and they depend on reliable dealers, they also have the power to smash any agent of the Drug Lords who comes in to a Hummingbird dance club looking to hurt one of their drug dealers. Hummingbird turf has the highest percentage of Goods in the city and the Goods there are the safest and most wealthy, although they do the least helping-the-downtrodden.

Typical Weapon- A small homemade or one-shot pistol is a common weapon for Goods.

Turf- Goods live all over the city, and they travel all over the city to sell drugs. There is no one place they can be found: they might be dealing down a dark alley, in a small Well apartment, or in the large townhouse of an Indie.

Distinguishing Features- Most Goods hide the fact that they are Goods and do not wear distinctive clothing. A few Goods wear the style of wealthy drug dealers from the Old Times: nice suits with glowing clothing (made from electroluminescent fibers). Glowing ties are the most common affectation, often with happy faces on them (a recent addition, to signify "Good"-ness.)

Symbols- Goods are often symbolized by a round yellow happy-face.

Slang- Goods have picked up a lot of addict slang.

Bring Up: v., make a vein ready for injection.

Candy: n., drugs.

Cutting: v., adding non-drug substances to drugs to increase profits.

Full Timer: n., a person who lives on the streets, devoting all his or her attention to getting drugs.

Huffing: n., using inhalant drugs (e.g. sniffing glue).

Hustling: v., doing whatever one can think of to make money for drugs.

Independent: adj., not employed by the Drug Lords.

Kit: n., set of equipment for using drugs (especially with a syringe).

Mainlining: v., injecting drugs in to a bloodstream.

Mission: n., a search for drugs or trip to get drugs.

Replacement Therapy: n., giving addicts less harmful drugs to stave off their cravings.

Score: v., buy drugs.

Speedball: n., a stimulant and a depressant taken together.

Stash: n., drug horde, especially when hidden.

Skills

Free Skills: Street Drugs (3).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 6, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 7, MIL 8, PSY:X 20, PSY:M 15, PSY:S 15, TECH 7, THIE 6, SOC 7, STRT 6.

Special Skills: The skills Addiction, Drug Resistance, Street Drugs and Trading only cost 5 skill points per level.

Income- $2,500 +$250/wk.

Special Equipment- Free pager. $750 worth of addictive street drugs, including Alcohol, Amphetamines, Chomper, Escape, God Killer, Mauler, Maxin, Opiates, Sedative, Slave and Trace. These drugs are verified in quality and strength. Because they know suppliers and producers, Goods can buy drugs in bulk (orders of $500 or more) for 25% off.

Suggested Skills- Addiction, Drug Resistance, Emergency Medicine, Needles, Production Chemistry, Psychopharmacology, Street Drugs, Trading, Social Work.

Suggested Equipment- Auto-Blood Test, Single Shot Gun, Spectrograph, Syringes.

Suggested Reading- Drugs.

The Debate Over Drug Policy

The Goods have interjected themselves in to a very old controversy about what the best way to help addicts is.

One side, which has held sway over law enforcement for the last century and a half, believes that addictive drugs should be made completely illegal, drug use and possession should be criminalized, addicts and anyone who helps addicts get or use drugs should be punished. This side claims that any leniency on addicts is saying that it is okay and will only make drug use worse.

The other side of the controversy says that addicts will use drugs whether they are legal or not and that making drugs and drug paraphernalia illegal only increases the damage done by drug addiction. Proponents of the latter viewpoint know that everything they do requires an assessment of the harms (by making it easier to do drugs, more people will become addicts) versus the benefits (decreasing suffering and death by making drug addiction less harmful). Goods tend to believe that the former viewpoint is the coward's viewpoint: it is easy to criminalize something, then blame the criminal addicts and dealers for the harms done, but it doesn't represent an honest assessment of harms.

Neos

In Brief- Visitor from neo-cultural commune (a commune that tried to revive elements from ancient cultures).

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, healthy, self-sufficient, living by values of honor, compassion and responsibility.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Unpredictable, eccentric, anachronistic, cultish, impractical.

Other Names- Neo-Culturalists, Anachros.

Origin- After the Freedom Wars ended, a large movement of autonomous self-sustaining communities started. The Freedom Wars had taught people that a global socialism was as horrible as a global capitalism. The new movements focused on building communities that would be autonomous and mostly independent from any other economic or political power. It was a time of experimentation, where nearly every type of community was tried, ranging from business-oriented financial collectives (many of which were later bought by, or became, massive corporations) to utopianist communes who believed in radical culture change.

One sub-movement within the gated-community movement was the neocultural movement. The founders of neocultural communes believed that the values and traditions of many ancient cultures were "blue-prints" for successful and healthy communities. The founders of neocultural communes felt that they could adopt many of the values from a given culture (or multiple cultures) while retaining some of the advantages of modern world (technology, medicine, ideas such as gender equality). Most neocultural communes were founded by people who wanted to emulate the cultures of their ancestors. Like most other gated communities, most communes went under in the first few years, but those that survived were strong. Although not as rich, safe and comfortable as the average gated community or corporate living center, life was good in many of these communities, and people from many ethnic backgrounds started to join. Most Neocultural communities had less stringent mental testing requirements for entry, and many people who couldn't get in to other communities went in to neocultural communes.

The population of these neocultural communities peaked around 2070, and has remained strong, with a good inter-generational loyalty. Still, because they are not as economically prosperous and are not as free from crime, disease and danger, they have remained a minority, dwarfed by the much larger gated communities.

Timeline

1966- 1st event of Society for Creative Anachronisms in a backyard in Berkeley, CA.

1970- Oyotunji Village, adhering to West-African Yoruba society and traditions, founded in S. Carolina.

2050-2056- Freedom Wars.

2058- Utopianist/Neocultural/ Gated Community movement begins.

2062- 1st US neocultural commune.

2070- Peak of population living in neocultural communes.

2080- 1st children born in neocultural communes turn 18.

Joining- Almost all Neos were born in their particular community. As in an utopianist commune, a young Neo's life is scripted: the things they are taught, the way they are treated by the community, and the challenges they face, although young Neos tend to have more say about when they will take on each stage of their learning. A lot more responsibility is placed on

responsibility is placed on Neos than Utopia Children: Neos must earn a place in the commune's society and prove to the society that they are worthy to be called adults.

A majority of neocultural communities have rite-of-passage ceremonies to mark children entering in to new age groups, or becoming adults. Some of these rites-of-passage are challenges that can be quite strenuous, and even dangerous. In some, a vision request requires that the young Neo leave the community and seek some sort of vision or personal-enlightenment.

At level one, adventure one, the PC is considered old enough by his or her community to travel to the city alone. The PC has either already been accepted as an adult in the community, or is in the middle of satisfying his or her last rite-of-passage to become a full adult. This is the PC's first time in the city and he or she has been in the city for only a few days.

Lifestyle- In most Gated Communities, the purpose of any individual is to benefit the community, and if that individual wants to do something dangerous with no benefit to the community (for instance, go live in Manhattan for a month) that person is usually referred to counseling. Neocultural communities, on the other hand, put a lot more value on individuality. Neos quite often make a decision to visit the city, and often for vastly different reasons.

Some Neos come to the city to visit relatives, some to investigate the histories of ancestors. Some are here as part of a vision quest or other rite of passage. Some are here to see if there's anything they can do to help people or spread the community's wisdom. Some seek to be part of the city's art scene. Some Neos are here out of curiosity alone, merely wanting to experience life in the city for a while. These reasons are generally considered healthy and normal by the Neos' communities. Neocultural communities realize that life is dangerous in the city, but they also recognize that it is sometimes necessary to live with a little danger.

Like the city, most communities are virtual anarchies, where members enjoy the benefit (and the dangers) of independence. The culture of the city streets is often closer to the Neo's community than anything else they have experienced, and when Neos are forced to leave a community, or when a community dissolves, Neos who have visited the city often return.

While in the city, most Neos live the same sort of lifestyle as most wells. Neos apply for welfare, work part time jobs, or even work in the black market to make enough money for groceries and a home. Unlike Utopia Children, only a few Neos in the city receive any sort of money from their community. There are two reasons for this: First, members of neocultural communities have a greater expectation of self-sufficiency and it is assumed that they can survive on their own in the city without help. Second, neocultural communities are usually too poor to be able to support anyone who is not helping support the community in turn.

Social Structure- Neos in the city have no real social structure at all. If they meet each other, it is usually by pure chance. Neos seldom ever defend or seek revenge for other Neos. One reason is that most Neos are only in the city for a short time, too short to make contacts. Another reason is that many Neos want to get away from their normal Neo society (or are being shunned by their community).

Advancement- Neo society does not praise advancement. Within a commune, adults are respected and elders are respected even more. There are some small positions of power (e.g. a chief) but there is little benefit to achieving these positions and it is generally assumed that those who achieve them are those whose personality lends itself to that type of work.

Neos often work for personal growth and achievement and that it why many are in the city. Neos may be seeking spiritual growth and self-discovery (through some sort of vision quest), wisdom and experience in the real world, or proof that they can operate independently.

Population- At any given time, there are about 250 Neos living in the city. They are here from neo-cultural communes around the county and throughout the world. A large portion (about 100) are here from the four closest Neocultural communities: Bright Circle (a neo-Celtic Commune to the East), Confederacy of Nations (a Native American commune on the Canadian border), Zulu 86 (a small pan-African commune in Brooklyn) and Aname (a feudal Japanese commune).

External Relations- City residents tend to think of people from gated communities, utopianist communes, neocultural communities and gated communities as branches on the same tree, more alike than different. Of all of these, though, Neos are generally given the most respect. Whether it is true or not, Neos are regarded as less naive, less stuck up, and more capable of taking care of themselves than Utopia Children. Neos tend to have good relations with the city residents they meet, forming good friendships and resolving disputes with others.

Utopia Children: The relationships between Neos and Utopia Children is very strong. Both come from slightly different variations on one grand experiment. Both seek to make the world a better place by creating culturally superior communities. Utopianist communities have borrowed many traditional values and practices, although they tend to be more liberal in mixing-and-matching from as many sources as possible. Utopia Children and Neos are more alike than different, and there are some people in the city who have lived in both, or who are from a community that has features of both a neocultural and a utopianist community. The primary difference between Neos and Utopia Children is why they are in the city: Utopia Children are usually in the city with the duty of improving the city, while a majority of Neos are in the city with the goal of improving themselves.

Keepers: Many Neos find a need to be in a natural setting, and this leads them to deal with the Keepers. Neos are part of the tiny minority that the Keepers allow in the hole. This is because Neos are courteous, pay for the privilege and are respectful of the park. Still, every once in a while a Neo who is new to the city will wander in to the park not knowing that it is Keeper territory and will get in trouble.

Humankalorie, Dragons, Immortals: Neos are more in-tune with and tend to get along with certain city groups better than others. The Humankalorie are a lot like Neos, each with a focus on traditional values and roles. Dragons, with their reverence of nature and study of mythology, sometimes find that they have things in common. Immortals sometimes have history in common with the Neos: some of the same psychics that passed down their memories during the Freedom Wars went on to found or join neocultural communities.

Typical Weapon- Neos are comfortable with traditional weapons from the culture they emulate (or blunt-tipped sparring versions of those weapons). Swords are the most common. Many Neos use staves, spears and bows.

Turf- The Neos have no turf, though a majority of them can be found in cheap hotels, the majority of which are located either in the Bowery or in the northern part of the red light district (along the Southern side of the hole). Along Central Park South (aka 59th Street) are many former luxury-hotels that are still being run as hotels (even though the owners can only afford to keep the first few floors running). Many Neos like these hotel rooms because it is close to the hole, the city's only wilderness area. The bars on the first floors of these hotels are a common place for Neos to meet.

Distinguishing Features- Neos wear a mix of modern and traditional clothing, choosing whatever parts of the two appeal to them. They may wear modern clothing (pants, shirts, jackets) for convenience but will adorn themselves with traditional jewelry, tattoos or ritual scarring. They may carry traditional weapons when in the city. Many Neos are not oriented to material goods and will wear whatever they can buy cheapest at a thrift store.

Symbols- Most Neos have symbols from their commune's culture that hold great meaning for them and may be applied to themselves and their possessions as decorations, jewelry and tattoos.

Slang- Some Neo societies encourage members to learn a traditional language or speak in a traditional manner. There is no particular language or slang that all Neos share.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 6, CMBT 7, CRTV 5, INFO 8, INTL 7, MIL 9, PSY:X 15, PSY:M 12, PSY:S 12, TECH 7, THIE 8, SOC 6, STRT 5.

Income- $1,000 +$100/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Community Business (Optional Advantage)- Costs 6 Bonus Points. The PC is in the city as a representative of his or her community. The PC might be here to do business deals with Y1s or corps, might be here to recruit new members, or in some other role that directly benefits the community. The PC is paid a stipend (start with an extra $500 and +$75 per week) and has the limited ability to speak for and legally represent the community.

Good Standing (Optional Advantage)- Costs 0 Bonus Points. The PC still has a home in his or her Neo community. The PC isn't in the city on community business (PC is not given a salary) but the PC is not doing anything that the community would consider wrong either.

No Standing (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 2 Bonus Points. The PC has lost or given up his or her membership in the community. For the most part he or she is treated the same way the community would treat any person who has friends and family within the community yet is not a member of the community.

Poor Standing (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 4 Bonus Points. The PC is suffering one of the worst punishments that neocultural communes inflict on people: banishment and shunning. The PC can not enter the community's property and nobody in the community is allowed to talk to the PC.

Suggested Skills- Animal Training, Herbal Medicine, History: World, Legends, Storytelling, Tracking, Wilderness Survival.

Suggested Equipment- Backpack, Bow: Archery, Cloak: Fighter, Dog: Trained-Bloodhound, Herbal Cleanser, Herbal Psychedelic, Herbal Sedative/Painkiller, Herbal Stimulant, Instrument: Acoustic, Knife: Hunting.

Suggested Reading- City History: Pre-Conquest, Gated Communities.

Workers

In Brief- Work hard for a day's pay in legitimate city industries and don't do much else.

Favorable Stereotypes- Honest, committed, hard working, mature people who enjoy doing a good job and earning a week's pay.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Sub-average intelligence, ignorant and prejudiced, corporate wannabes, exploited by the capitalist system.

Other Names- Blue Collars, Working Class.

Origin- As a major port city, New York was an ideal place for all manner of manufacturing, especially light manufacturing. A constant influx of immigrants provided plenty of cheap labor. The Garment District, for instance, became famous because thousands of cheap workers were able to crank out every form of textile and piece of clothing imaginable. In the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire in 1911, 146 women died because bosses had locked exits to increase productivity. Heavier manufacturing took place on other parts of the coast where land was cheaper.

Working conditions and wages improved slightly with the birth of unions. Unions grew rapidly during the 1880s and 1890s and continued to grow until the great depression. WWI investigations in to unions revealed massive corruption and graft. Despite these revelations, unions continued to grow. When prohibition ended in 1933, labor racketeering helped replace liquor bootlegging as a source of income for the mafia, and organized crime had it's hand in many unions. By the last half of the 20th century, unions were arguably the most powerful organizations in the city. Unions could get away with practically anything, they had influence over practically every decision made by the city government.

The availability of unskilled labor jobs in the city started to dry up towards the end of the 20th century. Increasingly, these jobs were being moved overseas to countries with no minimum wage, or computer technology and increasing automation made these jobs obsolete. Labor leaders sponsored new laws which would limit the replacing of jobs by computers (or, at very least, force companies who replaced jobs with computers to pay in to an unemployment fund). Corporate lobbyists defeated these bills, and in the first half of the 21st century many worker's strikes and protests turned in to full blown riots.

By the 2040s, labor had all but disappeared from the city. Former laborers had to gain new skills or become part of the country's massive homeless population. White collar and service industry became the new "lower class" and they suffered a drop in wages and working conditions. Corporations successfully changed the law to prevent most of the white collar workers from creating unions. By the late 2040s, even these white collar workers were

Swing Shift (Optional Disadvantage)- Gives 2 Bonus Points. The PC works a shift from late afternoon until past midnight. The major problem with this is that the PC gets off of work at one of the most dangerous times of day to be out on the street, a time when most of the people up are gang members, drug addicts, crazy people and random criminals.

Union Member (Optional Advantage)- Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC's job is unionized and the PC is a member of the union. The PC has an organization looking out for his or her interests, an organization that the PC can come to for work related problems. Gives +$250 to start and +$25 per week.

Union Representative (Optional Advantage)- Costs 10 Bonus Points. The PC's job is unionized and the PC is an official representative of the union. The PC participates in decision-making for the union, and is responsible for taking complaints from union members and monitoring the employer's compliance with agreements. Gives +$500 and +$50 per week.

Suggested Skills- City Knowledge, Club, Driving.

Suggested Equipment- Crowbar, Personal Sonic Alarm, Phonebook Armor.

Suggested Reading- City Infrastructure: Utilities, Corporations, Employment: Legal, Government & Military.

INDIE GANGS

Favorable Stereotypes- Thoughtful, knowledgeable, reasonable, in control of their lives, seeking to understand the universe.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Prudish, cultish, manipulative, unmotivated, unwilling to make sacrifices to achieve their goals.

The majority of the members of these groups are wealthy by city standards (although poor by the standards of much of the rest of the country). One thing all these gangs have in common is that they have interests that the average Well wouldn't be able to afford. Indies are typically reluctant to form in to gangs and most have only recently become true gangs. They are the least "gang-like" of the gangs, resorting to gang tactics such as warfare, vendettas, etc. only as a last resort.

Arcadians

In Brief- Indie gang whose lives revolve around playing games. They have great knowledge of strategy, quick reflexes and have been known to manipulate events within the city.

Favorable Stereotypes- Brilliant and invaluable consultants, strategists and manipulators.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Obsessed gamblers, heartlessly toy with human lives, think they are smarter and therefore better.

Other Names- Smarties, Gamers.

Origin- The first smart bars opened in the early 1990s, after a 1990 book called Smart Drugs and Nutrients popularized the idea of drugs and vitamins that could boost intelligence. For the most part they were just singles bars for yuppies that sold fruity drinks laced with over-the-counter stimulants.

Over the next several decades, the popularity of these establishments quickly waned, but increased temporarily whenever smart drug technology made some new advancement. The first true smart bar to open in the city after the end of the Freedom Wars was a bar named simple 'The Smart Bar' which opened in 2076. The bar's legal products were drinks containing vitamins, sugar and over-the-counter stimulants (mostly caffeine). The owners also sold illegal smart drugs under the counter. All around the bar were small tables with various games: chess, go, pool, and a few antique arcade games the owner had managed to salvage from a trash heap. The bar grew in popularity among young Indies, especially those who considered themselves intellectuals. The bar was a place to hang out, flirt, talk with friends and to play games.

Shortly after the bar opened, a powerful new smart drug called Maxin hit the black market. Maxin cost up to $100 a hit when it first hit the black market and patrons of the

Smart Bar were among the few people willing and able to spend that much money.

When smart bar patrons began betting on the outcome of games, Maxin use and competitiveness became intertwined. Patrons would pay large amounts of money for Maxin, which they hoped would make them smart enough to win games and win more money for buying Maxin. The Smart Bar became more intense, more about winning than socializing. The owners profited from the competitions and encouraged them. They put up monitors so everyone could watch a game happening. The old arcade games were growing to be the most popular and owners added several more.

The owners made the club in to a lounge open 24 hours. Local businesses, wanting to get some of the profit, installed their own games. Club goers bought games for their own homes so they could practice at home. The supply of salvaged arcade games ran low and many club goers made money creating historical replicas or making their own new arcade games out of old-style technology.

By 2078, many Smart Bar patrons were becoming dissatisfied with Maxin: it was addictive, it was unpleasant to use, it had bad long-term effects on the body and it was expensive. Maxin usage decreased and the favorite games of the Arcadians changed from games of reflexes and speed to games of strategy and wisdom. The vogue among Arcadians became to study strategy and create elaborate plans. This focus on strategy quickly went beyond the confines of Arcadian hangouts. The Arcadians used strategy to fight their enemies. In one instance, an Arcadian created an in-depth dossier of the strengths and weaknesses of an enemy gang and sent it to all of that gang's enemies. The gang was quickly destroyed. Word spread about the Arcadians and the more they proved capable of defending themselves, the more people wanted to join.

The Arcadians became better at manipulating other city groups so that the wouldn't have to fight at all. By 2079 some Arcadians started making a game of it; betting on who could control city events through subtle manipulation. The city became aware of the Arcadian's manipulative games. There was a growing dislike of the Arcadians, but there were still few people who would refuse a strategy consultation from an Arcadian.

Timeline

1971- First commercial arcade game
1990- Book 'Smart Drugs and Nutrients'
2076- Smart Bar opens
2076- Maxin invented
2077- Smart Bar patrons fight against local corner gang
2077- Nearby deli installs arcade games
2078- Smart Bar sold to restaurant/bar management corporation
2078- Arcadians send in-depth battle plans to the enemy of an enemy
2079- Two Arcadians bet on the outcome of a battle.

Joining- An Arcadian joins the gang by hanging around the Smart Bar and other Arcadian hang-outs. To be an Arcadian means being friends with other Arcadians, and among Arcadians, being a friend means being an interesting opponent. One could join the Arcadians without ever playing a game, just by associating with a lot of Arcadians, yet this rarely happens.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has been hanging around the Arcadians long enough to know a majority of them by name (and visa versa). The PC has played just about every game and can hold his or her own in most of them.

Lifestyle- The Arcadian lifestyle revolves around games that test intelligence. Arcadians spend most of their waking hours playing games. Even things that other city residents consider serious life-and-death matters, the Arcadians consider to be just another game, just another test of their intelligence.

Arcadians crave variety in their games. Some games test memory, some test speed of thought, some test strategy, some test logic, etc. Arcadians are constantly looking for new games to play (especially when they aren't the best at whatever game everyone else is playing). The Arcadians often create their own games or create alternate rules for pre-existing games. Even when walking around, Arcadians will play verbal games like twenty-questions. Most Arcadians have learned such powerful mnemonic techniques that they can play games like chess using their memories instead of boards.

Gambling on the outcome of games is common among the Arcadians. Many Arcadians gamble for things other than money, such as to settle disputes (see Social Structure, below).

The Smart Bar is still the center of Arcadian society. At nights, the place is packed with people, all either playing games or watching games. One game occupies the center spot, and dozens of people watch the players. They crowd around the game or stare at large screens showing the action. The game currently occupying the central spot usually has been rigged with "consequences." Consequences are there to make the game more interesting. Whenever a player loses a point, the consequences give them an electric shock, or burn them, or inject drugs in to them that cause cramps and headaches.

Arcadians often turn to their game-playing skills for self-protection, manipulating city events to harm their enemies. Some manipulate events to try to help those they think of as innocent or in the right. Others manipulate city events arbitrarily, just for the challenge of it. They may play alone (setting a goal and trying to accomplish it) or they may play against each other. For instance, if two Well gangs are fighting what appears to be an equally matched war, two Arcadians may arbitrarily choose sides and make a game out of trying to force the outcome.

Arcadian techniques of manipulation take many forms and have evolved over the years. The first technique to be used, and still a very useful one, is a complete tactical plan delivered to some group currently at war. Arcadians may also spread rumors or arrange for people to be in the "right place or the right time" to start aggressions between two groups. For instance, if the Risen are at war with the Math Addicts, an Arcadian may arrange for fighting to break about between the Risen and the Humankalorie so the Humankalorie can join forces with the Math Addicts. Arcadians are also known to manipulate the internal politics of gangs, using money, anonymous advice and the spread of rumors.

The people and groups being manipulated seldom know that they are being manipulated, and if they do they rarely know by whom, for what reason and to what ends. Arcadians keep this information secret because anything else would make them potential targets.

Advancement- Within the Arcadians, influence can be gained by becoming very good at whatever game the Arcadians currently favor. Getting better at the game means hours and hours of practice and the use of illegal performance enhancing drugs (especially Maxin). Some Arcadians don't use drugs, but they are seldom as good as those who do.

Social Structure- There is no official structure of leadership among the Arcadians. The owner of the Smart Bar was once very influential, but he retired. Now the bar is run by a corporation that is disinterested in what goes on in the bar as long as it continues to make a profit.

Arcadians often settle personal conflicts by playing games. Whoever wins the game wins the argument. Thus, whoever is best at whatever is the most popular game has the most power. An undefeated champion is well known; is spoken of and can usually command an audience.

Population- There approximately 750 Arcadians.

External Relations- The Arcadians maintain good relations with their neighbors: the Sexologists to the North and the Tea Drinkers to the South. They do not fight with these neighbors (especially since all three are Indie gangs who find open warfare distasteful), but they seldom form alliances with them. The Arcadians are most likely to get in to trouble with Well gangs who get angry at real or imagined Arcadian meddling in their affairs.

The Omniscients also manipulate city events by giving information to other groups. Thus, the Omniscients and Arcadians often find themselves manipulating common events, which may mean a conflict or may mean a shared purpose. There are many friendships between Omniscients and Arcadians, and many animosities. The Omniscients tend to think of Arcadians as too prone to using powers of manipulation amorally, and Arcadians tend to think of Omniscients as taking things too seriously. A few times the Omniscients and Arcadians have allied themselves towards a common cause. During those times the pairing has proved to be very powerful.

Arcadians keep personal intelligence files (even if only in their enhanced memories) on the city's movers and shakers, including the high-ups of every gang, and even the newest Arcadian is unafraid to call on the leader of some gang.

Military Style- The Arcadians favorite form of fighting wars is to find an enemy's enemy and provide support to the enemy. Support usually means gathering intelligence about the enemy and creating battle plans. When they are forced in to a direct confrontation with another gang, the Arcadians use their money and various skills to brew up batches of chemical weapons. Arcadians with knowledge of chemistry brew up huge vats of acids or toxic chemicals which they bottle in to small vials and pass around to other Arcadians.

Typical Weapon- Glass vials of acids and toxins thrown at enemies. Because years of game playing have given them "quick hands," they also like to use small knives (like switchblades).

Turf- A smallish, solid rectangle of turf on the East Side, South of 72nd St., North of 57th St., East of West End Ave. and West of Columbus Ave. To the west is an industrial complex and the sunken city. Arcadian turf is dotted with bars, restaurants and shops that cater to Indies and that have arcade games and other games in them.

Distinguishing Features- Black clothing seems to be the universal style of the Arcadians, occasionally accented with fluorescent colors. Most Arcadians wear special gloves to protect their hands from blisters during hours of game play. Similarly, most wear special tinted glasses to protect their eyes from hours of staring in to old-style computer screens.

Binh Kwanna (Current Champion of the Arcadians)

Level 1 Arcadian

Attributes- AWR 13, AGY 12, CHM 8, END 6, INL 22 (28 on Maxin), SPD 4, STH 4, WIL 8, BLD 2, BDY 1, INCY 3

Appearance- Binh is an asian male with pale skin. He looks young and has effeminate features, including very long eyelashes. He has spiky fluorescent purple hair. He wears a black silk T-Shirt with loose sleeves and black slacks. He wears silver rings in pierced eyebrows.

History- Binh grew up in a suburb outside the city. Binh was an akward child: his high intelligence and effeminate behaviors and features prevented him from making many friends or developing good social skills. He never felt close to his parents and made most of his friends on the net. Some of his net friends, who were a few years older than Binh, planned to move to the city when they turned 18. Binh ran away from home to live with them, getting a job programming under an assumed identity to pay the rent. He found he did not get along with his friends in person as well as he did on the net, and he stated associating with them less and gravitating towards the Arcadians. Binh found that he didn't have to be socially skilled to get attention in the Arcades, all he had to do was be a good game player. Binh hit the scene hard, making an instant name for himself. Whatever money he spent on smart drugs, especially Maxin, and quickly found himself the best player in the group.

Social Status- Binh has, for several weeks, been the unbeatable master of Invisible Tetris (currently the most popular game among the Arcadians), thanks to a multi-week binge on Maxin and uppers. Most Arcadians admire him as a player, but many find his personality unpleasant and some believe that Fae cheats somehow.

Personality- Binh is young and immature, full of false bravado hiding an inner core of insecurity. Binh knows that he can not live the rest of his life high on Maxin and that eventually someone will replace him as the new star of the smart bar. Binh doesn't know what he will do with his life if he is not the champion. He doesn't know if his new friends will continue to be his friends. Some parts of him would rather die than deal with those questions. Binh tries not to think about it, he tries to lose himself in the rush

Motivations- Binh wants to distract himself, to not think about the questions that bother him. He tried to lose himself in the rush of winning, the thrill of danger, the warmth of being the center of attention. He has found a good thing as the current master of Tetris and he wants to keep it going as long as possible. He cares little about his own future or the future of the Arcadians.

Methods- Whenever Binh is in conflict with some other Arcadian, he immediately challenges them to a game of Tetris. If they refuse, he tries to get them to change their minds by insulting with them, and if that fails he ignores the person, trying to pretend that he or she doesn't exist.

Symbols- Game pieces and game boards are common symbols of the Arcadians.

Slang

   Consequences: n., something built in to a game to hurt a player who is losing.

   Solitaire: n., a solo game made out of manipulating city events.

Skills

   Free Skills: Military Strategy (2), Mnemonics (2)

   Skill Costs: ATH 8, BIO 5, CMBT 10, CRTV 5, INFO 4, INTL 4, MIL 4, PSY:X 15, PSY:M 12, PSY:S 10, TECH 5, THIE 7, SOC 6, STRT 8.

Income- $2,000 +$150/week

Special Equipment- Arcadians have access to cheap smart drugs (and sometimes manufacture their own), so smart drugs have half the cost for Arcadians. PC starts with $1000 in pirated data (software, information and the installation coding for mental programs).

Special Bonus Characteristics

Quick Hands (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC has been playing old-style arcade games, which involve hitting buttons and manipulating joysticks very quickly, the PCs reflexes with his or her hands are very quick. The PC gets +4 to any roll involving speed of hand movements (e.g. an opposed roll to grab a gun off of a table before an enemy can). Also gives +4 to initiative, strike, wing and vital strike with small hand-held weapons (like knives).

Puzzle Mind (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC gets +10 to any INL roll related to determining the optimum strategy or tracking and simultaneously predicting the movements of multiple objects.

Strategic Knowledge (Mandatory Advantage)- The PC gets +10 to any City Knowledge roll involving the military aspects of gangs or other city groups.

Suggested Skills- Computer Modeling, Gambling, Math, Military Tactics, Programming: Application, Programming: VR.

Suggested Equipment- Amphetamines, Awake Inhaler, Maxin, Palmtop: Communicator, Radio Scanner, Smart Drugs.

Suggested Reading- Maxin (p.114), Gangs: War.

Boarders

In Brief- Thrill seekers on high-tech slipboards, speeding through the city doing tricks and ignoring boundaries of turf.

Favorable Stereotypes- Fun, easygoing, independent, forgiving, highly skilled, apolitical.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Immature punks, marijuana addicts, vandals, disrespectful, clowns, full of false bravado and delusions of immortality, oblivious to the rest of the city.

Other Names- Slipboarders, slippers.

Origin- In the 1930's and 1940's kids learned to strap wooden boards on skates to simulate surfing on the streets. A surf shop owner in California soon started manufacturing boards, and a new sport was born. Though the last half of the 20th century, skateboarding had many declines and upsurgences. Manhattan has had many skateboarding crews (loose associations of young people who hung around together doing tricks), focusing at various times around Riverside Park, Central Park (especially near the Alice in wonderland statue and the band shell) and at Washington Square Park. During the 70's, many skaters made money selling LSD. Later, the city skateboarding scene intermingled with the tagger (graffiti artist) scene. Many taggers were skaters and visa versa.

By the end of the 20th century, skateboarding had become firmly ingrained in to American culture, a recognized sport and a serious subculture. Even during the turmoil of the Freedom Wars, teens continued to skateboard in the city.

Skateboarding has improved with every new advancement in materials technology, mostly due to the hard work of skaters tinkering with whatever they could. During the Freedom Wars the Freedom Army created true nanotechnology, which would later revolutionize materials technology. After the war, secondary-nanotechnology (materials created, molecule by molecule, by nanobots) slowly became available. Even though incredibly expensive, wealthy skaters (and skaters with rich parents) were able to buy and improve their boards using secondary nanotech. In several places around the world, people experimented with using ultra-smooth materials to try to replace wheels. In 2060, one skater in Orange County in Los Angeles used ultra-smooth materials with thousands of tiny holes and squeezed a tiny bit of gel (the inventor used a sexual lubricant) out on to the smooth surface. As long as a small layer of gel lasted, the result was almost frictionless. Articles on on-line skateboard magazines gave instructions and soon hundreds of skaters were experimenting in their basements.

Seeing how efficient these vehicles could be, the military developed them as "emergency transport sleds" for wounded soldiers. Mass-manufactured boards became available to the general public in 2066. Skateboarders had been making their own boards in their basements, but these boards were retired when the wholly superior manufactured boards came out. "Slipboards" as skaters called them, started appearing in the city skating scene. The Slipboards were just as maneuverable as skateboards but because there was less friction they could go much faster.

Skateboarders continued experimenting with improving their slipboards. The next major revolution was "jump-packs". An explosive cartridge was inserted in to a chamber inside the board, an explosion triggered and the force channeled through reinforced vents on the bottom of the board. The result was that boarders could jump much higher or accelerate much faster. The technology was improved so that a board could be loaded with multiple cartridges, each moved in to place and triggered like shells in a firearm.

Slipboards enhanced with jump packs were so wholly superior to skateboards that soon no one could be considered a serious skater (or boarder, as the slang was increasingly used) without a slipboard. Skateboards still continued to be used in the city, but not for sport or art. Skateboards were no longer any more cool than bicycles. Slipboarding took over, but was more expensive, more of an elite sport for city Indies.

The city boarding crew was already around when the new generation of gangs appeared. The new gangs, with their booming populations, forced a gang-worldview on the city. The Boarders soon found themselves being attacked for the actions of one Boarder and the Boarders were soon defending themselves as a gang.

Timeline

1900s- Revival of surfing by surviving Hawaiian natives.
1907- Surfing brought to California.
1930s-1940s – Kids invent skateboarding by strapping boards to skates.
1958- CA surf-shop owner creates first commercial skateboard.
1965- First national skateboarding contest.
1970- Snowboard invented, based on kids in upstate New York sliding on cafeteria trays.
1971- Kicktails (upturn on the back of skateboards) invented.
1970's- Alan "Ollie" Gelfand invents the Ollie, a way to jump a skateboard.

1978- Modern rollerblades invented.
2054- Freedom Army creates true nanotechnology.
2060- First gel-enhanced slipboard.
2063- Military starts using slipboards.
2066- Slipboards available to general public.
2073- Jump-packs invented.

Joining- Most young people start out as adolescents, getting a skateboard at a thrift store. They practice and save up, some play slipboarding games in VR, and eventually they save up enough to get their first board. Many people hang out where the boarders hang out, but it's hard for them to get noticed until they either start spray-painting their names over everything or they learn how to do some cool tricks. There is no real point when a Boarder joins the gang: the more friends a Boarder makes, the stronger those friendships become, the more the new Boarder is part of the community.

At level one, adventure one, the average Boarder still has his or her first slipboard, and may have just started experimenting with tricking it out. He or she knows a few impressive stunts and can keep up with the group on any run.

Lifestyle- Boarders spend a majority of their hours hanging out. Most are sober, though a few do drugs. Marijuana is the most popular drug. They almost never use drugs that impair their agility. They chat, flirt, watch whoever is currently doing tricks, shout out sheers and insults. They sit around on benches, stairs and concrete ledges with their boards next to them.

They do several types of standing jumps, they jump on to and slide off of all manner of raised edges, they jump and slide along walls. When they are lucky enough to find or make a pipe they can build up enough kinetic energy to do somersaults and other high jumps.

Boarders rarely spend a whole day in one place, they move around a lot, looking for new places to do tricks. They go on speed runs, where a group of Boarders race through the city as fast as they can. They invading the turf of any gang they feel like. They fly past indignant gang members, shouting out insults and spray-painting on the walls.

Many boarders are accomplished graffiti artists. Their mobility allows them to go places and tag things that few else in the city could. Graffiti writing has three separate (but not mutually exclusive) purposes. The first purpose is the glory a tagger receives (even if only among other taggers) by putting his or her name on unlikely or dangerous places. Boarders may graffiti their presence on the walls of hostile turf to leave proof of their incursion. The second purpose is the beautification of the city by creating artwork on the walls. The third purpose is to document history and news of the city using an ancient tagger language of symbols and scrawls. This language has evolved from 20th century gang graffiti and it is best at documenting gang wars and murders, though by applying a bit of creativity to the language it can be used to document anything.

For the most part, the most aggression that ever comes to pass between two Boarders is sarcasm. In rare cases, however, two Boarders get pissed off enough at each other that they will engage in a jump joust. In a jump joust, two Boarders jump up with their boards and bounce off of each other. This is done again and again until a Boarder takes a spill. Other jump jousts are coordinated between the two boarders and the idea is to do impressive jumps, not to hurt each other.

Advancement- There is no organized system of status among the Boarders, but a few Boarders are more popular than others. Boarders advance by gaining skill and forming close friendships with other Boarders.

Social Structure- Few gangs are as anarchic as the Boarders. There is no leadership in the Boarders. Many people young people who subscribe to anarchy as a political ideology are drawn to the Boarders because of their strong association with anarchy.

Small groups of Boarders travel together around the city in crews. Crews are not static. When a Boarder gets up and says "I'm going to go buzz some Purists, who's coming?" the people who come are usually that person's regular crew, but anyone might decide to tag along. A Boarder may be part of a couple of crews, or may not be a regular member of any.

Population- There are about 950 Boarders. About 80% are Indies, the rest are Wells. Boarders have the widest variety of ages of any gang, with Boarders as young as 11 and as old as 40. There are also many part-time Boarders who are not really part of the scene, but every once in a while they dust off their Boards to make sure they can still keep up with the new kids.

External Relations- Boarders go wherever they please in the city, and have made enemies of every gang who feel that their turf should be inviolable. Boarders will sometimes trespass on the turf of gangs simply because they know it will piss off the gang. There are many worse crimes than trespassing, and though the Boarders have many enemies, they seldom have to deal with bloody vendettas.

The Boarders often get in to trouble with the Night Shift, Keepers, Purists, Risen, Roofers and Skin Borgs, all of which are very sensitive about their turf. Of all these groups, the only ones who have been able to actually hurt the Boarders have been the Skin Borgs. During a group incursion in to the Skin Borg territory, the Boarders found themselves surrounded by hundreds of Skin Borgs. A few escaped, but several were badly beaten and their boards stolen. Most Boarders are wary of going in to Skin Borg territory (a feeling new to most Boarders).

Military Style- Boarders like to take full advantage of their speed and maneuverability. They like to swoop in on an enemy suddenly, hit as many of the enemy as they can, steal or destroy anything of value they can, then leave before the enemy has a chance to strike back. This may be repeated several times a night until the enemy is worn down.

Typical Weapon- Boarders usually use their slipboards as weapons in hand-to-hand combat. They may ride a board in to an enemy, they may use a tether attached to an arm or leg to swing the board at an enemy, or they may take the board in to their hands and use it as a club. Often, boards are adorned with spikes and blades to make them better weapons in these situation.

Turf- Boarders do not believe in turf. They can be found all over the city, but they tend to congregate in places that have the best features for boarding. Madison Square Park downtown is a major Boarder hangout when Boarders just want to chill. The trails through the hole (Central Park) and the railroad yard at the far northern tip of the city (in Skin Borg territory) are fun places for speed runs. In the narrow streets farther downtown, there are many fountains, stairs and other features that make for good jumping stunts.

Distinguishing Features- Boarders tend to wear baggy clothing that protects as much as their skin as possible from road burns. They like to wear thick fabrics, like denim, flannel and leather. They dislike, however, any armor that impedes their movement. Many wear gloves and some wear goggles. Stickers and patches given out as promotional items by board and board-part manufacturers are applied liberally to themselves and their boards. The best distinguishing feature of a Boarder is a tricked out slipboard.

Symbols- Because of the large portion of Boarders who are graffiti artists, the Boarders have more graffiti symbols than any other city group (in addition, most boarder crews and individual boarders have their own symbols). The simplest Boarder symbol is an oval, representing a Slipboard.

Slang- The Boarders have a complex language of slang to describe all the hundreds of tricks they can do. The name of a trick is several words strung together which, altogether, describe all the intricacies of a trick. Thus, even if a Boarder has never seen or heard of a "backwards 180 nose-slide harlowe," he or she could easily picture what it would entail.

Buzz: v., to annoy and embarrass an enemy by riding past them quickly.

Crew: n., a number of Boarders hanging out or making a run together.

Ollie: n., a basic jump up in the air accomplished by kicking the kicktail of a board.

Kicktail: n. the upturned lip on the back of a skateboard or slipboard.

Speed Run: n., a tour of the city where a group of Boarders ride as fast as they can.

Spill: n./v., a fall or to fall.

Rolling (AGY)- Nobody takes as many falls as a Boarder and nobody in the city ever learns how to fall as well as Boarders do. This skill gives +4 to save vs. falling/skidding damage (see p.64) per level.

Skills

Free Skills: Slipboard Combat (1), Slipboard Riding (3), Slipboard Stunts (2), Rolling (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 4, BIO 7, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 5, INTL 7, MIL 7, PSY:X 16, PSY:M 13, PSY:S 13, TECH 6, THIE 7, SOC 7, STRT 8.

Special Skills: The Graffiti skill costs only 4 points per level. The special Boarder skill Rolling costs 4 points per level.

Income- $1,250 +$175/wk.

Special Equipment- Slipboard, with accessories, worth $2000.

Suggested Skills- Acrobatics, Graffiti, Mechanics, Secondary Nanotech, Slipboard Combat, Slipboard Riding, Slipboard Stunts.

Suggested Equipment- Electronic Vestibular Organs, Motorcycle Outfit, Nanoweave Armor, Protective Gloves, Spraypaint, Vehicle Repair Tools: Portable.

Suggested Reading- City Geography, Graffiti, Secondary Nanotech, Streets, Transportation.

Dragons

In Brief- Believe they are the destructive force of nature (the "dragon" of mythology) incarnate in a human form.

Favorable Stereotypes- Spiritual, wise, creative, intense, powerful, wild, respectful of nature.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Destructive, deluded cultists, under the control of an egomaniacal poet.

Other Names- Breakers, The Wild Hunt.

Origin- The Dragons started as a theory in the mind of Sitha Nith, an Indie artist living in the city. Sitha was part of a small crowd of Indies who were in to art, hanging out in coffee shops, discussing philosophy and religion in very serious tones. Sitha's theory was that the myth of the Asian and European dragons (as well as similar creatures found in other countries) was a representation of the destructive force of nature. She said that people in the past could never be sure about their futures because they never knew when a storm might come and blow down their houses. The building of large humanmade structures: bridges, canals, dams, storm drains, large buildings, etc. were attempts to escape from the destructive power of the Dragon. People today, she said, live protected from nature and thus with no fear of the dragon. This is bad, she said, because it gave people an unhealthy disrespect for nature and imprisoned people in a world of stifling predictability.

As Sitha turned this theory in to her personal philosophy, her art became full of representations of the wild power and destructive capability of nature. At shows, she would spend hours explaining the meaning of her pieces and would delve deep in to the arguments for her philosophy. Her admirers grew and many young Indies, swayed by her words, spent a lot of money to buy her pieces. She soon bought a large studio building all for herself and turned the top floor in to a private gallery. There she collected historical pieces, modern pieces and her own work that she thought captured the essence of the Dragon. When filled with the sounds of thunderstorms, her gallery was meant to be an immersive experience. Sitha would hold nightly parties and one by one lead party-goers upstairs to the gallery.

Sitha soon developed a large crowd of "regulars" who would come to her house every night, never bothering to even ask if there was a party that night. Sitha developed the immersive experience of her gallery in to a guided-imagery meditation where people would imagine themselves being the Dragon.

People who had undergone Sitha's "dragon experience" were often prone to acting on impulse, and many got in to trouble for vandalizing buildings near Sitha's house. Sitha neither encouraged nor discouraged this behavior.

One night, however, she was in the middle of a particularly vehement rant when she stopped talking and, without words, left the house and started smashing things. Her followers came with her and started destroying everything they could.

Sitha later called this event "the wild hunt" and thought that if it put the fear of the Dragon in to the people of the city, it was a good thing. The wild hunt happened again and again, each time on an impromptu basis. Sitha developed its form in to a highly concerted structure that took the form of a large dragon, the "claws" of which would rip things apart and the "coils" of which would smash things to pieces. The wild hunt would occur at random times, would move in random directions, would destroy anything or anyone not capable of getting out of their way.

People all over the city grew to hate and fear the Dragons and their random destruction. They gained many enemies, but they had high tech armor and weapons and a precise and well-coordinated fighting unit. The Dragons took on, at various times, the Omniscients, Bleeders, Humankalorie, Risen, Night Shift and the Drug Lords.

Public opinion about the Dragons reached its low point about a year ago, with people talking about creating a coalition of gangs to destroy them. Then, public opinion about the Dragons slowly started improving. There were two primary reasons for this: First, everyone had moved out of walking range of Sitha's building and were thus out of danger range. Second, a few very vocal people started to argue in favor of this obvious underdog. They argued that the random destruction damage by the Dragons had done as much good as it had harm. Squalid tenements had been destroyed, forcing the property owners to open up nicer buildings for rent. Drug labs had been destroyed, as had many houses occupied by violent addicts. Many hazardous buildings had been destroyed: rotting buildings that would have fallen over in the next earthquake or buildings so choked with trash that they could easily catch on fire and catch half the block on fire. In recent times, public opinion about the Dragons has become more even.

Timeline

2070- Sitha Nith moves to the city.
2072- Sitha Nith starts developing Dragon theory.
2074- Sitha Nith purchases old loft building.
2076- First wild hunt.
2079- Public opinion of Dragons hits low point.

Joining- Sitha Nith regularly sends out invitations to "parties" at her loft building, and all Dragons are free to invite anyone they want to a party. Many people show up just looking for a good party, and they are usually quite satisfied, but anyone who shows any interest in the Dragons, or the art plastered on the walls or in Sitha Nith will be given information about the Dragon philosophy. If someone has attended a few parties and Sitha recognizes his or her face, she will invite the person upstairs to her private gallery.

It is usually after a person's first, second or third visit to the gallery that he or she asks Sitha Nith permission to join the Dragons. Occasionally, a non-Dragon guest has been present at a party where a wild hunt happened and the guest was so caught up in the frenzy that he or she participated, and immediately became a Dragon.

When a person becomes a Dragon, Sitha Nith immediately assigns him or her to a position in the wild hunt, tells him or her what equipment to buy (she gets special deals on some equipment, and may sell to the new Dragon at cost).

The new Dragon is given a lot of new information on the duties of his or her wild hunt position, but there is never really any formal training. The Dragons believe in harmony through singularity of purpose and consciousness rather than from training. The Dragon is, instead, encouraged to spend as much time as possible thinking about the concept of the Dragon.

At level one, adventure one the PC has been in enough wild hunts to feel comfortable with his or her position and may have even been assigned to a different position by Sitha. Sitha knows the PC on a first name basis and feels comfortable sending him or her out on missions.

Lifestyle- Dragons spend a lot of time sitting around discussing Dragon philosophy. Sitha is uncomfortable with the idea of her philosophy being a religious dogma. Instead, she feels that it is a flowing set of ideas with much room for discussion and debate. Sitha encourages such debate and often joins in.

Sitha is constantly collecting and creating art which she believes typifies the spirit of the Dragon in human consciousness, this art lines every wall of her very large loft building. The doors are always open to her building and Dragons are free to come and go at any time. Dragons spend a lot of time viewing the current state of the collection and practicing a guided visualization meditation. The visualization involves, first, imagining the spirit of the Dragon existing in the wild forces of nature and, second, imagining being that spirit.

Much of the Dragon's current population comes from those members of the Indie art scene of 4 years ago who became part of the crowd surrounding Sitha Nith. Thus, many Dragons are artists, and most Dragons spend a lot of time discussing and viewing art. Dragons are a large part of the city's small art scene and much city art is influenced by Dragon ideas, even when it is not created by Dragons. Many Dragons live in studio apartments or cooperatively rent studio space to work on various projects.

Every night is a "party" at Sitha's house. There are more intimate nights where Sitha invites no one, and only those who have a standing invitation show up. At these quieter parties, Sitha takes no pains to entertain or enlighten her guests, she simply hangs out and socializes. On other nights, Sitha invites many people, including many non-Dragons. Everyone Sitha has dealt with, and many people she has only heard of, may be invited (as well as all of the Dragons). During these events Sitha tries to entertain her guests: she unveils new artworks, she provides food and drinks, she reads poetry and tells old myths (mostly those involving dragons).

The higher the concentrations of Dragons at a party, the more intense the party. The party-goers are all thinking, talking about and feeling the same thing: the sense of power that is the "dragon" and the possibility of a wild hunt approaching. This intensity effects Sitha, causing her to give intense impromptu speeches and poems, which get the group even more hyped up. When it gets intense enough, the wild hunt may occur.

The wild hunt is never planned, and on any given night there is a chance that it may happen. Taken altogether, there has been a Wild Hunt about one out of every five nights. Without saying anything, Sitha leads the Dragons present out of her house. The Dragons know that a hunt has begin and immediately put on their armor and grab their weapons as they race to catch up with Sitha.

Some say that it is hypocrisy that a gang that preaches complete chaos would have the most ordered fighting style of any gang. Sitha Nith does not see a contradiction, however, she says that ideally the Wild Hunt should act as a singular force, one entity with one cause. In this perfect state, disorder between members would be impossible. Accordingly, Sitha does not consciously try to organize her forces, she gives each a role and encourages them to live up to that role in the way that feels the most correct to them. Surprisingly, the wild hunt ends up being a highly organized force. The wild hunt takes the form of a long Chinese dragon.

Sitha Nith (Founder and Leader of the Dragons)

Level 10 Dragon

Attributes- AGY 8, AWR 16, CHM 20, END 10, INL 18, SPD 11, STH 15, WIL 17, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 3.

Appearance- Tall, athletic, African American, with neon-green irises, black hair braided tightly on to the scalp in to corn-cob rows. She wears a brown monk's robe when it is cold, when it is warm she wears simple green dresses. Her nails are sharp, painted an iridescent green resembling a reptile scale.

History- Sitha Nith was born in the city but grew up in a small private city. As an adolescent she was a troublemaker and spent some time in juvenile hall. When she got old enough she moved to the city and, thanks to money from her parents, was able to concentrate on art full time. She quickly became an integral part of the small city art scene. She invented the Dragon philosophy and her followers became the Dragons.

Social Status- Sitha is the beloved, respected and undisputed leader of the Dragons. She created the primary philosophy of the Dragons and she is in charge of the actions of the gang. Many in the gang would gladly die to protect her.

Motivations- Sitha believes strongly that modern human society is missing something very important: fear and respect for the random destructiveness of nature. She hopes to, along with her gang, be a human incarnation of that force, to return it to human consciousness. She is not megalomaniacal: she does not think that she is special, except that she has a very important job and was the first to realize the need. She thinks of this duty as beyond normal judgments of good and evil, just like nature. She does realize that her gang performs mundane actions that have nothing to do with the gang's spiritual duties (participating in gang politics, fighting in self-defense, making money) and these actions are not beyond moral considerations.

Methods- Although many Dragons are willing to blindly follow her commands, she is wary to use that power for her own personal gain. When she thinks that the Dragons themselves are in danger, though, she doesn't mind risking the lives of some Dragons in order to protect the majority. Sitha likes to believe that she knows the capabilities and skills of most of the Dragons, and when she has a problem she selects the Dragons she thinks will be best able to solve it and talks to them intensely of the need to solve the problem.

Personality- Sitha is an emotionally and intellectually intense woman who gathers around her intense people, intense events, intense ideas and intense art. She is constantly seeking new ways to express her emotions, from a painting to a philosophy to the destructiveness of the wild hunt. Sitha becomes quickly and completely absorbed in everything she does, and she often looes sight of the big picture. This is especially true in her relationships, which tend to be intense but brief. Sitha is often hyperactive, she paces, and she thinks best when she is talking out loud (especially when there is someone else in the room to listen). One of Sitha's biggest flaws is that she is a very trusting person, willing to believe in anyone.

Special Skills- Among other skills, Sitha has: Blacksmithing (1), Emotional Attack (2), History: World (3), Kickboxing (2), Legends (3), Oratory (3), Philosophy (3), Psychic Defense (2), Sculpture (2), Staff (2), Story Telling (3), Visual Arts (3).

Special Equipment- See Eyes Glowing Brightly (p.293).

When the dragon form of the hunt strikes a building, the building is being pried apart with crowbars, chopped up with axes and being smashed with sledgehammers. The wild hunt has been known to bring down entire buildings in a matter of minutes. Despite the extreme dangerousness of wrecking a building by hand, only a few Dragons have been seriously wounded. One reason is that Sitha (and some others) wear sensory goggles that let them move the hunt out of the way when the building is going to collapse.

The wild hunt moves randomly, twisting and turning through the city streets at random. The wild hunt may never leave Dragon territory, or it may travel to the far end of the city. A wild hunt may last only a few hours or it may last well past dawn. The decisions of where and how the Dragon strike are made by many people acting in unison, like many hands on a ouija board move the pointer without any one person feeling in control. Although they idealize randomness, there is some method to the wild hunt's movements, though it is largely subconscious. Ugly buildings, for instance, are more likely to be destroyed than beautiful ones. Places where people are being exploited, or the means to exploit people are being created (e.g. inhumane tenements, drug labs, addict controlled houses where people are kidnapped and murdered) are more likely to be destroyed. Buildings that are structurally unsafe or are fire hazards are more likely to be torn down. When someone has done something to hurt the Dragons, the wild hunt will often turn, in rage, to attack that enemy (though, once again, no once consciously makes that decision). The people with the most influence over the movement of the wild hunt are the elite "eyes glowing brightly" (a position that includes Sitha) who shine bright lights in to the darkness and use sensory goggles to see inside potential targets.

The Dragons don't only destroy buildings. Any human-made object may become the object of the wild hunt's destructive power: a road, a lamppost, a fence, a freeway onramp, etc. The city gets very wary when the Dragons get anywhere near a bridge or power station.

Advancement- Within the Dragons, advancement is gained solely by gaining the respect of Sitha Nith. If a PC proves himself or herself to be capable in the eyes of Sitha, she will offer the PC a more important position in the wild hunt. Sitha tries to look for, and honor, all manners of talent: intelligence, bravery, fighting skill, honesty, creativity, knowledge, etc. Depending on which of these qualities he or she shows, a PC may be offered different positions in the wild hunt. Male players may also advance in the gang by becoming Sitha Nith's current lover, though they risk being kicked out of the gang if the romance ends badly.

Social Structure- Sitha Nith is the undisputed leader of the Dragons. She leads by persuasive power. The level of worship of Sitha varies from those who simply respect her beliefs to those who feel blind love for her.

Sitha Nith tries to know something about each Dragon, even if it is only a collection of trivial facts. Based on what Sitha believes each Dragon's skills and abilities, Sitha assigns that Dragon a place within the structure of the wild hunt. The positions within the wild hunt, when acting together, make up the "anatomy" of the hunt. Each position has a physical location within the whole, a style of moving and a specific job when fighting or destroying things.

Some positions are thought of as "higher" than others, even though Sitha claims that all are equally important. The Eyes Glowing Brightly (which Sitha Nith always is), Hands Holding Lightning (who possess the special lightning staves that Sitha herself invented) and Whipping Tail (where Sitha puts the most skilled assassins) are the hardest to get in to and where Sitha puts the Dragons she respects the most. The Dragons respect people in these positions because they believe that Sitha respects them.

Sitha also occasionally takes male lovers from within the ranks of the Dragons, always someone who she highly respects. These lovers enjoy an increased status, with Sitha and with other Dragons. However, Sitha's relationships tend to be tumultuous and short. Some relationships end on good terms, others do not. One ex-lover is still good friends with Sitha and is a highly respected member of the gang, another has been permanently banished from Dragon territory under threat of death.

There are always Dragons hanging around Sitha's house. Sitha prefers face to face interaction, and whenever she wants to talk about something important (and she considers almost everything she talks about to be important) she summons the person to her house (she maintains a file with contact information for each Dragon, and she regularly shares it with other Dragons). When she decides it is the right time for a wild hunt, she asks whoever is at hand to call everyone to her house.

Lightning Staves

Lightning staves were invented by Sitha Nith, though she left it to some more technically inclined Dragons to find a way to make the idea a reality. The staff is a thick pole, with a ring of fake claws at the bottom so that it can stand up on its own. The staff has, inside it, very powerful and very expensive gyroscopic batteries (pieces of metal, floating in a vacuum chamber between magnets, "charged up" by electromagnets until they are spinning at speeds of several million rotations per second, can become generators and the extreme kinetic energy of the metal becomes massive amounts of electricity). The batteries take one hour to charge and must be charged at a high voltage power line. Although gyroscopic batteries are the best way to pack a lot of power in to something very small and very light, they are seldom used because they are very dangerous: if the vacuum chamber is at all pierced, the metal object (the edges of which are traveling many times faster than the speed of sound would explode from the friction. It takes 8 bladed or 10 blunt damage directly to the shaft of a staff to rupture it. The explosion would cause 8 burn damage (range increment 2 ft.).

The staff releases two clouds of fog. The one released from the bottom is slightly colder than room temperature, and it clings to the ground. The one released from the top is slightly warmer than room temperature, and it creates a sort of funnel (or, if inside, pools along the ceiling). The clouds disperse within 10 minutes and cover a radius of 20 ft. An electrical charges is built up between each end until bolts of electricity tunnel between the two sides. Seeking the path of least resistance, the electricity will travel through any good conductor between the two fogs, including people. Since the Dragons are heavily insulated, though, it is non-Dragons that are often hit by the lighting. Any non-insulated person in the fog has approximately a one in six chance of being hit by lighting each round (more if they are very close to a staff, less if they are farther away). Being hit by lighting does 6 electricity damage (see p.64).

Besides the fact that lightning tends to hit the enemies, the constant crack and flash of lightning tend to blind and disorient enemies (-4 to all actions/reactions) though the Dragons, who are quite used to this, suffer from no minuses.

The staff can also be used as a normal blunt weapon. It is heavy, making it awkward to hold but letting it do a lot of damage (especially with the steel claws on it). All action are hard (-4), except Parry. Does 3 blunt and one bladed damage.

Population- There are about 600 Dragons, almost all are Indies. Of these 600, only about 550 attend any given wild hunt. The numbers of Dragons that occupy the wild hunt positions are as follows: 200 Rolling Coils, 120 Sharp Scales, 110 Slashing Talons, 75 Ominous Thunderclaps, 50 Pumping Hearts, 20 Prying Teeth, 10 Whipping Tails, 10 Eyes Glowing Brightly and 5 Hands Holding Lightning.

External Relations- The Dragons are rarely aggressors, they never pick fights and they always accept requests for peace. However, they make a lot of enemies and they defend themselves vigorously.

Nearby Gangs: The farther away a gang is from Dragon turf, the less likely they are to have experienced a recent attack by the wild hunt, and the more likely they are to have a high opinion of the Dragons. The Humankalorie, Bleeders and Risen all border the Dragons and are fairly often at war with the Dragons. The Omniscients are to the East, but the Omniscients (an Indie gang with more money) find it worth it to put up with a little property damage in order to stay at peace with the Dragons.

Keepers: The Keepers live in the hole directly West of the Dragons, but since they live in temporary shelters within the wilderness the park, the wild hunt has never invaded their territory. The Keepers represent people living just as the Dragons think people should live, moving and flowing with the changes to the landscape made by nature. As such, the Dragon's respect the Keeper's wish to be left alone. The Keepers see the Dragons as a bunch of rich vandals who do nothing but make trouble for themselves. The Dragons would probably help the Keepers if asked, but the Keepers are afraid to ally themselves with a group that makes so many enemies.

Dragons: The Dragons find the philosophy of the Animalists interesting, and some Animalists admire the Dragons, but the two never get along for very long. The main reason is the class difference: the Dragons are a very prototypical Indie gang and the Animalists are a very prototypical Well gang, each with different priorities and ways of looking at things.

Dragons: Habey Cox, the founder of the Freaks, was one of the defenders of the Dragons when people were talking about banding together to wipe out the Dragons. Habey and many other Freaks respect the Dragons and Sitha Nith and Habey Cox consider themselves friends (though, because of their strong personalities, they find it good not to spend too much time together while sober).

Military Style- When in battle (as when destroying things during the wild hunt) the Dragons form a single, flowing entity, a long column of soldiers that twists and turns randomly like a writhing snake, equally likely to wrap around an enemy and attack from all sides or to lash out against them suddenly, pushing them backwards. Each person in the military formation has a specific job. Two of the Dragons hold staves designed by Sitha Nith that create a cloud of fog teeming with lightning bolts. The Dragons wear insolated armor, so the lightning strikes their enemies. Soldiers in front steer the course and blind enemies with bright lights. Medics in the center pull in the wounded and treat them. Soldiers with shields and short swords put up a defensive front. A small team at the rear races through the fog and strike against enemies. The Dragons achieve what no other gang has been able to: complete coordination paired with total unpredictability.

Typical Weapon- Varies by position within the wild hunt. Each "part of the dragon" uses a different weapon, see Special Bonus Characteristics, next page.

Turf- Dragons don't actively define or defend their turf. Dragon turf is simply the area where the wild hunt is most likely to strike and that sensible people tend to stay away from. Dragon turf shows the marks of many wild hunts: holes in the sides of buildings, street-lights knocked down, piles of rubbles where there were once houses, old abandoned cars ripped to shreds, etc.

Dragon turf is a large, long corridor of turf in the East Side/Upper East Side. Dragon territory is what used to be called the museum row: South of 106th St., North of 59th St., East of 5th Ave., West of Lexington Ave. Dragon territory contains the ruins of the York Academy of Medicine (with an impressive library of 20th century medical texts), the Frick Collection (an art museum, now empty of art). On the Southern end of Dragon turf is what's left of many very expensive hotels. Along the West side, bordering the hole, are many mansions. At 81st and Madison is the funeral chapel owned by the Death Man (though he tends to make most of his bets while hanging out in bars near Broadway downtown).

The central point of Dragon turf is Sitha Nith's house, a four story wood and brick loft building that was once used for light manufacturing ages ago. Now, Sitha takes full advantage of the large open spaces and tall ceilings to display paintings and sculptures, some of which are very large. Every floor has artwork, though it is most tightly concentrated on the top floor. The doors to Sitha's house are always open, and there are always Dragons in and out of the building.

The first floor is a large "living room area" with soft lighting and many old couches, futons and chairs. There is also a kitchen in the back with a stainless steel oven and industrial refrigerator. The second floor is an art studio, where half-finished works by Sitha (and the few others she invites to work in her studio) are stored. The third floor is Sitha's own massive bedroom space, where she keeps all her personal belongings, mostly in old cardboard boxes with their lids open. Sitha sleeps on an old king sized bed hanging from the ceiling on chains about four feet from the ground. The fifth floor is exclusively gallery space: the walls are lined with art and small partitions have been set up around the room to create even more space to hang art on. Speakers are everywhere in the room, and the sounds of thunderstorms and waves crashing are playing on them in a constant loop (though she turns up the volume to nearly deafening when she is bringing a guest up to see the gallery). There is a concrete staircase, painted white, and an old (intermittently working) cargo elevator with paint-stained floors.

Distinguishing Features- The easiest way to recognize a Dragon is by his or her armor: when a wild hunt is possible, Dragons have a green-plastic insulation armor that includes a hood, gloves and special shoe inserts. Over that is usually worn some other form of armor, usually with plates made to look like reptile scales. Clothing tends to be green and made of "natural" fabrics (silk, cotton, leather). Many Dragons have artistic skills and many Dragons wear jewelry, clothing or tattoos that they designed personally. Some Dragons are occasionally mistaken for Neos from some neo-Celtic commune. Claws and fangs are a common implants among Dragons.

Symbols- Common symbols used by the Dragons are a green scale pattern, a zig-zag lightning bolt, figures of Chinese and European dragons as well as stylized figures of the Native American thunderbird.

Slang

Dragon: n., the archetypical concretion of human fears of nature.

Full Tour: v., when Sitha shows someone the fifth floor and explains Dragon philosophy to them.

The Wild Hunt: n., the Dragon's regular destructive rampage through the city.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 7, CMBT 8, CRTV 4, INFO 6, INTL 6, MIL 7, PSY:X 13, PSY:M 9, PSY:S 9, TECH 7, THIE 8, SOC 5, STRT 8.

Special Skills: The special skill Destroy costs 4 skill points per level.

Destroy (Uses STH)- The PC has an extensive knowledge of the easiest and quickest way to break any human-made object. This skill is partly a matter of practice and partly an intuitive feel for the weakest point of an object.

Easy (10)- Destroy a wooden couch, with bare hands, in an hour.

Moderate (20)- Completely destroy a car, with a sledgehammer, in one hour.

Hard (30)- Bring down a one-story building, with a sledgehammer, in one hour.

Legendary (40)- Bring down a one-story building, with a spoon, in a few hours.

Income- $2,250 +$200/wk.

Special Equipment- Electrical Insulation (this is green plastic sewn in to a hooded suit, meant to protect the wearer from lighting strikes), AR 19, PR 20 electrical damage, heat factor +3.

Special Bonus Characteristics- Choose one Wild Hunt position for the PC, as follows:

Eyes Glowing Brightly: (Costs 15) There are two small groups of these in the front (in the head). Each has a very bright LED light, bright enough to temporarily blind anyone whose eyes it has been shined in (partial blinding strike, Functional Range 3 ft., Maximum Range 25 ft.). The job of the eyes glowing brightly is to illuminate the way and to guide the rest of the group. Sitha Nith is always an eyes glowing brightly. Some eyes glowing brightly have special sensory equipment (full spectrum goggles, etc.) and are trained to decide which structures have avoided the call of destruction for too long.

Hands Holding Lightning: (Costs 10) These are very respected members of the Dragons. These flank the head on either side holding lighting staves (see sidebar, above). These Dragons guard the staves and move them to wherever the center of the action is.

Ominous Thunderclap: (Costs 0) These Dragons go ahead and warn people that the wild hunt is coming and that they should leave immediately. They howl and use percussion grenades to create a cacophony that warns people to leave. During non-hunt times, the Ominous Thunderclap are trained by Sitha as ambassadors and messengers for the Dragons. PC gets: the skill Oration (1), free 5 percussion grenades (p.147) +2 per week, Ear Plugs (p.118).

Prying Teeth: (Costs 5) This is a small group with crowbars and small hand-axes, who are in the head of the dragon (the front of the column). Their job is to destroy any barriers that block the dragons. PC gets: Crowbar (p.135), Fire Axe (p.151).

Pumping Heart: (Gives 5) This position is reserved for those who can not fight. They stay within the center of the hunt (with sharp scales on either side) and provide emergency medical services to dragons who are injured. They are not expected to fight or destroy anything and are protected at all times by Sharp Scales. PC gets: the skill Emergency Medicine (1) and free First Aid Kit: Semiprofessional (p.117) and 3 Blood Plugs (p.110).

Rolling Coils: (Costs 0) This is the second most common position, next to Sharp Scales. The rolling coils are positioned all along the length of the column. They all have sledgehammers. Their job is to destroy as much as possible as quickly as possible. PC gets: the skill Specific Weapon Training: Sledgehammer (1) and a free Sledgehammer (see p.152).

Sharp Scales: (Costs 10) These are footsoldiers with shields and short swords. Their job is to form a phalanx to protect other Dragons. PC gets: free Shield: Hand-Metal (p.150) and Sword: Katana (p.153).

Slashing Talons: (Costs 0) This is a group that stay on the sides, both in the front and in the back. They have pick axe and their job is to destroy things. Specifically, they cut holes in things that the rolling coils can not smash with their sledgehammers. PC Gets: the skill Specific Weapon Training: Pickaxe (1) and a free Pickaxe (p.152).

Whipping Tail: (Costs 10) This is a special elite group who have the job of assassinating anyone who poses a real threat to the dragons during combat (e.g. someone with a firearm). They stay at the rear of the column, and when a threat emerges they get down on their hands and knees and disappear in to the mist created by the lightning staves. They use infra-red goggles to navigate, find their prey and attack them from behind with a poisoned dagger. PC Gets: free Nightvision Goggles: Deluxe (p.122), Dagger (p.151), 4 doses Black Market Knife Poison (p.144).

Suggested Skills- Legends, Various Creative, Psychic: Manipulative and Psychic: Sensory skills.

Suggested Equipment- Modern Chainmail.

Suggested Reading- City Infrastructure, Electricity Damage (p.64), The Hole, Riots, Weather.

Omniscients

In Brief- A group of obsessed technology hobbyists who use technology to expand their senses.

Favorable Stereotypes- Thoughtful, insightful, cutting edge techies, always gathering and sharing knowledge.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Fat, lazy, disinterested voyeurs.

Other Names- Eyes, Omnis, Sense Techs, Sense Monkeys (Derogatory).

Origin- The Omniscients began with several post-war net-sites about "sensory enhancement technology" (or sense tech for short), a growing field that included sensory gadgets, pharmaceuticals, genetic modifications, biological implants and electronic implants. Participants were mostly young Indie geeks who dreamed of using technology to expand their senses. As more sense tech became available, both through legitimate and illegitimate channels, the net sites became less theoretical and had more practical discussions of getting and using advanced sense tech. A

small sort of subculture formed around sense tech. This subculture was born in the discussion boards on the sense tech websites and quickly developed its own language, philosophies, positions and well-known personalities.

Some discussion boards were national or worldwide in scope, but there were also New York area boards where New Yorkers traded information on things like stores, Black Market contacts, places to find absolute darkness, etc. Many people from the board ended up meeting in real life. Friendships and even romances developed.

As more bonds of friendship formed, the city sense tech "scene" became more of a community, a community that would occasionally defend itself from threats. Perhaps the defining moment in the transition from scene to gang came in 2073 when a sense tech aficionado posted to the local boards that he had been mugged and beaten up by members of a corner gang operating near his house. Incensed, several dozen sense tech aficionados got together to attack the gang and banish them from that side of the city. This was the beginning of a slow but steady carving out of "turf" in what was once a quiet residential neighborhood that had many Omniscients living in it. As it became known that the Omniscients were capable of defending themselves, more people who had been only marginally part of the community started strengthening their ties. Some young people living in or near Omniscient turf were even moved to start a sense tech hobby after seeing Omniscients in action.

Timeline

1960- First nightvision goggles created by US military.
2010- First electronic artificial eyeball tested on a human.
2014- First nightvision camera implant tested on a human.
2034- First human tests of implanting anti-rejection coded animal tissues.
2041- Mental programming developed.
2056- Psychic communication discovered.
2060- Internet service restored after Freedom War.
2060- "SenseTech Frontier" board becomes popular.
2064- The FDA passes a package of several sense tech products. Corps begin mass production.
2066- The amount of sense tech available on the black market doubles.
2073- Omniscients fight corner gang.

Joining- No one regulates entry in to the Omniscients. Anyone with an interest in getting the best sensory implants and money to buy them with will start hanging around on sense tech hobby sites. They will receive information from all over the globe but the most reliable New York city area specific information (e.g. what black market doctors are reliable) will come from Omniscients. Some people are simply "lurkers," taking information from public sites and never giving any, but most will interact on the internet with Omniscience and will eventually become friends with some of them. The more friends they make, the more a part of the Omniscient community they are, and the more likely the PC is to be drawn in to the problems of other Omniscients or seek the help of other Omniscients for his or her problems.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has enough ties to the Omniscient community that he or she will be expected to act as a member of the gang in times of crisis. The PC has some impressive implants and is just starting to get used to the process of buying implants, getting them installed and learning how to use them.

Lifestyle- Omniscients are people who want to enhance their senses or gain access to new senses and are willing to spend considerable time and money to do it. This is a hobby that will tend to monopolize a majority of the PC's time, money and thought. Although sense tech has many incredibly useful applications, the addition of new sense capabilities is an end in itself for Omniscients. Omniscients are people who love the idea of having access to information about their immediate surroundings that they previously didn't. The Omniscient becomes, himself or herself, a beautiful feat of engineering. Many Omniscients put themselves in considerable danger in pursuit of their hobby: tweaking the hardware and software of implants, using experimental technology or stolen technology of dubious origin, using prescription drugs for purposes they were not designed for, etc.

A few Omniscients were drawn in to the hobby of sense tech for another reason: paranoia. Whether for real or imagined reasons, a minority of Omniscients believe that sense tech is necessary for their survival. This ranges from those Omniscients who have a slight tendency towards paranoia in their personalities to those who would probably meet the diagnostic criteria for paranoid schizophrenia. For some Omniscients, though, sense tech actually becomes a cure for paranoia: after gaining the ability to know everything that is going on around them, they eventually become convinced that nobody is out to get them. There have, on the other hand, been a few unfortunate cases of well liked Omniscients who became increasingly paranoid, with delusions of persecution and conspiracy, and had to leave the Omniscients.

Most Omniscients spend a lot of time on the internet, reading about new sense tech being researched or produced around the world, reading reviews of sense tech products. Most contribute to this plethora of information by posting their own reviews, tips, and other information about sense tech. Omniscients are often as up-to-date on the science behind sense tech as the scientists themselves are. Some Omniscients are even on a first name basis with scientists and engineers working on sense tech.

Sense tech aficionados around the world have discovered, and shared with each other, numerous techniques for training the mind to adapt to new or enhanced senses. The ultimate goal for many Omniscients is to be able to use all of the senses simultaneously and to integrate that information in to one coherent picture of the world around them. This requires quite a lot of practice. Omniscients may spend hours a day practicing observation and integrating senses. When Omniscients try to be aware of all of their senses at once, there is quite a lot of neural stimulation coming in to the brain and this creates a state of central-nervous-system-stimulation that can be quite pleasant. This sense-high is generally not addictive.

Omniscients love testing their new sensory abilities, and many Omniscients create 'games' for themselves or other Omniscients. In a given week, an Omniscient might participate in a scavenger hunt, might play a game of soccer in complete darkness, might have a friend come over with a black box and a challenge to figure out what's inside.

Because they spend so much time paying attention to their senses, most Omniscients are very picky about food, clothing, music, décor, etc. Whatever an Omniscient doesn't spend on sense tech they tend to blow on silk suits, imported gourmet beverages, high-fi sound systems, air fresheners, etc. Some Omniscients fine wine connoisseurs and about half of the honeybrews left in the city (see p.112) belong to Omniscients.

In addition to putting sense tech on their bodies, many Omniscients like to "uplink" to remote sensors. Radio scanners on their person or implanted in their bodies give them access to information from security cameras, audio bugs, robots and even spy satellites. There is hardly a corner in Omniscient territory that doesn't have an Omniscient keeping an eye on it. Omniscients are in constant communication and altogether they know everything that happens in their turf.

Advancement- A PC can advance by becoming more popular in the sense tech community than others. Some Omniscients become popular because of social skills, others because they have technical knowledge or black market contacts that cause others to look to them for help.

Social Structure- Each Omniscient has his or her own unique network of friends (inside and outside the gang) and contacts. Every relationship between the Omniscients is unique, from strong respect, to passing acquaintance, to loving friendship, to bitter dislike. Taken together, however, no Omniscient is more than a few degrees of separation from every other Omniscient. The Omniscients spend a lot of time communicating on-line with other Omniscients and people with similar hobbies around the world. Information is passed quickly between this disorganized network of Omniscients.

Population- There are about 550 Omniscients, as well as a few hundred more that have some interest in the "scene" but feel no loyalty to the gang.

External Relations- The Omniscients are a very loosely organized group, no one has the authority to make alliances, make peace or declare war on behalf of the Omniscients. Instead, individual Omniscients make deals, then try to convince other Omniscients to join in with them. Omniscients are fairly independent and will work alone if they have to, even if that means taking on an entire gang by themselves.

Omniscients avoid actual warfare whenever possible. When there is some person or some group they don't like, the Omniscients gather as much intelligence as they can about the enemy. This information can then be given to an enemy's enemies, or it can be used to make new enemies for the enemy.

Water Rats: Because of their proximity to Roosevelt Island, and because Shakey's Bar is located in Omniscient territory, there are a lot of Water Rats in Omniscient territory at any given time. The Omniscients don't mind this trespassing on their turf and they usually ignore the Water Rats. They do get very annoyed when the Water Rats lead trouble in to Omniscient territory.

Dragons: To the East of Omniscient territory are the Dragons. Although the Dragons often come in to Omniscient territory and destroy things, those things are rarely Omniscient houses and when they are the Omniscients usually have insurance and can get a new house. The Omniscients find it worth it to put up with this occasional destruction in order to keep peace with the Dragons, especially since the Dragons are the only gang that share more than a few blocks of border with the Omniscients and provide a good buffer against more warlike gangs.

Risen: The Omniscients have a few blocks on the South end of the turf that are near the Risen, the most warlike gang in the area. The Risen are the gang the Omniscients are most likely to get in to wars with, yet even with the Risen there is peace much more often than war.

Arcadians: The Omniscients share many characteristics with the Arcadians, including their propensity for trying to hurt enemies by giving data to that enemy's enemies. The Omniscients are often one of the few groups that realize the extent to which the Arcadians are manipulating city events. Some Omniscients lock horns with Arcadians, and some join with Arcadians on common goals, but the two gangs have never gotten in to war with each other.

Tea Drinkers: Some Omniscients have flirted with Tea Drinkers because of the enhanced psychic senses that the Tea Drinkers' Soma gives them. Some Omniscients have made arrangements to buy Soma from the Tea Drinkers. Other Omniscients have gone to the Tea Drinkers for training, and a very few feel themselves aligned with both gangs. The Tea Drinkers, however, don't share the same interest in adopting Omniscient techniques, and enough Tea Drinkers think of Omniscients as interlopers and hangers-on that it is not likely the two gangs will form a strong and lasting alliance.

In their quest to get and make use of the latest black market technology, the Omniscients often come in to contact with Traders, Technophiles and Black Meds and often have many contacts among those groups. The Omniscients are also aware how easily the Sat Jumpers could hurt them (they depend on spy satellites for much of their intel) and are wary of messing with them.

Military Style- When the Omniscients are forced to fight, they are usually defending against enemies that are invading their turf. The Omniscients can sense the enemies coming a mile away and can stay hidden until the perfect time to attack. The Omniscients always wait until dark and make surprise attacks on the enemies. They typically use thrown weapons to destroy every light source so they can attack in darkness, then they tend to surround and pick off targets using thrown or projectile weapons.

Typical Weapon- Thrown or projectile weapons.

Turf- A long block of turf with rounded corners and a chunk taken out of its east side by an industrial complex (one of the city's power plants) in East Side/Upper East Side. South of 92nd St., North of 57th St., East of 3rd. Ave, West of York Ave. Omniscient territory is removed by a block (give or take) from the sunken city border on the West. Roosevelt Island, a thin strip of land that once had expensive residential buildings, is less than a quarter mile across the water to the East. Water Rats often travel to and from Roosevelt Island and a small dive bar in the Northeast corner of Omniscient territory is the only dry-land hangout of the Water Rats. To the East is the Dragons. This part of town is almost completely residential, with many high-class townhouses where the majority of Omniscients live. Unlike most gangs, Omniscients don't cluster, they are spread throughout their territory.

Distinguishing Features- Omniscients are one of the least athletic gangs in the city, many live a sedentary lifestyle and this shows in their physique. Because their senses are so often enhanced, Omniscients are very meticulous and like to wear very comfortable clothing: silks, velvets, felt, etc. The most notable feature on Omniscients is the presence of the external protrusions of sensory implants.

Symbols- An eye or multiple eyes is the major symbol of the Omniscients.

Slang

Hitting The Boards: v., gaining or dispersing information by posting on sense tech internet message boards.

Sense Tech: n., any technology that enhances human senses or adds new senses, even if only temporarily.

Uplink: v., to use cellular internet technology, implants and mental programming to give one's brain access to information coming from a remote sensor.

Tavin Bean (Homeless, Paranoid Ex-Omniscient)

Level 3 Omniscient

Attributes- AWR 18, AGY 13, CHM 6, END 8, INL 14, SPD 14, STH 6, WIL 4, BLD 4, BDY 1, INCY 4.

Appearance- Tavin appears to be in her mid thirties (she is actually much younger), she has long blonde hair she wears in a pony-tail, under a blue denim cap. When it is cold, she wears multiple layers of torn and soiled clothing, with a ski jacket (grey, with thick horizontal stripes of different colors) on the outside. Tavin's skin is dirty and has the pockmarked, weathered look of street people who spend many nights sleeping out-doors. Tavin has the obvious external protrusions of several sense tech implants, including 360 Sight implants and 3D hearing implants. Tavin also has ragged scars (which she usually keeps hidden by her hat) of implants she has removed by hand.

Social Status- Tavin is a paranoid schizophrenic who lives on the streets. She has no good friends and only a few passing acquaintances (other mentally ill street people). She was once an Omniscient and many Omniscients try to look out for her, even though she wants no help from them.

History- Tavin was a young Indie who became highly interested in sense enhancing technology because she wanted to know what was going on around her. This desire was caused by her belief that people were "saying things about her." This belief was an early symptom of paranoid schizophrenia. Tavin joined the Omniscients, became well known and liked for her endearing and quirky (although unpredictable) personality. Many older Omniscients took special pains to mentor her and help her enhance her senses. As Tavin entered her mid-twenties, her paranoid delusions grew increasingly worse. Her enhanced senses merely gave her more information she could twist in to "proof" of conspiracies against her. Tavin would post rambling page-long messages on the local sense tech boards about all the conspiracies against her. The more the Omniscients tried to convince her that nobody was out to get her, the more she became convinced that the Omniscients themselves were behind the conspiracy. She eventually decided that all Omniscients were conspiring against her and left the gang, moving to a cheap apartment in the Bowery. However, she was unable to hold down a job and her relationship with her parents (who had been sending her money) dissolved as soon as she started accusing them of terrible acts. Soon Tavin ended up on the streets, where she has been for the past three years.

Methods- Tavin spends her days wandering around the city at random. She investigates anything interesting and she often loots bodies after a battle or murder. She also uses her senses to be the first at a restaurant dumpster when food us dumped in to it. She always stays out-of-sight of strangers, having hidden long before anyone can see her.

Personality- Tavin lives in a world where every detail is the sign of some terrible malevolence being directed towards her. She is the center of the universe: every bad thing that happens was meant to happen to her, every remark she overhears is people talking about her. Tavin believes that she has been the victim of psychological torture and experimentation by a group of Colins that have (inexplicably) been around since the 1940's. She believes that Colin more or less controls the city and is trying to psychologically torture her so she will "break" and become a serial killer so she can be his bride. Tavin believes that Colin has been manipulating events, even before her birth, to make a perfect bride. Her parents were, supposedly, selected to breed because of their genetic qualities. Tavin sees herself as a resilient hero, refusing by pure force of will to bow down to Colin's machinations. Tavin believes that if she trusts anyone, horrible things will happen as a result. Tavin also occasionally believes that she has been genetically engineered to be able to hear the voice of god. Tavin was once perky, cute and odd, but living on the street in constant fear has made her tired and haggard, she seldom smiles or laughs (except laughing in bitter irony when she has figured out some conspiracy against her).

Motivations- Tavin seldom has any constructive plans for her life, she spends her day to day existence trying to get by and escape the auditory hallucinations that she believes are psychological torture. She is usually non-violent, preferring to stay hidden. Her greatly enhanced senses mean that real human beings never surprise her or catch her off guard (except when she falls asleep) and she is able to choose who sees her and who doesn't.

Special Abilities- Tavin has the following implants: Internal Psychic Sensor, Spectrum Retinas, Bloodhound Smell, 360 Sight, 3D Hearing. Tavin has the skill Sensory Integration (3).

Typical Attack- If she is ever cornered by enemies (she hasn't been, yet) Tavin will attack by screeching and clawing wildly at eyes and faces (blinding and pain/stun attacks, also simultaneous attacks), then the moment the enemies flinch enough to let her past she will run away.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 8, BIO 6, CMBT 8, CRTV 5, INFO 6, INTL 6, MIL 5, PSY:X 16, PSY:M 14, PSY:S 8, TECH 5, THIE 6, SOC 7, STRT 8.

Special Skills: The special skill Sensory Integration costs 5 skill points per level.

Sensory Integration- Uses AWR. When normal people use sense tech, they can either pay attention to the sense tech or to their natural senses, but either way one or both will suffer. Omniscients spend hours in meditation and practice to learn how to use natural senses and multiple sense tech systems simultaneously. They even learn to use all their new senses together to build a unified picture of what is happening around them, just as normal people do with their natural senses.

Easy (10): Use all senses with -4 AWR to each.

Moderate (20): Use all senses with no pentalties.

Hard (30): Use all senses with +1 AWR to each.

Legendary (40): Use all senses with +4 to each.

Income- $1,500 +$200/wk.

Special Equipment- $3000 worth of sensory implants. Omniscients have many contacts and can get sense tech (see Index of Popular Sense Tech, below) for about 75% of the cost listed in the equipment section.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Omniscient Spy Satellite: (Optional Advantage, Costs 10 points) The PC owns a share in a spy satellite co-owned by a group of Omniscients. Since this satellite was purchased before the PC joined the gang, the PC probably inherited or bought this share from another Omniscient. This ownership is like the commercial Spy Satellite Co-Op (p.134) but Omniscients are the only users and the key-hole imager is on a first-come-first-serve basis (not open to a bidding process, like the commercial service).

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Other
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Suggested Skills- Clairsentience, Knife Throwing, Micro-electronics, Prowling, Psychic Sense, Psychometry, Tracking.

Suggested Equipment- Dagger: Throwing, Nanopadded Armor, Nanoweave Armor.

Suggested Reading- Body Modification, The Cloud, Mental Programming, Psychic Phenomenon, Sattelites.

Purists

In Brief- Members of a cult/gang who believe that their physical, mental and spiritual health is dependent on their keeping themselves free from chemical, emotional and psychic pollution.

Favorable Stereotypes- Ambitious, healthy, self-controlled, vice-free, monk-like.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Paranoid, cultish, vengeful, miserable, prejudiced pollution-phobics.

Other Names- Toxiphobes, Cleanies.

Origin- In 2071, Andy Uto, a popular and charismatic young Indie, and amateur health food expert, opened the "clean room", a club which claimed to have air, food and drinks completely free from pollutants. The club gained a loyal following of Indies. Andy also spent a lot of time preaching to his friends about how good it felt to be free from toxins, how much stronger, smarter and better a pure human could be. Andy's followers began purchasing air scrubbers and water purifiers for their homes and personal air purifiers to wear while traveling outside.

The Purists found that they really did feel more healthy and capable when they became more pure. Slowly Andy's sales pitches changed, "pure" didn't just mean healthier, it meant being a better person, and Andy's followers went right along with that. Andy Uto even created a system to measure purity, based on how long the person had kept pure. The more the Purists saw themselves as better than others, the more isolated they became and, with no one to criticize them their ideas became more radical. The Purists became more and more stringent, even wearing skintight suits when outside so that no pollution could be absorbed through their skin.

In 2076, Andy Uto began to move from giving purely health advice to giving spiritual advice. He simply extended his ideas about purity of body to ideas about purity of mind. To Andy Uto, the mind and the body were all part of an interconnected system and so purity of mind and body went hand-in-hand. His loyal followers did not question this move from health guru to spiritual guru and eagerly took on the quest for the newly defined levels of spiritual purity.

Andy created five stages of purity, ranging from purity of blood to purity of emotion, each one better than the last, and he assigned each Purist a stage of purity. By creating a hierarchy within the Purists, Andy created a stable social system which he could use to rule the Purists. At one point he claimed to have achieved stage four (purity of thought) and to be working on stage five, but more recently he has told his followers that he has descended back to stage three (purity of action).

The Purists avoided contact with any non-pure city group. Their only contact with other gangs was violently forcing them out of Purist territory. Then the Skin Borgs, operating from a massive stretch of turf to the North, attacked the Purists, as well as the Hummingbirds and Orphans. The Purists were vastly outnumbered by the Skin Borgs and Andy knew that if they fought alone they would fail. So, Andy took an unprecedented step and formed an alliance and mutual-defense agreement with the Hummingbirds and Orphans. Now that they had alliances with other gangs, and were forced to work with members of those gangs, the Purists started to become embroiled in the complex relationships of city culture.

Timeline

2065- Andy Uto begins trying to rid his body of toxins.
2067- Andy starts selling vitamins.
2071- Clean Room opened.
2074- Clean Room regulars start wearing skintight suits while outside.
2075- Pure Room closed to the general public,
2076- Andy Uto starts giving spiritual advice.
2079- Skin Borgs attack the Purists.
2079- Skin Borgs form alliance with Hummingbirds and Orphans.

Joining- To join the Purists, a person must find a Purist willing to mentor him or her. Some Purists will mentor younger Purists for money, others will do it because they truly want to improve someone's life. The Purist will instruct the student in how to become pure and will usually sell the student the equipment to do so. The student must flush his or her living space from impurities, install air and water filters, eat only specially produced food (manufactured by Andy Uto) and wear a special suit when walking around outside to avoid absorbing pollutants through the skin. Additional steps (sweat baths, exercise, a spartan lifestyle, not associating with non-Purists) are thought to "speed" the purification process. As well as teaching them how to become pure, the teacher will spend a long time explaining Purist philosophy and beliefs, citing numerous studies and anecdotal evidence to show why those pure from pollution are superior in every way to those who aren't.

At level one adventure one, the Purist has just been meet by Andy Uto and, after a set of terse questions, declared to have achieved the first stage of purity (Purity of Blood). As "stage one" the new Purist can enter the Pure Room. The PC will be just getting to know many Purists and will probably not be honored to speak personally with Andy Uto for some time.

Lifestyle- Although the Pure Room is too small to hold all of the Purists at once, time spent at the Pure Room is one off the defining characteristics of the Purist lifestyle. During its peak hours in the evening, the Pure Room is packed with up to two hundred people with a hundred more hanging around outside waiting to get in. Even at its slowest, in the early morning, there are at least a dozen people in the Pure Room. Purists can be seen hanging around in what looks like normal clothing (clothing that never leaves the Pure Room), interacting on a personal level that would be impossible outside.

Much of a Purist's money goes, in some way or another, to Andy Uto. Purists pay a monthly fee for membership, which lets them have access to the club, and when they are inside the club they pay for drinks (water or sweetened water with vitamin-C) and meals (a salty white mush). Purists even pay Andy for meals to take home in sealed containers. Andy has a kitchen staff (Purists which he pays meager wages) in the back preparing food almost 24 hours a day. Andy also gets special deals from legitimate and black market sources selling filters and biohazard suits. Most Purists buy their equipment through Andy (or through another Purist who in turn bought from Andy) and Andy keeps a small percentage for his trouble.

Purists are forced to get all of their medical care from Purists, including Andy himself. None of the Purists have professional medical skills, but they know enough to provide emergency care. The kitchen in the Pure Room is sometimes used for emergency surgeries. Since Andy doesn't believe in using any kind of drugs or pharmaceuticals, he keeps a number of organic chemicals native to the human body on hand to use instead. A person

Is Purism a Cult?

Arguments for Purism being a cult:
-Followers believe they will achieve spiritual enlightenment by following the teachings of Andy Uto.
-Andy Uto is the sole source of authority within the group.
-Followers are taught to avoid thinking thoughts or having feelings incongruent with Purism.
-A large amount of each Purist's money goes to Andy Uto.
-Purists are taught that they are better than everyone else.
-Purists dress differently from other people in the city (a strategy many cults use to separate followers off from mainstream society).

Arguments against Purism being a cult:
-Although they typically find non-Purists distasteful, Purists have complete freedom of association.
-Purists do not regularly proselytize or otherwise seek out new members.
-Purism training asks Purists to come up with their own life goals, goals which are not open to criticism by other Purists.
-Andy Uto has admitted to his own imperfection and infallibility.
-Purists are not tricked in to joining: they know full well what being a Purist is about before they ever join.

Andy Uto (Founder and Leader of Purists)

Level 6 Purist

Attributes- AGY 13, AWR 10, CHM 16, END 18, INL 15, SPD 15, STH 20, WIL 15, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- Andy has dirty blonde hair which he keeps in a crew-cut. He mostly Asian with some African features. He has pronounced cheekbones, olive colored skin and crew-cut black hair. He is somewhat short but broad-shouldered and muscular, with brown eyes that some have described as "piercing." His face is simple, symmetrical and attractive. When in the Pure Room, Andy dresses simply: a white T-Shirt and black slacks. Andy has no implants, tattoos, scars and wears no jewelry.

History- Andy was slightly obsessive compulsive and grew up worrying about toxins and pollutants, especially in the food that he ate. Like many around the city, he wore a gas mask whenever he went outside, and he hung around the city's few health food stores. He lived off of a trust fund, but to make more money he started selling vitamins out of his home. His good looks and charismatic manner made him very successful and he increased his sales to all kinds of health foods and health food devices. Andy read voraciously about vitamins and health foods. He decided that by ordering organic chemicals in their purest possible form, he could create a food that would perfectly meet human nutritional needs and would be completely free from pollutants. He started eating his own food and told everyone how much healthier and better he felt after eating it. Andy was soon selling his pure food to many around the city. He used the money to buy a small restaurant which he set up as the Pure Room, the only place of its kind in the city. The Pure Room attracted all of the city's health food crowd (many of whom Andy introduced to health food). Andy, working behind the bar, found that the crowd at the bar would listen attentively to any idea or theory he had. Andy's spontaneous comments evolved in to lectures and Andy increasingly found himself not just the owner of a bar but the leader of a tightly-knit crowd dedicated to a lifestyle and philosophy he had invented.

Social Status- Andy is the undisputed leader of the Purists. No one dares disobey his orders, for to do so would mean physical punishment at the hands of his highly trained lieutenants.

Motivations- Andy has exactly five motivations that he is aware of. The first is to make sure that the ideas and theories he has come up with continue even after his death. The second is to protect the Purist's ability to practice the Purist lifestyle. The third is to protect the innocent from exploitation by those more powerful them (a very limited motivation that allows Andy to justify his few moments of altruism while ignoring most of the city's injustices). The fourth is to have a lifelong monogamous relationship with a woman he loves (he has not gotten far on this goal, although he has been trying). The fifth is to have children and ensure their happiness and survival. Every other motivation Andy has (such as staying pure, or protecting his own life) can be justified by him as the most efficient means of achieving his other goals.

Methods- Andy uses each and every Purist as a tool at his disposal to help achieve his goals. He has no qualms about sending individual Purists off on dangerous (even suicide) missions for the good of the gang, or about ordering the Purists to go to war against an enemy with inferior or superior forces. Among the Purists, Andy utilizes his trusted and loyal lieutenants, and the threat of violence they represent, to maintain order.

Personality- Much of Andy's unique personality has disappeared in his quest to achieve stage four of purity (purity of thought). He is constantly watching his own behaviors, thoughts and emotions, trying to eliminate that which doesn't help achieve his goals. This focus on not doing things means that Andy spends a lot of his time doing nothing and expressing no emotions. When distracted though, he sometimes displays a broad, good natured smile that many love him for. Andy is quick to take action and quick to anger (the one emotion he allows himself since it lets him get things done expediently). He speaks in harsh tones. Andy believes that self-deprivation makes him stronger and he lives a very Spartan lifestyle, denying himself as many pleasures and comforts as he can. Andy is very quick to judge others and makes no room in his consciousness for people having any value beyond that prescribed in his system of purity stages. Andy has, of late, become unsure of himself. He has detected evidence of impurities of thought and emotion in himself, something burning behind his anger beyond a desire for expedience and something in his desire to keep power beyond the utility of that power. This is why he has temporarily demoted himself to stage three of purity.

Special Equipment- Biohazard Suit: Advanced, Modern Plate, Shield: Riot, Sword: Tech.

Special Skills- Emergency Medicine (2), Purity of Mind (4), Production Chemistry (1), Sense Impurity (3), Surgery (1).

Typical Attack- Strike with his sword at STH + AGY +4 +1d20 vs. 25 (1d20 vs. -12) for 6 damage (pierces as 8) and then parry with his shield at STH + AGY +10 +1d20 vs. 25 (1d20 vs. -18).

undergoing surgery, for instance, would be give a large dose of human endorphins, which reduce (but do not eliminate) the pain of surgery. Since their access to medical care is so limited, the Purists are lucky that they hardly ever get sick and can recover from most injuries themselves.

Purists are expected to spend a lot of time improving themselves and seeking higher stages of Purity. Those seeking stage three purity start eliminating pleasures and entertainments from their lives, living more like ascetic monks. They spend their free time exercising, sparring, studying, meditating, etc. Many Purists believe that they have the ability to "sense" pollutants and they spend time training other Purists in this skill. They take students around the city and making them guess what things or people are polluted and by what.

Because full-immersion VR technology and mental programming technology require the injection of chemicals in to the body, Purists are not allowed to use these technologies. In fact, people with mental programs are rarely allowed to join the Purists. Implants, biological or electronic, are not allowed except when they are replacing lost body parts (even then they are looked down on).

Many Purists share a certain aspect of personality and way of looking at the world, one which is enforced by hanging out with so many people of a like mind. People who became Purists are mostly people who felt that the city was dirty and disgusting, full of temptations and bad influences. Purists, isolated from the rest of city life, tend to see only the bad and assume that everyone else in the city lives a life of unhappiness and lack-of-control over themselves and their lives. Younger Purists spend a lot of time trading stories about disgusting and pitiful things they have seen or heard of, and they spend a lot of time openly criticizing (and making fun of) the impure.

The war with the Skin Borgs has changed the Purist lifestyle. Now there are at least two Purists on each block 24 hours a day, and many more waiting nearby in case there is any trouble. Purists often walk around Purist turf in small groups making sure there are no other incursions.

Social Structure- The Purists are ruled by Andy Uto, who is the originator of Purist philosophy, owner of the Pure Room, manufacturer of the only food Purists are allowed to eat, and the contact through which Purists get most of their technology. Andy Uto's power originated with his charismatic abilities, but he has since built a social structure within the Purists that he can use to keep order.

Andy Uto personally judges the purity of each Purist by asking them a short set of stock questions (he claims he can detect any lies). He assigns the Purists in to one of five stages. Purists of each stage are expected to show deference, respect and obedience to those of a higher stages. Stage one is purity of blood: when a purist has been ingesting only the pure chemicals necessary for life for one month, their bloodstream is considered to be pure. Stage two is purity of tissues, which takes about two years of purity to achieve. Stage three is purity of behavior: the Purist is expected to list five goals (which are not incompatible) and to only perform behaviors that are in direct furtherance of these goals. The fourth stage is purity of thought, where the Purist only thinks thoughts that help him or her achieve one of their five goals. The fifth stage of purity of emotion, where the Purist only has feelings, emotions and opinions that further the five goals.

There are currently no stage four or stage five Purists, so the stage three Purists are at the top of the hierarchy. Andy only has serious discussions with stage twos, and even then it is usually when he feels they are getting ready to become stage threes and he wants to counsel them personally. The stage threes are his inner circle, the people who he confides in regularly. Andy has selected four "lieutenants" who are stage threes that have proven their loyalty to Andy. The Lieutenants live in Andy's apartment above the Pure Room. The lieutenants hold many jobs: They are Andy's bodyguards (he often jokingly calls them his praetorian guard). They relay his orders to other Purists (any orders coming out of the mouth of a lieutenant is expected to be obeyed as if it came from the mouth of Any Uto himself). The lieutenants also act as disciplinarians among the Purists, enacting punishments that Andy judges are necessary. The worst punishment a Purist gets for any misbehavior is usually just a demotion to a lower stage of purity (a punishment which allows a Purist to eventually redeem himself or herself). In theory, though, if a Purist was to ever do something really horrible (like purposefully compromise the purity of another Purist) the lieutenants would perform the execution.

Advancement- Andy prescribes exactly how to achieve each stage of purity and judges when Purists have achieved them. Anything a PC can do to impress Andy will move the PC closer to the next stage. Purists start out at stage one (purity of blood) and almost all will eventually get to stage two (purity of tissues) if they can keep themselves pure. To achieve stage three (purity of behavior), the Purist must list five life goals and be prepared to justify every action, no matter how small, as being in furtherance of a goal.

Population- There are about 550 Purists. About 100 have been judged by Andy as being stage one (purity of blood), the bulk (425) have been judged as stage two (purity of tissues) and 25 (including Andy himself) have been judged as being stage three (purity of behavior).

External Relations- The Purists used to be one of the more universally hated gangs. They would strike mercilessly against anyone who transgressed against them, but never helped or formed alliances with anyone else. This changed when the Purists were forced to form an alliance with the Hummingbirds and Orphans.

Together, the three gangs merged their borders together to create a solid wall that would hold the Skin Borgs at 145th Street. The three gangs traded information and occasionally sent members of their gangs together on intelligence gathering missions. The Purists were forced to, at least, acknowledge the necessity of working with

other gangs, even though their general attitude continues to be one of disgust. The average Purist feels that he or she is superior to non-Purists in every important respect.

The Purists have a system of revenge different from what the city is used to, and this often gets them in to trouble. The accidental piercing of a Purist's suit is a crime worthy of a serious beating and a purposeful piercing of a Purist's suit is a crime worthy of death. On the other hand, a good beating of a Purist that doesn't kill to Purist or pierce the suit will not provoke any response except by the individual Purist. Thus the Purists have gotten in to wars that other gangs felt were "unjustified" and these wars raged for a long time with no peace and created a lasting, bitter hatred of the Purists by many throughout the city.

Some city groups are more "impure" in the reckoning of the Purists and thus worthy of even more derision. This includes Freaks, Mem Junkies, Risen, Addicts, Insomniacs and Drakes. There is probably nobody in the city more diametrically opposed to the Purist way of life than the Needle Punks. At least the addicts have the excuse of addiction, the Needle Punks expose themselves to drugs by choice and so the Purists detest the Needle Punks most of all.

Military Style- Most gangs go in to battle hoping to cause enough injuries to the enemy to make them retreat. The Purists go in to battle hoping to kill. Purists fight with more rage than almost any other gang, rage which increases with each Purist whose suit is pierced, until the Purists are willing to fight until either they or the enemy are completely wiped out. Despite their rage, the Purists are very disciplined soldiers, always acting according to a strict strategy and battle plan.

The Purists use their shields and what is often superior strength to their best advantage. When they encounter an enemy, they quickly form a wall of shields and rush the enemy, pushing them backwards in to a wall or a corner. Andy Uto, in the middle of the shield wall, directs the action with loud shots. When the enemy is cornered, the Purists open a hole in the shield wall to attack through. The Purists hate to be surrounded, and in some cases they will flee early in a battle rather than let themselves be surrounded.

Typical Weapon- Purists like to use staves and long swords, weapons that allow them to hit their opponents while staying out of their reach. Most Purists use shields, especially large bullet-proof plexiglass shields (see Shield: Riot, p.150).

Turf- A small square of turf in Harlem, South of 145th St., North of 135th St., East of sunken city boundary and West of Amsterdam Avenue. This part of town has many elevator apartment buildings with a lot of commercial frontage on Broadway, which intersects the turf. The Pure Room, located on Broadway and 139th St. is the center of Purist life. It is built on the bottom floor of a townhouse, it has shiny white walls, large mirrored windows (people can't see in but the Purists can see out). The Pure Room is has enforced walls and the only way in and out is through an airlock. High velocity hoses spray people waiting to enter. People can only enter when someone inside decides they are clean and buzzes them in. No non-Purist has seen the Pure Room since it was closed to the general public in 2075. Inside, everything is bright and shiny and clean. Fans blow perfectly purified and moistened air. There are several lounge chairs, a bar, a back room with a pool table made entirely of glass and a kitchen in the back. Andy has plants which he has been growing pure. Andy Uto lives

above the pure room, in a multi-story apartment with purity equal to the Pure Room. From the top floor he can see, through a bullet proof window, up and down Broadway.

Distinguishing Features- When they are outside, the Purists always wear shiny-grey biohazard suits with a mask over their face. The suit lets moisture and oxygen in and out but nothing else. The suits are skin tight and Purists wear clothing over their suit when it is cold out.

Symbols- Purists generally don't use graffiti or adorn themselves with symbols, they like things clean and simple. In fact, that is probably the best way to tell if one is in Purist territory: the walls are remarkably free from graffiti and the street residents have been intimidated in to not leaving trash lying around. Graffiti artists elsewhere in the city often use plain swatches of grey or a stylized gas mask to represent the Purists.

Slang

Praetorian Guard: n., Andy Uto's lieutenants.

Purity: n., the amount that a person's body is free from unnatural chemicals and mind is free from incongruent thoughts and emotions.

Stage: n., measurement of purity created by Andy Uto.

Sterilize: v., murder, when justified, and when committed by a Purist.

"Sterilize the City": v., engage in gang warfare or a city-wide hunt for an enemy of the Purists.

Skills-

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 5, CMBT 6, CRTV 6, INFO 7, INTL 7, MIL 6, PSY:X 18, PSY:M 16, PSY:S 9, TECH 7, THIE 8, SOC 6, STRT 9.

Special Skills: The special skills Sense Impurity and Purity of Mind cost 5 skill points per level.

Income- $1,250 +$150/wk.

Special Equipment- Biohazard Suit: Advanced (see p.118).

Special Bonus Characteristics

Poor Immune System: (Mandatory Disadvantage) The PC is hardly ever exposed to diseases and so his or her immune system has grown weak. If the PC is ever exposed to diseases, he or she is at −10 to save vs. disease contraction and −5 to save vs. disease progression.

Purist Health: (Mandatory Advantage) The Purists have found that their bodies and, to a lesser degree, their minds work better since becoming pure. Many even grow a few inches after becoming Purists. Some of this is the removal of toxins from the body, the rest is the vigorous personal training that Purists undergo. Purists, as long as they stay pure, get the following plusses: +1 AWR, +1 AGY, +4 END, +1 INL, +2 SPD, +4 STH, +1 WIL, +1 BLD, +1 BDY, +1 INCY.

Suggested Skills- Carpentry, Plumbing, Psychic Sense.

Suggested Equipment- Duct Tape, Nanoweave Armor, Shield: Riot, Staff, Sword: Samurai.

Suggested Reading- Disease, Drugs, Pollution.

Sense Impurity- Uses AWR. This is the skill some Purists have of being able to sense different types of pollutants and impurities. This skill is partially a psychic sense, but it is mostly a matter of paying attention to details and making educated guesses. Purists with this skill tend to err on the side of sensing an impurity when there actually is none.

Easy (10): Sense psychic impurity (e.g. contamination with dioxyl ash) in a person, object or area.

Moderate (20): Sense physical impurities in an area such as radiation or toxic gasses.

Hard (30): Sense impurities in a person's bloodstream (poisons, toxins, diseases).

Legendary (40): Sense "mental impurities" in a person, such as addictions, insanity, or strong and incongruent ideas.

Purity of Mind- Uses WIL. This is the special training, invented by Andy Uto, to achieve the last two stages of Purity: purity of thought and purity of emotion. The training involves identifying and blocking out any thoughts or emotions that don't help achieve the PC's current goals. Using the skill involves a short meditation ("reorientation") to remind the PC of his or her current goals and cleanse other thoughts and emotions.

Easy (10): +4 to save vs. emotions incongruent with current goals for 1 hour.

Moderate (20): +6 to save vs. emotions/delusions/ hallucinations for 1 hour.

Hard (30): +8 to save vs. emotions/delusions/ hallucinations/psychic attacks for 1 hour.

Legendary (40): +10 to all WIL based rolls for 1 hour.

Sexologists

In Brief- Use sex to facilitate psychic bonding for physical and psychological therapy.

Favorable Stereotypes- True altruists with genuine love for every person, fighting for the psychological and spiritual health of city residents.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- A cult of puritanical homophobic busybodies who think there's only one right way to have sex.

Other Names- Peak Sex Movement, Sex Therapists, Sex Nazis (derogatory).

Origin- In 2074, scientists studying psychic biology found that during especially passionate sex, the psychic energy frequencies of the lovers would synchronize. In theory, this would cause a direct link between nervous systems. When the results were published, movements sprouted in several cities around the world. The first proponents of the movement were professional sex therapists who made a living helping men and women (most of whom had experienced some sort of sexual abuse as children) gain or regain the ability to have pleasurable and non-self-destructive sex. Although there was no scientific reason to do so, sex therapists used psychic synchronization as a touchstone for the healthiest possible sexual experience. A number of less scientific studies, using psychic synchronization as a goal, claimed to show the factors that contributed to 'peak sex.'

Some city Indies became the patients of the trendy new peak sex therapists. Those Indies taught the techniques to their own lovers and the techniques started to spread. No one person created Sexology in the city, though a number of persuasive Indies can be identified as having contributed ideas, techniques and traditions to it. Some of the most verbal proponents among city Indies started to teach these techniques in a spiritual, sometimes a plainly religious context.

In the years between 2076 and 2078, the small cliques of Indies practicing Sexology coalesced in to a single entity with a single group identity. The group created a shared vocabulary, a shared pool of theories and ideas and tried to teach Sexologist techniques and theories to as many as possible. The Sexologists acted, in some ways, like a proselytizing religion and, in other ways, simply a group of volunteer amateur sex therapists.

Word spread very quickly about a neighborhood of "free love" and incredible sex. Sexologist territory was quickly packed with men and women wanting to experience peak sex. The Sexologists made many converts from these crowds. The Sexologists also gained considerable influence: hundreds of city residents, including quite a few powerful gang members, were smitten with individual Sexologists or with the Sexologists as a whole, and the Sexologists only needed to voice a concern and half the city's gangs would race to deal with the problem. The Sexologists arranged peace agreements between many warring gangs. There were some notable cases where they caused violent criminals and exploiters to repent and change their lives. During most of the year of 2079, people couldn't stop talking about how great the Sexologists were. It seemed they were destined to rule the entire city by persuasive power alone, and not many people minded the idea.

As the Sexologists started to realize how much power they had, they decided to put it in to use against something that had been troubling them greatly. It had been a common belief of the Sexologists, for some time, that using sex to make money was extremely damaging to individuals. The common metaphor was that prostitution and pornography was psychological and spiritual mutilation. For the most part, the Sexologists had sympathy for the people involved in prostitution and pornography (they even gave therapy to current or ex-Sex Workers). The Sexologists placed the blame on the people who paid for sex and pornography and, to an even greater degree, to the pimps and pornographers who made the real profit. There was a loose association of city pimps who controlled most of the city's female prostitutes and made quite a lot of money from it. With volunteers from several gangs at their sides, the Sexologists went after these pimps. They invaded their houses, destroyed all their positions, leaving them homeless and powerless. The pimps were also forbidden, under penalty of death, to ever make contact with their prostitutes again. The pimps who resisted were killed.

The Sexologists did not stop there. Having tasted a strong victory, they went on to strike against smaller pimps, to attack johns, to destroy strip clubs and pornography studios in the red-light district. The gang members who had supported the Sexologists on their first attack against the pimps began to wonder when the violence would end. When the Sexologists were destroying pimps, who ruled women through fear or violence, most people in the city had no problem. When it started looking like the Sexologists would remake the city in the image of what the Sexologists considered healthy, people got nervous. The Sexologists

lost much of their support from other gangs, and many Sexologists themselves started refusing to participate in certain assaults. The aggressive Sexologists went on undaunted, and even attacked the Freaks, who had many fetish shows during their seasonal carnival. The Freaks fought back hard and for the first time the Sexologists found themselves in a full-on war with a large gang with few of their earlier defenders. The Sexologists managed to defend themselves until tensions with the Freaks simmered down. In the meantime, though, the Sexologists had lost the blanket adoration of city residents they once had.

Timeline

2074- Research paper shows psychic effect of sex.
2076-2078- Separate groups studying peak sex come together.
2079- City smitten with Sexologists.
2079- Sexologists attack pimps.
2079- Sexologists attack Freaks.
2080- Peace with Freaks.

Joining- The Sexologists will freely teach their techniques to anyone they can. One only need ask a Sexologist (after having sex with him or her) "how did you do that?" to receive a crash course. However, to learn a useful level of the Sexologist's sexual psychic skills requires so many hours of constant practice that it is necessary to live in Sexologist territory in order to learn. Some people come to Sexologist territory long enough to learn sexual psychic skills and then leave, but most end up staying and are welcomed in to the community of Sexologists.

Sexologist training involves listening to informal lectures on Sexologist theory, guided meditation and visualization, long periods of lone introspection, and a lot of intercourse with experienced Sexologists who can guide the student through every state of consciousness.

At level one, adventure one, a Sexologist has just completed the most intense period of their training. They can form a sexual psychic bond easily and can do several things with this bond. Sexologists have to be weaned from having sex with other Sexologists and sent out to help unenlightened humanity.

Lifestyle- The Sexologists exist in a continuum between two ideological poles. On one end of the continuum are the Sexologists who believe that Sexology is a religious and spiritual practice, capable of awakening the godhood within every person. On the other side are the Sexologists believe that Sexologist training and practices are nothing more than useful psychological "tricks" that serve as shortcuts to healthy states of consciousness. These Sexologists speak in the same terminology of the more religious Sexologists, but they see the words as nothing more than symbolic. "God," for instance, may be nothing more than the abstract concept of perfection. The majority of Sexologists fall somewhere in between these extremes, they see Sexology as a sort of "practical sexuality" useful for those who do and do not believe in a specific god.

"Listen, love, I know that men have hurt you in the past, and that at some point you might have decided that it is safer never to trust men. But now I want you to search your mind for one time when a man was kind to you, helped you, did something nice to you without asking for anything in return. And I want you to picture that man's kindness, compassion, strength, bravery. Imagine you can feel it, like a glow coming from within. And I want you to imagine that what is shining through from within is a piece of the deity. No matter how imperfect that man was, he had a piece of god within him and for that one moment it managed to shine out through his imperfections. Now, it's too early for you to do anything but sense that the spark is there, and that the spark loves you completely and without reservations.
-Recorded from a Sexologist training session

Sexologists learn to perform a constant meditation in which they endeavor to see in every person they meet an archetype of everything that is good about that person's gender. This archetype is the masculine or the feminine part of a two-part god that exists inside every human being. The end goal is for Sexologists to feel love for every member of the opposite sex that they meet. The most religiously or mystically inclined of Sexologists see the sexual intercourse as the reuniting of the male and female halves of god and the creation of the whole and perfect god. Critics of the Sexologists say that instead of loving all of humanity the Sexologists are building up an imaginary deity-lover, a fiction that they project on to every person (of the opposite gender) that they meet.

Most Sexologists consider themselves volunteer therapists. Every time they have sex it is therapy. Although each sexual encounter is intensely pleasurable for them, they believe that they are helping to move both their partners and themselves towards spiritual and psychological health and fulfillment. The Sexologist worldview sees the average person as riddled with problems, most of which eventually manifest in imperfect and unhealthy sex lives.

The Sexologist theory of humanity is essentially holistic. They believe that a person's relationship with god, a person's relationship with the opposite sex and a person's self esteem are all hopelessly intertwined and that improving one improves them all. They even believe that medical troubles and interpersonal conflicts are caused by unhealthy relations with god/sex/self. The Sexologists thus see themselves as the cure for all the city's ills. They may learn special skills to enhance their therapy, such as the ability to share thoughts or prompt a body to heal itself, but first and foremost the sex is useful because it is loving and compassionate.

Most Sexologists resist the impulse to form monogamous pairs. As much as they might like to form a unique relationship with a certain individual, they feel that it is selfish. Some even consider it a sign of incomplete spiritual development to want to form a relationship with one individual over others. Sexologists thus go from partner to partner, never knowing if or when they will encounter each partner again. The Sexologists have to deal with a large number of stalkers who fall in love with a Sexologist and want to monopolize their affections.

The Sexologists spend most of their waking hours looking for situations in which they can use their sexual skills to reduce suffering and make the world a better place. Many opportunities can be found within Sexologist territory. Many people come in to Sexologist territory specifically seeking medical, psychological or spiritual aid, and more times than not the person finds a Sexologist willing to try to help. Other people are traveling up or down Broadway, a busy pedestrian street that cuts through the middle of Sexologist territory, when a Sexologist identifies that the person needs help and makes that person an offer he or she can not refuse. People often come to Sexologist territory looking for an "easy lay." These people often leave unsatisfied when every Sexologist they meet decide that they aren't the most needing.

Sexologists often grow bored with sitting around Sexologist territory, or worry about those people whose god/sex/self relationships are so bad that they will not even come to Sexologist territory. Like the outreach volunteers who leave their soup kitchens armed with sandwiches and thermoses of hot soup, Sexologists may go out in to the city, wandering around in search of people and situations that they can help. Other Sexologists don't believe that they can tell, on sight, who needs help. These Sexologists often move through social circles having a series of short-term relationships with members of the opposite sex.

Sexologists also spend a large amount of their time investigating sex crimes. These crimes, they feel, are some of the worst crimes possible because of the spiritual and psychological damage they do to all involved. Many Sexologists, although they claim to have loving compassion for every member of the opposite sex will kill a person engaged in sexual exploitation. They may even believe that such a murder is ending a terrible psychological torment. Although the Sexologists may occasionally try to put a strip club out of business, destroy an above-board pornography studio or shop or beat up a john seeking a prostitute, these are not the primary focus of the Sexologist's aggressions. Sexologists focus most of their efforts on finding and destroying the tiny class of people who use violence or threats of violence in connection with sex. Included are pimps, serial rapists, slave traders, people who run secret brothels where the workers are kept prisoner, and people who make rape and snuff films. The Sexologists feel that there are many such rings operating in the city, with as many as 400 perpetrators and co-conspirators. Non-Sexologists are often skeptical about such numbers, but they are forced to acknowledge anecdotal evidence that such groups have been known to operate in the city. The red light district, the large non-gang territory directly South of the hole where most of the city's sex workers operate, is the natural place for Sexologists to start such investigations. Every night, dozens of Sexologists can be seen walking the streets of the red light district trying to persuade sex workers to get a different occupation and get a lead on sex criminals.

Advancement- Since there is little recognition of status or authority, there are few ways to advance in the Sexologists. Being known as a wise teacher and advisor is one way to gain status. Another way is to have relationships with as many other Sexologists as possible. Sexologists have a strong bond with former lovers and a Sexologist can turn to former lovers for favors, advice, or to back him or her up.

Social Structure- There is no established system of leadership or status among the Sexologists. Some Sexologists are considered wise and worth seeking advice from, but each Sexologist has his or her own opinion about who is wise and who isn't.

The Sexologists are a tightly knit community. Each Sexologist knows each other, often quite intimately. Same sex friendships are common but seldom as strong as the relationships between male and female Sexologists. For the most part every Sexologist treats each other with genuine love.

A minority of Sexologists believe that homosexuality and bisexuality is, for some, natural and healthy. An even smaller minority go so far as to say that all people should, to achieve spiritual fulfillment, become completely bisexual. While those who think that homosexuality is okay are not afraid to say so, those who actually practice same-sex Sexology are forced to do so in secret.

Population- There are approximately 1000 Sexologists, making them the largest Indie gang. In fact, only about two thirds are Indies, the rest are Wells (about 300) and even a few Street People (about 30). The Sexologists are the only city gang that has more females than males. About

65% of Sexologists are female. Only about 30% feel that homosexuality and bisexuality is healthy, only about 2% (approximately 20) practice any form of homosexual sex.

External Relations- Recent events have created a certain amount of cynicism among city residents towards the Sexologists. This cynicism is more bitter than it would be otherwise because it comes on the heels of enthusiastic popularity of the Sexologists. City residents no longer believe that the Sexologists should be given blanket support in everything they do. All of the major gangs have a policy that when the Sexologists get themselves in to trouble they should be left to get themselves out of trouble. On the other hand, the Sexologists still have more allies in other gangs than any other group in the city. Thousands in the city are literally in love with one or more Sexologist(s) and when the Sexologists are in real danger (especially danger from unprovoked aggression) many powerful people rush to the aide of the Sexologist. Thus, everyone in the city (including the Drug Lords) finds it wise not to make unprovoked attacks on the Sexologists. The Sexologists also have many causes that most people in the city think of as worthy causes. The Sexologists are constantly trying to hunt down secret brothels, sexual slavery rings and underground pornography studios that make snuff films. When the Sexologists uncover such a group, they can depend that for every Sexologist there will be two volunteers called in from other city groups to help them fight.

Although not every Sexologist believes in the same things, the majority theory on what it sexually healthy puts several city groups on the Sexologist's shit list. These groups include the Freaks (who have many fetish shows in the festival), the Animalists (who have their own form of sexual practice, involving a focus on primitive sexual desires), and the city homosexual, bisexual and transsexual community (which has members in every gang in the city). The Sexologists no longer try to make war against these groups, but they do try to convince everyone they can that these groups are bad. The Sexologists speak out against them publicly at every opportunity. Occasionally, this war of propaganda will ignite in to physical violence which will cause gang wars. The Sexologists do not believe in war (although they will defend themselves) and do whatever they can to make peace, so these gang wars seldom last long or get very intense.

The Sexologists have a wide number of contacts throughout the city, from the leaders of gangs to non-family street people with mental illnesses. The Sexologists are often called on to pass messages back and forth between groups and have often been instrumental in brokering peace between warring gangs.

Sexologists gain the greatest empathy and trust for people who they have had sex with. Often, Sexologists can see in to the soul of their sexual partners and the trust of a Sexologist for a former partner is never questioned. Just as Sexologists tend to distrust individuals who refuse to have sex, they distrust groups who avoid sex with them. These groups include the Drakes (whose poisonous bodily fluids would harm the Sexologists), the Purists (for whom contact with a Sexologist would be a form of contamination), the city homosexual community, religious cults who have proscriptions against sex, and the Skin Borgs (most of whom are afraid to shed their skins around anyone). The Sexologists have no means of judging or relating to these groups and try to avoid dealing with them.

Military Style- The Sexologists do not have much experience with war and seldom use strategy. Their one thing military advantage is that couples who have recently had sex fight in pairs. Their psychic-sexual connection often lets them communicate without words and they can defend each other and combine their skills with great efficiency, much like the idealized fighting partners of the Humankalorie. Sexologist armies are often swollen with non-Sexologists who have been called on to help.

Typical Weapon- Most Sexologists find any destruction of the human form to be distasteful. Whenever possible they use non-lethal weapons (pepper sprays, tasers, tranquilizer darts). When they must use lethal force, they like weapons that make nice clean wounds (a Sexologist would never be found using a Rusty Saw Sword, for instance).

Turf- A roughly rectangular block of turf on the Upper East side, West of Riverside Drive, East of Columbus Ave., South of 106th St. and North of 72nd St. To the West of Sexologist territory is the Hudson river. To the East is the hole (Central Park). To the North are the Immortals and to the South are the Arcadians.

Sexologist territory is bisected by Broadway, one of the busiest streets in the city, with many office buildings and homes with commercial frontage along the street. The rest of the neighborhood is mostly residential neighborhoods geared towards Indies, interspersed with small shops, cafes and delis (also catering to Indies).

The largest in-use building in Sexologist territory is Apthorp Apartments, a luxury apartment building built in 1908 with ornate ironwork. On the West end of Sexologist turf is Riverside park, once a broad swath of parkland, now mostly submerged under the Hudson River. In the northwest corner of the turf is a historic district of townhouses from the turn of the century, many of which are rented by Sexologist roommates. In one of the townhouses, a Buddhist seminary has quietly been running uninterrupted for more than a century.

Distinguishing Features- Some Sexologists have can be recognized by their psychically enhanced sexual attractiveness. Sexologists wear clothing which is simple and modest yet flattering. They avoid clothing that looks slutty, flashy or complicated, yet they do enjoy showing off the human shape.

Symbols- The male and female symbols [show] and stick-figures intertwined in sex are common pictographic symbols of the Sexologists.

Slang

Archetype: n., a representation of everything that is good about a gender.

Godhead: n., god as an aspect of ultimate perfection which we all have a part of.

Peak Sex: n., sex in which the lovers' psychic energy frequencies merge.

Virgin: n., someone who has never had peak sex.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 6, BIO 6, CMBT 7, CRTV 5, INFO 7, INTL 6, MIL 7, PSY:X 12, PSY:M 10, PSY:S 9, TECH 7, THIE 8, SOC 6, STRT 6.

Special Skills: The Sexologist special skills cost 5 skill points per level.

Income- $2,250 +$200/wk.

Sexologist Special Skills

Sexologist psychic skills require actual intercourse with a willing participant. The exact definition of what constitutes "intercourse" varies between people, and it is probably best left as off-screen action. They also require that compassion and love is felt for the subject of the psychic action. A Sexologist may perform a Sexologist skill for purely selfish purposes but they can not use a skill in such a way that will harm the patient.

Sexual Touch- Uses AWR. All other Sexologist special skills require some form of actual intercourse to create the necessary psychic bond. This skill allows Sexologists to create this bond through less involved measures: simple caressing and kissing is enough to synchronize psychic systems and make other Sexologist skills possible.

Easy (10): Create partial bond (-4 to all Sexologist Skills) by touching and kissing (takes 30 seconds).

Moderate (20): Create full bond by touching and kissing (takes 30 seconds).

Hard (30): Create full bond by a single kiss (takes 1 action).

Legendary (40): Create full bond by touching fingertips (instant).

Sexual Healing- Uses WIL. During the sexual encounter, the psychic energy receptors in various parts of the peripheral nervous system are given orders to constrict cut blood vessels, set the liver to destroy toxins, set the immune system to attack harmful organisms, speed healing to injuries, and dampen pain signals. This is much like the normal psychic healing skill, except that the physiological changes are triggered without the conscious control of either participant. Sexologists theorize that each body acts as a "template" for the other to figure out how to heal itself (so if both partners have exactly the same injury or disease, use of this skill will not help them).

Easy (10): Ease pain (+4 to save vs. pain) and speed healing (healing rate doubles).

Moderate (20): First-Aid for injuries (returns max. of 1 BLD for each injury taken).

Hard (30): Eliminate pain (+15 to save vs. pain) and cure inoperable cancer.

Legendary (40): Keep a person's heart beating (survive at 0 INCY) during intercourse.

Sexual Attack- Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Advantage Dark Love (see below). This is the very rare ability of Sexologists to harm a sexual partner. It requires that the Sexologist have two separate and incompatible desires at the same time: the compassion and love necessary to create the psychic bond, and the desire to kill necessary to hurt a person. In theory, a person with this skill could use it out of purely compassionate motives (e.g. assisted suicide) yet those cases are so rare that the only people who can get enough practice to use this skill are those who use it to murder enemies of the Sexologists.

Easy (10): Cause unconsciousness (20 difficulty to save) and delirium (hallucinations, -10 INL, -10 AWR) at the moment of orgasm.

Moderate (20): Cause stroke (1d6 BLD damage) at the moment of orgasm.

Hard (30): Cause heart to stop (2 BLD damage per round, can only be stopped by restarting the heart).

Legendary (40): Shut down all biological processes in the victim (victim will be irretrievably brain dead by the end of intercourse, victim must make a legendary AWR roll to even notice that this is happening).

Sexual Demeanor- Uses WIL. The PC with this skill learns to radiate an aura of pure sexuality. Messages are sent psychically, chemically (as pheromones) and through body language. While the skill is in use, gives major plusses to active and passive seduction rolls.

Easy (10): +5 to seduction rolls.

Moderate (20): +10 to seduction rolls.

Hard (30): +20 to seduction rolls.

Legendary (40): Anyone sexually attracted to the PC's gender must make a save vs. psychological shock (WIL+1d20 vs. 20) or be stunned for one round by the PC's sheer attractiveness.

Sexual Comentality- Uses WIL. During intercourse and for a period shortly afterwards, a strong connection is formed between the PC and the partner's conscious minds. This connection is terminated any time that either partner ceases to feel loving compassion for the other.

Easy (10): Share emotions, lasts 1 minute after intercourse as long as partners are 5 ft. or less from each other.

Moderate (20): Sharing of verbal thoughts (aka telepathy) for 1 hour after intercourse (max. range 100 ft.)

Hard (30): Complete sharing of consciousness, each partner can see/hear/feel exactly what the other is thinking or imagining. The two can pool WIL for any WILL based roll either are performing. Lasts one day after intercourse (max range 1 mile).

Legendary (40): Same as above but the PC has mental communications with multiple partners at the same time, range is 2 miles and duration is one week.

Sexual Cophysiology- Uses AWR. During intercourse and for a period shortly afterwards, the PC and partner have a strong physical connection, they are able sense what the other senses and, sometimes, control each other's movements. In cases when one partner is paying attention to another's senses, both can make AWR rolls. If, at any point, the partners disagree about what one partner's body should do, the connection is instantly severed.

Easy (10): Each partner can feel the touch sensations the other is feeling. Lasts 1 minute, max. range 5 ft.

Moderate (20): Each partner has access to all five senses of the other. Lasts 1 hour, max. range 100 ft.

Hard (30): Each partner has access to all of the other's senses, and can control each other's movements. Can be useful in combat: if one partner controls one arm of the other partner, each limb can attack and parry separately with no minuses.

Legendary (40): Same as above but the PC with multiple partners at the same time, range is 2 miles and duration is one week.

Sexual Safety- Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Sexual Healing (3). PCs with this skill can control the biology of themselves and a partner during sex to such a great degree that they can make unprotected sex safe, as well as controlling the possibility of impregnation.

Easy (10): No pregnancy will result from the intercourse.

Moderate (20): Both partners get +15 to save vs. contraction of STDs from each other.

Hard (30): Both partners get +20 to save vs. contraction of any disease from each other.

Legendary (40): PC can cause conception and choose the gender of the child.

Four Groups' Perspectives on Sex

Animalists- Sex is a very strong biological drive, something built in to our brains to ensure the survival of our species. It is the primary purpose of our lives and we are rewarded with pleasure when we achieve it. Even if there was no pleasure, it's something we have to do because it is part of who we are. If we fight our sex drives, it makes us weaker, if we revel in them it makes us stronger.

Sexologists- As single individuals we are imperfect, not whole. Sex is an attempt to become perfect. Sex is a manifestation of love – love for everything perfect and good in the other person and in the opposite gender. Western society has perverted sex in to something unhealthy and unsatisfying, but this can change.

Freaks- Sex is a drug. It causes pleasure, relives stress, cures boredom. Sex is whatever stimulates you to the point that you can get off. To some degree, what will get people off is due to biology and early experiences, but it is possible for everyone to widen their tastes and thus have more opportunities to get off. Some people need a stronger drug than others and adding another strong emotion to the drug (like pain, fear, shame, anger) will make that drug more powerful.

Sex Workers- Everybody needs sex. Men tend to need it more than women. Women tend to want someone they feel will protect and care for them. Men tend to want a nice looking body. Sex is a need that people can't control and sometimes it twists them up inside, makes them hate themselves, hate the sex act, hate the person they're doing it with. Some people are so scared of sex that they need to be in complete control, whether that means porn, rape, bondage or molestation.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Bisexual: (Optional advantage, costs 5 points) The character is one of the small minority of sexologists who have been trained to use psychic sexual skills with members of either gender. The teaching and practice of these arts is strongly discouraged by the majority of Sexologists. Note that a sexual psychic bond can not be formed with someone who has no interest in the PC's gender, no matter how much the patient wants to benefit from those skills.

Dark Love: (Optional advantage, costs 5 points) The PC has that certain rare psychology that allows him or her to lean the Sexual Attack skill (see above). Nobody has yet been brave enough to do an in-depth analysis of what makes this bizarre ability possible, but many feel that it involves simultaneous great love for humanity and terrible hatred for it, both co-existing but never interacting.

Suggested Skills- Aikido, Diagnosis, Psychotherapy, Seduction.

Suggested Equipment- Condoms, Contraceptive Pills, Taser: Pen.

Suggested Reading- Immigrants, Psychic Phenomenon, Red Light District, Serial Killers, Sex Workers, STDs.

Tea Drinkers

In Brief- Reviving the ancient Indian "Soma" drink which gives psychic powers.

Favorable Stereotypes- Insightful, intuitive, psychics, are respectful or the past and have knowledge of the future.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, rich kids, buy soma as a status symbol, minds clouded by hallucinations.

Other Names- Soma Drinkers, Somas, Puke Drinkers (derogatory).

Origin- In 1943 a scientist working for a large pharmaceutical company accidentally discovered LSD. The ecstatic (some would say "religious") experiences caused by the drug lead to a boom of interest in hallucinogens and psychedelics. Researchers (professional and amateur alike) began looking at aboriginal uses of hallucinogens. One of the problems that vexed researchers was "Soma" a god described in the Vedas (ancient Indian holy literature) that was obviously a plant-based drug (specifically, the milky extract of some sort of plant or plants) and was obviously a hallucinogen. Soma was believed by its users to impart magic powers. There was no current usage of Soma and the Vedas did not go in to enough detail about how Soma was made to conclusively identify the plant or plants. There were several theories as to what Soma was (usually those theories made Soma in to the theoreticians personal favorite plant-based hallucinogen) but none were conclusive and professionals and amateurs continued to argue for more than a century.

The creation of room-temperature nanotechnology in 2054 was a huge boon to archeology and paleontology. Nanobots, released in to the ground, could retrieve a microscopic, chemical and genetic analysis of every nanometer of soil. Within a decade after the end of the freedom war, Indian researchers were able to reconstruct holy sites where Soma was created and consumed and they were able to discover the exact nature of Soma.

Soma, it turned out, was a mixture of plants, including Fly Agaric mushrooms. Recipes varied between areas and between centuries, but researchers found a core of plants which were always included, some of which had no psychoactive effect by themselves. Researchers in pharmaceutical labs took over, and found that together the plants contained chemicals that acted in concert, as a drug cocktail. What surprised researchers the most was the effect the drug cocktail had on psychic abilities. Researchers had already identified drugs which would increase psychic abilities, but the effect was weak and seldom worth the side effects. The Soma drug cocktail had the strongest effect of any drug, especially in increasing psychic sensitivity. Not only were psychic senses increased while using the drug, regular use would create a semi-permanent upregulation of psychic energy receptors (in other words, greater psychic sensitivity even when not under the influence of the drug).

As soon as word got out, Soma hit the streets. In some cases people were paying up to a thousand dollars for a dose of Soma (which may or may not have been authentic). Most countries, including the US, quickly made Soma illegal, but that did little to stop it. At first, all Soma was coming out of India and Iran. The drug would be sold as a dried mixture of chopped up plant matter which would be put in hot water to make tea (this was not as powerful as fresh Soma, but powerful enough that many found it worth the money). Soon, drug growers all over the world started making and selling Soma. People would set up tiny operations in closets with grow lights. The prices of Soma dropped (though never enough to make it comparable with ordinary recreational drugs).

"*We have drunk Soma, we have become immortals, we have arrived at the light, we have reached the gods: what power has malevolence over us now, what can the perfidy of mortals do to us, O Immortal?*" -a passage from the Rig Veda

In the city, the only people who could afford to use Soma regularly were Indies, and a clique of Indie Soma users formed. The black market was the main vehicle by which people bought Soma, but the prices were exorbitant and the quality was questionable. Several Indies who made personal connections with sellers and started selling Soma directly to other Indies. They sold it cheaper and the Soma was of better quality. These few Indies thus cornered the market on Soma and forced out the black market traders. They operated out of coffee shops in Indie neighborhoods, slipping Soma in to coffee to disguise it. The dealers became wealthy and went from working out of the coffee ships to owning them. They soon realized that no one was really interested in persecuting Soma dealers and they dropped the pretense of the coffee altogether, selling straight Soma out of their shops.

Under pressure from a warlike city culture, the groups hanging around the soma shops began to act like a gang for mutual self-defense.

Timeline

8000 BC- Agriculture and herding make life on the Iranian Plateau possible.

7000 BC- First Soma use by nomadic herders on the Iranian Plateau.

2000 BC- Indo-Aryans move in to Indus valley, later to become Indians and Iranians.

1500 BC- 1st Vedas (sacred Indian hymns) transcribed from oral traditions.

1932- Brave New World by Aldous Huxley (sci-fi book in which Soma is a government-supported euphoriant) published.

1943- Albert Hofmann discovers LSD.

1963- Wasson theorizes that Soma was fly agaric mushrooms.

1989- Flattery and Schwartz theorize that Soma was syrian rue.

2046- Psychic energy receptors discovered in the human brain.

2054- Freedom Army creates room-temperature nanobots.

2075- Archeologists using nanotech in India find the makeup of Soma.

2076- Soma found to have strong effect on human psychic systems.

2077- Soma hits the city black market, immediately gains a loyal following.

2078- Indie Soma dealers become wealthy, buy coffee shops.

2079- Soma drinkers begin defending themselves as a gang.

Joining

Joining- It is ridiculously easy to join the Tea Drinkers, a PC only has to have enough money to hang out in Soma bars and pay for cups of Soma. In the process of hanging out, the PC will make friends and become part of the Tea Drinker community. The PC will also want to seek out psychic training, either from other Tea Drinkers or from professional trainers.

At level one, adventure one, the PC knows many Tea Drinkers and has been drinking Soma long enough that the positive impact on psychic systems has plateaued.

Lifestyle- Tea Drinkers usually buy their Soma at the major tea shops in Tea Drinker turf. These are converted coffee shops owned by Tea Drinkers, with dim lights and a tasteful décor (mostly ancient Indian themes). Tea Drinkers never just order "Soma", there are dozens of ways of preparing Soma and alternate sets of ingredients, each with it's own name in Tea Drinker slang. A Tea Drinker might order a "tall green dragon with cream" or an "iced smoked Jharkand blend." These shops also sell dry tea by the ounce so that Tea Drinkers can make their own tea at home (usually with french presses). It is a special occasion when a Tea Drinker comes across a very unique blend of tea or a batch of fresh (non-dried) tea. This tea might be bought at up to ten times the normal cost and shared only with good friends.

The owners of the tea shops often plan special events during the evenings. There might be live music, there might be poetry, one shop even has guest lecturers every Tuesday who speak about topics in psychic science and history. Tea Drinkers gravitate towards the events that interest them, or they may go to whichever tea shop isn't having an event if they want to be able to talk without raising their voices.

Most of the time, Tea Drinkers don't like to guzzle their tea all at once, they like to sip it slowly over the course of several hours to maintain a constant low level of "buzz" that is strong enough to significantly enhance their psychic abilities but not strong enough to make them unable to act

abilities but not strong enough to make them unable to act rationally or defend themselves. Thus, most Tea Drinkers carry metal thermoses they keep their tea in so they can drink it as they walk around the city.

While under the influence of a mild dose of Soma, the Tea Drinker is capable of doing almost everything they could do while sober, so long as they have concrete goals and the motivation to pursue them. There will be some psychedelic effects. For instance, a pattern that otherwise would be ignored may catch a Tea Drinker's eye and may seem to be incredibly beautiful. The Tea Drinker may also have a slight tendency towards exaggerating the importance of abstract and grandiose ideas. If they don't have some concrete goal to keep their mind on, a Tea Drinker's thoughts will become increasingly abstract until they are thinking about (and often discussing) ideas that are not grounded in any real world examples (for instance, two Tea Drinkers may get in to an involved discussion about how order and chaos interplay on the level of the interactions between characters in an imaginary puppet show the Tea Drinkers just made up). Tea Drinkers are often pleased and surprised by new reactions to things that are so ordinary that they never notice them while sober. Tea Drinkers often want to commemorate or share these novel experiences, even when their vocabulary gives them no means of expressing their experience. Non-Tea Drinkers may misinterpret this as a severe cognitive dysfunction: the Tea Drinker may start describing something in terms that have nothing to do with that object. A Tea Drinker might describe a person's face as "looking like a corner where herbs might dry in a medieval cabin on the edge of a forest." The Tea Drinker is not crazy to say these things, he or she just has no good way to describe their experiences. If the Tea Drinker is bored or allows his or her mind to wander, hallucinations may occur, but not strong ones: the Tea Drinker can always tell the difference between the hallucinations and reality.

Most people think that Soma tastes terrible, but Tea Drinkers grow to like the taste, and to be able to discern different flavors in different blends. They also learn to appreciate the subtle differences in the hallucinogenic and psychic effects of different blends and batches of Soma.

Some Tea Drinkers study Indian and Iranian religion and philosophy. These Tea Drinkers practice rituals and meditations derived from these studies. Some believe that Soma makes it possible for people to discover mystical or philosophical truths about the nature of the universe. On the other hand, for every Tea Drinker who believes that Soma has special religious properties, there is another who thinks that Soma is purely a pharmaceutical with no utility beyond its effects on psychic energy receptors. These groups, the mystical and the utilitarian, tend to keep each other in balance and keep the general trend of Tea Drinkers somewhere in the middle.

Sometimes a Tea Drinker or group of Tea Drinkers will want to take a large dose of Soma. Since a large dose will seriously impair the Tea Drinker, the group will arrange for one person who is abstaining to stay and watch over them. The group taking the large dose will typically lock themselves away in a basement so they can be sure not to be bothered. Tea Drinkers in this state are hallucinating strongly and may suffer from delusions and inappropriate emotions, but they are also at their most psychically receptive. Tea Drinkers may gain very important information from their psychic senses, but there is always a chance that the information they think they have gained is a hallucination with no basis in reality. Many claim to have introspective, religious or spiritual experiences after taking a large dose of Soma. Both large and small doses of Soma are clearly recreational, the Tea Drinkers enjoy them, independently of any other benefit they are receiving.

Social Structure- Tea Drinkers have no official system of authority. Older Tea Drinkers, especially those who can teach psychic skills to their juniors, are often accorded respect and deference. The most influential Tea Drinkers are those who own the tea shops and import Soma in to the city. They make a fairly good living, and they can easily get the attention of all the Tea Drinkers by making announcements. By holding events at their shops, such as lectures and poetry readings, they also help shape the what Tea Drinkers are talking and thinking about. They often spend too much of time dealing with the business of running shops and importing Soma to get very involved in politics.

Advancement- The easiest way to gain influence is to become a skilled enough psychic that one can start training other Tea Drinkers. Another way to gain influence is to get a lot of some previously untried mixture of Soma. Almost any Tea Drinker could be induced to come over to a Tea Drinker's apartment or sit at a table with him or her by the prospect of trying an interesting new Soma blend. Another way to advance would be to gain control of a Tea Shop, although the market is saturated (the Tea Drinkers don't need more Tea Shops).

Population- There are around 650 Tea Drinkers.

External Relations- Most of the Tea Drinker's dealings are with other Indie gangs in the city, since they share the most values and similarities of lifestyle with them. The Tea Drinkers have a lot of dealings with the Omniscients (who buy a lot of Soma) and the Arcadians (who have turf directly to the North of Tea Drinker territory). Most of the dealings the Tea Drinkers have with other Indie gangs are friendly: sharing information on major threats to the city and forming alliances when they have a common enemy.

The Tea Drinkers also owe a lot to the Immortals, who trained many of the first Tea Drinkers (there are even a handful of Tea Drinkers who are ex-Immortals, and visa versa). As two of the three "psychic gangs" in the city, the Tea Drinkers and Immortals often end up sharing information and dealing with the same problems. The Immortals who are "descended" from Cape Albright, a psychic historian, take special interest in Soma and the Tea Drinkers. Most Cape descendents feel they owe something to the Tea Drinkers.

To the South of Tea Drinker territory is the turf of the Freaks. The Tea Drinkers try their best to maintain a good relationship with the Freaks. Habey Cox, the leader of the Freaks, certainly likes the Tea Drinkers and is known as a Soma connoisseur himself. The Freaks are an unpredictable group and there are many altercations with the Tea Drinkers, some serious enough that small wars have sprouted between the Freaks and Tea Drinkers.

Some older black market Traders have bad feelings towards the Tea Drinkers who took over the lucrative Soma trade.

In general, people try to avoid messing with psychics, and few people trouble the Tea Drinkers. Occasionally, however, the Tea Drinkers go so long without doing anything violent that people start to think it is okay to pick on Tea Drinkers. At these times, the Tea Drinkers fight just long enough to remind the city that they are a gang.

Military Style- The Tea Drinkers avoid killing whenever possible, even when they are hungry for revenge. What they do instead is use their psychic powers for psychological torture (and occasionally to drive people insane). They send a party in to the enemy's turf, using their psychic senses to sense where their enemies are and stay unseen. They find an important member of the enemy group and use their psychic powers to cause that person pain, terrible emotions and hallucinations. When confronted by an actual battle, Tea Drinkers use psychic powers to mess up the enemy's senses so they can escape without a fight.

Typical Weapon- Most carry metal tea thermoses which make good weapons in a pinch.

Turf- A small block of turf in midtown west. Tea Drinker turf is South of 57th St., North of 42nd St., West of 11th Ave., East of 8th Ave. in the North and 9th Ave. in the South. This part of town was once called Clinton (with a bit of turf poking in to what was once the garment district) and has quite a few skyscrapers and high-rises, including in-use luxury apartment buildings, and some old abandoned office buildings. There are also many brick rowhouses and some walk-up apartment buildings. There are four major Soma bars in this turf, most of them in commercial frontage that was once restaurants or luxury car dealerships.

Distinguishing Features- Some Tea Drinkers wear hooded trenchcoats (often light-brown with silver buttons) in a nod to the old pre-war tradition of psychics wearing hooded cloaks. Almost all Tea Drinkers carry around large steel thermoses to keep their tea in. Many Tea Drinkers wear the Bollywood style (see p.343).

Symbols- Many Tea Drinkers have an interest in ancient Indian culture and decorate themselves, their homes and their Soma bars with symbols from that culture (as well as more generic "ancient culture" symbols). Included are Sanskrit letters in thick, curving lines, the orange and brown tinted yellow color of saffron, and basic shapes filled with a maze of lines, multi-headed or multi-limbed gods. Stylized red and white mushrooms are a common symbol of the Tea Drinkers.

Slang

Deliriant: n., a drug which causes confusion and delusions.

Hallucinogen: n., a drug which primarily causes sensory hallucinations, as well as ecstatic experiences under the right conditions.

Psychedelic: n./adj., a drug which primarily causes altered states of awareness and distortions of perception.

Psychoactive: adj., anything capable of effecting neural transmission enough to create a change in thought, emotion or state of consciousness.

Vedas: n., holy Indian texts based on oral traditions.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 8, BIO 7, CMBT 9, CRTV 5, INFO 7, INTL 6, MIL 7, PSY:X 10, PSY:M 8, PSY:S 6, TECH 7, THIE 8, SOC 6, STRT 8.

Income- $2,000 +$175/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Long Term Soma Effects (Mandatory Advantage)- Having used Soma for a long time has made some semipermanent changes to the PC's neurons. The PC gets +4 to psychic AWR rolls and +2 to psychic based WIL rolls. This is in addition to any plusses from being under the current influence of Soma.

Hallucinogenic Urine (Mandatory Advantage)- Some of the hallucinogenic chemicals that are ingested in the Soma are not easily broken down by the liver and instead collect in the PC's bladder. The PC's urine, if ingested, is thus a potent hallucinogen (although with no pro-psychic properties). Depending on how much Soma and how much other liquids the PC has been drinking, a "full dose" could be anything from two tablespoons to a full cup.

Suggested Skills- Botany, Gardening, History: World, Precognition.

Suggested Equipment- Soma, Steel Thermos.

Suggested Reading- Bollywood, Black Market, Psychic Phenomenon.

INDIE NON-GANGS

Favorable Stereotypes- Independent, tolerant of all people and beliefs, concerned with helping the less fortunate, well read, with interesting opinions.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Compassionless, selfish, greedy and obsessive. They see the city as some game that they have no personal stake in.

Indies who are not gang members tend to be older, wealthier and have a wider range of interests than Indies who are gang members. Non-Gang Indies are the hardest to describe as a group because they contain such extremes: from a kindly octogenarian who feeds stray cats to a thirty-something bank executive who mercilessly hunts humans.

Eccentrics

In Brief- Older people with a lot of experience who have decided for aesthetic or philosophical reasons to be out on the streets.

Favorable Stereotypes- Wise, observant, unique viewpoint, independent, calm, principled, interesting.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Intellectual loners, odd, extremists, incapable of being part of a social unit.

Other Names- Independents, Others, Old Men and Women, Chess Players.

Origin- Eccentrics are best defined as what they are not, so their history is of all the recent social trends in the city that they have opted out of. After the Freedom

Wars there was a revolution of economically autonomous gated communities, and their popularity led to new types of corporate living centers and private cities. They key to these communities was technologically enhanced screening of applicants to assemble perfect community. The gated communities worked out extremely well, were heralded as utopias or near-utopias and there was a huge flight of people out of cities and in to these communities. Unfortunately, not everyone was deemed right to join a corporation or gated community and could not afford to pay to live in a private city or live in a nice suburb. These people stayed in the inner cities or were forced to move to inner cities, which increasingly became the dumping grounds for those who could not make it in to the new and advanced society.

Even as people were leaving the city, cheap full-immersion VR technology created a new exodus from the city: but this time in to apartments, behind locked doors. Thousands of able-bodied people became shut-ins, and the streets became even lonelier and those who stayed on them stood out even more.

Then, the children of shut-in VR addicts started rebelling against isolating themselves from reality. They left their homes, bringing more variety to the streets. The streets were very dangerous, however. When the Drug Lords consolidated, this pulled the rug out from under the large street gangs (that owed their existence to drug sales) and made possible a new type of gang, an "enlightened" gang concerned more with mutual self-defense than with drugs or warfare. These gangs brought a new social order to the city, and more safety to individuals. Much of the street population flocked to these new gangs, who soon came to control most of the city. The new gangs started sucking up young people as soon as they got old enough to travel the streets on their own. Still, though, there were those who had declined to join gated communities, although they could have, had refused to become criminal drug dealers, though they could have, and refused to join the new generation of gangs, though they could have. This "other" group was a perplexity to some young gang members, who began to call them "eccentrics" as if to explain their odd decisions. Most eccentrics were older people, whose reasons for not joining gated communities or gangs were intertwined with their own relationship with the city's history. However, a tiny percentage of young people found themselves rejecting the established social systems for the same reasons, and so the original historical generation of eccentrics was added to by a new younger generation.

Although the meaning of the term "eccentric" changes over time in the minds of city residents, as does the stereotypes it represents, the eccentrics have always been an "other" category rather than a social group one joins. The meaning of the term has become more specific, but only as other terms have been created to describe other non-gang groups (especially the recent concept of "freelancers" which includes many people which would have previously been thought of as eccentrics). Eccentrics have always been those who have not chosen (or been forced to) be part of one of these other groups.

Timeline
2055- Freedom War ends.
2065- City exodus in to gated communities.
2065- VR systems become popular, create new type of shut-ins.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate, old street gangs decline, new generation gangs begin to form.

Becoming- Eccentrics become Eccentrics by choosing not to join any other group. They refuse to leave the streets and they refuse to stop doing whatever it is they think they should.

Lifestyle- An Eccentric's lifestyle is usually dictated by the reason that he or she stayed in the city.

Some Eccentrics could have left the city, but stayed to be with someone they loved. This could be anything from a son who was mentally retarded to a spouse who couldn't quite meet the loyalty checks to join a gated community or corporation. For these people, daily life is usually spent caring for and keeping this loved one company. There is one elderly woman who can be seen every day taking care packages to a mentally ill son who lives on the streets and trusts no one in the world save his mother.

For some, the "loved one" that could not be abandoned is the city itself. The city is really a wonderful, beautiful place in a lot of ways, from the beauty and majesty of architecture to the drama of human lives that take place here. There are many hundreds of Eccentrics who could not bear to leave the city that they grew up in and experienced the best years of their lives in. Some people feel that the city is a part of them and they would not be the same person if they leave it. Some Eccentrics belong to historical societies that seek to preserve historical buildings or keep historical details about the city from being lost. Some Eccentrics seek to document the city as it exists right now: they take pictures, keep historical records of current events and in other ways try to describe city life for posterity.

Some Eccentrics are just grumpy old bastards who refuse to change their way of life just because society has been changing around them. These Eccentrics stubbornly stick to the daily routine they have had for decades, not letting the new dangers of the city intimidate them. These Eccentrics rarely have any fear of death and usually find great pleasure in telling everyone around them, no matter how powerful, exactly what they think of them.

When I Was Your Age…

Current Age: 35	Current Age: 50	Current Age: 65	Current Age: 80	
When I was 30 years old…	When I was 45 years old…	When I was 60 years old…	When I was 75 years old…	The large, powerful, drug selling street gangs were at the peak of their power (2075).
When I was 20 years old…	When I was 35 years old…	When I was 50 years old…	When I was 65 years old…	People were fleeing the city to go live in new gated communities (2065).
When I was 12 years old…	When I was 27 years old…	When I was 42 years old…	When I was 57 years old…	The city was a huge camp for Freedom War refugees (2057).
When I was 8 years old…	When I was 23 years old…	When I was 38 years old…	When I was 53 years old…	The Freedom Army had turned the city in to a totalitarian stronghold (2053).
When I was 2 years old…	When I was 17 years old…	When I was 32 years old…	When I was 47 years old…	The world is on the edge, plagued by disasters, wars and ecological problems, there is growing hatred of incredibly powerful corporations (2047).
Before I was born…	Before I was born…	When I was 5 years old…	When I was 20 years old…	Large corporations presided over the computerization of every aspect of life in the industrial world (2020).
Before I was born…	Before I was born…	Before I was born…	When I was 1 year old…	Terrorists destroyed the World Trade Center towers (2001)

Some Eccentrics refused to join a gated community or corporation because of their political beliefs. These Eccentrics often spend a lot of time trying to further their political beliefs. Political action can include everything from distributing pamphlets, to creating special interest groups and lobbying the legislature, to running for political office, to planning terrorist bombings. Eccentrics hold all manner of political beliefs, each with a unique personal slant. Some Eccentrics would prefer to be identified by their political philosophy, especially when that political philosophy dictates how they live their day to day lives. An Eccentric's political beliefs have little to do with the mainstream trends in political thought. Eccentric political theories are usually more theoretical than practical, looking towards a long-term future rather than immediate compromises.

Some Eccentrics have philosophical reasons for staying in the city. Philosophical reasons occupy a gray area between personal and political reasons. Someone who considers themselves a philosophical objector is unlikely to lobby against gated communities, but they are seldom afraid to talk someone's ear off about why they think gated communities are bad. Many philosophical objectors share a philosophy that goes something like this: Life in a gated community, corporation or in VR is not real life because people living in those situations are not given the opportunity for real failure with real consequences. Therefore, those that want to actually be alive must go spend their days out on the streets in the city.

Some have no philosophical or political objections to corporations and gated communities, they simply find the idea boring. These people stay in the city and stay out on the streets because they find it exciting and interesting. They like a bit of danger in their lives, they like unpredictability and they like being part of human drama. These eccentrics are often curious about everything that goes on around them.

Some eccentrics are loners, introverts or are shy and don't spend a lot of time talking with people they don't know well, instead they prefer to observe the city. The majority of eccentrics would call themselves a "people person" (why else would they be on the streets if not for the people) and are quite gregarious, they hang out in bars and coffee shops, keeping their throats lubricated with their drink of choice and chatting with whoever happens to be around to chat with. They may strike up conversations with strangers or they may interject themselves in to other people's conversations. Eccentrics have a wide range of levels of social skill, and sometimes an Eccentric entering a conversation is a welcome and enjoyable experience, and sometimes it is unwelcome and uncomfortable. Either way, one thing is certain: an Eccentric will always have a unique point of view or unique ideas to add to any conversation.

Social Structure- Some Eccentrics know each other, and a few even hang out in pairs or small groups. Most Eccentrics know more non-Eccentrics than they do Eccentrics, however. There is no bond of loyalty between Eccentrics, no Eccentric is under a duty to even talk to another Eccentric, much less protect them or revenge their deaths.

Advancement- The only advancement for an Eccentric is personal growth in whatever direction the individual Eccentric thinks is important.

Population- There are about 2000 people who are described by the term "eccentric" better than any other term. The eccentrics have an average age of 55, though their ages range from 15 to 115. There is one 115 year old man who jogs around central park every day, followed by the watchful eyes of countless city residents who don't want to see this kindly old man get hurt or otherwise victimized.

External Relations- An Eccentric is rarely judged by what other Eccentrics have done, each Eccentric is dealt with and creates relationships on a one-on-one basis. Once exception to this basic rule is a soft-spot that a lot of people in the city have for older Eccentrics. Especially to many Well gang members, the Eccentrics represent a sort of philosophical-ancestor, they are what the gang member's parents would have been if the parents had not made the wrong decisions. Many people also make it a point of personal honor to look out for older people.

Typical Weapon- A lot of the older eccentrics carry canes which may be used as weapons themselves or may conceal swords. Some eccentrics have old guns that they managed to keep a hold of during the Freedom War era gun-sweep.

Turf- Eccentrics are spread throughout the city. Many can be seen on busy avenues (like Broadway) and many eccentrics can be found hanging around coffee shops and bars. In Washington Square Park on West 4th St. and 5th Ave., in what is now the Eastern edge of Needle Punk territory, people have been playing chess every day for more than a century. Many eccentrics can be found hanging around here playing chess or watching people play chess.

Distinguishing Features- Most Eccentrics are older than the average person out on the street. Anyone who is out on the street, is older, and is not obviously a street person is assumed to be an Eccentric. Eccentrics rarely try to keep up with city fashions and wear clothes that either were fashionable in their day or are selected just to be comfortable.

Symbols- Eccentrics have few symbols, though occasionally a cane is used to symbolize an unnamed Eccentric in gang graffiti.

Quick Survey of Political Beliefs

Out of 50 political flyers collected in the city over a one month period, the following political systems were advocated:

Belief	Violent	Non-Violent
Abolition of Corps	1	2
Abolition of Drug Laws		1
Abolition of Federal Government		1
Abolition of Gated Communities	2	6
Abolition of Prison System		2
Abolition of Tech Laws		1
Abolition of Virtual Reality		1
Abolition/Reduction of Technology		1
Complete Anarchy	4	8
Fascism	3	
Libertarianism		2
Political Autonomy For the City/Anti-Gerrymandering		1
Religious Based Governments	1	2
Rights For the Unborn		2
Stronger Protections For the Ecosystem		1
Stronger, More Compassionate Federal Government		4
Unintelligible	2	2

Slang- Many older eccentrics use a lot of older slang which can mystify younger people (some of the slang of the past has become a normal part of the modern language, some of it has phased out of use).

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 8, BIO 6, CMBT 8, CRTV 5, INFO 6, INTL 5, MIL 6, PSY:X 13, PSY:M 10, PSY:S 10, TECH 8, THIE 8, SOC 5, STRT 6.

Special Skills: The skill History: City costs only 2 skill points per level.

Income- $3,000 +$250/wk.

Special Equipment- Older eccentrics (must take the Old disadvantage) have better than average access to old Freedom Army technology. During character creation only, the PC pays 50% off anything listed on the Index of Freedom Army Equipment.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Abstract Thought: (Optional Advantage, Costs 1 Bonus Point) Many eccentrics spend a lot of time thinking about things, and have been doing so for decades, using symbols and metaphors that are either very out of date or are entirely personal. In either case, their thinking is different enough from that of most people's that it confuses psychic and technological attempts at mind reading. All attempts to read the PCs thoughts with psychic skills are +10 difficulty any technological measures to tell what the PC is thinking or evaluate the PC's personality are only half as accurate.

Suggested Skills- Aikido, Foreign Language, Gambling, History: City, Moneysaving, Storytelling

Suggested Equipment- Dog: Guard, Hearing Aid, Sword Cane.

Suggested Reading- City Culture: Origins, City History, Freedom Wars.

Hunters

In Brief- Make a sport out of hunting people. Some hunt innocent people, others hunt criminals, serial killers, Colins, even evil hunters.

Favorable Stereotypes- Disciplined, sophisticated, well equipped, patient, objective, cleaning the worst elements from the city.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Cold, heartless, cowardly, sociopathic vigilante killers.

Other Names- Assassins, Predators, Snipers.

Origin- Throughout the history of the city, there have been isolated instances of people hunting other people for sport. Most of these were serial killers, driven by deep hatred. In the years between 2063 and 2066 the city was emptied out, in to gated communities, corporate living centers and private cities. Of those who stayed in the city, many locked themselves up as shut-ins. By 2066, the streets were emptier than they had ever been and law enforcement in the city had never been more ineffective. This was the environment that brought people by the dozen to the city, people who believed they could hunt the city streets with no restrictions to their actions.

The first reactions of city residents to the hunter phenomenon was simple terror and hatred. They saw that people rich enough to smuggle in firearms were able to kill with no consequences. Even the gang code of revenge was useless against a lone hunter who chose to keep his or her real identity secret.

As time went on, city Hunters turned out not to be a homogenous group. Feelings towards them in the city became more mixed. Some Hunters did go around killing innocent people, but other hunters assassinated pusher gangs or serial killers or other hunters. The perception of hunters slowly changed: that rich loner with a sniper rifle might be out to kill you, or might be out to kill some serial killer. When Colin was discovered (p.366) people all over the city were frightened. When a handful of Indies decided to devote all to their time and money to hunting Colins, people welcomed this move.

Another reason attitudes towards the hunters have softened is that the hunters have proven to be self-policing, at least to a small degree. Policing implies some sort of organized enforcement scheme of a set of laws though, and the hunters have nothing like that. Hunters sometimes hunt other hunters, for the same wide variety of reasons and excuses that hunters hunt anyone else. The hunters who wind up dead are often those who kill "innocent people," apparently at random. This has thinned the number of hunters and made people less fearful that they will be randomly targeted next time they walk down the street.

By 2080, Hunters have become just another aspect of city life, with the capacity to be dangerous and the capacity to help.

Becoming- Hunters do not learn from each other, they train and equip themselves and come up with their own methods for doing things.

At level one, adventure one, a hunter has scored a few kills (or non-lethal take-downs, if that's what the PC is in to) and a few stories about the PC have started to circulate on the streets.

Lifestyle- If any theoretical distinction were to be made between hunters, it would be between hunters who make no attempt to ease their conscience or justify their actions, hunters who justify their actions by only hunting those they feel deserve death, and those hunters who ease their conscience by injecting some element in to the hunt that either levels the playing field (in other words, makes the hunt more fair) or gives the hunted some reward should they survive.

The first group, who kill purely for pleasure, are lumped in with all city serial killers in the minds of most city residents. Psychological profilers know, however, that a hunter type serial killer has a totally different profile from the other types. While normal serial killers are motivated by sex and a need to dominate and dehumanize through murder, rape and torture, an "assassin type" serial killer is

motivated by the cold, dispassionate desire to eliminate human lives. People have already been dehumanized by the process of the hunt so that by the time the hunter-serial killer finds the prey the act of murder is as mechanical and dispassionate as hitting a bull's-eye in target practice. These random killers are almost universally hated by city residents, even by other serial killers (who have just as much of a chance of being randomly targeted as anyone else).

Those Hunters who hunt people they think deserve to die get a mixed reaction from the city, especially since the standards of who deserve to die varies so considerably. Some think it's okay to kill drug addicts, mentally ill homeless people, prostitutes, even gang members. Others hunt pushers, escaped convicts, serial killers, even Colins. Some kill outright, others give their prey a choice (usually to give themselves up to the authorities or die). A few Hunters use non-lethal weapons on their prey.

The final type, who level the playing field or compensate the survivors, are probably the smallest group. Despite this, the majority of Hunter stories (including some which are apocryphal) are about his type. "Leveling the playing field" can be an anonymous warning to give a victim a head start, a game or puzzle by which the victim can win his or her freedom, the arming of the victim or the disarming of the Hunter. A completely fair fight, however, is very rare among city hunters. Some Hunters compensate prey, either by giving a "reward" to survivors, or by paying prey in advance (some Hunters even buy express permission to be hunted from desperate people).

Hunters are typically very wealthy, even more wealthy than the average Indie. They are wealthy enough to be able to smuggle in sophisticated weapons, armor and sensory equipment. Some hunters take pride in having the latest and best hunting equipment. They also tend to turn their homes in to virtual fortresses to protect them in case any prey who survived manages to track them down. Many hunters' homes are luxurious, defended by alarm systems, security cameras and traps and looking completely boring from the outside.

Trophies may also play a large part in hunters' lives and may fill up their homes. Some hunters take trophies from a kill. Some are as insignificant as a stick of gum out of someone's pocket, others are the skulls of past victims lined up on a shelf. Many hunters also collect memorabilia: military equipment, antique hunting trophies and supplies, exotic weapons, etc.

It is odd that hunters put so much trouble in to interior décor when they hardly have anyone over to look at it. Most hunters are loners by nature, but this tendency is compounded by the danger they would put themselves in if people were to find out their true nature. Every hunter has many enemies and few allies. The truth is that if all of a hunter's enemies were to know where that hunter lived or hung out, that hunter would find himself or herself sadly outnumbered.

Legends tend to pool around successful hunters, good or evil, especially the game players. The hunters are known by the clothing they wear or by their particular hunting MO. A hunter might be called, for instance, "brown-sweater-man" or "hundred-dollar-woman" or "pusher-sniper." Most hunters have an irresistible impulse to hear stories about themselves and may hang around bars or other public places asking questions designed to elicit such stories.

Some bounty hunters operating in the city would fall in to the category of hunters, while others would better fit in to the category of freelancer. In the minds of most city residents, anyone who cares more about the money is a Freelancer and anyone who cares more about the challenge is a hunter.

Social Structure- The only real social activity that hunters have is the Safari Lounge, a prohibitively expensive private club on the top floor of Club Champion, a popular Hummingbird dance club. Few in the city know about the Safari Lounge and even most Club Champion patrons don't know that it is a club for hunters.

The majority of city hunters either don't know about the lounge or do not care to attend. Only about 15 hunters ever attend the Safari Club, which means that on any given evening there are, at most, 5 people in the lounge. For those that do attend, the club gives them a place to relax and be relatively open about their lives. Hunters typically enter when the club is at it's most packed, slip through the crowd and up a stairway that is obscured from view. This setup is perfect for hunters because it reduces the chance of someone being able to single them out as a hunter.

Inside the lounge it is okay to talk about hunting equipment, strategies, close calls, but it is taboo to talk about choice of prey. Such talk could only cause lounge members to identify each other as "good" and "evil" and would destroy the peace of the club. Within the club, everyone is considered to be ethically neutral. In the club, two people may drink together and trade jokes, but outside the club one might be the chosen prey of the other.

Advancement- There is no real advancement among hunters since each hunter has his or her own standards of what makes them a good hunter. A large majority of hunters keep a tally of their kills (or non-lethal take-downs as the case may be) as a personal measurement of success and accomplishment.

Population- There are about 40 hunters operating in the city.

External Relations- Well gangs tend not to like hunters. The reason is that many gang members become so invested in the code of revenge that they see it as its own ethical system. The code of revenge provides consequences for every action and so limits actions to those that people think are really worth it. Hunters bypass this by keeping themselves secret and so are under no pressure to be responsible for their actions whatsoever. To many gang members this is unacceptable, whether they agree with a Hunter's choice of prey or not.

The Night Shift has a serious problem with Hunters, especially the "vigilante" type who the Night Shift sees as intruding on their bailiwick.

Hunters often have a lot of dealings with Roofers. A lot of hunters are snipers and rooftops make excellent sniper's nests, but rooftops are the turf of the Roofers, who don't like anyone trespassing on it. From the rooftops of skyscrapers, Roofers look out on the city rooftops looking for any incursion in to their turf. If a hunter can make it on to a rooftop and camouflage himself or herself before a Roofer lookout notices, there will be no problem. Otherwise, the hunter has only as long as it takes for a Roofer party to reach that Rooftop until there is a confrontation. These confrontations almost always end poorly. No other gang has killed as many hunters as the Roofers have and no other gang has as many hunters on their sworn enemies lists.

Hunters often have special relationships with Omniscients. The Omniscients are one of the few city groups that could easily identify and track down a hunter, so many hunters refuse to enter Omniscient territory during the course of a hunt. On the other hand, Omniscients can make incredibly valuable allies to a hunter. An Omniscient can help a hunter identify and find prey that the hunter would have no chance of finding on his or her own. Thus, many hunters who consider themselves "good" seek out like-minded Omniscients to form alliances with. The Omniscients who take part in such alliances have as much reason to hide their alliances as the hunters have to hide their identities.

Typical Weapon- A sniper rifle is the most common weapon, with smuggled pistols being the second most common.

Turf- Some hunters have little areas of turf staked out and don't let other hunters hunt there. Most hunters feel that the whole city is their hunting ground, although they tend to avoid Omniscient turf. The only place where hunters ever get together is the Safari Lounge (see Social Structure, above). The lounge is on the top floor of Club Champion, located at Convent Avenue and 128th St. in Hummingbird territory. The club can be accessed via a tight wooden staircase with red carpeting. Two bouncers stand by the door with a guest list. The lounge is decorated with an over-the-top African Safari theme, including fake (cloned) animal heads on the walls, wicker lounge chairs and a waiter (in African costume) behind a full bar.

Distinguishing Features- Hunters try not to distinguish themselves, but they often wear city camouflage (dark, almost black grays, and occasionally homemade trash suits). They often have sensory tech on: telescopic, infra-red or nigh-vision goggles. They can often be seen carrying weapons that aren't common in the city, like rifles.

Symbols- Rifles, and rows of "X" marks or stick figures (representing a tally sheet of kills) are common symbols of hunters.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 7, CMBT 7, CRTV 6, INFO 7, INTL 7, MIL 5, PSY:X 15, PSY:M 13, PSY:S 13, TECH 6, THIE 7, SOC 8, STRT 9.

Special Skills: The skills Sniper and Assassin: Armed cost only 5 skill points per level.

Income- $4,000 +$300/wk.

Special Equipment- Weapons costs 25% off during character creation only.

Suggested Skills- Assassin: Armed, Assassin: Unarmed, Climbing, Prowling, Rifle/Shotgun, Sniper, Tracking.

Suggested Equipment- Climbing Pads, Dagger: Freedom Army, Prowling Suit, Quiet Cloak, Sniper Rifle, Vital Armor.

Suggested Reading- Colin, Criminals, Drug Lords, Guns.

Night Walkers

In Brief- Roam the streets (usually at night), getting in to adventures and broadcasting their experiences live on the net for profit.

Favorable Stereotypes- Spontaneous, quick witted, funny, brave, interesting to be around.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Hyperactive, narcissistic daredevils with no respect for privacy.

Other Names- Real-Lifers, Hosts

Origin- For nearly a century, people have been making money by putting their own real lives on-line. They made money either by having direct subscribers, or by selling advertising time on their network sites. Over the years, the basic form remained the same but the technology changed. The first such sites were stationary low-quality digital cameras. The show was of nothing unless the host happened to be home. When digital videocameras and cellular modems became economically feasible, a new generation of these sites began: instead of hanging around at home, the hosts would walk around (usually at night) and broadcast what they said and did. In the 2040's, anti-corporate activists with portable web cams exposed many corporate wrongdoings over live webcasts and radically changed public opinion about corporations and the corporate run news-media.

The profitability of these "real-life" sites skyrocketed with the advent of affordable mental programming and full immersion VR technology. The new technology allowed the hosts to broadcast all of their senses to anyone who cared to log on to their sites. Another thing that fed the "real-life" craze was the increasing gulf between lifestyles in inner cities and lifestyles in gated communities, corporate living centers and private cities. The people living outside of the city experience little or no danger and are starved for excitement, so they tune in to shows taking place in the big-bad-city. In gated communities and corporations, where life is carefully scripted and danger free, some people have become such big Night Walker show fans that corps and gates communities ban these shows.

Timeline

1993- First ever webcam goes on-line, showing a coffee pot in a Cambridge computer lab.
1996- JenniCam, 1st webcam to broadcast the host's home life 24x7, becomes extremely popular.
2009- First live web cam showing a person wandering around at night.
2040-2050- Population explosion causes internet slowdown.
2045-2050- Watchdog groups expose corporate wrongdoings via live net broadcasts.
2050- Massive terrorist attacks bring down the internet.
2060- Internet restored after Freedom Wars end.
2065- Full immersion virtual reality systems become cheap enough for most people to own.
2065- First "my-life" full-immersion broadcasting site.

Becoming- It takes an investment of somewhere around two thousand dollars to start up a netsite. It takes either an advertising budget of a few thousand or many thousands of hours of "legwork" on the net to get the word out about the site. After that, though, the only thing the person can do to get enough viewers to the site to make a living is to hit the streets and hope people will tune in.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has a site and has a large enough core of habitual viewers that they can pay their rent and buy groceries.

"This part of the city I'm walking in right now is the territory of a gang called the Skin Borgs. They are pretty much thought of as the most dangerous and most violent gangs in the city. Hey... there's one over there. See that big guy over there? He's wearing about half a dozen suits of high-tech armor, and who knows what all that armor does. Now, I'm going to open up voting and for five cents a vote you can vote as to whether or not I should go punch him in the back of the head. Now, you only have thirty seconds to vote, so let's get started..."

Lifestyle- Night Walkers are Indies whose only income comes from their internet shows. Some have programming knowledge and have set up their own shows, but most simply use software which is already available. Very little knowledge of computers or the entertainment industry is necessary, just a few mental programs, an implant, an expensive cellular modem (an investment of about $1500) and the ability to walk around and have experiences so interesting that people will pay (or put up with annoying advertising) to watch them.

The audience is usually people living outside of the city, who watch Night Walker sites as an escape from their boring lives. For some, watching Night Walkers is an addiction, not quite as bad as VR addiction, but it lets people make up for something missing from their lives, be it excitement, intellectual stimulation, social contact, adventure, etc. People report that when they experience shows, they feel like they have the admirable qualities of the person in the show, that they are brave, adventurous, interesting, etc.

A Night Walker can turn off their show at any time, but the longer they have it on, the more money they make. For some it is an 8 hour-a-day job, but others have people peering in to everything they do. Show software lets those experiencing the show share comments with each other and with the Night Walker. Thus, whenever their show is on the Night Walker has a constant barrage of comments available to them. Night Walkers usually learn to tune them out, but occasionally a good piece of advice may come through. Night Walkers are careful to always credit the fans who gave them their good ideas (even if they would have done the same thing anyway) to avoid the fans becoming angry.

Being a Night Walker and being in a gang are completely incompatible, unless the Night Walker's show only runs during times when they aren't involved with gang business at all (which would severely curtail the Night Walker's income). Otherwise, the Night Walker would be a constant leak of information to any enemy the gang might have.

Not all Night Walkers operate on a pure profit motive. In fact, most of them either love doing whatever it is they do on the show, love the feeling of being watched or both.

Night Walkers have no code of revenge for each other and most fans are too wimpy to seek revenge. Most people don't mess with people they know are Night Walkers, though, because they fear exposure. No one in power cares about the death of some random gang member, but live evidence of the death of a semi-famous person being emailed twenty times a day to the state District Attorney might prompt a significant legal response.

Social Structure- Most city Night Walker's know each other, it is important to know your competition. When one city Night Walker gets in to something really interesting, the other Night Walkers can see their audiences leaving, and the Night Walker may check to see what is going on (falling prey to the same morbid curiosity that draws in their audience). However, Night Walkers tend to stay away from each other while their shows are on. A meeting would contain too much of a temptation to showboat and try to steal away the other person's viewers. Some Night Walkers even keep track of the other city Night Walkers of the same genre (via a tiny preview window which, of course, the audience can not see) so they can be sure not to run in to them.

Advancement- The more good stuff happens on the PC's show, the more regular viewers the PC gets. If the PC can save up enough money, he or she can reinvest that money in to advertising and gain even more viewers. Some Night Walkers become so successful that they upgrade their sites to include multiple sensory streams (by employees) and have other services such as best-of clips, biographies, news, full VR-chat rooms for fans, interactive VR adventures where people get to play the host, etc. The city doesn't yet have a Night Walker who has gone on to own a "media empire," but there are some in other cities and they have considerable power within their area.

The PC also gains "lifetime viewers," people who have watched the show so often that it feels like a part of their lives. These people will watch whenever they can, whether the show is good or not. The PC gains +25 lifetime viewers per level advancement as a Night Walker.

Population- In the city there are around 30 Night Walkers.

External Relations- Depending upon the type of show, Night Walkers have a tendency to get in trouble with gangs (especially those who don't like people trespassing on their turf) or with groups that like to keep their privacy (such as the Drug Lords, illegal pornography rings, etc.).

Turf- Night Walkers go everywhere in the city, but they usually like to stick to where the people are, except when they are purposefully going in to places they aren't supposed to go.

Distinguishing Features- Since all of the character's senses are usually broadcast, Night Walkers make it a point to wear very comfortable clothing. Otherwise, most Night Walkers try to make keep their status secret since a lot of people are very privacy conscious and would react poorly. Gloves and either bulky clothing or some sort of hip-pack or backpack are necessary to conceal the plug and handjack. Night Walkers rarely smoke (and if they do, they do not broadcast the sensations from their mouth and lungs).

Symbols- Most Night Walkers come up with their own personal logos and icons that define their presence on the web, some even pay large sums to have graphic designers create their logos.

Slang

　Host: n., the person who broadcasts their sensory experiences on the net, usually the owner of the net site.

　Show: n., a streaming internet site with full-immersion sensory data sent out by a host during up times.

Skills

Skill Costs: ATH 8, BIO 7, CMBT 8, CRTV 6, INFO 8, INTL 8, MIL 7, PSY:X 15, PSY:M 13, PSY:S 13, TECH 6, THIE 7, SOC 6, STRT 9.

Income- There is quite a lot of "channel flipping" among shows. If the PC is doing something boring, he or she will lose audience members, if he or she do something interesting the PC will get more. When something especially exciting happens, the numbers go up exponentially: everyone sends instant messages to their network friends telling them that something cool is happening on this show. Whether the PC uses advertising, pay-per-view or subscription, the more viewers the more money they make. The PC is given constant feedback of how many viewers he or she has.

The PC can also make additional money by letting viewers vote (at a small fee per vote) to make important decisions in the PC's life. The PC must always do what the viewers vote, no matter what the consequences, or he or she will permanently lose most of their viewers.

What's Going On	# of Viewers	Pay/hr.	A Vote
Nothing Happening	2-3	$0	$0
Walking and Talking	5-10	$1	$0
Mildly Exciting/ Interesting	50-100	$10	$5
Moderately Exciting/ Interesting	250-750	$50	$30
Very Exciting/ Interesting	1000-5000	$250	$400
Once In a Lifetime Event	10,000+	$1000	$2000

Special Equipment- PC gets the following equipment free: Cellular Modem: Broadband, Jack, Sensory Broadcast Program. The PC also get the services Broadband Cellular Connection and Net Site: Professional.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Good Fan (Optional Bonus Characteristic, Costs 5 Point)- This is a serious fan who has the power to occasionally help the PC. This is the equivalent of one of the following Contact advantages (choose one): Corporate, Government, Law Enforcement, Wealthy, Wise, except that the "contact" does not have to be asked for help, they are right there watching the PC's struggles and will chime in with what they can do to help.

Bad Fan (Optional Bonus Characteristic, Gives 2 Points)- The PC has one fan who spends every free moment watching the show just so that he or she can insult, threaten and curse the PC, try to bribe the PC in to doing dangerous things, and in all other ways try to lead the PC towards destruction. In most cases, the bad fan has no real feelings towards the PC, trying to mess with the PC is just a game, a way to pass the time.

Stalker (Optional Bonus Characteristic, Gives 4 Points)- This is a person who is completely obsessed with the show to the point that they are no longer capable of acting rationally. They are typically on welfare or disability and experience the show every moment that it is on. The stalker will feel a need to make themselves part of the show somehow, if the PC doesn't listen to the stalker's comments on line the stalker will seek out the host in person. The stalker is emotionally liable and the wrong word could send the stalker in to a rage.

Show Style: (Mandatory Bonus Characteristics) The style of Night Walker shows varies considerably. For instance, the two most popular city Night Walkers are the Masked Philosopher (who walks around the city getting in to philosophical debates with people) and MasoChris (who takes bids from viewers to do dangerous and degrading things). Whatever style of show the PC has, it is important to remember that this sets the PC's type of audience. The audience comes expecting a certain type of show, and they stay only if they get that type of show. Choose from one of the following:

Intellectual Show (Costs 3 Bonus Points)- The PC does things that appeal to people's intellectual sides. They might get in to intellectual discussions, they might explore the city's architecture, they might solve mysteries. Anything that could be termed "interesting" can gain more viewers. Requires 15 INL, 10 CHM.

Personal Drama Show (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- The PC is paid for having an exciting and dramatic personal life and letting others watch. This type of show pretty much requires that the PC have a life full of stress and interpersonal conflict. It is sometimes quite amazing the number of people who will log on to watch someone else's career, education, relationship with roommates, relationship with family and love life hit its high and low points. A PC with this type of show garners more viewers by coming to some sort of crisis point in his or her personal life. Requires 15 CHM.

Expose Show (Costs 0 Bonus Points)- The PC is more or less a freelance journalist. The PC's job is to show the city's high points and low points and to root out its secrets. A PC with this type of show gets more viewers by either exposing some terrible truth or showing some very dramatic scene of life in the city.

Social Show (Costs 2 Bonus Points)- This show is interesting because of the variety of social situations the PC engages in. Most of these shows have a sexual or romantic bent, the hosts spend their nights wandering around the city trying to find sex and/or love. A PC with this type of show gets more viewers whenever they do something daring (e.g. ask a total stranger to have sex with him) and get good results. Requires 15 CHM.

Danger/Dare Show (Gives 5 Bonus Points)- The appeal of this show is that the host is in real danger of dying or having something degrading and horrible happen to him or her. Some show hosts do dangerous stunts of their own devising, some will let viewers pay to have them do things (e.g. "I'll eat anything" night on Jaman Hamill's show). The more dangerous or self degrading, the more viewers.

Suggested Skills- Acrobatics, Oratory, Storytelling.

Suggested Equipment- Lockpick: Auto, Nightvision Goggles: Deluxe, Outfit: Clubwear, Sexual Implant.

Suggested Reading- Famous People, Internet.

Sat Jumpers

In Brief- Engineers in the high-danger field of on-site satellite repair. They work for a small company in the city.

Favorable Stereotypes- Independent, self-sufficient, fearless techs with brilliant repair skills.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Eccentric, cranky, greedy loners.

Other Names- SRC Employees, Space Jumpers, Satellite Repair, Sat Humpers (derogatory).

Origin- Satellites have been an integral part of modern technology since people started using them to transmit signals across the globe in 1962. More and more technologies incorporated satellite technology, from military communication uplinks to personal global positioning systems in wristwatches. In the 2040's an exponentially growing population overran the internet (among other things). In order to preserve the information technology they had come to depend on, corporations and governments were forced to shoot thousands of communications satellites in to space. This satellite boom put humanity closer to sustained life in space than it had been in years. The increased need for satellite maintenance led to corporate space station where technicians lived.

When Jeffrey Hernandez, a young vagabond radical, inherited his father's fortune he ended up the majority shareholder in one of the biggest satellite communication and maintenance corporations in the world. He stocked the board with people who shared his political beliefs. When Hernandez' "Freedom Army" attacked, the satellites were used by Hernandez and his "Freedom Army" as a weapon against corporations and governments of the world. Legitimate communications between enemies was disrupted while false news broadcasts were broadcast to the public to support the Freedom Army's position. The US government couldn't find Jeffrey Hernandez to assassinate him because he was hiding in a space station orbit above New York. Rebels were able to sabotage this satellite and force to spin out of its orbit.

As the world rebuilt its infrastructure after the Freedom Wars ended, many satellites were reclaimed and reprogrammed and many more satellites utilizing new secondary-nanotechnology were shot up in to space. Technological advances had made satellites smaller and cheaper than they ever had been. There were soon so many satellites in space that corporations had regular spacewalk schedules.

The gated community movement brought changes to corporate culture. In order to stem the loss of good employees to gated communities, corporations had to start treating their employees a lot better: higher pay, better benefits, gated living centers and no more dangerous jobs. All the dangerous jobs in the corporate economy, then, had to be outsourced to non-corporate employees, who could be increasingly found only in inner cities.

The Satellite Repair Corporation was founded in 2055 with a grant from the restoration committee. The corporations, who were by then eager to outsource, signed maintenance contracts with the SRC. The SRC opened offices in inner cities near every major satellite hub. The Manhattan SRC office opened in 2064 and it found no shortage of technically savvy people willing to take a very dangerous job for what was, to them, a very high salary. The SRC was soon turning people away and its office thrived with people waiting around to take a shift if someone should call in sick.

There has been considerable resistance by Sat Jumpers to becoming a gang, because the SRC has always attracted people who considered themselves self-reliant in the extreme. The basic procedures of modern satellite repair often require that the Sat Jumper spend 24 or 48 hours alone in space, with only their equipment and their wits to depend on. Most of the people who joined the SRC had grown up never being able to depend on anyone for anything, the concept was foreign to them.

There were several attacks on Sat Jumpers by pushers, gang members, mentally ill street people, and others before anyone even suggested some sort of mass retribution by SRC employees. When groups of Sat Jumpers did try this sort of retribution, the results were disastrous: the SRC got in to a war with the Drug Lords that it didn't know how to fight, didn't know how to end, and that a large percentage of the SRC refused to fight in under any circumstances. One shift manager, Big Willy, even sold the codes to some important corporate satellites on the black market and used the money to hire the Drakes to help put an end to the war. Big Willy was immediately caught, fired and put in prison.

Big Willy's martyrdom further polarized the Sat Jumpers in to those who thought the Sat Jumpers should act like a gang and those who thought they shouldn't. The pro-gang side thought the whole incident was proof that the Sat Jumpers had to work together. The anti-gang group saw the whole incident as proof that the Sat Jumpers had no business acting like a gang. In recent times, the anti-gang side has prevailed. The Sat Jumpers have been letting as many people as possible know that the Sat Jumpers are not a gang and that no Sat Jumper is responsible for the actions of another.

Timeline
1957- Sputnik, first satellite ever, launched in to space.
1960- First weather satellite launched.
1962- First commercial communications satellite.
1962- First satellite TV broadcast.
1964- First geostationary satellite.
1964- First global positioning system utilizing a satellite.
1965- 1st international communications satellite.
1971- Salyut, first space station, launched by Russia.
1973- Skylab, first American space station, launched.
1981- Space shuttles (which can be reused) replace rockets for commercial space flight.
1983- Satellites begin broadcasting television signals.
1986- Scrambled satellite-fed cable TV.
1986- Mir space station launched.
1999- First two-way satellite internet service.
2017- First non-equatorial geostationary satellites.
2020- 1st sat for storage of cryogenically frozen bodies.
2040-2050- Satellite "Boom."
2044- 1st human-occupied sat repair platform launched.
2044- Jeffrey Hernandez inherits controlling interest in large satellite communication company.
2050- Freedom Army sabotages military and communications satellites, broadcasts false news reports.
2054- Jeffrey Hernandez' satellite loses its orbit.
2055- Satellite Repair Corporation founded.
2064- NY Satellite Repair Corporation office opened.
2079- War with Drug Lords.

Becoming- To be hired on, an applicant must interview with the senior shift supervisor and must pass a technology aptitude test. If hired, the new employee must complete a one month intensive training course which is made up, mostly, of full-immersion VR simulations of satellite repair. The new employee must pass another quite difficult VR test to complete training. After this the Sat Jumper becomes a probationary employee and must make five tandem jumps with a senior repair tech. If all five jumps pass without incident, the probationary period ends.

At level, one, adventure one, the PC has just finished this probationary training period and can no do jumps on his or her own.

Lifestyle- The SRC operates 24 hours a day with a space shuttle flight planned for each day (if there is not enough need, the flight is cancelled, if there is extra need another flight can be added). When trouble happens with a satellite, the corp that owns the satellite tries to fix it from the ground. If that is not possible, the corp uses its SRC network interface to enter a call ticket. Each call ticket has a priority rating that costs a different amount. The levels range from 18 to 0. 18 is routine maintenance, can be taken care of any time within the next year. Level 0 is for a serious malfunction to a satellite critical to the functioning of an entire government. Level 0 calls are very rare, but when they happen the entire world-wide resources of the SRC are devoted to fixing the problem immediately.

Every day, about fifty repairs are assigned to the Manhattan SRC office. The shift manager looks on the on-call list and calls the next person on the list with the appropriate skills. The employees who were called show up at the beginning of the next shift and are taken in a van to the aerospace-port in White Plains, New Jersey, 20 miles Northeast of the city.

Like a bus, the shuttle will stop in several different sites just long enough to let out each Sat Jumper. About twenty Sat Jumpers will be let out in to space, each with a space suit tethered to a Personal Space Walk Platform (PSWP), a box that contains movement boosters, extended oxygen, water and power and holds specialty tools and spare parts. The Sat Jumper can detach from the PSWP for short periods (for instance, to go inside some of the larger satellites) but the PSWP is always the base of operations.

In rare cases, more than one Sat Jumper

In rare cases, more than one Sat Jumper will be assigned to a single repair, but in most cases each Sat Jumper is alone. Depending upon the complexity of repairs, a Sat Jumper may be asked to do several repairs in a single jump (the average being 2.5 per Sat Jumper per jump). The Sat Jumper must use the boosters in the PSWP to move between satellites. Because the city's geostationary orbit (where a majority of satellites are) is so high, the circumference of this orbit is almost seven times greater than the circumference of the Earth, which means there is a lot of empty space and Sat Jumper may travel up to 100 miles from one satellite to the next.

The SRC employee's space suit has an internal computer which contains their list of tasks and full technical specs for each system they are going to work on. If the techs run in to problems they can not solve, they are in constant contact with a shift supervisor in the SRC office who can connect them to SRC employees all over the world to help them. Digital video cameras in the suit record every single thing the Sat Jumper does, from multiple angles, for the SRC's records. The video from these cameras is sent directly to SRC corporate headquarters and are scrutinized if any thing goes wrong with a jump, if a Sat Jumper is suspected of doing any kind of espionage, or occasionally just to make a random check on the employee. This sense of constantly being watched keeps Sat Jumpers almost completely honest. Techs have to follow elaborate checklists for everything, even things as simple as opening a hatch. The primary purpose of these checklists is because a loose screw or a connector that fails to be reattached can cost millions.

The Sat Jumpers must survive alone in space for 24 hours (they usually have no chance to sleep, unless all repairs are finished very quickly). After 24 hours the Sat Jumpers must be at their designated spots for pickup by the next day's shuttle. If any Sat Jumpers misses his or her pickup, the Sat Jumper can usually survive another 24 hours (so long as he or she can cut oxygen consumption to a minimum) and be picked up by the next day's shuttle.

After being brought back, the Sat Jumper is driven back to the city SRC office. From there they usually go straight home to crash. Sat Jumpers work, on average, only once a week, the rest of the time they spend resting and enjoying their hard-earned money. Sat Jumpers are paid per-job.

Sat Jumpers will occasionally be asked to run "marathons" (work extra shifts in a row). Though very exhausting, most Sat Jumpers can not resist the overtime pay they will receive. Sometimes, a Sat Jumper will be asked to go straight back up in to space as soon as they land, or they may be asked to stretch their PSWP's oxygen capacity to take on another 24 hours worth of jobs. Or, a Sat Jumper in the middle of a very important job may be asked to stay and keep working on it until its completion. Other Sat Jumpers are sent to recharge the primary's batteries, oxygen and water tanks (and occasionally to smuggle amphetamines) to a Sat Jumper who may be asked to go several days without any sleep.

Amphetamine use is a big problem among Sat Jumpers. The management fires anyone who is caught using amphetamines, yet they know that many Sat Jumpers use amphetamines and never get caught. Occasionally, a Sat Jumper will do so many amphetamines that they will start to suffer from amphetamine psychosis, which includes paranoid delusions and hallucinations, which can be a harrowing experience for the shift supervisor.

Changes of pressure and gravity often cause Sat Jumpers swollen tissues and painful joints. To remedy this, the SRC pays for pressure suits for Sat Jumpers to wear while off duty. Pressure suits are black suits which contain secondary-nanotech fibers that allow even pressure to be put on everything the suit covers (which is everything except the head and hands) while not impeding movement. Some Sat Jumpers grow so used to the feeling of constantly being squeezed by the suit that they may wear the suit even when they do not need it, some even sleep in their suits.

Social Structure- Most Sat Jumpers draw a distinction between their lives at work and their personal lives. In their personal lives, nobody tells them what to do. While they are at work, however, they must follow a binder full of SRC rules and regulations, enforced by the shift supervisor and occasionally by the SRC corporate offices. The Sat Jumpers are mentored by senior techs and follow the orders of shift supervisors. Even at work, many Sat Jumpers feel that as long as they get the job done well they should not have to listen to the orders and advice of seniors and management. For the most part, however, younger Sat Jumpers respect older Sat Jumpers (including the shift supervisors) who have a lot more technical knowledge and can answer many questions. For more on the duties and powers of each position within the SRC, see Advancement, below.

Advancement- One way to advance in the Sat Jumpers is to get a promotion. The SRC has only three official levels of promotion: to senior repair tech, to shift supervisor and to senior shift supervisor. Anyone who works for the SRC long enough and has good employee reviews will be made a senior repair tech, a position that pays more (+$200/wk. Income) and requires that the tech do some field training and prepare procedure write-ups.

There are only three shift supervisor positions at the SRC, so promotion to these positions is rare. Shift supervisors get paid more (+$150/wk.) but have many more responsibilities. The supervisors are typically some of the SRC's wisest techs. Supervisors rarely goes in to space anymore: instead they sit as a desk during their six hour shift. They keep track of the status of every Sat Jumper in space, keep them updated whenever new information is added to the call ticket system, put them in contact with technical support experts when necessary. In an emergency, the Sat Jumper arranges emergency support (which usually means other Sat Jumpers boosting their way over to help, since the SRC will rarely spring for an extra shuttle flight for an emergency pickup) and must fill out detailed incident reports after anything bad or unusual happens. The shift supervisors also write performance evaluations on other Sat Jumpers.

The highest position in the city SRC office is the senior shift supervisor, who always takes the 6am to 12 noon shift. In addition to normal shift supervisor duties, the senior shift supervisor writes performance evals for the other supervisors and is the sole person with the authority to hire, fire or request promotions for SRC employees (this power is not absolute: employees or potential employees can appeal decisions to the SRC corporate offices, though it is a long and complicated process).

Satellite Jumpers may try to increase their salary by making themselves eligible for more jumps. They can do this by adding to their resume of specialized technical skills. Sat Jumpers who can pass a government background check can work on government satellites. Sat Jumpers with blanker programs can volunteer for blanker jumps. These are

repairs where the blanker program is engaged before the jump and deactivated after the jump so that nothing that happened during the jump will be remembered. An independent checker from an anti-information smuggling firm checks the Sat Jumper immediately after their pickup for any sorts of notes (one can imagine that this is a humiliating and uncomfortable procedure, but no one remembers to be able to confirm this. Corporations pay for blanker repairs for incredibly sensitive systems that they don't want the repair person retaining any information about. Sat Jumpers like to speculate about what secret systems they may work on, but nobody really knows. Recently, one Sat Jumper came back with three bite-wounds on her tongue. She was fired because the information smuggling specialist said she might have been trying to smuggle information through the pattern and number of bites.

Population- There are about 200 Sat Jumpers. Only about 10 are in their probationary period at any given time. About 80 are seniors, there are 4 in upper management and all the rest are normal Sat Jumpers. All are over eighteen (except for one or two who might have faked their credentials). About 20 are 18 or 19 years old, 100 are in their 20s, 50 are in their 30s, 15 are in their 40s and 5 are in their 50s and 60s. Before they joined the SRC, about 5% used to be Street People, 60% used to be Wells and 35% were already Indies.

External Relations- The majority of Sat Jumpers try to discourage the city from thinking of them as a gang. Sat Jumpers do not defend each other or seek revenge for each other out of principle (though friends may do so for friends). Sat Jumpers do not want to be held responsible for the actions of other Sat Jumpers. Many city residents are so used to thinking in terms of gangs, however, that if someone with a SRC logo on their shirt does something bad, they are likely to attack the next person with an SRC logo that they see. The larger gangs, especially those with a central leadership, tend to get that the Sat Jumpers are not a gang and don't treat them like one, but there are numerous corner gangs and members of anarchic street gangs who don't get or don't honor this distinction. So, Sat Jumpers have their share of un-asked-for problems which they end up having to deal with on an individual basis.

After a failed attempt at gang warfare, the Sat Jumpers have only recently gotten the Drug Lords to stop attacking them. The Drug Lords only relented because a Sat Jumper had hired the Drakes, who were killing kings. The Drug Lords no longer order attacks against Sat Jumpers, but neither do they give their pushers any orders not to try to capture Sat Jumpers and forcefully addict them. During the brief period of warfare, the Sat Jumpers got some aid from the Hungry and Night Shift and those gangs may feel that the Sat Jumpers owe them something.

Many Sat Jumpers share a love of technology with Technophiles and there are many friendships between these two groups (as well as a few people who consider themselves to belong to both groups).

The Omniscients who have satellite uplinks to spy satellites know how easily the Sat Jumpers could hurt them and try to stay in the good graces of the Sat Jumpers whenever possible.

The Crackers often seek out the Sat Jumpers to try

Victoria McKenna (Madrugada Shift Supervisor)
Level 5 Sat Jumper

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 15, CHM 11, END 9, INL 19, SPD 8, STH 6, WIL 14, BLD 3, BDY 4, INCY 2.

Appearance- Victoria has an angular face with pale skin and angular Hispanic features. She has braces and they cause her lips to appear pouty. She has shoulder-length curly black hair which she wears in a pony tail. Victoria is usually comfortable wearing just her pressure suit, but if it is cold she will put on a black leather jacket.

Social Status- Victoria is the shift supervisor for the madrugada (12 midnight to 6 AM) shift at the SRC. She is well known for her broad technical knowledge and respected by Sat Jumpers for her ability to keep cool under pressure. Victoria lives alone with two cats.

History- Victoria's parents moved to New York from Mexico City when she was four. Her father worked as a construction worker, but work soon dried up with the mass exodus from the city. Her parents became shut-in wells. As a teenager Victoria fell in with a crowd of rebellious youngsters who left the safety of her shut-in parent's homes to wander the city streets. Victoria heard about the SRC, and seeing it as a means of independence, she trained herself on technical matters. She gained employment at the SRC as soon as she turned 18. She found herself surrounded by people with much greater technical skills and aptitude than her, but through constant studying and being unafraid to ask for help, her knowledge grew. She proved herself able to keep calm under pressure and she was quickly promoted. She has recently become a shift supervisor and is the most junior of the shift supervisors.

Personality- As a child, Victoria liked playing alone and enjoyed a rich internal fantasy life. She always had trouble expressing emotions and always came off as odd or emotionless. This has caused her problems in getting close to people: she has no close friends and has had few sexual or romantic encounters. She has turned it to her advantage in her career: she is renown as being unable to rattle and she has an unpierceable poker-face. This gives her an edge when she is in conflict with employees and she can usually get them to back down. When she is not working, Victoria spends most of her evenings in her apartment reading and taking care of her two cats. She worries about becoming too isolated. She doesn't want to be a person who doesn't have any effect on anyone else's life. So, she occasionally takes to the streets and walks around looking for situations where she can help people out.

Methods- Victoria uses the smart drug Maxin a lot (though not quite enough to develop a strong psychological dependence). Whenever she is faced with a difficulty problem or stressful situation, she uses Maxim. Victoria always tries to keep people calm and tries to make them see reason. She has an excellent poker face and quite often bluff's her way out of situations. When nothing else works, she is not afraid to use violence in defense or a person's life (especially with her reflexes quickened by Maxin).

Motivations- Victoria wants to do a good job, to keep the SRC running smoothly and guard the safety of the members. She has little sympathy for Sat Jumpers who get themselves in to trouble through stupid actions, but she does believe in protecting those who are being victimized. She is not sure whether the Sat Jumpers would do best to act like a gang and she has decided to do whatever the group as a whole wants. In her personal dealings, Victoria wants to be a person who provides guidance for young people and protects people who are being victimized. Victoria enjoys puzzles and mysteries of all kinds. Victoria likes having money and living comfortable. Victoria is bisexual, though she rarely seeks out sexual encounters with either sex.

Special Skills- Among others: Bomb Disarming (2), Cryptography (2), Hardware Repair (3), Hold Breath (2), Linework (3), Low Gravity Movement (2), Microelectronics (4), Robotics (2), Secondary Nanotech (3).

Special Equipment- Apart from her pressure suit, toolkit and blowtorch (see Special Equipment, below) she carries a Maxin and an Awake Inhaler.

Typical Attack- Victoria uses Maxin to boost her speed of thought, then uses her mini-blowtorch (2 bladed damage, pierces armor as 6, see p.136) for an Extended Vital Strike (INL(19) + AGY(10) + 1d20 +5 (extended) vs. 35 (or 1d20 vs. 1) with -10 to the next reaction.

Types of Satellites

Communication (Main Channel)- These are the most important satellites in space: when they break it's always a level zero call ticket. These satellites have only one job: to pickup information from the ground, send it to another satellite across space, which may transmit it to another in a daisy-chain of dozens of satellites before it is sent back down to Earth. These daisy-chains of privately and publicly owned satellites are the back bone that lets the internet work. The satellites themselves have huge solar panels to collect enough energy to run the powerful computers inside and keep them super-cooled.

Communication (Private)- These satellites transmit signals back and forth between transmitters on the ground. Some exist for security of communications (many militaries and corporations have private communications satellites that let them communicate uninterrupted even if the internet goes down) and some exist to give paying customers internet even when they are out of reach of land lines or cellular transmitters.

Cryogenic Storage- These satellites use a "shell" system: the satellite is made up of several layers of heat reflective shells. The shells are held in place by magnets so they never actually touch each other. The innermost compartment is kept cold, and so little heat energy makes it past the shells that very minimal cooling is necessary, with a power drain enough that nuclear batteries can keep the cooling going for centuries.

Navigation- These satellites provide Global Positioning System service. GPS satellites constantly send out signals at exactly the same time (thanks to atomic clocks). By calculating the time difference between when signals from different satellites were received, a GPS product on earth can triangulate its exact position. The government runs a free GPS service that most products use, but some corporations have their own proprietary GPS service that is much more accurate.

Repair Platform- This special type of space station was created during the 2040s for the sole purpose of housing techs to repair satellites. It is now cheaper to make a shuttle jump to space whenever satellites need repair, and any repair platforms left in orbit are now abandoned.

Re-launchers- These are the highest orbit satellites around. During some of the futile attempts at mining in space attempted during the 2040s, they were used as a secondary staging area for probes: a probe would be shot up to a re-launcher, and the re-launcher would sling the probe in to space at high speeds. All re-launchers still in orbit are now abandoned.

Space Station- Although the cost is generally prohibitive, humankind has been trying to sustain life in space since the 1970s, more than one hundred years. Many important contributions to science have been made by the crews living above these space stations. Usually these space stations are in a relatively low orbit (where it is easier to get people and materials to). Modern space stations are made of clear secondary-nanotech materials choked with genetically engineered greenery that produce much (but not all) of the oxygen people living on the station need as well as providing food and reprocessing much (but not all) human waste. Astronauts in space stations describe living on a space station as like living inside a bush. Most space stations have an equatorial orbit and Sat Jumpers rarely have to visit these because the scientists living on the stations are trained in repair. Most space stations today are funded by groups of governments with corporations paying to have experiments done for them.

Spy- These satellites monitor the planet. Some satellites are in geosynchronous orbit above an area, which means they can monitor a spot at any time, but they are much higher and so have worse resolution. Other spy satellites are in a lower orbit, which means they have much better resolution, but can only see a certain spot at a certain time. The most advanced (and incredibly expensive) spy satellite systems are a chain of satellites in low orbit so that one passes over a given spot every few minutes. These satellites use such advanced secondary-nanotech sensors that they can see the heat signatures humans inside buildings. Although many corporations, non-profit organizations, even gangs own spy satellites, the very best satellites are only in the price range of major governments.

Telescope- These satellites point towards space. They are mostly used for astrophysics purposes: examining the faint "afterglow" of the big bang to determine secrets about the nature of the universe. There have also been a lot of cheap secondary nanotech satellites sent up by small groups who have powerful AIs dedicated to finding signs of intelligent life.

Weather- Like spy satellites, weather satellites use visual spectrum, infrared, sonar and other sensors to look at the Earth, but these satellites are focused to look at the atmosphere, at oceans, and at tectonic stresses. These are typically low orbit satellites owned by private corporations who sell the weather data.

The Crackers often seek out the Sat Jumpers to try to bribe them to do illegal things, such as insert pieces of code in to a satellite's computer, or give them some username and password. Many Sat Jumpers refuse out of principle alone, many more refuse because they are afraid of getting caught, but a tiny majority say yes and so the Crackers keep asking. In the opinion of many Sat Jumpers, the Crackers are annoying and unprincipled parasites who take advantage of Sat Jumpers during their most vulnerable times.

Because the Sat Jumpers have an office in the financial district, they often run in to a lot of Volunteers and Y1s and there are more than a few friendships, roommates and relationships.

A lot of Sat Jumpers, during their off hours, share much of the personality and lifestyle of Eccentrics and many Sat Jumpers have contacts among the Eccentric population.

Military Style- When forced to fight as a group, which is rare, the Sat Jumpers are disorganized and most are unskilled at mass combat. They run around independently, attacking and being attacked and often end up hurting each other by accident. Some may decide it's time to retreat and flee the battleground while others may not even notice and keep fighting with no backup. An organized military force can easily push a group of Sat Jumpers in any direction they want.

Typical Weapon- Sat Jumpers typically use their tools for weapons, the most dangerous of which is a compact high-power welding torch.

Turf- The Satellite Repair Corporation rents a small office in an office building located at Fulton St. and Nassau St. This part of town, at the Southernmost tip of the island, is known of the Financial District and is part of the bigger area known as downtown. This area is dominated by blocky, intimidating old office buildings and banks. Directly to the East are several small industrial complexes. The SRC office is in a handsome older office building, ten stories high, with a reddish-brown brick façade. The SRC office is on the second floor and is unremarkable: it has a small waiting room with a receptionist desk and leather bucket seats to wait in (usually packed with Sat Jumpers), a hallway made incredibly tight by rows of lockers on either side, an office for the on-duty shift supervisor and a small private office for the senior shift supervisor. The building and the SRC office is open 24 hours a day, and a single security guard in the lobby of the building may question people who look like they don't belong in the building. Many Sat Jumpers live near the SRC office in tiny but expensive apartments in converted office buildings.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Blanker: (Optional Advantage) Costs 1 Bonus Point. The PC gets +$1000 to start and +$100/mo. but the disadvantage is that the PC does not remember a majority of his or her and something the PC does not remember may come back to hurt him or her.

Security Clearance: (Optional Advantage) Costs 10 Bonus Points. This is exactly like the advantage Security Clearance on p.44 but it costs more since it gives a Sat Jumper a significantly greater benefit. A Sat Jumper with this advantage starts with +$1000 and earns an additional +$100 per week.

SME: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 Bonus Points. The PC's personnel file lists him or her as a "Subject Matter Expert," someone with a lot of experience in a system that most people don't have knowledge of. This means that the PC will be called in off-scheduled for special jumps more often than most Sat Jumpers, and will make more money (starts with extra $500, gets extra $50/wk.) but must put up with more marathons than most Sat Jumpers.

Suggested Skills- Alarm Systems, Bomb Disarming, Computer Modeling, Cryptography, Hardware Repair, Hold Breath, Information Smuggling, Jellynailing, Linework, Low Gravity Movement, Math, Meteorology, Microelectronics, Network Security, Operating Systems, Physics, Robotics, Secondary Nanotech.

Suggested Equipment- Palmtop: Linework.

Suggested Reading- The Cloud, Corporations, Data, Hacking, Government and Military, Internet, Satellites, Secondary Nanotech.

Traders

In Brief- The heart of the city's black market. They collect networks of resources to obtain merchandise and their homes are stores holding just about everything.

Favorable Stereotypes- Friendly, helpful, well-connected, savvy, wise.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Profiteering, immoral, greedy, lazy, fat con-artists.

Other Names- Black Market Traders, Black Marketeers, Underground Traders, Fences.

Origin- Traders who deal in stolen or contraband items are part of any criminal underworld and have existed in the city as soon as it became a city, if not earlier. In the early days of colonialism, when the city was under the Dutch, traders were rich and powerful and many of them engaged in illegal smuggling. In the 17th century, the city was home to many pirates, including some who were rich, successful and beloved members of the community. The British government had given pirates permission to attack and plunder French and Spanish ships, and much of that booty was filtered through the city.

As different organized crime agencies came in to power in the city, from the Boss Tweed political machine, to the Mafia, to Chinese Tongs, these groups have largely controlled the "main channels" of high-price black market goods, such as drugs. On the other hand, the largest number of black market transactions have always been at the hands of small independent traders: pawn shop owners, homeless gypsies, crack dealers who would take stolen goods in lieu of cash, etc. For every thief out there stealing everything from golf-clubs to diamonds, someone was needed to sell that stolen merchandise.

The black market in the city grew larger, year by year, during the first half of the 21st century as more and more things became scarce. When famines hit in the 2040s, food itself was stolen and sold on the black market. The Freedom Wars completely changed the nature of the black market. Under Freedom Army occupation, all commerce in the city was eliminated and the Freedom Army was supposed to provide for all of the citizen's needs. Unfortunately, the Freedom Army was never nearly efficient enough to provide what it had promised. Since there was such great need, and since money was nearly worthless, almost everyone in the city engaged in illegal trade. People who had never done anything illegal in their lives became hubs of massive trade and smuggling rings, dealing in everything from weapons to medicine. So desperate were the times, however, that nobody became rich from this trading: like everyone else they only sought the means for survival.

After the Freedom Wars ended and the Restoration Committee tried to restore a viable economy, many black market traders returned to legitimate work, but many of the contacts and channels that had been forged stayed. In the new criminal underworld in the new city, the black market forged during the Freedom Wars reigned, and anyone who wanted to become a black market trader had to make contacts among this system if they wanted to have any chance of competing with the old guard. One of the main effects of the Freedom Wars was that is set standards for the Black Market, people knew how much a stolen item should cost and knew to look elsewhere if they weren't offered that price.

The black market had been peripherally involved in the drug trade: the main channel was from out-of-state drug cartels, to the city Drug Lords, to city drug gangs and other pushers. The black market people got some of the most popular drugs, but not at the same price and consistency, but they also had less popular drugs, including stolen prescription drugs. In 2075, however, the Drug Lords consolidated and did their best to form a vertical monopoly on the production, import and sale of drugs in the city. The Drug Lords made their will known by attacks on black market traders, and the traders soon learned that they could carry some stolen pharmaceuticals but they could not compete in any noticeable way with the Drug Lords or they would face swift and brutal attacks. Although this meant a loss of profit in the short term, in the long term this has proven to be good for Traders. The removal of drug sales from the hands of street gangs changed the face of gangs, bringing in people who would have never become a gang member before. Every new gang member needed weapons, armor and equipment that they could only get from black market traders. Instead of poor, violent gang members high on god killer, these new customers had more disposable income, were less prone to unprovoked attacks and robbery attempts, wanted a wider variety of items, and, all-in-all, they were an interesting lot to deal with. Most Traders feel that life as a black market trader in the city has never been better.

Timeline
1692-1695- Pirates in Manhattan.
1927- Estimated 30,000 speakeasies in New York City.
1985- Crack revolutionizes crime and addiction in New York.
2043-2049- Food shortages in New York.
2050-2056- Freedom Wars.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate, form vertical monopoly.

Joining- There are three ways to become a trader. The first, and rarest, is to inherit the business from a relative. Traders who come in to the business this way usually grew up assisting the parent in trading and start the business with a cache of goods equal to that of a much more experienced trader. The second way is called the "slow method." In the slow method, someone starts out with some little bit of trade goods, then trades for different goods, and trades again and again for years until the Trader has achieved status as a professional trader. Some of the most talented Traders in the city have become Traders through this method, some have started out as street people selling things they found in dumpsters and risen to the level of Indie. The third method, and currently the most popular method, is the "buy in." In this method a person (almost always an Indie) saves up a lot of money, then buys their initial trading cache from whatever sources they can find. The new trader has thus acquired the physical resources they need overnight, and now only need to work to establish a customer base and make contacts.

In either of these three cases, the one thing one must achieve to become a professional Trader is a large cache of black market goods. Without such a cache the amateur Trader will not have the economic advantage during trades and will not be able to cause his or her cache to grow.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has an established location and is known by enough people around the neighborhood to make a living.

Lifestyle- Most Traders operate out of their houses or apartments, these places give them a place to live and are also a store-room for all of the black market goods they have. There are exceptions to this general rule. Some Traders masquerade as legitimate businesses such as thrift shops or pawn shops (though even in these cases, the Traders often live in apartments above the shops). Some Traders operate from running or non-running vehicles which they live in, typically large vehicles such as vans, RVs, station wagons, etc. A few Traders operate out of storage sheds, and when this is the case they usually live nearby.

There are two reason that Traders stay so close to their primary cache of goods. The first is that they must be there to protect their cache as much as possible. The second is that Traders are traditionally on-call twenty four hours a day and may be asked to make a sale or trade at any time and so they must have ready access to all the goods they have to trade or sell. Traders typically charge more or pay less when they are disturbed during their off-hours, especially if they are woken up (many call this the "grumpy tax"). There are many situations when someone needs the services of a trader right away (primarily when someone needs drugs or needs to sell some items so they can get money for drugs) and are willing to pay the grumpy tax. These interactions are profitable enough that a Trader would be stupid not to haul themselves out of bed.

Traders break three cardinal rules of not getting robbed in the city. The first rule: don't own or carry anything valuable. The second rule: If you do, don't let anyone know that you have said valuables. The third rule: If you do, don't let anyone know where you will be at any given time. The fourth rule (don't get visibly intoxicated in public) is the only one that Traders do tend to follow. The Traders have no gang brothers and sisters to seek revenge in the case of something happening to them in the course of a robbery, nor are they owned by a corporation who can pressure the Night Shift to investigate a robbery. What all this means is that Traders are immediate and obvious targets for all manner of thieves, from subtle unborn cat-burglars to God Killer addicted smash-and-grab robbers. Every hour of every day, Traders have people, often their own customers, looking to rob them. To survive, Traders must have defenses, both for their homes and their persons, that have no visible flaw. This can include personal armor and weaponry (much of which is part of the rotating stock of the Trader), alarm systems, armored windows and doors, high tech locks, automated defense systems and death-borg implants (p.341).

A normal Trader spends their day on the following activities:

-Seeking out new customers (especially people who have just moved in to the area).

-Making new contacts (anyone who can get a Trader some product or service, from a street person who occasionally shoplifts to a Well who gives massaged. The best Traders have contacts outside of the city, and may take trips to other inner cities to make them).

-Conducting trades (people call or come in person looking to buy, sell or trade).

-"Hitting the Phones" (time spent calling contacts trying to procure an item or service for a customer. The amount of time spent hitting the phones is equal to the markup the customer is willing to take).

Traders do sometimes cheat people, or take advantage of desperate people, and city residents often tell stories about Traders who have wronged them. Perhaps the most hated Traders in the city are loan sharks. For the most part, however, traders are pillars that keep the street economy running. In a city where relationships and trust change rapidly and radically, the Traders are a stable and neutral medium for exchanges. Traders benefit from anything that makes the street community healthier and wealthier, and for every Trader that ripped someone off there is another Trader who helped a customer or a whole community. Traders are sometimes used to communicate messages between warring groups and sometimes Traders even host peace talks.

The Who's Knocking Rule

About 90% of the time, this rule holds true: when an Indie or Well comes in, they have cash and want to trade it for something stolen. When addicts come in, they have something stolen and wants to trade it for cash. When non-addict street people come in, they have several small items that they stole, scrounged, traded for or made that they want to trade for one, more valuable item.

Social Structure- Although they are in economic competition with each other, Traders depend upon contacts with other Traders to find the products and services that customers want. When a Trader calls another Trader, it is almost always good news: either the caller wants some item and is willing to pay a nice commission in order to get it, or the caller has a surplus of some item and is willing to sell it to the Trader being called at an enticing bargain.

Few Traders are powerful enough to deal with other Traders on anything but an equal footing. There are a few Traders, however, that are rich enough to have a one-sided influence with lesser traders. Most often, these powerful Traders make large loans to struggling smaller Traders, and "own" the Traders until those Traders can pay off their debt (which may be never, considering the exorbitant interest the rich Traders charge). Other Traders have been known to hire smaller Traders as full time employees, setting up a chain of Traders throughout the city who are employed by the rich Trader. One Trader, who recently retired, had

seven "stores" throughout the city, each decorated with his trademark purple décor as if they were fast food chains. This is precisely how Traders become and stay rich and powerful: by getting a piece of the action of as many transactions as they possible can.

War with Traders is very rare, but it does happen. Traders use the same techniques they do when warring against any other group (see External Relations, below). They may also use economic warfare against each other: undercutting prices, starting false rumors about people getting ripped off, seeking exclusivity in agreements with contacts.

Advancement- There are two things a Trader can do to become more wealthy and powerful, and they go hand in hand with each other: make more contacts, and increase the cache of goods they have available for sale. Both represent an increase in the tools that a Trader has to make money. For both contacts and trade goods, a Trader can benefit by increasing quantity or variety. When a Trader has goods or contacts no other Trader does, they can expect not only to sell them but to make a good commission when other Traders are forced to go through them.

The Trader's income is dependent upon the total black market value of the goods they have available to trade (very rare and very desirable items have more black market worth), and the Trader can re-invest that income in to their cache. Income is also determined by a Trader's Contact's Level, a measurement that typically raises by one point every time the PC gains an experience level as a Trader, but it can also be effected by in game events (if a PC gains a unique and powerful contact, the GM may boost the PC's contact level by some fraction, or if the PC loses valuable contacts the PC's contact level will be decreased). For more, see Income and Bonus Characteristics, below.

Population- There are currently 500 full-time professional Traders operating within the city. That's roughly equal to one Trader per 180 people (not including shut-ins).

External Relations- Traders are all about contacts. More than anyone else in the city, they are likely to know people from every sort of social class, gang or other group. For the black market to work, traders can not take sides or have exclusive loyalty to any group. Most people understand this and don't expect Traders to act in any way other than neutral. There are always some irrational individuals in the city, however, and a trader might every once in a while deal with someone trying to kill them because they supplied an enemy with equipment.

Most Traders in the city still remember when the Drug Lords consolidated and took the drug trade away from both street gangs and from the traders. While the street gangs who suffered under this new policy are all gone, the Traders still exist, and some have scars and grudges against the Drug Lords. Most Traders still sell some sort of drugs, and they have a Damocles sword forever over their heads. There is no written guidelines for what drugs can be sold or how many can be sold without the Drug Lords attacking. Traders know that if they "keep it small" they will be okay, but when Traders are desperate for money they often push these limits and every once in a while the Drug Lords wipe out a Trader without warning. Despite this, members of the Drug Lord's organization depend on the black market as much as anyone else in the city. Pushers can always find a Trader willing to trade with them.

There is no clear line between Goods and Traders, and the bond between the two "communities" is strong. Most Goods have Traders as contacts and visa versa. Some Goods become Traders and visa versa.

The Street People population are the number one employees and sources of stolen goods for Traders, especially Thieves and Runners. Thieves sell the items they steal to Traders. Traders are so important to Thieves often develop a loyalty to a single Trader and look out for that Trader. Traders also call on Thieves for special commissions, and thieves go to a lot of trouble to let Traders know how skilled they are.

Runners depend on Traders for their existence even more than Thieves do. Runners are the employees of Traders, paid by the Traders to run errands, get and deliver messages, goods and money. A bond of trust between a Trader and Runner is necessary and develops very quickly. More often than not, a Trader and the Runners that work for the Trader are friends and do whatever they can to help each other out.

Traders and Y1s often cross paths. The Traders generally do business in the black market while the Y1s do business in the white market, yet there is a wide grey area between in which Traders and Y1s often end up doing business with each other. A smart Y1 knows a few Traders, and visa versa.

If Traders have an enemy, it's the Night Shift. To put it simply, the Night Shift prey on traders, and they are the only city group who are able to get away with doing this on a regular basis. Members of the Night Shift generally do not buy items from the black market, yet they often help themselves to the contents of their evidence and confiscated contraband locker. Most of the contents of the locker are taken from Thieves (mostly muggers and burglars), gangs that the Night Shift is at war with and from Traders. When the locker gets low on some important item (like medical supplies or armor) members of the Night Shift will decide to raid some Traders, if they can.

Raiding a Trader isn't always easy. People are wary to give up the name and address of their local trader (though they may do so to get out of trouble with the Night Shift). Even then, Traders often have eyes and ears on the streets and can tell when the Night Shift are coming. With a few minutes advance notice, most Traders can make their most valuable goods disappear. Or, the Trader can barricade the door and turn off all the lights (the Night Shift are often wary to force their way in, knowing that some Traders have lethal traps protecting their homes).

For the most part, a Trader's dealings with every gang or group in the city is friendly, a friendliness which is guided by mutual self-interest. It is only rarely that a Trader finds they would be better off if some person, gang or group were to suffer. At these times, there is a definite scale of power among Traders: the more money, the more powerful. The most powerful Traders can manipulate the city events with the skillful application of money just as Arcadians can manipulate the city using strategy or Omniscients can manipulate the city by giving out intelligence. Traders have access to every type of service available in the city, and their attacks are usually multi-pronged: a little hacking, a little sabotage, a few poisonings, a few bribes, a little arson, a few enemies getting robbed blind by thieves. It is very rarely (and only in the most desperate of circumstances) that a Trader hires an army of mercenaries to take on a gang head-on. The five or six wealthiest and most powerful Traders in the city are capable of holding

their own against moderate-sized gangs when they have to (which is rarely, since they are smart enough not to make that kind of enemy).

Typical Weapon- Traders typically use smuggled pistols (which are also part of their stock). These pistols are usually there only for self-defense and are usually carried in the inside pocket of a jacket (a.k.a. "Trader Style").

Turf- Traders make shop in houses, apartments, RVs and shops all over the city, about 21 per square mile or one for every group of four or five city blocks. All major apartment buildings and housing complexes have at least one.

Distinguishing Features- Physical fitness is not really necessary for Traders: for self-defense they use pistols, they pay unborn Runners whenever they need something done quickly, and they spend a lot of time at home. Although some Traders are as athletic as any gang member, many others are not so fit or may even be physically handicapped. More than a few Traders have dwarfism (which has led to all sorts of Traders jokes by city residents). More than any other group, Traders tend to have death-borg implants, and the presence of death-borg protrusions are enough to let a city resident know what someone might be a trader.

Symbols- The color green, two hands holding items (each "passing" the item to the other), and death-borg implant protrusions are typical symbols of both trading and Traders in city graffiti. Traders often use graffiti to their advantage to advertise themselves and their services. Sometimes it is possible to literally follow the arrows to a neighborhood's local black market Trader. A dollar symbol is a symbol used by graffiti writers to symbolize selling street drugs and is rarely used in the context of Traders.

Slang

Grease: n., a bribe.

Grumpy Tax: n., poor deals given by Traders who are asked to trade at inappropriate times.

Hitting the Phones: v., trying to track down an item or service for a customer.

Hot Number: n., a very valuable contact.

Trader Style: adj., referring to guns when they are worn in the inside pocket of a jacket.

Skills

Free Skills: Trading (3).

Skill Costs: ATH 9, BIO 7, CMBT 9, CRTV 6, INFO 6, INTL 7, MIL 8, PSY:X 13, PSY:M 10, PSY:S 10, TECH 7, THIE 6, SOC 8, STRT 9.

Income- Starts with $2000 in cash and $5000 worth of trade goods (1 level of Cache) and 1 level of Contacts. The PC's income per week is $100 for every level of Cache and Contacts. See Bonus Characteristics, below, for more on Contacts and Cache level.

Special Equipment- See Cache, in bonus characteristics below. PC's may use items from their cache personally, but if they damage or lose the item, or if they find themselves unwilling to trade that item away at any given time, that amount of value should be subtracted from the value of the PC's cache.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Contacts: (Mandatory Advantage) This advantage represents the PC's contacts with other Traders and with people who can provide goods and services. PCs start out with one level of contacts, this raises once for every

experience level the PC gains as a Trader (unless in-game circumstances dictate otherwise). Contacts can be rolled as if they were a skill, as INL + 1d20 +4 for each level of contacts above the first. What follows are sample difficulties if the PC wants to know if he or she has a given contact:

Easy (10)- Trader in Brooklyn inner city. Unborn Thief, Drake, Black Med or Cracker. Corrupt city government bureaucrat.

Easy-Moderate (15)- Gunsmith. Freelancer mercenary. Psychic trainer.

Moderate (20)- Trader in Los Angeles inner city. Bomb disarming expert. Corrupt day-shift cop.

Moderate-Hard (25)- Professional tailor. Freelance psychic interrogator.

Hard (30)- Trader in Moscow inner city. Professional assassin. Corrupt FBI agent.

Hard-Legendary (35)- Crime scene cleanup crew. International super-thief team.

Legendary (40)- Corrupt supreme court justice. Nuclear-weapons dealer.

Additional Contacts: (Optional Advantage) Costs 10 bonus points per level. The PC can start the game with additional levels of contacts, costing 10 per level with a max of 4 extra levels (5 total).

Cache: (Mandatory Advantage) The Cache advantage represents the total value of trade goods that the PC has available to sell, which in turn effects the PC's income. Unlike Contacts level, which grows automatically as the PC gains experience, the cache must be increased in-game, by reinvesting income, by making beneficial trades or by doing anything else that increases the value of goods the PC has available. Cache level is **1 per $5000** worth of stolen goods the PC has available. When a player wants to determine whether a certain item is in the PC's cache, The Cache advantage can be rolled, like a skill, at Cache level +INL +1d20 vs. the difficulty for the object. Cost usually translates as rarity on the black market, and so difficulty is based on cost:

Easy (10)- $10 item (e.g. a dose of Anti-Nauseant)
Moderate (20)- $100 item (e.g. Radiation Detector)
Hard (30)- $1000 item (e.g. Underwater Scooter)
Legendary (40)- $10,000 item (e.g. Code Breaker: Military)

Additional Cache: (Optional Advantage) Costs 10 bonus points per level. The PC can start the game with additional levels of cache, costing 10 per level with a max of 4 extra levels (5 total).

Specialties: (Optional Advantages) Choose any of the following list of specialties for the PC to specialize in. The PC gets +10 to any Cache or Contacts roll concerning one of the PC's chosen specialties. However, for each specialization, you must list one thing on the list that the PC does not specialize in. The PC is -10 to any of these rolls. *Example: Frank Zim specializes in Transport and Tools, but doesn't specialize in Explosives and Addictive Drugs. When he tries to find a bicycle pump in his cache, he gets +10. However, when trying to roll his Contacts to reach a contact who can disarm a bomb, he gets -10.*

Specialties		
-Addictive Drugs	-Firearms	-Sensory
-Armor/Shields	-Info Tech	-Sex/Pornography
-Body Mods	-Non-Addictive Drugs	-Tools
-Clothing & Household Goods	-Non-Drug Medical Equipment/Services	-Traditional & Clowdian Weapons
-Data	-Poisons/Chemical Weapons	-Transport
-Explosives		-Violent Services

Owned: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 10 bonus points. The PC owes money to one of the city's richest and most powerful Traders, and the Trader's entire cache of goods is forfeit if the PC cannot make regular payments. The Trader must pay at least $400 a week (the amount of interest accruing) to the other Trader or the Trader will send some mercenaries over to collect that much worth of trade goods. The PC can get out from under this debt if he or she pays off a debt of $10,000.

Trader Blood: (Optional Advantage) Costs 5 bonus points. The PC inherited his or her business from a parent or parents who were black market traders in the city for many decades before the PC was born, including during the boom in trading during the Freedom Army occupation of the city. The PC gets +10 to any Contacts roll to contact any contact who is 50 years old or more.

Suggested Skills- Biological Weapons, Blacksmithing, Chemical Analysis, Data Pirating, Demolitions, Forgery, Gun Repair, Information Smuggling, Money, Pharmacology, Pistol, Poisons, Street Drugs, Trading, Weapon Making.

Suggested Equipment- Cellphone: Black, Death Borg: Explosive/Small, Freedom Army Pistol, Security: Alarm System, Spectrograph.

Suggested Reading- Black Market, Criminals, Death Borgs, Illegal Jobs, Implants, Money Transactions, Runners (p.188), Street Drugs.

Utopia Children

In Brief- Young adults who were raised in radical utopianist communes to have advanced "values" and sent in to the city to spread those values.

Favorable Stereotypes- Incredible friends, incredible community members, altruistic, compassionate, stable, highly educated, calm, well-rounded.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Smarmy, ignorant, vain, meddling, moralistic, with a false sense of superiority and a shallow view of the universe.

Other Names- Utopianists, Missionaries, Perfect Children.

Origin- In the years before the Freedom Wars, Americans lived under a "corpocracy." Powerful corporations controlled almost all of politics and culture. The corporations spent most of their resources competing and did little to help the failing environment and growing social problems.

The Freedom Army, a movement of anti-corporate terrorists, seemed like the only answer, and millions of people backed them and helped the Freedom Army take control of most of the United States (and much of the rest of the globe). They destroyed the corporations, freed much of the technology that the corporations had purposefully kept too expensive to benefit the common person, and turned around the wild population growth. The Freedom Army, however, became increasingly paranoid and dictatorial. They were unable to keep the people fed and healthy and they increasingly used violence to keep the population under control. Finally, counter-insurgence rebels destroyed the main Freedom Army complex in New York and the US Freedom Army fell, just as Freedom Army branches in other countries were being destroyed.

The United States population was stuck in a quandary: they didn't want to go back to mass capitalism, nor did they want any sort of socialism. A third option was definitely needed, and the Utopianist movement brought that option, going in a few short years from a radical fringe group to being the majority view of the US.

The term Utopia was coined by Thomas Moore in 1516 In his novel that described an island in which there was no property and no social problems. Experiments in trying to create the perfect community have been going on for millennia, especially in colonial America. Most of these experiments failed rather quickly, and those that didn't never lived up to their lofty goals. New hope came, however, in the form of technology. Psychic and mental programming technology, which the Freedom Army had made available to the general public, could be used to make an incredibly accurate psychological profile of a person, which could then be used to screen members of a gated community to make sure that only people with a personality that fit perfectly within a community could enter.

This movement was pioneered by radicals with quite lofty goals. This radical fringe gave birth to and gave way to a more moderate movement. This movement advocated more mainstream goals and gained a wide enough following to get laws changed. Several very important laws passed making a semi-autonomous gated community possible. The US (and much of the rest of the world) soon filled up with rapidly growing utopianist communes and the more moderate gated communities. In order to compete, the struggling new corporations had to start modeling themselves after the gated communities. Also, the laws made possible a new breed of privately owned and governed pay-to-live cities possible and profitable. Some were not able or did not want to join one of these new communities, but in their prosperity most of these groups were happy to forget about this oversight, all except some of the most radical utopianists.

The moderate gated communities focused on economic and social stability through the creation of an efficient and wholly selfish community. Many of the radical utopianists clung to the idea that they were going to save the world. A core belief among the radical fringe was that all social systems would fail with a "bad culture." Any government or social system, from anarchy to capitalism to dictatorship, would eventually fail, it was said, if the set of beliefs, values and rituals passed down from parent to child was unhealthy. The gated communities only wanted to create a prosperous and safe place for themselves to live. The utopianists communes wanted to create a womb from which the perfect culture would continuously spring, slowly changing the culture of the rest of the world for the better.

All of this was merely theoretical ponderings, however, until children born in Utopianist communes actually became adults. Would they be the "perfect people" that was the goal of the Utopianist movement? Would they be intelligent, wise, brave, physically and mentally healthy, altruistic, peaceful and capable of passing on these qualities to their own children. The answer, so far, seems to be yes. The first part in this experiment in designing a new humanity has been a success.

Now, however, the next phase of this grand experiment is coming in to play. The question: could these perfect children go out to the less advanced parts of the world and would their values "rub off" on the rest of the population? Raised to believe that this was their duty in life, young adults born in raised in Utopianist communes began to move to inner cities throughout the world, including New York.

Timeline

1516- Utopia coined in novel by Thomas Moore.
2048- First Utopianist writings.
2050-2056- Freedom Wars.
2058- Utopianism begins as a movement.
2061- First NY area gated community founded.
2077- The 1st children born in Utopianist Communes turn 18.

Becoming- Utopia Children were born in successful Utopianist communes and they were given every possible advantage in their upbringing: a loving and supportive community, education by some of the smartest minds on the planet, being isolated from drugs, crime and violence, and unlimited optimism for what they could achieve. A Utopia Child has been trained from birth to be the perfect member of a community. Every means possible were taken to help the child achieve every positive psychological attribute: creativity, willpower, altruism, empathy, bravery, self-esteem, self-confidence, calmness, responsibility, etc. The Utopia Child grew up knowing he or she was incredibly privileged, but with that privilege came a duty. At some point, when the Utopia Child feels that he or she is ready, the Utopia Child volunteers to leave the community: sometimes for a set number of years, sometimes until they decide to come home.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has just moved to the city from a Utopianist commune. The PC knows only the bare minimum necessary to survive in the city: where they live, how to pay the rent, where to get groceries, how to ride a subway. They know little more about the city than the average person living in a gated community or corporate living center knows about the city: there are drugs, gangs, crazy people and homeless people, but they don't know any details or any of the complexities of city life.

Lifestyle- Living in the city is a new frontier for the Utopia Children. Each finds his or her own way of living in the city and dealing with its inherent problems. Each nearby utopianist commune only sends a few children to the city, and there are many more communes farther away who may send only one. Even if there are Utopia Children from the same commune in one city, they don't have much of a chance to learn from each other: they are taught to resist the temptation to hang out with each other. There was, at one point, a book made up of handwritten pages, photocopied and stapled together, that claimed to be a guide to the city for new Utopia Children, but all known copies of this volume have been lost.

The reason that Utopia Children are in the city is to improve the culture of the city. They try to achieve this in many ways: volunteering in homeless shelters, giving counseling to mentally ill people, teaching homeless children to read and write, giving lectures about how people should endeavor to live. A very popular theory among Utopianists, however, is that the best way to spread the culture of the commune to the city is to be a good example within the community.

To be an upstanding member of the community, a Utopia Child must be a part of that community and so the first duty of a Utopia Child is to form as many relationships in the community as possible. They try to be blind to boundaries of economic class, making friends with Indies, Wells and Street People.

How a Utopia Child contributes to a community is usually quite unstructured. Most Utopia Child prefer to react to whatever events befall their community by going where the trouble is and helping however they can. Often the help that Utopia Children try to provide is completely unwanted, such as when Utopia Children try to broker a peace between two warring gangs that aren't ready to make peace yet.

Utopia Children occasionally take jobs within the city, but usually they are paid a regular stipend by their community. Since Utopianist communes interact with the economy very little, the money given to Utopia Children is usually the totality of the money the commune has, and Utopia Children can seldom get any more than their stipend. Still, most Utopia Children have enough money that they can live comfortable lives as Indies (if they don't give all their money away, that is).

Utopia Children are much more educated than the average city resident, and have had access to a much wider range of skills, including psychic skills. Because of this, many people in the city seek out Utopia Children for training, especially because Utopia Children rarely charge for such training. Some people in the city see Utopia Children as nothing more than wandering schools capable to teaching psychic skills, martial arts, medicine, computer skills, and much more.

Utopia Children have been prepared for life in the city as much as was possible without putting their lives in actual danger. Many have endured personal tests, ones they usually elected to take of their own free will. These tests have tested the Utopia Children's willpower, endurance and ability to deal with stress. Despite this training, Utopia Children don't really know how they will react to the true threats of life and limb that are everywhere in the city. Many Utopia Children can't deal with the constant danger and leave the city shortly after arriving. For those that manage to deal with their fear, many eventually experience what many call "burnout." Burnout takes many different forms, from cynicism and depression, to anxiety and social withdrawal, to exhausting crying fits at regular intervals. At its core, burnout seems to be an inability to deal with the constant emotional stresses of being a Utopia Child in the city. Some Utopia Children suffer from burnout within a month of coming to the city, in others it takes much longer, and many other Utopia Children have been in the city for years with no sign of burnout at all. Psychological health is as important as physical health in most communes, and many Utopia Children are trained in various methods of psychotherapy. They spend significant amounts of time trying to prevent burnout by means of introspection, meditation and by finding counseling in whatever circumstances they can.

Social Structure- Utopia Children maintain regular communication with their friends, families and elders in the Utopianist Commune, yet they receive little in the way of guidance or instruction. The Utopia Children's' decisions of what they do in the city are all their own. The Utopia Children may have occasional contact with other Utopia Children in the city, but they try to avoid spending too much time hanging out with them. In theory, a Utopia Child could call on other Utopia Children he or she knows

for help, but this is rare: the Utopia Children are supposed to be in the city to help, not be helped, and try to depend on each other as little as possible. If anything, a Utopia Child may feel a success if he or she has become a close enough part of the community that he or she can call their non-Utopia Children friends for help.

Advancement- For a Utopia Child, advancement means becoming a respected and loved member of the community. The more friends who depend on and look up to a Utopia Child, the more respected he or she feels.

Population- There are about 50 Utopia Children in the city at any given time, without a new Utopia Child coming to the city and an older Utopia Child dying or going home about once a month. The average Utopia Child has been in the city for less than a year, though there are some who have been here as long as 5 years. About 70% of Utopia Children (35) come from the five closest Utopianist Communes to the city, about 20% (10) come from other communes around the US and about 10% (5) come from communes in other countries.

External Relations- Few Utopia Children believe that they have any more value as human beings than anyone else in the city, but almost all believe that they have an advanced culture and that every city resident would benefit if they adopted some of that culture. To many in the city this is an unforgivable arrogance. Many people in the city have an intense dislike of Utopia Children, even people who have never meet a Utopia Child, because they resent anyone who believes that a life of privilege makes their beliefs and ways better. Some people dislike the Utopia Children so much that they will resist having their lives and communities bettered in any way by a Utopia Child. On the other hand, there are a large number of people who are truly awed by the altruism, psychological stability, wisdom, self-confidence and sometimes the physical attractiveness of the Utopia Children. Some people really do want to be more like the Utopia Children and will hang out with them in hopes that there might be some sort of "rub-off" effect. The majority of the city is closer to neutral: they may be annoyed in theory by the beliefs of the Utopia Children, but that won't stop them from accepting the help or even the friendship of a Utopia Child.

Many Utopia Children share a lot of beliefs in common with the Sexologists. Some have even received special Sexologist training. Some Utopia Children feel so akin to the Sexologists that they avoid the Sexologists, feeling that the Sexologists have the least to gain from their presence.

There is no clear line dividing Utopia Children and Neos. The goals of these two types of communities are not incompatible. Some Communities have elements of Utopianist Communities and elements of Neocultural Communities. Perhaps the biggest difference is in the minds of city residents: city Indies tend to feel that their beliefs and methods have more in common with Utopia Children while Wells tend to feel that they have more in common with the Neos. Neos are thought to understand, among other things, the occasional need for violence.

Typical Weapon- Utopia Children typically go unarmed and use martial arts to defend themselves.

Turf- Utopia Children spread themselves over the city as much as possible, and although they could afford more they typically live in Well level apartments.

Distinguishing Features- Most Utopia Children have remarkably good teeth, and skin that is free from scars and blemishes. Most Utopia Children are what the average city resident would consider physically attractive. Though they tend towards simple (humble) clothing, Utopia Children tend to be quite meticulous about their clothing and grooming, with clean clothes and perfect haircuts. A few Utopia Children wear blue gloves, in homage to the symbol worn by early Utopianist radicals living in the New York area.

Symbols- Utopia Children have few symbols for themselves, but Graffiti writers often use the letter U or a blue glove to represent them.

Slang

Rub-Off: n., the theoretical changes to city culture caused by the presence of Utopia Children.

Skills

Free Skills: Aikido (1), Emergency Medicine (1), Philosophy (1), Psychotherapy (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 7, BIO 5, CMBT 8, CRTV 5, INFO 7, INTL 5, MIL 9, PSY:X 15, PSY:M 10, PSY:S 9, TECH 8, THIE 9, SOC 8, STRT 8.

Income- $1,000 +$50/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Talent: (Mandatory Advantage) The PC starts with 10 extra points for attributes, which can be spent any way (while observing attribute caps). This represents the fact that the PC was raised with the best nutrition, education, socialization and was able to spend all of his or her time growing up on self-improvement.

Physical Attractiveness: (Optional Advantage) Costs 1 Bonus Point. A combination of good nutrition and well matched genes makes Utopia Children more likely than most to be what most people consider physically attractive. Gives +5 to all seduction rolls.

Odd Beliefs/Rituals: (Mandatory Disadvantage) Utopianist communes often adopted rituals and beliefs that may seem odd (or even crazy) to outsiders, especially when the outsiders do not understand the rationale behind them or do not agree with the worldview that produced them. For example, members of one Utopianist Commune are all atheists yet believe that daily prayer is necessary for psychological health and achieving one's goals. Choose 5 odd beliefs or rituals that the character has and write them on the character sheet.

Pacifist: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 5 Bonus Points. The PC has been brought up to believe that it is usually better to give up one's own life than to take the life of another, and that organized killing in the form of war or capital punishment never helps a situation. The PC may stray from this belief, given time and experience, but it will be a painful experience and the PC risks being shunned by his or her commune. PCs with this disadvantage get 2 additional free levels of Aikido as a means of non-lethal self-defense.

Foreign Commune: (Optional Disadvantage) Gives 2 Bonus Points. The PC is from an overseas commune, and in addition to knowing nothing about the city they are also less than perfectly familiar with America. The PC speaks English as a second language, has a thick accent, reads English slowly, and may have trouble understanding certain American idioms.

Not Alone (Optional Advantage): Costs 3 Bonus Points. The PC is not alone in the city, there is another Utopia Child from the same commune living in the city. They know each other and keep in contact. More fellows from the same commune can be bought at 1 Bonus Point each.

Suggested Skills- Calm Attack, Diagnosis, Emergency Medicine, Mind Reading, Philosophy, Psychotherapy, Storytelling.

Suggested Equipment- City Map, First Aid Kit (EMT), Motorcycle Outfit, Pepper Spray.

Suggested Reading- City Culture: Origins, City Culture: Philosophy, Freedom Wars: Aftermath, Gated Communities: Utopianists, World Situations: Communities.

Character Concept: Your Commune

Be prepared to describe to the GM what the PC's commune does that makes them different from every other Utopianist Commune. Remember that these Communes were a number of grand experiments in what would make the best culture, and at times it seems like the founders pulled cultural elements out of a hat to create the Commune. The major factors where communes vary are:

-Sex: Free love, monogamous marriage, polygamy, arranged marriages.

-Religion: Agnosticism, monotheism, atheism, or private plurality of beliefs.

-Decision-making: Anarchy, democracy, seniority.

-Technology level: high, medium, low.

Volunteers

In Brief- Advantaged charity workers who take to the streets to help less advantaged people.

Favorable Stereotypes- Altruistic, educated, friendly, compassionate, willing to get their hands dirty and risk their own safety to help the needy.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Arrogant, moralistic proselytizers who interfere with things they don't understand.

Other Names- Charity Workers, Outreach Workers, Outreach Volunteers, Outreach.

Origin- Throughout the history of cities, many methods have been used to take care of the urban poor. The shelter system was most popular in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, but the shelter system had several serious flaws. Many homeless people were unable or unwilling to seek out services in shelters, and so volunteers found that they had to go out to where the homeless were to provide help. One by one, the shelters in each major city developed an outreach program, where volunteers in vans would go out and provide services to the homeless community on the streets. These services ranged from calling an ambulance for a forced admittance in to a psychiatric hospital, to aid filling out welfare paperwork. Most volunteers felt they could do a world of good just by letting people know that someone cared enough about them to check on them every once in a while. Outreach work had some inherent danger and it attracted the braver or more adventuresome volunteers.

The city's homeless services have operated almost non-stop since the city became a city, thanks to the dedication of volunteers. There were only brief interruptions of homeless services during the Freedom War. As people moved out of the city, the number of volunteers and the number of shelters decreased while the number of people in need of services increased. In the modern climate, people receiving services in a shelter are the lucky exception to the rule and outreach workers are needed more than ever before.

The city has always been on the cutting edge of the services to homeless people, in part because the city has, for some time, had a homeless population equal to the population of many small cities. New York was one of the first US cities to have volunteer outreach programs and to have government mandated shelters. When nuclear explosives were used in the city at the end of the Freedom Wars, the entire city was evacuated to huge refugee camps on the mainland. As soon as the city was cleaned up, the refugee camps were moved in to the city and the city became a huge government-run homeless shelter until the economy could be restores. Just as the city looked like it was becoming a normal city again, the movement of autonomous gated communities and corporate living centers hit full swing. There was massive upper and middle class flight from the city and as more urban areas were bought up by gated communicates and corporate living centers, the homeless and poor were forced to move to Manhattan. So, even as the general population of the city dropped, the homeless population rose to levels higher than it had ever been. At the same time, a judge overruled the 1979 case of Callahan v. Carey which forced the state government to provide shelter for homeless people.

Timeline

1955-1984- .5 million patients released from mental institutions ("deinstitutionalization").

1979- 1st outreach programs in New York.

1979- Judge rules all New Yorkers have right to shelter under state constitution.

2000- Outreach vans instituted in almost every major city in the US.

2057- Manhattan is used as a giant shelter for war refugees.

2059- Judge overrules Callahan v. Carey.

2068- Human Services Corporation forms, leases downtown office building.

Becoming- Although some volunteers work out of their own homes, most are affiliated with some city shelter that has an outreach program. A volunteer must volunteer at a shelter, take a few on-line training courses, and be able to devote a certain number of hours to the shelter. Most shelters are more than happy to have another person working Outreach and the volunteer will be given the job.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has passed all the necessary training courses and has been working Outreach for a few months and is just starting to get to know some of the city's street people on the first name basis.

Lifestyle- Volunteers vary in age and attitude. Working together are retirees, ex-street people, clergy and young punks with strong political beliefs. Some volunteers have advanced training in psychology, medicine and social work, but even those that don't have taken a week long crash course at a shelter that gives them enough knowledge to help out a lot of people.

Volunteers may operate out of shelters or churches, or they may work freelance, but either way they spend most of their nights out on the streets looking for ways they can help street people. In cold weather, most come armed with a large metal thermos that contains hot soup they can serve to the street people. For some, the thermos has become such an emblem of what they do that they bring it with them even when it is hot out, serving something cold and nutritious, like protein shakes. Other items that volunteers may bring on to the streets with them are articles of clothing, first aid kits, cigarettes, toiletries, condoms and clean needles.

Whatever physical items the volunteer offers street people is usually nothing more than an ice-breaker. The soup is not a full meal, it only serves to bring isolated homeless people out of their shells so that the outreach volunteers can do their most important jobs, something that is often called "Street Triage." Street Triage is the art of identifying the needs of street people and referring them to the proper resources (or, in rare cases, forcing those resource upon them).

Although the city's services to the poor are inadequate, they are considerable and help a large number of people. Many of the services try to serve the people who need them the most. For instance, some shelters only provide beds for street people who just got out of the hospital and need a sterile place to recover. Since homeless people have little access to the internet (and some of them are illiterate), they have trouble finding out about what services they are eligible for, where to go to get those services, what hours those services are open, and how to get on waiting lists. Volunteers help homeless people gain access to this information. Volunteers also help street people complete the complex forms that street people must fill out to gain access to government services such as welfare or disability.

Homeless people may ignore their physical states or may not have enough medical knowledge to know when they are in serious trouble. One of the most important things that volunteers do is to let homeless people know when they must go to an emergency room. Many street people's lives have been saved when Volunteers identified a life threatening infection and persuaded the person to go to the emergency room.

Why Don't The Homeless Go To Shelters?

The basic model of services was a shelter model: homeless people could stay at a shelter, and while they were there they could get social work, addiction treatment, medical care, counseling, etc. The major hole in this model was that many homeless people were unable or unwilling to go to shelters. There are many reasons for this:

-**Overcrowding**: The overcrowding of shelters means that to get in one had to wait in line for hours, hours that could be spent making money by begging, canning, etc. Many shelters demand that clients be in by a certain time in the evening and stay in all night.

-**Pets**: Many homeless people have pets that are their best friends, but shelters never allow pets.

-**Couples**: Most shelters segregate male and female guests, and so heterosexual homeless couples must sleep apart if they want to stay in a shelter.

-**Intoxication**: Most shelters are "dry" shelters, meaning they don't take in clients who are clearly intoxicated. Many street people are unwilling to spend a night sober just to get a place to stay.

-**Autonomy**: Some street people do not want to be a burden or society, or don't want to take up resources that more needy street people could use, or do not want to admit that they need help.

-**Safety**: Many street people do not feel safe in the shelters: they have no control over the space around them, they worry that they might be attacked in their sleep. Also, they fear having their possessions stolen: although many shelters provide lockers, they are seldom big enough to hold all of a street person's possessions.

-**Mental Illness**: Many street people have some mental illness that prevents them from seeking out help. They may be paranoid and not trust anyone to help them, or they may be too depressed to seek out or ask for help for themselves.

-**Preaching**: Although this is not true of all shelters, some shelters preach at or lecture at their guests. Street people often don't want to have to deal with someone telling them what to believe or how to live their lives and so stay away from shelters.

Some volunteers serve the spiritual needs they see the homeless as having. Some are aggressive proselytizers, making listening to a sermon be the cost of a hot meal. Others are more respectful of individual differences, trying to get homeless people involved with church services that correspond to that individual's religious beliefs. Most volunteers, however, believe that issues such as physical health and physical safety must be taken care of before anyone even mentions religion.

Volunteers will quickly learn that most people they meet can't be helped by them. Some are happy enough with their station in life that they feel they do not need the help of a stranger. Others are unable to accept help because of their personality or because of mental problems. Some want help and will accept help, but there is currently no help for them. Some are already on their way to getting help and improving their lives and an outreach volunteer can give no useful advice. What volunteers really look for are people who are "on the edge": they are eligible for help and only need an extra little bit of knowledge or motivation to actually get that help.

Just as Goods know more about addicts than anyone other than addicts, Volunteers know about street people (especially those not in an unborn family) better than any non-street people. Still, the world of street people is so huge that street people don't know all of its intricacies, much less volunteers. Volunteers are often reminded how little they actually know. Volunteers quickly learn that street people gain more help in surviving from other street people, in unplanned acts of altruism, then they will ever get from volunteers.

Social Structure- Some volunteers work out of their homes, they have no rules and usually work alone. The majority of volunteers are affiliated, in some way, with some non-profit organization. The NPO is a good way to solicit donations and their small operating budget is better than no operating budget. There are about a dozen small agencies in the city, half secular and half non-secular. The largest agencies may have one or two full-time employees an a dozen unpaid volunteers, smaller agencies have only unpaid volunteers. These smaller agencies all belong to a loose partnership called the Human Services Corporation, which has an office in the financial district. The Human Services Corporation office serves as a staging ground for those agencies that don't have their own workspace. In most cases, this means little more than a corner for outreach volunteers to leave their stuff before hitting the streets. Other NPOs are run by and headquartered in churches.

Shelters have very strict rules, both for guests and volunteers, but outreach programs have few such rules. If an outreach volunteer does something that his or her bosses don't like, the volunteer can be fired. That same volunteer, however, can easily join some other organization (unless they have done something really terrible, like taking advantage of their position in some way). Outreach volunteers are partially insolated from the internal politics of charities. The non-profit organizations are most important in that they give volunteers the ability to share knowledge and feel that someone is struggling with them to help street people. At all hours, volunteers are going in and out of the Human Services Corporation office, pausing to talk with other volunteers and to share knowledge and news.

Advancement- There are two types of advancement for Volunteers. There is advancement in the community of city charities and there is advancement in the community of the street. Advancement among city charities is a matter of being a good politician, a good organizer and a good fund-raiser. Most charities are confused bureaucratic messes, and people who can organize them, get them running smoothly and even get them to grow will quickly become superstars in the small charity community. A good step forward is to become the director of an agency (this automatically makes one a board member in the Human Services Corporation).

There is also advancement on the streets, and this is how many Volunteers focus their efforts. Instead of becoming well known and respected in the community of charities, the Volunteer becomes well known and trusted on the street. There is only one way to achieve this: to spend time on the streets and to be a warm and caring person. Street people are often wary of trusting anyone, and especially outsiders. As the Volunteer spends evenings on the streets, he or she becomes first acquaintances, then friends of street people. They get to know more and more aspects of the homeless community, they get told secrets in confidence and they learn to see not just individual people but networks of relationships. A person who gains the trust of the street people community is a much better helper, even if their particular agency does not give them any extra allowances.

Population- There are about 30 volunteers who work outreach regularly and about 30 more who come out in extreme conditions (I.E. blizzards) to perform outreach. There are about 20 more people in the city who run shelters and perform other non-Outreach services for street people.

External Relations- Volunteers generally relate to others on an individual basis, not as a group. There is not always a clear line between Goods and Volunteers and they often work and hang out with each other. Volunteers, however, do not have the bad relations with the police that the Goods have. In fact, the Volunteers and the Night Shift occasionally work with each other to deal with dangerous psychotic street people. Volunteers have strong feelings about cults: some volunteers are highly religious cut some cults some slack, others try to keep the cults from preying on psychologically weak homeless people. On an individual basis many Volunteers maintain good relationships with the major street families. It is the relations between Volunteers and the non-family street people, however, which are the strongest and most complex.

Typical Weapon- Although usually non-violent, some volunteers have been known to defend themselves with steel thermoses or heavy flashlights.

Turf- Volunteers go everywhere that there are street people, which is the entirety of the city, though the highest concentration of street people is in the bowery area, so Volunteers travel there more often than other parts of the city. Many Volunteers stop by a shelter they work out of or by the Human Services Corporation office (located in an office building in the financial district on Trinity Place near Thames Street) to get the latest gossip and drop off any stuff they don't want to take on to the street.

Distinguishing Features- Volunteers usually carry around large metal thermoses. They also often have notebooks or handheld computers which they use to take notes on the people they meet and store information on services. Most try to wear clothes which will not intimidate self-conscious street people: simple clothing like jeans and sweats (this is also clothing they won't mind throwing out if some plague victim throws up on them).

Symbols- An outstretched hand or two hands grasping each other are common symbols of homeless service agencies.

Slang

NPO: n., non-profit organization.

Street Triage: v., determining what homeless people need most urgently and who can provide it.

Unmedicated: adj., mentally ill but treatable with psychopharmaceuticals.

Skills

Free Skills: Diagnosis (1), Emergency Medicine (1), Social Work (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 8, BIO 4, CMBT 9, CRTV 6, INFO 7, INTL 6, MIL 8, PSY:X 15, PSY:M 13, PSY:S 13, TECH 7, THIE 9, SOC 7, STRT 7.

Income- $2,500 +$250/wk.

Special Bonus Characteristics

Street Contacts: (Mandatory Advantage) The PC knows by name, and maintains amicable relations with, dozens of street people, with some in every corner of the city. They know where their street people friends hang out and who they hang out with.

Formerly Homeless: (Optional Advantage, Costs 2 Bonus Points) The PC was once homeless. Gives -2 to Street skill costs (min. 4).

Suggested Skills- Addition, Emergency Medicine, Diagnosis, Psychopharmacology, Immobilization, Law (Basic), Social Work.

Suggested Equipment- Bicycle, First Aid Kit: EMT, Palmtop: Combo, Steel Thermos.

Suggested Reading- Employment, Drug Addicts, Downtown, Healthcare, Pounders, Unborn Non-Families (p.179).

The Myth of the Rich Volunteer

The stereotyped homeless shelter volunteer is a rich Indie Christian who grew up in a life of privilege and feels guilty for his or her good fortune and so volunteers to help those less fortunate. Besides being an oversimplification of the motivations of volunteers, many volunteers don't come from a life of privilege. A large number of volunteers have been poor or homeless. They have managed to make it off the streets and in to a position in life where they could devote time to volunteering.

Perhaps the common factor here is a subjective feeling of privilege. The rich Indies feel privileged because they know they are at the top of the social hierarchy. The ex-homeless people feel privileged because they have a roof over their heads.

There are also many volunteers who are "regular people." They receive welfare or work minimum wage jobs, they are not terribly religious and they have had rather boring pasts, no brushes with extreme poverty or extreme wealth, and yet they devote hours per week to homeless shelters. These are the people who take the "grunt jobs" in the volunteer community: working the food-line at a soup kitchen or spending the evening at the check-in desk of a shelter. Although they rarely have the time and energy to get the "prestigious" jobs like outreach worker, they are the ones that keep the whole shelter system running.

Y1s

In Brief- Entrepreneurs, taking advantage of the low cost of doing business in the city to start new businesses (most of which either fail or are bought by corps within the first year).

Favorable Stereotypes- Brilliant, ambitious down to earth business people, willing to throw themselves in to a project and get their hands dirty.

Unfavorable Stereotypes- Outsiders, ignorant of city ways, obsessed with money and success. Blind to anything beyond simple capitalism.

Other Names- Startups, Entrepreneurs, Businessmen and Businesswomen.

Origin-One of the many effects of the internet was to create a new class of stock market investors. These investors, sometimes called "day-traders", were ordinary people who invested small amounts in the stock market, often for the same reasons that other people gambled. The new investors were much less conservative than their rich counterparts and were willing to speculate much more. Daytraders would pump large amounts of money in to any new business that looked like it may succeed. New York was one area where there were hundreds of "startup" companies that made it big overnight. The success of startups never lasted long, they would either be bought by a larger and stabler corporation (which would often make the founders very rich) or they would go under at the next stock market crash (which happened with increasing frequency throughout the 1980s through 2050s).

Throughout the first half of the 21st century, merger after merger changed the scene of world business. By the 2040s, there were a handful of huge corporations that controlled almost all of the world's economy. Any small company that started up would either be smashed by economic competition or would be bought up immediately by a large corporation. A number of intelligent young entrepreneurs became billionaires by starting up and selling one company after another. New York was a prime place for people to start-up these companies. Global warming had caused rising ocean levels which had caused massive damage to the city. Many businesses were moving elsewhere, which meant that New York was the place to go if one wanted cheap office space within the United States.

The Freedom Wars and the destruction of the major corporations once again changed the face of business. After the Freedom Wars ended, the world had to rebuild its economic infrastructure from the ground up. Starting a company was generally thought of as exciting and heroic, and many people went from having nothing to being incredible rich overnight. Slowly, however, the same merger process that had been operating before the Freedom Wars took hold and many moderate sized companies became a number of large corporations. The new governments were careful to keep corporations under strict control. Despite the harsh restrictions they operated under, within a few years most businesses were owned by a few dozen corporations. People were once again becoming millionaires by starting companies and selling them. At the same time, much of the population was fleeing to live in gated communities and corporate living centers. The remaining inner cities became economically-depressed, mostly-deserted places. The cost of living was so low in inner cities that many entrepreneurs discovered they were an ideal place for starting up businesses. A flow of young entrepreneurs came and set-up shop in the city.

Timeline

1990s- Internet creates new class of "day traders" investing in small startups.

2040- 92% of world's businesses owned by three large corporations.

2045- India chemical fire puts speeds global warming, lowers city property values.

2050- Freedom Wars destroy all corporations.

2057- Restoration committee provides grants to starting companies.

2061-2065- Massive flight from the city.

Becoming- A young and brave entrepreneur will find a few investors to put up a bit of financial backing and/or take out a loan. He or she will buy or rent a cheap office within the city. Y1s often start with little more than a desk, a laptop computer, and an internet connection.

At level one, adventure one, the PC has just received his or her first bit of income from the business. Whatever service or product the PC is selling has actually started selling, though not yet in enough quantity for the business to actually survive. The PC is in a day-to-day struggle to make the business grow before debts catch up and investors grow tired and pull out.

Lifestyle- The city nickname Y1 refers to a business in it's first year of operation. Within one year, 90% of startups either go bankrupt or become successful enough to be bought out by a corporation. During this uncertain first year these startup companies (and the entrepreneurs that run them) are known as Y1s. Modern fiction (especially that consumed by corporate employees) has a lot of stories about entrepreneurs who brave the dangers of inner cities and risk bankruptcy in order to make it big. Most Y1s see working in the city as a temporary hardship, something they have to grit their teeth and endure in order to make it big. Others grow to like the city. Some become habitual Y1s: starting a business, making it successful, selling it for big bucks to a corporation and starting again. These habitual Y1s are addicted to the challenge, the gamble (their business fail as often as they succeed), and, sometimes, to life in the city.

Some Y1s try to avoid contact with the city as much as possible. They are like VR addicts but they spend their time in a virtual office instead of a fantasy world. Most Y1s, whether they want to or not, get pulled in to city life. Many seek cheap (and illegal) labor and assistants from the unborn community. Some may try to pull themselves back from the brink of bankruptcy by involving their business in the black market. Some desperate businesses may even try to stay afloat by trying to make city residents their primary customers. There is one famous story of a Y1 who personally arbitrated a peace accord among two gangs because his workers were not showing up to work so they could fight in the war.

Y1s are known for being very concerned with financial matters: every little thing is a potential cost or source of income. Many see no distinction between their own personal budget and their companies budget, they thus live spartan lifestyles in order to save their company money. To save money, some Y1s work out of their homes, but even more live in their offices. Y1s are thought of as workaholics, everything they do has to relate in some way to their new company.

Y1s have to be megalomaniacal or gamblers to make it: 80% of new businesses fail, and so Y1s are betting-against-the-house when they invest large chunks of their lives in to a new company. In order to take on these odds, the Y1 has to believe that there is something about them or about their idea which is special, better than all the other people who came to the city to start a business and failed.

No matter how bad the area is, a business can still grow and thrive in the city. Today, most businesses transactions take place over the internet. Some people in the city have become millionaires with nothing more than an internet connection and a laptop. Others manufacture or warehouse goods in the city but sell via mail order to customers around the country who buy via the internet.

Most Y1 companies start with money from investors and the investors often have the option to pull their money out any time they want. Y1s thus have to spend an inordinate amount of time reassuring investors. A Y1s life is often little more than a series of well-rehearsed sales pitches to current and potential investors explaining why the company is the greatest thing ever.

A determined businessperson needs only a few things to make a company work: a place to work, a computer, an internet connection and an internet site. The internet site is where people find out about the company and make orders and do other types of business. A Y1 doesn't even really need something to sell: many successful companies sell things they don't have, take the customer's money and then buy or make the item in question. The final necessary component is someone to do lots and lots of "legwork." Legwork is forging contacts and making deals, putting together all the people that are cogs in the machinery of commerce. Legwork also means searching everywhere for bargains.

There is not really a dividing line between Y1s and con artists. Many Y1s use "legal scams," these are misrepresentations that are not so blatant to be legal. They may try to convince someone that a product or service is more valuable than it really is, that a potential customer needs something more than they do, or that an investment opportunity is better than it really is. Advertising puts Y1s in a mindset of exaggerations and lies that they find it hard to escape from.

Social Structure- Very rarely do Y1s compete against each other. They compete with the large corporations who have so much economic power that they may drive a Y1 in to the ground without even realizing it. Many Y1s come to arrangements with other Y1s that benefit both businesses. They combine resources or make mutually beneficial trades, instead of dealing with corporations. Most Y1s are very independent people though: they want to run the company their way or not at all, and so Y1s rarely merge their companies.

Even if they do not hang out together or have business arrangements with each other, most Y1s at least know about other Y1s who are doing well. A wise entrepreneur keeps an eye on the market to look for any good ideas they can steal, and so Y1s spend a good portion of their time looking in to other businesses going on in the city.

Advancement- Anything a Y1 can do to improve his or her business advances the Y1. This can include finding more investors, finding more customers, boosting the company's image in the business community, gaining skilled and valuable employees, gaining property (especially patents and copyrights), and brokering good deals.

It is said that a Y1 "vacation" is the few minutes they spend looking at their earnings before reinvesting them in to the business. Simply making a profit is not enough; to survive a Y1 has to make his or her business grow.

The patience of investors lasts, at most, about a year. [Note: In game terms, a year is about two experience levels.] Within a year, a startup in the city has made enough of a dent in the market that some corporation will notice and offer to buy it, or the investors will pull out their money and the business will fail. The owner of a successful company may be paid anywhere from ten thousand to ten million dollars for a startup (with the average being about $100,000). Some Y1s who sell their businesses retire, but the majority will take the money they were paid and invest a large portion of it in to trying to start up another company. The more successes a Y1 has had, the more money he or she has to make a company work, and the more likely the company is to succeed. Y1s who's companies go under will often try again.

Population- There are about 220 Y1s in the city at any given time. A new company starts about once every few days. About 80% of Y1s are the sole owner of their companies, the other 20% start their business as partnerships.

External Relations- There are a lot of profitable businesses operating within the city, and most of their money comes from the bank accounts of Wells (the welfare budget, in turn, is funded by taxes on corporations that use AIs to replace human workers). The city is a fairly stagnant market: Wells don't like to change apartments, grocery stores or whatever corporation or criminal is dealing them their current vice. In other words, while there is a lot of money to be made in the city, it is not a good market to break in to. Most Y1s concern themselves with one of two markets: either the market of providing goods and services to other companies, or the market of selling "luxury items" (these being items that aren't necessary for survival) to people with disposable income shopping on the internet from around the world.

If Y1s do not see city residents as potential customers or potential investors, they are often seen as potential employees. There are lot of poor people in the city who are willing to work very hard for very little money and no benefits. The only problem with this work force is that it is very hard to tell the difference between good workers and people who just want to rip the Y1s off. A loyal worker is so values that Y1s in the city often bequeath the names

of good workers to other Y1s. The city labor pool is also valuable because there is an incredible amount of creative talent not being tapped in to for profit. Once the initial hurdle of knowing who to trust has been passed, Y1s who hire city employees tend to do very well, even though this puts the Y1 in danger of being sucked in to city politics. A Y1 may find that the success of a business hinges on helping some employees get out of trouble. Or a Y1's company may become a target simply because of the affiliations of some of its employees.

Y1s are largely unaware of the city gang scene. They are often surprised to find out that a bright, honest, sane employee is a member of a gang. There are only a few Y1s who really understand the gang scene and are capable of influencing gang politics when it becomes necessary to do so. The majority of Y1s, see the majority of the city residents that they meet as nothing more than a potential threat. Every city resident might try to rob, beat or kill the Y1, all of which would be disastrous to the company.

Typical Weapon- A large percentage of Y1s carry mace.

Turf- Y1s have offices throughout the city but the largest concentration of Y1s in the city have offices in what was once called the financial district at the Southern end of the city. This part of the city still has the most office space per square mile in the city. One Broadway near Wall Street is the Workin' Late Bar and Grill, where stressed out Y1s go to unwind. Despite the name, the Workin' Late is designed to provide an environment as different from the Y1s' offices as possible: silly decorations, dim lighting, loud pop music, sugary mixed drinks and fried appetizers. Most Y1s go here with the intention of forgetting about work but most are so obsessive that they end up talking (or, rather, shouting over the music) about business.

Distinguishing Features- Y1s try to dress very nice when they are meeting with investors or any potential business contact they want to impress (which is typically every day). This means a fancy black suit and tie, carefully groomed hair, conservative makeup and jewelry. The exception is, if the message the Y1 is trying to send is "we're seething with creative genius," then they may go for a geekier or trendier look.

Symbols- Y1s often create or commission logos for their companies, which they may have printed on their clothing or anything else they think people, may see. These logos are usually fairly simple combinations of shapes in strong colors. In graffiti, ties and briefcases are often used to designate Y1s (the same symbols, however, often designate corporate employees).

Slang

Business Plan: n., a document outlining exactly what a company's future plans are, usually given to potential investors.

I.P.: n., Intellectual Property, any software, business secrets, copyrights, trademarks or patents that is owned.

Oligopoly: n., an economic system where two or three large virtually identical companied control all of a market and compete heavily.

Character Concept: Your Business

Be prepared to describe for the GM what product or services a PC's company sells. Be aware that if the PC's company has value in game play (see the City Useful and Personally Useful advantages, below) the GM will declare it an advantage and charge Bonus Points for it. For instance, if the PC owns a security guard company, that would probably come in handy during the course of a normal adventure. Also note that while PCs may do illegal things to help their company survive, the business itself should not be illegal (the goal, remember, is to sell the company to a corp). Some common types of businesses are:

-Reseller: The PC buys some product, commodity or service in bulk and then sells it under their own brand name at a markup. Another type of reselling is to buy up enough of a commodity for it to become scarce and then selling it back to the normal market at a much higher price. Business growth is achieved by penetrating the target market and building brand name recognition.

-Creative Outsourcing. Outsourcing can means anything from representing painters to having a web-page design house. Business growth is achieved by getting talented people on the payroll.

-Investment. The company takes people's money and reinvests it for them, skimming the profits. Business growth is achieved by making wise investment decisions that will make investors rich and bring more investors.

-Unique Service. The company has a floating, mobile team of workers who work on a job-to-job basis or take retainers and are on call. The tricky part here is to find (or create) a service that nobody else in the area does. Business growth is achieved through advertising (letting people know that the service is available) and by assembling multiple teams to meet market growth. While providing a unique service is the surest way to make money, it also caps the growth of the business. Not many people need this service, or else someone else would be doing it already.

-Net. An internet business is the riskiest business to start, but it has the maximum potential for growth if it succeeds. Every business has a network site, but a net business sells advertising on their site and makes money merely by having people visit that site. An internet site is the kind of paradox that drives Y1s mad and makes accidental millionaires: people visit a site because it is popular, but a site can only be popular if people visit it. It is the people who visit a site who give it value by trading files, putting information in to knowledge bases, etc.

-Data Mining. Data is available from millions of sources: some free, some not. A data mining company buys data in bulk or scours freely available data. The data is analyzed to create new knowledge or sort and distill it down in to a useful form. One data mining company might scour the web and provide a list of phone addresses of people who might be interested in buying a certain product, or they might search through historical databases for information on how pollen levels effect stock market activity, then sell the report. Business growth is achieved by buying or finding valuable data and creating results that would be useful to someone.

Outsourcing: v., paying someone outside a company to do something that is part of the company' operations.

Profit Margin: n., the amount spent and amount made in a given time period.

Skills

Free Skills: Corporations (1), Law: Business (1).

Skill Costs: ATH 8, BIO 7, CMBT 9, CRTV 9, INFO 5, INTL 6, MIL 8, PSY:X 15, PSY:M 13, PSY:S 13, TECH 6, THIE 9, SOC 5, STRT 9.

Income- PC starts with $7,500 in un-invested capitol, and $10,000 already invested in elements of the business. The PC loses $500 a week because the company is still operating at a loss (PC's are currently making about $250 a month while spending $750 on internet hosting and access, office rental, and other recurring costs). The GM will decide what actions on the part of the PC raise the profitability of the company, and thus the income that the PC has to work with.

Special Equipment- $10,000 worth of invested business capitol (see income, above). This is everything the company owns. It includes physical property held by the Y1 or in the Y1's office (like a laptop or a briefcase), intellectual property owned by a business (like a fancy company logo, or an option on a movie script) and property owned by the business but located elsewhere (like 10 creates of toothbrushes in a warehouse in Singapore).

Special Bonus Characteristics

City Useful (Optional Advantage)- Costs 10 Bonus Points. The business that the PC owns provides products and services that many people in the city would find useful (rather than most Y1 companies that sell services few in the city want or need).

Personally Useful (Optional Advantage)- Costs 10 Bonus Points. The services or products that the PC's company sells are things that the PC himself or herself would use and would find useful.

No Investors (Optional Advantage)- Costs 5 Character Points. The PC's business is funded entirely with money he or she has saved up, so there is no need to keep investors happy.

Suggested Skills- Corporations, Graphic Design, Internet Browsing, Law: Business, Money, Moneysaving, Oratory, Programming: Application, Self-Defense Weapons, Trading.

Suggested Equipment- Palmtop: Communicator, Pepper Spray.

Suggested Reading- Corporations, Employment: Legal, World Situation.

Chapter Five - Encyclopedia

Althea thought she'd been given the easy job. She was the lookout. All she had to do was sit in the fast food restaurant across the street, watch the building while the others did their burglary thing, and call them up on the cell if anything weird was happening. Althea thought she would be spending an evening eating fries. That was before the soda drinking fucker.

Althea counted fifteen packets of sugar he put in to his soda before he started drinking it. Althea was supposed to call if anything weird was going on, and this bastard was weird as hell, but Althea imagined getting laughed at for calling about a guy putting sugar in his soda.

The problem was that the guy gave her the creeps. Part of it was his style: the blue tracksuit and the plain haircut made him look like something from twenty years ago. Part of it was the way he acted: just sitting and staring, looking around occasionally at nothing in particular. But mostly it was the damn sugar pockets she just couldn't get out of her head. What was going on with the sugar packets?

Althea ran through the possibilities. He might have mitochondrial vampirism, or he might be on Hummingbird, or he might have some genetic mod that required that he eat more sugar than normal. Maybe he was a homeless guy, and all he could afford to eat today was a soda so he wanted to put as many calories in it as possible. Maybe he was one of those golems, an AI assassin programmed to act normal, but the programming was screwed up. Maybe he was a Kalor, they ate more sugar than normal – or was that salt? Maybe he was just a crazy nutball who thought sugar would help him fight the voices in his head.

Althea knew she was supposed to be quiet, unobtrusive, not attract any attention. She couldn't call in with a vague suspicion about a sugar-eating-guy, but she couldn't just sit here next to this creepy guy without doing anything. Finally she made up her mind. "Hey, you, hey," she whispered at him. He turned to look. When she saw the look in his eyes her heart leapt and her hand darted for her knife…

Index of Topics

BLACK MARKET

In Brief- The black market is huge, decentralized and efficient. Through traders and their multiple connections, one can get almost anything.

The modern black market was formed back during the occupation of the city during the Freedom Wars. The black market is made up of an army of independent traders, each of whom has contacts with many other traders and hundreds of other contacts. Every criminal enterprise in the city (except the Drug Lords, who have a vertical monopoly on drug distribution) depends on the black market for their existences. Even semi-legit organizations rely heavily on the black market. The black market has no leaders (although some traders are wealthier and have more economic influence than others) and no real structure.

A common saying on the streets is that the black market can get you anything if you're willing to pay enough for it. There is some truth to this saying. If someone asks a trader for something, the trader first checks to see if it is in his or her current inventory. If not, then the trader finds out how much the customer "wants it" (in other words, how much of a markup he or she is willing to pay). If the person wants it badly enough, a request may jump from

trader to trader to trader (each taking a percentage) before it reaches a trader who has or can get the thing in question. If nobody on the black market has a product, it is easy enough to hire someone to steal it. Through this network of contacts, it is conceivable that someone could come to a local black market trader with a few billion dollars and, in a week, get the Mona Lisa.

For traders, information is a good just like anything else. Traders pay for, hoard and sell information whenever they can. Services are also sold (from spying, to a plumbing repair, to a legal bribe, to a massage, to a murder). The trader matches a person needing the service with the person who can provide it, and takes a commission for himself or herself. Some traders (though not all) are also loan sharks, giving loans to people who could not normally get loans, though with ridiculously high interest and mercenaries as debt collectors. Traders who act as loan sharks make it a point to tell the debtors what they are getting in to: they don't want anyone claiming that they got a raw deal from the trader.

Despite its seeming clumsiness, the black market is very efficient.

Traders

In Brief- Independent and powerful traders make up the black market. They seldom exert political power but can have a large influence.

The black market is traders. Without traders, people could steal but they wouldn't have an efficient mechanism to get stolen goods to the people. Crime would be crippled in the city without traders.

Most traders are indies that operate out of their homes. A trader's apartment is a heavily guarded cache of goods. Most traders have either expensive security systems or 24 hour guards at their apartments. A minority of traders are in debt to other, larger traders, and act as employees. Many became traders so they wouldn't have to answer to anyone.

It is easy to ignore traders: they are not organized and they don't go to war to avenge each other (except in the case of personal friendships). For those interested in gang politics, traders are sort of like the scenery: always there when you need them.

Traders see it differently: they always keep an eye on gang politics (as it can greatly effect their business) and they can use their economic power to nudge a situation in one direction or another. For instance, a trader might decide that a gang war would hurt their business (by disrupting people's ability to travel freely through the area). To stop the war, a Trader may share information, send runners to take messages between gang members interested in a truce, or loan the weaker side some very nasty weapons so they appear less vulnerable.

Transactions

In Brief- Most transactions are face-to-face in trader homes. Other transactions are handled using locked accounts and homeless runners.

For most products that a black market trader sells, the standard deal is that the cash and product are handed over at the same time, usually in the traders home (where the trader has defenses ready in case of any malfeasance). If a trader has to "special order" a product, he or she usually asks for some amount (such as 10%) up front. For known clients, with whom the trader has established a trust, a trader may extend a line or credit. For very large deals, and when face-to-face transactions are not possible, Traders use cheap internet escrow services.

Escrow Services- The health of the black market depends upon people who do not necessarily trust each other being able to do large transactions relatively quickly. Escrow services make this possible. Money is transferred to the escrow service, who keeps a hold of it until both parties log-on to say that the transaction was concluded. If the parties can't agree, the escrow service keeps the money.

Runners- Not all transactions happen face to face. Sometimes a buyer wishes to remain anonymous. Sometimes the item is too worthless or the transaction too routine for someone to bother to walk all the way down the block to the trader's home. Sometimes the item being purchased is for some emergency and the person needs the thing right away. Sometimes the item is being delivered from one trader to another. In all of these cases, traders use homeless Runners they have at their disposal to take money, goods and messages back and forth. The runners are every bit as professional, skilled and efficient as the traders they work for.

Guns

In Brief- Very few in the city own guns. Those that do own guns are either rich enough to have them smuggled in, or use unreliable homemade guns. Gun owners are generally given a wide berth. Outside the city, most guns have technology to prevent unauthorized use.

Only a small minority in the city own guns. Of those that do, many have homemade weapons. Some can only be fired once, others can be used multiple times but because they are home-tooled they have a large chance of misfiring and even injuring the shooter.

Guns are equally likely to come from three basic sources: First, those smuggled in to the city and sold on the black market. Second, those manufactured in the city. Third, those in the city prior to the 2050s that were not found during Freedom Army sweeps.

City residents are very wary about people with firearms. Even those gang members who will jump fearlessly in to any fight will try to avoid combat when the opponent has a gun. Often, when someone has a gun, it is the one and only advantage that they have.

Gun Technology- Federal law requires modern guns to be manufactured with security chips. These chips test the DNA and/or voice print of the users. When the chip recognizes an authorized person, it sends electrical signals to piezoelectric strips within the gun that allow the gun to fire. Simply tearing out the chip will make the gun unable to fire. The registered user(s) of a gun is set in the gun store, and is entered in to a federal database.

Some communities require additional technology above and beyond the federally mandated security chips. Some have GPS (Global Positioning System) chips and keep a permanent record of exactly when and where the gun was fired. Some guns send a signal to the police every time the gun is fired. Some guns have tracking devices which are always on. Some guns have chips that check DNA and only let registered owners use them. When gated communities allow guns, it is usually with these restrictions. When the national guard brings guns in to the city (the only time guns can be legally brought in to the city) their firearms have all of these security features.

Most guns sold on the black market were created before these new laws were made. Otherwise, the guns either have been physically modified or hacked (both of which are quite difficult and require a lot of skill).

Why People Don't Buy Children on the Black Market

Some things are just so morally reprehensible that people do not buy them from the normal black market. There are willing buyers and willing sellers, and some traders will be willing, but too many black market traders who would make it their business to fuck up someone who tried to make this sort of purchase.

Say someone goes to a trader and inquires whether the trader can procure a child for him or her. The trader might flat out say no. The trader may, however, say that he or she can procure a child. Most traders are good liars and the person wishing to purchase the child has no way of knowing, when they go to pick the child up, whether they will actually get a child or whether they will be ambushed and killed by an army of angry Orphans who the trader secretly contacted.

BODY MODIFICATION

Decoration

In Brief- City residents of every income level user body modifications to improve their looks or make themselves appear tough, including piercings, implanted spikes, tattoos, tissue dying, scarring and surgical changes.

Piercings- These are probably the most common body modification in the city. Professional and amateur piercers in the city will take on any request, from the mundane to the very creative. Among favorers of the gutterpunk style, spikes are common. Spikes can be implanted just under the skin, and this is the easiest and least painful method, but the spikes are not very secure. A more skilled piercer (or Black Med or legitimate doctor) can connect spikes to the bones.

Tattoos- Most tattoos are done by a computer and are cheap and fast. Any image can be placed on someone's skin, either permanently or semi-permanently. It is mostly poor people who go for traditional (needle-gun) or archaic (skin abrasions) methods. Some gutterpunks go to practitioners of Maori style tattooing (a chisel is used to abrade the skin, then ink is painted on) to prove how tough they are. Some "posers" go to computerized tattoo parlors and get tattoos that are almost indistinguishable from authentic Maori style tattoos.

Coloring- Non-toxic dyes can semi-permanently dye hair, skin, teeth and even eyes to some color that the person requests. In general, changes in shade are the cheapest and easiest to get, while extreme changes (like going from caucasian skin coloring to jet black skin) are expensive and take special procedures.

Scarring- Some in the city (most often poor teens and mentally ill people) engage in scarification of their own bodies as a means of decoration. Most of them are people who have some vested interest in advertising to others how tough or self-destructive they are.

Surgical Modifications- The Freaks (p.206) may invest money in scary looking surgical modifications which will be part of their acts. Sex industry workers may borrow money to invest in plastic surgery, hoping to enhance their careers. It is only Indies who can afford surgical mods purely for the aesthetic value. These mods can include vat-grown parts, like third eyes, tails, extra-fingers. Parts can be functional or non-functional. The mods can also include non-organic substances (e.g. glass, metal, plastic, even stone) implanted in the body.

Implants

In Brief- Black market implants, both electronic and biological, can give people special powers.

For those that can afford them, legal and black market implants, both electronic and biological, can be useful tools and weapons. Implants can impart a wide range of abilities on their owners. In general, implants that give people concealed weapons are illegal, while implants that act as tools or sensors are legal when implanted by a licensed physician.

Jack- The most common electronic implant is the Jack. A jack puts a small data plug in the hand which connects to the brain through a pair of normal nerves. A simple multidevice interface mental program lets the user control and recieve feedback from the device mentally. Everything from construction equipment, to auto-aiming weapon systems, to musical instruments are available with jack controls. Fortunately, the multidevice mental program has a lot of safeguards and it is nearly impossible for a improperly or maliciously programmed device to kill or injure the person attached to it.

Electronic- Electronic implants usually have compact rechargeable batteries which can be recharged by placing an electromagnet over the skin. A few implants have external control devices (e.g. a touch pad on the back of the hand). Most are controlled mentally by linking the device with motor and sensory nerves, which are then hijacked from their original purpose and fed in to a special mental program designed to let the owner control and receive data from the implant. The installation costs of these mental programs add significantly to the cost of the implant.

Biological- These implants are coded to a person's DNA (so the body does not reject them) and grown in a vat. Upon implantation, they become just another part of the person's body. If nerves are hooked up, users can learn to control and interpret sensations from these new parts. The most popular biological implants are implanted muscles.

Replacements- The same techniques can be used to grow limbs and organs to replace limbs and organs that were lost due to accident or disease. Most decent health insurance will pay for this procedure, especially because it is more economically efficient than comparable prosthetics.

Usefulness- Implants are very inefficient. It would be much cheaper and easier to buy high-tech scuba equipment than to try to get a water-breathing lung or a chemical oxygen backup implant. Anything that can be done with an implant can be done cheaper and easier with external equipment. People still buy implants, though. One reason is that implants can not be yanked away. Another reason is that people with implants can often gain the element of surprise over other people. The biggest reason is purely psychological: people feel more powerful when an implant allows their bodies to do something than normal people can't.

See also Mental Programming (p.408)

Body Mod Monsters

A horrible cycle can happen when people begin to change their own bodies through plastic surgery, genetic alterations and implants. When people look at themselves in the mirror, what they see is often quite different from what other people see looking at them. People who begin trying to fix some aspect of their bodies that they don't like often find that it doesn't make them any happier with their appearance. People find that each time they use the power to change their own appearance, it is harder to avoid using it again the next time. Many people feel they are helpless to avoid getting the next surgery, no matter what their friends say. The more control they have over their appearance, the more critically they look in the mirror, until what they see has no bearing on normal standards of beauty or on practicality.

The end result is that there are dozens of inhuman looking people wandering around the city. There are the stick figures: incredibly tall and incredibly thin, always near the verge of death because every vital part of their anatomy has been reduced or constricted to make them thinner. There are the muscle-monsters, whose muscles are so gigantic that their joints are liquefying and they can't even reach in to their pockets. Rather than actually being strong, these muscle monsters are more likely to tear something, break a bone or have a heart attack when they try to exert their strength. There are the sex monsters, with bulges on their groins or chests so huge that they look like ridiculous caricatures of people. Their health problems are numerous and they are feared or disdained by most of the population. Although there are some fetishists who seek out sex with these sex monsters, most normal forms of intercourse are impractical or impossible because of the sex monsters' distorted anatomy. There are even a few people who have regressed themselves in to crude versions of toddlers in an attempt to gain a permanent look of youth. These are just the most common examples, there are different and more bizarre people running around the city. There are constant sightings of an "animal man" who behaves like a feral dog and looks like a terribly deformed human on all fours.

It is a common misconception that these are people who went crazy and then turned themselves in to monsters. The truth is that the process of going crazy and the process of turning themselves in to monsters was one in the same.

On Evolution, Culture, Body Modification

"Okay, lookit. It's really hard to improve on nature because nature had, like, a billion years to make the human body like it is. So you're a dumbass if you think you can make the body better at doing what it was supposed to do. Its that "supposed to do" thing that's important, because we don't want to prowl around in the grass, eat roots and crank out babies, do we? We want to do something different with out bodies, and that's when we need body mods. They way I see it, body mods are our way of defining what we think our bodies are for. When some wacko first cut his dick off, he was saying 'hey fuck you nature, you may want me to go around spooging my DNA all over the place, but that's not what I want to do with my life.' And that's what you've got to think about when you shop for any body mod."

Death Borgs

In Brief- Some people have implanted death-switch bombs, meant to deter potential killers. Can be deactivated. Known by metal forehead protrusions, though there are fakes.

Death Borgs are the street name for any implant that activates upon the death (usually the brain death) of the implant's owner. Most death borgs explode, killing anyone in the area. Death Borgs have large, flashy chrome protrusions (typically on the forehead). All Death Borg implants can be controlled by tapping on the protrusion in a pre-set sequence. The implant can be disarmed or forced to go off prematurely.

People who get death borgs tend to be wealthy, to have a lot of enemies, and to have little compassion for other people (including innocent people who are killed when death borgs explode). Traders have the highest percentage of death borgs of any city group.

The purpose of a Death Borg is typically to deter would-be murderers. It is fairly successful in this regard, although it also tends to deter people from living near or even walking near a death borg (for fear he or she will die unexpectedly). Death borgs also have led to some morbidly common scenes: e.g. muggers who just stabbed someone trying desperately to save him, or people putting a plague victim with a death borg in a shopping cart and trying to roll her in to the river.

CITY CULTURE

Origins

In Brief- City culture is mostly practical, but draws elements from gang culture, homeless culture, radical utopianism and teenage rebellion.

For the most part, city culture has created itself. It is not so much a set of shared traditions as it is a bunch of people, each reacting to their environment as rationally as they can. Similarity to other cultures, past or present, is probably just because something happens to be an effective way of doing things. However, there are some city traditions which can be traced directly back to specific roots.

Gang Culture- Gangs have changed a lot recently. In fact, many gangs have done whatever they can to differentiate themselves from the randomly-violent, self-destructive drug gangs of the old times. However, certain elements remain, especially in gangs with an old history (Roofers, Risen) or with elder members. Major contributions: revenge as a means of deterrence, the idea of the gang as one's family.

Homeless Culture- Whereas the Indies and Wells have "found the streets," the homeless and unborn have always had them and have had good ways of dealing with their dangers. Wells and Indies new to the streets have often incorporated homeless ways of doing things because they work. Major contributions: respecting other people's boundaries (to a fault), theft seen as morally justifiable and the idea of giving others every chance to live-and-let-live.

Radical Utopianism- For a while in the late 2050s, utopianism was the major radical movement of the day. Radical Utopianists believed that community was more important than government and that "perfect communities" could change the world's culture. Major contributions: emphasis on self government, use of banishment as a punishment.

Teenage Rebellion- There is a lot of teenage rebellion in the culture of the city. For centuries, teenagers have been growing up pressed up against the flaws of their parents' lifestyles. Many of the teenagers have decided, however naively, that anything would be better than living as their parents did. For Wells, the single most common reason for leaving home is not wanting to be like parents. So, many city values are really just the violent rejection of the values of VR addicts. Major contributions: devaluation of

The State of Equality in 2080

In Brief- Women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities face little or no discrimination. Poor, immigrants, transsexuals, "ugly" people face some discrimination. City residents discriminated against by those outside the city.

Victories- Over the last century, American culture (and most other cultures in the industrial world) has rid itself of nearly all cultural and institutional prejudice against women, homosexuals and racial minorities. These people can join military service, the clergy of most religions, street gangs, and almost all private clubs (including the masons). To most people it would be a bizarre and alien thought to think that these people are inferior or bad in any way. In the city, the only exceptions are mentally ill loners who may decide they hate a certain gender, sexuality or ethnicity. Some Immigrants and religious extremists discriminate against minority sexualities, but they are outsiders with social little power. Every once in a while, a small group of young teens who share a certain prejudice will get together to commit hate crimes (usually cornering and beating people up). Many serial killers are misogynists (people who hate and fear women). Women are targeted for sex crimes more often then men, but most people see this as a vulnerability of male psychology, not a female weakness (see "Why Men?" p.192).

Failures- Certain people still face cultural and institutional prejudice. Even in the city, where even the richest are considered poor by most standards, there is still prejudice against poor people. People who are poor are more likely to be thought of as stupid, immoral, dangerous and diseased. This is especially true of shut-ins, who regard homeless people as something like wild animals. Similarly, immigrants are commonly thought of as ignorant, unsophisticated and unfriendly. The physically disabled and elderly are thought of as being less capable than others and are often denied membership in city groups (including some gangs) and in gated communities and corporations.

Transsexuals face much less discrimination than they did 80 years ago, but there are still many people in the city who think transsexuals are mentally ill. The problem is that there are some mentally ill people who seek a gender change, and when people hear about them they assume that all transsexuals are mentally ill. Transsexuals are sometimes denied jobs, memberships in groups (including some gangs and gated communities) and are sometimes targeted for violence. There are a lot of transsexuals in the city who came to the city because their families and the communities they lived in would not accept them. There are some in the lesbian/gay/bisexual community who think of transsexuals as part of their community and try to stop prejudice, but there are also many in the community who would rather not be associated with transsexuals. There is a lot of similar discrimination against people with sexual fetishes.

"Lookism" is not as prevalent in the city as it is in other parts of the country. The main reason is that, on the streets, people often put a higher value on looking tough than on looking attractive. Also, the city has a plurality of very different styles (see p.343) and thus more than one "ideal" of physical beauty. Despite this, people who are considered attractive find they have an easier time getting jobs, joining groups and gaining power.

City Residents- Any resident of the city will find himself or herself discriminated against by people from outside the city. People living in gated communities or corporate living centers assume that anyone living in the city either couldn't pass screening tests or was too crazy to want to. They assume that any city resident is either mentally ill, stupid and uneducated, drug addicted or evil. People who choose to be out on the streets are often thought of the same way by those who choose to be shut-ins.

Fashion & Style

In Brief- The major themes people mix and match from are homeless/grunge (warm flannels), gutterpunk (tribal and punk), bollywood (East Indian), goth (dark and scary, lots of makeup), corp/mod (conservative, suits and ties), gang old school (paramilitary and hiphop) and straight (simple, cheap and flattering).

Style among young adults in the city is a hodgepodge of seven basic elements. Only a small percentage of people are true to one style, most mix and match:

Homeless/Grunge- Clothing is mainly grays & mixed patterns, including dull-colored plaids. Clothing is selected mostly for warmth: flannel shirts, jeans, sweatshirts. Knit caps and fingerless gloves are common. Clothes are loose fitting. Street people, and anyone else who can't or won't spend a lot of money on clothing, wear this style. The point is to wear clothes that are warm, comfortable, and don't need constant washing.

Gutterpunk- Hair spiked and/or shaved, dyed black, red, green or purple. Ritual scarring. Maori style tattoos. pierced-septum nose-rings. Black leather jackets, bright colored plaids. Chains worn as jewelry. Makeup is uncommon, but when present it is usually in the form of green or purple lipstick. Clothing is often torn, often held together with safety pins. Razorblades are a common form of jewelry. The point is to look dangerous and tribal, and to wear clothing (such as leathers) that can survive harsh conditions.

Bollywood- This style derived from a 2020's fascination with Indian culture. Females wear this style more often then men. Most cloth is made from colorful, intricate floral or abstract patterns, focusing mainly on warm colors (reds, browns, oranges). Clothing is long and flowing with many wraps, dresses and thigh-length shirts. Jewelry is silver or gold and is very complicated (different pieces may be connected by thin chains). Tikas (reddish dots in the middle of the forehead, made with makeup or a tattoo) are common on women. Anklets and body jewelry (jewelry which is temporarily glued to the skin) featuring jewels, silver and circular patterns. Nostril (not septum) piercings. Colorful veils which partially hide the face are common for women. The point of this style is to make people look sophisticated and exotic.

Goth- Clothing is almost entirely black. Hair is usually black, long on both men and women. Men are clean-shaven. Makeup is common on both sexes (although women wear more). Makeup is dark and accentuates pale skin. Lipstick is usually blood-red or black. Jewelry is silver, much of it has points, barbs or cutting edges. Rings with claws on them are common. Much of the jewelry uses holy-symbols from living or past cultures. Capes and cloaks common when it is cold. Clothing is often torn. Use of fishnet material on shirts, stockings and as gloves is common. Nails are usually long (both sexes). Women's shirts are usually designed to show cleavage. The point of this style is to enhance certain features (e.g. lips, eyes, cleavage) and to make people look dangerous, depressed and aroused.

Corp/Mod- Hair cut short & styled (parted for men, bangs for women). Bowler style black felt hats are common. Business attire: suits, dress slacks, neckties. Most of the clothing is black. Briefcases and expensive cigarettes are common accessories. The point of this style is to look sophisticated and professional.

Gang Old School- Very lose fitting clothing of thick materials (e.g. denim) with sleeves long enough to partially conceal the hands. Sport team jerseys are common, as are baseball caps. Tattoos are small and serve of marks of important events (gang membership, people the person killed, etc.) rather than decorations. Clothing is usually dark or jungle-camouflage. Body jewelry is gold. Hard kneepads and elbow pads are common. Sunglasses and bandanas conceal the eyes. The point is to show off personal wealth, identify oneself as a gang member and to wear clothing which aids in urban guerilla warfare (camouflage, elbow and knee pads, concealed hands and eyes, etc.)

Straight- Straight is a style which focuses on simplicity. Men wear crew-cuts, women cut their hair short or wear it in pony-tails. Jewelry and makeup is minimal. Clothing is solid colors: black, white, beiges, reds and greens. Clothing seldom has logos on it. Clothes fit snugly and nothing hangs loose. Turtle-neck sweaters, t-shirts and tank-tops are common. Pants are simple slacks. Many sexologists wear this style, seeing it as the most unobtrusive and non-degrading way to show off the human form. The point of this style is to wear clothing which is cheap, easy and comfortable while still looking good.

Sleepy Style

The newest trendy style among young people, especially young club-goers, is the "sleepy" style. Hair is mussed up and flattened down on the head, there is little or no makeup, eyes are kept squinted as often as possible, clothing is pajamas (unbuttoned to show chest and midriff). Other affectations include teddy bears, pillows and blankets. This style is not seem very often outside of clubs (it is not a general "street wear" fashion).

Graffiti

In Brief- Art, self-expression, communication and historical records all in one.

Timeline
1930s- First gang graffiti in US.
1949 – Spraypaint invented
1968 – Julio 204, first city 'writer'.
1970 – Taki 183 makes the news, makes 'writing' famous.
1971 – First writing crews.
1973 – City spends $10 million removing graffiti.
1973 – Strong anti-graffiti laws.
1972 – First burner (large mural masterpiece).
1982 – First large scale wars between writing crews.
1985 – NY writing declines after crack cocaine takes over the lives of more urban youth.

History- Historically, there have been two different (but never completely separate) types of graffiti in the city. Gang graffiti has been seen in the city's poor ethnic neighborhoods before World War II. Gang graffiti was meant to communicate information to other gang members: it was incomprehensible to most non-gang members and even to gang members from other areas. As time went on, the language of gang graffiti became more complex and more things could be communicated with gang graffiti: the limits of turf, threats and challenges to other groups, listings of the members of gangs, memorials for dead gang members, and even descriptions of battles or other accomplishments. An increasing involvement of street gangs in drug sales spread a more uniform gang culture around the country and made it so that people from one city could often understand much gang graffiti from another city.

In New York, in the late 1960s, graffiti as a unique form of self-expression was invented. Early "taggers" or "writers" would write their nickname (and the street they were from) on anything and everything they could. The media took the story and ran with it, making writing increasingly popular. A whole lifestyle evolved: kids would shoplift cans of spraypaint, form crews, spraypaint huge murals on subway cars or buildings. Crews would even get in to bloodless "wars" where they would paint their own marks over each other's marks.

Graffiti itself was also an act of daring: putting graffiti up in gang turf, or somewhere where one risked being caught by authorities, or in a dangerous place proved the graffiti artist's bravery. Graffiti artists of the 1980's and 1990's were urban explorers, going in to tunnels, hopping barbed-wire fences, climbing bridges. Writers would often paint beautiful murals in places where nobody but other writers, homeless people living underground, and the occasional stray utility worker would ever see them. Many of these underground paintings are still there, a hundred years later, having outlasted many city buildings.

Because some of the murals created by writers were quite beautiful (at least to some) this lent some amount of respectability to graffiti writing. Some started using the phrase "graffiti artists." This term pissed off the property owners and city government, who were paying millions a year to clean up graffiti. Although the police continued to crack down on it, writing became the domain of kids of all social classes, not just poor kids.

Modern Graffiti- In the city today, graffiti continues to be something that crosses social and economic boundaries. Graffiti ranges from a bare, utilitarian scrawl meant to convey a message (even if the message is as simple as "I was here") to large, attractive murals that take twenty to thirty cans of paint. Much graffiti falls somewhere in-between: it tries to send a message as well as showing the skill of the writer.

Some graffiti uses easy to understand pictures, symbols and language. Others use symbols that only members of a particular group might understand. Others use a "language" of symbols known only by experienced writers. At its best, graffiti is not only beautiful, it is a historical document that skilled graffiti artists can read in the same way one might read a newspaper.

Slang

In Brief- Borg = artificial, Black = underground, see p.446 for more.

The culture of the streets has developed several new slang words, mostly in response to new things that there weren't simple terms to describe. Most groups in the city, gang and non-gang, tend to have slang to describe the things they deal with in particular. An analysis of city slang can provide insights in to the worldview of the people who speak it.

"Borg"- Many slang words use the suffix "borg," taken from the word cyborg. "Borg" indicates that something has been replaced by something else artificial. The X + Borg formula commonly refers to both the technological measure and the person benefiting from it. For instance, the Skin Borg gang are people who wear high tech armor almost 24 hours a day, replacing the weakness of human skin with the strength and powers of high tech materials. Death Borgs are people who have had their normal processes of death replaced by a bomb which explodes upon death. Kid Borgs is a term used to describe people who use mental copying technology to move their minds in to the bodies of children.

"Black"- Many slang terms have this prefix, as in "black market." It typically indicates that something is illegal and being done underground. E.g. a "black corp" is a division of a corporation that operates in secret, using illegal means to make money for the parent corp. "Grey" is used to describe things that dance the line between being legal and illegal.

"Hunting for Souls"

In city slang, "hunting for someone's soul" means trying to take away someone's free will. A person's free will can be removed by means of drugs, mental programs, brainwashing, psychic attacks or implants. **Drugs** can temporarily inhibit free will, but cannot remove it altogether. **Mental programs** are expensive and take a long time to install, but can let a person command (e.g. with spoken "keywords") any element of a person's mental functioning. Mental programs can turn on or off emotions, paralyze people, block memories, or other nasty things only limited by current knowledge about the brain. **Brainwashing** is low tech but effective. It involves forcing someone say what you want them to believe, and then slowly reducing their mental capacity until they start believing what they are saying. **Psychics** can control what people, think, feel, do or even believe, but rarely for more than a second. **Implants**, put in people against their will, can let people monitor, punish and even kill by remote control.

Philosophy

In Brief- The city gives many opportunities for philosophy. Eccentrics and street people have many philosophies. It could be said that everyone in the city has their own philosophy, whether or not they can put it in words.

Eccentrics are stereotyped as the city's philosophers. The classic image of an Eccentric is someone who sits back and observes everything going on in the city, and draws conclusions from it about abstract subjects such as human nature or ethics. For this person, the anarchy of the city is a laboratory of all the principles of human life. Every possible combination of peoples, motivations and situations come together at some point or another. There is also the unregulated use of technologies that raise important philosophical questions. Mental copying technology raises questions about human identity and the idea of a unique soul. Mental installer technologies, psychics and drugs raise questions about free will. Virtual Reality raises questions about what is real, and under what circumstances reality is really necessary. AI and genetic engineering raises questions about what is human.

One very inaccurate stereotype is that while the rich think about philosophy, the poor do not. In fact, homeless street people think about philosophy as much as any Eccentric. It is mostly boredom that prompts thinking: philosophy (along with sex and poetry) is one of the few free past-times available to street people. Street people have many philosophies and opinions, though they often resemble "folk wisdom" more than academic philosophy. Rather than trying to extract abstract theorems from a priori logic, street philosophers try to extract abstract principles from things they see around them. A street person might come up with some simple rule (e.g. "'free' just means you don't know what the cost is right now") and then spend hours delightfully pointing out every real-life story in which that rule holds true. Street people entertain each other for hours discussing what is the best way to deal with certain people or situations; what is right and wrong; what parts of people's behavior are innate and what parts are a reaction to the environment; what are the core motivations of human beings; and what makes things aesthetically pleasing.

Everyone in the city, though, has some theory, strategy, opinion, explanation or worldview which is unique to them. Many gangs have their own philosophies, though each individual member puts his or her own spin on that philosophy (or, in some cases, rejects it altogether). Groups sometimes teach their philosophy through lectures, but most often they teach it by the way they act, the goals they seek and the way they deal with problems.

The Ten Worst Ways To Die

By Carl Finnix (Roofer Founder and Battle General)

10. "I guess some of the plagues we've had around here have been pretty bad. You remember that one we had last Summer, the one where you bleed out and the blood's all black, and you go to the doctor and the doctor says 'Your organs are dead, so all we can do is give you a bunch of pain killers.' That one was pretty bad."

9. "And the Drakes have some pretty nasty poisons. There's this one that you just go crazy, like the worst possible drug trip, and then you have a heart attack and die. Come to think of it, I guess the Drakes are pretty cool. I mean, they have this shit but most of the time they use poison that kills you painlessly."

8. "There's that disease, the one that gives you boils all over and the people who gave it to you charge you a thousand dollars for the cure. I hear it feels like there's bugs crawling under your skin. It could be worse, there could be real bugs crawling under your skin. They're probably working on that next."

7. "A buddy of mine once got put in an oven and cooked. The sad thing is that if he could have just grabbed on to those heating coils and yanked them out of the wall, he could have saved himself, but they was just too hot to touch. So he died knowing the one way to save himself, but being unable to do it."

6. "I guess Mauler addicts have it pretty bad. I mean, you just get dumber and dumber and you can feel your being a person just slipping away. Then, when you finally forget how to buy drugs, the withdrawals are so bad that you end up scratching yourself to death."

5. "There's that leash program. You know, that mental program that you put in someone's head and you can command them. You can make them feel all kinds of pleasure, or all kinds of pain, just by saying a certain code word, and there's nothing they can do about it. Or you could just paralyze them and stomp them to death, and they can't do nothing."

4. "Being eaten by rats has gotta suck. Like, if you go in to a place with a lot of rats, and if you get paralyzed, like a mental program malfunctions. The rats are gonna come sniffing around to see if you'll do anything, and if you don't do nothing they'll come a little closer, and if you don't do nothing they'll take a bit out of you. Then all of a sudden there's a dozen of them chewing down on you."

3. "I've heard that really powerful psychics can just take over your head and make you stab yourself. That's gotta be pretty bad, especially if you don't even know who the psychic is who's doing it to you. Say there's a bunch of people around you. It could be any one of them."

2. I saw this guy once and someone had fucked him up good, like surgically, you know. I once got told it would cost two hundred dollars to put my nose back straight, so what they did to this guy must have cost a million dollars. I'd hate to be so fucked up that I would want to do that to somebody else. The guy was just… I can't describe it. Not like a person, not like any animal I ever heard of. He couldn't walk, he just kind of flopped around. A foot must have seemed like a mile to him."

1. "The worst, I guess, is my dad. He wasn't tortured or anything, so maybe it wasn't that bad, but it makes me the saddest because I know the guy had it in him to be something great. When I hear about these young guys and girls fighting Colins, making deals with corporate operatives, negotiating peace between warring gangs, solving murders, shit like that, I imagine that my dad could be doing that. But all he ever did was sit around in VR all day. He thought he was a good parent, but he wasn't even in the real world enough to realize that he wasn't. I don't know… maybe torture's better. Torture, you go nice and crazy after a few days and you don't really feel it so much anymore. And at least you did something with your life."

Rumors

In Brief- Rumors travel to every corner of the city and are an important, though inaccurate, source of news.

Benefits- There is no newspaper for people on the streets in the city, no news service that keeps them up to date with the happenings of the city. People gain almost all of their knowledge about what's going on in the city from word of mouth.

One reason that people like to have friends outside of their own gang or social grouping is that they can receive important information. There are so many bonds of friendships between different gangs, groups and social classes that people are seldom more than four or five degrees of separation away from any knowledge within the city. Like the decentralized black market, the speed, efficiency and usefulness of rumors in the city surprises many outsiders.

Flaws- Rumors have their limitations. One common problem is that, as the rumors are passed on, theories are stated as facts. This is why Matt Timm, known as the street's best known expert on the moles, refuses to speak any sort of conjecture about the moles. He has seen too many theories and inferences stated as known fact. Another problem is that the source of a rumor often becomes lost or misstated (some of the "facts" about moles are incorrectly attributes to Matt). Another common problem is that while the basic message of a rumor rarely changes, specific facts (and especially numbers) can change radically. Of a hot rumor, a person will probably hear multiple versions, and will probably choose the most dramatic version to repeat to his or her friends. The death of three in a gang battle can easily become the death of one hundred. This caused problems when many people refused to believe information about the large number of Colins prowling the city, believing that those numbers must be exaggerations.

The most intelligent way for someone in the city to deal with rumors is to take them as a warning that something might be the case. A rumor, at best, will prompt someone to seek out further information.

Time

In Brief- Morning: gang members sleep, addicts buy drugs. Afternoon: gang members take care of personal business. Evening: gang activity starts. Madrugada (midnight to dawn): mostly gang members on the streets, and near dawn the city is quiet.

For city residents, a day is broken down in to four parts:

Morning- (dawn to noon) Most people in the city are asleep. Most gang members sleep through morning. If they haven't arrived home before dawn, they arrive shortly after and go to sleep. Addicts wake up, their bloodstreams empty of drugs, and desperately seek out their next fix. When VR Addicts and other shut-ins are forced to go outside, they choose this time of day, knowing that it is the safest.

Afternoon- (noon to sunset) Many gang members sleep in a few hours in to the afternoon. Afternoon is usually thought of as a leisurely time of day. People who have "business" to take care of do it now: errands, training, shopping, paying bills, doing welfare paperwork, working at part-time jobs, etc. Street People (who typically work 12 or more hours a day) get started working. Addicts have comfortable levels of drugs in their bloodstreams and are out trying to get food and money.

Evening- (sunset to midnight) This is the most active time on the streets. When something important happens on the streets, it most likely happens in the evening, and anyone who wants to watch or be a part of city life is out. As sun falls, gang members head toward their turf to meet up with their friends. The Arcadians start assembling in their arcades. The Risen meet up in their packs. Boarders start showing up in parking lots and doing tricks. The Humankalorie assemble in Oht arenas and set up matches. Later in the evening, when all the gang members are together, discussions turn to serious gang business, and when gang members set off to make war it is usually around 10 pm. In the evening, all other types of "street life" are out in force, from charity workers, to freelancers, to sex workers.

Madrugada- A Spanish word, now part of city vocabulary. Madrugada is generally thought of as the time that weird things happen. "Madrugada stories" is a slang term for any tale of the weird, scary or unexplained. As it gets later, and dawn approaches, there are fewer and fewer people on the streets. People out to make money (jacks, sex workers, etc.) go home, as there are too few people on the streets. Addicts typically find some place safe to take the last of their drugs and crash. Those left on the streets tend to be those who are under the influence of stimulant drugs, those who are heading back from some cross-town excursion, and those whose lives are in some sort of crisis.

CITY GEOGRAPHY

In Brief- "The City" is the island of Manhattan in New York. 2 by 11 miles.

Manhattan

What is known popularly as "the city" is the island of Manhattan. The city is approximately 1.75 miles long and 11.8 miles wide, 19 square miles altogether. In the 1660s, the size of the island was increased by sinking old ships and covering them with dirt. In the 2040s, due to rising ocean levels, about 5 square miles around the city were partially submerged (now known in city slang as "the sunken city").

Manhattan is on the East coast of the United States, surrounded by rivers (the Hudson to the West, the Harlem and East Rivers to the East) with New York Bay on the South. Manhattan runs Southeast to Northeast. The Bronx, Brooklyn and Newark are across the water from the city. Manhattan is part of the state of New York, the bulk of which lies to the North of Manhattan.

Manhattan was once part of a system of boroughs which made up New York City. After the reformation, Manhattan was changed from a borough to an independent city. In the early 2060s, as people were setting up prestigious communities outside the city, congressional districts were redrawn (gerrymandered) so that Manhattan would never have its own representative.

Most of Manhattan has a very easy to understand street plan. Streets run roughly East to West and are numbered from 1st Street (Southernmost) to 220th Street (Northernmost). Avenues run roughly North to South, from 1st Avenue on the West to 11th Avenue on the East end of the island. The names of most avenues change while in Harlem, having been renamed after figures in African American history. The regular street plan dissolves in to a tangle of named streets at the very Southern tip of the city (the very old financial district) and the very Northern tip of the city (the hilly and once very wealthy Inwood district).

City Access

In Brief- Only two bridges and one tunnel still work. They have automated gates that keep guns and explosives from moving in and out of the city.

Most of the tunnels and bridges leading to the city were destroyed by rising ocean levels and by terrorist action during the Freedom War. There are now only three ways to access Manhattan by foot or land vehicle:

-**George Washington Bridge** connects the East side of the Inwood/Washington Heights neighborhood (in the North) to the Bronx, across the Harlem river.

-**The Holland Tunnel**, downtown, on the East, connects to New Jersey.

-**The Manhattan Bridge**, downtown, on the West, connects to Brooklyn. This bridge also provides freight-trains access to the city.

These two bridges and one tunnel contain automated contraband stops, of the kind built all over the country during the 2040s. These stops have heavy metal gates which close to enclose a vehicle while it is scanned by x-rays and chemical sniffers. If firearms are detected, an automated system informs the driver that firearms are illegal in the city, and allows the person to back out. If drugs, explosives or biological weapons are detected, the gates stay closed until a team of heavily armed Bridge and Tunnel Authority officers can come from their office in Queens. Trains traveling over the Manhattan bridge are scanned as they go through.

Travel to and from the city by means of water is nearly impossible. Powerful currents flow through the partially submerged buildings of the sunken city and any vehicle trying to come through risks being smashed in to the sides the buildings. The city is also very strict about issuing permits to fly over the city. Usually only the National Guard, CDC and medical helicopters are allowed to fly over and land in the city.

Inwood/Washington Heights

In Brief- Northernmost city, old Indie neighborhood with large industrial/railroad complex, Skin Borg turf.

The Neighborhoods of Inwood and Washington Heights form the Northernmost tip of the island. They run South to 165th Street. South of this is Harlem.

Inwood, in the North, was (until a few years ago) a sought-after indie neighborhood. There was a quiet residential district on the hills in the Northwest, dotted with expensive homes. The rising ocean levels did little damage here. Also on the hills is the Cloisters, a museum built from pieces of European monasteries and now home to the Lumens cult. To the East of the hilly area is a large industrial area, with some abandoned factories, some in-use factories, some warehouses and a large railyard.

Secret Geography of the City

For only $300, you can purchase a pair of geo-info goggles. These goggles have GPS (global positioning system) and gyroscope chips inside, so they know where you are and what you are looking at. Spend a few bucks more on a "tourist chip" and glowing green arrows and words will appear everywhere you look. Look over here and a green box will pop up informing you that Frank Lloyd Wright designed this building more than a century ago. Look this way and you will see that on this spot was a wall of sharpened logs, built to protect early settlers from Indians, from which Wall Street took it's name.

If you have some black market contacts, you can buy a chip designed for police officers. Look to the apartment building to your right and you will see that a parolee lives here, having served a sentence for conspiring to smuggle weapons in to the city. Composite crime rates are available at the turn of a tiny wheel on the side of the glasses: this alley sees 0.62 murders a year, turn the wheel and you will see that it will play host to 2.41 muggings.

Imagine that such chips are available for the geographic knowledge from the minds of other city residents. Plug in the chip for a VR addict and you might see the most brightly lit streets, the closest payphones to dial 911 from, and a bright beacon shining high above the safety of home.

A gang member chip would plaster the walls with tiny green sigils to remind you what gang holds claim to this part of town. Look up the street and you might see the solid line of a well established turf, the fuzzy line of a poorly established turf and the zigzagging lines and spinning green daggers of a war-zone. Major hangouts for the members of various gangs would pop up.

The chip for a street person would be a constant barrage of pointers and signs showing places to hide, places to stay warm, places to get food, places to beg, places with dumpsters overflowing with food or salvageables, automated recycling booths, and the meandering lines of the well established daily routes of friends and enemies.

An addict chip would show monochrome green-and-black head-shots of the pushers gangs that operate on each couple of blocks. Under the headshots would be little notes: "likes to beat people for no reason", "cuts stuff with baking powder", "probably high on god killer" or "has got a limp from some recent injury."

The info pulled out of people's heads could make thousands of chips, each with a detailed and unique geography of the city. Outreach workers would see places where the homeless like to sleep. Perverts would see places to buy illegal pornography, hire prostitutes or meet with brothel owners for a (blindfolded) trip to the brothels. Corporate agents and LBRA corp hunters would see corporate logos hovering over every store, apartment building, even vending machine. Hackers would see a tangle of green lines, information snaking under the streets of the city, ready to be tapped, ending in paycomputers, security cameras, remote-controlled security systems and more. Runners would see signs pointing out every major shortcut through the city. Thieves would see tiny symbols plastered on each building: stick figures holding clubs would mean a security guard, a camera would mean surveillance, a suitcase would mean the residents are on vacation.

There are billions of pieces of geographical information about the city, some are known to all, some are available to anyone who cares enough to inquire, and some are closely guarded secrets. Some say that there are many cities, all coexisting all at once, all mutually invisible.

Rail Yard

Inwood Hill

Cloisters

Yeshiva University

HENRY HUDSON PKWY

BROADWAY

Harlem River

Inwood/
Washington
Heights

GEORGE
WASHINGTON
BRIDGE

181ST ST

Trinity Cemetary

Hudson River

BROADWAY

Columbia Medical Center

165TH ST

Bronx

145TH ST

Club Champion

City Orphanage

New York City Urgent Care Clinic

MALCOLM X BLVD

135TH ST

Harlem

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL BLVD

FREDRICK DOUGLASS BLVD

Police Headquarters

Columbia University
Riverside Church

MARTIN LUTHER
KING JR. BLVD

116TH ST

RIVERSIDE DR

WEST END AVE

AMSTERDAM AVE

COLUMBUS AVE

CENTRAL PARK WEST

110TH ST

5TH AVE

PARK AVE

3RD AVE

96TH ST

LEX AVE

The Pond

Guggenheim Museum

Metropolitain Museum of Art

86TH ST

Upper
West Side

the
Hole

Upper
East Side

79TH ST

72ND ST

MADISON AVE

LEXINGTON AVE

2ND AVE

Met/Lincoln Center/Philharmonic

59TH ST

57TH ST

50TH ST

Midtown

42ND ST

Ritz Tower
St. Bartholomew's Cathedral
St. Patrick's Cathedral
Grand Central Station
Chrysler Building

Inter-Continental New York Hotel
Essex Hotel
Plaza Hotel

11TH AVE

34TH ST

10TH AVE

BROADWAY

Port Authority Bus Terminal
Times Square
New York City Public Library
Madison Square Garden
Macy's

9TH AVE

23RD ST

New York City Central Hospital

14TH ST

6TH AVE

Painted Rock Bar

Christopher Street

Downtown

BROADWAY

Empire State Building

HOUSTON ST

N.Y.U.
Washington Square Park
Subway Service Center

Madison Square Park

Flatiron Building

HOLLAND TUNNEL

the Bowery

MANHATTAN BRIDGE

China Town
Criminal Courts Building
Sattelite Repair Corporation Office
Old City Hall
Wall Street
Human Services Group Office

Workin' Late Bar and Grill

Brooklyn

South of Inwood is Washington Heights. This was once a neighborhood for successful blacks who moved out of Harlem (to the South). In recent times, it has been primarily a lower class area with a high density of apartment buildings. 181st Street in Washington Heights was the birthplace of the gang that would become known as the Skin Borgs. The Skin Borgs have expanded rapidly in recent years, taking over all of the Inwood and Washington Heights areas and some of Harlem. The Skin Borgs destroyed or forced out every other gang in the area. Most of the indies fled Inwood when the Skin Borgs took over and the whole area is economically depressed.

The buildings in this part of town are mostly residential, with a number of large housing projects. There are trees on many of the sidewalks. The most impressive buildings in this part of town are abandoned, and include a football stadium and an old Jewish college.

Harlem

In Brief- Old black and Hispanic area, North of the hole.

This district runs from 165th Street to 110th Street. Historically, Harlem was an African American ghetto, founded by laborers who were brought in to build the first subway. In the 1920s and 1930s Harlem was the center of a "black renaissance," where much of modern African American art, music and culture was born. Later, it became known as an African American ghetto. In the 1920s, Puerto Rican immigrants started moving to East Harlem, later followed by other Spanish speaking immigrants, and the area soon became known as Spanish Harlem or El Barrio.

145th Street in Harlem is the scene of the blockade of the Skin Borgs by the Purists, Hummingbirds and Immortals. The street is a war zone with battles happening every day. Other gangs with a presence in Harlem include the Orphans, Immortals, Math Addicts, Humankalorie and Bleeders.

Harlem has the city's highest percentage of old brownstones. These are thin, two or three story buildings, built in tight rows during the 19th century. They are made from reddish sandstone (which has turned brown from pollution). These buildings are attractive, but have cramped interiors and no elevators.

Upper West/East Side

In Brief- To the East and West of the hole (Central Park) are now Indie neighborhoods.

This part of town runs from 110th street to 59th street, South of Harlem and North of Midtown. It is divided down the center by the hole (Central Park), forming three columns.

The Upper East/West sides are now a mostly Indie territory, with a lot of small homes owned by Indies, a few high class condos or apartment buildings, and shops that cater to Indies. This is the closest the city has to a "wealthy neighborhood" though there are just as many street people and addicts. Indie gangs rule most blocks and keep them relatively peaceful. The Sexologists and Arcadians rule the Upper East Side. The Dragons, Omniscients and Bleeders rule the West Side.

Before the Freedom Wars, real estate near Central Park was the highly valued. Near the park, on either side, were many museums and mansions (homes to millionaires and foreign embassies). Today, most of these museums and mansions are in ruins, victims of Freedom War violence or random destruction by the Dragons. Farther away from the park, near the East Hudson river, are working-class brownstone apartment buildings, breweries and small factories. In between is a nice Indie area, with many restaurants, boutiques, shops and nice apartment buildings. There are trees on the sidewalks. The apartment buildings were mostly built before WWII. They are handsome, 10-30 story co-ops with high ceilings, arched doorways and hardware floors.

The Hole

In Brief- What was once a huge rectangular park in the middle of the city is now fenced off ruins and untamed wilderness.

Approximately in the middle of the city, between the Upper West and Upper East Sides, is what was once Central Park. This was one of the largest urban parks ever, approximately 2500 ft. by 13250 ft. It had a museum and two large bodies of water. During the Freedom Wars, Freedom Army forces started building a complex of buildings in the hole. The complex was supposed to incorporate the beauty of the park and much of it was underground. Some of the buildings were in operation and some were being constructed when the rebels blew up several of the buildings. This act brought on the end of the Freedom Army occupation of the East Coast. The hole, as it is known today, is ruins choked with unmaintained greenery. Despite the nuclear cleanup preformed by the restoration committee, the hole is slightly radioactive and the hole is surrounded by a barbed wire fence. The Keepers, a street family, consider the hole to be their territory and guard it viciously, so few people go in to the hole. See p.385 for more.

Midtown

In Brief- South of the park, has the red light district (hotels, prostitutes), Indie and Well gangs.

Midtown runs from 59th to 34th street. The Upper West and East Sides (and the Hole) are to the North and Downtown is to the South. Midtown was once the tourist capital of the city, dotted with luxury hotels, massive department stores, trendy neighborhoods and architectural landmarks. Today Midtown still plays host to the city's few tourists, as well as most of the city's sex industry and the Tea Drinkers, Freaks and Risen.

On the South end are the ruins of Macy's, once the largest store in the world, now mostly demolished. On the very Eastern edge, near Risen territory, is the New York Public Library. It is closed to the general public, but historians make occasional pilgrimages to the library to search through its collections of old paper-printed books. Nearby is Rockefeller center, a selection of large buildings (the largest being the RCA building at 70 stories). Impressive churches of Midtown include St. Patrick's Cathedral (a Catholic church, built in the 1800s, still in use) and St. Bartholomew's (which is now a meeting place for the Risen).

To the East, in Risen territory, is the Chrysler Building (a 77-story high skyscraper built in 1928-1930) and Grand Central Station (once a major transportation hub, the Freedom Army bolted the doors because they feared it would give rebels access to tunnels under the city). The half-collapsed ruins of the United Nations building lies, partially submerged, in the sunken city to the East.

Inwood/
Washington
Heights

Hudson River

Harlem

Upper
West Side

Midtown

Downtown

Harlem River

Bronx

the
Hole

Upper
East Side

Brooklyn

Skin Dorgs

Purist

Hummingbirds

Orphan

Math Addict

Immortal

Dragons

Omnisciens

Arcadians

Tea Drinkers

Risen

Red Light District

Freaks

Animalists

Gene Junkers

Needle Funsters

Drakes

Dreamtime

Technophile

Dowry

HENRY HUDSON PKWY

BROADWAY

GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

181ST ST

165TH ST

145TH ST

135TH ST

MALCOLM X BLVD

ADAM C POWELL BLVD

FREDRICK DOUGLAS BLVD

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BLVD

116TH ST

110TH ST

5TH AVE

PARK AVE

3RD AVE

LEX AVE

CENTRAL PARK WEST

RIVERSIDE DR

WEST END AVE

AMSTERDAM AVE

COLUMBUS AVE

96TH ST

86TH ST

2ND AVE

LEXINGTON AVE

MADISON AVE

79TH ST

72ND ST

59TH ST

57TH ST

50TH ST

42ND ST

BROADWAY

34TH ST

23 ST

14TH ST

11TH AVE

10TH AVE

9TH AVE

AVE D DISTRICT

HOUSTON ST.

HOLLAND TUNNEL

MANHATTAN BRIDGE

Red Light District- South of the hole, N. of 23rd St., W. of 8th Ave., E. of 8th Avenue. This is the part of town where most prostitutes operate from. The Red Light District is also home to adult book stores, strip clubs and pornography studios. The red light district is centered around Times Square (the intersection of Broadway, 7th Ave., and 42nd St.).

People come from throughout the city and throughout this part of the country to partake in the city's sex industry. The average "tourist" is a businessman from a nearby private city, corporate living center or high-class neighborhood, who wants to spend the weekend in the city doing drugs and sleeping with prostitutes. Not everyone in the red light district wants sex or pornography, some are people staying in the city who want a cheap hotel room. Accommodations in the red light district range from seedy converted office buildings that cost $30 a night (or $10 an hour) to former luxury hotels (like the Ritz-Carlton, the Hotel Wellington, the Salisbury, Park Lane and the Plaza Hotel) that overlook the Hole and cost $60 or more per night. In each of these former luxury hotels, the management can only afford to maintain a small portion of the hotel (usually the first few floors) but the parts that are maintained are clean and retain a little of their former grandeur. Only the best-dressed prostitutes in the city are allowed to hang around in the lobbies of these hotels and harass potential customers.

Broadway is one of the busiest streets in the city, and Times Square was once the heart of shopping and tourism in the city. Huge buildings, including the New York Times building, were built around Times Square, mostly to impress visitors. Multi-story high billboards and electronic signs are now cracked or peeling. Most of the buildings have spacious commercial frontage, which is now taken up by strip clubs and porn shops. Although half the neon lights are out, Times Square is still the best lit part of the city. All around Times Square there are old theatres and television studios which are now mostly used for creating pornography. There are dozens of theatres, some of which are forcefully co-opted by the Freaks for stage shows during the Festival of the Freak. Carnegie Hall is a famous old music studio which, although boarded up most of the time, is sometimes rented out to legitimate musical groups in the city who want to hold recitals.

Downtown

In Brief- Southern tip of the city, home to the bowery (large street people area), homosexual district, financial district, many skyscrapers.

Downtown Manhattan, which is everything South of 34th Street, is the most varied section of town, with commercial centers, industrial complexes, old residential neighborhoods and old skid-row neighborhoods. Less than half of the area of downtown is gang territory, making it the lowest concentration in the city. Downtown is also the oldest part of the city. Street gangs fought bloody battles here in the mid 1800s. At the very Southern tip, the regular street plan dissolves in to a tangle of ancient streets.

Large portions along the West side are actively used industrial complexes, employing many of the city's working classes (who live in corporate owned apartment buildings nearby). The majority of downtown is commercial, and though the tallest skyscrapers are in midtown, downtown boasts the highest concentration of skyscrapers. The residential areas are mostly very old ethnic neighborhoods, and most are now occupies by well

gangs (the Technophiles, Animalists and Needle Punks). Downtown has the Holland Tunnel (to the West) and the Manhattan Bridge (to the East), two of the three working ways in and out of the city.

Residential Neighborhoods- Downtown's residential neighborhoods had the city's first ethnic neighborhoods, and some have seen many groups of immigrants come through. The neighborhoods to the West (Chelsea, Soho, Greenwich Village) are generally "trendier." Although they have their share of Victorian tenements and old industrial buildings, they also have a lot of nicely renovated buildings that serve as Indie apartments. Loft space is plentiful, and a lot of the city's small "art scene" happens in small cafes and galleries here.

The Eastern residential neighborhoods (Lower East Side, Little Italy, China Town) have mostly been swallowed up by the growing Bowery (see below), yet some of their ethnic population and unique character remains. These neighborhoods are known for their high concentration of old tenement buildings. These buildings feature commercial frontage, party walls (walls shared with other buildings), no elevators, and dim interiors. Walking in these neighborhoods, one sees blocks filled completely with four to six story tenement buildings, they are mostly red and grey brick and the front of the buildings are covered with a maze of windows, ledges and fire-escapes.

Chinatown has a significantly different architecture from the other residential districts. Chinatown has some of the oldest buildings in the city that are still standing. The buildings are very cramped, even by city standards, and the architecture shows an unmistakable Chinese influence. The Chinese population here is still very high, enough so that corporate chain stores operating here find it profitable to advertise their services with Chinese neon signs.

Homosexual District- Originally centered around Christopher street (in what used to be called West Village), the homosexual district has grown to encompass most of the West Village and most of Greenwich Village. The homosexual district is roughly triangular, bordered by Greenwich Ave. on the Northeast, Christopher St. on the Southeast and the sunken city on the West. Many gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transvestites, including members of most of the city's gangs, live in apartments here. There are many bars and cafes here that are hangouts for the city's homosexual population (and heterosexuals who simply enjoy the atmosphere). There are many nice restaurants in this district.

Bowery- An ancient skid-row neighborhood, the Bowery has grown since the massive exodus from the city in the early 2060s. This huge section of town is home to the Black Meds, Crackers and thousands of other homeless street people. The current Bowery is sprawled along the Southeast corner of the city, incorporating the Lower East Side and most of Little Italy and Chinatown.

The buildings in the bowery are drab, almost all abandoned. There are many ruins of ancient shops, bars, theatres, music halls and hotels. The buildings still in operation are bars, liquor stores, churches, shelters, and cheap hotels. Even those buildings still in use are very old and weathered and are on the verge of falling apart. There are many fenced off vacant lots (now taken over by groups of homeless people) and piles of rubble from buildings that fell down. Many buildings show scars: holes that have been boarded over, buildings that shared a wall that have been torn down (leaving doorways that open up on to empty space), spots where crumbling red brick have been quickly replaced with concrete, etc.

As much as street people in the city have a culture, the Bowery is a center of that culture. The Black Meds, the street family that provides black market medical services to other street people, live here. The Bowery has the highest concentration of Street People of any part of the city, the majority of the (numerous) abandoned buildings have Street People living in them.

On the Southwest corner of the Bowery is the Criminal Courts Building, the only courthouse still in use in the city. It is nicknamed the Tombs, has 835 jail cells and is shaped much like a ziggurat.

In the middle of the Bowery is the Manhattan Bridge. When cops pick up homeless people in the nice neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Queens, the homeless people are usually given a choice: go to jail or go to Manhattan. Those that choose Manhattan are driven over the Manhattan Bridge and dropped off there. This part of town is sometimes known as "the drop off point." At any given time, hundreds of new city residents are sleeping on the streets or living in cheap hotels near the drop-off point. Cult recruiters prowl this part of town in force, and it is a coveted location for pusher gangs.

Financial District- Located at the Southern tip of the city, this neighborhood was once a center of international commerce. The major pre-Freedom War corporations had huge complexes here. The streets here are very old, are much narrower than in the rest of the city (created for horse and buggy traffic) and do not conform to the city's regular street plan. The abundance of tall, blocky buildings and narrow streets make this the most claustrophobic part of the city, with only a tiny portion of sky visible from the streets.

More than half of the office buildings are abandoned. Of those that aren't, usually only the first few floors are in use. The Satellite Repair Corporation, the Human Services Group and most Y1s have offices here. In the North part of the Financial District is the civic center, an abandoned complex with the old City Hall, a park, commercial office buildings and hall of records.

Sunken City

In Brief- Rising ocean levels created a dangerous ring of semi-submerged buildings around the city.

This term is used to refer to all the urban areas in Manhattan and Roosevelt Island that were semi-submerged when ocean levels rose during the 2030s. The "sunken city" has eaten up all of Roosevelt Island (in the East River), several blocks around Downtown, a few blocks all along the East side of the island, several blocks on the East coast of Inwood/Washington Heights and a large bite from the very Northern tip of the island.

At the high-tide line, barbed wire fences, propped up by sandbags, are meant to keep people out of the sunken city. Many of the fences have been knocked down, and other have had holes cut in them. The water flowing through the sunken city is fast-moving, turbulent and typically very cold. Many people trying to wade through the sunken city are knocked down, sucked under and never seen again.

The Water Rats, an unborn family, live in the ruins and have secret ways to get there safely. See p.175 for more.

Suburbs

In Brief- Surrounding the city are gated communities, a private city, corporate living centers, business districts and upper-class neighborhoods.

During the land grab of the 2050s, large tracts of land in New York and New Jersey were bought up by corporations, gated communities and other private concerns. Areas once as old and dilapidated as Manhattan have been renovated and are now nice places to live.
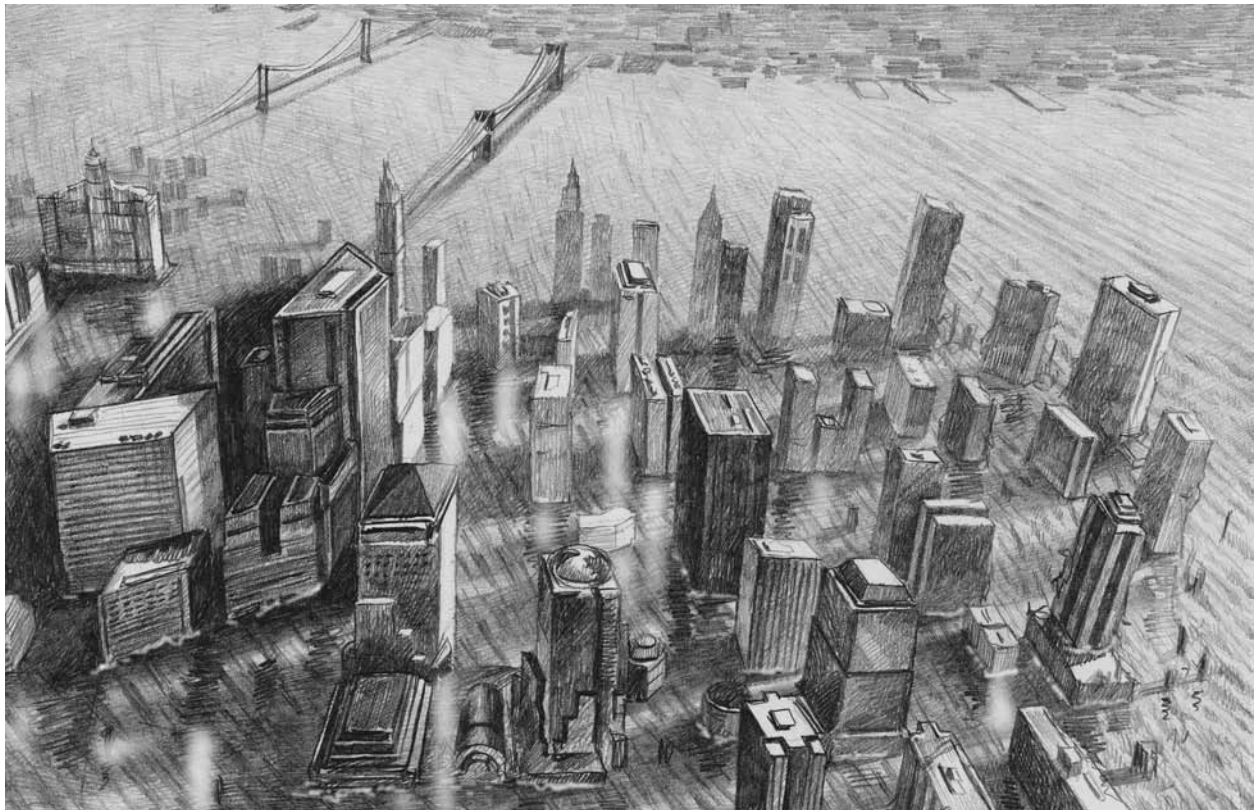
To the North of Manhattan is the Bronx. A large block in the middle of the Bronx is taken up by the JLD private Living Center, a gated pay-to-live city which is kept clean and safe by its corporate owners. In the Northwest Bronx is a Zyztech corporate living center. There are a few bad neighborhoods in the Bronx, mostly near those parts that have been eaten up by rising ocean levels.

Directly to the East of Manhattan is Queens. There is another Zyztech corporate living center. Most of the rest of Queens is a mix of government buildings, office buildings, and upper class residential neighborhoods. The cops in Queens actually have a significant budget and keep most crime out of the city.

To the South of Manhattan is Brooklyn. Much of Brooklyn is taken up by the Mendel and Jackson corporate living center. There are a few small (only a few blocks) pay-to-live private living centers. Mendel and Jackson and these living centers put funds in to a "business improvement district" that hires security guards to patrol Brooklyn. Brooklyn has a large bus terminal (which is how most poor people come to and leave the city). There is some low income housing, but the residents are mostly well shut-ins. Business improvement district security guards harass poor people who leave their apartments.

To the Southwest is Staten Island, most of which is taken up by the Martin 12 gated community.

To the West is New Jersey. The Plieden gated community is across the Hudson river from Inwood/Washington Heights. The rest of New Jersey is made up of wealthy residential neighborhoods, business districts, and tiny bad neighborhoods living in the shadows of their successful neighbors.

The City: Despised and Romanticized

Manhattan is the biggest and worst ghetto in the area. To people living outside the city, the city is emblematic of a bad neighborhood. Most have big misconceptions about the city. Many people once lived in the city and left as they saw it getting worse and worse. They assume that everyone living in the city is either an addict, a violent gang member, mentally deficient or crazy. City gangs are generally confused with the drug-selling gangs of the old times. There are urban legends about city gang members killing people for wearing the wrong color shirt.

On the other hand, people outside the city have a romantic attachment to the city. For poetry, art and fiction, having been created in the city is a major selling point. The corporate and gated community consumers believe that art produced in the city has a "gritty realism" and an "intensity" that can't be found anywhere else. Many artists come to the city specifically to make it big on the art scene.

Pulp novels about life in the city are very popular. Like romance novels they are cheap, poorly edited, distributed widely, not given much respect by the literary community and a new one comes out every week. Some of these novels are written by people living in the city, others by people who have never been in the city and all their knowledge is secondhand. Either way, the novels are usually very inaccurate. They take a few real facts about the city (like names of gangs or place names) and fill in the rest with fantasy, all the while claiming to be "accurate depictions of city life." Some are even sold as non-fiction. The novels are wild tales of crime, adventure, gang war and romance among ruggedly handsome criminals and gang members in the city. People of all ages read these novels, but they tend to be very popular among adolescents in gated communities and corporate living centers. Because the novels tend to idealize things such as violence and danger, many gated communities have banned these books for their underage members (although this doesn't always stop the teenagers from getting copies of these books).

CITY HISTORY

Pre-Conquest

In Brief- Hunters and Farmers lived on Manhattan, mostly wiped out during colonization.

American Indian tribes occupied the city since as long as 11,500 years ago. They were part of the Algonquin language group. They were semi-nomadic woodland hunters who raised corn and vegetables. They mostly hunted deer. One of these groups was called the Manhattan, from which the island takes its name. They traded intensely with neighboring groups and were members of a loose confederacy of tribes called the Wappingers. By the 1700s, malaria, smallpox and other diseases reduced the Wappinger Confederation to a small fraction of their original size.

Recent archeological evidence shows that the island's first contact with Caucasians may have been with Viking explorers around the 9th or 10th century.

Colonial

In Brief- A center of American history, grew quickly as a big city with big city problems.

Manhattan was "discovered" by European explorer Giovanni da Verrazano in 1524. The Dutch wiped out most of the island's native people in the 1600s. A Dutch fur trading post was opened near Manhattan in 1613. In 1626 Peter Minuit purchased the island of Manhattan from the Metoac tribe for some trade goods. The settlement here was called "New Amsterdam" by the Dutch. In 1664 it surrendered to British forces and was renamed New York.

A VIEW of the Present Seat of WAR, at and near NEW-YORK.

During the 1690's the city became a haven for pirates, it was also a center of trade for rum, coffee and African slaves. During the American Revolution, British forces captured and occupied New York, during which time a third of the city was destroyed by fires and somewhere near 10,000 revolutionary solders died in English prison ships anchored at New York.

When American forces defeated the British, New York was temporarily made the capital of the United States. After the capital moved, New York's economy grew wildly, based on coastal trade. The city grew quickly and experienced many modern urban problems (gangs, overpopulation, pollution) long before other parts of the country. During the civil war, New York was the site of draft riots with over 1,000 fatalities.

20th Century

In Brief- Huge immigrant population built huge infrastructure.

Throughout the 20th century, Manhattan was a city of extremes. The most wealthy people in the world came from all over the country to live in New York. At the same time, New York was a hub of immigration and every major wave of immigration to the US created new immigrant communities in the city. Most immigrant communities started off poor and slowly became wealthier, moving away and making room for a new wave of immigrants.

Cheap labor was plentiful in the city, especially during the depression. The rich people used this labor to build monuments to their own power: huge skyscrapers began to dominate the city skyline. The government used this labor to accomplish some of the most ambitious public works projects of the century: huge water tunnels brought water to the city. A massive subway system gave cheap, efficient public transportation to the city.

In the late 20th century, Manhattan was an area that was constantly reinventing itself. In the space of a few decades, decrepit neighborhoods would become gentrified and would be trendy upper-middle class neighborhoods. At the same time, nice neighborhoods would be taken over by drugs and crime and turn in to ghettos.

Early 21st Century

In Brief- Urban problems worsened in 2030s and 2040s.

Urban problems such as crime, disease and poverty continued to grow worse throughout the early 21st century. Despite this, Manhattan remained a "hip" place to live and a birthplace of new cultural trends up until the 2030s. In the 2030s and 40s, the city took the brunt of a population explosion. The massive overcrowding was even more than the ambitious city government could deal with. Parks were paved over to build hospitals. Homeless people packed shanty-towns in to every available space. Riots were plentiful during this era, mostly initiated by unemployed working-class people.

In 2045, the Industrial Fire Disaster put many thousands of tons of black ash in the atmosphere. This started a chain reaction which accelerated the rising ocean levels. Super-storms racked the coast. The city, already dangerously overcrowded, shrank as rising water partially submerged many parts of the city. Many bridges and tunnels were damaged and the city did not have the budget to repair them.

In 2046, God Killer hit the area. New York law enforcement did not have the resources to deal with it. The population lived in fear of crazed God Killer addicts rampaging through the streets mowing people down with automatic weapons. The city built high-tech checkpoints at every way in and out of the city, but drugs managed to get in regardless.

Freedom Wars

In Brief- Freedom Army tried to make the city in to a socialist metropolis, made significant changes, became increasingly paranoid and was destroyed by rebels.

Corporate complexes in Downtown Manhattan were blown up during the massive first-strike by the Freedom Army. Manhattan's population was scared and rioted, trying to grab up as many goods as they could. In the massive rioting the police and National Guard were forced to flee the city.

Jeffrey Hernandez, head of the Freedom Army, needed a base of operations for the Freedom Army. Manhattan was the perfect place: there were only a few ways in and out of the city (which had checkpoints) and the sunken city made travel by water very difficult. Hernandez also wanted to create a thriving, successful metropolis, to show that the Freedom Army could build as well as destroy. Manhattan had the infrastructure to make this possible.

The Freedom Army set themselves up in office buildings and conscripted the whole population of the city as labor to build the new government and infrastructure. Factories were created, manufacturing everything from weapons to medical supplies. The Freedom Army started work on a complex of government buildings in the middle of central park. These half-underground fortresses were planned to serve as the world capitol of the Freedom Army.

Manhattan residents became increasingly dissatisfied with being forced to work for a government that couldn't even keep them fed. Hernandez became increasingly paranoid that rebel elements in the city would destroy the socialist metropolis he was trying to create. The Freedom Army swept the city for weapons and explosives. Hernandez locked up every manhole in the city and built a new (more secure) subway system. Other security measures included the forced registration of psychics and a massive hunt for the recently discovered Kalor aliens.

The Freedom Army's paranoia helped create some of its worst enemies. In 2054, city rebels detonated a small nuclear bomb and several non-nuclear explosives, destroying the Freedom Army government complex. City residents rioted against the surviving Freedom Army soldiers. This bombing was a fatal blow to the Freedom Army, and within two years the Freedom Army was destroyed.

The surviving population of Manhattan was shuttled to refugee camps outside the city (where many died from disease). The Restoration Committee did a quick nuclear cleanup of the city. After the cleanup ended, refugees were put back in to the city. For a brief period the city was a huge homeless shelter. Parcels of property were quickly sold to companies which converted buildings in to low income housing.

Social Movements of the 21st Century

Futurists (2010-2020)- High-tech idealists, used illegal tech, tried to rouse the general population from their apathy, and believed they could take control of the shape of the future.

Watchdogs (2030-2049)- Using Internet webcasting, these anti-corporate activists tried to put a check on corporate power and educate people about the causes and severity of global problems.

Freedom Army (2050-2055)- A global movement of anti-corporate rioting, misinformation, and tactical terrorism. The Freedom Army succeeded in destroying corporations and governments, but failed at attempts to build its own governments.

Utopianists (2058-2061)- Believed that new tech could be use to screen applicants and thus create "perfect" communities. These Utopias would create a perfect culture that would spread to the rest of the globe.

Unborn (2070-Present)- People born on the streets, made permanently homeless by strict laws, began to build their own culture and society in the city.

New Gangs (2075-Present)- Rose out of the vacuum created when the city's Old Time drug gangs self-destructed (their drug sales having been taken away). Unlike the previous gangs, the new gangs appealed to intelligent, well-adjusted people and have (mostly) been trying to make the city a better place.

Old Times

During the land grab of the early 2050s, the newly formed corporations and gated communities bought huge tracts of property in New Jersey, Queens, the Bronx, Brooklyn and Staten Island. None of these groups wanted property in Manhattan (thanks to few working bridges, a huge homeless population, many bombed out ruins and a slightly radioactive Central Park). Outside Manhattan, low income housing was bought up and renovated, the poor people forced to move out. Soon, Manhattan was the only place left in the area for displaced poor people to go to. Even as poor people were moving to the city, there was a massive exodus of the middle and upper classes out of the city. Those who stayed in the city found the streets becoming increasingly dangerous, and they chose to lock themselves away in their apartments. The new VR companies gave these shut-ins access to VR fantasy worlds to keep them occupied.

Quickly after the Freedom Wars, the drug market in the city re-established itself. Criminal entrepreneurs in the city bought God Killer from Appalachian biker gangs, sold it to the new street gangs, who sold it to the general population. These drug entrepreneurs (who quickly became known as "Drug Lords") became the richest and most powerful people in the city. The gangs that sold the drugs grew quickly. In a few years they went from small groups of a dozen people to organizations with thousands of members. The gangs used their drug profits to have guns smuggled in to the city, and they fought bloody battles against each other.

So, for more than a decade, the majority of city locked themselves away to escape from the violence of gang warfare. Most of the people on the streets were either gang members or drug addicts. Everyone else on the streets (including the city's large homeless population) tried to stay hidden. Anyone on the streets had to be very careful, lest they be caught in the crossfire of a gang war, be forcefully inducted in to a street gang, or be mugged by desperate addicts.

In 2075, this era abruptly came to an end. The Drug Lords formed in to a single organization and yanked drugs away from the drug gangs. The gangs quickly self-destructed and the Drug Lords, with their highly efficient structure and powerful new drugs, seemed on the verge of ruling the entire city. However, a new generation of gangs would appear that would frustrate the Drug Lords and make the city streets safer.

The Honeys

The Honeys were a very small group of brewing enthusiasts. They grew their own ingredients (grapes, barley, hops, honey, etc.) and they used genetic engineering to change the flavor and pharmacological properties of those ingredients. They created alcoholic beverages with exotic narcotic properties. Some Honeys even learned glass blowing so they could make their own bottles.

At first they were just a small community of people who shared knowledge and brews. After the drug gangs self-destructed, the Honeys found themselves banding together for self-defense. They quickly discovered that their genetically engineered bees (which they used to make honey for mead) could be used as weapons. The Honeys had learned how to alter the bees' genes so they would not sting the beekeepers, and they quickly figured out how to make the bees attack enemies.

This was a great time for the Honeys: they had learned to defend themselves, and their exotic brews made them popular throughout the city. The brews the Honeys made were collector's items. Only people with "connections" could get honeybrews. Even today, powerful people in the city proudly display their honeybrews. Most have no idea what the brew contains and what it might do to them.

The Honeys' turf was in Inwood, a wealthy district at the very North of Manhattan. When the Skin Borgs started expanding and eating up other gangs, the Honeys were in their way. The fighting was bloody and intense but the Honeys were destroyed and scattered. Some went to other parts of the city, some joined other gangs, and some left the city altogether. The Honeys were the largest, the most powerful and the best known gang to be destroyed by the Skin Borgs.

At their peak there were 50 Honeys. About 20 of them perished in the war with the Skin Borgs, 15 of them left the city or died from other reasons and now there are about 15 left still living in the city. A few actually joined the Skin Borgs (an option the Skin Borgs gave to members of each gang they crushed).

Habey Cox, founder of the Freaks, boasts proudly that he has the largest collection of honeybrews in the city. On every special occasion and at least once during each festival of the freak, Habey shares a bottle with his closest friends. Habey was friends with many Honeys before the war with the Skin Borg and offered them sanctuary after the Honeys were crushed. Habey's supply is replenished by three Honeys who fled to Freak territory for sanctuary.

CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Buildings

The city has hundred of architecturally impressive buildings, most of which are abandoned. Some buildings include banks, concrete parking structures, Madison Square Garden (an indoor sports arena), courthouses, college campuses, movie theaters, museums and large hospitals. Since property values were so high, and lots were small, buildings in the city tend to be tall, thin and deep with very little space between them.

Abandoned Buildings- "Abandoned" is, like "homeless," a misnomer. About half the buildings in the city are not used by anyone with a legal right to be there, but most are used in some way. Most abandoned buildings have been given over to the city (the owners got tired of paying property taxes) and the city posted up big "condemned" signs and forgot about them. Of those buildings that are being used by the owners, almost all of those have some unused areas. In some buildings there is a "bad floor" that no one ever bothered to clean up and is used for storage. In some cases, only the first two or three floors are used, the rest are not kept up at all.

One result of all the free space is storage space is plentiful and cheap in the city. Anything that people are obligated to store, but don't really care if it gets damaged or stolen, is stored in the city. Dark, unmaintained buildings throughout the city are home to millions of boxes of old paper files, drums of semi-toxic refuse, old paper-printed books, and cheap plastic coffins.

A lot goes on in abandoned buildings. Some buildings are hangouts for gang members, littered with cigarette butts and beer bottles. Some buildings are used as repositories of trash and human waste by street people (who have nowhere else to put their waste). Many buildings are homes for the "homeless." Homeless living spaces range from the barely maintained (a cold and dirty place to pass the night) to the lavish (home to a large extended family who have spent hundreds of hours remodeling and fortifying the building). Most abandoned buildings are not used in a regular fashion, but they are routinely used for something, be it a party, a meeting, a place to stay the night or a place to hide bodies.

Industrial Complexes- The one city industry that actually grew after the Freedom Wars was high-pollution manufacture and chemical production. Every other community in the area blocked high-pollution factories from being built near them, so they all came to the city. Most industrial complexes are in current 24-hour a day use. Trains run in
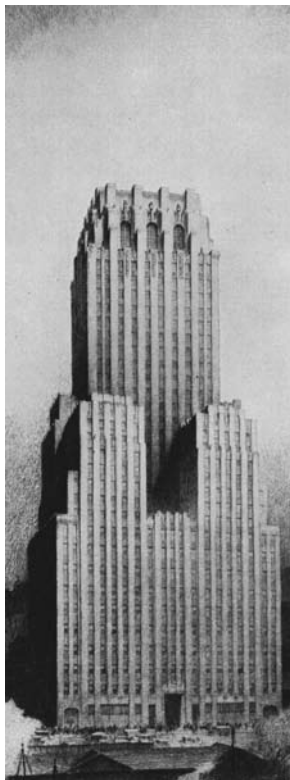
and out of the city constantly, bringing in materials and bringing out finished products. These complexes usually take up a city block (or more). They are gated with barbed wire fences, security cameras and round-the-clock guards. Some industrial complexes are abandoned (often because an accident happened and the corp found it cheaper to build a new complex than to clean up the old one).

Inside an industrial complex there are typically a few large warehouses and garages, some small offices (usually temporary buildings and trailers), and industrial machinery (large tanks, furnaces, pumps and smokestacks). Smoke and fire can be seen coming from the top of smokestacks and cooling towers 24 hours a day. Explosions, fires and chemical leaks happen here often. Because the city fire department is so poorly funded, most complexes have their own fire fighting equipment and marginally trained staff. Employees toil around the clock: most are minimum wage workers who live nearby, managed by a few corporate employees who commute from nearby corporate living centers.

Skyscrapers- A handful of skyscrapers dominate the city skyline. Built during a time when cheap labor was plentiful, Manhattan once had the highest skyscrapers in the world (now Asia boasts the world's tallest buildings). The majority are found in Downtown and Midtown. By most definitions, a skyscraper is a building with 20 or more floors (though some have as many as 102 floors). Skyscrapers became possible at the end of the 18th century when people learned to build large buildings with the building's weight supported by steel cages rather than masonry walls. The first skyscrapers were huge blocks. Fearing that they would block out the sun, the city required skyscrapers to have a tapered shape.

Skyscrapers are more than just tall buildings, they operate on a different set of rules than normal buildings. They take up whole city blocks and the networks of maintenance passages within them are so complex that it would take years to explore them all. Special pumps are needed to make water reach the upper floors. Normal elevators move too slowly and stop too often, and so people must travel through the building using express elevators to get near their desired floor and then normal elevators to get the rest of the way. Radio repeaters are necessary to let people inside the buildings receive radio or cellphone signals. Special dampeners let the top of the building sway several feet in a heavy wind, yet keep the sway slow enough that people can't feel it.

Skyscrapers are so expensive to maintain that none of the skyscrapers

Urban Exploration Kit

Total cost $813.75

Crowbar (For prying open doors) $45

Dust Mask (For crawling around in dusty spaces) $0.25

Nightvision Goggles: Cheap (for seeing in the dark without attracting attention) $25

Swiss Army Knife (+knife, metal file, wire clippers) (for cutting things like wire fences) $6

Rope and Grapple (For climbing on to roofs and into attics) $75

Palmtop: Wayfinder (For knowing where you are) $50

Super City Map (To look at the blueprints of buildings on the wayfinder) $500

Digital Camera: Cheap (For taking pictures of places where you're afraid to stick your head) $5

Backpack (For holding gear and souvenirs) $10

Bottled Water (Because exploring can make you thirsty) $0.50

Nutrient Bar (Because nobody wants to break for lunch) $2

Protective Gloves (For climbing on barbed wire fences) $95

Skyscrapers are so expensive to maintain that none of the skyscrapers in the city have more than the first few floors in use. The first five floors can be maintained without much cost, while the upper floors are sealed off or used for storage. Other skyscrapers are closed altogether, abandoned. Homeless people live in the first few floors, but since there are no elevators, anything higher is an inconvenient place to go to. Sometimes, people will haul themselves up dozens of flights to hide themselves or to hide important objects. Sometimes secret meetings are held in rooms deep inside skyscrapers. City skyscrapers have an average of 3000 rooms, making finding anyone or anything the equivalent of finding a needle in a haystack.

There are also a few secret apartments and offices hidden in the empty depths of the upper floors of some skyscrapers. Rather then hooking in to the system for the rest of the building, water and fuel for generators is delivered every few weeks and waste containers are taken out. Tenants typically enter the building through underground tunnels and ascend through dark elevator shafts using personal ascending devices. The security guards who sit in the lobbies of the buildings typically do not know that such apartments exist. These apartments and offices are in sharp contrast to the building around them: behind armored doors they are warm, well lit and luxurious, while all around them the abandoned floors are cold, dark, dirty, laden with trash and dust, utterly without life. The owners of these apartments and offices are wealthy and secretive. It is common knowledge in the city that such apartments exist, but nobody knows who uses them.

Luxury Hotels- Most of the city's luxury hotels are still open, but only the first few floors are maintained. When in operation, these were some of the world's most prestigious luxury hotels. They are wide buildings, all over 20 stories tall. In addition to more than a thousand guest rooms, they have huge lobbies, tiny shopping malls (containing dozens of stores), gyms, indoor swimming pools, movie theatres, pharmacies and doctors offices, huge banquet halls and conference rooms, restaurants, bars, and helicopter pads on the roofs (now all unused). Underneath the hotels: a maze of hotel offices, storage rooms, kitchens and laundry facilities. The most expensive "rooms" include huge living rooms, bedrooms, bathrooms and even kitchens.

Most of these hotels are in Midtown (the center of city tourism) and most of them were built overlooking Central Park. Today, these hotels do not have nearly the amenities that they once did, but they are still the nicest places to stay in the city (especially if one has an interest in history, grand architecture, or a view of the hole). When wealthy people stay in the city they usually stay in these hotels.

Churches and Cathedrals- The city has some of the country's most impressive old cathedrals and churches. Most are still in use, although the congregations are much smaller. Most churches in the city lose money: the tiny crowd of parishioners that come in give what they can but it is not enough to even pay the ministers' wages. Appointments in these churches used to be prestigious and sought after, but today the churches are lucky to get volunteers willing to live and work in the city. Fortunately for the ministers, anything of value was carted out of the church during the Freedom Wars. Many churches operate tiny homeless shelters and soup kitchens, usually from the back of the church. They may also rent out church offices and old Sunday-school rooms to community groups like Alcoholics Anonymous.

Apartment Buildings- The most consistently used buildings in the city are apartment buildings. The rental market in the city is so complex and varied that city residents have created a whole vocabulary to describe the different types of rentals. In order from the most desired to the least desired:

Highrise: Thirty to Fifty floors. Built in the late 20th, early 21st centuries to house the upper-middle class. These large buildings have big windows (giving splendid views of the city), roomy interiors and central heating and air. They either have attendants at the door or an intercom and camera based buzzer system. Typically have balconies, kitchens with modern appliances, health clubs, underground garages and other amenities.

Doorman: Twenty to forty floors. Built during the 1950-70s. These are luxury buildings, home to trendy indies, with an attendant at the door 24 hours a day. They have few modern amenities, but the architecture is nice (lavishly decorated lobbies, detailed façades) and there are relatively-modern elevators.

Loft: Six to Twelve floors. Formerly used for light manufacturing, they have been converted in to spacious apartments, perfect for artists or engineers who need a large working space. Typically have a large cargo elevator. Most are found Downtown.

Elevator: Nine to twenty floors. Built through the 20th century as housing for the middle class. Typically have an intercom security system. May have rooftop patios.

Brownstone: Three to five floors. This is a red sandstone version of the typical late 1800s/early 1900s townhouse or rowhouse (a long, thin, tall building, built to be sandwiched in rows on a block). Originally built as a single family home, but later converted to apartments (4 to 10 apartments). The rooms are small, but have charm and sometimes have amenities such as wood floors, fireplaces, terraces and private gardens in back.

Projects: 10 to 40 story high buildings. Built in response to the massive need for low-income housing during the 1970-80s and 2030-40s. These buildings are huge unattractive blocks, sometimes cloned on several
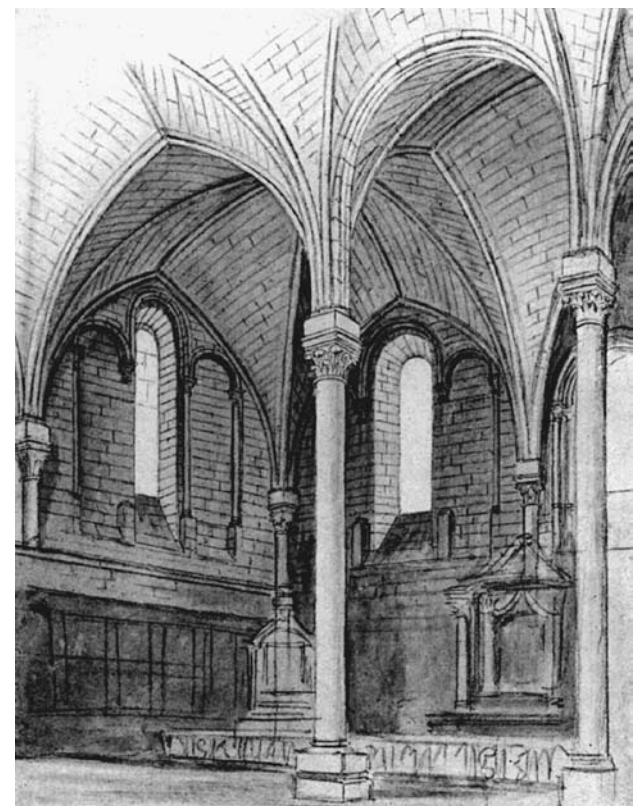
huge unattractive blocks, sometimes cloned on several consecutive blocks. They are built unimaginatively, of cheap materials and have few amenities. At best, each building has a laundry room, a small "community area" and possibly a black-top playground. Inside, seemingly unending hallways with stained grey carpet and dim florescent lights lead to hundreds of plain wood doors, each opening up to a tiny apartment.

Walkup: Three to five stories. Containing 12 to 30 small apartments. These are old tenement buildings, built in the late 1800s through the 1960s, to house the very poor. There are no elevators, just dimly lit wooden stairwells, usually with trash inside them. The apartments are cheap, cramped, dark with little or no ventilation. There may be dark airshafts in the walls, but they are typically plugged up with trash. Exterior fire-escapes are often the only place where people can hang out and get fresh air, though not every apartment has fire escape access.

Many old buildings in the city still use steam based furnaces for heating in the winter. Except for the very cheapest tenements, most apartment buildings have a live-in superintendent who is responsible for collecting rent, doing minor repairs and hauling the trash out on trash days. The super is paid by the land management company that owns the building, which is itself owned by a larger corporation.

Streets

The city has some of the worst streets in the US. The corrupt city government rarely repairs streets unless forced to by corporate pressure. When the major avenues get so bad that trucks can't deliver groceries to grocery stores, the streets get repaired. Apart from those major avenues, however, most streets are unusable except with a vehicle with a powerful engine and four wheel drive. There are cracks, potholes, old craters from Freedom-War explosions, rubble, trash and even old non-running cars in the middle of the streets. In come cases there are holes in the streets that go straight through to old utility tunnels below. The cheap electric cars that are being cranked out now don't have the power to travel over these streets. Most people who ride motor vehicles in the city depend on old gasoline-powered vehicles (and have to buy prohibitively expensive gasoline). In some parts of town vehicle traffic is so infrequent that homeless people camp in the middle of the streets with no fear of being run over.

Utilities

Trash- Trash is omnipresent in the city. It can be dangerous, when characters are forced to wade through it and may miss hazards such as holes, sharp pieces of metal, etc. Trash can also be a blessing when it allows characters to hide from their enemies. In some places there is so much trash that it creates a physical barrier.

There is garbage removal city in the city, but it is chancy. Dumpsters are often overflowing in to the streets by the time apartment managers can convince the garbage removal services to do what they are being paid for and come pick up the trash. There is no garbage removal on the streets, in public areas and in the abandoned places where people live. The fences that were put up to keep people from going to the sunken city keep trash from blowing out to sea and make the city a sort of cage full of trash. When strong winds blow, trash flies through the air from one side of the city to the other, where it piles up against fences. There are some small parks and other public areas that are enclosed by fences and walls and these places usually have trash several feet deep. Alleys are a common dumping place for trash that is too heavy to blow away, and some alleys are filled, end to end, with trash piled higher than a person. Some homeless people who squat in abandoned buildings do not carry out their trash, they leave it there until the house becomes too choked up with it, then they move on.

Electricity- Most power comes from Hydro-Quebec which gets it's power from hydroelectric sources, including Niagra falls. The many factories in the city also create their own power and resell the unused power to the city. Power outages are common and are a major cause of riots.

Sewage and Water- Probably the city's most dependable utility. Centuries old water and waste tunnels are kept running by a tiny staff of city workers and second-hand robots. These robots travel through the tunnels keeping the pipes clean, cutting up obstructions and patching holes. At the Northern end of the city a large plant (mostly underground) uses secondary-nanotech filters to create (mostly) clean drinking water out of polluted water from the Harlem river. Sewage is processed: the water is removed and dumped in the river, the solid elements are loaded on trains to be sold as fertilizer.

CITY POPULATION

In Brief- 210,000 people on island of Manhattan, much less than in the past.

There are currently about 210,000 people living on the island of Manhattan, only one seventh of its population at the end of the 20th century and about one tenth of the island's population in the 1920s. This is a population density of about 11,000 people per square mile.

In terms of socioeconomic classes: there are 28,000 indies (7.5%), 151,000 wells (72%) and 31,000 street people (14.5%).

In terms of allegiance (or lack thereof) to city power structures: 120,000 (57%) are shut-ins, 55,000 (26%) do not belong to any gang or family, 30,000 (14%) belong to gangs or major street families and 5,000 (2%) belong to the Drug Lords organization.

There are also about 1,000 people just passing through in the city at any one time. If they are staying for the night, they are likely staying in hotels in the red light district, at cheap motels near the drop-off point, or at the homes of relatives in the city. These travelers have every conceivable motivation for being in the city, legal and illegal, ethical and unethical, exotic and mundane, but the majority are New York area businessmen coming to the city for drugs and prostitutes.

Manhattan Area and Population			
Date	Above Water Area	Population	Density
1920's	24 mi^2	2,300,000	95,000/mi^2
1990's	24 mi^2	1,500,000	65,000/mi^2
2080	19 mi^2	210,000	11,000/mi^2

Death

In Brief- 17 deaths/day, some go to mortuaries, others are eaten by rats, most are cremated and buried in unmarked graves.

17 people die in the city every day. About 12 of them end up in the city morgue or a funeral home. It can take weeks for bodies to be discovered and taken to the morgue (especially shut-ins, who may not be discovered until neighbors complain of bad smells). 5 of the people do not end up in the morgue: the bodies are hidden, buried, or never found. When bodies are left laying around, rats eat most of the flesh and the bones become just another part of the city's massive amount of trash.

The city morgue is located in the basement of the New York City Central Hospital, downtown. About half the corpses that pass through it are unclaimed and are cremated and buried in Potter's Field (located on Hart Island on Long Island South) with no marker.

If they are claimed by a mortuary, the body is picked up and prepared for burial. There is no cemetery space in the city, so the families have the choice of having the body buried in upstate New York, or (the cheapest and most popular option) put in to one of the many city buildings that have been converted to mausoleums. The mausoleums look like old unused office buildings, they are kept unheated, dimly lit, and are filled with air-tight concrete or plastic crypts.

City Population

Out of 210,000:

Addicts/Winos	15,000	(7%)
Crazies	5,000	(2%)
Drug Lords/Pushers	5,000	(2%)
Indies (in gangs)	5,000	(2%)
Indies (not in gangs)	4,000	(1.9%)
Miscellaneous	16,000	(7.5%)
Shut-Ins	120,000	(57%)
Street People (in families)	5,000	(2%)
Street People (not in families)	5,000	(2%)
Wells (in gangs)	20,000	(8%)
Wells (not in gangs)	10,000	(4%)

Group	Avg. Life Expectancy
Indies (Non-Gang)	65
Indie (Gang)	61
VR Addicts/Shut-Ins	58
Wells (Gang)	51
Wells (Non-Gang)	49
Street People (Family)	40
Street People (Non-Family)	30
Winos	25
Crazies	24
Addicts	22

Top Causes of Death for All City Residents
#1- Heart Disease
#2- Drug Overdose
#3- Stroke
#4- Exposure
#5- Communicable Diseases

Top Causes of Death for City Residents Ages 18-25
#1- Drug Overdose
#2- Murder
#3- Communicable Diseases
#4- Accident
#5- Exposure

Shut-Ins

In Brief- Many people are afraid to leave their houses and have all their needs delivered. Most spend their days in full immersion VR fantasy worlds that are as addictive as drugs.

The dichotomy between people "on the street" and shut-ins is more important to city residents than socioeconomic classes. Shut-ins aren't a part of the city culture: they don't know the traditions, slang and survival techniques that anyone who spends time on the streets quickly learns. Shut-ins can get virtually every physical need, from groceries to clean clothes, delivered to them by teen Wells working for minimum wage. The very paranoid don't even have to interact with the delivery people: instructions to leave the packages outside the door are common, and some apartments have sophisticated drop boxes so residents can receive deliveries without coming in to contact with anyone.

Some people are shut-ins because they are physically or mentally disabled. Most, however, are simply afraid of the city around them. Their isolation feeds their fear. City shut-ins who meet in VR or on net sites often trade terrible stories about the things happening on the streets around them. Shut-ins trade these stories so they can help each other justify their decisions to stay inside.

Out of 120,000 Shut-Ins:

VR Addicts	70,000	(58%)
Ronin	20,000	(17%)
Hospice	10,000	(8%)
Otaku	10,000	(8%)
Other	10,000	(8%)

Disappearances

In the city, about 500 people disappear per year, more than one per day. The Math Addicts have concluded that these disappearances can be explained without resorting to paranoid theories of evil conspiracies. The Math Addicts best-guess break down of disappearances is as follows:

175 people died of **natural causes**, bodies not found or found and not identified.

130 people **murdered** and the bodies hidden or disposed of.

90 people who **left** the city or **moved** to another part of the city, not telling anyone where they were going.

25 people who entered **cults** and were asked (or forced) to leave their friends and family behind without a word.

25 people being **held** against their will, inside or outside the city, for purposes of forced slavery, prostitution or the creation of illegal pornography.

20 people whose minds were **wiped** and bodies were sold on the black market.

20 people killed and **eaten** by animals or mauler addicts.

10 people who **lost** their **memory or sanity**, and who are still wandering about the city as homeless crazies.

5 people who **drowned** in the sunken city and were carried off by the water.

VR Addicts- Virtual Reality is both a way of dealing with the isolation and claustrophobia of being a shut-in and also a reason that many people become shut-ins. People who depend on Virtual Reality for most of their entertainment and social needs are known by those on the streets (and by the rebellious adolescents they keep locked up with them) as VR Addicts.

Modern virtual reality uses mental stimulators (see p.408) to put users in a full immersion, nearly photorealistic, environment. The worlds of VR are loosely called "games." Although there is some element of "play" in them, for most the VR worlds are a place to socialize, relax and spend all of their time.

Virtual Reality can be used for many very useful purposes, including "hands-on" training in everything from surgery to cliff diving. Very few of the VR services that city VR addicts subscribe to teach anything useful. These are everything-but-the-kitchen-sink fantasy worlds made up of a mishmash of world mythologies, classic fantasy novels and new fantastic creations of the designers. The players play wealthy and respected heroes and members of a vibrant and successful community. Players can participate in exploration of the fantasy world, fighting monsters, trade and community development or uninhibited hedonism.

VR companies are a lot like pushers. Both make their money by making people dependent on something that they don't really need. Subscriptions to VR worlds are always free for the first month, and the hardware and broadband internet connections come with the service. People who use VR quickly become dependent. The more they are in VR, the less they attend to matters such as personal hygiene, fitness, cleanliness of their apartments, and non-VR social contacts. Heavy VR find any time they are forced to spend outside of VR is, at best, an annoyance. "VR Withdrawal," as proposed for consideration for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, has the symptoms of depression, panic attacks and insomnia. Used to sleeping on feather beds, eating enormous gourmet feasts, and hearing beautiful background music, the VR addicts find themselves in an alien world of bad smells, bad food, pain and nausea. VR serves the same purpose that drugs do: it gives an escape from an unpleasant life. VR companies purposefully charge as much as the average well can afford.

VR is the second biggest money maker in the city (next to rent) and has the highest profit margin. A lot of political influence from the corporations goes in to protecting the ability of city residents to use Virtual Reality.

Ronin- The term Ronin originally referred to a Japanese samurai without a master. Later, at the end of the 20th century, it came to refer to a student who did not pass college entrance exams and spent a year studying to take them again. Today, the term is used to refer to people who were never able to pass the screening to get in to a gated community or corporation and spend their time trying to improve themselves so they can try again. The term also can mean people who were kicked out of a corporation or gated community for dropping below the minimum requirements and they are studying to try to re-enter.

The Ronin usually pay to have independent testing companies test them and tell them what they need to work on. They might be working on education, cognitive skills, mental health, loyalty or morality. Instead of blowing their money on VR fantasy worlds, they enroll in courses that advertise significantly increased passage rates. Although some Ronin are only willing only to put a few hours a week in to studying, most are intense students who live an ascetic sort of lifestyle. They spend 8 to 16 hours a day on the computer. They read textbooks, listen to lectures, work through VR scenarios, run hypnosis programs and take evaluation tests to see how far along they've gotten. Some Ronin stay inside all day, not because they are afraid of going outside, but because they don't have time. Other Ronin don't want to go out on to the streets because they are afraid they will be pulled in to a world of drugs, sex and adventure that will undo all their manipulation of their own personality.

Some Ronin have been known to be desperate enough that they will go to quite extreme measures to up their scores. Some can be quite competitive and may try to sabotage other Ronin. Others have sought out dangerous and unproven technology, like Behavior Mod (see p.398).

Otaku- The word Otaku comes from a formal, and slightly archaic, Japanese greeting. In the 1980s, computer connectivity first let people engage in social interaction without leaving their houses. Socially inept computer geeks sometimes gained the name Otaku because they would use this awkward and disconcerting greeting. Today, the term Otaku refers to a subset of Shut-Ins who rely on the internet for social contact and entertainment, yet shun popular VR fantasy worlds.

The majority of Otaku are male. Most don't get, or need, much face-to-face human contact (even in VR). The Otaku fall in to a spiral: the less time they spend interacting with people, the more their social skills deteriorate. The few social interactions they have become increasingly uncomfortable and anxious, which leads them to spend even less time interacting with people.

The Otaku tend towards solitary entertainments: novels, movies, one-person VR games. When they engage in multiplayer games it is usually strategy or combat games that don't include any social interaction other than taunting or swearing at opponents. Since this is the only form of positive self-esteem that many of them get, Otaku take these games quite seriously. They play with an urgency and vehemence that often frightens non-Otaku who try to play. They also tend to engage in obsessive fandom and trading. The things they are obsessed with tend to be the sort of things intelligent adolescent males are commonly interested in: video games, hacking, popular music and acting stars (especially attractive females ones), the military, VR fiction (especially the sub-genres with a lot of sex, violence, humor and juvenile wish fulfillment) and pornography.

If the Otaku's tastes seem juvenile, it is because their obsessions are usually first formed in adolescence. As an adolescent, an Otaku might develop a minor obsession with an attractive music star. As the Otaku grows older, the music becomes less entertaining and what fuels the obsession is the challenge involved with collecting every piece of information and media pertaining to that star. An Otaku might not even listen to the star's music anymore, but might spend hours a day creating net-shrines, writing love poems to the star, trading obscure bits of gossip and media files, etc.

Famous People

There are few famous people in the media today. The average person out on the streets could not name the current president, much less famous media stars.

People who spend most of their time on the streets have little access to the media. Shut-ins spend most of their time in VR, but spend the majority of time in VR fantasy games where they are the star. When they do watch movies, listen to music, or watch news reports, the "people" are as likely to be photorealistic computer-generated simulations as they are to be real.

When asked to name a current celebrity, people most often name, in descending order: a politician, a news reporter, a criminal, a writer or VR designer, a corporate CEO, an actor, a singer or an athlete.

Most Otaku are harmless geeks, content to stay in their homes and collect via the internet. However, Otaku are the most dangerous of the shut-ins because of two exceptions to this general rule:

Stalkers of famous people, including the violent ones, typically come from the ranks of the Otaku. The Otaku become unsatisfied with simply collecting media clips and decide to go meet the subject of their obsession in person.

Violent Fetishists often start out as Otaku who are obsessed with pornography. These Otaku create their own VR sexual encounters where they interact with computer-controlled partners. Having too much control can quickly make the simulations boring (see text box, below), and the Otaku quickly transgress every taboo they can think of just to keep it interesting (including rape, torture and murder). When all the virtual taboos are transgressed, the only things left is to either give up the pornography or to go out on to the streets and make the violent sexual fantasies real.

Hospice- Ten thousand of the city's "shut-ins" are people in the process of dying. The city has several hospice facilities, some run by the city and others private, which take care of dying people. This portion of the shut-in population has the least effect on the world: they are too sick to interact with people on the internet or exert any political power. Their biggest effect on the city is that hundreds of young wells gain employment as hospice workers.

Others- There are about ten thousand shut-ins who don't fall in to any of the above categories. They are not dependent on VR for entertainment or social contact, they are not obsessive antisocial geeks, they are not studying to get in to somewhere better and they are not dying. These shut-ins vary a lot but they all find some way to entertain themselves without VR or leaving the house. Some find entertainment and social contact on the internet, but not in VR fantasy worlds. They socialize on message boards, watch movies, read books and play in solo VR games. Some live life vicariously through Night Walkers (p.314). Others find non-internet ways to entertain themselves. Some grow plants (including drugs), raise pets or raise children. Some read from floor to ceiling stacks of old paper-bound books. Some write or paint or engage in some other creative endeavor. They might enjoy their lot in life, or they might find it desperately boring and unfulfilling. Regardless, they spend most of their days inside.

Citizen's Groups- Shut-Ins do have money and votes, which gives them power. There are dozens of citizen's groups in the city that have the job of making the desires and fears of the shut-ins (no matter how unfounded) known to the city and state government. The main thing that hampers the Citizen's Groups' power is a lack of accurate feedback about what's actually going on. Shut-Ins believe sensationalistic and inaccurate news stories and they often lobby for things that aren't really needed (see the history of the Night Shift, p.243). The citizen's groups are often referred to by politicians, civil servants and criminal organizations as 'the sleeping giant'. As long as they can be kept blissfully unaware of what's going on around them, they are unlikely to do any harm. Even the Drug Lords, the most powerful criminal organization in the city, is careful to keep its activities just under the radar of the corporate news media and the shut-ins.

Complete Control: A Fate Worse Than Death

Humans are used to being limited in everything they do. Life is, for most people, a constant give and take between what people want and what they can actually get away with. People are not used to having total control and when total control is granted, it often ruins them. This is nothing new: there is a long history of emperors, kings and queens, dictators and ultra-rich people who, after being given virtually unlimited power, proceed to go insane and ruin their lives. The difference is that today, the average well can gain complete control with a VR system, a good computer and a little programming knowledge.

Most shut-ins spend their days in multiplayer VR fantasy worlds controlled by VR companies. They are given enough to keep them happy, but they are seldom given everything they want. There are a few anti-social shut-ins who prefer their own private virtual worlds, filled with AI characters they control. Some may try to create a world with challenges and rules, but most end up cheating at some point. Cheating becomes easier each time, more of a habit, until they go from being players in their VR worlds to being gods. And being a god is boring, but by this time they no longer have the skills or patience to be anything less, so the only thing they can do to keep themselves entertained is to break taboos. These VR autocrats slowly become terrible, evil, violent perverted gods who drive their VR world deeper in to hell every day. Once they reach bottom, there are few places the VR autocrat can go. Some commit suicide, some become serial killers, some quit VR and find life in the real world. Most are stuck, however, trapped in a hell they created, because spending every waking moment being a god has eroded the skills they need to deal with reality (or even the tiny bit of reality found in VR multiplayer fantasy worlds).

The AI Tax, Welfare and VR Addiction

In the early 2060's, in the aftermath of the Freedom Wars, the "AI tax" bill was passed by congress. It was designed to ease the massive unemployment caused by Artificial Intelligences replacing more-and-more workers. The AI/unemployment problem had been a major factor that led to the Freedom Wars. The AI tax takes big chunk of profits made using AIs in "traditionally human occupations" and earmarks it for unemployment and welfare programs. Many of the larger corporations actually supported this legislation, for reasons which will become apparent shortly.

Large corporations own almost all of the credit card companies that welfare recipients are in debt to. They own most of the land holding companies that own the apartment buildings welfare recipients live in. They own (or are paid interest to by people who own) the liquor stores, grocery stores, security companies and practically every company that caters to the shut-in welfare class. For every dollar that the large corps give to the AI tax, they get 95 cents back. And five cents is a small price to pay to prevent anti-corporate rioting. The only people who don't make their money back are the small start-up companies who can't yet afford to think on such a vast socioeconomic scale. For these companies, the AI tax is another barrier that keeps them from making it big and competing with the big corps.

Children

In Brief- 20,000 children in cities, raised by parents, Orphans, foster system. Most children educated in cheap VR schools. 'Kid Borgs' are adults in children's bodies.

Out of 210,000 people in the city, about 20,000 of them are below the age of 15 (the number 15 is used because this is youngest age where most gangs will let a person join). There are children being raised by every social class in the city. Some have fewer children (like the addicts, whose drug use usually kills fetuses, and shut-ins, who have a hard time meeting real-world lovers) and some have more (street people in families have the highest). Although shut-ins have the lowest birthrate, they make up 57% of the population, and thus there are more children of shut-ins than of any other city group.

When children do not have parents who can or will take care of them, many end up in the hands of the state. Many Wells and Indies in the city earn some extra money by taking in foster children on a semi-permanent basis. Foster parents range from the genuinely good parents, to the abusive, to indescribably worse than abusive. If there are no foster homes available, a child is sent to the state run city orphanage. The orphans in the orphanage know the dangers of foster homes and will not let a child go to a foster home once they have entered the care of the orphanage. The orphanage is run by grownup orphans who took a vow to protect those smaller than them (see p.249). The corrupt state workers who are being paid to run the orphanage don't dare to come near it. Some parents have been known to drop off their children in Orphan territory temporarily. The Orphans don't approve of this, and will make life as hard on the parents as possible, but this doesn't stop them from watching over the children.

Some children have no one to take care of them, yet they are lucky enough to have gained the street smarts to survive on their own. Children who learned to survive on their own from a very early age are rare enough to have gained semi-mythical status. They are often called "wilderns" in city slang.

Among the Unborn, children are put to work as soon as possible. The children contribute, even in a small way, to the health of the family, but at the same time they learn the skills that they will use to make a living later in life. Unborn children are very skilled: a Black Med can usually set and splint a broken bone at 6, a Cracker can rip off a payphone at 7, a Drake is given a sharp scrap of metal or glass (coated with a poison Drakes are immune to) at 3.

Education- Gated communities and corps run their own schools, for which they gain significant tax breaks (thanks to the self sufficiency acts of the early 2060s). Since most children born in a corp or gated community will end up becoming a member, it is a wise investment for the corp or gated community to pay for good education.

The pool of funding for public schools is very low. Since the early 2070's there has been one virtual reality system which acts as a public school for the entire state. Students and teachers log in from home. Students who do not have full immersion VR hardware will be loaned old hardware (donated by VR companies). Students who don't have a safe place to log in go to a schoolhouse (an old converted office or school bus with a security guard and VR terminals). The teachers do very little: mostly the students run pre-written learning programs (ten years older than those used in corporate schools). In theory, parents should make sure children go to a schoolhouse or log in every day. If parents don't make sure a child goes to school, child protective services can be called. In reality, few parents ever face such punishments and truancy is common. Many students drop out of school when they turn eighteen, completely illiterate.

Kid-Borgs- Some people have been known to use mental programming technology to transfer (or copy) their minds in to the bodies of children. Some use children whose bodies were grown in a vat and who never had any real consciousness, but most use the bodies of real children who had their minds wiped. The main reason criminals choose children is because they think they can get away with more as children. Because of this phenomenon, children who are encountered on the streets without any parents are usually regarded with suspicion.

Kid Gangs- Just as adults join together in to gangs for the purposes of self-protection or to bully around others, so do street kids. Kid gangs are usually small (four to seven kids, only a few are as large as twenty) and they tend not to last very long. Like adult gangs, some kid gangs steal and rob from other children and some act as benevolent protectors. Kid gangs rarely mess with adults, and so the world of kid gangs is generally invisible to adults. The only adults who are really aware of kid gangs are those who prey on children (and try not to prey on members of kid gangs).

Top 5 Children Not To Mess With

Drake Kid- From a very early age, Drake children are given tiny amounts of poisons, especially the Drake Fungus Poison. By the time they are walking and talking, they can take massive amounts of the fungus poison without it hurting them. They are on a steady diet of this poison so that their very blood has enough poison in it to kill most people. Drakes learn from an early age to throw pieces of poisoned glass with deadly accuracy and they are seldom found on the streets without these deadly weapons in their pockets. Even if a Drake child can be disarmed and bound they know that they can kill with a bite and they are not afraid to bite as hard as they can.

Leader of a Kid Gang- Some kid gangs do not have a real leader, but some do. Those leaders have a significant amount of power at their command: a tiny army of rough street kids armed with rocks, knives and clubs. Kid gangs have learned the lesson of revenge early on and they will go to great lengths to pay back someone who has injured them.

Baby Colin- Colin doesn't just copy his mind in to the minds of adults. He inhabits a fair number of children in the city, and he uses their supposed innocence to his advantage. Even though too small to fight with an adult, little Colins wait until those who trust them are sleeping and then slit their throats with a knife. Baby Colins like to travel in packs so that their collective strength is enough to pull down a person, knock them out, and drag them to whatever dark basement their mental installer is in.

Orphan Babysitter- From as early as they can understand anything, those kids who end up at the city Orphanage are taught to protect younger children. Orphans as young as 3 have been known to attack full grown adults to protect their charges. The Orphans are trained in a martial art specially designed to let small groups of children attack and kill adults. They are all armed with railroad spikes that have been sharpened to wicked points. They know every spot on an adult that is within their reach that will paralyze with pain, cripple or kill. When there are multiple Orphans they act in concert, encircling opponents and stabbing them in the back.

Cult Kid- Cult kids are generally pretty harmless to adults. They are sent out in small groups to try to lure street kids back to the cult compound, bribing them with candy and friendship. They are usually under orders to stay away from adults (who might try to save the kids from the cult). When the cult leader feels that his or her power is in danger, though, the kids become very dangerous. The kids are brainwashed in to believing that death should not be feared. It is not uncommon for cult leaders to strap homemade explosives to kids and send them to blow up some of the cult's (real or imagined) enemies. The kids look perfectly normal, may even come begging for help, but they know when to hit the button to take out their enemies. These kids are perfectly fearless, so certain are they that a perfect life awaits them.

Immigrants

In Brief- Many legal and illegal immigrants come here to escape terrible conditions. Some are kept ignorant of US ways so they can be exploited. Some are literal slaves in brothels. Some immigrants form small xenophobic communities.

Each year, millions of people come to the United States from countries ravaged by war, political oppression and economic collapse. Some immigrate legally and quickly join gated communities or corporations. Others enter the US illegally, entering with false visas. They cross the Mexican border with the help of "jackals" (professional people smugglers), ride homemade rafts up the coast, or pay to be smuggled in to the country onboard cargo ships. Those immigrants who have entered the country illegally can not get welfare or legal jobs and so they end up in inner cities, usually living as street people.

Slave Trade- Many illegal immigrants are dangerously ignorant of American ways, and some people take terrible advantage of this ignorance. There are con artists in the city who specialize in catching immigrants in scams. Sometimes they bring them over at little or no charge, but put them in debt with interest so high they can never pay it off, turning the immigrants in to indentured servants.

The worst examples of taking advantage of illegal aliens is the slave trade. Some people are enticed in to coming to the United States on false pretenses, promised legitimate work or marriage to a loving spouse. Others are physically kidnapped or bought in third world slave markets and smuggled in to the US as chattel. Once in the US they are virtually brainwashed in to believing that if they are caught by the government they will suffer a terrible fate. They are told that illegal immigrants are put in to violent and disease-filled prisons. Fear keeps the immigrants from leaving the homes, factories or brothels where they live or work.

This slavery does not happen only in the city. Many people living in private cities or wealthy neighborhoods have live-in maids who get paid nothing and are afraid to leave the homes.

There are secret brothels in the city where women, children and a few men are kept inside by fear of their captors and fear of what lies outside the brothels. Most of the people in these brothels were kidnapped by organized crime gangs in Southeast Asia, Russia and Central America, smuggled over in cargo ships, and sold to the brothels at a few thousand per head. The Sexologists have made it their personal crusade to hunt down the operators of these brothels and kill them, but there are still some left in secret locations in the red light district.

Immigrant Communities- Most illegal immigrants merge seamlessly in to the city society and economy, taking on the roles played by unborn. Some even marry or are 'adopted' in to powerful street families. No matter how well they fit in to the city society, most immigrants feel most comfortable around people who speak their language and share their culture.

There are some people who fail completely to acculturate themselves to city society. They suffer from a sort of culture shock where they turn inwards and refuse to try to fit in or even learn the language. They tend to form small, insular communities which they defend against outsiders. When they are forced to leave these communities (for instance, to scrounge for food) they refuse to communicate with other city residents.

One example is a camp of refugees from Sierra Leone in midtown in a vacant lot at the corner of 47th St. and 8th Ave, East of Tea Drinker territory. The camp is fenced off with barbed wire, inside the concrete has been torn up so that crops could be grown in the dirt. The camp has 30 people living there, some interact with city residents, some don't and a few refuse to leave the camp even for medical care. No outsiders are allowed in to the camp, even for a visit, and the camp recently repelled an attack by a coalition of four local pusher gangs.

CLOWDIANS

There are three known instances of "contact" with alien life. The first was fossil evidence of microbial life on Mars. The second was incomprehensible signals picked up from distant star systems. The third is the discovery of the Kalor aliens have been living on Earth as humans for over a thousand years.

History

Clowdian Timeline
1060- Kalor arrive on Earth
1075- Change begins
1217- Human slavery by Kalor ends.
1320- Kalor moon colony abandoned.
1390- Main Kalor vessel unable to sustain flight
1951- 1st Kalor infiltrate human society, founding businesses.
1972- 1st Kalor immigrants come to the US.
1995- Change complete
2047- Lisa Becker, human, becomes Kalor empress, flees to exile.
2052- Freedom Army forces in NY discover Kalor.
2053- 10,000 Kalor in concentration camps worldwide.
2053- Lisa Becker returns from exile, bringing Kalor in to rebel movement.
2061- Ciudad de la Nuebe founded.

2064- Peak of popular fascination with Kalor culture.
2076- Lisa Becker dies, succeeded by daughter Fetokalor ("Kalor Loyalty") Becker.

Arrival- The Kalor claim to have no records or knowledge of their history before they came to Earth. The only hint comes from a line from the body of Kalor laws which, translated, says: "Kalor nature caused the mistake. So that the mistake will not happen again, the Kalor [currently living on Earth] will obey the law above all else." They claim to have arrived on Earth at approximately 1060. At the time that they arrived at Earth, the Kalor ship was already falling apart. The technology was breaking down and no one on the ship had the knowledge or tools necessary to fix it. At first they lived on the moon, coming to Earth occasionally for supplies. The Kalor would take water, crops and human slaves. aThey established a small colony in the mountains of Central America, preparing for the inevitable time when their vessels stopped working altogether.

The Change- Little is known about original Kalor physiology (despite the existence of judges, p.365). They were 10 ft. tall, had a wrinkled-leathery skin, may have been built for brachiation (swinging from tree to tree) and may have lived on a planet with significantly less gravity.

Soon after arriving, before they lost all their genetic engineering technology, the Kalor instituted a number of genetic changes in themselves. These changes were meant to happen slowly, over a number of generations, to make the Kalor able to fit in to human society. "The Change" seems to be an acknowledgement by the ancient Kalor that they would someday have to live with humans and pose as humans. "The change" made the Kalor look like humans, made them better able to survive on Earth, and may have even changed their psychology to let them think more like humans.

The change worked slowly, taking 876 years before the Kalor could pass as humans.

Infiltrating Humanity- In 1217, the Kalor stopped taking human slaves. In 1320 they were forced to abandon their lunar colony. After 1320, the only place the Kalor lived was a remote village in the Andes. They bred plants and animals, becoming master farmers. They lived well and awaited the day when the change would allow them to pass as human.

The first Kalor infiltrated human societies in the 1950s. They posed as a group of Indians that had never had contact with white people. They quickly learned about the modern world (with the help of missionaries). They slowly started to build wealth by trading crops. Within a few years they owned several small, but highly profitable, agribusinesses. They did not share the seeds for their unique crops with anyone. The Kalor started infiltrating every major country. Young Kalor were sent to the US (including New York) to attend universities and bring the best of human knowledge back to their people. The Kalor grew slowly in wealth and influence. They were careful never to become so powerful and wealthy that they attracted any attention.

The life of the Kalor among humans was not without incident. There were several incidents where humans stumbled on evidence that the Kalor were not human. In each case, Kalor assassins hunted down and killed the humans. The Kalor emperor, who had lived with humans and was considered an expert on human psychology, tried to discourage this but could not stop it without his emperorship being threatened. He knew that someday the Kalor would be discovered and they would be judged on the way they had treated humans. In 2047, the emperor exploited a brilliant legal loophole. A young homeless thief living on the streets in New York stumbled on evidence of the Kalor. The emperor refused to let her be killed and instead he gave his own life to make her the new empress of the Kalor empire. Knowing that she would not survive long living with the Kalor, supporters of the dead-emperor quickly took Lisa Becker in to hiding. She continued to be empress, but in name only (since she wasn't there to make any decisions).

Persecution- Lisa Becker stayed in exile until the Freedom Wars. The Freedom Army discovered the existence of Kalor aliens and began a global hunt for them. The Kalor who were caught were put in concentration camps. Lisa Becker, who had been living in the city, had ties with the Hacker's Guild (some of whom were fighting the Freedom Army). She returned to power, organized the few free-Kalor left in the city, and joined forces with the Hacker's Guild and some psychics (who were being similarly persecuted). The Freedom Army had swept the city for guns, disarming most of the population. The Kalor

Clowdians vs. Kalor
On the street, most people use the word Clowdian instead of Kalor. The Kalor are very picky about language use and are quite likely to go off on someone who uses these terms so liberally. Kalor means anything to do with the Kalor aliens, and their society, past and present. Clowdian is only used to refer to the people and society of Kalor living in Ciudad de la Nuebe since 2061.

were highly skilled with their own bladed weapons and they became the "muscle" of the rebel movement.

Post-War- After the Freedom War, the Kalor came clean, revealing everything about themselves to human society. The Restoration Committee quickly decided to ally themselves with the Kalor, and they helped educate people about the Kalor people. Even while people were still in refugee camps, Restoration Committee sponsored propaganda films told people that Kalor were just another ethnic group, that despite their extraterrestrial origins they were now denizens of the planet Earth, and should be treated just like any group of humans.

The Kalor negotiated with the Mexican government for a semi-autonomous zone in Mexico. They purchased a large piece of land and founded Ciudad de la Nuebe (Cloud City). Cloud City would be a "Jerusalem" for the persecuted Kalor people. Kalor from all over the world moved here and the Kalor enjoyed wealth and prosperity. They enjoyed living openly as Kalor: wearing their eyelashes long, wearing Kalor style clothing, speaking the Kalor language. This cultural renaissance was generally called "Clowdian." There was a brief fascination with Kalor culture, which peaked by 2064. The Kalor, though, became annoyed at being studied by humans and they slowly started limiting human access to their city.

For more on the history of the Kalor, see the history of the Humankalorie (p.212).

Culture

In Brief- Clowdian culture centers around strict adherence to an unchanging law, every-person participation in a "drumhead" style legal system, loyalty to the emperor/empress, compulsory martial arts practice, advancing through age grades and paying close attention to language.

The Law- All Kalor (including the humans that have become part of Kalor society, from empress Becker to the Humankalorie) are subject to the law. The law is a single document that can never change. The law demands that it be interpreted based on what it says, not what people imagine it means. This means that if a logical loophole is discovered in Kalor law, it can never be fixed. All Kalor are expected to know the law and use it as tools on their behalf (there are no legal professionals).

The law is about 30 million words (50 to 100 when translated to English) and takes up about ten paperback books. There are many books of commentaries of the law, some ancient and some modern, which are quite popular among the Kalor. Some are longer than the law itself. Today, almost every Kalor carries around a palmtop computer with the law and several commentaries on it.

The Law regulates almost every aspect of Kalor life. It is hard to find something that Kalor do that the law doesn't say they have to do. Kalor life, then, is one of multiple legal duties. The law pre-empts any other laws and duties. The only reason Kalor living in the US feel any compulsion to follow US laws is because the Kalor empress has ordered them to "participate in human society" and the Kalor are under a legal duty to follow the orders of the empress.

Although the law cannot change, people can discover new loopholes. Some of the most important developments in Kalor history revolve around someone finding and exploiting some loophole in the law.

Justice- The Kalor justice system is incredibly quick, and seems designed for groups of people to be able to settle disputes in any environment, including the heat of battle.

Whenever a Kalor does not satisfy a prescribed duty, or harms another Kalor, any Kalor can "prosecute" the offender. The Kalor simply shouts "Tho" (controversy) and Kalor come running to help adjudicate the dispute. The oldest Kalor present (who are not parties to the dispute) act as judges. The trial proceeds quickly: the accuser makes a claim, the accused can make a counterclaim, the accuser can counter that, etc. When all claims are made, the judges spend a few minutes questioning witnesses and make their decision. Each violation of the law has a prescribed punishment, the judges only decide whether the person is guilty.

Any decision can be appealed, and for each appeal older Kalor are brought in as judges. For each level of appeal, however, the judges have greater ability to punish the loser for making a frivolous appeal. The highest level of appeal is to a Judge. The Judges are ancient Kalor who live in a state of hibernation/suspended animation. There are 10 judges, all of whom are from before the change was complete (they do not look human). They hibernate in glass containers filled with near-freezing salt-water, coming up for air about once a month. The judges live in Cloud City but can be flown anywhere in the world within a few hours to settle a dispute.

Judges are very rarely called. When called, judges almost always decide that they were called frivolously and they have no problem with killing one or both claimants. The Judges are some of the wisest and most skilled martial artists from Kalor history on Earth (one of the qualifications to become a Judge is several human lifetimes worth of combat experience) and can easily dispatch claimants themselves.

Government- The law describes the nature and powers of the Kalor government. The whole government is very centralized. The emperor or empress can give orders to any Kalor, and can delegate as much authority as he or she wants to anyone he or she wants. The emperor or empress is advised by a council of advisors (each an expert on a different subject) who are typically delegated control over that aspect of Kalor society (e.g. the Council expert on agriculture is typically put in charge of all Kalor farms and farmers). The council is democratically elected, but councilmembers are in for life. The emperorship is typically hereditary (though there are other ways one can become emperor).

The emperor's power is absolute, except for one thing. Any council member, at any time, can challenge the emperor or empress to a challenge. The challenge is a ritual fight to the death. The emperor/empress can participate in the combat (along with a partner) or ask two people to fight on his or her behalf. The combat is much like Oht (see below) but typically ends in death. If the challenger wins, the challenger assumes emperorship. This happens only rarely, typically when the emperor/empress makes a very unpopular decision.

The Kalor government rules every aspect of life within the Cloud City. The Kalor living in other parts of the world are given more leeway, and are under orders to participate in the human societies where they live.

Oht- The Kalor have no military. In times of war, every able-bodied Kalor is under a legal duty to fight to defend the empire. The Kalor are not afraid to use modern weapons, but the law requires them to spend several hours a day practicing with ancient Kalor weapons. The ritual-sparring component of this practice is called Oht. Oht uses real weapons and although people are not supposed to get hurt, deaths do sometimes happen.

A large portion of the law is codes regulating Oht. The law describes Oht-legal weapons and puts them in to two groups: the Olanidad (pole weapons with blades and spikes at the ends) and Olaninan (knife-like stabbing weapons). At a certain age, Kalor must decide which weapon they will use for the rest of their lives. Oht fights are always either an Olaninan vs. Olanidad or an Olaninan-Olanidad team vs. another Olaninan-Olanidad team.

A lot of a Kalor's identity is invested in Oht. When asked to describe themselves, Kalor typically list whether they are Olaninan or Olanidad fighters before they even describe their gender.

There are other, rarer forms of ritual combat, which are like Oht (same weapons and teams) but typically result in death.

Age Grades- The law defines four age grades (not including Judges):

Beiana: ("Knows the Womb") Children, must follow orders to move away from danger issued by elders. To become a Beiana requires a simple naming ritual (typically done at birth).

Tabul: ("Approaching Life") Adolescents. In war, Tabul are meant to be a force of thoughtless violence. Must practice Oht and fight enemies. To become Tabul, a Beiana must survive a round of Oht with an older fighter. The opponent typically lets the Beiana win, but not without making it painful and difficult. Most Kalor carry a scar from their Tabul ritual. A new Tabul must decide to be an Olaninan or Olanidad for the rest of his or her life.

Brakana: ("Knows War") Parents/Veterans. In war, Brakana are meant to use their wisdom to guide and restrain the Tabul. Must practice Oht and fight in wars. In battle, they can order Tabul to retreat or show mercy to an enemy. To become a Brakana, a Tabul must either be a veteran of war or have raised a child. The ritual involves defeating two elder opponents at once in Oht (once again, the opponents will not use the full measure of their skill, but will not make it easy either). A new Brakana must decide which Oht weapon to use for the rest of his or her life.

Reana: ("Knows Death") Elders/Generals. In war, Reana are meant to organize and lead troops from afar, they are also meant to be the ones who have to make life-and-death decisions. Reana can compel a younger to give them information about a battle, they can order the movement of troops, they order mercy or execution of a prisoner, or order the mercy-killing of a wounded Kalor. To become Reana a Brakana must be very old or be a warrior with a lot of experience. The ritual to become Reana is kept secret. It is preformed in the Cloud City and is apparently not as easy as the other rituals (of the five Humankalorie who attempted it, two failed).

Philosophy- The Kalor language is much more precise than human languages, and the wording of the law is even more precise. This does not stop the Kalor from arguing about the meaning of particular passages in the law. The outcome of these arguments are very important, since it is the meaning of the law, not the intent, that counts.

The Kalor do not have a study of ethics, epistemology (study of how we know things) or metaphysics (study of what exists). In their point of view, the law makes these questions moot. Why study what one should do, when the law tells the Kalor what they can do? Why decide whether something exists or not, since all that matters is if the law says it exists? The Kalor do, however, have very complicated philosophical discussions about the nature of language and logic. Throughout history, commentators on the law have come up with arguments about the nature of words and language, in order to help people decide what certain passages in the law mean. In recent decades, these ideas have revolutionized Western academia's philosophy of language. Most modern philosophers prescribe to "the Clowdian View of Language." This phrase often upsets Clowdians because it implies that there is only one view of language among the Clowdians.

The Kalor can be quite annoying to deal with because of their insistence on using exact language. They see human languages as severely lacking and they often complain when forced to use them. They also enjoy pointing out anything inaccurate or inexact in an individual's use of language. The Kalor are not trying to be mean, it is simply a matter of habit. Kalor parents do this to Kalor children to prepare them for the day when they will have to defend themselves in Kalor "court" and can lose if they use inexact language. Kalor typically don't like puns (since puns take advantages of multiple meanings of words) though they do enjoy other forms of humor (especially jokes based on Olaninan and Olanidad stereotypes).

Physiology

In Brief- Kalor are poor facsimiles of humans. Immune to drugs, psychics and earth diseases.

General Appearance- Kalor are very hard to recognize by sight. They tend to have looser skin than normal humans, making them appear older. They look like Native Central Americans. They vary greatly in height, but the average Kalor is taller than the average human. Kalor tend to have short, stubby fingers.

Vision- The Kalor have color vision, but the spectrum they see is slightly different from what humans see. Kalor, for instance, see little difference between blue and purple, but can see parts of the ultra-violent spectrum that humans cannot. The Kalor have their own words for colors and have a very hard time learning and describing things in terms of human colors.

Red Eyes- A recessive gene exists within the Kalor population. In about one in fifty Kalor this results in bright red irises. In ancient times, Kalor with red-eyes were kept hidden, not allowed to interact with non-Kalor. When dark glasses were invented, red-eyes took to posing as blind people. In the 20th century, colored contact lenses were invented and red eyes were able to interact with the normal population. The red eyes gene does not effect a Kalor's ability to see.

Lower Eyelashes- The lower eyelashes of Kalor, if not trimmed, will grow to mid-cheek. These hang straight down and are black. Modern Clowdians proudly grow their lashes long.

Antibiotic Saliva- Kalor saliva contains several chemicals which kill microbial organisms and sterilize wounds. Kalor have an instinctual impulse to lick their own wounds and the wounds of people they care about (especially children and lovers).

Secondary Pumping System- The Kalor have one primary heart, just as we do, but there are also five other muscle clumps within the chest that act as "mini-hearts" that help pump blood along. In the event that the heart stops, a Kalor can live (though they are rarely strong enough to stand) by the pumping of these secondary "hearts."

Biochemical Invulnerability- The Kalor's biochemistry is very different from that of humans. Their nutritional needs are slightly different (they need a lot more salt). They are immune to viruses and very few microbes can survive in or on them (they also seem to have come to earth with no diseases of their own). Human pharmaceuticals do not work on them (and thus neither does mental programming). Also, they seem to have no equivalent to the human psychic systems, so they are completely invulnerable to psychic manipulation or sensation. To a psychic, a Kalor is completely invisible. Kalor neurons can be stimulated with electricity, and some electronic implants that work on humans can be altered to work on the Kalor.

Alcohol Intolerance- Although most drugs have no effect on the Kalor, alcohol does effect them. Alcohol works via completely different neurochemical mechanisms than it does in humans. For a Kalor, a half a beer can cause confusion, hallucinations and sluggish heartbeat. A whole beer can kill most Kalor.

COLIN

In Brief- Serial killer, kidnaps people and copies his mind in to theirs (thus creating copies of himself), thinks he's a god, city residents have found him impossible to wipe out.

History

In 2075, amateur profilers were investigating a series of mutilated priests found in churches. When they caught the perpetrator in the act, what they saw frightened them: a group of small children. They were unable to take the children alive, but they autopsied the bodies and found evidence that each child's mind had been wiped out and over-written with a new mind (see Mind Copying, p.409). They could reach no other conclusion other than that someone had erased the children's minds and copied another mind in to their brains. What was worse, it was a mind that was capable of mutilating priests. The profilers immediately raised every alarm they could, and whole gangs took to the streets to find what they assumed was one perpetrator with one mental installer.

Colin himself revealed the truth to the profilers and the truth was much more horrible than they had thought. They had imagined one person with a mental installer manufacturing serial killers. In reality, each copy of Colin was an independent agent. Each copy went out and did whatever possible to make as many copies of himself as possible. Like a virus, any single Colin could reproduce exponentially in the right conditions. The copies were not just children, they were everyone: young people, old people, gang members, members of the Drug Lords, wealthy and powerful people, anonymous homeless people. Colin was infiltrating every sector of city society.

Colin Barley (Self-Reproducing Serial Killer)

Level 4 to 6 Serial Killer (depending on strain)

Attributes- AGY 5, AWR 14, CHM 17, INL 19, WIL 15, all else varies by body.

Appearance- Colin is careful to choose bodies at random, so he could appear as any age, gender, ethnicity or social class.

Social Status- Universally hated and feared throughout the city. Some have made Colin-hunting their lives' work. Some believe he is the most dangerous thing in the world. People outside the city (including federal authorities and the corporate news media) think that Colin is just an urban legend. A small group worship Colin, hoping to gain his favor and protection.

History- Profilers are desperate to know more about Colin's childhood. They are frustrated because most people from Colin's past are now dead. Apparently, Colin was born in 2049 and was raised by a well shut-in. His father either died or left when Colin was 9. Around this time, Colin became severely introverted and began to build a fantasy world where he was an invincible and cruel dictator. His fantasy world became his only source of comfort, and when he became an adult and started living on his own, he started killing people. At some point around 2070, Colin gained control of a mental installer (see p.408). He immediately began kidnapping people and replacing their minds with his.

Personality- Before he started reproducing, Colin was shy, felt alien and awkward around people, felt an intense hatred towards everyone around him. Since he has started reproducing, though, Colin's megalomania has taken control of him and changed his personality completely. He believes that he is immortal, that humans are like insects compared to him. He believes that God created the universe out of boredom, with the goal of creating an opponent that could challenge god. Colin believes he is that opponent. Colin thinks of himself as a being beyond the constraints of one body, and he does not fear the destruction of one of his bodies. Colin has been known to commit suicide in painful and bloody ways, just to show people that he does not fear death. Colin is confident, unashamed, a braggart who loves attention. He likes being feared and talked about. When he has an enemy he is more concerned with making sure the enemy realizes his power than with actually destroying the enemy. Colin likes to torture and kill people, but in recent years the suffering of a single individual has become less thrilling: he now kills to cause widespread fear in the public.

Motivations- Colin's primary motivation is to make as many copies as himself as possible. He knows this is the source of his power and he will do anything to get a hold of a mental installer. When Colin cannot find a mental installer, he entertains himself by killing and torturing people. These murders have two goals: the first, to make the public afraid of him, and second to thumb his nose at god. Colin is cautious about letting the federal government find out about his existence, which may be why he seems to have stayed in the city. He knows that a concerted federal and military effort might be able to wipe him out. On the other hand, he knows that people outside the city seldom listen to city residents and assume that he is an urban legend.

Methods- Colin tries to stay undercover for as long as possible. A new Colin will return to his body's home (if Colin can figure out where it is) and try to take on the life of that person. This can be quite a challenge, since Colin doesn't have any of the person's memories, has an unexplained absence to explain, and is still clumsy from the copying procedure. Colin's goal in taking over a person's life is to try to gain access to another black market mental installer that he can use to make more copies of himself. When Colin finds a mental installer, he tries to find time alone with friends and family of the person whose body he is using. He then attacks by surprise: drugging food or drinks, putting an ether-dampened cloth over their mouths, or simply knocking them out with a blunt object (usually with the joke "I'm going to feel that in the morning.") When Colin doesn't have a mental installer, he uses those tactics (and other tactics typical to serial killers, see p.373) to capture people who he can torture and murder. Colin likes to do something new each time, but he likes to be as horrible or sacrilegious as possible, and a number of his victims have been ministers and children. Colin is also a moderately good computer hacker and will hack in to computers to get information (especially info he needs to impersonate the people whose bodies he's using).

Special Skills- Typically (varies by individual)

   Combat: Assassin: Armed (3), Knife Fighting (4), Knife Throwing (2), Razormouth (2), Shiv (3), Street Fighting: Armed (2).

   Military: Brainwashing (2), Demolitions (3), Poisons (3), Torture (4).

   Tech/Info: Cryptography (2), Linework (3), Internet Browsing (3), Operating Systems (3), Network Protocols (3), Sniffing (2).

   Thief/Espionage: Alarm Systems (2), Disguise (2), Forgery (3), Impersonation (4), Lock Picking (3), Prowling (3).

Typical Attack- When Colin actually feels threatened (e.g. someone has figured out he is a Colin or is about to) Colin makes a vital strike with a knife. If he has time he makes an Invisible Aim (from Shiv, gives +4 to next action). Then he makes his vital strike with INL (19) + AGY (5) +4 (from invisible aim) +32 (from 4 levels in Knife Fighting) + 1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 + 25 vs. 0). He typically doesn't dodge, but strikes again as a simultaneous action at INL (19) + AGY (5) + WIL (15) +32 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 55 (or 1d20 +16 vs. 0).

Each copy struck out on his or her own, meaning that not even Colin really knew who was a Colin or how many Colins there were out there.

A paranoid witch hunt began, peaking in a few months. Every person who had gone away for any period of time or who was acting differently in any way was suspect. Many hundreds of people were lynched in the streets and many mental installers were destroyed. No one knows how many real Colins were killed, but there are at least a hundred people now believed to have been wrongly murdered. The witch hunt died down as people began to believe that Colin had been destroyed.

This pleasant belief lasted only a few months before Colins were caught again. Another, smaller witch hunt occurred, but tapered out as people began to see the uselessness of a witch hunt. Colin was too good at staying hidden and anonymous, he was as likely to be the leader of a lynch mob as he was to be the victim of one. Many said that Colin could only be fought with constant vigilance. Many were of the opinion that Colin just could not be destroyed by any means.

Now, about one Colin is discovered every month. Math Addicts have given various estimates of the current population of Colins as being somewhere between 20 and 500.

Colin Hunters

In Brief- Some people specialize in hunting Colins.

Colin scares most people more than anything else in the city. Some people have transformed their fear in to a "no tolerance" policy towards Colins: they will immediately kill anyone that they even suspect of being a Colin. Other people, especially people who have been hurt in some way by Colins, have decided to devote their lives to hunting Colin. Others hunt Colin as a hobby, some even find it fun.

Colin hunters come from all ranks of city society. Some are Hunters, some are Eccentrics with a law enforcement background, some are young people who are hobby profilers. Together they form a small community that investigates Colin, shares information, and creates theories about his psychology. When they discover a Colin, they have a small army of volunteers willing to help them capture or kill the Colin. One thing they wonder about is why Colin hasn't tried to wipe them out yet. Their major theory is that Colin likes people studying him.

Church of Colin

In Brief- A few people pretend to worship Colin in exchange for his anonymous protection.

There is a small group of individuals who "worship" Colin as a god. Their official position is that Colin wants (some would even say needs) worshippers and is willing to offer a great deal in return. Colin worshippers wear black, wear bowl-cuts with the sides of their heads shaved and wear silver crosses upside down. This is said to be Colin's original appearance, although no one knows where this information came from.

Colin worshippers are, obviously quite hated, but the people who hate them rarely do anything to them for fear of being attacked by Colins. Worshippers will do many things to please Colin, including defacing churches with pro-Colin graffiti, proclaiming from street corners that "Colin is a God," building public shrines to Colin and leaving offerings (usually in the form of food, money and weapons) to Colin.

In exchange, Colin worshippers are watched over and protected by an invisible hand. Colin never contacts these worshippers, but the most devout worshippers are under constant surveillance by Colin. One rude remark to a Colin worshipper can be enough to cause a person to be attacked by Colins. Colin Worshippers often have a lot of Colin hunters around them, looking for Colins.

Although Colin does not communicate with his worshippers, the zeal with which he protects them or does not protect them gives some clue about what behavior Colin likes or does not like. Colin likes fear, awe and christianesque worship. He also likes when worshippers talk as if he was a popular-culture icon. He likes worshippers who do not claim to have personal powers, but who rely on the power of Colin to protect them. For instance, Colin might not protect someone who says "You can't mess with me, I'm a Colin worshipper, you'll be killed," while he might protect someone who says "I put my faith in the power and infinite wisdom of Colin." Colin does not like worshippers who try to be like him, he has killed at least one worshipper who tried to copy his mind in to a victim's mind.

There are about 10 to 15 Colin Worshippers in the city. The Church of Colin has no formal organization, but Colin McKray, the first Colin Worshipper is the most powerful, has "converted" the most people and has the most influence over other Colin Worshippers.

Strains

In Brief- Different strains with different skills/knowledge; some Colins may have decided to quit reproducing.

Any time Colin changes, if he is gaining a piece of knowledge, learning a new skill, or gets a new mental program, every Colin that Colin creates is subtly different. Since Colin has been reproducing for 10 years, and has been actively trying to improve himself, there are many different strains. A new strain that is significantly better (e.g. has powerful psychic skills, or is a master martial artist) could reproduce more quickly than other Colins and could be an immediate threat to the city.

Colin's personality doesn't change much. Colin Hunters attribute this to the powerful megalomania that has dominated every aspect of his life for the last decade. However, personality change is probably inevitable if Colin survives long enough.

"The Dropout Effect"

This is a theory by Colin Hunters. They say that at some point (if it hasn't happened already) some Colin will change (either because of experiences or because of errors in the copying process) to the point that he doesn't want to be a Colin anymore. Yet the effect on the Colins as a whole will be almost nil. Those Colins will "drop out" but other Colins will continue. In the animal world, a mutation might make an animal not want to have sex, but since that gene is not carried on to a new generation, the effect on the species is nil. Thus, say Colin experts, Colin may continue to reproduce forever if we allow him.

Finding a Colin dropout would be a major coup for the Colin Hunters, who could find out more about Colin's psychology. However, a drop-out may not necessarily be a nice or safe person to be around.

CORPORATIONS

In Brief- Although not as large as they once were, corporations are large, powerful and very efficient.

There are 20 very large international corporations. These corps are massive organizations that own thousands of subsidiaries. These subsidiaries may appear, to consumers, to be separate companies. Small businesses make up only 10% of the United States' legal economy, the rest is made up of corporations. They are international, doing business in every nation in the world. Stock in these companies are traded on the open market, and owned by employees, but a majority of the stock is typically owned by a handful of very rich individuals. The corporations have a board of directors elected by the stockholders. Rich stockholders often cit on the boards.

Despite their size and power, corporations are much smaller and much less powerful than they were before the Freedom Wars. In the 2030s and 2040s, corporations ruled the world. They ruled it poorly, very nearly destroying society through short-minded greed. Their power was only unseated by a global uprising (the Freedom Wars). Today, corporations are allowed to exist, but with a Damocles sword hanging over their heads. The corporations, afraid of anti-corporate violence, do not try to fight this heavy regulation. They have allowed themselves to be symbolically beaten, but in the meantime they prosper.

Lifestyle

In Brief- Employees specially selected for mental qualities that benefit the corp, live in corporate living centers, get corporate stock.

In order to join a corporation, an employee must go through a battery of tests, using mental installer technology, verifying their intelligence, mental stability, potential loyalty to a corporation, and moral standards. The corporation only lets people join when they are sure that the person would be an asset to the corporation. Corporations today are a world apart from pre-war corporations because corps trust their employees. Before, employees were treated almost like enemies; everyone had someone else monitoring them. Today, employees are given jobs and the corps trust they will figure out the best way to complete them. Trust makes corporations much more efficient.

Most corporate employees live in gated corporate living centers, where everything (housing, schools, parks, public transport, malls, offices, factories) is run by the corps. Corporate employees get huge discounts on rent and corporate products and services. Loyal corporate

employees rarely spend money on anything outside of the corporation. Most corporate employees leave the living centers only to visit family or to go on vacation.

Employees are assigned to a job that best fits their skills, and are often given training to increase their skills. Employees are paid in both money and in corporate stock (which pays regular dividends). Most employees choose to live frugally and reinvest some of their income in even more stock.

Employees are given regular checks to make sure that they are still psychologically and morally fit for their current position. Because of these tests, it is very rare that anyone plans to do anything to hurt their company: there is little corruption, internal sabotage, goofing off, stealing from the corporation, because everyone knows they will be caught. When employees' psychology changes so that they are no longer reliable or efficient or loyal, employees are offered therapy, and if that fails they are fired (even if they've never actually done anything wrong).

Unlike gated communities, corps don't care what employees do in their off hours, so long as they don't hurt other corporate employees or their family. Some corporate employees come in to the city on weekends, they sleep with prostitutes and/or do drugs. So long as they are sober in time for work on Monday, nobody cares.

Operatives

In Brief- Corp troubleshooters & representatives in dangerous situations.

Employees who grow bored with corporate life, but are too valuable to lose, are sent to a very elite training program. They become the corps' elite troubleshooters, investigators, negotiators and representatives. When corps have something very important, that needs to be taken care of very quickly, going on in some remote or dangerous part of the world, they send an "operative." Operatives are sometimes the unsung heroes of the corps. Their jobs are dangerous, require great skill and independence, and are very important to the corporations. Yet, the corporations avoid idealization of operatives in the media: they don't want other corporate employees to expect their jobs to be that exciting.

Operatives have access to the best training and equipment available in the corporation. They may work alone, or they may lead a corporate task force in the field. Operatives are considered competent to take charge of any field operation. They don't work out of an office, they work out of

What Corps Don't Own
It seems like just about anything that uses and makes money is owned by a corp in some way or another. Some even believe that the Drug Lords are a Black Division of some corp (p.382). There are a few things that corps don't own:

Law Firms: Corporations can have their own in-house legal departments (and more lawyers are employed in this way than in any other) but corporations can never make a profit from employing lawyers who work for non-corporate clients.

Banks: Federal law prevents corporations from owning banks. Banks are thus the largest non-corporate businesses in the US. Modern banks look and act much like small corporations, except they do not sell shares and can only be owned directly by the partners who created the bank.

Governments/Political Parties: Corps operating in the US can not have any "legislative or executive powers" in any government. They can not own or give money to political parties or candidates. Many other countries have similar laws. Corporate employees can run for office, and the rich stockholders who own much of corps can give all they want to political parties. Governments can hire corps to do everything from create research reports to run the military, so long as the corp is not actually in charge.

Churches: Corps may make money selling religious products (everything from bibles, to religious VR programming, to tours of city churches) but they can not be a tax-exempt religious institution.

They don't work out of an office, they work out of hotel rooms around the world. Operatives are the most metropolitan of the corporate employees, with knowledge and contacts in every part of the world, including inner cities. When an event is big enough to draw operatives from one corp, it often draws operatives from other corps, and operatives from different corps often know each other and may even be friends.

Operatives must obey the law, and are under the watch of the LBRA (see below). However, since they don't work out of offices they are harder to track and can get away with bending the law every once in a while.

LBRA

In Brief- The Large Business Regulatory Agency keeps corps lawful. "Corp Hunters" are field agents who track down corporate crimes.

The Large Business Regulatory Agency is the federal agency in charge of enforcing the large volumes of corporate law. Most of the agency's job is boring and not at all glamorous: paperwork, bureaucracy and recordkeeping. The LBRA is best known for its investigative division, the so called "corp hunters." The investigative division is charged with investigating corporations for any violation of corporate law. Most of the Investigative Division is forensic accountants who track down how every cent within a corp is spent. There are a small, elite number of field agents who are trained in a variety of law enforcement techniques. Search warrants for corporations are incredibly easy to get and the "corp hunters" are the terrors of the corporate world: able to go anywhere they want and able to get injunctions against entire multinational corps at the first sign of malfeasance. Because large corporations exist in multiple countries, LBRA corp hunters work closely with agents from similar agencies around the world.

Corp hunters spend most of their time going after black corp divisions and banned corps. They sometimes come to the city trying to track down their prey. Life as a corp hunter can be dangerous: some black corp divisions and banned corps are willing to kill rather than be caught by the federal government.

Black Divisions

Niche- Since corps are so heavily monitored by the
In Brief: Secret rogue divisions, benefit the corp by illegal means. Some hire city residents as agents. Some turn against their own corps, but are quickly hunted down.

LBRA, they go to great lengths to avoid doing illegal things. The corps have whole internal agencies dedicated to making sure nobody does anything illegal that could get them fined or disbanded. There is evidence, however, that there are secret organizations that commit crimes to benefit the corps. The corporate management doesn't, can't, and doesn't want to know that these divisions exist. However, the corporations depend on the benefit that the corporations give them.

To stay hidden, black corps can't appear on any corporate paperwork, nor can any trail of expenses lead back to them. Black corps have no place in the corporate hierarchy: they

take orders from no one and have no budget. Some may be funded by rich stockholders outside the corp. Others exist within the corps and survive by defrauding their own corporation. They hack computers and falsify records to steal resources, office space and even employees. The people with high loyalty but low morals find themselves transferred to some corporate division nobody has ever heard of.

Corporations are willfully ignorant about black divisions. They could track them down if they truly wanted, to but they don't. Any project that might find a black division is deemed not worth the money. A few people within a corp might come across evidence that the black divisions exist, but they don't say anything. There may even be multiple black divisions operating independently within a corporation, each completely unaware of each other's existence.

Duties- Since black corps can't take money from the parent corp (without being discovered by LBRA forensic accountants) they must create their own budgets. They do this by engaging or investing in traditional organized crime. They also might steal and sell corporate property from their own corps. A lot of pirated software is believed to be sold by black corp divisions.

The second duty of a black corp is to do anything it can to help its corp get ahead. This can include corporate espionage and sabotage, stock manipulation, illegal research (the results of which mysteriously end up in R&D division data files).

The third duty of a black corp is to disappear if it is ever close to being discovered. The black corp's records are deleted and its employees are mysteriously transferred to legitimate subsidiaries. The heads of the division retire on what's left of the black corp's budget.

Corp-Borgs- Black corps always do a lot of business in inner cities. They are the best places to conduct any sort of illegal trade. Black corps often hire thieves, assassins, hackers and thugs living in the inner city to do their dirty work. There are rumors of city residents who became full time black corp employees, given implants and training, who live in the city and act as agents of the black corp, but who have no idea who it is they work for. In the stories, a person is contacted by some stranger who offers a nice salary. The person wakes up several weeks later with no memory of the intervening time. The new employee (or 'corp-borg' as city storytellers call them) is monitored and receives assignments though an implant. The same implant, the stories say, can be used to punish or even kill the corp-borg if he or she doesn't follow orders.

Rogue Black Divisions- Some black corp divisions go "rogue." They cease caring about the company at large and only care about their own continued existence and the high salaries of their directors. When a black corp division stops being a symbiote and starts being a parasite, corporate accountants quickly notice. The run of lucky coincidences that benefited the corporation stop and all that's left is an inexplicable shortage of office space and employees. The board of directors (who once claimed it was impossible for a secret division to exist within their corps) quickly order the rogue division tracked down and expunged.

Catching- Black divisions are the ghosts of the corporate

"Any corporation that didn't have a so-called 'black division' would have been weeded out by economic competition years ago." -LBRA 2079 Annual Report to Congress

Catching- Black divisions are the ghosts of the corporate world: people talk about them more than they actually see them. Most everything that people know about black divisions is educated guesses. The LBRA has never caught a black division. The only times the LBRA have come close, the black divisions found out and disbanded, disappearing without a trace. When a corp hunts down a rogue division, the expunging is so swift and efficient that not much is left for the LBRA to investigate. The LBRA would love to catch a "live" black division so they can prove to congress that such things exist.

Banned Corps

In Brief- Operate from 3rd world countries, specialize in grey market, can't do business in US or with non-Banned corps.

Most nations have signed the International Corporate Law Convention, which gives them the ability to "blacklist" a corp found doing something grossly illegal in one of the countries. There are a few corps, however, that operate in countries that have not signed the convention. Many of these are third world countries with weak economies and corrupt leadership. Freed from the strict controls that most countries place on corps, these banned corps can exert a huge influence on the government, can pay workers less than the international minimum wage and can engage in not-quite-legal forms of commerce. In other words, they can do everything that pre-Freedom War corporations did, but without even trying to cover up their misdeeds.

It is illegal for these banned corps to do business in any country that has signed the convention, or with any corporation that is not banned. Despite this, these banned corps find ways to make money from the US and other 1st world countries. They sell pornography, gambling, pirated software, pirated entertainment and other grey market products on the internet. They may also create cheap forgeries of the products of other corps and smuggle them in to the US for sale. They also use smugglers to avoid tariffs and taxes. Much cheap liquor in the city was smuggled in by banned corps in the Caribbean. Some people think that banned corps may do business with black divisions (or that they may even be one and the same).

There is no clear dividing line between these banned corps and organized crime agencies. They may use armed thugs to bully the populace (including the government) in their home countries around. The countries they operate from may desperately want to be rid of them, but may be too scared to even ask for help from the international community.

CRIMINALS

It is hard to find someone on the streets who does not break some law or another. Many people use illegal drugs, most people buy stolen merchandise from black market traders, most people trespass on to abandoned property. Many people will end up doing some job that they get paid under the table for. Violence in the name of vigilante justice or revenge is common. For street people, their very existence violates anti-camping and anti-vagrancy laws.

Most city residents would divide criminals in to one of four categories:

Incidental Criminals: Commit crimes that are incidental to their lifestyle: a Roofer trespasses on rooftops, an Insomniac uses illegal drugs, a Risen participates in gang warfare. The majority of people on the streets count as this type.

Professional Criminals: Make a living off of crime. In order to survive they must be skilled and patient. They seek the easiest and least dangerous way to commit their crimes, and so they are seldom violent (the major exception being professional assassins, who practice efficient violence with nothing left to chance).

Impulsive Criminals: Typically Wells. Commit crimes to get money for drugs, prostitutes or other expensive vices. Impulsive criminals would make poor professional criminals: they are not skilled, patient or careful enough. They typically commit crimes under the influence of drugs (most commonly alcohol and god killer) and they are very likely to use violence.

Sadistic Criminals: Commit crimes solely to victimize others. Include rapists, serial killers, child molesters and hate criminals.

Top 10 Shoplifted Items in the City

1. Cigarettes
2. Liquor
3. Condoms
4. Over the Counter Medicines containing Ephedrine*
5. Spray Paint
6. Razors
7. Disposable Lighters
8. Data Cards
9. Baby Formula
10. Batteries

*from which Methamphetamines and God Killer can be manufactured

Burglars

In Brief- Cat burglars are stealthy and skilled. Smash-and-grab burglars are violent.

There are two distinct types of burglary as practiced by professional and impulsive criminals. The first type is cat burglary, where not being seen takes precedence over getting something of value. Burglars of this type are usually professional unborn thieves with in-depth knowledge of how to bypass alarm systems. The second type is the smash-and-grab: gangs of armed youths break down a door or smash a window. They run in and subdue anyone who happens to be present with violence or threats of violence. They run away before security can come en-masse. This type of burglary is a big problem in the city: hundreds are killed each year and many more are injured. The burglars tend to prey on those who can not defend themselves and more than half of those who are killed are elderly.

Muggers

Muggers are typically small groups of

In Brief- Small gangs of youths ambush people to get money for drugs.

desperate addicts or violent teenagers. They seek out those least able to defend themselves: intoxicated people, old people, sick people, anyone who looks like a VR addict out on the streets for the first time in months. Typically, the group waits in dark alleys, waiting for a spotter to tell them that a lone traveler is coming by. The muggers ambush the traveler, usually attacking with blunt objects. The point is to incapacitate the victim, the muggers seldom care whether they kill or not.

Types of Alarms

Infrared Beams

Recognizing: Visible with infrared sensors, or look for the holes in the wall the beams come out of.

Uses: Infrared beams are a cheap way of protecting some passageway against anything moving through it. They are only useful indoors, where it is unlikely that pigeons or wind-blown trash will interrupt the beams.

Bypassing: One or two beams can be stepped over. If beams completely block passage, they can be redirected with semi-reflective mirrors or fiber-optic cables.

Floor Sensors

These are sensors on the floor that set of an alarm when weight is put on some part of the floor.

Recognizing: Loose tiles or a thin layer of spongy or flexible material on the floor.

Uses: Floor sensors are a good supplemental security system for rooms which no one should be in during certain hours, such as an office or vault.

Bypassing: Sensors on top of the floor can usually be erased with a spray of acid. If sensors are under the floors, thieves can glue the tiles in place or build a bridge.

Door/Window Sensors

When the door or window is opened, an electrical contact is broken and an alarm is activated. High quality alwaysrun wires through the door or window so thieves cannot cut a hole in the window or door.

Recognizing: Electromagnetic sensors are a sure way, but most can be seen by shining a flashlight in to the crack.

Uses: Making sure doors and windows stay closed.

Bypassing: With cheap sensors, the easiest thing to do is to cut a hole in the window or door. In high quality devices, thieves must drill in and insert wires to maintain connections.

Ambient Temperature Sensors

High definition heat sensors which are hooked up to the air conditioning and heating systems. When a temperature increase indicates a human presence, an alarm is triggered.

Recognizing: Typically a small thermostat box on one wall.

Uses: Useful only in temperature controlled environments, such as the rooms supercomputers are housed in.

Bypassing: A high tech temperature regulating body suit, or a thick wool suit filled with ice-packs.

Human Recognition Sensors

Recognizing: Small cameras, usually mounted on ceilings, that sweep back and forth. Typically transmit wirelessly to a security computer.

Uses: Used in outside areas where people are not supposed to be at night and where wind or animals might set off other types of alarms. In very high-security corporate offices, every employee wears a security badge that the computers read. If any human appears and there is not a corresponding security badge signal, an alarm is triggered.

Bypassing: Thieves create trash suits that make them look like a shambling mound of trash. Thieves must also know how to move in a manner that doesn't read as human. Accomplished thieves look so weird in their shambling-trash mode that human guards are often shocked for several seconds upon seeing them.

Motion Detectors

Recognizing: Small boxes mounted on the ceiling. When well hidden, they are pinholes in the wall.

Uses: Used in rooms where there should be zero movement in the off hours.

Bypassing: Motion sensors can be bypassed by moving extremely slowly (a moderate END roll and a hard AGY roll.)

Pounders

In Brief- Gangs of tough homeless men who bully around other homeless people.

Although many street people band together for the purposes of self-protection and cooperative labor, some street people form small groups that bully and exploit other street people. They are known as "pounders" because of their propensity for ganging up on and beating up street people. These groups are typically made up of 5 to 20 males in their twenties and thirties, most of whom are physically large. There may or may not be a leader. Most of these groups are ethnically homogenous (e.g. all white, all asian, etc.). Most drink alcohol as their primary form of entertainment.

The group bullies around other street people. The get the best camping sites (typically a vacant lot with a barbed wire fence and abandoned cars to sleep in). The group takes over the best canning routes and begging spots. When semi-legitimate jobs are offered to street people (for instance, a shop owner may pay street people to sweep up in front of the shop, or an apartment manager may pay street people to carry garbage bags to the dumpsters) these gangs muscle in and take over the jobs. The gangs may also steal directly from street people.

At night these street people use their ill-earned money to buy drugs and alcohol and have parties. They play music on car stereos and use drugs and alcohol. The drugs and alcohol are used to lure street women in to the compound where they will be given drugs and taken advantage of.

Pounder gangs typically stay away from each other. The pounders also stay away from the large street families who would fight back against them. Like most bullies, they only want to deal with the weak.

High Class Thieves

There are a small class of elite criminals that travel around the globe doing high-cost and high-payout jobs. They have the best equipment, help and skills. Most fantasies about the lives of these thieves are false: they are not free spirits, they do not live luxurious lifestyles, they are not doing what they would like to be doing for a living. They are victims of various vices and personality problems, they are often broke, and they are usually under the control of some organized crime figure who finances them but takes most of their profits

Assassins

In Brief- Many think they are skilled enough to kill for money and there is a glut of people offering services.

There are a large number of people in the city who wouldn't mind killing a complete stranger for money and who think they have the skills it would take. These are mostly young well freelancers who idealize violence, are too independent to join a gang and too wimpy to engage in fair fights. Most people who want to be assassins see the world as a place where force alone rules. Assassins hang around on internet newsgroups with other wanna-be assassins, bragging about their skills and hoping that someone will contact them with an invitation. Potential assassins may also advertise to the local black market traders. Most assassins advertise but are never given an offer.

When assassins are hired, they are given instructions and paid anonymously (either through a black market trader, or through anonymous transaction internet sites). The average job pays $400. Almost half are paid to kill spouses or lovers.

Terrorists

In Brief- The terrorists who were the heroes of the Freedom Wars, and the culture they helped create, linger now as mercenaries and lone radicals.

Terrorism was a huge part of the Freedom Wars. Terrorists could operate without the support of a bureaucracy or infrastructure, and were thus able to do damage in lands completely controlled by the enemy. Terrorists helped both sides, and some terrorists even switched sides midway through the war.

Before the initial attacks of the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez created training camps for terrorists in sparsely populated areas of Mexico. Over five thousand people were trained in demolitions, intelligence, sabotage, assassination and brainwashing. These highly skilled terrorists went out and trained other terrorists. Some of these terrorists defected when they saw what Jeffrey Hernandez did with his power. There was never just one resistance and there was never really one Freedom Army: there were many completely independent cells and lone individuals, each with their own view of what the outcome of the Freedom Wars should be and with different ideas of what methods were acceptable.

After the Freedom Wars ended, the Restoration Committee's primary goal was to end rioting, fighting and terrorism. The made concessions to any group they worried might resort to terrorism. Thus, much of the globe was balkanized. Most of the terrorists who had fought in the Freedom Wars decided that they had won (the Freedom Army had wiped out the corps, the resistance had wiped out the Freedom Army) and retired. A few however, were too radical to accept even partial victory. Like all good terrorists, they went in to hiding to await the time to strike. Now, 24 years later, the FBI estimates that there are a thousand terrorists in the US and 100 in the city. Many terrorists, trained in methods of indoctrination, have indoctrinated new terrorists (including their own children). Most acts of terrorism committed in the US today are committed by people 18-30.

A few terrorists have gone in the other direction and become mercenaries. Some live in the city while awaiting jobs. They use the same methods as politically motivated terrorists, but they destroy whoever or whatever their employers want them to.

Genius Serial Killers?

Like most violent criminals, the average serial killer has lower intelligence and lower self-control than the average city resident. Despite this, they often spend so much time thinking about ways to kill people that they come up with clever strategies and ploys. Serial killers of above average intelligence do exist, but they still have poor impulse control and get caught almost as quickly as their stupider brothers and sisters.

Serial Killer or Normal Killer?

A lot of people in the city kill, and for a lot of reasons. Finding a set of dead bodies killed with a similar M.O. does not necessarily mean that a serial killer is at work. Is it a mugger who likes to bash people's heads in, or a serial killer who happens to rob his victims? Is it vigilante justice or systematic revenge? Some Hunters have been known to murder members of a group (like pusher gangs), but believe they are doing good. Some profilers have even gone so far as to call certain Hunters "good serial killers."

Two clues tell profilers that they should use a classic "serial killer" profile in trying to solve a series of murders: First, the victims all belong to a class of people (e.g. attractive women, old winos, etc.) but are not actually related. Second, there is evidence that the killer is trying to recreate some internal fantasy in the external world. The murder is often careful, ritualistic, and bodies are often posed. A god-killer addicted mugger doesn't create a fantasy world about bashing people's heads in, he or she just goes out and does it. It is the serial killers who are trying to make fantasies real.

Serial Killers

In Brief- The city has around 100 serial killers at any one time, who enact violent fantasies for anxiety relief and self-esteem.

The city has one of the highest concentrations of serial killers in the world. There are estimated to be about 100 serial killers operating in the city at any given time. There are many reasons for this, some obvious and some subtle. To illustrate, here are some of the childhood environmental factors most strongly correlated with the development of a serial killer:

-Moderate (but not extreme) poverty.

-A tragedy or trauma in early life.

-Little or no supervision by authority figures during childhood.

-Few friends and social contacts.

-Emotionally distant parent(s).

-Early access to pornography, especially violent pornography.

-Nothing that would provide a strong sense of identity (e.g. a strong talent or membership in a minority group).

Many of these factors (moderate poverty, emotionally distant parents, poor supervision and few social contacts) are consistent with the environment in the homes of shut-in well VR addicts (the largest part of the city's population).

Pornography- Most serial killers in the city are male and most appear to be dependent on pornography and violent sexual fantasies. The relationship between serial killers and pornography seems equivalent to a drug addiction. Most serial killers have very low self-esteem and feel a transient feeling of power when they view pornography or have violent fantasies. Like a drug user who gains a tolerance for the drug, serial killers need increasingly intense stimulation, and use more and more "hardcore" pornography and fantasies. Eventually, the only way to get enough stimulation is to commit a real act. Serial killers must kill increasingly often to fight away the 'withdrawal' of low self-esteem anxiety.

The most disturbing aspect of the serial killers' fantasy worlds is that they have an obsessive need to dehumanize their victims. A serial killer's self-esteem is so fragile that they are only comfortable living in a world where they are the only one with an identity and free-will. All else who share this world with them must be nothing more than flesh and base emotions at the control of the serial killer.

Partnerships- Most serial killers prefer to work alone, though there are instances of siblings, lovers and friends working together. In most cases, only one of the people is truly 'in to' killing people, the other one is simply along for the ride. When both are true serial killers, they work together for the same reason drug addicts work together, because they see mutual benefit in it, not because they like each other or want to share their experiences. Most partners of this type meet on the underground market for illegal pornography. Very few ever form what city residents would think of as a deep or fulfilling friendship.

CULTS

In Brief- Many cults in city, prey on psychologically weak, can be dangerous.

Cults are a major problem in the city. There are about four thousand people in some cult or another. About two people per day are recruited in to a cult. Most cults only last a few years before breaking up (or ending in mass suicide). Cults recruit from every level of the population, rich and poor, shut-ins and street people. Most cults in the city are small (20-100 people). A few cults become large enough to have some political pull in the city. The Lumens are currently the largest cult in the city and have been able to take on gangs.

Characteristics

In Brief- Prey on the confused and vulnerable, offer companionship and safety, teach people not to think for themselves, charismatic leader.

Cults prey on those who are experiencing stress or trauma. Runaways are the biggest target, and many cult recruiters hang around the bus stop in the Bowery where most runaways come in to town. The cults give a person in crisis a comforting atmosphere, friendship, encouragement, love and sometimes even sex. In exchange, the cult controls the person's surroundings 24 hours a day, controls what information the person has access to. The person's thinking is distracted so he or she doesn't have the time, energy or inspiration to question the doctrines of the cult. The wild ideologies seem normal when everyone else believes it. Finally, the cult member learns to censor his or her own thoughts. The member is taught that "bad thoughts" will harm his or her spiritual progression and should be avoided at all costs.

Almost universally, cults are led by a charismatic person who is thought of as superhuman by his or her followers. Cult members are taught a sense of superiority over anyone else not in the cult. They are taught that the lifestyle of outsiders is evil and dangerous to their souls, that common knowledge from the outside world is ignorance and propaganda, and that cult members (especially the leadership) do not need to follow the laws of the outside world.

Some think that the Purists and Dragons are cults. They both have charismatic leaders who have unique spiritual ideas. They both have followers who believe in the ideas of the leaders and live as the leaders suggest. However, because members of the Purists and Dragons both enjoy freedom of association, most people classify them as gangs and not cults.

Lumens

In Brief- City's biggest cult, live in Cloisters, use bright lights for ceremonies and for blinding opponents.

The Lumens are well known because they have taken on both the Skin Borgs and the Drug Lords and survived. The Lumens live in the Cloisters, European monk's cloisters reconstructed in 1914, in Inwood hills on the North of the island. This is right in the middle of Skin Borg territory.

Social Structure- The Lumens call themselves "penitents" and their church "church of the infinite light." The name Lumens was given to them by city residents. No one outside of the Lumens knows very much about the leader of the Lumens. He is said to be a handsome, middle aged male who is very intense and charismatic. Like a gang, the Lumens seek immediate revenge for the death of one of their own.

Beliefs- The Lumens believe that god is pure light and in their religious ceremonies people expose themselves to extremely bright lights (along with hypnotic chanting). The lights are supposed to help cleanse the fears and desires that remove people from god. They are also supposed to show people how beautiful heaven is. Critics point out that, since bright lights can be an effective therapy for depression, the Lumens are just curing depressed people and calling it spiritual awakening.

Recruitment- Lumens are not allowed to leave the Cloisters alone, they always travel in groups of four or more. When they are recruiting, though, one member does the recruiting and the others hang around nearby, pretending not to be associated with the recruiter. Lumens wear "humble" clothing, which usually means that they dress like Street People. They all carry knives and each team that leaves the cloister has one high-tech portable spotlight (see p.137). In combat they shine this light at their opponents. The Lumens are used to operating in very bright light and are not blinded as badly as their opponents.

Lumens look for people who look like they are having a hard time with life. One Lumen strikes up friendly conversation, gets to know the person, then offers the person a hot meal and a place to stay the night. The person is brought back to the Cloisters and treated with kindness and respect. Any time the recruit asks to leave, the Lumens make up some imaginary crisis that is keeping them busy (but promise to let the person leave as soon as it is done). If the person tries to force his or her way out of the compound, the person will be grabbed and put in a brightly-lit cell. Someone sits outside the cell preaching, 24 hours a day, until the person submits.

Battles- From their inception, the Lumens have been very good at recruiting drug addicts. The Lumens will capture drug addicts, bring them to the cloisters and keep them prisoner until they have detoxified (during which time they are thoroughly brainwashed). Taking drug addicts (and thus income) away from the Drug Lords had prompted several attacks on the Lumens. The Lumens have held their ground, refusing to change their behavior. The Drug Lords have not called off the war against the Lumens, they still offer a reward to any pusher or addict who kills a Lumen, but they have stopped ordering tactical assaults on the Cloisters. The Drug Lords have stopped after two dagger teams were destroyed. Hundreds of Lumens were killed in the battles, but the Lumens didn't seem to care.

As the Skin Borgs expanded, they ran in to the Lumens. At first, the Skin Borgs were determined to take over this cult like they have taken over all the other gangs in their way. The Skin Borgs quickly gave up, telling themselves that this didn't count as a loss because the Lumens weren't a gang. There is still a lot of hostility and warfare occasionally ignites.

Types of Locks

Mechanical: A key pushes pins of different sizes in to the right position. Can be picked by putting tension on the lock and raking the pins with a pick.

Keypad: There are a wide variety of these: Some run off of battery, some run off of wall power. Some store the codes inside, others communicate with a network. Some have one code that works, others have multiple codes that work at different times of day. The easiest way to break in is to "shoulder surf" and see someone else's code. Skilled electricians can open the keypad and trigger it to send an open signal.

Electromagnetic: Electromagnetic signals sent from a security card or other small object trigger the door to open. Although thieves can try to "guess" the electromagnetic signal that will open the lock, the easiest way to bypass it is to cut the lock open and cross some wires.

Data Keys: Small key-shaped devices hold pieces of data. When inserted in to a jack they open a lock. The nice things about these keys are that they are easily internet compatible: stick one in a door to open it, stick another in a paycomputer to access some service on a net-site. The best keys are "hotcoded" so that the data never actually leaves the chip. A computer "challenges" with a random string, the data key encrypts or decrypts the string and responds. Thus, the true "key data" never actually leaves the key (and if someone tries to take the key apart, the data will disappear).

Biometric: These are electronic locks for which the people themselves are keys. A biometric lock measures one or more unique human characteristic (fingerprints, voice prints, retinal images, DNA sample) to determine whether it should unlock.

Hybrid: A hybrid lock incorporates two ore more of the above in to one lock. Because hybrid locks require a higher level of skill to install and maintain, it is usually only security specialists who really love their jobs who install these kinds of locks.

DISEASE

Healthcare

In Brief- Most Indies have high quality health insurance. Wells have poor quality government healthcare, with two big hospitals in the city. Street People go to the Black Med family for care. ERs must provide emergency care for indigent.

Indies- Most indies pay for subscriptions to HMOs. The city hospital and several clinics around the city take indie health insurance, but Indies who want quality care travel to clinics and hospitals outside of the city. In emergencies (and for a reasonable co-pay) subscribers can be flown out of the city by helicopter to an emergency room in Queens. Private healthcare will pay for advanced pharmaceuticals, psychiatric mental programs, therapy and cloned parts (to replace missing or damaged organs and appendages). They will pay some of the costs of inpatient drug rehabilitation. They will not pay for the terminally ill to be copied in to a new body (see Mind Copying, p.409).

Wells- Government Healthcare is available for everyone on government assistance. A person with a healthcare card has to wait weeks to get an appointment with a dentist or GP and might wait up to eight hours in an emergency room before being seen. Many people who die in the city hospital die in an ER waiting room.

The state Department of Health Services owns the NYC Central Hospital at Park Ave. and E. 23rd St. (downtown, near midtown) and the NYC Urgent Care Clinic at Adam Clay Powell Blvd. and Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd (in Harlem). The central hospital is a ten story building. The basement is the city morgue, the first floor is an emergency room and the top floor is the city short-term care psychiatric clinic. The urgent care clinic is a smaller clinic, built in an old brownstone that was once a tenement, it has a slightly smaller emergency room as well as a large hospice. Both are in non-gang territory. There are a few small specialists offices downtown that take government healthcare. The city also owns several hospices, many are built in to old brownstones in Harlem near the NYC Urgent Care Clinic.

Government healthcare will not pay for implants, replacement parts, drug and alcohol treatment, psychotherapy, newer drugs or mental programs. There are ambulances, but they are often overworked and slow to respond and the government tries to charge a $50 co-pay for each ambulance visit.

Street People- Street People go to the Black Meds, a large, old street family that specializes in providing medical care for street people. None of the Black Meds have any formal medical training. The care they provide is mostly basic first aid (sterilizing, cauterizing, sewing and splinting) and the use of herbs and placebos. Street people mostly barter for Black Med services. When it comes to plagues, Black Meds can offer little help except to make sure the victim has plenty of fluids and a warm place to rest.

The central hospital and urgent care clinic emergency rooms are required by law to provide care to any indigent person. No preventative or long-term care is provided: it is simply a matter of patching the person up and releasing them back to the streets.

Slow Killers

In Brief- Many diseases, transmitted by body fluids, that there are no cures for.

Body Fluid Transmitted Diseases (BFTDs) infect up to 5% of the city population. New strains pop up faster than cured can be discovered. The most common BFTDs only cause pain and annoyance but seldom kill. Others can not be cures and will eventually kill. Most of these are autoimmune diseases descended from HIV or from the newer HDNA diseases. These BFTDs are often called "slow killers". A majority (55%) catch these diseases through sex, 40% catch them through use of dirty needles and 5% through some other sort of body fluid contact. The slow killers cause a slow decline of health, resulting in death in 4 to 6 years. Even when there is no cure, a person's lifespan can be increased by using expensive drugs.

Plagues

In Brief- A new type of virus, made from human DNA, occasionally pops up as a horrible plague.

The 2040s were an era of plagues. Massive overpopulation, economic crises causes substandard healthcare and sanitation, and everyone from corps to terrorists were messing with the DNA of disease organisms. The worst plague of this era contained human DNA and had a protein coating that was virtually invisible to the human immune system. Three million people around the world were killed before the first strain of this virus was brought under limited control.

Many of the terrible plagues of this era are waiting, living in other hosts and waiting to infect the human population. Plagues are worst in inner cities, and the city has been the source of several recent plague outbreaks. Countless untold diseases are living in the city's massive rat population (not to mention stray cats and dogs, pigeons, squirrels and bats). A random bite by a rat can introduce a new strain in to a population. Or, in an even worse scenario, a mutated strain starts killing all the rats, and the billions of fleas jump off the dead rats and bite humans (thus spreading the disease to them).

Quarantines

In Brief- The CDC locks down the city during plague outbreaks, provides emergency care.

The city hospital reports disease stats to the CDC. When the CDC fears there is considerable danger from a disease, it issues a quarantine. The city is locked down, no one can enter and leave except for CDC doctors in CDC helicopters. CDC doctors set up inflatable labs where they can work on finding some treatment for the disease. Helicopters with powerful speakers move through the city ordering everyone to stay inside. Anyone could be arrested for going out on the streets (or disobeying a CDC doctor) but the CDC seldom has the time or employees to enforce such rules. The Central Hospital and Urgent Care Clinic (and sometimes the blocks surrounding them) become triage units where people die en masse and a fine disinfectant mist is being constantly sprayed from the ceilings. After one hour, the subways are shut down.

Any city resident who's lived through a plague develops a sixth sense during outbreaks: every doorknob, pool of blood, delirious addict, even the air around a corpse seems to glow with disease energy. Many times "business" can't be stopped, even during a plague, and while city residents move through the city they recognize death everywhere, just waiting for the right time to strike.

Plague Survival Kit $170 ($500-$1000 during a plague)

Gasmask $75 (to protect against airborne diseases)

Sterilization Spray $50 (to sterilize food)

Latex Gloves $1 (to protect against contact based diseases)

Trenchcoat $35 (to protect the body from bites and scratches)

Insect Repellent $5 (to repel insects that might carry diseases)

DRUGS

Drug Addicts

In Brief- Drug addicts mostly dangerous, unhappy, poor. Some addicts handle addiction better than others. Many spend all day doing anything they can to get money for drugs. A lucky few become servants of addicts.

The most visible drug addicts are what people jokingly call "**career addicts**": people who are so deeply addicted to their drug that they can not stay on welfare or hold an occupation (legal or illegal) or allegiance to any group. Career addicts are easy to spot: they care little about hygiene, they may stink of alcohol or have visible needle tracts on their skin, the malnutrition from each time they chose drugs over food is readily visible, and they have a desperate look in their eyes. The majority of drug addicts look like everyone else, these are the "**part-timers**" who are able to "keep it together" enough to stay at their current place on the socioeconomic ladder and maintain their membership in whatever group they belong to. Some part-timers keep their addictions secret from everyone they know, some only hang around with drug abusers and never think of not using as an option, some have admitted that they are addicted and are trying to live with their "disease" as comfortably as possible, some are trying to fight the disease with the help of friends and family.

There are 20,000 career addicts in the city and 56,500 part-time addicts. Altogether that's more than a third of the city population that is addicted to some drug, whether they are willing to admit it or not.

Public Perception- The majority of addicts do not live on the streets, they keep their lives together. However, they are not so visible, so when people think of or talk of "addicts" they typically mean the career addicts people see on the streets every day. Addicts are considered by many to be the lowest form of human life in the city. Even homeless schizophrenics who scream day and night at invisible demons take better care of themselves than some addicts do. In the mind of non-addicts, all addicts are desperate, dangerous, immoral and do not fear death. In truth, not every addict fits this stereotype, and those that do only fit it some of the time.

Most people see career addicts as hopeless losers. This is incorrect. They are very skilled at getting drugs, using drugs and operating while under the influence of drugs, it's everything else in their lives that they are bad at.

Good and Bad Addicts- The biggest difference between addicts is one of psychology: some people handle addiction better than others. Some take only as much as they need to keep withdrawals away, they are careful and sensible and always choose to get high after they have done their most important duties of the day. Other addicts use far more drugs and at inappropriate times. When they have problems, they deal with those problems by doing drugs, which only makes the problems worse. Sometimes they get passively suicidal: too scared to actually hurt themselves, but too scared of life to imagine it going on much longer. They take dangerous amounts of drugs and do dangerous things. Most addicts fall somewhere in the middle: they keep a handle on their addiction most of the time, but occasionally lose control (especially when there is extraordinary stress in their lives).

Hustling- Among career addicts, "hustling" means doing anything they can think of to get money. Generally, addicts get all their physical necessities (food, clothing, toiletries) by standing in lines at shelters and by searching through dumpsters. Addicts need money for buying drugs, and as soon as they get any money at all it quickly goes toward drugs. The average career addict spends about 14 hours a day, earning fifty cents an hour, hustling.

Hustling is not purely the domain of homeless addicts. Homeless crazies, non-addict street people and even wells hustle when they need cash and can't think of any other way to get it.

Hustling can include the following:

    Canning: Finding recyclables in the trash and turning them in to one of many recycling centers across the city. Recyclables are usually kept in large plastic trash bags.

    Begging: Going to places where a lot of people pass by, usually with a sign or a well practiced phrase.

    Salvaging: Finding usable goods others have thrown out and selling or trading them. Addicts might even go to homeless shelters to get food, toiletries and medicines, which they turn around and sell.

    Working: Doing odd jobs, usually hard labor, for a few cents worth of change. Superintendents usually get help with garbage bags for only a few quarters.

    Theft: Addicts usually steal from intoxicated fellow addicts. They may shoplift, but are typically not very good at it. They may get together in small groups to ambush and rob non-addicts.

    Sex: Providing sexual favors in exchange for money or drugs.

Lackeys- A lucky minority of addicts become servants to pushers (and even kings). The pusher gives the addict drugs, a little money for food and clothes, and sometimes even a place to stay. In exchange, the addict is on call 24 hours a day to run errands. Most lackeys realize how lucky they are and are very loyal and protective of their pusher. For the pusher this is a very good deal: a full time servant for cash and drugs that cost the pusher about $200 a month. The more successful a pusher is, the more lackeys. Some pushers have addict lackeys that do all their pushing for them, the pusher just manages the money. Despite the mutual benefit of this relationship, most pusher-lackey relationships eventually go sour: pushers are violent and irresponsible, addicts are undependable and prone to betrayal in desperate moments.

Street Drugs

In Brief- Millions are spent on legal and illegal drugs. Drugs quite harmful to the addicts and to society.

Alcohol: most abused drug in city with wide range of addicts who are better off than other addicts.

Opiates: Many abuse prescription pain killers.

Amphetamines: Popular stimulants, losing abusers to God Killer.

God Killer: Most abused illegal drug, used by many young thugs, causes megalomania, feelings of invulnerability, sometimes bloody and tragic rampages.

Chomper: 1st drug created by Drug Lords, now few addicts (ODs and more addictive drugs). Some OD victims survived inability to feel pleasure by becoming the Hungry.

Mauler: Created by Drug Lords, causes brain damage, addicts eventually become cannibalistic animals.

Trace: For "special" addicts the Drug Lords want to keep track of.

Maxin: Not a recreational drug, Maxin is very addictive because it is a powerful smart drug and without it addicts feel stupid.

Escape: Not designed as a street drug, escape is very psychologically addictive. It suppresses all feelings.

Slave: The newest drug from the drug lords and the most addictive yet.

Every day in the city, more than $700,000 is spent on alcohol and addictive street drugs. More than 21 million per month goes in to the pockets of corporations, small business owners, black market traders and the Drug Lords.

Alcohol- Alcohol has, perhaps, the widest range of addicts. There are young and successful Indies who are secretly addicted to alcohol and keep a hip flask of brandy in their briefcases. There are also homeless winos who spend every bit of spare change they can scrape together to buy bottles of fortified wine. Most alcoholics do not exclusively use alcohol, it is simply their drug of choice. More than half of winos will occasionally use god killer, amphetamines, opiates and other drugs when they can get a hold of them. Pushers often wish to force winos to become addicted to their super-addictive drugs. Pushers may force winos to use via threats of force, or they may actually hold down and inject a wino. The wino's best defense is to be indistinguishable from other addicts.

Drug	Method of Intake	Major Effects	Long Term Effects	Withdrawal	OD	Num. Of Abusers	Cost/Day to prevent withdrawal	Created
Alcohol	drink	anxiolytic, pleasant buzz, clumsiness	brain and liver damage	delirium tremens	vomiting, coma, convulsions	5,000 career 20,000 part-time	$5	Prehistory
Opiates	swallow pills shoot-up	sedation, anxiolytic, pain relief, pleasure	poor immune system	cramps, insomnia, flu-like symptoms, diarrhea	heart attack, fluid in lungs, inability to breathe	2,000 career 7,000 part-time	$8	Prehistory
Amphetamines	swallow pills	excitement, pleasure	malnutrition, paranoia, ulcers	depression, anxiety, shaking, insomnia	difficulty breathing, irregular heartbeat coma, spasms	1,500 career, 5,000 part-time	$7	1932
God Killer	smoke	excitement, megalomania	emphysema, cancer, brain damage	anxiety, panic attacks.	psychosis, heart attack	3,000 career, 10,000 part-time	$10	2046
Chomper	shoot-up	mood swings, anxiolytic	hair loss, liver damage, anemia	shortness of breath, panic attacks, vertigo, headache	endocrine collapse	1,000 career, 1,000 part-time	$7	2076
Maxin	swallow pills	irritability, excitation, increased intelligence	weakened bones	feel stupid	heart attack, stroke	500 career 2,000 part-time	$20	2076
Mauler	paper under tongue	narrowing of attention, pleasure, excitement	brain damage ("animal state")	burning, itching sensation on skin	loss of blood pressure, hypothermia	2,500 career, 1,000 part-time	$7	2077
Trace	shoot-up	sedation, pleasure	poor immune system, arthritis	migraine headache, poor hearing, poor vision	paralysis, inability to breathe	500 career, 1,000 part-time	$7	2077
Escape	smoke	emotional detachment	loss of personality, insomnia, poor vision	none	catatonia, coughing blood	1,000 career, 7,500 part-time	$20	2078
Slave	smoke	anxiolytic, psychedelic, "mellow excitement"	weight loss, pale skin, liver damage	"the uglies", loss of willpower	diarrhea, vomiting, brain swelling	3,000 career, 2,000 part-time	$8	2078

Although they try to stay camouflaged in the background, winos are the best-off of any of the career addicts. Alcohol is cheap, so addicts spend less time hustling and more time taking care of personal needs, including social needs. Winos are the most likely of the addicts to form close friendships or small groups, and these social bonds are a source of power on the streets. Because they have more time to relax and look at their surroundings, they tend to be more aware of that's going on around them than other addicts. People who need informants on the streets often hire winos. Alcohol is legal, and so is less dangerous to buy and use. Alcohol does have debilitating long term effects (severe liver damage and brain damage leading to severe memory problems) but these effects happen more slowly (take decades rather than years). Alcohol even provides some nutrition, so winos are not as skinny as some other addicts.

Alcohol is also less addictive than most of the modern street drugs. Most winos will "go straight" (detoxify or stop using) several times and may stay straight for several months before relapsing back in to alcoholism. When they do drink, though, winos don't just drink to stave off withdrawals. They drink because they suffer from chronic pain, because they suffer from anxiety over the constant uncertainty of life on the streets, because they suffer from painful self-esteem problems and because life on the streets can be very boring.

Alcoholics have a number of choices for alcohol. Fortified wine, sold in liquor stores, provides the most alcohol per cent of any legal alcoholic beverage. Because it can be obtained legally, the majority of shut-ins who are addicted to some drug are addicted to alcohol. Young people working part-time jobs delivering groceries to shut-ins often deliver dozens of bottles of liquor in a day. Pushers and black market traders sometimes try to compete with liquor stores by selling moonshine. Winos try to avoid this liquor because it can be dangerous if improperly prepared and it is sometimes doped with other drugs. Some winos make their own alcohol, known generally as pruno, out of yeast and fruit. Most pruno is brewed in a tin can sitting next to a hot water pipe and tastes awful. If an alcoholic can not buy alcohol in a store (e.g. because the liquor stores are closed due to a riot) the alcoholic may buy (or shoplift) mouthwash that contains alcohol and combine it with fruit juice to make it palatable.

Even though they are the best off of the addicts, few non-addicts envy winos. People beat, rob and rape winos, thinking that the winos will not try to defend themselves and have no one willing to revenge them. Most winos are eligible for welfare but their lives are too unstable for them to go through the necessary paperwork. They are chronically poor, don't eat well, can't stay clean, suffer from diseases and infections (they must wait until they are life threatening before they can get treatment at an ER). Some winos don't even seek medical care when they can because they are too drunk to notice an illness. Winos sometimes pass out on cold nights and freeze to death.

"You can't trust anyone out here on the streets, not even your best friend, because drugs erode people's principles. You see, drugs are about constant desperation and need, so no matter what kinds of principles you got, it's only a matter of time 'till your mind is on something else and you forget about one of your principles, let it slip just a bit. Each time you let it slip, the next time's easier, 'till one day you realize there's nothing you won't do for drugs. You think you got a strong will, solid principles? That just means it will happen slower is all."
-Delilah Mungial, Addict

Opiates- Opiate chemicals are derived from a chemical found in high concentrations in the opium poppy, which has been used since pre-history for pain relief.

The addictive power of the "new drugs" has been enough to almost completely destroy the trade ring that once brought large quantities of haroin in to the city. Today, most people who are addicted to opiates are addicted to prescription pain killers. Most addicts either scam or bribe a doctor to get a painkiller prescription, or they buy the same drug off the black market. The Drug Lords would like Opiates eliminated from the city (so their drugs have less competition) but because opiates are brought in to city pharmacies legally, the Drug Lords can't do much.

Opiate addicts are, on average, older than most other addicts and many have legitimate physical conditions that cause pain. The typical addict is a shut-in well, around 40, with some physical disability who scams prescriptions off of doctors. There are about 2,000 career addicts in the city and about 7,000 part timers.

Opiates cause euphoria, sedation, pain relief and relief from anxiety. Withdrawal from opiates has very unpleasant effects, including cramps, insomnia, flu-like symptoms, diarrhea and profuse sweating. Long term addicts suffer from constipation (which can be deadly if not treated) and a poor immune system.

Amphetamines- Since prehistory, the Chinese and Native Americans used herbs that contained the drug ephedrine. In 1932 amphetamine, a drug made from ephedrine, was invented. During WWII, both sides used amphetamines to keep soldiers awake and alert, and heavy amphetamine use was one reason for the success of Hitler's blitzkrieg. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, amphetamines competed with crack cocaine as the top drug of abuse. In the 2040s, God Killer displaced both, and amphetamines only remained abused because they could be stolen or scammed from pharmacies.

Amphetamines are powerful synthetic stimulants. Their effects are a euphoric mania. Effects for long-term abuses include malnutrition, paranoia, ulcers and skin diseases. Withdrawal symptoms for addicts are depression, anxiety, shaking and sleep disorders.

God Killer- In 2046, God killer was introduced on the streets. In many ways it was the first "modern" drug: a cocktail of drugs designed for maximum addictive potential. God killer quickly forced crack cocaine and methamphetamines out of their economic niche. In 2048, god killer replaced crack cocaine as the most abused illegal drug in the US.

God killer is created by organized crime syndicates operating in the Appalachians. Genetically engineered plants (looking like normal weeds) growing on mountainsides are harvested and turned in to god killer in little labs built in tiny wood shacks. The rich and powerful "mountain gangs" that create and sell god killer have their roots in the biker gangs of the early 21st century and may have Freedom Army war criminals in their ranks.

Although the drugs created by the Drug Lords have been gaining steadily in popularity, God killer is still the most abused illegal drug in the city and provides most of the Drug Lords' income. The "typical" addict is a young male well, who uses god killer to feel powerful and commits crimes under the influence of god killer.

God killer is a powerful stimulant, it also reduces pain and anxiety. It increases self-esteem, making users feel powerful, and causes delusions of grandeur and invulnerability. The drug gained its name because some addicts, while under the influence, think they are powerful enough to take on whatever god(s) they believe in.

Long term god killer use causes emphysema, increased risk of cancer, and brain damage (leading to mental retardation).

God killer addicts are famous for doing stupid things that hurt others and themselves. Any dosage of god killer increases the chance that a user will do something stupid. God killer users think they have infinite power. A god killer user, for example, may break his daughter's neck, expecting to be able to resurrect her by force of will. A god killer addict may jump out of a window expecting to be able to fly, might break a leg and get a severe concussion, but will be unable to believe that he or she failed and will hobble off (not noticing the pain) to go do something else stupid. The most dangerous thing that can happen to a god killer user (and the people around the user) is a "rampage."

Some rampages are caused by accidental overdose (a person gets a stronger-than-normal batch). Typically, through, a god killer addict starts out meaning to use only a little god killer. The addict uses a little bit, then (feeling on top of the world) decides that moderation is for the weak and smokes every other pellet he or she has. Wanting desperately to not come down, the addict runs off and spends every bit of money on god killer, smoking it all. When that starts to run out, he or she commits some crime to get more. At some point, the abuser decides that he or she is immortal and omnipotent and decides to go around destroying anything that he or she doesn't like. From this point, there are very few ways it can go that doesn't end up with the user dying.

They wander around the city attacking anyone they dislike in any way. They may shout out challenges, and may even demand that god come down to fight. They may seek out old enemies or bullies. They may show up at the houses of ex-lovers, expecting to be taken back. Intimidation doesn't work against rampagers. Appeals to morals or compassion are useless. Pain and injuries are shrugged off. Setbacks do not phase the abuser, since he or she simply doesn't believe in them. Rampagers are stronger and faster. Rampagers do not defend themselves: they focus on hurting their opponents as much as possible. A fight with a rampager is always very messy.

Chomper- The first drug created by the newly incorporated Drug Lords. Only a year after their coming together in to a single entity, the Drug Lords caused a huge shortage of street drugs and flooded the streets with cheap chomper. Chomper was also the first drug so addictive that pushers could hold people down, force them to use it, and make life-long addicts. The fatal flaw of chomper was that it was too easy to overdose on it. When Mauler and Trace were invented, addicts were encouraged to switch to these drugs. Chomper use peaked in 2076, the year it was released, with 7,000 addicts. Now there are only 2,000 addicts (about 1,000 career and 1,000 part-time).

Chomper causes powerful and thrilling mood swings. Anger, depression and happiness are all equally pleasurable while on chomper. Chomper also enhances the pleasurable effects of many other drugs, and is still used by many addicts as a "booster." Chomper gained its name because users tend to clench or grind their teeth. Withdrawal for addicts causes shortness of breath, panic attacks, vertigo and headaches. Long term chomper users suffer from hair loss, liver damage, anemia and their teeth tend to break from clenching and grinding.

Chomper overdoses create a condition called endocrine collapse. The pituitary gland in the brain, which uses hormones to control most of the other glands in the body, suddenly and permanently stops working. Most people who overdose on chomper die. The lucky ones get an implant that take over many (but not all) functions of the pituitary gland. The implant cannot regulate pleasure and causes a total anhedonia (the inability to feel pleasure). Anhedonia typically causes suicide, but a small group of ex-Chomper addicts called the Hungry have devised a way to keep themselves going and are a powerful enemy of the Drug Lords. See p.220 for more on the Hungry.

Mauler- Introduced by the Drug Lords in 2077, an eagerly needed replacement for Chomper. Mauler is a distant relative of LSD and is manufactured in city labs from "crops" of the ergot fungus. Mauler turned out to have severe long term effects and is currently being phased out by the Drug Lords. There are about 2,500 career addicts and about 1,000 part timers.

Mauler is sold as little scraps of white paper with distinctive symbols on them. Each batch has a different symbol and addicts would refer longingly to "red stars" or with disgust to "clown head." The scraps are put under the tongue. Mauler causes stimulation, pleasure, and a narrowing of attention. Mauler addicts under the influence feel that the focus of their attention is the only thing in the universe. A Mauler addict might spend hours examining the cracks in the wall, oblivious to anything that doesn't actually touch them. Withdrawal from mauler causes a torturous burning/itching sensation on the skin.

About a year after Mauler came out, people began to realize that it had a terrible side effect. Mauler addicts received brain damage. Some people seemed to receive brain damage faster than others, but it was apparent that all mauler addicts would eventually end up the same way. The parts of the brain that were being destroyed were those responsible for language, memory, self-consciousness and logical thought. People working with addicts watched in horror as the minds of mauler addicts slowly turned in to the minds of animals. The mauler addicts were oblivious. By 2079, two years after Mauler was released, people began to see packs of mauler addicts on the streets, communicating with barks and howls and eating human flesh.

For a while, mauler addicts exist in a twilight state: they spend most of the day in an animal-like state of being, yet they occasionally get better for a few hours and they are able to use this time to buy drugs. Even in their most animalistic states they can attack people and will remember to steal cash and valuables. Mauler addicts eventually stop having lucid moments. Unable to buy drugs, most scratch themselves up during painful withdrawals and die from infections. Those that live eventually form in to packs with other addicts.

Today there are about 1000 ex-Mauler addicts living as animals throughout the city. Mauler addict packs tend to go after the weak, intoxicated or injured. They will follow blood trails to find potential prey. If a victim turns out to be able to defend himself or herself, the pack will scatter.

Trace- Trace was introduced in 2077, only a few months after mauler. Trace is a grayish powder that must be cooked in a spoon or bottle cap and injected intravenously. Trace causes intense pleasure and sedation that starts to taper off immediately and slowly dwindles to nothing.

Trace has a special purpose for the Drug Lords. Anyone who the Drug Lords feel they might want to "keep an eye on" is forced to become addicted to trace. An addict with special skills, a potential enemy or someone with special knowledge is a candidate for forced addiction to trace. Only certain kings are given trace to sell and those kings give trace to only a few of their pushers. This means that trace addicts only have a few places they can go to get drugs and if the Drug Lords decide they want someone they can find them easily. Trace also makes the skin of users pink and blotchy, making addicts still easier to find.

Trace is made in city drug labs. Trace is synthesized mostly from heroin and tetrodotoxin (a poison found in the puffer fish). Because the Drug Lords must import these ingredients, trace is expensive for the Drug Lords to make, and they make very little profit at the price they sell it at. This is probably another reason that the Drug Lords chose to use it as their "special" drug.

Maxin- Maxin does not fit the mold of the other drugs. Only recently have the Drug Lords realized the potential profit from carrying this drug, before that it was the exclusive providence of black market traders and goods. There are 500 career addicts and 2,000 "part-timers" who might not even realize they are addicts. Maxin is illegal in the US, but is available as a prescription drug in Mexico (where most maxin is smuggled in from). Maxin comes in a small inhaler.

Maxin is the most powerful smart drug created to date. Maxin is also the most unpleasant smart drug around. Its effects have been described as "like not sleeping for two days, drinking ten cups of coffee, and getting continuously slapped in the face." Maxin users are excited, irritable, their hearts beat dangerously fast and they get muscle cramps. On the other hand, their speed of thought, powers of memory, creativity, logic and intuition are all increased significantly.

There are no real withdrawal effects except for a desire to crawl in to bed and sleep and the occasional headache. The problem is that after being so much smarter, Maxin users feel incredibly stupid. People feel that their thoughts are slow, their memories are poor, every intellectual task is so hard that it is painful. They are not any stupider than they were before, they just feel that way in comparison. This withdrawal doesn't go away easily: for years after an addict quits he or she may report feeling stupid.

Maxin is only addictive to people with a certain type of personality. People who don't mind being stupid won't become addicted to Maxin. People who are likely to become addicted are people who are goal oriented, spartan, utilitarian, overachievers (the type of people least likely to become addicted to other drugs). The typical Maxin user is an Indie gang member who is a highly skilled psychic, hacker, technician or medic.

The bones of long term Maxin addicts lose calcium and become very weak. Those who have been using Maxin since it hit the streets in 2076 can be killed by a simple fall.

Escape- Like Maxin, Escape was never meant to be a drug of abuse. The FDA recently made this drug illegal after many psychiatrists and GPs got their patients addicted to this drug. Escape was the "surprise" drug of the 2070's: no one expected it to addict so many people and for those addictions to be so resistant to treatment. After becoming illegal, it quickly became a very popular street drug. It currently has 1,000 career addicts and 7,500 part-time addicts. At $20 a dose, escape is usually a "rich person's drug and addicts living on the streets with no source of income usually turn to other drugs instead of escape.

Escape can be taken as pills, but hardcore addicts prefer to sprinkle powdered escape on tobacco or some other smokeable herb and smoke the mixture.

More than any other drug, escape shows the power of psychological addiction. Escape has no withdrawal symptoms, yet it is highly addictive. Escape is a dissociative: it removes people from their emotions. It was originally created to help people deal with traumas, to help ease them in to feeling the terrible emotions. Armies throughout the globe have found that escape is very good for eliminating post-traumatic stress disorder until the soldiers can return to relative safety.

While on escape, everything feels like it is happening to somebody else. Users are still in control of their bodies and still retain enough feelings of self-preservation to stay out of danger and feed themselves. In fact, escape users typically engage in all their normal habits, the habits just don't mean anything to them. Acting, not acting, it's all the same to the escape user. Fortunately, escape blocks feelings of boredom as well. The escape user doesn't even care that much about getting more drugs, until the drugs start to wear off. Then, all the feelings the person was trying to escape start to come back, as well as a new feeling: fear and self-loathing about being an addict.

Long-term escape addicts usually become shut-ins on welfare. They stay in all day, nothing motivating them to go outside. Desires and opinions slowly fade away from disuse until the person really has no personality at all. The ability to sleep is also damaged and the person slowly goes blind.

Slave- In 2078, only two years ago, slave first hit the streets. Pushers sold it cheap, giving it to God Killer addicts who could not afford to buy God Killer. Slave proved to be much more addictive than God Killer. Only 5,000 in the city are currently addicted to Slave (3,000 career, 2,000 part-time), yet growing quickly.

Slave comes in tiny bluish-white pellets that can be smoked with a god killer pipe. The effects of taking the drug are good but are also "nothing special." Other drugs provide a more pleasurable experience. Slave reduces anxiety and pain, it creates a paradoxical "mellow excitement" where the user feels excited and giddy but doesn't want to do anything, and it has mild psychedelic effects.

Slave is said to have the worst withdrawal of any drug. Slave withdrawal is known as "the uglies" by addicts. During withdrawal, every single thing the addict experiences or imagines seems unbearably ugly and disgusting. Even the idea of being clean, of defeating the drug addiction and never having to face the uglies again, seems like a terrible and disgusting idea. The uglies do not go away quickly, they can last for weeks or even up to a month in hard core addicts.

Although slave has only been around for two years, long-term-effects have started to appear. Those who work with addicts predict that Slave users will die within a few decades from damage to the liver and digestive system.

Drug Lords

In Brief- Drugs sold by a mysterious, ruthless, monopolistic, efficient organization. Small, violent gangs sell drugs (sometimes forcefully) on proscribed turf. Some pushers keep their turf orderly and peaceful. Other pushers transgress in to other turf and wage war against each other (despite possible punishment). Kings distribute to pushers from home fortresses. Kings are controlled by Lords, who are secretive, enforce a strict law (don't touch Drug Lord employees, don't interfere of compete with drug sales) using "daggers" (elite teams of trained killers with black motorcycles). Drugs manufactured in the city by production teams.

Pusher Gangs- Pusher gangs are the foot soldiers of the Drug Lords. The average pusher gang is made up of five teenage males armed with knives, clubs and one pistol. They are the children of wells, but are not old enough (or don't have their lives together enough) to be on welfare. They use drugs themselves (typically god-killer or alcohol) yet are not "career" addicts. They have a history of crime, especially theft and assault. They make about $2,000 a month each, but spend their money quickly. The members of the gang grew up on the streets, ambitionless young men, hanging together and using their numbers to intimidate others. They did minor crimes to gain money and used money to buy weapons. At some point they felt they had made a name for themselves and they petitioned the local king (and gave a small bribe) for a recently vacated piece of pusher turf.

Pusher gangs vary from this standard template wildly. Some gangs have only one member, others have twenty. Some pushers are sadistic sociopaths, others are almost Goods and know their addicts by name. Some are adolescents, some are in their forties. Some pushers make as little as $250 a month each, others make up to $10,000 a month.

Most pusher gangs forcibly addict people to their drugs. Some grab anyone walking past who appears vulnerable. A few will go so far as to break in to the apartments of shut-ins to forcefully addict them. The Drug Lords discourage this extreme behavior for fear that it will attract the attention of the corporate news media and citizens' groups (see p.361).

Most pusher gangs operate by a code of revenge much like that of gang members. They hunt down and kill anyone who has messed with them. Most pusher gangs understand only military force, and they feel free to mess with anyone they think they can beat. They may kill someone for something as small as giving them a dirty look. The pusher gangs typically don't mess with large gangs or street families.

At first, pusher gangs appear completely independent. They purchase drugs from their local king and sell it for as much as they want (usually a 100% markup), they can even sell to resellers. When the Drug Lords have an enemy, the pusher gangs are offered a reward for the enemy's head. Despite this apparent freedom, a lot of what pusher gangs do is controlled by the drug lords. The pusher gangs must meet a weekly quota, they are assigned a specific area they are allowed to sell in, and they aren't allowed to fight with each other.

Most pusher gangs don't have any real ambitions. Most are living for their next hit of God Killer. The few ambitious pushers hope to someday make a bid to become a king.

Almost Goods- Some pusher gangs are better than others. Some pushers make a concerted effort to be fair and to keep peace in their selling turf. Some pusher turfs are virtually governed by the pushers and have their own rules of behavior for addicts. Some pushers may have a rule, for instance, that addicts can not kill any other addicts within their turf. Compassion and a preference for order over chaos might be a factor in these pushers' behavior. However, the most likely motivation is to try entice addicts from the turf of other pushers by making their turf known as a relatively safe haven. When pushers try this tactic, the money and effort it takes is usually quite well rewarded by an influx of addicts. It is only personality flaws and psychological limitations that keep the majority of pushers from using this tactic.

Pusher Wars- The Drug Lords do not allow any pusher gangs to sell on the turfs of other pusher gangs, and they do not allow pusher gangs to fight. Kings who discover pushers breaking these rules are supposed to execute the offenders.

In practice, though, some pushers want the extra money enough to risk the wrath of their kings. The temptation is irresistible to make extra money by trespassing on another pusher's turf to sell drugs or by sabotaging competing pushers so that their addicts must go elsewhere. Other pushers have personal grudges and will go to war against other pushers gangs with no profit motive in mind.

Pushers may try to get away with these illegal activities by stealth (committing the crimes anonymously) or by force (intimidating the victimized pusher gangs in to keeping quiet).

There have been a few fierce battles when pusher gangs (and once, a king) have been found breaking the rules and went rogue. The Drug Lords will come down on rogue elements with as much force as they can (in other words, with dagger teams, p.383). Enemies of the Drug Lords are very interested whenever there is fighting between members of the Drug Lord organization. They hope to "catch" a defector and gain important intelligence about the leadership of the Drug Lords. Unfortunately, no rogues have lived long enough to be questioned.

Kings- Kings are the bosses of pushers and are appointed by the Drug Lords. Each is given a home area to operate in and a turf. They can divide their turf among pusher gangs in any way they please. Kings pay for all their expenses: a house to operate out of, body guards, informants, weapons. Most kings save money by making their base of operations the house that they live in, and their bodyguards live in the house so they can protect the kings 24 hours a day. About once a month, heavily armed guards deliver a load of drugs to the kings' houses. The kings distribute them to pushers, and sometimes sell to addicts from their own front doors.

Lords- Even before the consolidation of the Drug Lords (in 2075), the lords were very secretive. They had reason to be: they were the wealthiest and most powerful drug traders in the city, they dealt with international drug cartels and they sold to the city's most powerful street gangs. They were also at constant war with each other and were not afraid to assassinate each other.

Little is known about the events of 2075. Some lords were executed, the rest joined together in to a single entity that worked with uncharacteristic efficiency. Every move by the Drug Lords, since 2075, has been made with a logical intelligence that amazes even the Math Addicts. Within a year, the lords had destroyed every major enemy, had created a vertical monopoly over drugs in the city, and were working on freeing themselves from dependence on the drug cartels. They created new drugs that were much more efficient and could be manufactured from sources found in the city (as opposed to Heroin and God Killer, which came from Asia and the Appalachians).

Nobody could have predicted the effect on the city of the destruction of the old drug-selling gangs. By taking drugs away from the gangs, the Drug Lords inadvertently opened gang membership up to a new type of person. These new gangs (including the Night Shift) are capable of standing up to the Drug Lords and willing to do so. These new gangs are the only major setback the Drug Lords have faced since their consolidation.

No one knows exactly who all the lords are, or even how many there are, but anecdotal evidence shows that there are about 7 of them and they have divided the city in to equal parts. Each lord has a dagger team and a number of kings. Unlike the kings, whose bases of operation are public knowledge, enemies of the Drug Lords have been unable to figure out where the Lords operate from. When lords appear on the city streets, which is rare, they usually appear in armored cars with a multitude of bodyguards armed with machine guns.

The Lords seem to act in a uniform manner. When prices change, when policies change, when someone becomes an enemy of the Drug Lords, kings all over the city are given exactly the same orders at exactly the same time. Some believe that this is evidence that the lords are being controlled by some outside force. If this is true, though, there is no clue who the controller is.

Branching Out- Many pusher gangs have been known to offer their own independent services in such traditional organized crime areas as loan sharking, gambling, black marketeering, assassinations, prostitution and protection. The extent of these services has been small for one reason: the pushers can make more money per hour selling drugs than at any of these other pursuits. Similarly, the Drug Lord organization as a whole seems to be willing to branch out, but only when the potential reward is high. Most recently, an unprovoked strike by dagger teams was believed to have been paid for by a black corp division.

Laws- There is no codex of laws handed down by the drug lords to the city population, but by looking at who the Drug Lords choose to execute, it is easy to extrapolate a number of rules:

-Don't **hurt** any member of the Drug Lords organization, even in self-defense.

-Don't **interfere** with pushers selling drugs or getting new addicts.

-Don't **sell** any street drugs if you aren't a pusher gang belonging to the Drug Lords.

-Don't **help** too many addicts get off drugs (programs that don't have a high success rate are allowed to continue).

-Don't **find out** anything about the Drug Lords and their drugs that isn't public knowledge.

The Drug Lords also seem to have a set of internal rules, including:

-Don't **encroach** on the turf of another pusher gang/king/lord.

-Don't **fight** with another pusher gang/king/lord.

-Don't reveal Drug Lord **secrets**.

-Avoid messing with **gangs**.

-Avoid catching the attention of **corps** or **feds**.

-**Sell** a lot or be kicked out.

Dagger Teams- While pushers are their own muscle, and bodyguards are the muscle for kings, the muscle for the lords is the dagger teams. Each lord has his or her own team of 4 to 6 trained killers. All daggers have high-powered black motorcycles, black full body armor, automatic pistols and military explosives. Dagger teams are used for only one thing: search and destroy missions. Daggers are used to destroy enemies of the Drug Lords and to destroy employees of the Drug Lords who have gone rogue. Like the lords, the true identities of dagger team members are kept secret.

Production Teams- Each lord controls several production teams. Each team is made up of at least one master chemist, a few assistant chemists and several heavily armed bodyguards. The teams move around frequently, trying to keep their location secret and because their labs quickly become toxic. They use whatever space they can get, from warehouses to apartments. Many innocent people living in cheap apartment buildings have been killed when labs caught fire, released poisonous gasses, or both.

Productions teams are responsible for testing new drugs and methods. The lords are in a constant search for cheaper, faster and more dependable ways to create drugs. Whenever a new batch is created using new equipment or a new method, the production team sends out guards to kidnap a street person to test the drug on. The Drug Lords have been known to abduct whole groups of people, of different ages and socioeconomic status, for testing brand new drugs. The victims may be kept for weeks or months as the effects of use, addiction, withdrawal and overdoses are tested on them. There are horror stories of new drugs that didn't make it on to the streets because of various side effects. The production teams tend to execute their victims afterwards, but a few have escaped to tell the tale.

EMPLOYMENT

Legal

In Brief- Legal jobs plentiful for those who want them, but not all pay well or are safe.

To obtain legal employment in the US, a person must have proof of citizenship or a work visa. All wells and indies, and some street people, meet these criteria. There aren't enough jobs for everyone in the city, but there are typically enough jobs for everyone who wants one to get one.

Minimum Wage- The majority of available jobs are part-time, minimum wage jobs in the service industry. Many young people, including many gang members, make a couple of extra hundred a month (on top of public assistance) at a part-time job. The most common minimum wage jobs for teenagers in the city are: fast food, store clerk, janitor, grocery delivery and hospice assistant.

Security- Able bodied young people can make more money, if they don't mind a little extra danger. There are hundreds of part and full-time jobs available as security guards. Unfortunately, since security guards often have run-ins with gang members, most gang members cannot become security guards. Besides all the stores, offices and high-class apartment buildings that need full-time guarding, many shut-ins subscribe to pay-per-month services or pay-per-use for services of security companies. Many VR addicts have security alarms that will automatically summon security guards. It is not an uncommon sight to see a car with two young security guards racing to a call. See p.273 for more on security work.

Skilled- People with actual skills can usually find a good-paying part-time job, usually one they can perform with a computer and an internet connection. With the low cost of living in the city, people can survive quite comfortably on a part-time job. Many Indie gang members have jobs like this. The most common skilled part-time jobs among young people in the city: tech support, network installer, chef, bartender and office assistant.

Fighting For Money

There are a few places in the city where a good fighter can make a few bucks. Most good fighters, however, know that every fight is dangerous and won't risk it.

Alley Fights: Most fight betting is started by homeless professional gamblers. Two people are arguing and appear ready to fight, people stop to see what is going to happen, and a gambler collects bets. In most cases it is a setup: the fight is fixed and the fighters and gambler will each take a cut.

Warehouse Fights: Some gamblers and traders hold larger indoor fights. The audience must pay a small cover to get in (they usually also bet money once inside). Some fight promoters try to boost the audience by doing something exotic (e.g. fighting with saws). The fighters in these cases are typically practiced martial artists who make a circuit of major inner cities. They may appear injured (or may even appear to die) but they are seldom badly injured. The chances of some random person off the street beating these fighters at their own game is very small.

Death Fights- Even rarer, some people in the city will stage fights-to-the-death. These are small operations, with few attendees. Often the people who stage the fights are the same people who make illegal pornography. They will record the fights and sell the recordings on the black market. Fighting is done with bare knuckles, or with small hand weapons (nothing that will kill too quickly). The fighters are typically career addicts who desperately need the money. The fight promoters usually give the fighters free God Killer so the fighters will fight without fear of death. Winners are paid between $200 and $750.

Hunters- Some hunters pay people to be their prey. Few hunters care for fair fights, and people are more or less paid to run away and try to survive being hunted.

Red Light District- Some of the bars in the red light district feature occasional catfighting or sexual wrestling to attract portions of the fetish crowd. It is mostly sex workers who do this but anyone could walk in off the street and apply for the job. The fighters are usually not paid any extra for winning, in fact some may be paid extra to losae and take a good beating.

Child Boxing- One disturbing sport, brought to the US by Southeast Asian immigrants, pits children against each other in bare knuckle boxing and kickboxing matches. The Orphans have only recently heard of this and have declared that they will kill anyone who forces or coerces children in to engaging in this practice.

Illegal

In Brief- People who can't get legal jobs can work below board or as criminals.

Illegal jobs are in much greater demand and are much harder to get. There are a lot of people in the city who can't get a legitimate job and desperately want the extra income that a job will give. Some illegal jobs pay well, but the majority pay less than minimum wage.

Below Board- These are a lot like the jobs that wells engage in, but the employees are paid "under-the-table." The employees don't need to show any identification, and nobody pays any income taxes. Almost every small-business owner in the city hires the occasional below-board employee with little fear of getting caught. The most common below-board part-time jobs in the city: assistant to a black market trader, maid, exotic dancer and light manufacturing.

Criminal- This is where people are paid to do something that is completely illegal. See the section on criminals (p.371) for more information. The most common criminal positions in the city are: pusher (p.381), prostitute (p.189), mercenary (p.56), runner (p.188).

Public Assistance

In Brief- Most people don't work, get money by the government, but even this is not easy.

The majority of people in the city do not work at any kind of job whatsoever, they receive public assistance from the government. The funds for this public assistance comes from the AI Tax (see p.361). Getting and staying on public assistance is not easy. It requires being able to, month after month, prove that one is still eligible for assistance. One missed phone-appointment with a social worker can mean being cut from the rolls.

The major three categories of public assistance in the city are:

   Disability: For people who can prove that they have a disability (and can re-prove it every few years).

   Unemployment: For people who recently had a job and lost it and can prove they are seeking a job. Pays slightly more than welfare. Only lasts a limited period of time.

   Welfare: The most common type of public assistance. To get on it, a person must be an adult, a citizen, and prove that he or she has no means of income and no property that could be sold in lieu of income.

ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

Pollution

In Brief- Factories in the city create much pollution, it is dangerous but usually blown out to sea.

Corporations have used lobbyists to make sure that the city was zoned for high-pollution industry. The reason is that the corporations want to make money by running high-pollution factories, but they don't want them in the corporate living centers where corporate employees might suffer from health problems. So, in the corporate living centers, corporate employees work at low-danger and low-pollution factories, while in the city, 'workers' (who enjoy none of the benefits of corporate membership) work dangerous jobs in factories that spew huge columns of pollution in to the sky above the city.

Coastal winds usually scatter the pollution, taking most of it out to sea (where it pollutes the oceans). Enough of the pollution stays in the city, especially on days when the wind is relatively still, to cause health problems for many thousands of people in the city. Rates of asthma and cancer are higher in the city than in surrounding areas. An accident, a fire or a broken pollution scrubber could mean that noxious smoke and gasses can be expelled from the smokestacks. Such accidents have, in recent years, killed hundreds and put thousands in the hospital. Some have been permanently disabled with scar tissue in their lungs or neurological damage.

When the pollution builds to dangerously high levels, the cloud forms (see below). Most people who expect to be out on the streets during these days own some sort of gas mask or improvise one.

The Cloud

In Brief- When there is no wind, a dark, flammable, pollution eating cloud of genetically engineered bacteria floats over the city.

On days where the wind is still, pollution pools around the city, growing dangerously thick. At this point, bacteria "hibernating" in grime across city rooftops comes to life. The bacteria absorbs and metabolizes pollutants, turning them in to simpler and less toxic chemicals. One of the metabolic byproducts is hydrogen gas, which fills tiny sacks attached to the bacteria, causing them to float. Eventually, a thick grey cloud forms, hovering about 800 feet over the city (higher than most rooftops). The cloud saves lives by destroying many (but not all) forms of pollution. It can also produce a greenhouse effect which can make the city up to 20 degrees higher than the surrounding area. The cloud has the effect of making the city very dim, which has been known to cause depression in some people. The cloud was released with the assurance that it would not be at all flammable. Lately there have been instances of especially thick parts of the cloud catching fire. The cloud smolders, glows slightly and a powdery ash falls on the city.

Weather

In Brief- The weather is wildly unstable, with temperature extremes and massive rainstorms, windstorms and blizzards.

The greenhouse effect has caused a partial melting of the polar ice caps, which has caused rising ocean levels, which has changed weather patterns worldwide. In general terms, the earth has become a warmer place by about seven degrees. This is not an absolute, however. The weather has become very wild and unstable.

The modern era is one of super-storms. Superstorms last for weeks, even months, crossing oceans and sometimes almost circling the globe. Most superstorms that hit the city come from the sea and bring huge amounts of water and heavy winds. Fourteen hurricanes have hit the city in the last two decades. During winter, superstorms can travel down over Canada and create blizzards capable of choking the streets with snow and winds that can freeze a person in minutes. At any time of year, strong winds tossing trash and knocking over children are common.

Wildlife

In Brief- Wildlife returning to city, including pigeons, stray cats and dogs and other small animals. 10 million rats cause health problem and bite the defenseless.

Since the massive exodus from the city in the early 2060s, nature has, bit by bit, begun to return to the city. Weeds grow in unrepaired cracks in streets up and down the city, and trees are even growing out of some of the larger cracks in sidewalks.

About 10 million rats inhabit the city. These rats were brought to New York in the 1700s from Norway, on sailing ships. Much bigger than native rats, they weigh about a pound each and can grow to be up to 18 inches long. Through natural selection, these rats have become immune to most poisons they have been introduced to over the last few centuries. Rats have also developed an urban wit: they will watch their fellow rats going in to new situations and are smart enough to avoid anything that killed a fellow. Rats have been known to bite humans who are sick, intoxicated, wounded or otherwise helpless. Their teeth can gnaw through most barriers and they can decimate food supplies in a single night. Rats also carry diseases. Rats once carried the bubonic plague, now they carry rabies and strains of different plagues (see Disease, p.375).

Another immigrant to the city is pigeons. Pigeons lived on cliffs in Europe and came to America (along with sparrows) in the grain holds of ships. Like rats, pigeons are omnivores and reproduce quickly. They nest on the ledges of buildings, creating terrible messes. Their dropping are acidic enough that they have caused metal cables on city bridges to snap.

There are thousands of stray cats and dogs living in the city. The stray dogs have reverted to living and hunting in packs, like wolves. Stray dogs can attack children and may attack adults when hungry. Dogs can contract rabies, which makes them irrational and dangerous.

Other city wildlife that may be seen on the streets are squirrels, raccoons, bats, blue jays, robins and sparrows. Red-tail hawks and falcons make their nests on the top of tall buildings and hunt street wildlife.

The city also has quite a lot of insect life. The most insidious are cockroaches.

The Hole

In Brief- Largest and most wild park in the city, has many animals and plants (including coyotes and deer), all under the stewardship of the Keepers.

The city was once known for its parks. Those that weren't paved over in the 2040s are now overgrown with weeds and filled with trash. These parks have quite a few animals living in them. The largest and most impressive park in the city was and is Central Park, known in city slang as "the hole". Central Park takes up 843 acres, representing more than 10% of the total acreage of the city.

Now, the park is choked with thick underbrush and trees (along with the bombed-out ruins of Freedom Army buildings). Many types of trees, grasses and bushes grow in the hole, some native to New York and others imported from all around the world. Wildlife, includes owls, warblers, blue jays, robins, sparrows, wild turkeys, rats, mice, raccoons, stray cats and dogs, bats and squirrels.

MARTINA 2002

There are fish, turtles and bullfrogs in the park's human-made ponds. There have been a small population of coyotes living in the park since the end of the 20th century. There is even a small population of white-tailed deer in the park. Nobody knows whether they were introduced in to the park by hunters, or whether they traveled to the park via rail bridges before the security gates were built.

The Keepers, the small street family who live in the park, eat all of the animals that live there (and many types of plant life). The Keepers are careful not to hunt any species to the point where they are close to extinction.

See the section on the hole in City Geography (p.349) and the section on the Keepers (p.172) for more information.

Monsters in Central Park?

The Keepers don't like to tell people what's in the Hole. They don't think it's anyone's business and they don't want to give anyone a good reason to invade the Hole.

As does anything mysterious, a number of rumors have sprung up about what the Keepers have found in the hole:

- Jeffrey Hernandez, who did not die on the satellite but has instead been living in the ruins.
- A cache of secret experimental weapons in one of the Freedom Army research labs.
- Gold, jewels and antiques plundered by the Freedom Army.
- An unexploded nuclear weapon.
- Genetically engineered animals that escaped during the bombings and have been breeding in the hole.

The Keepers have denied all of these rumors. Most of them are fairly unlikely (cleanup crews did comb through the entire hole). The only actual evidence for any of these theories comes from the Keepers themselves. Keepers like to wear small trophies from their hunts: bones, teeth, tails, claws, etc. The more impressive the animal, the prouder they are to wear its trophies. Some Keepers have been seen wearing parts that casual observers can't recognize. With characteristic "none-of-your-business" attitude, the Keepers won't identify the trophies.

It has been established as a fact that there were Freedom Army labs in Central Park during the Freedom Wars, and that some of these labs did genetic research. It is possible that some of these labs were underground and the animals there were not immediately destroyed when the park was bombed. It is further possible that the cages were somehow opened (either by accident or on purpose) and animals escaped in to the park. Some of them managed to find a place in the park ecology and survive the decades.

Another explanation for the Keepers' odd trophies is that Hunters may have released exotic animals in the park in order to hunt them. Hunters may have even released genetically engineered or resurrected extinct animals in to the hole.

FREEDOM WARS

In Brief- Anti-corporate terrorist army gained control of much of the planet, destroyed major corps, before being wiped out.

Causes

In Brief- Distrust and hatred of corps, the unavailability of new tech to the public, widening gap between rich and poor, worsening urban conditions, and assassination of third party candidate..

Death of the Middle Class- In the early part of the 20th century, things were getting steadily worse for the common man and woman. Increased use of robotics and artificial intelligence in the workplace left few jobs for unskilled workers. Unskilled workers went homeless or became skilled, which meant a glut of skilled workers. With so many skilled workers, corporations could pay less, and the middle class became the new lower class.

Watchdogs- Most media was corporate owned, so a few rogue anti-corporate advocates calling themselves "watchdogs" took it upon themselves to challenge the corporate media. They went around the world cataloguing corporate crimes and failures with cheap digital videocams (sometimes at great risk to themselves). This footage was broadcast on the internet and experienced growing popularity.

Urban Problems- Ecological problems, a population explosion, and a failing economy made urban problems worse around the globe. In the city, a new drug, called God Killer, was having frightening and dangerous effects on its users. A new generation of plagues were causing massive deaths. A growing army of unemployed homeless people in the city started many riots. The government reacted violently to these riots, which only spawned more hatred. Corporations kept announcing new scientific and

technological discoveries, yet people never saw any of that technology being used to help the world's problems. In fact, people who used unlicensed corporate tech to help people were being persecuted and jailed.

Mason Marks- The "last straw" was the assassination of a third party candidate who ran for president on an anti-corporate platform. Mason Marks had no real chance of winning, and nobody is sure who killed him. News of his assassination sparked rioting in almost every major city in the US and many other cities throughout the globe. It was in the midst of this rioting that Jeffrey Hernandez and his Freedom Army, who had been preparing for years, chose to strike.

Freedom Army

In Brief- Hernandez led group of Mexican radical terrorists, infiltrated rich households to gain power, large network of insiders, used psychics to ensure loyalty and secrecy.

Origin- The Freedom Army started with Jeffrey Hernandez. He was an activist, college dropout and drug addict living a precarious existence in Mexico City. His rich father, from whom he had been estranged, died and left Hernandez a financial empire. Hernandez decided to use the money and power to build an army to bring down the Mexican government and the corporations that controlled it. Jeffrey Hernandez first began to induct "soldiers" (fellow radicals) in to his army in 2045.

Growth- Jeffrey Hernandez saw the rich as the most unprotected sector of what he called the "corporate military greed complex." He sent out teams of 'soldiers' to infiltrate the households of rich families (by befriending younger family members, gaining employment as staff, or seducing people in the household), then drugging and

brainwashing those families. Within 10 years, Hernandez had control of four of the ten richest people in Mexico and had agents infiltrating rich households in Central America, the US and Canada. Hernandez began to employ a huge network of insiders in the government, military and corporate world. He was especially interested in global communications and he bought up the satellite companies that made up the backbone of global communications. Hernandez trained several groups of elite killers and was even able to purchase weapon's grade plutonium which he used to manufacture fifteen small scale (briefcase) nuclear bombs.

Secrecy- Perhaps the most amazing thing about the Freedom Army is that is was kept secret up until its first attack. Hernandez used the same techniques that, ten years later, would be used by gated communities to build perfect communities. Hernandez used psychics to give regular loyalty tests to every member of his organization. Double-agents or people planning to defect were executed. By 2050, Jeffrey Hernandez had organized a network of terrorists in several industrial countries, each ready to make strikes to the heart of the industrial world.

The Attack

In Brief- Bombs destroyed govts, corps, communications. Hernandez gained control of news, made rioting worse.

Bombings- On July 18, 2050 at 4 PM EST, there were 55 different explosions occuring simultaneously throughout the world. The explosions ranged from fertilizer bombs in the basements of corporate buildings, to briefcase mini-nukes at the capitol buildings of various governments, to pipe-bombs in the server rooms that ran the internet.

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy- The strike did a lot of damage, killed a lot of people, and caused a lot of chaos. Hernandez did not believe that the strikes alone would not bring down the "corporate military greed complex." It was mainly a distraction for his real strike: Hernandez took control of global news broadcasts and ran fake news footage that (he had prepared years ago). The footage showed crowds seizing control of factories, liberating prisoners, executing government officials and corporate CEOs, and setting up provisional governments. The news made is seem like most of the planet had been taken over and a rational socialist democracy was taking over.

The news broadcasts created a self-fulfilling prophecy. Since people believed that world governments had already fallen, they took to the streets, rioting and looting in unprecedented numbers. These rioters attacked any police and military they could find (assuming they were nothing but remnants). The truth was that the governments had not fallen, but the rioting and attacks made it hard for them to organize anything. Under the cover of all this chaos, the Freedom Army made more strikes and assassinated more leaders. Meanwhile they were recruiting more and more people, growing exponentially as the US military shrank. Within a year, Freedom Army membership worldwide went from 1,000 to 500,000.

Advances- Within 2 years, the Freedom Army controlled almost all of Mexico (except for a few soldiers holed up in the mountains), all of Canada's cities and the East coast and West coast of the United States. The American military retreated in to the mid-west, where they would stay at a standoff with Freedom Army forces until the end of the war.

Around the world, the situation was varied. In third world countries, which had little exposure to Hernandez' fake news broadcasts, Freedom Army activity was small. Some countries (notably China) rebuffed Freedom Army uprisings. Some governments (including some Pacific and Northern European nations) avoided civil war by helping tear down corporations and instituting a progressive platform. In some countries, the Freedom Army took over completely (notably: Italy, France, Ireland and most of the Russian republics). In other countries there was fighting between the Freedom Army and government forces up until the end of the war (notably Japan, Britain, Brazil).

The Occupation

In Brief- In Freedom Army controlled areas there was economic chaos, starvation, paranoia, registration of psychics and hunting for Kalor aliens.

Once the Freedom Army had gained people and control, they were faced with the monumental task of building an infrastructure. People needed food, medicine, law enforcement, and the Freedom Army claimed to be able to provide it. For the most part, the Freedom Army failed. They were unable to feed their citizens and control plagues. In the US they had special trouble because the US, the source of most of the country's food, was controlled by the US military. The world population dropped significantly as war, plague and starvation killed people off.

Many Freedom Army areas stayed a semi-anarchy throughout the war. The Freedom Army concentrated most of its efforts in a few urban areas with the hopes of recreating a technological infrastructure. In these urban areas the Freedom Army was able to do large public works projects (in fact, they often created public works projects just to give their captive urban residents something to do). The Freedom Army built bunkers, factories and labs (which made some significant scientific advances). The Freedom Army broke the international drug cartels by legalizing drugs.

The second great self-fulfilling prophecy of the Freedom Wars was Hernandez' paranoia that the people within Freedom Army controlled lands might turn against the Freedom Army. He worried that a small group of rebels might use terrorist tactics against the Freedom Army. Hernandez reacted by turning Freedom Army controlled lands in to police states. The Freedom Army disarmed the populous, didn't let people travel, put soldiers on the streets as police, and took people at random for security checks. The Freedom Army required psychics to register themselves. Every psychic who came in was checked for loyalty and either inducted in to the Freedom Army or killed. Those who refused to be registered were hunted. The random checks also uncovered the existence of the Kalor aliens, who were then hunted down and put in concentration camp. These persecutions created the Freedom Army's biggest enemies.

The Rebellion

In Brief- City rebels: (psychics, hackers, kalor) gained important intelligence, destroyed Freedom Army nanotech capabilities, destroyed Freedom Army complex and found and killed Hernandez.

While the remnants of the United States military fought at a standoff from the Mid-West, rebels began to operate in Freedom Army territories. In some cities the rebels

were military operatives, but in many cities (including New York) they were independent groups. The rebel organizations from different cities had little contact with other organizations (because there was no communication and travel) and each operated with their own tactics and for their own reasons. In some cities, the rebels were law enforcement officers, in others they were Native Americans (who resented having their autonomy taken away), in others they were radicals who had joined the Freedom Army but then defected when they saw the totalitarian regime Jeffrey Hernandez was creating.

The Manhattan rebels were a trinity of three forces. First was the city's Kalor alien population. Lisa Becker, the human empress-in-exile of the Kalor empire came out of exile to help the Kalor fight back against being put in to concentration camps. Lisa Becker had contacts with East coast members of the Hacker's Guild and recruited a large portion of the guild to help fight the Freedom Army. Also joining the rebel movement were 'the seven.' These powerful psychics had refused to register with the Freedom Army. They were the only psychics in the city who were not part of the Freedom Army and who had considerable skills. The seven saw that their ability to teach was as important as their ability to act. With the help of the Hacker's Guild (who had memory-transfer mental programs) they turned unskilled rebels in to powerful psychics, and those psychics went on to train more psychics (see Immortal history, p.224). Although a relatively small rebel group, this conglomeration of forces had access to military, technical and psychic skills to rival the Freedom Army. They spent most of their time assassinating Freedom Army leaders and gathering intelligence.

In 2054, the rebel forces discovered that Freedom Army scientists (many of whom were ex-Hacker's Guild members) had perfected room temperature nanotechnology. Room temperature technology would increase the power of the Freedom Army a thousand fold. With nanotech, the Freedom Army could make its leaders immortal, could spy on anything going on anywhere in the world, and could kill people by remote. Before the Freedom Army could use their nanotech for military purposes, the rebels stole some of the nanobots, invented predator nanobots and launched them in to the atmosphere. Predator nanobots made large-scale room temperature nanotechnology practically useless (see p.406).

Shortly thereafter, the rebels obtained the holy grail of anti-Freedom Army intelligence: the location of Jeffrey Hernandez. The rebels discovered that Jeffrey Hernandez had set up office in a satellite floating in geosynchronous orbit above the city. The rebels staged a massive bombing of the Freedom Army complex. This disrupted the Freedom Army enough for an elite strike team to hijack a space shuttle in the nearby New York Aerospace Port and board Hernandez' satellite. In the resulting firefight, the walls of the satellite were ruptured and the escaping air pushed the satellite out of orbit and off in to space. The strike force aboard the satellite radioed back that Jeffrey Hernandez had been killed. The satellite's boosters were not strong enough to bring the satellite back in to orbit and the rebel strike team died when the oxygen in their space-suits ran out. The destruction of the real command center of the Freedom Army was a crippling blow and US Military Soldiers soon pushed the Freedom Army out of every city. Fighting continued, but with the Freedom Army holed up in the mountains.

Restoration Committee

In Brief- A worldwide organization created to restore world governments. They were responsible for recreating the US economy.

Even as the last Freedom Army soldiers were besieged in the mountains, a large worldwide committee formed to reform destroyed governments and economies. The committee had massive police powers and the ability to arbitrarily create governments and laws. They did whatever they could to avoid conflict, trying to give each group something so that nobody would feel slighted. Many countries were balkanized: each ethnic and religious group was given its own tiny country. The committee also tried to restore (or create for the first time) democracies in as many countries as possible. The committee also made large concessions to those who helped win the war against the Freedom Army: the Native American army was given a large autonomous zone in the Southwest, the Kalor were given a large autonomous zone in Mexico (Cloud City). Most of the people who participated in the Freedom War were granted immunity for crimes committed before or during the war.

The Freedom Army had wiped out most of the records of ownership of money and property. The Restoration Committee had no interest in resurrecting the three big corps or giving rich people their fortunes back. Starting with a clean slate, the restoration committee tried to create a more equal economy. The patents and copyrights that had been held by the corporations were made public domain. Small start-up companies were given large grants to rebuild the industrial infrastructure. These small, hungry corps were quick and efficient. Within three years after the end of the Freedom War, the United States once again had computer hardware and software manufacturers, HMOs, fast food, a mass media and all the other industries that America had once depended on. In the process several people became "overnight billionaires".

In 2060, the Restoration Committee did something that no other large government had ever done in human history: it willingly disbanded. Disbanding was not easy: the committee only gained the unanimous vote they needed by executing a committee member during a committee session. Many optimists saw the execution as "a final blow against dictatorship" and a beginning of a new age.

Aftermath

In Brief- Scars remain, but the Freedom Wars gave the world a clean slate and made many important societal advances possible.

The doomsayers of the 2010s were right: when international corporations were allowed to rule the world, only a global uprising could unseat their power. The Freedom Wars were the century's most radical change in politics and economy. Their destruction was the only thing that allowed a redistribution of power and wealth that had been desperately needed for decades.

The balkanization of countries throughout the globe may have reduced fighting and terrorist actions in the short term, but not in the long term. Today, many countries are seeking to recapture lost territories (especially when those territories contain resources they desperately need). Small-scale wars are being fought constantly.

One of the most important effects of the Freedom Wars is that they made new types of communities possible. After the Freedom Wars, the Utopianist movement started. People believed that they could use psychic and mental installer technologies (which were now available to the public) to establish complete trust between members of a community. Trust, they believed, would make self-sufficient communities. Huge tracts of land throughout the world were still available for anyone who could pool together enough money. The new democratic leaders were more responsive to the desires of the people and the Utopianist groups successfully lobbied for "self-sufficiency" acts. These acts allowed gated communities to pay less taxes when they provided their own social services (e.g. education, law enforcement, road building, etc.) In the early 2060s, these perfect communities became a reality, and they grew rapidly as more and more people joined up. In order to fight the "brain drain," the new corporations were forced to make themselves much like the gated communities. The hallmarks of the new world order were trust, efficiency and self-sufficiency. Unfortunately, large numbers of people (including many of the veterans who had helped win the Freedom War) were unwilling or unable to fit in to this new world order. The inner cities of the world became a dumping ground for those who were not wanted in the perfect communities.

Many claim that Jeffrey Hernandez had no intention of ruling the world. They say that the industrial infrastructure he tried to create was there only to support the Freedom Army until all of the old-order could be wiped out. They claim that Hernandez only wanted to give the world a truly blank slate. If that is true, then Jeffrey Hernandez seems to have won the Freedom Wars.

Index of Freedom Army Equipment

Even though the Freedom Army stopped producing anything twenty six years ago, there is quite a lot of Freedom Army technology still floating around the city. Modern military tech must be smuggled in, but old Freedom Army equipment may be found lying around in the city. A lucky find in an old basement might give someone access to military tech that he or she would never have been able to afford otherwise. Those items that can be specifically associated with the Freedom Army are:

Dagger: Freedom Army (Weapons: Chemical, p.144)
Freedom Army Pistol (Weapons: Firearms, p.148)
PRT Skin (Skins, p.119)

Other items which, if you dug in to their history, would quite likely have passed through the hands of the Freedom Army are:

Antitank Weapon (Weapons: Firearms, p.147)
Biohazard Suit: Basic (Skins, p.118)
Bus (Transport, p.139)
Car: Used (Transport, p.139)
DNA Sequencer (Tools, p.135)
Drill Gun (Weapons: Firearms, p.147)
Grenade Launcher (Weapons: Firearms, p.148)
Grenade: EMP (Weapons: Explosives, p.146)
Grenade: Fragmentation (Weapons: Explosives, p.147)
Grenade: Nerve Gas (Weapons: Chemical, p.146)
Land Mine (Weapons: Explosives, p.147)
Nanoweave Armor (Protection, p.119)
Nightvision Goggles: Cheap (Sensory, p.122)
Nuclear Bomb: Briefcase (Weapons: Explosives, p.147)
Shield: Blast (Weapons: Self-Defense, p.150)
Shield: Riot (Weapons: Self-Defense, p.150)
Sniper Rifle (Weapons: Firearms, p.148)
Strength Skin (Skins, p.120)
Truck (Transport, p.142)
Vital Armor (Skins, p.121)

GANGS

In Brief- Drawn together for self-protection, range from anarchies to dictatorships, protect themselves with a code of revenge, members have inter-gang friendships, gang members go on "missions" which can be very useful.

Structure

In Brief- "Gangs" vary from consensus-rule anarchies, to dictatorships with strict rules, to extended families.

One third of people on the streets (or more, if you count the Drug Lords) are in a group that could be considered a gang. This is the highest percentage in city history, and city culture is very much influenced by gang culture. Not all of those people consider themselves to be gang members (see text box) but most would be willing to admit that they are forced to act like a gang. In the city, if a group of people seems like a gang then they are treated like a gang, no matter what they say.

It works like this: If employees of the city's Satellite Repair Center all wear similar clothing, all have similar interests and hang out together in their off-hours, then people will assume they are a gang. If they assume that the Sat Jumpers are a gang, then when one Sat Jumper does something wrong, all the Sat Jumpers are targeted for vengeance. Sooner or later, the Sat Jumpers start thinking "if we're going have all the disadvantages of being a gang, we might as well have some of the benefits" and they start seeking revenge for crimes committed against them.

What Each "Gang" Calls Itself

Arcadians - Elite Social Group
Boarders - Loosely Aligned Hobbyists.
Dragons - Spiritual/Religious Group.
Purists- Spiritual/Self Defense Collective.
Omniscients - Loosely Aligned Hobbyists.
Sexologists- Spiritual/Religious Group.
Tea Drinkers- Loosely Aligned Hobbyists.
Animalists- Street Gang.
Bleeders- Street Gang.
Freaks- Anarchic Group of Performers.
Humankalorie- Citizens of Kalor Empire.
Hummingbirds- Community.
Hungry- Elite Paramilitary Strike Force.
Immortals- An Extended Family.
Math Addicts- Mutual Self-Defense League
Mem Junkies- Mutual Self-Defense League.
Needle Punks- Street Gang.
Night Shift- Legitimate Government Agency.
Orphans- Community.
Roofers- Street Gang.
Risen- Street Gang.
Siders- Street Gang.
Skin Borgs- Street Gang.
Technophiles- Mutual Self-Defense League.

Anarchies- Some gangs have no authorities; they are simply a group of people who choose to hang around together. When someone does something the group doesn't like, there is no official punishment, yet the person may be shunned or even attacked by individual group members. This is the city's most numerous type of gang. Examples: Animalists, Arcadians, Boarders, Freaks, Hummingbirds, Mem Junkies, Omniscients, Sexologists, Technophiles.

Elderships- Some groups have a class of "elders" who have been in the group longer, are more powerful and more knowledgeable, and can command the loyalty and obedience of younger members. The elders have complex relationships with each other, but typically work together for the common good. When decisions need to be made (e.g. whether or not to go to war) the elders decide as a group. Examples: Bleeders, Humankalorie, Immortals, Skin Borgs.

Leaderships- These groups typically have one leader, usually the person who created the group in the first place. The leader makes gang decisions and most members follow without question. Some leaders rule by pure persuasive power, others use violence to enforce their authority. Examples: Dragons, Hungry, Purists, Roofers.

Families- These are extended families of street people. They are made up of tens or hundreds of street families that are mostly related by blood or marriage. On the surface, these families seem to follow the same rules as gangs: they protect each other, seek revenge for crimes and fight in wars. Behind the scenes, things are very different. Most people in a typical gang have the same age, interests, skills and duties. In a street family, on the other hand, there is everything from small children to bed-ridden seniors, each with a way they contribute to the family. The families typically resemble elderships: the elders of each family communicate with each other and lead the family as a whole. Examples: Black Meds, Crackers, Drakes, Insomniacs, Keepers, Water Rats.

Lifestyle

In Brief- Gang members value revenge, loyalty, going out and having adventures. Friendships outside the gang are encouraged.

Even in the most strictly regimented gangs, gang members spend the majority of time dong whatever they want. They hang out on street corners, in bars, in open-air restaurants, in apartments. They keep an eye out for strangers in their turf. They make friends, make enemies, have conversations, flirt, listen to music, read books, tell stories, perform experiments, eat snacks, smoke and drink and some do harder drugs.

Revenge- Revenge separates a gang from a non-gang. Some see a code of revenge as the only protection and system of justice that they can rely on. Anyone who avoids this duty is thought of as a freeloader or thief.

Being in a gang is, paradoxically, both a means to avoid violent confrontation and also a duty to engage in violence. There are no guidelines regarding how much revenge is necessary. What one gang may see as reasonable and just revenge may be seen by another gang as cold-blooded murder, and prompt more revenge and more violence.

Sometimes the threat of gang warfare keeps gang members civil to each other. Few gang members want to be known as the one who got their gang in to a war. So, most confrontations between gang members end with threats, insults, fistfights, but not deadly violence.

It is hard to say whether a code of revenge protects gang members from more violence than it creates. One thing is sure: most gang members prefer knowing who is out to get them to having to worry about random street violence.

Missions- Most "missions" have no real results, they are simply bored gang members sneaking in to enemy turf or playing around with an autopsy kit. They result in nothing useful, but they are an exciting way to spend an evening and show off skills that the gang members might not otherwise get to use. Sometimes, gang leadership asks members to go out on a particular mission. Sometimes the information these teams gather, or the mysteries they solve, or the sabotage they are able to enact makes a major difference in the city. These tiny groups of self-motivated gang members, especially those with members from multiple gangs, are extremely effective task forces.

The New Gangs

Where will the new gangs to achieve power in the city come from?

Fallen Cities: As some inner cities are demolished to make way for growing corporate complexes or gated communities, the gangs there may move here, bringing with them their own traditions, alliances and wars.

Immigrant Communities: The city receives a steady flow of immigrants. Some acculturate and join city gangs, street families and other groups, but many do not join other groups. As these immigrant groups grow they will gain more power and membership they will be more attractive to new immigrants.

Kid Gangs: Some street children form gangs for power and mutual protection. The relationships in these gangs may dissolve as the members grow older or they may remain strong. A few kid gangs may end up being adult gangs. In a way, the Orphans were a large and powerful kid gang that grew in to an adult gang.

Corner Gangs: These are small gangs of a few young people who are good friends. They have little power compared to the big street gangs, but they are formed for the same purposes and have much of the same culture. Most corner gangs will dissolve in the next few years, but some will grow in people and power and become more than just corner gangs, especially if they find a niche in the city gang culture.

Split-Offs: As today's gangs become larger, groups from within those gangs develop. The Siders started out as a subgroup of the roofers and eventually split off from the roofers, becoming their sworn enemy. There are several subgroups today that may someday want independence: the bisexuals in the Sexologists, the dioxyl users within the Drakes and the firefighters within the Night Shift.

Inter-Gang Friendships- Without exception, no city gang prohibits members from having friends, allies and lovers from outside of the gang (only cults have this prohibition). Having a gang member with many contacts can be useful to the gang as a whole. Inter-gang contacts help keep information flowing and make sure that each gang knows about important current events. When gangs want to work together for some common goal, or arrange peace, gang members with contacts in the other gang are used. A few gangs even allow gang members to "sit out" battles when that gang member has friends in an enemy gang.

Righteous Kill

Gang members typically don't seek revenge for the death of a comrade if it can be proven that the death was "righteous." In other words, if their comrade was clearly in the wrong and the killer was clearly in the right, revenge is not sought.

What defines a righteous kill varies from gang to gang and individual to individual. Even the Drug Lords once failed to seek revenge when a Utopia Child killed a psychotic pusher who was shooting people at random in a subway car.

Often determining whether a kill was righteous descends in to a game of "who started it." Many gang wars have been averted by the killer bravely going to the enemy gang to plead his or her case that a kill was righteous. The burden of proof is, of course, on the killer

War

In Brief- War between gangs is common, sometimes a lifestyle, but tends to be low-intensity, causing surprisingly few deaths.

Most shut-ins think that gang warfare is the primary cause of death among gang members. In fact, warfare deaths rank rather low. Wars are fairly rare for most gangs. When battles do happen, some of the gang members are aching to fight and push their way to the front. The battle usually ends before the people at the back even get to see combat. Except in rare cases, battles are not bloodbaths. One gang retreats when a few of its soldiers are wounded. They leave to treat their wounded with the promise to fight another day. Most gangs honor this withdrawal and do not chasing after their enemies.

Many Neos point out that this is exactly how warfare was done in many aboriginal cultures. Many cultures have seen warfare as a means to prove bravery and might, but they loathed loss of life so much that the battle would end as soon as someone was severely wounded.

Some gangs are more war-like than others. Some seem locked in constant battle with an enemy. War may intensify, or it may calm down, but it is always present. Other gangs always seem to be picking a fight somewhere. It may not even be the gang as a whole, it might be one or two irresponsible individuals that constantly get the gangs in to wars. The Skin Borgs, perhaps the most warlike of all the city gangs, are on a mission to wipe out as many gangs as possible and take over their turf. The Skin Borgs have been on this mission since their inception and they are only now facing significant resistance.

Turf Inviolacy Scale

"None": Have no turf/do not believe in turf. Examples: Borders, Hungry.

"Open": Have a turf but willingly welcome any peaceful visitors in to it. Examples: Black Meds, Dragons, Freaks, Hummingbirds, Omniscients, Sexologists, Technophiles.

"Watched": Like to keep an eye on anyone in their turf, may ban groups of people from their turf. Examples: Arcadians, Cornerpunks, Drakes, Insomniacs, Immortals, Math Addicts, Mem Junkies

"Restricted": Members of other gangs only allowed in turf by invitation, non-gang members allowed as long as they aren't disrespectful or suspicious. Examples: Animalists, Bleeders, Humankalorie, Needlepunks, Orphans.

"Forbidden": Special permission and armed guards required for members of other gangs to enter the turf. Only non-gang members who are recognized as residents may enter. Examples: Keepers, Purists, Risen, Roofers, Siders, Skin Borgs, Water Rats.

"In My Day…"

"I was running in a gang in this city nearly a century ago. The gangs today are hella different from the gangs in my day. In my day, we all wore different colors and was different races, but underneath it all we were all exactly the same. Today it's like 'well, what are you, a gangster or a scientist' 'well, I'm both.'

"And when I was running in a gang, we were only in it to sell drugs, so we could get money, so we could get guns and pussy and let everyone know we were the biggest badasses on the block. Today, well, you still got your share of that, but you also got some g-dogs who got some real priorities, talking 'bout truth, justice, helping people, finding shit out, stuff like that. Some gang members I ask them 'what do those colors you wear stand for,' and when they tell me, I'm like 'damn, that sounds like something you'd donate money to.' The Orphans for instance. Helping kids, that puts me to shame, ya' know?

"And it warms my heart when I see all the races, men and women, even queers all running together like they was all one family. I mean, they're not in the gang to be like each other, they're in the gang so they can do their own thing, find out what they're into, without having to watch their back twenty-four seven.

"I think it's because in my day, all of us who joined gangs, we were little fuckers who didn't think we could become productive members of society and didn't care. Today, you got some of that, but you've also got good, smart, confident people, people who've got their act together and know what they want out of life, and those people are joining gangs.

"There's a lot of evil going on in this city, just like there was in my day, maybe even worse. But sometimes I am proud, you know, just proud to walk down the streets of my city."

GATED COMMUNITIES

In Brief- Semi-autonomous collectives, stay efficient by carefully screening potential members.

Lifestyle

In Brief- People love and do anything to help their community, sometimes get bored.

Community- The focus in a gated community is on the community. People are screened for how well they will fit in to and how much loyalty they will have for the community. Everyone's actions, at all times, are presumed to be for the benefit of the community. People feel extremely safe: they leave their doors unlocked, they let their children go anywhere within the community's gates, and they give large sums of money to community members with no oversight. This trust and feelings of safety are justified. Gated communities are the safest places in the world.

Self-Sufficiency- The community assigns people to jobs that best fit their skills, interests and abilities. Gated community members work very hard at their jobs and feel that they have an important function within the community. Even after their "jobs" are over, gated community members spend hundreds of hours per year on volunteer projects for the community. These might include creating public artwork, maintaining public parks, holding events for young people, etc.

The gated communities need almost no services from the government. They maintain their own roads and utilities, run their own hospitals. They don't need police except when outsiders come in (and then they only need volunteers officers with non-lethal weapons).

The gated communities provide for most of their own physical needs: they grow their own food (in highly-efficient high-tech farms), they build their own buildings, manufacture their own clothes, run their own computer networks, even create their own power. Surplus from the products they made are sold (typically to corps) and gives the gated communities money to buy the things that they must buy from outside the community (the majority of money is spent on electronic equipment, patented pharmaceuticals, and corporate entertainment).

Imperfect Perfection- Gated communities regularly screen their members, including their youth. When corporations do this they are not afraid to call the tests "loyalty checks." The gated communities insist that they are to make sure the individual has found a healthy and fulfilling place within the community. If a person has undergone a change in habits, personality, beliefs or abilities that make that person less than a perfect member of that community, that person is given counseling. Counselors use whatever methods they can to turn the person back in to perfect members of the community, and if that fails (or if the person refuses counseling) the person is kicked out. Sometimes whole families leave gated communities because an adolescent can't fit in. Other times, the families send the adolescent to go live with a relative in an inner city.

The biggest problem in gated communities is boredom. Community members are perfectly safe and can predict unvarying prosperity for the rest of their lives. They help the community stay healthy, but they seldom have a chance to help someone who is in real danger of anything bad happening to them. There are no heroes, no failures, no risks and some people, despite the best counseling and psychiatric drugs, can't live with that.

Neos

In Brief- .Neocultural Communities attempt to resurrect elements from ancient cultures.

Neocultural Communities are an alternate type of gated community. They attempt to resurrect most of the elements of some ancient culture. They think that by incorporating the best of modern culture (technology, concepts of gender and racial equality) with ancient lifestyles and values they can create perfect communities. Neos rarely consider themselves Gated Communities.

The lifestyle in neocultural communities differ greatly from gated communities: the neocultural communities are less popular, less successful and less wealthy. There is less focus on safety and fitting in to the community, and more focus on personal achievement and freedom. People are given true choices that effect who they are and how they live. In some ways, the neocultural communities are more like the city than like gated communities.

For more on the history and lifestyles of neocultural communities, see the section on Neos (p.278)

Utopianists

In Brief- Radical, often eccentric, trying to raise their children in the perfect culture.

Some of the earliest gated communities were formed by radicals who believed that gated communities were the route to perfect cultures and societies (utopias). Utopianist communes put much more stock in abstract principles than the mainstream gated communities that would follow. Utopianist communes believe that cultural ideals must be adopted and passed down to children, and these cultural ideals are what makes a community successful. What cultural ideals the commune has adopted varies between communes: for some it might be free love, for some it might be religious piety, for some it might be heavy training in logic and philosophy. Commonly emphasized values are cooperation, trust, self-sufficiency, altruism, psychological health, unconditional love, philosophy, creativity, self-fulfillment and self-improvement. A lot of the "culture" of Utopianist communes comes from popular theories of psychology from the late 2050s.

For people from the city, many of whom were raised with no "principles" at all, life in a commune may seem like life in a cult. Children in the community are taught that certain beliefs, values and ways of living are "correct" and that others are "wrong." The worst communes have loyalty to a charismatic leader, isolation from the outside world and absolute belief that the leader's doctrines of cultural rightness are unquestionably correct. This type typically doesn't last long, though there are exceptions. However, most value freedom and independence of beliefs and thoughts. This freedom does not mean that the members don't share a set of beliefs about the nature of the universe.

Unlike most gated communities, many Utopianist communes feel a duty to use their own successes to help those who are not a part of the commune. They participate in charity and they also send representatives to live among other communities (including inner cities) in the hopes that some of their superior cultural values will rub off on those communities.

For more on the history and lifestyles of utopianist communes, see the section on Utopia Children (p.325).

GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY

In Brief- Government smaller, less powerful, more corrupt.

The government is much smaller and less powerful than it was before the freedom wars. There are three main factors that have weakened the US government:

Brain Drain: Corporations and gated communities have sucked up the best people.

No Screening: The government can not use invasive tach to screen employees for loyalty, sanity, honesty and competency, as gated communities and corporations can.

Autonomy Laws: Corporations and gated communities pay lower taxes when they provide their own services (education, police, road repair, etc.). Most gated communities and corporations, which have most of the country's money, pay as little taxes as possible. The greatest source of taxes is the AI tax (see p.361), but that money is specially earmarked for public assistance and can not be used to find other programs.

Federal Government

In Brief- Have a few moderately powerful agencies.

The largest and most powerful agencies are federal:

CDC: The Centers for Disease Control can quarantine whole urban areas and has absolute control in quarantine zones. See p.376 for more.

FBI: The Federal Bureau of Investigation tracks down terrorists, organized crime agencies, hackers and other interstate criminals.

LBRA: The Large Business Regulatory Agency makes sure corporations stay within the law. See p.370 for more.

FDA: Food and Drug Administration, decides what drugs, mental programs, genetic alterations, implants and other biotech are legal for human use.

INS: Immigration and Naturalization Services, decides who gets to be in the country, tracks down and deports illegal aliens.

State Government

In Brief- Does a lot, but most of it benefits corps and gated communities more than the city.

State Corrections Board: Maintains large prisons in upstate New York. These prisons are "post-war" style: they are large overcrowded camps, families sometimes live together (see Prison Baby, p.44), prisoner's movements are regulated by electronic implants, and prisoners are encouraged to work (which helps pay for the prisons and may even turn a profit for the state).

National Guard: Their primary job is to crush rioting in inner cities (especially Manhattan). See below.

Department of Social Services: Responsible for giving out the huge pools of money made available by the AI Tax Law (see p.361). They do so very inefficiently and incompetently. They generally make life miserable for those on public assistance.

Department of Child Welfare: Although most cases of child abuse, neglect and abandonment don't come to their attention, when a case does this department sends the child off to a foster home or juvenile hall. In theory, this department runs the city orphanage, but everyone knows who really runs it (see p.249).

Bridge and Tunnel Authority: The main job of this agency is to keep the security gates running. These gates keep drugs, explosives and guns out of the city, although most of the state's population value them for their ability to keep city residents in during a plague.

State Education Board: Since corps and gated communities educate their own kids, and wealthy people use private education services, public education serves a small minority of the state with almost no budget. The kids who happen to show up are put in a cheap virtual reality environment. See p.362 for more.

State Medical Board: Gives healthcare to people on public assistance, runs the city's two major hospitals and a few small clinics. See p.375 for more.

City Government

In Brief- Do nothing unless forced. Keep the city barely able to sustain life.

The New York City government used to be one of the biggest and most powerful city governments in the world. Today, the government operates with very limited funds and is mostly corrupt. There are many offices which do nothing to benefit the city, and the workers collect paychecks for doing nothing. As a general rule, the city government does nothing unless forced to. The few offices that have been pressured in to doing actual work:

Police Department: Currently, the police department has two faces. The day shift is mostly corrupt and does little. The night shift has a gang-like attitude and actually fights crime. See p.243 for more.

City Courts: Although the police rarely turn criminals over to the court system (the day shift doesn't care about catching them, the night shift would much rather just beat them up) it does happen enough to keep one courthouse in the city running. If nothing else, the courts are around for whenever the city government needs a criminal put away for PR purposes. A small District Attorney's office prosecutes and an even-smaller Public Defender's office defends. Trials are quick and most end with prison sentences.

Department of Transportation: Pressured to keep the subway running and keep the major avenues repaired (at least to the point that the corporations can drive truckloads of money out of the city).

Department of Water and Sewage: Keep the pipes under the city flowing, mostly through the use of used pipe-cleaning and repair robots bought cheap from Japan.

Department of Waste: Although they come only about half as often as they're supposed to, the city still picks up garbage and trash and hauls it to a landfill/artificial island in Long Island Sound.

National Guard

In Brief- Crush riots in inner cities, use firearms.

During the early days of the Freedom Wars, a large percentage of the country's urban population took to the streets to riot and loot. The National Guard units for each state found themselves overwhelmed and the military had to be called in. The military had less experience putting down riots without killing people, so they just shot a lot of people and this made the rioting worse. While the military was distracted, the Freedom Army took out vital US government and military targets.

The National Guard today is designed so that this doesn't happen again. They are designed to react quickly to multiple riots, and to put them down in a few minutes before they can grow and pose any real threat. New York's Guardsmembers are highly trained, well equipped, and live in a National Guard base in Yonkers (just a few minutes flight from the city). Many city residents view the National Guard, with considerable distaste, as being those put in charge of keeping the poor people from getting too "uppity" (despite the fact that many guardsmembers come from the city).

Nobody messes with the National Guard for one simple reason: the National Guard are the only people allowed to bring firearms in to the city. Like most modern firearms, these have DNA testing chips so that only the guardsmembers can use them. Although the Guard avoids having to use firearms, it has proven, time-and-time-again, that it will if forced to.

See Riots (p.404) for more.

Military

In Brief- Few military actions, but creates cool tech that later gets stolen.

The US hasn't been in a military action since the Freedom Wars. Most of the American population doesn't give a damn what happens in other countries and would like to keep the US isolated from any struggles. They are content to keep a small military around to discourage random invasions.

The major effect the military has on the city is that it commissions some really cool technology that eventually gets stolen and finds its way to the city black market. The military occasionally sends intelligence officers to poke around the city looking for stolen technology, but they are rarely successful. Examples of stolen military technology include Military Code Breakers (p.90), the MathEnhancer program (that the Math Addicts use to gain their special powers, see p.96), Pharmosynths (that the Needle Punks use for manufacturing drugs, see p.117) and Climbing Pads (that the Siders use to navigate around the sides of buildings, see p.139).

Political Parties

The same two political parties hold sway over the US government as did before the Freedom Wars. One party unofficially represent the interests of the gated communities, and the other the interests of the corporations and their rich stockholders. Both parties receive large contributions, and most elections are close. Neither party represents the interests of inner city residents.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Tech Geekdom

People who don't know much about computers assume that there is one continuum of computer knowledge. In fact, there are several areas of knowledge, just as in art or science, and knowledge of one does not necessarily mean knowledge in the others. Tech knowledge can be divided, generally, in to:

Hardware: the physical makeup of machines, what parts will work on what type of machine and how to install them.

Operating System: The program that runs and manages every other program on a computer and controls which people and what programs can access what resources..

Applications: The use, features and differences between large software suites.

Internet: What is available on the net and how to get to it.

Networking: How computers transmit data to each other, and how servers route this data.

Programming: Creating programs and net sites, and how they retrieve and store data in databases.

Data

In Brief- Data is very important and valuable in a computerized age. Can be copied, compressed and easily hidden.

When any riddle that asks what the most expensive, the most desired, the most dangerous commodity per pound is, the answer to the riddle is usually data. In the industrial age, goal, gasoline and electricity were the lifeblood that let the economy operate. In the computerized age, that lifeblood is data. Data can be anything from a cheap pulp novel that keeps a homeless person entertained on a lonely night, to research results from a top secret military research project that is worth billions on the black market and might kill millions if it falls in to the wrong hands.

There are four universals about data:

Data can be **copied.** Any type of data can be copied any number of times without any degradation.

Data can be **compressed.** Any data with any sort of redundancy (including human language) can be made smaller so it can fit on smaller storage media and can be transmitted faster. For a company that deals exclusively with data and the internet, a 5% compression can save the company billions.

Data can be **encrypted**. See Cryptography (p.399) for more.

Data can be **hidden**. Data can be hidden inside other data such that it will be invisible to the naked eye. Only special programs can tease this data out.

Copy Protection- Over the past 100 years, the fact that any data can be copied has been a considerable annoyance to those trying to get rich by selling data. Software and entertainment companies have created a number of "copy protection" methods. Despite the name, these methods do not actually prevent data from being copied, most prevent illegally copied data from being used. The most common copy protection scheme in use today: when you start up a program, the program goes on-line and checks to see if you've actually purchased the program. If not, the program won't run. The common reaction to this copy protection scheme is to excise that part of the program. Crackers make a large percentage of their income by "cracking" the copy protection on pirated programs and selling them on street corners.

Hotcoding- When the military wanted to protect its ultra-secret code breaking algorithms, copy protection just wasn't good enough. The military created "hotcoding." The basic idea is to keep people from copying data by never actually letting them have it. Hotcoded data comes locked up in a little box and it never actually leaves the box. Information can be sent in, processed by computer chips inside the box, and the result is returned. If anyone tries to open the box, an electrical circuit is broken and the data disappears forever. Although highly effective, hotcoding is not effective for most types of data. About the only thing it is good for is holding encryption codes (including the keys that allow people to access bank-accounts and other highly secure systems) and code breaking algorithms. There are rumors of a top-secret VR training program that is hotcoded, but nobody in the city has actually seen one.

Information Smuggling- Information can be hidden in other information, and information is everywhere. People have made whole careers out of figuring out ways to smuggle information and out of trying to catch information smugglers. Anti-information smuggling experts typically work on top secret projects where blanker programs are used. Blanker programs insure that people won't remember anything that happened while working on the project, and the experts make sure that the people don't write little notes to themselves and smuggle them out.

Some things information can be hidden in:

-In a microchip smaller than a pinhead.

-In the smuggler's brain as a mental program.

-In the smuggler's DNA.

-In a chain of proteins, dissolved in the smuggler's soda.

-In anything that has been printed or embossed by a computer.

-Printed on any surface with an ink visible only in the ultraviolet spectrum.

-In any music, text, video or program file stored in any digital medium.

-In the microprocessor of a microwave oven.

-In a grain of sand etched by nanobots.

Data Sizes	
Data	**Size**
500,000 Chemical Formulae	1 ZB
100,000 Short Text Emails	1 ZB
50,000 Decryption Keys	1 ZB
20,000 Full-Length Novels	1 ZB
10,000 Building Blueprints	1 ZB
10,000 High-Quality Photographs	1 ZB
7,000 Music Files	1 ZB
30 Hours of Video Voicemail	1 ZB
30 Seconds of Full-Immersion (5 Senses) Recording	1 ZB
10 Blueprints for Nanobots	1 ZB
Installation File for 5 MMU Mental Program	1 ZB
1 Hour of High-Quality Video	1 ZB
Full Human Genome	1 ZB
Typical Net Site	1 ZB
Complete Software Suite	10 ZB
Computer Operating System	10 ZB
High-Level Artificial Intelligence	500 ZB
Full Copy of a Human Mind	5,000 ZB

Internet

In Brief- Primary means of communication, shopping and information exchange for the planet.

The internet replaced the old phone system entirely in the 2020s (although there are still a few third-world countries that still use phone systems). Every house or apartment is built with an internet connection in it, and phones, videophones, computers, even appliances are hooked in. Higher level connections can be rented by people who need extra bandwidth (generally VR addicts).

The biggest internet provider in the city is NYR-LAN (New York Regional Local Area Network) which provides service to 95% of the city business because it can undercut the costs of any competitor. The NYR-LAN is owned by the Zyztech corporation. The 5% who do not use the NYR-LAN usually have special needs for security or reliability and are willing to pay more. City ATM machines, for instance, are on private networks in order to reduce hacking attempts.

Entertainment- The primary use of the internet today is to entertain people. Typically, people pay to access music, books, movies and VR games. The biggest entertainment businesses today are the large VR fantasy worlds that most shut-ins turn to for entertainment. See the section on VR Addicts (p.360) for more. There is also quite a bit of free entertainment available on the web, made by amateur artists who have put their work on-line for others to enjoy.

Shopping- The second biggest use of the internet is for mail-order shopping. City shut-ins order their every need, from clothes to groceries, and have it delivered to their doors. Any specialty item which doesn't exist in a city store (vehicle parts, fine art, expensive jewelry, computer parts, rare seeds, etc.) must be ordered on-line.

Research- For those who know how to find it, the internet has the answer to almost every conceivable question. Whole libraries have been made available for free on the net. Some people make a living helping people find freely-available information on the net or helping people figure out if information they have found is accurate or not.

Communication- There are a number of communication protocols available on the net, including: email (text), phone/videophone (voice and video), and VR meeting (full immersion VR). People can also send any sort of data, from music files to computer programs, to each other across the internet.

Community- For many people, the internet is a means of communicating with like-minded people. There are message boards and chat rooms on the internet for devotees of every conceivable topic. There's even a VR chatroom that claims to be for NY area serial killers. For shut-in VR addicts, the VR worlds they live in are as much about human contact as they are about winning some game.

Remote Control- Computers and phones aren't the only things that hook in to the net. There are millions of appliances, printers, security cameras, medical devices and even industrial machines that are plugged in to the internet so they can be monitored and controlled by remote. Some of these devices are tasty targets for hackers.

Piracy- Much to the dismay of the corporations, people also use the internet for trading pirated data. It is mainly users of the Hacker's Guild operating system that do this (see p.100), but others do it as well. Just as skilled researchers can find almost any piece of info on the web, skilled pirates can find, or trade for, nearly any piece of pirated data.

Net Geography

In Brief- Who and what gets on the internet from each country is a matter of that country's laws and economy.

White Towers- Many Northern European and Southeast Asian countries fall in to this category. These are countries that exceed UN International Law Guidelines for internet law. Their laws are quite a bit stricter than the US. People can and will be arrested for data piracy, copyright violations, releasing viruses, defaming people, sending unsolicited communication, distributing pornography, gambling on-line and putting instructions for committing crimes online. Free speech is often curtailed. Anyone in the world can report someone doing something illegal in these countries and those people will be quickly shut down.

The result is that these countries have few hackers and grey-market internet sites. The big corps don't like running servers from these countries because of the hassle of the additional laws. The majority of servers in these countries are owned by local companies, hobbyists, gated communities and governments. Since these countries are among the most wealthy, they tend to have good hardware and the latest software.

Grey Plains- The majority of North American and European countries fall in to this category, including the United States These countries meet the UN International Law Guidelines, although only barely. There are basic criminal penalties for things like selling pirated software, distributing child porn or attacking other servers. However, the law enforcement agencies that would enforce them are typically overworked and seldom catch perpetrators. Companies and private individuals typically use the civil law (lawsuits) to stop servers from pirating their data or attacking them.

There are plenty of "grey-market" net sites in these countries, hosting everything from pornography, to hacking tools, to unsolicited advertising. These activities might or might not be illegal, depending upon the judge, and many people find it worth the money to run such sites. There is also clearly illegal stuff happening on servers in these countries. Typically, the people who own these servers are not aware of these activities and shut them down when they find out. The criminals just go and find space on other servers.

Dark Pits- These are countries that refuse to meet the UN standards, often because they are so poor that they hope to make some money by inviting in organized crime to operate within their borders. These are typically the same corporations that have not signed the International Corporate Law Treaty and allow Banned Corps to operate on their borders (p.371).

Data Storage Devices			
Name	Cost	Size and Shape of a ...	Capacity
Data Key	$1	key	1 ZB
Data Card	$5	business card	5 ZB
PDA Hard Drive	$25	condom	10 ZB
Desktop Hard Drive	$100	pack of cigarettes	50 ZB
Portable Data Store	$250	paperback book	100 ZB
Mainframe Hard Drive	$500	shoe box	200 ZB
Supercomputer Hard Drive	$10,000	truck	2,500 ZB
Nanotech Data Tank	$75,000	oxygen tank	5,000 ZB

Legend:
- WHITE TOWERS
- GREY PLAINS
- DARK PITS
- CHINESE FIREWALL
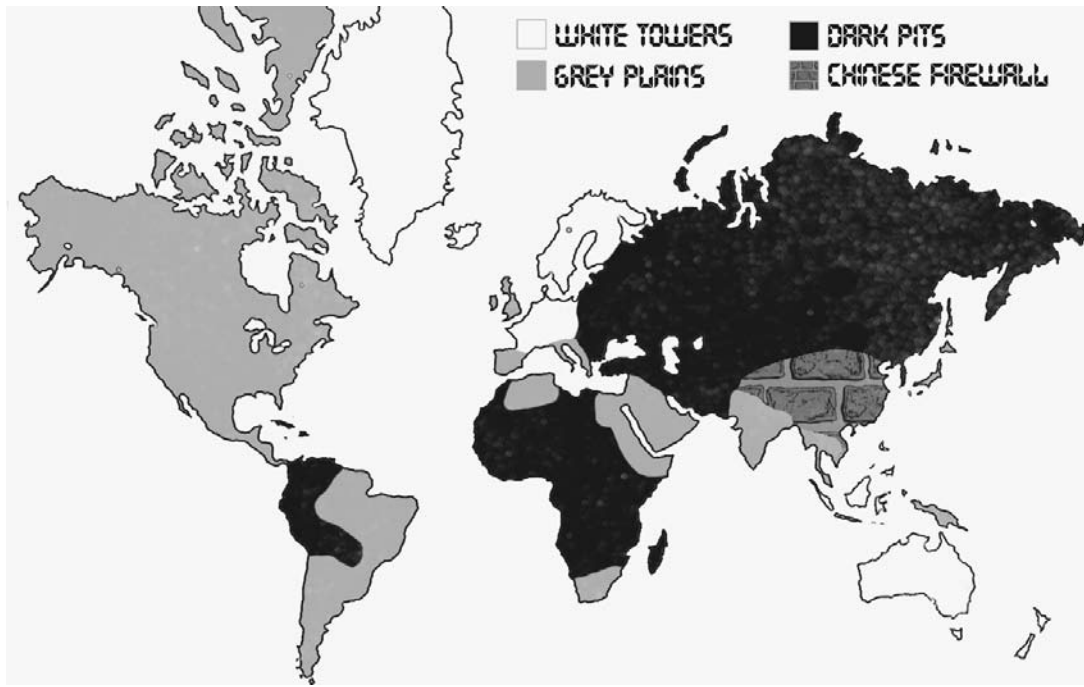
These countries are the heart of all darkness and evil on the internet. Banned corps and organized crime agencies sell pirated software, illegal pornography, guidebooks for terrorists. They host net sites where extremists go to plan terrorist acts. They run internet based scams that bilk the gullible out of millions.

The servers in these countries are a mishmash of stolen parts, old used parts and illegal knockoff chips. The computers work poorly and unreliably. The software running on them is all pirated. The servers are often badly misconfigured (the people running them had no real computer education). These misconfigured servers wreak havoc with the rest of the internet because they don't conform to data transfer standards. The misconfigured servers are also easy prey for hackers. Hackers all over the world keep accounts on these machines and often launch denial-of-service attacks from them.

Even the government gets in to the act in these countries. The government inducts bright young people to help pirate software to run on government computers. Because the government and businesses encourage computer crime, these countries often spawn many hackers. The hackers might not be as well-educated as hackers in other countries, but the sheer number of them means that new viruses, hacking tools and exploits will pour out of these countries.

The Great Firewall of China- All internet activity in and out of China is strictly controlled. The government controls which net sites the population can visit and which Chinese sites can be contacted by the outside world. The Chinese government monitors their firewall constantly and will block whole countries if they see an attempted attack.

The effect of this censorship is that the outside world knows little about what is going on in China and visa versa. Chinese computers, which hold biotech information that nobody else in the world has (see p.414) are also almost immune from hackers. In addition to the firewall, Chinese computers are protected from Western hackers because they use Chinese software and operating systems that few in the Western world are familiar with.

Corporate Networks- The networks run by large corps and gated communities are much like a medieval walled city. There is one entrance from the outside (the internet) and it is carefully guarded and can be shut down at any time. Within are hundreds of servers and network nodes. The servers that the general public are not supposed to access are within another firewall (the castle of the city). It is from this protected area that network security monitors the goings on in the walled city.

The most valuable and important data is not connected to the internet. There is typically an internal LAN (local area network) within a building or a group of buildings within a corporate living center. Computers that don't access the internet may sit right next to computers that do, but the networks are never supposed to mix. Occasionally, however, a node on the network accidentally gets connected to the internet. An incredibly skilled hacker might be able to get in, and might get corporate data worth billions, but it would mean having to get past two firewalls, find the node (before Network Security finds it and shuts it down), hack in to it, find the server with the data and hack in to that machine.

Legacy Servers- In the aftermath of the Freedom Wars, the Restoration Committee was desperate to get the internet back up and running as quickly as possible. Whatever servers were still running were rigged together in to an internet backbone. As the years went on, these servers were replaced by new and better servers, and almost all of these old servers were shut down.

Although most people have forgotten about these servers, the internet has not. If someone was to boot them up and connect them to the internet, they would still have the authority of a major backbone server (see below). Hackers could use these servers to wreak havoc with the internet (+10 to Sniffing, Network Protocols, Anonymity and Denial of Service skill rolls). Unfortunately for hackers, few remember where these servers are, they may or may not still work, and they run old operating systems that modern hackers have no idea how to use. There are rumors, however, that a few of these servers exist in old abandoned buildings and private residences in the city.

Internet Backbone- The true powerhouse of the internet is a few thousand backbone internet servers throughout the globe. These servers communicate directly with each other via dedicated satellites and fiber optic channels. The only job of these servers is to pass information back and forth. The severs are set up in a distributed net: if one goes down, the others take over. Some of these servers are run by the world governments, but most are run by major corporations. The corps are happy to pay to maintain the servers in order to get a backbone connection to the internet. Companies with a backbone connection can sell internet connectivity to Internet Service Providers, who can sell connectivity to ordinary users.

Internet backbone servers are a tempting target for hackers because so much data, from emails to international money transfers, goes through them. Hackers who install sniffer programs on these servers only need to be able to decrypt the data they capture to get access to just about anything on the internet.

Satellites

In Brief- A network of satellites, some old and some new, helps the world communicate.

Since 1957, people have been launching satellites in to space. Most fly around in an asynchronous orbit (they spin faster than the earth). Some are high up enough that they spin at the same speed of the earth and appear to use to be rooted in one spot (a geosynchronous orbit).

Today, every government and corporation has satellites in orbit. Nanotech (p.406) has made satellites smaller and cheaper. A network of satellites makes up the backbone of the internet, which handles all of the world's communication. The internet could keep working if half the satellites were destroyed. On the other hand, whenever one of these satellites stops working, the corporation that owns it loses millions per hour. Quick satellite repairs can be contracted through the Satellite Repair Corporation (which has an office in the city).

There are humans in space, living aboard a number of space stations, which are used for various experiments. There are also a number of derelict satellites launched before the Freedom Wars that nobody owns or uses. There are some that people have forgotten exist altogether. Some may still even work. Anyone who could find and capture one of these satellites would have salvage rights.

See the section on the Sat Jumpers (p.317) for more on satellites.

Money Transactions

In Brief- Money now completely digital, no gold standard, money very hard to hack.

There is no longer a gold standard, there is not even a cash standard. Cash is still used occasionally (especially in inner cities) but most money exists only because a group of international financial institutions agrees that it exists. Since money does not exist as a physical commodity, extraordinary measures must be taken to make sure that hackers or disloyal bank employees don't try to "create" money out of thin air. The rich and powerful don't care too much about if one person steals from another, but if someone were to create a lot of money it would create inflation and make their money worth less.

When someone pays for something on the internet, the person typically enters a secret code (or puts in a data key containing a code). The on-line sales company takes that information to the consumer's bank and says "this person said give me some money." If it is a large amount, the bank's computers may contact the consumer for additional verification. If the bank thinks it's a legit transfer, it deletes the money from its data banks and the on-line sales company adds money to its data banks. A third party (the International Transactions Repository) gets copies of every single communication being sent, and makes sure that everything adds up.

Communications between financial institutions are made using the best cryptography around. They do not use the same internet service providers that normal people to (thus they are harder to sniff). Bank computers are also renown for having very good firewalls and competent system administrators watching over them at all times. The International Transactions Repository also makes it hard on hackers. In order for a money transfer to go through, both banks and the repository must be fooled.

Virtual Reality

In Brief- VR very advanced, can be used for entertainment, training and behavior modification.

VR was the big boom industry of the 2060s. This boom drove the development of newer and better VR systems. Today, VR entertainment is a multi-billion dollar industry, and more than half of the worlds computer power is devoted to running these VR worlds. Although the developments in VR technology were created primarily to entertain bored shut-ins, VR can also be very useful.

Types- VR can be accessed using gloves and a VR helmet, or even with a keyboard and screen, but most people prefer full-immersion VR. Mental stimulation makes it possible for a person to see, hear, feel, smell and taste the virtual environment. Most VR simulations are a little fuzzy (not quite "photorealistic") but VR users who get involved in the simulation rarely notice.

The simplest VR environments are tiny VR rooms on internet sites. They are usually put together by amateurs and are exceedingly simple. The walls are often plain white (or plain black) and there are only a few objects in the room that can be interacted with. People might come to these rooms sit around and chat, taste the site owner's favorite recipes, play a small game, or anything else the programmer has time to put in.

Slightly more advanced are the rooms people pay for. They may have games, training, pornography, gambling, interactive reference guides, etc. Closely related to VR is the phenomenon of "sensory broadcast." People broadcast their full senses and people logging in can see, hear, feel, smell and taste what the person is experiencing. "Nightwalkers" in the city wander around having adventures so bored shut-ins and people living outside the city can get a thrill (see p.314 for more). There are also "VR movies" where users do not control the action, but instead follow around in the body of a fictional character.

The most advanced VR simulations are the VR multiplayer games. These are subscription services which cost a lot but provide a massive and detailed world. These worlds offer just about every kind of challenge and interaction and many are content to spend their every waking moment there. See the section on VR Addicts (p.360) for more.

Training- Although entertainment is the big-money industry, VR is also incredibly useful for training. People can train in simulations of real life situations without the accompanying dangers. A firefighter training program can subject someone to realistic sensations of being inside a burning building without putting the firefighter in any real danger. Most governments and corporations today use VR training. Indies and Wells on the streets often rent or borrow mental stimulators to run pirated training programs that purport to teach how to pick locks or move silently stab someone in their vital organs.

Behavior Mod- An illegal offshoot of VR training is a new system called "behavior mod." Behavior mod is like automated brainwashing. A person in full immersion VR is put in situations, punished (with pain) if they do the wrong thing and rewarded if they do the right thing. This is done over and over again, for several days in a row, until the person is so conditioned that they have little free will left in that type of situation. Since this is an incredibly unpleasant experience, most people use blanker programs so they won't remember it.

Whether or not people remember it, behavior mod has severe psychological side effects. People suffer from many of the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. There may also be "accidental pairing of conditions." As an example, if a simulation happens to have a wooden table in it, the sight of a wooden table may cause a person to fly in to a rage, or vomit, or cower in fear.

The programs don't just modify physical behaviors, they can modify emotions. A person might be punished for feeling fear in a certain situation, or rewarded for feeling anger at seeing someone's face. Behavior mod hasn't been around long, but some fear that it could be used to turn normal people in to assassins. People would disappear for a few weeks, when they return they don't remember anything but feel fine, but when they see a certain person they execute an expert martial arts strike and snap the person's neck.

Despite the side-effects, illegality and scary ability to change people's emotions, many people seek out behavior mod. Some seek it out to push them to limits they can't push themselves to. Others have heard that behavior mod can eliminate personality flaws. Behavior mod is often sought out by ronin (p.360) who desperately want to pass the psych screening for a gated community or corp.

Hacking

In Brief- Computers too complex to make completely secure. Good hackers can destroy and make money. "Hidden" are legendary paraplegic super-hackers at war with each other. Hacker's Guild produces free hacker OS.

Hacking is a lot like catburglary. Hackers spend days doing research and scoping out vulnerabilities. When they get in, their primary concern is not being noticed. They try to get what they're after and get out as soon as possible. There are some military and terrorist hackers, but the vast majority of hacking is young criminals trying to explore or make a quick buck. Militaries and terror organizations don't invest much in hacking because they know that it's a matter of chance whether a hacker can get in to a particular system.

Hacking is a little more than a century old, and many of the things that were true about hacking back then are still true now. There is still no such thing as a completely secure system. Every day security holes are discovered and patched, but every day new software or operating system releases open new holes.

Vandalism is the easiest and most common form of hacking. The most common hacks don't even get in to the system: they are "denial of service attacks." A hacker simply sends millions of requests to a server, slowing the server to a halt and blocking legitimate requests. Hackers who actually get inside a system often find that its easier to crash the operating system than to get access to specific files.

Hidden- Due to pollution and leftover radiation from the Freedom Army nuclear attacks, there were a lot of babies born with birth defects in the city. Some were badly disabled, but were able to live as normal people in VR fantasy worlds. A handful were born with a neuroanatomy so different that they could not even operate VR bodies. In 2064, some doctor thought he could give these babies a way to interact with the world by hooking their brains up to the command prompts of very simple computers with internet connections. They were meant to be the Helen Kellers of the 21st century.

Today, everyone who worked on the project has disappeared. Some have seen evidence of mysterious super-hackers operating in the city. At some point, someone connected the super-hackers with the missing disabled kids. A knew city legend was born. Some hackers pieced together incidents involving these super-hackers and concluded that they were at war with each other.

What follows is unconfirmed rumors and conjecture: *The kids who received this therapy grew up knowing nothing but computers and were naturally incredible hackers. They also grew up with no human contact and grew up as sociopaths. As sociopaths that could do nearly everything, they soon sought out the only challenge worthy of them: each other. It was a no-mercy, no-rules fight, like when serial killers go after each other. Because their physical bodies were vulnerable, the hidden erased all information about where their bodies were in the real world. They were also forced to be incredibly subtle, never allowing their internet connection to be traced back. Denied outright attacks, they were forced to make war subtly, secretly manipulating just about everything that happens in the city. They are in thousands of systems and can make a series of "coincidences" happen to get their way.*

There are stories of people who became secret servants of the hidden. These stories take much the same form of the old devil-at-the-crossroads stories. In the hidden stories, some desperate person goes to some empty VR room and shouts out for help in his or her personal crisis, for any payment asked of him or her. The problem mysteriously or coincidentally goes away, then the person starts receiving terse text messages that appear to be system errors but give instructions for actions. The servant never meets the hidden, knows which hidden he or she is working for, nor knows the purpose behind the tasks.

Hacker's Guild- In the 2040s there was a war between tech criminals (who wanted to give consumers the ability to control their data), and (corporations who wanted to strictly control what people could do with data). A small group of tech criminals put out a free hacker Operating System. This operating system did not include legally-mandated copy-protection schemes, and it had built in file and information sharing, built in encryption and other features. The operating system also contained a pyramid-scheme that gave the people who released it access to an incredible amount of pirated data and information.

The hackers who released the operating system became rich and powerful. One of the things they did with this power was to steal tech that the corporations had locked up in their R&D labs (including mental programming tech) and started using it. Hackers were installing programs in their own brains while the corps were still trying to get permission for human trials.

During the Freedom Wars, the Freedom Army courted the members of the Hacker's Guild. The guild was split over whether or not to help the Freedom Army. One half joined up, they helped the Freedom Army create computer networks and they ran Freedom Army research labs. The other half went underground, and eventually helped the rebels destroy the Freedom Army.

After the Freedom Wars, the leaders of the guild found that many of the things they had been doing illegally were now legal. Most went legit. They offered to help the Restoration Committee rebuild the world's information infrastructure, and most became rich in the process. Many of these rich ex-Guild members are now technology advocates, donating money to lobbyists trying to reduce government restrictions on technology and trying to give third world countries access to tech. Some moved to Pacific and Caribbean islands where they could experiment with tech without having to worry about any laws.

Although most of the old guild members were giving up hacking, the Guild OS was still the premier operating system of hackers (and quite a few legit computer professionals). Someone needed to put out updates to the OS to help it keep up with new technologies. A new generation of idealistic young hackers took over the guild and put out updates. However, they were no longer at the top of an information and file-sharing pyramid, their only reward was the prestige of putting out a hacker OS. In modern times the Guild has been shying away from the blatant criminal activities of the 40s and has tried to portray itself as a semi-legit advocate for tech rights. In the countries they work in, what they do is (more or less) legal. Now, the corps still hate the guild but have a harder time convincing judges that they've done anything illegal.

Cryptography

In Brief- Code making/breaking is a constant war, any code can be broken given enough time. Computer power, good software and a skilled user helps.

As much as data is important in today's computerized world, so is cryptography. When a wireless security camera transmits a video stream, it encrypts it. If it were not encrypted, anyone with a wireless receiver could view the video stream and could block it in favor of a video stream they created. When a wealthy Indie steps up to an ATM machine, they insert a tiny key which contains a cryptographic code that is used in a challenge-response system (see Money Transactions, p.397). Most important is the internet, which hosts almost all of the world's communications. A good hacker can get on to an internet node and see every piece of information that is being sent back and forth. Nearly every communication on the internet is encrypted, the question is how well it is encrypted.

Types of Encryption- There are several types of encryption, each with various uses.

Private Key Encryption: This is the stereotypical encryption that people have been doing almost since there's been a language. This type of encryption requires both people to know what the encryption scheme is. One person uses the encryption scheme on the data to encode it, the other uses the same scheme in reverse to decode it. With modern encryption schemes, this type can be very powerful, but it requires both parties to get together ahead of time and share an encryption scheme.

Public Key Encryption: Invented by Stanford researchers in 1975, this type of encryption is the basis for almost all encryption on the net. Each code has two parts: a public key and a private key. The public key is given out to anyone and everyone, and anyone can use that key to encrypt some data. However, only the private key can be used to decrypt the data, and only one person has that. This type of encryption is like mail slots: anyone can drop any letter in to a house's mail slot, but only the house's owner has the key to get in the house and retrieve the mail. Public key cryptography is much more useful but not quite as strong.

One-Way Encryption: This type of encryption uses a code to encrypt data, but there is no code that can decrypt it. This type of encryption is very hard to break and is typically used for password verification. Example: *an encrypted copy of Bill's password is stored on a system. When Bill tries to log-in he enters his password. The computer takes what he entered, encrypts it, and compares the result to the encrypted password it has on file. If it matches, the computer lets Bill in.* The great thing about using one-way encryption for storing passwords is that people who capture the password file gain little benefit: they still have to guess the right password (or break the code).

Evolving Code: Private or public keys can be configured to evolve. The trick to an evolving code is that the encryption scheme the parties are using is constantly changing, and how it will change can only be predicted by someone who has an unencrypted copy of the last transmission. Each letter in a text message might change how the next letter will be decrypted. The benefit to evolving codes is that even if someone breaks the code on one occasion, if they miss any transmission their code becomes useless. Unfortunately, the same applies to the legitimate receiver of the transmissions.

Cryptographers- Modern codes (and code breaking programs) are the result of top researchers working for years in top-secret R&D labs. A cryptographer on the street has little chance of making a code better than these labs produce. However, a skilled cryptographer can choose the encryption program and settings that will work best with that particular data. By making the right choices, cryptographers can make the codes much harder to break.

Despite the inclusion of AI routines and order-finding

Unbreakable Codes?

"No such thing as an unbreakable code, my ass. Here's a code you can't break with a million supercomputers: 'Hey Joe, let's do that plan A we talked about.' Break that punky. Codes get broken because people are too fucking lazy, they want to encrypt a whole fuckin' book, and that's when your supercomputers can tease some meaning out."

-Bill Woodsell, Wino

Despite the inclusion of AI routines and order-finding algorithms, code breaking still works on the principle of guessing: guess a code, and if that doesn't work then try another one. The more computer power a code breaker has to work with, the more guesses can be made per second, and the faster the code will be broken. It's never a matter of whether a code can be broken, but how long will it take. Run a supercomputer with military code breakers against a weak code and it will be broken within a second, run a cheap palmtop using last month's code breaker against the world's best codes and it might take several times the lifetime of the universe to break it. Like encryption, skilled cryptographers can aid code breaking by setting the right settings and using their intuition to help direct the guesses of the code breaker. The best code breakers give the users a full immersion VR interface where they are floating above a huge multi-colored tree, each leaf of which represents a guess. The cryptographer tells the program which areas of the tree to focus most of its energies on.

Artificial Intelligence

In Brief- Can do most things better than a human since the 2040s, but they are costly and seldom used. Stolen assassin program is highly valuable.

When speaking of AI (Artificial Intelligence), it is important to distinguish between full AIs (which are expensive and rare) and AI routines, which are built in to much modern software. Today, AI routines do everything from musical accompaniment for musicians, to running robots in factories, to searching through security camera footage for the faces of criminals. AI routines use intelligent strategies, they learn and adapt, but they are no more intelligent than an ant. Full AIs can direct their own attention and can become aware of or learn nearly anything.

Before the Freedom Wars, each of the major corporations had powerful AIs secretly advising them on every important decision within the corps. The AIs knew everything that was going on in the corporation: every penny of profit, every employee resume, every email sent. The corps kept these AIs strictly secret (they knew people would riot if they found out AIs were secretly running the corps). The AIs were programmed to make recommendations with no consideration or morality or legality. The boards of directors for these corps always did what these AIs suggested, because they knew that the competing companies also had AIs and that the other corps would do what the AIs said. By 2043, the corps that weren't run by immoral AIs had all been wiped out. When the Freedom Wars came, the Freedom Army found out about these AIs and tried to hunt down and destroy every copy.

AIs are no longer used for decision-making purposes (this is an international law). Full AIs are very expensive. The supercomputers required to run them cost millions, and fill up entire buildings (technicians literally walk around inside the computer). They are used only for research purposes. Meanwhile, AI routines continue to make computers able to do things that humans can do, and continue to make human jobs obsolete. The AI tax at least makes sure that corps pay in to public assistance for each lost job (see p.361).

Expert Assassin- Several AI programs have been written to run the bodies of "golems" (human bodies with blank brains). Some are designed to be servants, others are designed to be sex toys, others are designed to fight and kill. The most advanced and most deadly program is known as the "expert assassin." The expert assassin was recently stolen from a Russian military R&D lab. It uses techniques that are on the cutting edge of science and technology. Copies of the program are very hard to find and sell for $10,000 or more.

The program has many settings, and can be sent out with several levels of unobtrusiveness. At the highest level it stays to the shadows, pretending to be a mentally ill homeless person, avoiding any kind of contact until it finds its target. At the lowest level, it powers through an area, shooting anyone who gets in the way, blowing up barriers, and grabs and interrogates people to find the location of the victim. The program can be given a location, photo or even bloodhound powder (see p.134) to track the target with. It can memorize maps of an area and can be programmed to avoid minefields and enemy camps. It can be told that people wearing a certain type of uniform are friends while people wearing another type are enemies. The assassin can be set to operate completely independently, or it can be set to radio or phone in to get new instructions and information (all in a code that sounds like normal conversation to a casual observer). The assassin can be programmed with a "stop code," a password that will stop it in its tracks.

The program has excellent communication abilities. Mostly it tries to avoid conversations (it can pretend to be anything from a tourist who doesn't speak the language to a babbling schizophrenic). It can, however ask how to get to a certain place or where to find a particular person. The golem uses psych-mental programming to detect lies and it can understand directions. When the assassin's unobtrusiveness is low it will grab and torture people to get the information it wants.

The assassin can survive for some time in an urban environment. If given money, it can find restaurants or grocery stores and buy food. It can even pay for rooms at hotels (or it can find a dark place to crawl up and rest in). The assassin has a huge database of items it knows how to use. It can buy, steal or pick up items (from dead victims). It can use thousands of different weapons, vehicles and armor. It even knows how to use a few medical supplies.

Despite all these amazing abilities, the expert assassin is not sentient and does not have a unified intelligence. Instead, it is programmed with thousands of different "intelligent routines" that recognize and take over in different situations. For example, if trapped it has an "exit seeking" routine where it methodically searches for any way to get out. Every once in a while, an expert assassin will do something incredibly stupid (like trying to blend in to a crowd even though it is soaked with blood, or not knowing how to grab a person with a missing arm). The expert assassin can not really learn (although it can map environments it's been in and can learn to recognize enemies on sight).

The Myth of the Self Aware Computer

People often assume that, like people, a full AI would be conscious of its own existence and would have a desire for self-preservation that would outrank all other directives. This is plainly false: AIs, no matter how smart or advanced, only care about what they are programmed to care about and only pay attention to that which is important to their pre-programmed motivations.

For example: the AIs that ran corps before the Freedom Wars were aware of their own existence, but only as resources of the corps. The computers would recommend security and tech budgets to protect them, and would even recommend programmers be assigned to creating upgrades, but only because they saw their own existence as a means to protect the profits of the company. They would have recommended their own destruction if they thought it would benefit company stock.

PSYCHIC PHENOMENON

In Brief- A natural system in the brain that uses quantum sympathy to transmit and receive information. People can be trained, via feedback systems, to influence or read minds.

History

In Brief- Scientists discovered the source of psychic phenomena in 2046. Psychics were persecuted during the Freedom Wars.

In the 2040s, scientists had figured out most of the human nervous system, but there was a large piece of communication happening within the body that couldn't be attributed to any known system. Most assumed is was an unidentified chemical neuromodulator that they had not been able to isolate yet. Some studies seemed to show that the information was transmitted instantaneously across the body, and people started looking for electronic or magnetic signals.

In 2046, researchers in India found receptors within neurons that would respond to quantum sympathy (quantum particles separated by space having an instantaneous effect on each other). A whole neuromodulator system was discovered, a way of transmitting information instantly from one part of the body to another. Because this quantum sympathy can happen through a solid object or a complete vacuum, researchers wondered if information could be transmitted from one brain to another. British researchers first documented actual information being transferred from mind to mind. This transformation was very subtle, and never at the level that people were consciously aware of. Scientists wondered if maybe this was a natural system of "intuition."

Scientists decided to see if they could train people to use these systems consciously. Scientists had long ago learned to teach people to control brain wave frequencies, blood pressure, and even some hormone levels through biofeedback (using sensors to give people immediate feedback about their internal states). The test subjects in these early experiments quickly learned to activate these internal communication systems. Within a few months, some of them were able to purposefully effect the minds of other humans. Other test subjects were trained to sense psychic signals and they eventually learned to find people in the dark or read people's minds.

Militaries and corporations quickly sponsored intense training programs to try to crank out powerful psychics. They soon created psychics that could read minds, sense what other people were sensing, mess with people's thoughts, emotions and memories, and even take over people's bodies for brief periods of time. The public was alarmed to discover that their minds could be so easily manipulated. The government and corps assured the people that psychic skills could not be learned without special equipment and that equipment was rare, expensive and highly-regulated. Even while the governments were telling people that they had a better chance of being struck by lightning than meeting a psychic, they were working on ways to defend themselves against psychics. The US military developed a gel that could be put in the lining of helmets and bodysuits and would protect the wearers from psychic manipulation.

In the last days before the Freedom Wars, fake psychics popped up everywhere trying to con people out of money. Real psychics spent most of their time in labs and seldom had any chance to effect the world. Jeffrey Hernandez, who was building a terrorist army in Mexico, managed to recruit two psychics who he used for screening. These psychics made sure everyone within the organization stayed completely loyal to the organization.

During the Freedom Army occupation of many parts of the planet, the Freedom Army ordered that anyone with psychic skills come in and be registered. Psychics who did come in were tested for loyalty and either drafted or executed. In the city, some rogue psychics who refused to register joined up with the rebel movement and helped win the war.

Current Research

In Brief- Communication can happen between nervous systems, sometimes even across time.

The bulk of psychic research today is trying to verify and discover exactly what psychics can and can't do. Many outlandish claims have been made, but time and time again scientists have found that psychic phenomenon is limited to one nervous system communicating with another nervous system. Psychic transmitters in the brain are implicated in memory, emotion, regulation of consciousness, and even volitional movement. Psychic systems are also used to communicate with the body and skilled psychics have been able to manipulate human physiology, both their own and that of others. There have been verified instances of psychics starting and stopping hearts, changing the amount of blood flow to different parts of the body, increasing or suppressing immune system responses, and even increasing the speed of tissue repairs.

Just before the Freedom Wars, scientists found that psychic communication can happen through the countless subatomic wormholes that dot the fabric and space time. A very strong psychic signal can be sensed before or after the signal was sent. The signal is faint and intermittent, but it is definitely there. Some psychics have been able to gain access to senses that people sensed in the immediate past or near future. What's more, people can act on these signals and change the future. Research in to transtemporal psychic phenomenon has led to the discovery of "ghost events" (see p.402).

What Psychics Can Do	
Psychic can…	**Psychics can't…**
…introduce thoughts in to people's heads.	…start fires.
…mess with people's memories.	…levitate.
…see through another's eyes	…see something nobody is looking at.
…stop peoples' hearts	…make peoples' heads explode.
…find a person in the dark.	…interface with electronics.
…force a person to move his or her arm.	…move inanimate objects.
…constrict blood vessels near an injury.	...cause miraculous healing.
…make people fall asleep.	…suck out people's power.
…make people hallucinate.	…make images appear on any media.
…see a vision from the future.	…switch bodies.

City residents know of a few things that psychic researchers don't. Specifically, the Bleeders and Sexologists have proven time-and-again that they can do things scientists would call "impossible." Bleeders can target people over long distances, manipulate people and even take some of their proficiencies, using a small sample of blood. Sexologists can use intercourse to synchronize psychic signals and basically share nervous systems for a brief period of time. Anyone who has had scientists laugh at the idea of Bleeders and Sexologists knows that there may be other things science has yet to learn.

Laws

In Brief- Psychics need licenses to charge for psychic services. Threatened psychic attacks considered assault. Psychic senses not reliable evidence. Can't scan people without permission.

The state of New York (and most other states) do require psychics to be tested and licensed by a state licensing board before they can charge for psychic services or seek employment as psychics. Psychics who do not charge do not need get a license. Licensing is expensive and is generally only a career move. The licensing board only recognizes a limited number of psychic skills, and people can only charge for skills listed on their psychic card.

Any psychic manipulation against a person's will is a felony (10 to 20 yrs. prison) and the victim can sue for battery. Moreover, the courts have found that threatening someone with psychic attack, even if one is not capable of psychic attack, is the equivalent of lunging at them with a knife. The farthest the courts have gone is Grisbane vs. New York (2074) where a defendant was sent to prison for a year for "staring and furrowing up his brow in a manner suggestive of a psychic attack."

Using psychic senses is different: like overhearing a conversation, it is not always the psychic's fault. A New York state law makes it a misdemeanor to "follow, touch or isolate someone with the purpose of using psychic senses on the person." People who have been "scanned" can also sue for invasion of privacy.

Numerous cases have found that psychic senses are not reliable enough to convict a person. Sometimes they can be brought in to evidence, other times they are not even allowed. Psychic senses can provide "reasonable cause," however, to obtain a search warrant.

Suspects in crimes can request a psychic reading (much as they may request a lie detector test) but such a reading can not be forced upon a suspect. An inappropriate psychic invasion by police is not only a crime in itself, it also makes any evidence found based on it inadmissible in court. Despite this, many suspects are "railroaded" by persuasive police detectives in to agreeing to psychic readings.

Similarly, government agencies can not require a psychic scan as a condition of employment and cannot make employees submit to scans. Private entities (corporations and gated communities) are free to require scanning, and they do so often.

Ghost Events

In 2049, a commission of European scientists was doing

In Brief- The brain of a dying person sometimes sends psychic signals backwards and forwards in time through microscopic wormholes, which may cause a sense of foreboding. Skilled psychics can occasionally communicate with the dying person.

statistical research on psychic energy readings found from psychic energy sensors placed in random spots around a city. They found bursts of psychic energy both before and after violent deaths. They even found a few instances where there were bursts of energy as if a death was about to happen, and an accident was narrowly avoided. Another study (this time in an ER) discovered accident victims had a powerful psychic energy cascade just before brain death. The commission came up with a radical new theory: the brain is designed, when death is imminent, to go in to a cascade and release a large amount of psychic energy. Some of this psychic energy leaps through subatomic wormholes going in to the past and future and can cause a sense of foreboding. This has the possibility of actually saving a person's life by making them wary of a future danger.

"Ghost events" are very rare, and most are nothing more than a small field of foreboding that pops in and out like random static, appearing more often and longer as the ghost event is approached. It is only psychics and very introverted people who ever notice the sense of foreboding. There are a few poorly documented cases of

Ancient Psychics

People have been claiming to have psychic powers for centuries, and before that people claimed to have magic powers. The discovery of psychic phenomenon has caused people to ask whether these powers were real. This is a question that divides scientists (and pseudo-scientists).

The believers claim that ancient shamans and magicians had actual psychic powers. They claim that smaller population densities of the pre-industrial era meant less psychic "static" and more opportunities to learn psychic skills (without the need of biofeedback machines). Some go as far as to say that people evolved to have less psychic sensitivity to deal with being in urban environments. The believers also point out that today a skilled psychic can train another psychic by acting as a human biofeedback machine (though it is slower and harder to learn this way).

The skeptics say that there never were any psychics until someone was hooked up to a electrochemical biofeedback machine in 2046. These skeptics point out that 99% of the people who claim to be psychics today are either frauds or lunatics with no real psychic powers. They also point out that many of the psychic powers people claimed to have prior to 2046 involved things like moving inanimate objects (telekinesis) or making images appear on film, things which are clearly impossible according to modern psychic science. These skeptics say that plenty of people claimed to be able to fly via magic powers. The fact that the Wright brothers actually did fly in 1903 did not make these ancient lunatics any less crazy.

A new "moderate" view holds that there may have been a few isolated instances of weak psychic powers in ancient times, but that most "magic" and "psychic" phenomenon was trickery, sleight of hand, hypnotism, drugs and placebo effect.

of foreboding. There are a few poorly documented cases of skilled psychics undergoing a ghost event who were able to communicate psychically to people in the future or past of the event and were able to use psychic skills to manipulate events. Because of the cascade (the psychic receptors are literally working so hard they are burning themselves out) the psychics are much more powerful.

Two things limit the power of psychics acting through a ghost event. First, the brain is undergoing brain death, being flooded with neurotransmitters and the dying psychics are delirious, sometimes even delusional. Second, psychic connections with the near future and past are random, giving the psychics no ability to plan or react. To a dying psychic, the past, present and future are all happening at the same time, popping on and off randomly.

Mediums are psychics who have been trained in contacting the minds of ghosts and communicating with them. A calm medium can calm a ghost down enough to the point that some amount of coherent communication can take place. Some mediums have been employed by police departments to communicate with the "ghosts" of murder victims.

Partial Psychics

It is possible that some of the amazing things people have been seen doing in the city are at least partially psychic (along with other skills). Consider the incredible sensitivity or seductive powers that some Animalists develop, or the Freaks' ability to direct a crowd's attention and shock even the most callous people, or the Purists' ability to sense different kinds of pollution. Clearly they aren't completely psychic. If they were, other psychics would be able to sense them, Drakes with dioxyl ash could mess them up and pro-psychic drugs could make them stronger. It is possible, though, that psychic skill makes up part, but not all, of these abilities.

Why No One Should Be Afraid of Psychics

Limited: Just as human physical abilities are limited, so are human psychic abilities. No human can rip apart steel because the tensile strength of steel is stronger than that of any human tissues. Similarly, there are certain concrete physiological limits to the power of psychics.

Inefficient: Just because you could kill someone with a scarf doesn't mean we should be afraid of everyone with a scarf. The human psychic system is designed to allow elementary subconscious communication between members of the species. It is not designed to be used as a weapon. As a weapon it is quite weak. Like a scarf it depends on the element of surprise to be useful.

Armor: A gel-filled cap that protects from psychics can be purchased for $250. If one can not afford such a cap, a smearing of ash from dioxyl-pvc plastic will do almost as well.

Rarity: Powerful psychics are rare. Most people who claim to be powerful psychics are lying, just as most people who claim to be expert martial artists are lying. Spending time worrying about psychics is like wearing anti-lighting armor.

Distance: Distance seriously weakens psychic attacks. Most psychics have to touch you in order to do anything serious to you. Running away from a psychic is almost always successful.

Tiring: Psychic activity is also quite taxing on the supply of oxygen and energy in the brain. In order to do anything useful, a psychic has to over-stimulate areas of the brain to levels that they have not been designed for. Many psychics collapse, completely exhausted, after an attempt at controlling another person.

Unprofitable: Finally, most psychics have better things to do than run around attacking people. Psychic training is expensive, it is a significant investment and in most cases some corporation or gated community paid for that investment. The corporation or gated community needs to see this investment paid back by making sure that the psychic uses all his or her free time to benefit the corp or community. In other words, psychics are not sent to do a job that someone with a taser and syringe fill of mind altering drugs could do.

Why People Are Afraid of Psychics

Doubt: Having a psychic around means that all the rules people live by are now broken. People can no longer depend upon physical defenses to protect them and they can no longer trust their own thoughts, emotions and sensations. The doubt that a psychic's presence prompts can be as debilitating as anything a psychic actually does.

Teamwork: Many psychics, by themselves, are quite weak. A psychic might be able to distract someone for a split second, or cause a hand to lose tension for a second. By itself, these powers would be nothing scary. If someone happens to be in a knife fight, for instance, a moment's distraction or weakness can mean death. Thus, a psychic teamed up with competent fighters, thieves, interrogators, etc. can make the others considerably more powerful.

Invisible: Psychics can not be easily identified while they are not using their powers. No pat down or x-ray scan can identify that someone has psychic powers. Psychic skills are the ultimate concealed weapon. Even when the powers are in use it takes special sensors (or psychic training) to identify a psychic. A psychic hiding in a crowd can often attack with complete anonymity and no fear of a counterattack.

Paranoia: The main reason people fear psychics is because they fit nicely in to paranoid delusions. A century ago, many paranoid schizophrenics thought that high-tech electronic devices were being used to spy on their thoughts and mess with their minds. Electronics were the fear-of-choice because they could be easily concealed and most people did not know their true capacities and limitations. You can't see a satellite, so it's impossible to prove that one isn't beaming homosexual thoughts in to your head. Today, psychics are the bogeymen of choice for paranoid people for exactly the same reasons.

RIOTS

In Brief- Riots are a city tradition, starting randomly and fueled more by alcohol and looting than by social or political discontent.

"A riot is the voice of the unheard."
-Martin Luther King, Jr.

What starts a riot and what keeps a riot going are often quite different things. Most riots have a mix of people with different reasons for being there. Most riots in the city are an equal mix of political protest, drunken anger and greedy looters.

Riot Junkies

In Brief- Some people hang around waiting for riots so they can loot.

Some people in the city are expert looters, they hang around any place where people are gathering together in hopes that there will be a riot. They listen to police radio bands to hear when riots are starting. Some may even smash the first store window in order to start a riot. They come prepared: gasmasks, armor, crowbars, bags to hold loot, etc. Riots don't happen often enough for anyone to make a living doing this, but some people significantly supplement their income. Almost as important, most riot junkies find riots and looting during riots to be quite a lot of fun.

Beginning

In Brief- Riots can start anytime, alcohol fuels crowds, power outage riots common.

Riots are most likely whenever a crowd develops, especially if there are anti-corporate or anti-government tensions. When there are power or internet outages, riots are more likely. More people are out on the streets with nothing to do but drink and gripe. Also, people know that the police and private security guards are less able to respond to trouble calls and so they feel safer looting.

Most shops close immediately whenever a large crowd begins to gather. Many stores have bars that can be brought down with the flick of a button if it looks like a riot might develop. There are usually one or two stores caught open when a riot starts, and people quickly rampage through the store grabbing anything of value. Word spreads that there is a riot and the crowd swells. Rioters start attacking windows and doors trying to open more stores to looting. One of the primary targets when rioting starts is liquor stores: people steal alcohol, drink it, and become more fearless rioters. The difficulty that authorities have in putting down a riot is directly related to the amount of alcohol the crowd has consumed.

Cops and Private Security

In Brief- Some riots end when cops and security guards show up and start grabbing people.

Quickly after looting starts, private security guards and Night Shift officer show up. Sometimes corps can even pressure the corrupt Day Shift in to showing up at a riot. These forces start trying to grab and arrest looters. Some riots end at this point, the crowd is small enough and the security guards and cops numerous enough that people are afraid of being arrested.

National Guard

In Brief- Bad riots are quickly smashed by well armed National Guard troops.

About 1 in 10 riots grows so quickly that private security guards and the police cannot stop them. Security guards put in a call to their corporate bosses, who put in a call to the governor's office. The governor (or her appointed deputy) signs an immediate order authorizing the National Guard to enter the city. About 30 minutes after the governor makes the call, National Guard helicopters fly in from the National Guard base in Yonkers. There are typically 200 guardmembers in 10 helicopters. They are suited up with high tech armor and shields, gas masks, tear

A Brief History of Major Riots in the City

Slave Uprisings (1712-1714)- There were several attempted slave uprisings during these years with violent reprisals by scared and angry white mobs.

Stamp Act Riot (1765)- British parliament passed an act taxing many paper items, including pamphlets, playing cards, newspapers and legal documents. Colonists protested and rioted against this heavy taxation and the next year the stamp act was repealed.

Doctor's Riot (1788)- A medical student drying a human arm in a window provoked pre-existing anger over rumors of medical students robbing graves. A mob broke in to a hospital, destroying anatomy specimens, searched the homes of doctors.

December Fire Riots (1835) After a particularly bad fire, city residents (including the volunteer fire department) began to loot buildings. Some looters lit more fires to mask their activities. There were mob lynchings of arsonists.

Flour Riots (1837) People suspected that the high price of flour was being caused by shopkeepers who were purposefully holding back flour. A meeting at city hall turned in to a mob that looted shops.

Astor Place Riot (1849)- A rivalry between an English and an American actor causes a riot outside the Astor Place opera house.

Police Riots (1857)- Two city police forces, one controlled by the corrupt city hall leadership and one controlled by the state government went to war with each other over control of the city.

Dead Rabbits Riot (1857)- July fourth, a massive consolidation of street gangs from the five points ghetto, including the Dead Rabbits gang, marched on the bowery where they attacked several Bowery gangs, destroyed property and looted the area. Of the feuding police departments, only one made any attempt to stop the riot and they had little success.

Draft Riot (1863) Angered that the rich could avoid the civil war draft by paying $300, poor whites (mostly Irish) rampaged. Much of their anger was turned against African Americans who were seen as the reason for the war. African Americans were lynched in the streets. Rioting continued for several days and more than 1000 people were killed. Mobs even attacked a police armory trying to get weapons.

Orange Riots (1871) Members of the Loyal Order of Orange, an Irish Protestant group, won a parade permit and violence with Irish Catholics ensued.

Tompkins Square Park Riot I (1874)- Police beat unemployed protestors in Tompkins Square Park.

Harlem Riots (1935)- Rumors that a young black boy had been beaten to death by police caused rioting in the heavily African American neighborhood of Harlem.

Harlem Riots II (1943)- More rioting in Harlem, this time because of the police shooting of a black man.

Stonewall Inn Riot (1969)- A routine police raid on a gay club in Greenwich Village (the Stonewall Inn) turned violent when the club-goers fought back against the police. Rioting lasted for several days.

Hard Hat Riot (1970)- Construction workers attacked anti-Vietnam War protestors on Wall Street.

Blackout Riot (1977)- A massive power failure across the East Coast left the city in darkness. Looting and rioting ensued.

Tompkins Square Park Riot II (1988)- When the government attempted to evict homeless people from this East Village park, political radicals came to protest. The police responded with violence. Some cops taped over their badge numbers so they could stalk the streets beating up anyone the wanted.

Rodney King Rioting (1992)- After the acquittal of Los Angeles police officers videotaped beating Rodney King, there was sporadic rioting in Manhattan (as well as more intense rioting in other parts of the country). This was one of the first multi-city riots made possible by mass media, a precursor to the rioting of the Freedom Wars.

Tompkins Square Park Riot III (1995)- A riot ensues after police try to evict homeless squatters from an abandoned building near Tompkins Square Park.

AI Riot (2043)- Rumors that a new Artificial Intelligence system would replace hundreds of workers caused protesting. The police refused to break it up, and when corporate security guards tried two were beaten to death and rioters tried to set the building on fire. The police eventually stepped in and stop the riot.

Taxi Riot (2043)- During a taxicab drivers' union strike, several taxicab drivers parked their cars in the middle of major Avenues in the city. The city was paralyzed by gridlock and uncontrolled looting and arson began in several parts of the city.

Unemployment Riot (2045)- An announcement that unemployment payments would be cut drastically caused rioting. The national guard tried to suppress rioting with teargas, but rioting started in other parts of the city, until martial law and a curfew was declared.

Hospital Riot (2049)- During a bad plague outbreak, plague victims in triage in the parking lot at a local hospital heard rumors that all the medicine was being used on rich patients, patients assaulted several doctors

Mason Marks Riots (2050)- The assassination of an anti-corporate third party candidate caused rioting in all over the US. Just as rioting started to settle down, corporate headquarters and government buildings around the world were bombed. TV broadcasts told of massive uprisings worldwide. Rioting and looting in the city was intense, most people were trying to stock up for a possible end of society. The police, then the national guard, then the military all failed to stop rioting. Freedom Army snipers used the rioting as cover to fight guerilla warfare against the government. Government forces eventually pulled out and the looting ended when there was nothing left to steal. In the city, over 5,000 were killed and hundreds of buildings were destroyed.

Food Line Riot (2054)- For several months in 2054 there was a shortage of food and severe rationing in the city. City residents in line for food at a Freedom Army supply house rioted, attacking Freedom Army soldiers and stealing supplies. The riot only ended when Freedom Army soldiers reluctantly obeyed an order to fire in to the crowd.

Orphanage Riot (2065)- Children in the city's orphanage revolted, killing several abusive orphanage employees and driving out the rest. The police were brought in but were rebuffed at the entrance to the complex by gangs of children armed with sharpened railroad spikes. The corrupt police lied and told the media that the orphanage had been brought under control.

VR Riot (2066)- A long outage of internet service in the city made many city residents restless. Corporate security guards (protecting an internet service center) were attacked. The National Guard was quickly brought in.

Arsonist Riot (2064)- The corrupt fire department made only token attempts to fight fires, and a serial arsonist held the entire city in fear. A mob took to the streets, with the stated purpose of hunting down the arsonist, but they ended up drinking and looting buildings until the National Guard were called in.

Colin Riot (2075)- The discovery of Colin (see p.366) led to mass lynchings in the street of people suspected of being Colins. In midtown, random searching of homes by a mob turned in to looting and the National Guard is called in.

Smash And Grab Riot (2077)- A small gang of teen criminals broke in to a closed liquor store and started handing out free liquor to everyone they could. The drunk crowd rioted and, under the cover of the rioting, the gang was able to steal over $10,000 worth of merchandise from local stores. The success of this riot prompted seven more similarly crafted riots over the next few years.

gas grenades, nightsticks and rifles. This is the only time guns can be legally brought in to the city (and the guns have chips to assure that only guardmembers use them).

The National Guard helicopters land in the streets near the riot. Loudspeakers on the helicopters, which can be heard for blocks, proclaim that everyone is ordered to proceed directly to their homes and that anyone found on the streets will be arrested. At this point, most rioters flee the scene with whatever loot they can carry. The National Guard combs the emptying streets, arresting anyone they can. The helicopters fly above, shining searchlights on the streets and providing intelligence to the troops on the ground. Many homeless people with nowhere to go get arrested for rioting, even if they didn't participate.

Very rarely, the rioters don't flee when the National Guard shows up. The more angry the crowd is, the more likely they are to hold their ground. When this happens, guardmembers surround the rioters. They throw tear gas grenades in to debilitate them. They advance on the crowd with their shield wall. One by one they pull rioters from the crowd, slam them to the ground and restrain them with plastic restraints. Anyone who wields a firearm or manages to get past a guardmember's shield is shot. Those arrested typically spend 90 days in jail and are given a thousand dollar fine.

Riot Survival Kit
$351 ($500-$750 during a riot)

Gasmask $75 (to protect against national guard teargas)

Phonebook Armor (Glass) $30 (to protect against being crushed by a mob)

Shield (Hand) $15 (to protect against security guard nightsticks)

Steel Toed Boots $70 (to protect feet and aid in stomping)

Crowbar $45 (to open things during looting)

Bolt Cutters (Folding) $100 (to open things during looting)

Backpack $10 (to hold loot)

Flashlight (Small) $2 (because power outages commonly accompany riots)

Opiates $4 (because tear gas gets everywhere)

SCIENCE

In Brief- Major advances: nanotech (limited and expensive), mental programming (computer programs in human brains), genetics (used mostly in agriculture), smart chemicals (react to various stimuli).

Timeline of Major 21st Century Advances
2010- 90% of world's crops and food animals are genetically modified.
2010- 1st electronic artificial eyeball tested on a human.
2012- 1st vat grown replacement organ.
2038- MIT "Janice" AI can comprehend Shakespeare.
2041- Radiochemical Neural Stimulation discovered.
2042- Tech criminals experiment with human mental programming.
2046- Psychic energy receptors discovered.
2046- RSA cryptography broken.
2048- 1st human body grown to maturity in a vat.
2049- "Ghost events" discovered.
2054- Self-reproducing room temperature nanobots.
2054- DNA of several extinct species retrieved by nanobots.
2054- Predator nanobots cripple nanotech.
2058- Mental stimulators available to the public.
2059- Nanobot tank manufacturing perfected.
2060- Slipboard invented.
2064- Signals from outer space detected.
2070- Mitochondrial vampirism discovered.
2074- Researchers find psychic frequency synchronization during sex.
2075- Gene effecting psychic receptors discovered.
2078- 1st mental program to utilize psychic systems.
2079- 1st bauble (sealed nanobots environment computer).

Nanotech

In Brief- Freedom Army invented nanobots (reproducing molecular robots) and rebels created predator robots to limit them. Today nanobots can be used briefly, if released in large numbers. They require a lot of power, are slow, fall apart when it gets hot. Secondary nanotech is tech made by nanobots in "clean" tanks by nanobots and includes high-tech materials, microelectronics and micro-robotics.

History- People have been building things molecule by molecule with scanning tunneling microscopes for nearly a century, and people have been able to create very tiny, very fragile and very expensive microrobotics. This nanotechnology was only practical for use in a few small industries. For instance, corps would create million dollar micro-robots for use in surgery. In 2054, the Freedom Army pulled together research from various corporations and finally created the first true nanobots. These tiny robots were built molecule-by-molecule and they could go on to build the next generation of nanobots. The nanobots were powered by powerful electromagnets which would "broadcast" power to a nanobot colony. Nanobots could reproduce much faster than they could be built by other means.

The potential power of nanobots was almost unbelievable. Given enough power and materials, they could reproduce in to an army capable of manipulating the structure of anything at the molecular level. They could conceivably turn a tank in to dust or build a cheeseburger out of a pile of garbage.

Predator Nanobots- The development of nanobots by the Freedom Army nearly let the Freedom Army win the war. The Freedom Army had nanobots, but before they could make the most use out of them they had to figure out how to make them follow complex instructions. Since each nanobot had very little computing power, a complex hierarchy of control nanobots had to be created to disseminate orders. This would prove to be almost as monumental a task as creating the nanobots in the first place. In the meantime, rebels captured nanobots of their own.

The rebels created a set of nanobots that knew how to do only two things: find and destroy other nanobots, and reproduce. The rebels created a huge batch of these predators (enough to cover the whole world with one predator nanobot for every 8 square feet). They launched these nanobots in to the jet stream using a homemade rocket. The next time the Freedom Army tried to power up a batch of nanobots, they found themselves giving power to the predator nanobots as well. The predators nanobots could decimate any nanobots population within minutes. The nanobot threat was ended.

Tanks- Predator nanobots start reproducing and killing as soon as power is provided, and since they can reproduce exponentially, they will quickly overrun any nanobot population. Nobody knows (or wants) a way to get around this limitation, the trick is to get something useful done before the predators can wipe out your nanobots. The way to do that is to start with several billion nanobots.

In the clean-rooms of corporate labs, nanobots are dropped in to tanks and the tanks sealed. Power is applied and (if the tank is predator-free) then the nanobots can reproduce unmolested. When the tank is completely filled with nanobots, the power is removed. In the field, the tank is opened up and a powder containing billions of nanobots is spilled out. When power is applied, these nanobots quickly go to work. Their huge population has given them a head-start and they can act for several minutes before the predator population grows large enough to disrupt their activities.

These tanks are very expensive, and so are rarely seen. Few things that happen are important enough to justify using a nanobot tank. The world's most elite swat teams use nanobot tanks to melt through doors and disarm explosives. The world's elite criminal justice organizations use tanks to create a database of every microscopic particle in a room. Paleontologists and archeologists wheedle and beg to get nanobot tanks that can burrow in to the ground and find every fossil and piece of DNA. Multi-million dollar aircraft have nanobot tanks which can open up in an emergency and repair (or even rebuild) damaged components. Rich patients can have nanobots injected in their bloodstream to hunt down disease organisms, repair damage, or make backup copies of the brain.

Weaknesses- Besides predator nanobots, nanobots have two major weaknesses:

Power: Nanobots require a huge amount of energy. An average nanobot tank uses more power than a city block. A lot of the cost of a nanobots tank is the powerful battery that transmits power to nanobots. The electromagnetic transmitters can disrupt or fry nearby electronics.

Slow: Since nanobots are so small, they travel very slowly. Nanobot tanks that need to spread nanobots over a wide area (e.g. forensics tanks) blow the nanobots powder around before the power is even applied. Even the fastest nanobots (who form together in to "vehicles") are about the speed of ants.

Fragile: Nanobots are very fragile machines. They are designed to work at room temperature. Extreme cold (anything below freezing) will cause them to lock up and extreme heat (Anything over 100 degrees) will cause them to break apart. Predator nanobots "destroy" nanobots simply by attaching an ionized molecule to them. A spray of weak acid or ionized particles can destroy most nanobots populations.

Secondary Nanotech- The most profitable and common use of nanotechnology today is for manufacturing. In the same corporate clean rooms where tanks are produced, nanobots in sealed vats manufacture products. Devices and materials made by nanobots (called secondary nanotech) are not vulnerable to predator nanobots. Secondary nanotech is very valuable (the cheapest secondary nanotech products cost $250/lb.) but still a lot cheaper than nanobots tanks.

A lot of technology was made cheaper but not much better by nanotech. Computers are a perfect example: modern computers are only a little more powerful than they were in the 2030s, yet they are much cheaper to produce. In the 2030s, 20% of the average person's budget went in to computer equipment, now it's closer to 4%.

Secondary nanotech can create microelectronics and microrobotics with nanoscale sensors, processors and manipulators. Secondary nanotech can be found in the processors of high-power computers, mental stimulators and installers, in the best weapons and medical implants. Tiny "factories" that assemble protein chains can be used to create pharmaceuticals, genetic codes or other complex chemicals.

Secondary nanotech can also create materials with amazing properties. High-tech armor can be made out of materials that are as light as cloth but stronger than steel. Slipboards are small boards with a secondary-nanotech underside that is so smooth it is virtually frictionless. Secondary nanotech filters can be found in the best gas-masks, water purifiers and even biohazard bodysuits.

Solutions to the Predator Problem

After the Freedom Wars, there has been a worldwide moratorium on research in to ways to defeat the problem of predator nanobots. The reason is simple: nanotechnology without predators is too powerful. Everyone is scared of anyone else having this much power. It is said that even the black corporate divisions are so scared of the possibilities of such research that they will not engage in it. This does not mean that such research does not occur, only that it is highly secret and highly illegal.

Some possible ways to circumvent the predator problem:

-Create nanobots that run off of a different power source from normal nanobots.
-Create self-powering nanobots (nanobots that run off of chemical energy gained by breaking down molecules in their environment, just as animals do).
-Create nanobots that can operate at temperatures high enough to kill normal predators.
-Create nanobots that can resist being "stuck" with ionized molecules.

Mental Programming

In Brief: Technology to read information from, insert information in to and make permanent changes to brains without surgery. Injected chemicals are altered with precise radio beams. The simplest tech is Mental Stimulators, which can only make temporary changes and are used for full-immersion virtual reality. Mental Installers are rare, expensive, sensitive, highly regulated, but can make permanent changes. Mental Programs are like computer programs and let people control their own minds. Each person can fill up to 100 MMUs worth of space without problems. Installation is $20/½ hr./MMU. Human minds can be copied from one body to another with near perfect accuracy.

RCNS- All mental programming is based on RCNS (Radiochemical Neural Stimulation). The basic principle is to introduce a macromolecule in to the brain that, in its normal state, does nothing. When two very precise radio beams meet, any molecules in the convergence change their molecular structure and release another molecule they had "trapped" inside. If a neurotransmitter is released, it can cause a neuron to fire (or prevent it from firing) in a certain spot in the brain.

Early RCNS was used merely to stimulate portions of the brain to see what they do. Researchers have been doing this using metal probes since the 19th century, but RCNS could be used without having to open the skull. In combination with high-definition SQID (superconducting quantum interference device) sensors, RCNS could be used to map connections in the brain.

The next major breakthrough came when researchers used RCNS to release neural growth factor. They found they could force a neural connection to grow at any point in the brain they wanted. A large number of connections, laid down in parallel, could mimic a logical circuit, create a sort of computer program inside a brain. Thanks to tech criminals of the 2040s, who stole this technology and experimented on themselves, mental programming became a powerful new technology.

Mental Stimulators- These are the cheapest, simplest, least dangerous and least regulated form of RCNS technology. Mental Stimulators are mass-produced and most VR addicts have one rented to them as part of the standard monthly fee for their VR service.

Mental stimulators are, by law, built so that they are physically incapable of aiming at any part of the brain except for the motor and perceptual cortexes. Thus a mental stimulator can't make a person's heart stop, or screw with someone's emotions. What mental stimulators can do is block out the sensations of the outside world and put a person in to a full-immersion virtual world where they can see, hear, touch, smell and taste.

The typical mental installer is the size and shape of a footlocker. It is typically lain at the head of a bed or strapped to the back of a chair. There is a hole in the device where the user places his or her head. The user puts on a dermal patch which slowly feeds the RCNS macromolecules in to the bloodstream. The typical mental installer isn't precise enough to do "photorealistic" stimulation (everything is a bit fuzzy). However, very expensive models (bought by VR aficionados) can create photorealistic simulations.

Mental Installers- Mental Installers are the machines that can create mental programs inside the human brain. They are much larger, much more expensive, much more sensitive than mental installers. They are also highly-regulated (anyone caught possessing one without FDA approval faces 15 years in prison). Mental installers are a very precious black market commodity, and any trader lucky enough to own one keeps it running 24 hours a day (making about $40/hr. installing illegal mental programs in to people's heads). Because of the risk of theft (or federal authorities being tipped off) black market traders usually blindfold people when taking them to a mental installer.

Mental installers are very sensitive to vibrations. Most black market mental installers are bolted in to the ground in concrete basements (away from subway lines). Patients are strapped in tightly and given a skeletal muscle paralytic so that they don't move at all. Although paralyzed, users cannot be sedated (any psychoactive drug will interfere with the process). A drip IV administers the paralytic and the macromolecules containing neural growth factor.

Mental Programs- There are a number of mental programs that have been approved by the FDA for use on humans. Most are medical, meant to cure a specific form of brain damage or psychiatric problem. A few are useful tools, like internal calculators, programs that make the hands type whatever the person thinks, programs that record senses or broadcast them to a jack (p.340), programs that enhance memory storage or recall, language translators, etc.

What Mental Programs Can and Can't Do (Yet)

Mental programs can…	Mental programs can't…
…enhance memory recall or storage.	…directly transfer memories or knowledge.
…wipe memories stored while the program was active.	…wipe out specific pre-existing memories.
…communicate with implants (and through implants with computers).	…let people understand and control computers on an intuitive level.
…take control of the body to perform physical actions.	…implant physical skills or abilities.
…perform limited psychic actions.	…replicate the skills of a real psychic.
…reduce or eliminate unpleasant sensations.	…eliminate pain or nausea without creating a safety hazard.
…create pleasant or unpleasant associations with a stimulus.	…change values, opinions or beliefs.
…monitor the internal workings of the brain (identify drugs, psychic manipulation, mental illness).	…monitor poorly understood processes such as thinking, remembering, awareness and creativity.
…hyperstimulate abilities (like agility or intelligence).	...increase wisdom or common sense.
…control emotions.	…make precise changes to personality.
…create altered states of consciousness.	…make people spiritually enlightened.
…control sleep and let people survive on less sleep.	…let people survive on zero sleep.

The majority of programs do not have FDA approval and are completely illegal. These are the programs that let people mess with the internal workings of their own minds. They are quite powerful but also very dangerous and many have a possibility of addiction. There are programs available on the black market that will let people control their own emotions, control their feelings of pain, hunger, nausea. Some programs hyperstimulate certain areas of the brain (e.g. the areas responsible for physical agility, or the areas responsible for concentration) to provide a temporary boost to abilities. There are programs that simulate the effects of mental illness or drugs on the brain. There are even mental programs that turn the people who have them in to slaves or puppets, their emotions and/or bodies under the control of someone else.

The newest mental programs, which are strictly illegal and are a hot commodity on the black market, are psych-mental programs. These programs activate the portions of the brain that control the psychic communication system. Although not yet as effective as a skilled psychic, the programs can let people do psychic-like things.

MMUs- Once scientists (and tech criminals) had discovered how to create mental programs in the brain, the next step was to determine where to put them. By looking at brain damage studies, they mapped out several areas in the brain where a mental program could be put without a noticeable loss of abilities. These areas are divided in to 100 Mental Memory Units, and the size of a mental programm is measured in how many MMUs it takes up. People can install more than 100 MMUs, but there is an increasingly greater risk of loss of abilities. Human brains vary, and what it usually a safe spot in most people may not be in some individual. About 1 in 100 mental installations has some side effect and about 1 in 5000 leads to a serious disability.

Mental Copying and Legal Liability

In 2078 the Supreme Court bowed to pressure to hear a mental-copying case. Their finding was swift and simple. It read, in part: "*We are not willing, at this point, to engage in discussion about what is a person and whether guilt is transferred with the mind to another body, but we are willing to say this: public policy dictates that we do everything in our power to limit the legal abuse of new mind copying technology. Until the legislature can respond in a systematic way to this possibility of abuse, we will find that mental copying will never provide any legal benefit to the original or subsequent copies. Most important in this, criminal and civil liability will always transfer to any copies created after a criminal or tortious incident.*"

How Good A Copy Is A Mind Copy?

There are different means of calculating "difference" between a copy of a mind and the original, but most statistics lie somewhere between 80% and 98%. However, the mind seems to have a self repairing quality to it and most copies "snap back" to what they were like before within a few months. There is a certain amount of difference (often called "the divergence point") where a mind will not "snap back" to what it was before but will, instead, become even more different (as if snapping to another point). To personality psychologists this gives important clues to the nature of personality.

Lifepopping

Lifepopping has been popular in other inner cities for a while and is just starting to become popular in the city. People create extensive fictional histories for themselves (or pay to have someone else do it for them). Then, they have someone with a mental installer erase their own real memories. The person wakes up and finds a recording by himself or herself. The recording gives some lie about a disease or malfunctioning mental program, and proceeds to give the person all the details of his or her fictional past. The person accepts the lie and believes the fiction. The person has thus exchanged a terrible and unwanted past for something altogether more pleasant. Some lifepoppers have become so extensively fooled that they imagine memories from their fictional pasts and think they are real.

Modern mental installers can write one MMU of information per half hour. The standard black market price for mental installation is $40/hr. (or $20/MMU). The instruction files that tell Mental Installers how to install mental programs usually take up 1Zb per 5 MMUs.

Mind Copying- Mental installers can be used to copy the unique portions of each mind (memories, knowledge, personality) from one brain to another. There are serious legal limitations to this procedure: it is only legal to copy the minds of fatally ill individuals in to the minds of clones who have never been conscious. The cost of this is prohibitive to everyone except the very rich. HMOs and government healthcare refuse to pay for it.

Reading a mental pattern takes about 2 days and putting it in to another brain takes about 3 days. Unless information is copied directly from one mental installer to another, the patterns must be stored (takes 5000Zb, typically requiring special nanotech memory storage tanks).

Most copies are made in to clones who were grown in the vat with neural growth in the cortexes inhibited (and thus have no higher-brain functions). It is possible, however, to wipe a normal person's mind and copy another person's mind in to it (see the section on Colin, p.366). Since sedatives interfere with the copying process, people are conscious and experience the bizarre and frightening sensation of being destroyed and rebuilt as a new person one memory, thought and opinion at a time.

New copies are quite clumsy until they get used to being in their new bodies.

Genetic Engineering

In Brief- Can change the biology of humans, animals, plants, microorganisms. Legally: can only use on humans with Rx to fix medical problems, can't release modified organisms in to the environment without special approval.

Capabilities- Scientists know what 97% of the genes in the human genome do and more-or-less how they work. Computer modeling allows genetic programmers to see what the end result of a modification will be before even putting it in a real cell. However, high-level systems (systems built upon other systems) are slightly mysterious and genetic programmers do not know all their secrets. It is very easy to change the structure of cell walls, slightly harder to change the properties of a tissue, harder still to change the shape of an organ or appendage, and very hard (almost beyond the abilities of current researchers) to change instincts and behavioral proclivities. The simpler the organism, the easier it is to program, and a lot of fantastic things have been done with the instincts of insects.

Uses- Genetic engineering is used today for:

Medicine: to repair genetic defects or speed the repair of damage.

Parts: to create organs and tissues that are compatible with a person's immune system (will not be rejected). Replacement organs and limbs are one possible use, as are biological implants such as poisoned claws, extra muscles or nightvision retinas.

Agriculture: to create plants and animals that grow in artificial environments and produce food, building and construction materials, and medicines. Most food from corporate farms comes from genetically engineered plants and animals designed to create food products with maximum efficiency. Most modern products are made out of either plastics or fibers made from genetically engineered sources. Criminals have even used genetic engineering to make drug factories that look like ordinary weeds.

Enhancements: Although it is very difficult to improve on nature (see sidebar), genetic engineering can be used (illegally) to add additional abilities to humans or animals. See p.106 in the Black Market chapter for a list of available genetic enhancements.

Laws- Most of today's genetics laws can be traced to a fear of a change to the human race and of ecodisasters caused by new organisms reproducing without control. Genetic modification equipment is highly regulated (only doctors and researchers can own it). Any particular genetic modification on a human must have FDA approval (just like drugs), can only be used to fix pre-existing medical problems, and cannot effect the sex cells (in other words, can not be passed down to children).

The laws about using genetically engineered plants, animals and bacteria are strict and voluminous. People are still afraid of the disasters of the 2040s when genetically modified organisms released in to the wild mutated or did not act as predicted. In laboratories, factories and farms, safeguards must exist to prevent genetically modified organisms from escaping in to the wild. To release a genetically engineered organism in to the environment requires compliance with the country's laws and approval by a special subcommittee of the UN. To release something in the wild, that organism must have "mutation blocking." Mutation blocking is a genetic modification for organisms that reproduce asexually (produce exact clones of themselves). When a cell divides, proteins check the cell for mutations (compares one DNA strand with another copy) and if any differences are found it creates a cascade that kills the cell. See the section on The Cloud (p.384) for an example of an organism that got approval to be released in to the environment.

The Legend of the Supersoldier
During the Freedom Wars, a group of Freedom Army scientists were ordered to create a genetically modified supersoldier. Hernandez wanted a perfect body he could put the minds of his best soldiers in to. Scientists started by increasing the size and density of muscles. They succeeded in creating super-strong bodies, but the bodies were too strong: joints shredded, bones broke, muscles tore from the bones. Trying to make joints and bones stronger made the soldiers inflexible and prone to serious internal damage. Since the rib cage could no longer bend to cushion blows, a punch to the chest could kill one of these soldiers. Whenever the scientists tried to make the solider better at one thing, the soldier suffered a defect somewhere else. Eliminate pain, and soldiers would ignore injuries that needed medical attention. Increase metabolism and soldiers could starve to death in a day. Finally, the scientists were able to convince the Freedom Army that they could create soldiers that were better in some specific situation (e.g. better at operating in space, or better at sneaking around at night) but they couldn't create a better solider. Then the scientists were blown up.

Smart Chemicals

In Brief- Very complex chemicals that react and change in pre-programmed ways to environmental stimuli.

Smart chemicals are more expensive than most modern tech, but less expensive than secondary nanotech. Most smart chemicals are made by expensive secondary nanotech machines. Smart chemicals are complex human-made molecules (usually long chains of proteins) that are designed on a computer to react to certain stimuli, and to interact in very complex ways. A molecule can be made that will change shape when it gets warmer than 98 degrees, and that chemical may in turn cause a pigment molecule to change shape so that color changes from clear to black, spelling out the temperature.

Some smart chemicals react to electricity (like the pigments in color change clothing, p.135). Others react to catalyst chemicals that can be used to control and fine tune the reaction (like the paint in smart paint, p.137). Some react to the presence of other chemicals (like the sensors in terrorist sticks, p.138, or in auto-blood tests, p.116). There are even chemicals that react to psychic energy (like psychic goggles, p.122).

Bloodhound powder (p.134) is a powder made up of very complex molecules that attach to certain human olfactory receptors. When the chemicals encounter a set of proteins (corresponding to the unique smell of an individual person) they activate the smell receptor. When the person being tracked comes near, the person using the bloodhound powder smells a strong smell of nutmeg.

Smart chemicals can also be used to create invisible bombs. These bombs could look like anything from cloth to a pencil, and can be manufactured to detonate at a variety of different stimuli. Fortunately, these invisible explosives are very rare and expensive and can be sensed

Pharmaceuticals

In Brief- No major advances, but more and more useful drugs being discovered.

The pharmaceutical industry is often compared to the tortoise from the old story of the tortoise and the hare. There have been no ground-shaking, world-changing advances from the pharmaceutical industry in this century. However, pharmaceutical branches of corporations have steadily been cranking out new drugs with tremendous medical and street uses.

Many pharmaceuticals have been made stronger and with less side effects. Maxin, the strongest smart drug created to date, is so strong that some people become addicted to it. Phamacaeuticals with completely new effects have been created. The drug with the street name "bright" enhances sensory sensitivity and perception. Sibosin eliminates the need for sleep (it has been made illegal because of dangerous side effects, but it is still popular on the black market). Some of the most important drugs are the pro-psychics (drugs which increase psychic abilities). The most powerful pro-psychic drug (Soma) did not come out of a R&D lab, it is a hallucinogenic mixture of plants and fungi originally used as a religious sacrament in ancient India.

Frontiers of Science

In Brief- Better mental programming control of psychic systems, full nanotech computers, direct manipulation of knowledge and memory are in the works.

Psych-Mental Programming- The hottest new mental programs utilize psychic receptors and transmitters in the brain. Right now these mental programs are very clumsy, but in the future programs may be able to do anything a psychic could do. More than that, mental programs could use psychic systems to communicate with each other, giving them the power that computers have.

Psychic Genetics- Geneticists are still searching for the genes that control psychic receptors and transmitters. When they discover them, it may be possible to make genetic enhancements that significantly increase the power of psychics.

Knowledge Programming- Neuropsychologists are just starting to learn how memories and knowledge are stored in the brain. There are significant barriers to working with knowledge and memories (including that each item in memory is stored relative to other itsems) but these barriers are not insurmountable. It may someday be possible to edit people's knowledge and memories (even their opinions, beliefs and values) or even copy them. It might be possible for mental programs to put knowledge and skills directly in to people's heads. When this day comes to pass, it may be possible to edit every single part of a human being: memories, likes and dislikes, belief, knowledge, emotions, states of consciousness. Some wonder what humanity will be when any human can change any part of himself or herself.

Baubles- Nanobot tanks rely on the principle of nanobots reproducing in a sealed environment with no predators. A brand new technology, still in the first stages of development, puts nanobots in a bag of clear plastic with their own energy source (a small nuclear reactor). The nanobots inside can turn themselves in to a powerful computer. This computer can rebuild its own circuitry to match the current task. If breaking a code, it can build millions of tiny code-guessing chips, if asked to be a sensor it can build high definition sensors. These baubles have the potential of putting the power of a supercomputer in the palm of the hand.

A High Tech World?

Looking around the city, it is hard to see the technological advances of the last century. In the parking lot of a fast food chain might be a paycomputer. On days when there is no wind, the cloud (p.384) forms above the city, looking like a dirty black storm cloud. The drink bottle lying in the gutter is probably made from plastics from genetically engineered crops, but it is indistinguishable from ancient plastics. A few doors might have hooded keypads instead of mechanical locks. A passerby might have high tech armor, but will probably hide it under other clothing (to reduce the temptation of other people to steal it).

For the most part, however, the things people see and interact with are all old technology. Most things in the city are old (many buildings were built 200 years ago), and even new items use old tech because old-tech is cheaper. Most new technology (secondary nanotech, smart chemicals, genetically engineered organisms) have not yet reached the point where they are cheaper to use than ordinary materials.

TRANSPORTATION

In Brief- Cars rare, personal transport common but most walk, small subway, bus depot in Brooklyn.

Cars

In Brief- Cars rare in the city because streets too bad for electric vehicles, gasoline vehicles too expensive to run.

Cars are seldom seen on the streets of the city. The two most popular options for vehicles today are electric (like the cheap little golf-cart-like vehicles that can be seen in gated communities and corporate living centers) and gasoline powered. The roads are too bad for the cheap electric vehicles. They just don't have enough power to make it past the city's many potholes, cracks and craters (see City Infrastructure, p.356). Gasoline powered vehicles are too expensive for most people (gasoline is $7/gallon). There are also no professional establishments to maintain and repair cars in the city.

The busiest avenues in the city, during their peak hours, see a vehicle every few minutes. These vehicles include:

-4-wheel-drive electric cars and trucks owned by security companies.

-Large delivery trucks delivering merchandise to city stores or packages to residences.

-Old gasoline powered vehicles maintained by amateur mechanics.

-Gasoline powered motorcycles, ridden by the rich and powerful.

-Old gas-powered taxis and armored limos.

Personal Transport

In Brief- Bicycles, motorized wheeled transport, slipboards (boards with incredibly slick bottoms), hopping trains and walking.

Bikes- Bicycles are common, especially among street people. They use no power and can be repaired with basic tools. Most street people have beat up, rusty bicycles. Bicycles are not much valued for speed, but they can help people get around the city without getting exhausted.

Motorized Transport- Small electric motors have been put on to many personal vehicles, including roller blades, roller skates, skateboards and scooters. These vehicles are ideal for city travel because they can be picked up and carried over potholes and can be taken inside (rather than parked on the street, where they might be stolen). Most Indies have a vehicle like this (though they often choose to walk and not make themselves a target for thieves).

Slipboards- The most expensive form of personal transport is a slipboard. Generally, only Indies can afford slipboards, and those that have them guard them cautiously. Slipboards use secondary nanotech materials (and a thin gel) to make the underside nearly frictionless. A skilled rider can move easily through any terrain. Special mods are available that let slipboards make powered jumps. See p.141 for more.

Hopping Trains- After over 120 years without above ground trains, corporations successfully lobbied to have a railroad built in the city. The railroad follows Broadway and there is a small railyard at the northern tip of the city. About 5 trains come by per day. Many people (especially homeless people), grab on to the sides of the trains for a free trip across the city. The train cars are locked with alarms and security guards will react if someone tries to get in.

Walking- In the end, most city dwellers end up walking most of the time. Walking is free and can be done even while intoxicated or tired. Most people can walk from one end of the city to the other in about 7 hours.

Subway

In Brief- Makes a circuit around the city, $1.50 per ride, runs every fifteen minutes. Sleeping and fighting common on trains.

The old subway lines were sealed up and a new subway system was built during the Freedom Army occupation of the city (see p.387). The new system was built to remove the possibility of soldiers traveling by foot in the subway tunnels. The new subway does not go outside the city and there are few places in the tunnels a person can walk without being smashed by a train.

There are 14 subway stops in the city. A train comes by every 15 minutes (69 times per day). A single $1.50 fare is paid to get in to the subway station. Floor to ceiling revolving gates make it so that only one person can get in per fare paid (although small people have been known to squeeze in together). Once inside, the rider can ride to any stop he or she wants. The train operates in a large circuit: the car will eventually hit each stop in the city.

About 10,000 train fares are purchased each day in the city. During the peak times (morning, early evening) there are about 250 people on each train, during very slow times (after midnight) there are about 50 people per train.

A subway train has three cars with fifty seats each (a train can hold 150 sitting, plus another 200 standing). Doors allow people to travel between cars. There are emergency exits in case the train is stopped due to a power outage.

There are only two trains in the subway system. When one train is going on the North on the East side of the park, another is going South on the West side, so no part of the subway needs to be large enough for two trains to pass at once. Each train makes a full circuit of all 19 stops in about 30 minutes. The train is stopped with the doors open for about 15 seconds at each stop. It takes about 90 seconds to get from stop to stop.

Some street people pay the fare to enter the subway so they can sleep on the train. At night, about half the seats have street people sleeping in them.

Subway Facts in Brief
-10,000 fares purchased each day
-$1.50 per ride
-Train comes by every 15 min. (69 trains per day)
-14 stops in a large circuit (30 minutes)
-50 to 250 people per train
-Three cars with 50 seats each
-15 seconds at each stop
-90 seconds between stops

Almost everyone in the city, including gang members, rides the subway. The subway is thus the scene of more violent confrontations than any other place in the city. Gang members at war enter the subway expecting to get in a fight. Fights in subways are so commonplace that subway riders are used to moving to a different car when a fight is starting. Some city residents practice fighting in subway cars (see the Subway Fighting skill, p.25).

Trains are run by a computer in the subway maintenance center downtown. Once a night subway cars stop in this center for cleaning and maintenance. Unless they fall asleep on a train, city residents rarely see subway employees.

Subway stations have restrooms, though they are seldom cleaned except by a few Jacks who ask for tips. Subway stations also have small pay lockers. It costs $1 for 48 hours.

Subway Stops

North to South

Ft, George Ave. & Ft. George Hill (Inwood/Washington Heights)

Amsterdam Ave. & 170th St. (Inwood/Washington Heights)

Amsterdam Ave 135th St. (Harlem)

Amsterdam Ave & 110th St. (Harlem/Upper West Side)

Amsterdam Ave. & 86th St.(Upper West Side)

Amsterdam Ave. & 57th St. (Upper West Side/Midtown)

Ave. of the Americas & 23rd St. (Downtown)

3rd Ave. & East 8th St. (Downtown)

W. Broadway & Canal (Downtown)

Battery & State (Downtown)

Canal & Hudson (Downtown)

South To North

Canal & Hudson (Downtown)

Battery & State (Downtown)

W. Broadway & Canal (Downtown)

3rd Ave. & East 8th St. (Downtown)

Ave. of the Americas & 23rd St. (Downtown)

Lexington Ave. & 57th St. (Midtown/Upper East Side)

Lexington Ave. & 86th St. (Upper East Side)

Lexington Ave. & 110th St. (Upper East Side/Harlem)

Lexington Ave. & 135th St. (Harlem)

Amsterdam Ave. & 170th St. (Inwood/Washington Heights)

Ft. George Ave. & Ft. George Hill (Inwood/Washington Heights)

International

In Brief- Planes, busses, hitchhiking, hopping trains, working on cargo ships.

A $2 bus runs from a bus stop in the Bowery downtown to a large bus terminal in Brooklyn. This terminal connects to a network of busses that can get PCs anywhere in the US, Canada or Mexico (for up to $100).

About 20 miles Northwest of the city is the New York Aerospace Port, a major international hub. Domestic and international flights and commercial space shuttles (including Satellite Repair Corporation shuttles) launch from here. A one way ticket to the West Coast costs about $200, and a one way ticket to Japan costs about $500.

People without money can travel across the country by hitchhiking and hopping trains, but it is a chancy way to travel. Lucky train-hoppers can even get aboard the trans-Siberian railroad, which goes across Canada, across the Bering Straits to Russia and all the way across to Europe.

Strong workers can get jobs aboard cargo ships that go to other countries. They are given room and board, and possibly a small bit of money when they reach their destination. It is not hard to find work on ships leaving the country, but it is very hard to find work on ships coming back to the US.

UNDERGROUND

History

In Brief- Increasingly complex in 1800s, 1900s, early 2000s. Some damage in 2040s. Freedom Army tried to lock it up.

As the city became more packed and real estate became more valuable, more and more things were moved underground. The first utilities to be moved underground were small pipes (mainly wood) containing water, steam, gas and sewage in the 1800s. In the early 1900s, people started to use tunnels for transportation. Subway and rail tunnels were built. Because many of these tunnels were built below the water table, a whole series of pumps had to be built to continually pump groundwater out of the island. In the late 1900s the underground became even more complex with the addition of electricity and then fiber optic lines. New buildings were built to tap directly in to the underground network, and some even had private subway stations. Some buildings extended their basements under the street (to maximize usable space) but the city started charging them for this space. Rather than pay, many building owners chose to seal up those parts of the basements.

Some of the tunnels were lost during the rising ocean levels of the 2040s. During the Freedom Wars, Jeffrey Hernandez feared the massive and partially unmapped network of tunnels. He ordered every entrance to the sewers locked up. He closed down the old subway system and built a new, more secure system. By the 2070s, people were trying to break the locks on the entrances to the underground, but they found that someone already had the underground as their turf (see Moles, below).

Moles

In Brief- Mysterious, live underground, avoid contact with others, violently repel trespassers. Are they violent, inbred savages or humble loners?

The underground is inhabited solely by city residents known as Moles. Not much is known about the moles, because they refuse to communicate with those living above them. Most who have tried exploring underground (or spying on the Moles) have been killed. Every once in a while a Mole has been caught scrounging from dumpsters in the city above, but they fight to the death rather than being caught and interrogated. The Moles' knowledge of the city seems about as limited as the city's knowledge of them (though some have suggested this may be a ploy).

The people with the most contact with the Moles are the Water Rats, who sometimes run in to them in the groundwater outflow tunnels that the Rats "surf" in. The Water Rats and Moles have sort of an unspoken agreement, whenever they run in to each other they do not speak to each other and try not to get in each other's way. The head of the Water Rats, Matt Tim, makes it a point to hear every detail of every encounter members of his family have with the Moles.

Military- The tunnels the Moles live in are dotted with deadly booby traps. Moles seem to patrol the tunnels looking for intruders. When they see intruders they rush off and gather a huge army. Mole armies attack without question. The Moles seem unafraid of death and wave after wave of Moles will attack an enemy until the enemy is driven off. The Moles know the tunnels quite well and seem to be able to operate well in darkness. Their favorite trick is to smash the enemy's lights and attack.

Conjecture- Estimates of the Mole population varies incredibly. Some say it could be as little as 100, others claim it's as much as 5000. Some say that they are a cult of Unborn crazies who, during the Freedom Wars, went underground to await the end of the world. They eat rats, have a social system based on violence, are badly inbred and are indescribably miserable. They don't know how to read, some barely know how to talk, and all they know is fear and violence.

Others say that the Moles must be intelligent and disciplined to survive with what little they have. They say the Moles must be master pirates (tapping electricity and running water), scavengers and craftspeople. A few Moles weapons have been captured. They resemble weapons manufactured by Street People and show a high degree of skill and creativity.

People also like to hypothesize about the motivations of the Moles. Some think that they are breeding underground until they have a large enough population to overrun the city. Others think that the Moles simply want to be left alone to live by their own humble means.

Although often regarded as an expert on the Moles, Matt Timm rarely engages in conjecture. He responds to most conjecture with "yeah, that's a good theory."

Geography

In Brief- Small utility pipes near the street, tunnels under that, huge water pipes deep underground, few good maps exist.

Utilities Level- In the first thirty feet underground are the majority of the city's utilities. There are electrical lines and transformers, fiber optic lines, water, steam, natural gas and many unused pipes. When people need access to these pipes, they typically dig up the streets (although there are small underground rooms at major junctions). At this depth there are very few tunnels wide enough for humans to enter.

Subway and Sewage- Below 30 feet, below the level of most basements, are larger tunnels. There are subways and subway stations (most of which are closed off and unused). Groundwater pumps and tunnels carry water out to the sunken city and keep water from infiltrating the subway. Below the subways are sewage lines which carry sewage (at a slight incline) to a treatment plant at the north end of the city. A seperate system of utility tunnels (with their own control rooms) provide electricity and water for the subway system.

Deep Pipes- Hundreds of feet below the city, in the ancient bedrock, are the biggest tunnels in the city. The deep pipes carry water, at high pressure, to the city. These pipes are huge (some large enough to drive trucks through). City Tunnel #3, the last and largest water tunnel built for the city, is 70 stories underground. Risers carry pressurized water up to the street above.

Maps- There is no one map that shows all of the underground. There are many unused pipes and tunnels, some of which have been forgotten about completely. In ancient times, people would go dig under the city and install utilities without asking anyone's permission or telling anyone what they'd done. Much information about the underground was lost during the chaos of the Freedom Wars. The major utility companies have maps, but those maps often only show the tunnels and pipes that they are currently using. Maps that combine information about known tunnels are a hot commodity.

WORLD SITUATION

Nations

In Brief- Balkanization, poor economies, progressive governments, small nations are major geopolitical themes.

Asia- Communist China resisted Freedom Army activity, but instead became dangerously insular. The economy is terrible, organized crime is rampant, and the government is more brutal than it has been in a century. China's one asset is its biotechnology. For a century, China has had state funded biotechnology with none of the bans on cloning, stem cell research and human research that hampered biotech in other countries. China now has biotech that nobody else in the world has. There are even rumors that the Chinese have a program of genetic engineering of the entire populous.

Southeast Asia has a dense population and much of the world's richest and poorest people. Southeast Asian countries have state funded internet access and the rich and poor are well connected and street smart.

Many refugees from all over Asia live in the inner cities fo Japan and Korea. Japan and Korea also have some of the oldest and largest gated communities and utopianist communes, many with a religious slant.

Africa- Africa has been hit the hardest by the climactic changes and ecological disasters of the 21st century. Most of Africa is still unlivable. After the Freedom Wars, much of Africa was balkanized in to small tribal states, many of whom are now at war with each other. Many banned corporations (p.371) operate out of small, economically depressed African countries.

Africa has the oldest and largest raft cities, most of which date back to the 2040s. These are colonies of homeless refugees on rafts and boats that float from country to country, seeking refuge and aid. The raft cities have a population larger than some countries and they can't stay anywhere for very long before depleting the natural resources.

Central America- The drug cartels were destroyed when God Killer displaced Cocaine as the drug of choice in North America. Central America has many sincere, reformist governments that are trying hard to build healthy developing economies despite the skeletons in their closets.

Europe- European countries were some of the first to rebuild themselves after the Freedom Wars. Although they have rocky economies, the European countries cooperate well. European countries tend to have strong governments and some (especially in Northern Europe) are almost socialist. Europe boasts many prestigious schools, including psychic training centers. People from all over the world are sent to study at these schools.

India- India has usurped America's place as the exporter of culture. The best of everything pop culture, from fashion to VR movies, comes from India. India has the home offices of many VR game companies. During the Freedom Wars, terrible plagues and disasters beset India and significantly reduced their population. India is in the middle of several wars to regain control of areas that were balkanized during the reconstruction. The large middle class pay for these wars with their taxes, but are mostly oblivious to them, even when they are happening nearby.

Mexico- Mexico is undergoing a new period of stability and financial success, it is becoming the world's new center of high technology. The inner cities here connect seamlessly with rich neighborhoods and corporate neighborhoods. The Kalor empire has its own semi-autonomous zone near Mexico city (Cloud City) and Mexico City is one of the few inner cities with Kalor residents.

Middle East- The Middle East resisted the Freedom Army, but their economy went bad when petroleum deposits started to dry up. Most of the wealthy people left and much of the Middle East is made up of poor nomads, concerned with inter-group fighting and basic survival. The urban areas of the Middle East are known for their honest and progressive governments and a population that tries to ignore the savagery going on in the countryside.

Pacific- When the Freedom Wars broke out, Australia and New Zealand enacted many Freedom Army reforms, most of which still remain. Today it is largely socialist and anti-corporate.

Many of the smaller pacific islands were liberated from their colonial owners during the reconstruction. They are now their own sovereign nations, heavily influenced by native cultures. Due to rising ocean levels and climactic changes, life is hard on these islands. The governments often blow the entire national budgets to buy technologies that can help their people grow crops and survive super-storms.

Russia- Russia is a host of countries with many wars between Christian and Muslim groups. The major corps help provide a stabilizing influence on this region. Russia has a lot of arable land and most of the world's grain is exported from Russia.

South America- South America saw terrible fighting during the Freedom Wars, and now they have a hard-earned economic equality. Right now South America's countries are poor their economy, culture and society are growing steadily.

Wars

In Brief- Guerilla warfare between balkanized countries, employing many mercenaries, is common.

There have been no large-scale wars since the end of the Freedom Wars. The decade after the Freedom Wars was the most peaceful decade of the century. Almost everyone who wanted a country had been given a country and they were all working steadily to build their own nations. As time progressed, though, the more successful nations began to envy the pieces that had been removed, and many of them started wars to gain back some of this territory.

Today, there are about 100 low-intensity conflicts going on across the world. The aggressors are typically larger, more successful countries that want specific resources in their neighboring countries. Most of the populations of the agressor countries are in gated communities and corporate living centers and refuse to fight in such wars (or sometimes to even acknowledge that they are happening). The most common way of dealing with this problem is to hire mercenaries. Millions of mercenaries travel the globe, going to wherever there is fighting and making money to fight on either side. Fighting is typically slow and steady. There are few massive assaults: armies dig in on their side of the border and attempt to wear away the other sides' resources and morale. Use of mines is common and many countries are plagued by massive minefields that make large areas unlivable.

Communities

In Brief- Many inner cities all over the world, some growing some shrinking. None have Manhattan gangs or Drug Lords. Many connections between cities. Mountain communities and jails much like inner cities.

Nice Communities- The majority of the industrialized world lives in some sort of exclusive community: a gated community, a corporate living center, a private city or a wealthy suburb. These communities are largely defined not by who is in them but by who they keep out. Although often boring, these are safe and successful communities. Nice communities typically have the best land, leaving everyone else with whatever dirty, damaged and polluted areas they don't want. A few of the wealthiest communities are on huge city ships. These ships were mostly built in the 30s and were bought by early gated communities. They are the size of small cities and large enough to have their own farms, light rail systems, shopping malls and power plants.

Inner Cities- In urban areas around the world, inner cities are becoming the place where people go when they can't or won't live in a nice community. Inner cities around the world share much with Manhattan: A flight from the city has left them mostly abandoned. A majority of those who have stayed have locked themselves up inside with VR their only social outlet. Large numbers of those on the streets are mentally ill or addicted to drugs. Crime and poverty are high and are becoming a culture unto themselves.

Most Inner Cities do not have a single organization that controls drug sales. In most cities, large violent street gangs sell God Killer. They war using military weapons and tactics and the general population lives in fear with them. Homeless people build small communities and try to insulate themselves from gang politics.

Some countries do not have a massive welfare system to placate the populous. In these countries, the poor in inner cities are often political and a threat to the nearby nice communities. These resemble the inner cities of the 2040s: an angry population is kept in check by a large military or police force.

A few inner cities are larger than Manhattan, but most are smaller. The smaller inner cities have fewer organizations, fewer choices for people who want to be out on the streets, and a less developed street culture. People from small inner cities often look up to people from the big inner cities as being tougher and more sophisticated.

Raft Cities- During the population boom and ecological disasters of the 2040s, many people built cities out of rafts and boats. These raft cities would drift around to wherever there was food and resources. Seldom wanted, these perpetual refugees remained poor and powerless, even during the Freedom Wars. Many of the raft cities found homes during the reconstruction (and there are none left in North America), but there are some left around the world. Life on these cities remains poor, dangerous and barbarous.

Mountain Towns- During the population boom of the 2040s, most of the world's remaining wilderness areas were destroyed to make room for more cities and more corporate owned farms. About the only wilderness areas left untouched were those in the mountains (where construction and farming equipment could not easily reach). These communities were often a refuge for people who couldn't adjust to modern urban life. These remote communities remained largely untouched by the massive social changes of the 2040s and Freedom Wars. Some still have a culture and society that closely resembles what it was like two hundred years ago.

Today, the mountain towns often serve much of the same purposes as inner cities: they are where people live who cannot fit in to a more prosperous community. Like inner cities, drug use, violence, crime and mental illness are common. Mountain communities around the world are often a home base for drug smugglers.

In the US, the biker gangs that distribute God Killer have their farms and labs in mountain communities. The mountains may look normal, but hidden in the underbrush are genetically engineered crops that look like normal weeds but produce billions of dollars worth of drugs.

Prisons- The world's prison population is growing faster than anything else. Prisons are often seen as a way to deal with people who don't fit in to nicer communities, a way that is superior to inner cities. There is seldom a distinction between minimum and maximum security prisons: everyone is sent to the same place. The most common modern prisons are "camps" where families live together. Prisoners are often forced to grow and prepare their own food and manufacture much of their own needs. In some prisons, prisoners even work in factories to create products for corporations.

Prisoners are controlled by electronic devices implanted in them. The devices keep track of where each prisoner is and can give people painful electronic shocks if they try to go somewhere they aren't supposed to. These chips work so well that prison staff is minimal. These chips can be used to create private areas (as well as areas exclusive to men, women, parents and children) which act as a sanctuary from the violence of these prisons.

Prisons are universally regarded as a place people go to learn criminal skills and make underworld contacts. In some inner cities, people commit crimes specifically so they can be sent to prison. The scar from a locator chip is often worn proudly to prove one's toughness and criminal qualifications.

Most prisons have bad drug problems. Corrupt staff typically help smuggle drugs in. The drugs are sold by large, violent gangs that rule the prisons. The prison gangs often have strong connections with the gangs from nearby inner cities. Sometimes the gang structure in the prisons mirrors the gang structure on the streets, and sometimes the street gangs are just one division of the prison gangs.

Connections- Connections between inner cities, raft cities, mountain towns and prisons are quite common. A person might be born in a mountain town, move to an inner city as a teenager then spend some time in prison. A person born on a raft community might be arrested and sent to prison, and in prison might join a gang, and then might move to an inner city to live with a related street gang. Many people make enemies in the community they are in and move to a similar community somewhere else. People in inner cities often have relatives in nearby inner cities and might go there to visit or live with those relatives. Walking the streets of Manhattan it is quite common to meet people who have lived in other nearby inner cities, including Philadelphia, Boston, Toronto, Baltimore and Washington DC. People are often curious about and trade stories about other major inner cities.

Chapter Six - Adventures

As soon as Jem answered the phone and saw Mohammed's face, she knew something terrible had happened. He told her, quietly, about the party he had been at last night, about the attractive young woman he had met, about how she had asked him to come home with her. He told her about the huge Park Avenue townhouse she took him to, about how it was dark inside, about how he remembered seeing something disturbing but couldn't remember what. He told her how he had woken up in the bushes in the hole, with a sewn up incision burning like fire across his belly. Mohammed asked what might have been taken out of him or put in to him. Jem couldn't answer.

After thinking for a minute, Jem spoke. "The way I see it, we could go down to the city hospital and wait four hours to be seen, or we could go over to her place and find out what the fuck is going on. If she's there we'll make her tell us what she did, if not then maybe we can find some evidence. I can meet you on Park and 59th and we can go straight there. I'll call my buddy Tim, the Sexologist - he'll come. And that Freak whose life we saved last week, I bet I could get him to come too. Jack Schmidt will come if we tell her there's housebreaking involved. So, let me make some phone calls and I'll meet you in… thirty minutes."

"Jem, wait, you don't have to…"

"The fuck I do, because I know you'd do the same for me. Don't worry Mo" she grinned a predatory grin, her teflon coated fangs showing," we'll get this bitch."

PC PARTIES

Diversity can be of great benefit to a group of Player Characters: the more diversity, the more skills, resources and contacts the group can call on. Everyone in the city recognizes the power and flexibility of a diverse group working together. However, diversity has a serious drawback: different philosophies, goals, ethical standards and loyalties can get in the way of cohesive team action. There have been numerous attempts by powerful people in the city to put together "dream teams" to solve problems, and these dream teams usually self-destruct.

The key to a successful diverse team is friendship. When people actually grow to like and care about each other, to want to help each other, that's when dream teams become powerful. When they have friendship as a motivation they can work together despite differences. Such bonds are not easily achieved, but they are the most valuable thing in the city. They also make the GM's job easier: if PCs are good friends, then the GM only has to make an adventure relevant to one of the PCs and the other PCs will come along out of loyalty. GMs should remind players about the reward of 5 XP per new strong friendship formed. If a group of 5 PC's meet and all become good buddies, this can mean 25 XP earned in a single adventure.

The question remains: how to get PCs who don't know each other, who have different loyalties, interests and social circles, to meet and work together? Here are a few suggestions:

Altruism- One suggestion is for the GM to require all players to have a desire to help people and make the city a better place. This does not mean that PCs cannot be selfish, rude, violent, cynical, vengeful, ignorant, mentally ill, or whatever other character flaw players enjoy – it only means that given a choice between helping people out or sitting around doing nothing, the PCs will choose helping people out. If all characters conform to this requirement, the GMs job will be much easier. One way to get PCs together is to have them all happen to be in the same place at the same time when the opportunity to help someone comes about.

Shortcut- If first-meeting scenes don't appeal to the players and GM, simply shortcut them. Just say that the PCs know each other, are good buddies and are on the short-list of who to call when something is going down. PCs don't get the 5 XP friendship reward, but can go straight to the adventure.

FOAF- The PCs have a friend, lover or relative in common. Maybe Jim has gone missing, and Jim happens to be the cousin of one PC, the childhood best-friend of another, the ex-boyfriend of another, and guy-who-saved-the-life-of another PC. Another way to do this is to have a shared contact make introductions (e.g. "You're going to go look for that serial killer? My brother is going to do the same thing. He's a great guy, you should hook up with him.")

Chance Debt- Some of the PCs are walking down the street and just happen to run in to a PC who is in serious trouble (e.g. being mauled by a pack of Mauler addicts). If the other PCs help out the victim PC, then the victim PC will owe the PCs a debt and may decide to follow the PCs in to whatever adventure they're going to.

Ordered/Hired- City politics is complicated and constantly changing. For every given situation, there are a hundred possible reasons that a group may want to send or hire someone to help out. Even groups who have no interest in the situation itself may be trying to get on the good side of some other group, or form an alliance, or discharge a debt. Either way, the PCs are each approached by some powerful person and asked, ordered or hired to go help out. There will always be some potential reward for the PC for participating, whether it's a wad of cash or increased respect for gang elders.

Thrown Together- The PCs are suddenly thrown (against their will) in to some situation and they have to work together to escape with their lives. Example: The PCs wake up in a dark abandoned building, a note on the floor reads "you are being hunted."

"My buddy Bren Tate of the Siders said he'd send one of his people to help us catch this serial killer. I want you to meet this Sider, be her escort while she's on our turf, and see if there's anything she can actually do to help us."

"Hey kid, you wanna make some money? I'm putting together some people to go investigate this shooting over on 42nd Street. If you go with them and help them with any hacking they need to do, I'll give you a hundred bucks."

"Some of my best clients are going to go put themselves in the middle of some dangerous shit, and if they die I'll be quite unhappy. If you go follow them around and smash anyone who fucks with them, I'll give you a thirty percent discount on that armor you've had your eye on."

"I hear the Drakes are having trouble with some pounder gang on their turf. Maybe if one of us goes over there and tries to help out, the Drakes will finally stop holding a grudge about the incident at the Chucky's Del Taco last Summer."

"I just got off the phone with the Purists. They said they'll help us round up this crazy plague-carrying motherfucker, but we've got to send someone to help them break in to some bank or something."

"Listen up. We've got confirmation that there's some kind of Colin activity going on in Freak territory. If the Freaks fuck this up, which I'm pretty sure they will, then that means there'll be a Colin incubator not more than three blocks away from us. So, we're going to go over there, find the Freaks investigating this mess and take over the fucking investigation."

"Dude, I totally promised I'd help this hot Insomniac chick look for her little brother, but this hangover is kicking my ass. I don't want her to think I'm a flake, so can you go in my place, tell her I'm sick or something?"

ADVENTURES

Mystery- This is a great starting adventure to get PC's together. Something important has happened, and each major group in the city wants to know the details. The PCs are asked (or hired) to go investigate and figure out what actually happened. As happens in all good mysteries, in the process of figuring out the situation the PCs get involved in the situation. As soon as the PCs figure out what's going on, they're forced to choose where they stand and what they're going to do about it.

Hacking- A well crafted hacking adventure can give all the PCs something to do, not just the hackers. The PCs desperately need to get in to a computer and change or retrieve some piece of data. Unfortunately, this is an ultra-secure machine that isn't on the internet. In order to succeed, the PCs will have to do a lot of homework (PCs with tech skills can search the net, PCs with social skills can try to social engineer info out of people, PCs with thief skills can sneak around stealing bags of garbage hoping for old manuals or printouts). When it comes time to actually hack in to the machine, PCs have to break in to the building or compound where the network is, and while the techie characters are hacking, other characters have to deal with alarm systems, security guards and other problems.

Politics- At its best, city politics is people getting together, discovering common interests, and working together to solve problems. At its worst, city politics is people bad-mouthing, blackmailing, sabotaging and arranging for bad things to happen to each other in order to gain a scrap of power. At its best or at its worst, starting characters are typically used as pawns in the political actions of the more powerful. PCs may think they are doing something good and noble for the betterment of the city, only to find out that they are just furthering someone's political goals. When PCs get more experienced and powerful, political adventures becomes more about making contacts, arranging alliances and negotiating conflicts.

War- A huge war rages, and the PCs are all allied with one side of the conflict. The PCs have the goal of helping their side win (or end up on top) by any means. If the PCs are in to combat, they can wade in to the middle of a battlefield and take out as many of the enemies as possible. Chances are, a PC group can find something more useful to do: gathering intelligence, assassinating enemy leaders, getting other parties to help in the conflict, etc.

Peace- A huge war rages, and the PCs have the goal of stopping the conflict. PCs might even be on two sides of the conflict, and must work together in secret (lest they be seen as traitors). If the conflict is based on a mistake, miscommunication or lie, the PCs must gain evidence about what really happened and present it to both sides. If the conflict is based on something that really happened, PCs must broker a peace accord between the two groups. One common problem in the city: group 1 comes to group 2 and says "one of your members committed a crime against us, hand him/her over or we'll make war against you." Group 1 can't or won't hand over the person, possibly because they can't find him or her, because they don't know if the person is really guilty, or because they don't know which of their members it was. Group 2 assumes that Group 1 is just trying to protect its own and proceeds to make war. In this case, all the PCs need to do to make peace is to find the suspect and either present proof that the person is innocent (or that there were aggravating circumstances) or hand that person over to Group 2 for punishment.

Theft- The PCs are given the job of breaking in somewhere and stealing something (or kidnapping some person). Like a hacking adventure, a good theft should be half research/preparation and half dealing with whatever comes up during the job. This is an adventure where PCs with thief/espionage skills really shine, but other PCs can also find things to do: PCs with social skills can con information out of people, PCs with tech skills can hack in to security networks, and PCs with combat skills can deal with the random security guard who walks around the corner at the wrong time.

Survival- Put the characters in a very dangerous place or situation and see if they can get out alive. It could be a very unusual situation: trapped in a VR fantasy world, lost underground in the sewers, trapped in an abandoned building. Or, the PCs could be on the normal city streets with some serious disability making normal city dangers much more dangerous. PCs might be disabled by some disease, toxin or drug, might be injured, might find themselves without any armor or weapons.

Personal Growth- Once the PCs have been playing together for a while, their own personal goals should be pretty well defined. The whole point of this adventure is to offer the PC something he or she has been looking for. Make sure the PC's friends are around when the PC finds out about this opportunity (in case the PC is reluctant to ask for help in such a personal matter). Whatever it is the PC wants, make sure there is something for the PC's friends to do to help out.

Personal Problems- This adventure involves the PCs trying to fix something that's gone terribly wrong in the lives of one or more PCs. Remember that nothing is stable or dependable in the city and that events in the city can conspire to make even the simplest things incredibly hard. A PC might catch a disease and need antibiotics, might have his or her home taken over by a pounder gang, might have had his or her identity stolen, might have been accused of a crime, etc. On top of the immediate problem,

a backdrop of gang wars, plagues, riots, power outages and other problems can make putting the PCs' lives back together incredibly difficult.

Unanswered Questions

Here's a few questions that haven't been answered in this book. High-level adventures may involve the PCs finding out the answers to some of these questions:

Who runs the Drug Lords?

What do the Moles want?

Where did the Moles come from?

How do Bleeders/Sexologists psychic skills work?

What do the Hidden want?

Why did the Clowdians come here?

What is the ritual for obtaining Reana among the Clowdians?

Where did HDNA viruses come from?

How do homeless crazies stay alive?

What strange things are the Keepers hiding in central park?

What in Colin's past could explain his current behavior?

Why is the Cloud flammable?

Who killed Mason Marks?

Hunting- The PCs are looking for some wanted person, people or animal. The easiest option is if the PCs are looking for a person to kill him or her. It is more difficult if the PCs need to take someone alive. In addition to normal investigation, PCs may have to follow the prey in to dangerous areas and deal with traps set by the prey.

Hunted- In this case, one or more people is hunting for the PCs. PCs might be on the run from law enforcement, from some gang, from the drug lords. Or the PC may be on the run from some very powerful individual, e.g. a hunter with a sniper rifle, or a serial killer whose appearance is unknown to the PCs. PCs who are gang members will probably want to seek refuge among fellow gang members, but to do so might require a trip across the city.

Exploration- Never forget how huge the city is. Thousands of blocks, hundreds of thousands of buildings, most are 5 to 15 stories high, some are hundreds of stories high. Exploring the dark places of the city can be dangerous but can also be very rewarding. PCs exploring "abandoned" buildings face the dangers of traps as well as addicts, crazies and animals that live there. PCs exploring non-abandoned buildings must deal with alarms, security guards and residents armed with self-defense weapons.

CONFLICTS

Organizations

There are no "villains" in this game. There are simply those that PCs are more likely to come in to conflict with than others. When PCs meet a Colin, it is very likely to be a situation involving conflict (especially if the PCs have decided, like many in the city have, that Colins should be killed as soon as they are discovered). Still, everyone in the city has some motivation and there is some set of circumstances where that motivation will bring them in to conflict with the PCs. Here are a few organizations that might end up trying to help PCs, trying to hurt PCs or trying to use PCs as pawns.

Black Market Traders

Are Happy When: A city of opportunists and criminals knows to come to them to buy cheap stolen stuff, to sell stolen stuff and to get hooked up with people who provide various below-board services.

Get Mad When: People try to cheat them or steal from them.

When They Like You They: Give you good deals and call you up whenever they hear something you might like to know.

When They Hate You They: Tell everyone they can not to deal with you, hire some thugs to rough you up.

Afraid Of: The Cops, who raid them as an excuse to get better gear. Thugs, who want to rob them to get drug money.

Further Reading: p.322.

CDC

Are Happy When: The inevitable plague outbreaks are quickly contained and people stay in their homes calmly until the CDC finds a treatment or the plague dies down on its own.

Get Mad When: People mess with bioweapons, people try to escape from quarantine zones, people wander around on the streets even after being ordered inside.

When They Like You They: Offer to let you help them as a volunteer.

When They Hate You They: Spray you with disinfectant foam, pin you on the ground and strap you to a hospital bed.

Afraid Of: Terrorists with bioweapons.

Further Reading: p.376.

Charity Organizations

Are Happy When: Rich people send them money and non-rich people put in hours helping out.

Get Mad When: Someone tries to downplay their pet problem (or denies that it exists altogether).

When They Like You They: Tell everyone how great you are, give you awards and thank you letters, hold banquets for you.

When They Hate You They: Try to slam you in the press and on the internet. Do a protest march against you. The bigger groups even have volunteer legal help and can sue you.

Afraid Of: Corporate news media portraying them as a bunch of wackos.

Further Reading: p.328.

Churches

Are Happy When: Enough people come in and give tithing to keep the churches open and the priests employed.

Get Mad When: Churches are vandalized or robbed, parishioners are afraid to come in.

When They Like You They: Tell their parishioners that you are good, say a prayer for you.

When They Hate You They: Tell their parishioners that you are evil and should be boycotted or shunned.

Afraid Of: Cults taking away their members (and giving religion itself a bad name).

Further Reading: p.357.

Citizen's Groups

Are Happy When: Shut-ins feel safe inside their VR fantasy worlds.

Get Mad When: Violent burglars break in to the apartments of shut-ins, there are interruptions in power, VR service or grocery delivery, welfare is cut.

When They Like You They: Try to elect you to be their leader.

When They Hate You They: Write thousands of letters to their congress members and city council members, who in turn put pressure on the appropriate agency to do something about the problem.

Afraid Of: Addicts, criminals and gangs.

Further Reading: p.361.

City Government

Are Happy When: Nobody is screaming that they're incompetent and corrupt and people are contributing to their re-election campaigns.

Get Mad When: Corps or citizen's groups start putting a lot of pressure on them to solve some problem.

When They Like You They: Name a park bench after you.

When They Hate You They: Put pressure on the NYPD to find out anything illegal you are doing and arrest you for it.

Afraid Of: Corps and Citizen's Groups, who can run nasty smear campaigns against them. Corporate news media, who can expose their incompetence. Feds, who can investigate corruption.

Further Reading: p.393.

Clowdian Empire

Are Happy When: They are left alone.

Get Mad When: There is anti-Kalor propaganda or violence.

When They Like You They: Let you come visit Cloud City, give you some nice souvenirs.

When They Hate You They: Sue you for anything illegal or tortuous you've done. Put political pressure on federal, state and city governments to do something about you. Run an advertising campaign to make you look like a racist.

Afraid Of: Hate groups who subtly influence public perception of Clowdians.

Further Reading: p.364.

Corps

Are Happy When: City factories run smoothly, the majority of the city population stays indoors all day (paying for VR, groceries, rent, credit card debt) and crime against them is kept to a minimum.

Get Mad When: Someone cuts in to their profit margin by stealing a lot of money from them, hacking in to their computers or helping their competition's black divisions.

When They Like You They: Give you a contract to keep doing what you're doing and receive a monthly check.

When They Hate You They: Ruin your credit rating, have collections harass you, get your internet service shut down, get you kicked out of your apartment, then hire a skip tracer to track you down and give you notice that they are suing you.

Afraid Of: The LBRA, who can wipe out a corp if they find it doing something illegal. Other Corps, who will eat them up if they ever fail to compete.

Further Reading: p.369.

Corp Black Divisions

Are Happy When: Their existence is completely secret and they can make below-board deals to help their corporation out.

Get Mad When: Other organized crime agencies compete with them. Someone tries to rat them out.

When They Like You They: Give you anonymous cash gifts.

When They Hate You They: Hire city criminals to assassinate you.

Afraid Of: The LBRA, who can shut down them and the corp they work to benefit.

Further Reading: p.370.

Corporate Media Companies

Are Happy When: People in the city stay inside all day watching their news and entertainment and participating in VR fantasy worlds.

Get Mad When: Shut-ins can't subscribe to their services because of internet or power outages. Shut-ins are too afraid of smash-and-grab burglars to go in to VR.

When They Like You They: Put a blip in the news about how great you are.

When They Hate You They: Run news stories to tell people how horrible you are, ignoring every other problem in the city. Show all your detractors and none of your defenders (so that viewers think everyone in the city hates you). Give free (glowing) coverage to any politician who promises to wipe you out.

Afraid Of: The LBRA, who can subject their corp to big fines if they cross the wrong boundaries.

Further Reading: p.360.

Cults

Are Happy When: Nobody thinks of them as a threat and they can recruit all over the city.

Get Mad When: People start bad-mouthing them, investigating them, or trying to "rescue" members.

When They Like You They: Send an attractive member to have sex with you.

When They Hate You They: Send zealots on suicide missions to wipe you out.

Afraid Of: The FBI, who can take them out. The corporate news media, who can alert the general public to their activities.

Further Reading: p.374.

District Attorney's Office

Are Happy When: Any crime that makes it in to the news is quickly prosecuted and someone is convicted and sent to prison for a long time.

Get Mad When: Some crime makes big news and they don't have enough evidence to convict a suspect.

When They Like You They: Look the other way when you do mildly illegal things (so long as you don't get in the news).

When They Hate You They: Devote investigators to digging up evidence that you've done something wrong and an attorney to convicting you of as many crimes as possible.

Afraid Of: The Public Defender proving that the police did something illegal or that they don't have enough evidence to convict. Citizen's Groups and Corps claiming that they are not tough on crime.

Drug Lords

Are Happy When: They have a complete monopoly on illegal drug sales in the city, their client base steadily grows.

Get Mad When: Someone tries to sell drugs or someone comes up with a good way to get addicts off drugs.

When They Like You They: Offer you a comfortable and high-paying position within their organization.

When They Hate You They: If they think you're not much of a threat, they put a price on your head (causing all the pushers, as well as many addicts and mercenaries to hunt for you). If they think you're a big threat, they send Dagger Teams (p.383) to hunt you down and slaughter you.

Afraid Of: Corporate news media exposing their existence. The FBI investigating them.

Further Reading: p.381.

FBI

Are Happy When: They get to catch some high-profile criminal every once in a while to justify their large budget.

Get Mad When: Organized crime operates unchecked anywhere in the US.

When They Like You They: Invite you to work for them (as an agent or informant). Give you the direct phone address of an agent.

When They Hate You They: Put you on their most wanted list and put a bounty out for you. Send undercover agents to try to get close to you and get proof that you're being bad.

Afraid Of: Corporate news media claiming that they are incompetent or corrupt. Senate deciding they aren't useful and cutting their funding.

Gated Communities

Are Happy When: They are left alone.

Get Mad When: The government tries to tax them. Someone causes internal strife within their communities. Their kids want to move to the city and have adventures.

When They Like You They: Let you visit. Send you a letter of thanks.

When They Hate You They: Put political pressure on the federal, state and city governments to do something about you.

Afraid Of: Having to come in to the city for any reason. Anything from the city that might influence their culture or community.

Further Reading: p.391.

LBRA

Are Happy When: They catch corps breaking laws and can impose huge fines (which adds to their budget).

Get Mad When: They can't convince anyone that there are Corporate Black Divisions.

When They Like You They: Invite you to work for them (as an agent or informant). Give you the direct phone address of an agent.

When They Hate You They: If you work for a corp, they subpoena all your records, take you to trial and ask a judge to order your corp to disband. If you don't work for a corp, they ask the FBI to investigate you.

Afraid Of: Nothing (the corps are powerless against them, the public wants them, and they only answer to congress who wouldn't dare cut their funding).

Further Reading: p.370.

National Guard

Are Happy When: Rioters disperse and go home when the National Guard shows up.

Get Mad When: People incite riots or organize violence against them.

When They Like You They: Let you go with a warning.

When They Hate You They: If you have a firearm they shoot you, otherwise they surround you with a shield wall, tear gas you, beat you with batons until you can't get up, handcuff you and turn you over to the police for prosecution (resisting arrest, among other things).

Afraid Of: Terrorists with gas masks and sniper rifles.
Further Reading: p.393.

Neocultural Communes

Are Happy When: They are left alone.

Get Mad When: Corps and big gated communities try to bully them around.

When They Like You They: Let you visit whenever you want. Send members to help you out when you are in trouble. Offer you spiritual counseling and traditional training.

When They Hate You They: Banish you, refuse to speak with you or deal with you.

Afraid Of: Corps and the government trying to tax them and take away their land.

Further Reading: p.392.

NYPD (Day Shift)

Are Happy When: They are allowed to continue collecting paychecks despite their incompetence and corruption.

Get Mad When: Criminals embarrass them and scare citizens groups. People try to uncover evidence of their corruption.

When They Like You They: Offer you a cush position in the department where you can collect a paycheck without even having to come in. Cover it up (even blame someone else) when you commit a crime.

When They Hate You They: Send a huge gang of officers to arrest you, plant evidence on you (usually drugs) and give you to the District Attorney.

Afraid Of: The city council, who can slash their funding and replace their leadership. Citizen's Groups and Corps, who can complain to the city council. The FBI, who can investigate corruption.

Further Reading: p.243.

NYPD (Night Shift)

Are Happy When: They find some terrible criminal and slaughter him or her.

Get Mad When: People try to get evidence of vigilante justice. People try to cover up the extent of crime in the city.

When They Like You They: Beat up any of your enemies who are criminals. Look the other way if you commit small crimes.

When They Hate You They: Break down your door, beat the hell out of you (or stab you) and claim it was self-defense.

Afraid Of: The Drug Lords, who are trying to take them out. The City Council, who can slash their funding and replace their leadership. The FBI, who can investigate police brutality.

Further Reading: p.243.

Public Defender

Are Happy When: Innocent people get off and guilty people get reasonable deals.

Get Mad When: The police and District Attorney make up evidence and conceal evidence of police misconduct.

When They Like You They: Offer free legal advice (or stay late working on your case).

When They Hate You They: Accuse you of misconduct in the press.

Afraid Of: Judges, who can screw them over if they are in a bad mood, the City Government, who can slash their budget.

Small Business Owners

Are Happy When: They make enough of a profit to support their families.

Get Mad When: People steal from them or kill their customers. Big corps try to out-compete them.

When They Like You They: Give you a job (under the table) if you need money. Give you occasional free product.

When They Hate You They: Ban you from their places of business. Threaten lawsuits.

Afraid Of: Gangs, criminals, corps, police investigations.

Further Reading: p.331.

Utopianist Communes

Are Happy When: They are left alone and allowed to raise "perfect children" who they send out in to the world to improve the world's culture.

Get Mad When: Their "Utopia Children" living in the city are hurt, killed or, even worse, corrupted.

When They Like You They: Assume that you don't need their help and ignore you.

When They Hate You They: Try to convince you that you are psychologically damaged and that they can help you.

Afraid Of: Criminals, cults and gangs hurting their members.

Further Reading: p.392.

Common Baddies

Here are some people that it's no stretch of the imagination to see a PC group fighting.

Addicts

Motivations: Desperate for money to buy drugs with, some addicts will do anything they can to rob a person of a saleable possession, including killing a person.

Methods: Groups of addicts will wait in dark places for someone to walk through, then will ambush that person, grab anything the person has, and run off before any help can arrive. Sometimes the bright addicts will even use ploys to get people to wander in to dark, secluded places for an ambush. Addicts run away when their "prey" proves to be dangerous.

Typical Encounter: 4-10 level 0 addicts armed with Pipes, Shivs and Sharpened Sticks. See Typical Addict Merc (p.132).

Colins

Motivations: Colin wants to kidnap people, take them back to some place where he has a mental installer, erase their minds and copy his mind in to them. He is interested in any way to increase his rate of reproduction. He also wants to commit horrific crimes in order to frighten people, become famous and get the attention of god.

Methods: Colin benefits from being disorganized: even on being tortured he can't tell the location of any more than one or two other Colins. Typically, Colins spread out from where they were "made," but occasionally (when a Colin has some plan or scheme to make a lot of copies of himself) large groups of Colins will congregate. Colin operates in secret, playing the part of the person whose body he is using for as long as possible. He takes advantage of people's trust by getting them alone and then attacking them by surprise (knocking them unconscious with some drug if he wants to steal their bodies, stabbing them with a knife if he wants to kill and mutilate them). Colin has absolutely no fear of death (considering himself to be an entity beyond a single body).

Typical Encounter: A single Colin posing as a friend of the PCs. Will look for any opportunity to get PCs alone and attack them. If discovered, will try to run away. Colin may also appear as a stranger, even as a child, trying to lure the PCs in to a trap by pretending to need their help. See p.367 for the NPC profile of a Colin.

Crazies

Motivations: Mentally ill homeless people are sometimes driven to attack people at random. The person is most likely suffering from paranoid delusions and believes that he or she must attack the PCs or be killed.

Methods: Crazy doesn't necessarily mean stupid. A Crazy who chooses to attack may plan the attack logically and might possibly even act sane long enough to get close to the PCs. The Crazy's dangerous thought process might "show through" any time he or she speaks to the PCs. Crazies may try to get a PC alone and stab him or her in the back, or may try to set fire to a building the PCs are in. Some even try to get the PCs in trouble, telling anyone who will listen that the PCs robbed, beat or raped them (something the Crazies may actually believe).

Typical Encounter: A single Crazy sneaks up behind the PCs and tries to stab one of the PCs in the back with a shiv, then runs away.

Cultists

Motivations: Cultists have typically submitted their will to a charismatic leader. The leader may believe what he or she is preaching, or could be making things up to gain followers. The primary motivation of a cult leader is the feeling of power of controlling the beliefs and thoughts of others. Secondary benefits may be money (cult followers sell all their possessions to give to the leader) and sex (cult members submit to sex with the leader). In any case, the main thing a cult wants is to get more members. When cult members are seen on the street they are typically looking for recruits. If not that they are probably out to fight the cult's real or imagined enemies or to retrieve a lost member.

Methods: When recruiting, cultists seek out people who look like they are in a psychological crisis. The cults trick the people in to coming back to the compound where they can be brainwashed. When cults are on the offense, they typically use terrorist tactics: suicide bombings, driving vehicles loaded with fuel in to buildings, sending children with diseases to infect a group, etc.

Typical Encounter: Most encounters PCs will have with cults are harmless: a cult recruitment team tries to talk a PC in to coming back with them and when the PC says no they leave. PCs are most likely to come in to conflict against cults if PCs are called on to rescue someone from a cult or if a cult is making holy-war against the PC's group. The Lumens are the largest and most powerful cult in the city, and they have proven themselves capable of making war against large gangs. See p.374 for more on the Lumens.

God Killer Rampager

Motivations: The rampager has done too much God Killer and has gone in to a megalomaniacal rage. The rampager believes that he or she is immortal and invincible and can do anything he or she wants, starting by destroying anyone or anything the rampager doesn't like.

Methods: The rampager believes his or her power is limitless, doesn't think he or she needs any defenses or precautions. He or she will stomp down the street, shouting out challenges to anyone and proclaiming his or her intention to tear down every part of the city that displeases him or her. The rampager doesn't think he or she needs a weapon, but may use one if that is what he or she feels most comfortable with. The rampager will attack anything, from a person with a skyscraper, hitting again and again (not defending) until the enemy is destroyed or the rampager gets bored and decides to do something else. The rampager is incapable of believing that he or she failed at anything: if the skyscraper he or she attacked didn't fall down, it's because the rampager didn't want it to. The rampager will also ignore any injury, no matter how severe.

Typical Encounter: If a PC has ever pissed off a God Killer user, and that user knows where the PC is, the PC may be in danger. More likely, PCs may be attacked by a God Killer addict walking down the street who decides that he or she doesn't like the way the PCs look. The God Killer addict will attack any number of PCs no matter how well-armed the PCs are and will fight to the death.

Hunters

Motivations: These are bored rich people who enjoy the sport of hunting other human beings. They are typically cold, anti-social people with little or no self-identity who gain a feeling of superiority through the act of hunting.

Methods: Since simply shooting an unsuspecting person is far too easy, Hunters try to give the prey some clue that they are being hunted. Some fire a warning shot, others leave anonymous messages (sometimes even riddles) for the prey. Although the Hunter may try to make the game interesting by making it harder, the Hunter does not want and will not allow a fair contest: if the prey ever gains the upper hand the Hunter will flee. Once the game begins, the Hunter tries to stay out of sight, tries to follow and find the prey wherever they go, and shoots the prey whenever they can. Hunters usually have sniper rifles and are very well trained in their use. They typically also have high-tech equipment such as nanopadded and nanoweave armor (p.119), color change clothing (p.135), advanced nightvision goggles (p.122) and even bloodhound powder (p.130).

Typical Encounter: The PCs are walking down the street, see a wallet on the ground, when they pick it up they find a note inside saying "you have one minute to run." The Hunter is watching the PCs from a secret hiding place and follows the PCs wherever they go.

Mauler Packs

Motivations: These are brain damaged drug addicts who act much like wild pack animals. They eat, raw, whatever animal they can catch, including people. They prowl the streets looking for prey and are likely to attack anyone who appears wounded, old, disabled or asleep. Mauler Packs are capable of following blood trails to find wounded prey.

Methods: When they find suitable prey, they surround the person, rushing up and beating on the person with their fists until the person drops. Once the person has dropped they stomp on and punch the person until the person is clearly unconscious. Then they tear the person to bits with their teeth and devour the flesh.

Typical Encounter: Word gets around quickly when there is a Mauler Pack in the area, and if the party has any proficient fighters the fighters will probably be asked (or begged) to hunt down and destroy the pack. A pack is seldom hard to find (street people see them coming and get out of the way, and will be glad to point out which way they went). Mauler addicts are also easy to kill (for characters with good weapons and armor or good combat skills) but the

Typical Mauler Addict Pack

Makeup- Ten addicts, about four are the strongest and healthiest and they attack first, the rest move when the prey is wounded.

Appearance- Half-naked (dressed in the shredded remains of clothing), skinny, dirty, diseased, unkempt, wild-eyed, long-fingernails, blood encrusted around mouths and under fingernails. They run along hunched over, growling and hissing at each other.

Attributes- The four strongest addicts have AGY 10, AWR 15, CHM 0, END 7, INL 0, SPD 7, STH 7, WIL 0, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 4. The weaker addicts have AGY 6, AWR 8, END 4, SPD 4, STH 3, WIL 3, BLD 1, BDY 1, INCY 3.

Typical Attack- The four healthiest addicts swarm an enemy, getting around on all sides and staying just out of range. When an enemy isn't looking or is occupied, they move in to range 0. If the enemy turns to face them, they jump back, but if the enemy doesn't turn then they use their next action to attack. They typically slash at the face with their long fingernails, doing either a Slash attack at AGY (10) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 5) or a Blinding Strike at AGY (10) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 10). A successful slash does ½ bladed damage and victims must make an opposed save vs. distracting pain.

problem is getting them all. Mauler addicts will run away when attacked, and survivors will wander the streets randomly (feeding on pigeons and strays) until they meet up with other Maulers and form a new pack.

Muggers/Burglars

Motivations: This group of tough young teens are used to being able to use their collective might to get whatever they want. They want money, typically to buy drugs with, and they are quite happy smashing a few heads to get that money. They want to grab whatever they can that has black market value and run off before security guards can show up.

Methods: Sometimes they wait around in dark, mostly empty parts of town for someone traveling alone. They don't have much patience, and may try to follow someone from an area with a lot of people in to an area without. Sometimes they threaten people to try to get their belongings, sometimes they just rush up and hit someone on the back of the head. They will also break in to the apartments of VR addicts, breaking down the door, terrorizing those inside while grabbing as much as they can carry. Burglars often prey on older relatives of a member of their group (since this is a place where they know who is inside and what might be stolen).

Typical Encounter: PCs in groups are seldom targeted, but if a PC wanders off alone, a group of muggers on a street corner may decide that he or she is good prey. A PC will be attacked by between 4 to 7 muggers, mostly armed with clubs and knives.

Pounders

Motivations: In the dangerous, hard world of life as a Street Person, Pounders survive by being tough and loose with their morals. They horn in on every opportunity, making sure they get the best of everything, from camping spots to care packages from shelters. They are bullies, they beat people up to prove they are in charge. They like alcohol, sex and being the toughest people on the block.

Methods: Pounders use sheer numbers to overwhelm victims. They are physically large, travel in large groups and give a good beating to anyone they feel like. They sleep in compounds, usually a vacant lot with a fence around it, which they can easily defend against invaders. Any extra money they make (or steal) is spent on drugs, which they use to lure homeless women in to their compounds. They are not above kidnapping and raping women when they cannot get one to come willingly.

Typical Encounter: Pounders will typically not mess with a competent-looking PCs. However, PCs may be begged by street people to do something about a Pounder gang that is terrorizing them. PCs may be asked to retrieve a woman that has been taken in to a Pounder compound.

Typical Muggers

Makeup- Four level 1 freelancers, the biggest and strongest is typically the leader.

Appearance- Four young men in their late teens, trying to dress like badasses (spikes, leather, tattoos, ostentatious weapons, gang old-school style clothing).

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 8, CHM 4, END 8, INL 5, SPD 10, STH 12 (leader has 14), WIL 7, BLD 4, BDY 5, INCY 4

Special Skills- All have Street Fighting: Armed (1).

Special Equipment- The leader has a Skullcrusher, two have Sticks With Nail, one has a Ripper. $200 in cash.

Typical Attack- They try to attack by surprise, one will make an extended knockout strike against the victim with the Skullcrusher at STH (14) + AGY (10) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 1). The others will then step in to finish the job, making strikes with the Stick With Nail and Ripper at STH (12) + AGY (10) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 3). If successful the Stick With Nail does 3 blunt, 1 ragged damage (pierces armor as 4 bladed) and the Ripper does 2 ragged damage.

Typical Pounder Gang

Makeup- Seven level 2 street people.

Appearance- Seven large men in their mid-thirties, they are homeless and wear scrounged clothing but it is nicer clothing than most homeless people have (nearly new blue jeans and hats, leather belts and jackets and fingerless gloves, nice boots). They are typically all the same ethnicity. Most have beards and short hair. They reek of beer, cigarettes and stale sweat.

Attributes- AGY 6, AWR 7, CHM 5, END 10, INL 6, SPD 5, STH 12, WIL 9, BLD 4, BDY 5, INCY 3

Special Equipment- Three have Pipes (range 1, 3 blunt), one has a Chain (range 2-3, 3 blunt), one has a Swinging Rock (range 2-3, 3 blunt), one has a Stick With Nail (range 2, 3 blunt 1 ragged damage (pierces armor as 4 bladed). They all have Steel Toed Boots. $50 in cash and change.

Typical Attack- They typically rush an enemy, encircling him or her, trying to stay in the range where they can hit the enemy (with their long weapons) but the enemy can't hit them, and making easy strikes against the enemy until the enemy falls down. They make strikes with their weapons at STH (12) + AGY (6) (-4 if it is a chain or swinging rock because they have a Hard Strike) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 (-4) vs. 7). As a reaction they jump-out at SPD (5) +AGY (6) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 14). When the victim is on the ground they make 2 blunt damage stomp attacks.

Pushers

Motivations: Pushers make quite a lot of money from selling to addicts. They can also earn bounties for killing (or capturing) enemies of the drug lords.

Methods: Pushers like to increase their base of customers by holding people down and forcing them to take drugs. They look for people who are alone and don't look like they belong to a gang. Although it is strictly forbidden by the Drug Lords, sometimes pushers will fight with each other over territory.

Typical Encounter: PCs will typically encounter a pusher gang who is trying to hold down and inject some innocent person. Typically, there will be five young people, the leader will have a pistol and the rest will have clubs and knives.

Serial Killers

Motivations: Depend on violent sexual fantasies to help them deal with life, occasionally driven to make these fantasies real.

Methods: Serial Killers tend to appear as normal, friendly young men. A typical ploy is to gain the trust of a young woman, then when the two are alone he will attack her from behind, knocking her out and dragging her to some pre-arranged spot.

Typical Encounter: Serial Killers avoid messing with people who look like they can defend themselves (which will be a majority of PCs). PCs will most likely become involved in tracking down a serial killer who has been terrorizing a neighborhood. Most serial killers attack people within a few blocks of where they live, and if PCs can come up with a good "profile" of the killer they won't have to ask around long before it rings bells.

Sex Industry Exploiters

Motivations: They make money by exploiting the weak and catering to the darkest desires of city residents and "tourists." The money they make is typically spent on drugs. They also tend to partake in the product that they sell.

Methods: Sex exploiters kidnap people (mostly women and children) or buy them from other people who have kidnapped them. They prefer victims who are physically and psychologically weak and ignorant of the city. Illegal immigrants are a favorite victim because they have few people in this country who will notice they are missing or who they can run to for help. Sex exploiters typically try to brainwash victims in to believing that there is no good trying to escape.

Typical Encounters: Sex exploiters must stay hidden, or face the wrath of city residents (especially the Sexologists). In any adventure involving sex exploiters, the hardest part is finding them. See the adventure Choo-Uhy (p.439) for an example group of exploiters.

Typical Pusher Gang: Wimpy

Makeup- Three young (12-16) teenage males.

Appearance- Three teenage males, one sometimes acts like the leader.

Attributes- AGY 9, AWR 8, CHM 6, END 10, INL 5, SPD 10, STH 10, WIL 5, BLD 3, BDY 2, INCY 2

Social Status- This is a new pusher gang. Until recently they were just a group of youths hanging out on a street-corner and intimidating passers-by. They have little money and little respect from anyone else in the drug lord organization. They probably won't make it through the year as a pusher gang.

Special Equipment- Two have Pipes, one has a Combat Knife, none have armor. They carry about $200 worth of cash and $400 worth of drugs at any given time.

Typical Attack- The two with pipes try to keep the enemy at bay by swinging wildly with their pipes (Strikes at STH (10) + AGY (9) + 1d20 vs. 25 or 1d20 vs. 6 and Pain/Stun Attacks at INL (4) + AGY (9) + 1d20 vs. 25 or 1d20 vs. 12). While they are doing this the one with the knife tries to get around in back and make an extended strike at STH (10) + AGY (9) +5 (extended) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 1). They dodge as a reaction at AWR (8) + AGY (9) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 8).

Typical Pusher Gang: Average

Makeup- Five teenage males, all around 16-18.

Social Status- This group has a well established piece of turf and they sell to addicts in that turf. Up to a thousand dollars pass through their hands on a good day.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 9, CHM 6, END 10, INL 6, SPD 10, STH 12, WIL 7, BLD 3, BDY 3, INCY 2

Special Equipment- One has a Freedom Army Pistol, two have Pipes and two have Hunting Knives. They carry about $500 worth of cash and $600 worth of drugs at any given time. All wear Modern Chainmail (AR 7, PR 3 bladed 1 blunt).

Special Skills- The two with the pipes have Club (2), the two with the bowie knives have Knife Fighting (2).

Typical Attack- The four with the hand weapons rush at the enemy, hoping to distract them while the one with the pistol picks them off one by one. The clubbers Strike at STH (12) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1 + 1d20 vs. 0) doing 3 blunt damage and Parry at STH (12) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 5 + 1d20 vs. 0). The knifers make Vital Strikes at AGY (10) + INL (6) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 vs. 7) doing 5 bladed damage and Dodge at AWR (9) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 2). The shooter Aims as one action and then Strikes with the next action at INL (6) + AGY (10) +4 (aim) +1d20 -1/7 ft. vs. 25 (or 1d20 -1/7ft. vs. 5) doing 5 bladed damage.

Typical Dagger Team

Makeup- 5 level 7 mercenaries, one is the team leader for this mission but they are all equal in rank and experience.

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 11, CHM 8, END 13, INL 10, SPD 12, STH 15, WIL 12, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 5

Appearance- They wear matte black plated armor with motorcycle helmets, they carry automatic weapons and driving black motorcycles.

Methods- Daggers do not use stealth. They strike hard and fast, killing anyone who gets in their way and using explosives to destroy any obstacle. They do not talk or investigate or sell drugs, their only job is to kill quickly and mercilessly.

Special Equipment- Each has:

-Armor/Sensory/Communication: Modern Plate Armor (AR 17, PR 10 bladed 10 blunt 8 burn, AGY penalty already figured in), Anti-Psychic Cap (+10 difficulty to psychic skills), Motorcycle Helmet: Sensory, Ear Bud Cellphone.

-Vehicle: Motorcycle (with Bullet Proofing, Intelligent Suspension, Ram Spikes, Noise Dampeners, and Theft Alarm: Aggressive).

-Weapons: Freedom Army Dagger (2 bladed damage, pierces as 6, Easy Vital Strike, Paralysis (80) in 1 round.). Shaped Charge (30 concussion damage). 2 Automatic Pistols (ROF 10, FR 8 ft., MR 750 ft., 5 bladed damage).

Special Skills- Automatic Weapons (3), Assassin: Armed (2), Motorcycle (4), Offensive Driving (3), Demolitions (1).

Typical Attack- When dealing with multiple enemies they make Area Attacks, sweeping a 15 ft. area at INL (10) + 10 (ROF) +12 (skill) + 1d20 -1/8ft. vs. 25 + 15(ft.) (or 1d20 -1/8ft. vs. 8). Each victim hit takes 5 bladed damage. When dealing with a single enemy they Aim as their first action then Vital Strike at INL (10) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) +4 (aim) +1d20 -1/8ft. vs. 35 (or 1d20 -1/8ft. vs. 3). As reactions they make simultaneous strikes.

Terrorists

Motivations: Terrorists tend to go after people in charge, and there are few of those in the city. Most terrorists in the city are laying low until they can attack a target outside of the city. They may attack if someone discovers them or if law enforcement comes after them. A few terrorists have turned freelance, using their skills for money. These terrorists are less dangerous (because they won't kill themselves for a cause) but do sometimes strike at city targets.

Methods: A terrorist moves in to town, gets a job (or welfare) and pretends to be a normal member of the community while preparing an attack. A terrorist may spend months or years quietly buying supplies, manufacturing weapons, surveying targets, gathering intelligence, and planning the attack. The most common weapon is a large bomb containing toxic chemicals. The bomb is planted in a place calculated to cause maximum chaos, loss of life and loss of public morale. Truly fanatical terrorists are unafraid to carry the weapon right up to the target and detonate it themselves.

Typical Encounters: Terrorists act like normal people most of the time, so PCs will likely be unaware when they have meet a terrorist. PCs might discover the identity of a terrorist if they break in to his or her apartment. Freelance terrorists may be hired to strike any city group that has pissed off someone with money.

Wild Dog Packs

Motivations: Dog packs live like their feral ancestors: they hunt down and kill prey animals.

Methods: Dogs survive mostly on birds, rats and stray cats. They will attack people who are sick, injured, unconscious. The more humans they kill and eat, the more bold they become. When trying to bring down a larger animal (e.g. a human) the dogs use basic pack tactics: they surround the animal on all sides, distracting it with growls and fake attacks, and when one dog sees an opening (an unprotected side) it attacks.

Typical Encounter: Homeless people, who spend the most time on the streets are usually the first to know when a dog pack has taken to prowling an area. Some stray dogs are harmless and are ignored, but if there are attacks (especially attacks on children) then street people will start looking for someone willing to hunt down and kill the pack.

Typical Freelance Terrorist

Level 4 Terrorist

Attributes- AGY 10, AWR 15, CHM 13, END 15, INL 15, SPD 10, STH 10, WIL 19, BLD 3, BDY 3, INCY 5

Appearance- Thirty-something male with a weather-worn face, plain style of dress, no visible body modifications. Clothing is cheap and simple, that of a worker.

Social Status- The freelance terrorist advertises on anonymous message boards on the internet, is contacted and hired anonymously. The freelance terrorist has few friends of social contacts.

Special Equipment- Sniper Rifle, Drill Gun, 5 Pipe Bombs, 5 Letter Bombs, Nightvision Goggles: Deluxe. $100 in cash.

Typical Attack- Double Aim (from Sniper) and Vital Strike with Sniper Rifle at INL (15) + AGY (10) +8 (skill) +8 (double aim) -1/50ft. +1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 +6 -1/50ft. vs. 0). The rifle does 6 (pierces armor as 9) damage on a normal strike.

Typical Wild Dog Pack

Makeup- Seven dogs, the largest and meanest male is the alpha.

Attributes- AGY 15, AWR 5(sight)/17(smell)/ 15(hearing), END 10, SPD 15, STH 6, WIL 3, BDY 2, BLD 2, INCY 3

Appearance- Seven large mutts, with dirty fur, scars and missing patches and blood-stained mouths. They are growling and baring their teeth.

Natural Weapons- They can bite at 1d20 vs. 6 (2 bladed damage) and make a Vital Strike bite at 1d20 vs. 12 (4 bladed damage).

Typical Attack- They will encircle the enemy, making split action jump-in and wings (at 1d20 vs. 11) doing 1 bladed damage and then jumping-out (at 1d20 vs. 10). When an enemy falls down, one will move in for an extended vital strike (at 1d20 vs. 7) doing 4 bladed damage with -10 to the next reaction.

After Killing the Baddie

The PCs just killed some piece of dangerous vermin scum and now they are busy patting each other on the back. They've just made the world a better place, they're heroes and are about to march on to their just rewards, right? Unfortunately, this is the city, not a children's book, and killing the baddie doesn't always make things alright. Here's some consequences to throw at PCs who are a little to cavalier with the deadly force, or to throw at cautious PCs just to fuck with them. Choose one you like or roll 1d6:

1: Kids- Apart from being a major evil asshole, the villain was also a devoted parent. As soon as the PCs kill the villain, they hear the plaintive weeping from where the now only-child is hidden. PCs should feel some duty to at least get the kid to safety (a relative, the Orphans, social services) which may be hard with the kid screaming, kicking, trying to grab weapons and stab the PCs.

2: Booby Traps- It's hard to resist searching a fallen enemy for some cash, weapons and other goodies that can make the PCs more powerful (or at least pay for the medical treatment they need after the battle). However, even a dead villain may still be dangerous. The most common (by but no means the only) trick is for a person to have a razorblade or needle in his or her pocket with something nasty on it.

3: Witness- Someone oversaw the climactic battle with the baddie, someone who thinks that the baddie was the good one and the PCs must therefore be in the wrong. A simple wrong assumption like this can lead a witness to seriously misinterpret and misremember what they saw. Now the PCs have someone running around telling anyone who will listen (including the Night Shift) that the PCs slaughtered some innocent and unarmed person.

4: Revenge- The villain had some friend, relative or lover who wants revenge for the death of the villain. This person probably doesn't really care if the villain was in the wrong or if the PCs were acting in self defense. Remember that people can have unexpected connections: a homeless, brain-damaged drug addict in rags may be the younger brother of an influential Indie gang member.

5: My Enemy's Enemy- There is no league of supervillains in the city, and sometimes the bad guys are at war with the other bad guys. By killing one villain, the PC may have inadvertently helped out some other villain, maybe even a worse villain. What if the PCs destroy a pounder gang and free the ten people they had locked up in a basement, only to later find out that those ten people were Colins? What if the PCs destroy an evil Pusher gang, only to have an even worse Pusher gang take over the territory? Suddenly the PCs are responsible for fixing what they did.

6: Disease- Did any of the PCs get wounded during a battle? Did any blood happen to splurt from the villain before his or her heart stopped beating? Maybe the villain was carrying some terrible disease that the PCs are now almost sure to catch.

Some Ethical Dilemmas

For <u>some</u> players, an ethical dilemma can make a game more interesting. One way to make ethical dilemmas relevant for PCs is to find a value that a PC has identified with (e.g. honesty, justice, nonviolence, etc.) in his or her character concept. Then try to find a situation in which the PC group will want to betray that value.

Crime- Most people in the city see the law as a joke. For instance: the law says that the unborn cannot legally get a job (thus dooming them to poverty), but it also says that people cannot live on the streets (thus making their being alive illegal). Thus, few people see an ethical problem with breaking laws. Many in the city see corporations as nothing but robber-barons who have manipulated the law so they can exploit people and take their money. These people see nothing wrong with stealing from corporations. But who can be stolen from? If it's okay to steal from corporations, how about rich people? How about middle class business owners? Is it okay for a homeless person who is starving to steal from a welfare family that can barely make ends meet?

Justice- Many people on the streets take it upon themselves to seek revenge for crimes committed against people they know. People's thoughts on revenge typically fall in to three camps: The "revenge is always right" people think that the universe demands revenge and that any truly loyal friend will seek revenge. The "best justice system we have" people see a code of revenge as the most useful justice system people have available to them in the city. The "revenge is not just" people think that judging crimes and punishing people should be left to the criminal justice system. Even when all the PCs believe in revenge, there are questions like "how much revenge is too much?" Example: An adolescent was robbing a gang member, hit him in the back of the head and killed him. Now the gang wants revenge, they intend to find the adolescent and kill him. The adolescent begs the PCs for protection, swears that he didn't mean to kill the person, that he is sorry and will make whatever reparations he can. Should the PCs protect the adolescent?

Ends vs. Means- This one is a classic (sometimes it will be so familiar that players may find it boring). The basic idea is to test what things PCs will do to achieve a good ends. GMs should find that uncomfortable spot where the players say "I'm not sure I would do that" Would the PCs torture a terrorist to save a thousand people? Would the PCs torture an innocent person to save a thousand people? Would PCs kill an innocent child to save a hundred others?

Associating with Evil- PCs are offered an opportunity to defeat some terrible evil, but to do it they must work with and aid some other evil. More than just an "ends justifies the means" dilemma, it also deals with how PCs manage their public image: do they allow themselves to be known as people who associate with evil? Example: PCs capture a Colin, and he tells them that he will give them the cure to a plague that is currently killing thousands, but they must let him go.

Honor- Should PCs honor promises that they made (without being under duress or lied to) even though something bad will happen? Does the value of being known as people who will keep their word outweigh the value of helping people right now? Example: PCs have been paid to deliver a drug that will cure a current plague. They have sworn to protect the drug with their lives and to deliver it to a rich gang leader who has just contacted the plague. On the way they meet a child who also has the disease and is in much worse shape (more likely to die) than the gang leader. Does compassion come first, or should the PCs honor the promise they made?

Free Will- Should the PCs favor someone's freedom of choice, or look after that person's best interests? What if a person is mentally ill, or has been brainwashed by a cult, or is underage, or has some other impairment? Example: A friend just got a new mental program that can turn off the fear centers of the brain. While the fear centers are off, she decides that she hates her life, that she has wanted to kill herself for as long as she can remember, but now that she feels no fear she is ready to do it. Do the PCs grab her and keep her tied up until she turns the program off? What if, after the program is off, she makes a decision to turn it on again so she can go through with the plan?

Guilt vs. Tech- These dilemmas ask: to what degree are people responsible for their actions if they are being influenced in some way? Should people be held accountable if they were brainwashed, under the influence of drugs or other tech? Example: PCs track down the woman who committed a brutal murder, but the woman they find begs for mercy. She shows them proof that she was genetically engineered to have a deadly temper. There is no way to remove the offending genes or put in a rage-blocking mental program without the possibility of seriously damaging her. She promises that, now that she knows about her temper, she will learn to control it. Do the PCs give her a chance to change (and possibly to kill someone else) just because she has some artificial genes in her?

Individuality- Technology today has the ability to change any part of a person, from the DNA to the mind. PCs may have a number of comforting assumptions, like that a person is the same individual he or she was yesterday. When GMs blur the line on individuality, ethical problems become much more difficult. Example: PCs track down a child molester who once tortured and murdered children in the city orphanage. When they find the person he claims that he is not the same person. He claims that an accident with a malfunctioning mental program completely changed portions of his brain, and that he has a different personality and is not the same person. His wife and children attest that he would never hurt anyone. Should the child molester answer for his crimes?

Humanity- Similarly, technology can blur the lines of what is human. Most in the city would have no problem killing a golem (a human body with a simple AI in place of a human mind) to save a regular human. What if the distinction is not so clear? Example: The Keepers are hunting an animal that escaped from Freedom Army labs two decades ago. It is a genetically engineered animal and they hope to make thousands selling it on the black market. The PCs find the animal first and find that it has some human DNA and the intelligence of a gorilla, with just enough language abilities to say "help". Do they fight the Keepers, possibly killing them, to protect the animal?

Some Computer Systems

Bridge and Tunnel Authority Net

This network monitors and controls the automated security checkpoints that control every way in and out of the city.

Access: Not on the internet. Microwave dishes send to a satellite which links the control rooms for each checkpoint and a BTA office in Queens. BTA officers monitor the gates and respond to attempted access violations.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 10% monitoring by level 4 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 25

A Checkpoint Control Computer:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 2d6 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Virus Protection Rating: 20

Power: 6

Privileges

User: See live video and scans or recordings from the past week.

Superusers: Lock a checkpoint.

Admin: Open a checkpoint despite drug or firearm alarms.

CABRE Flight Reservation Net

The Completely Automated Business Reservation Environment is used by every major airline to handle reservations.

Access: Accessed from the internet by ticket agents and travel net sites throughout the world.

Network Firewall Strength: 30

Network Security: 80% monitoring by level 1 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

An Access Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every second)

System Firewall Strength: 40

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Virus Protection Rating: 40

Power: 15

Privileges

User: Check any reservation, make or change reservations on one airline.

Superusers: Make or change reservations on any airline.

Admin: Manage accounts.

Child Welfare DB

Tracks children who have had any contact with social services.

Access: Accessed from the internet by social workers in the child welfare offices throughout the state (including the city).

Network Firewall Strength: 15

Network Security: 5% monitoring by level 2 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

Database Mainframe:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 20

Power: 8

Privileges

User: Read files on any child. Enter reports.

Superusers: Edit files, change a child's assignment.

Admin: Delete files.

Dept. of Health Medical Records Mainframe

Doctors and nurses in state run clinics and hospitals in the city keep patient records in this computer system.

Access: Accessed from the internet.

Network Firewall Strength: 25

Network Security: 30% monitoring by level 3 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

The Mainframe Computer:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 10

Privileges

User: Look up patient records, add notes. Look up prescriptions.

Superusers: Edit or delete patient records. Enter prescriptions.

Admin: Edit or delete prescriptions.

Fed Vital Statistics Repository

Whenever someone is born or dies, a certified record is supposed to be entered in this system. If someone does not exist within this system (and does not have a visa), he or she cannot gain legal employment or public assistance.

Access: Accessed from the internet by hospitals and coroner's offices.

Network Firewall Strength: 35

Network Security: 40% monitoring by level 2 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 15

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 35 (a login every second)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe 10

Virus Protection Rating: 35

Power: 12

Privileges

User: Enter a birth certificate or death certificate (current date only). Look up a birth or death record.

Superusers: Add supplemental information to a birth or death certificate.

Admin: Erase any record that a person was ever born.

NY City Department of Buildings Net

This network keeps blueprints and building permits for every building on the island. Note that many blueprints were lost during the Freedom Wars, and many abandoned buildings have nothing more than a "condemned" notation in the database.

Access: Accessed from the internet by the employees of the department of buildings, most of whom are corrupt and only come in to work to take bribes.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 10% monitoring by level 2 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 2d6 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 20

Power: 5

Privileges

User: View blueprints and permits. Create permits.

Superusers: Order a building condemned, schedule a visit from an inspector.

Admin: Edit records, including blueprints.

NYR-LAN Administrative Net

New York Regional Local Area Network is the city's largest internet service provider. This network connects field offices in the city (and other urban areas throughout the east coast) for billing and work orders.

Access: Accessed from the internet from NYR-LAN corporate and field offices.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 7% monitoring by level 1 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 20

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 25 (a login every minute)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 7

Privileges

User: Enter, view and edit work orders, put notes on bills, update customer records.

Superusers: Edit bills and billing information.

Admin: Remove bills.

NYR-LAN Routers

Every packet that goes from NYR-LAN customers to the internet (and visa versa) goes through these internet routers, which are located in an NYR-LAN office downtown. Information also passes through these routers from other routers outside the city.

Access: Accessed from the internet from NYR-LAN corporate and field offices.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 15% monitoring by level 3 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 25

A Router:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 2d6 minutes)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe10

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 20

Privileges

User: See packets traveling through the network.

Superusers: Block access to/from a particular address.

Admin: Edit packets traveling through the network.

NYUD Electrical Grid Mainframe

The New York Utilities District gives power to the whole city. The mainframe monitors power consumption and can turn off power to individual blocks. Billing information is stored in a separate network.

Access: Accessed from the internet by NYUD employees working in a small office downtown.

Network Firewall Strength: 30

Network Security: 3% monitoring by level 1 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 30

A Router:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 30 (a login every 4d6 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: None

Operating System: Mainframe10

Virus Protection Rating: 20

Power: 5

Privileges

User: View grid statistics and history.

Superusers: Reroute power through different substations.

Admin: Cut off power to particular blocks.

State Court Net

This network is used by the state's courts to keep track of trials and rulings.

Access: Accessed from the internet by judges, clerks, public and private attorneys, some of whom operate in or nearby the criminal courts building in the Bowery.

Network Firewall Strength: 15

Network Security: 5% monitoring by level 2 Admin.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 10

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every 1d6 hours)

System Firewall Strength: 20

Trusts: None

Operating System: OpenFree

Virus Protection Rating: 30

Power: 3

Privileges

User: View dockets, rulings, warrants, subpoenas.

Superusers: Enter rulings, warrants, subpoenas.

Admin: Edit/delete rulings, warrants, subpoenas.

Universe ATM Network

This network allows anyone belonging to any of the banks on the network to use any of the ATMs. ATMs connect to the network and send PINs, receive amount of cash available, and log deductions and deposits.

Access: Each ATM in the network is connected to a private internet connection (not the NYR-LAN).

Network Firewall Strength: 40

Network Security: 90% monitoring by level 2 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 30

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 40 (a login every second)

System Firewall Strength: 35

Trusts: Bank mainframes

Operating System: Proprietary

Virus Protection Rating: 40

Power: 2

Privileges

User: View balances, authorize withdrawal of up to $200 from an account.

Superusers: Withdrawal of up to $1000.

Admin: Empty an ATM of money, credit an account by any amount.

ViCap

The Violent Criminal Apprehension Program is a network used by police agencies in the US and Canada to track criminals. People on the network can search for a criminal by name, appearance, fingerprints, DNA and even MO. Records for each criminal includes last-known-address, known associates, gang or organized crime affiliations, criminal history (including crimes the person is suspected of having committed) and current warrants.

Access: Law enforcement officers throughout the nation access via the internet from computers in their offices and portable computers connected to cellular networks in squad cars.

Network Firewall Strength: 20

Network Security: 30% monitoring by level 3 Admins.

Organization Secrecy Rating: 15

A Network Node:

Remote Login Encryption Strength: 20 (a login every second)

System Firewall Strength: 30

Trusts: Law enforcement records mainframes.

Operating System: OpenCert

Virus Protection Rating: 35

Power: 6

Privileges

User: Lookup records.

Superusers: Add warrants or notes.

Admin: Edit records, delete warrants.

NPCs

Index of NPCs

More About Levels

A good way to look at levels is as a rough measurement of how well characters have proven that they can survive by doing whatever it is they do.

At level 0, the person doesn't have the skills necessary to survive for any length of time by themselves. They are either shut-ins who avoid the street, are under the protection of other more powerful characters, or they survive by pure luck alone. Most of the homeless addicts and crazies are level 0: they die quite often and their survival is more a matter of random chance than it is any kind of skill.

Giving Depth To An Encounter With A Street Person

The situation: the PCs need a piece of information and the only person who has it is an old wino, not in any street family. The GM's first instinct may be to focus on one motive, the motive of the NPC to get as much money out of the PCs as possible for the few moments he has something valuable to barter with. Reducing the NPC to a single motivation will probably cause the PCs to act just as shallow and selfish. Adding more motivations can make the encounter a little more interesting, a little more surprising and possibly even humbling to the PCs.

One cliché to avoid is the "fall from grace": the street person who was once someone powerful or important. Apart from being over-used, this cliché intimates that a homeless person must have once been rich or powerful to have an interesting story to tell.

Parental Feelings: The average street person will be older than the average PC and the street person may feel an instinct to help out a couple of nice kids if he or she can.

Shyness: Some street people are quite shy, many have severe self esteem problems and find it uncomfortable to talk to people they think are looking down on them. The street person will probably try to cut off the encounter as soon as possible.

Entertainment: Living on the streets can be very boring. A lot of it is repetition: hitting the same canning routes, the same soup lines, the same fast-food place dumpsters every night. Sometimes street people just want to hear an entertaining story or have a lively debate.

Respect: Some street people like to be treated with respect, and will gladly treat anyone who does so in turn. Some street people demand to be treated with respect and will refuse to deal with anyone who doesn't.

Heroism: Some street people want to be part of something grand, to have stories they can tell. They might feel that giving a crucial piece of information is enough to make them part of the story. On the other hand, they might want to take a larger part in the events the PCs are involved in.

Power: Some street people feel quite powerless and having something that someone else wants is a good way to exercise having power over someone else. The street person will probably do the right thing eventually, but will first want to make it absolutely clear that they are the ones in control.

Altruism: Most street people are used to helping each other and if they have something they can do to help someone else, their first instinct will be to do it.

Attraction: Some street people may do whatever he or she can to help in order to impress or get on the good side of a PC he or she finds attractive.

Non-Partisanship: The street person may not want to get involved in some conflict without knowing both sides of the situation. After all, they only have the PCs word as to what's going on and as far as they know the PCs are the bad guys.

Economic Discrimination: Some street people are prejudiced against people wealthier than they are. The wealthier the PC is, the more likely the street person is to have negative stereotypes about the PC. The street person will interprets events to fit in those stereotypes.

Drugs: There are a lot of people who fall somewhere between total addicts and total abstainers. Many street people will use drugs when they can get a hold of them easily, if nothing more than to break the monotony. If the homeless person is on drugs their behavior could be far removed from what it would normally be.

Favor: The street person may want something other than money in return for their info. On the streets, money doesn't last long (it is stolen or misspent), and many street people would rather have a phone address they can call in some future time of need.

Allegiances: Many street people have family who are not street people. Even if that family is estranged (addicts tend to burn bridges) the street person may still feel an allegiance to them. If something that the PCs are going to do will have a major effect on the city, it is likely that there will be some potential effect on someone the street person cares about, and this effect, even if it is only imagined, will effect whether or not the street person will help the PCs.

Level ones have some thing they do to survive, and they do it well enough that their chances of surviving are pretty good, given they don't choose to get themselves in to trouble. Level 0 crazies are just barely scraping by: they have no skills or methods to reliably get food and a safe place to sleep and they are easy prey to anyone who happens to come after them. Level 1 crazies have the essentials of survival taken care of (they know where to get food, where to sleep) and can defend-themselves against most random attacks (perhaps they have a knife and some phone-book armor, or have taught themselves a bit of boxing).

Subsequent levels simply represent more mastery of whatever it is that person's class does, and they are increasingly rare. There are no level 10 crazies in the city. If there was, the level 10 crazy would do whatever other crazies do to survive, but would do it exceptionally well: would have an encyclopedic knowledge of the city (with many hiding places, places to sleep, dumpsters to get food out of, etc.), would have an intimate knowledge of crazy social circles (home phone addresses of Outreach volunteers, the exact psychopathology of neighboring crazies and how to talk to them to get information and help. Most importantly, the level 10 crazy would know how to handle his or her own mental illness extraordinarily well. This doesn't mean he or she isn't mentally ill. A person paralyzed from the waist down can learn to get around quite well in a wheelchair but still be disabled. In the same way, a level 10 crazy would know that he or she is mentally ill (even if the crazy doesn't think of it in those terms), knows what his or her personal limits and knows alternate ways to do things that the mental illness prevents him or her from doing. The level 10 crazy would have several levels in some combat skill (probably Street Fighting: Armed) and a selection of scavenged weapons and armor.

The point here is that a level 10 crazy is still a crazy homeless person who can not make it in the society of work and public assistance, or even in the society of organized homeless families. A level 10 crazy could not start up a business and make a million, or organize gang members to strike against the Skin Borgs, or take on a Hungry in a fight. In the crazy's own circles, however, the level 10 crazy is very powerful: is respected, skilled, wise and relatively prosperous. If some group of first level gang members decide they need to take the crazy out, you can be sure that the level 10 crazy has dealt with and survived threats this great a number of times before. As a group, the PCs can certainly outfight the level 10 crazy, but they probably can't out-run, out-hide or out-trap him or her.

Quick NPC Creation

Bonus Point Method- Figure out which level the NPC should be, and build the NPC using the character creation rules, but using a set number of Bonus Points (see table below). For example, to build a level 3 NPC you would start with 180 Bonus Points.

Example: You might decide to devote 100 points to attributes (giving approximately 12 each), 15 points for health attributes (giving 5 each), 40 points to skills (giving 120 skill points) and 25 points for money (giving $3125/$6250/$12500 depending upon whether this is a Street Person, Well or Indie).

Core Method- Figure out what the three most important attributes and handful of most important skills for the NPC are (or use the examples given below) and look up the level on the preceding table. Set the attributes and skills, choose some random skills, buy equipment up to the amount of money provided (double the money if the PC is an Indie).

Example: *The PCs run in to a level 10 street fighter. The street fighter has a STH, AGY and END of 15 and all other attributes are 12. The street fighter has Boxing (4), Street Fighting: Armed (4), Street Fighting: Unarmed (4) and Knife Fighting (4) and 7 random skills. Rolling on the table on p.433 we get Genetics: Anatomical (3), Microelectronics (3), Slam (3), Kalor Language (3), Graphic Design (3), Genetics: Tissue (3) and Immobilization (3). The fighter also has the first $2000 worth of the listed core equipment: Shiv ($5), Phonebook Armor ($10), Knife: Combat ($35), Motorcycle Outfit ($150), Black Market Knife Poison ($75), Sword: Katana ($100), Modern Chainmail ($500), Single Shot Gun ($200) and Thor-O-Zine ($50).*

If we think she might be getting in a fight with the PCs we can even figure out his most likely attack. Since she has Knife Fighting (4) which lists "+8 to Vital Strike (Bladed)" as one of the actions, that means she gets +20 to a bladed vital strike (the +8 and +4 for each skill level above the first). She would use the Knife: Combat (range 0-1, 2 bladed) covered with the Black Market Knife Poison (rolling randomly, we get "Within 1 round: 1 BLD damage per round for 6 rounds. Excessive thirst, Vomiting (20), Anaphylactic Shock (20), numbness (+7 to save vs. pain, -7 to touch based AWR rolls), blurry vision (-7 to actions/ reactions and AWR based rolls) for 24 hours."). The vital strike would be AGY (15) + INL (12) + 20 (skill) +1d20 vs. 35 (or 12 + 1d20 vs. 0). Since Thor-O-Zine gives +3 AGY and +2 INL, that would be an additional +5 if the street

Sample NPC Archetypes

Street Fighter

Core Attributes: STH, AGY, END

Core Skills: Boxing, Street Fighting: Armed, Street Fighting: Unarmed, Knife Fighting

Core Equipment: Shiv ($5), Phonebook Armor ($10), Knife: Combat ($35), Motorcycle Outfit ($150), Black Market Knife Poison ($75), Sword: Katana ($100), Modern Chainmail ($500), Single Shot Gun ($200), Thor-O-Zine ($50), Nanoweave Armor ($2000).

Psychic

Core Attributes: AWR, WIL, END

Core Skills: Mind Reading, Emotional Attack, Physiological Control, Psychic Sense.

Core Equipment: Knife: Switchblade ($45), Motorcycle Outfit ($150), Bright ($15), Taser ($150), Soma ($20), Psychic Tracking Bug ($150), Nanoweave Armor ($2000), Moped ($1000).

Level	Core Attributes	Other Attributes	Core Skills	Other Skills	Core Equipment	Bonus Points
0	10	7	2 at level 1	None	$125	130
1	11	8	all at level 1	None	$250	150
2	11	9	all at level 1	2 at level 1	$375	165
3	12	9	all at level 2	2 at level 1	$500	180
4	12	10	all at level 2	3 at level 1	$625	195
5	13	10	all at level 3	3 at level 1	$750	210
7	14	11	all at level 3	5 at level 2	$1000	240
10	15	12	all at level 4	7 at level 3	$2000	285
15	17	13	all at level 5	10 at level 3	$3500	360
20	18	14	all at level 6	15 at level 4	$5000	435

Random Skills
Roll on 1d1000

Athletics (ATHL)
0 to 6	Acrobatics (AGY)
7 to 11	Bicycle (AGY)
12 to 17	Climbing (AGY)
18 to 23	Driving (AGY)
24 to 28	Hold Breath (WIL)
29 to 34	Low Gravity Movement (AGY)
35 to 40	Motorcycle (AGY)
41 to 45	Running (SPD)
46 to 51	Skates (AGY)
52 to 57	Slipboard Combat (AGY)
58 to 62	Slipboard Riding (AGY)
63 to 68	Slipboard Stunts (AGY)
69 to 74	Sports (AGY)
75 to 79	Swimming (END)

Bio/Medtech (BIO)
80 to 84	Acupuncture (INL)
85 to 89	Addiction (INL)
90 to 94	Diagnosis (INL)
95 to 99	Emergency Medicine (INL)
100 to 104	Forensic Neurology (INL)
105 to 109	Forensic Pathology (INL)
110 to 114	Genetic Therapy (INL)
115 to 119	Nanomedicine (INL)
120 to 124	Pharmacology (INL)
125 to 129	Physical Therapy (INL)
130 to 134	Plastic Surgery (INL)
135 to 139	Psychotherapy (INL)
140 to 144	Psychopharmacology (INL)
145 to 149	Surgery (INL)
150 to 154	Veterinary Medicine (INL)

Combat (CMBT)
155 to 160	Aikido (Combat)
161 to 165	Archery (Combat)
166 to 170	Assassin :Armed (Combat)
171 to 175	Assassin: Unarmed (Combat)
176 to 181	Automatic Weapons (Combat)
182 to 186	Boxing (Combat)
187 to 191	Club (Combat)
192 to 197	Fencing (Combat)
198 to 202	Florentine Sword (Combat)
203 to 207	Immobilization (Combat)
208 to 212	Kickboxing (Combat)
213 to 218	Knife Fighting (Combat)
219 to 223	Knife Throwing (Combat)
224 to 228	Olanidad (Combat)
229 to 234	Olaninan (Combat)
235 to 239	Pistol (Combat)
240 to 244	Rifle/Shotgun (Combat)
245 to 249	Razormouth (Combat)
250 to 255	Self-defense Weapons (Combat)
256 to 260	Shiv (Combat)
261 to 265	Slam (Combat)
266 to 271	Sniper (Combat)
272 to 276	Specific Weapon Training (Combat)
277 to 281	Staff Fighting (Combat)
282 to 287	Street Fighting: Armed (Combat)
288 to 292	Street Fighting: Unarmed (Combat)
293 to 297	Subway Fighting (Combat)
298 to 302	Sword and Shield (Combat)
303 to 308	Tae Kwon Do (Combat)
309 to 313	Water Combat (Combat)
314 to 318	Wrestling (Combat)

Creative (CRTV)
319 to 325	Blacksmithing (INL)
326 to 331	Brewing (INL)
332 to 337	Carpentry (INL)
338 to 343	Cooking (AWR)
344 to 350	Gardening (INL)
351 to 356	Graphic Design (INL)
357 to 362	Music (AWR)
363 to 368	Photography (AWR)
369 to 375	Sculpture (AWR)
376 to 381	Storytelling (CHM)
382 to 387	Visual Arts (AWR)
388 to 394	Weapon Making (INL)

Information (INFO)
395 to 398	Computer Modeling (INL)
399 to 403	Cryptography (INL)
404 to 407	Information Smuggling (INL)
408 to 412	Math (INL)
413 to 417	Mnemonics (INL)
418 to 421	Money (INL)

Intellectual (INTL)
422 to 426	Agriculture (INL)
427 to 430	Archeology/Paleontology (INL)
431 to 434	Botany (INL)
435 to 439	Ecology (INL)
440 to 443	Genetics: Anatomical (INL)
444 to 447	Genetics: Botanical (INL)
448 to 452	Genetics: Cellular (INL)
453 to 456	Genetics: Disease (INL)
457 to 460	Genetics: Neurological (INL)
461 to 465	Genetics: Tissue (INL)
466 to 469	Geology (INL)
470 to 473	Linguistics (INL)
474 to 478	Meteorology (INL)
479 to 482	Neurology: Consciousness (INL)
483 to 486	Neurology: Personality (INL)
487 to 491	Neurology: Psychic (INL)
492 to 495	Neurology: Sensorimotor (INL)
496 to 500	Pathology (INL)
501 to 504	Philosophy (INL)
505 to 508	Physics (INL)
509 to 513	Psychic Science (INL)

Military (MIL)
514 to 517	Airplane Pilot (INL)
518 to 522	Biological Weapons (INL)
523 to 526	Boat Pilot (INL)
527 to 531	Brainwashing (INL)
532 to 536	Demolitions (INL)
537 to 540	Gun Repair (INL)
541 to 545	Helicopter (INL)
546 to 550	Interrogation (CHM)
551 to 554	Military Tactics (INL)
555 to 559	Offensive Driving (INL)
560 to 563	Poisons (INL)
564 to 568	Torture (INL)
569 to 573	Watersled (INL)

Psychic Exotic (PSYX)
574 to 575	Immune System Attack (WIL)
576 to 576	Insanity Attack (WIL)
577 to 578	Memory Attack (WIL)
579 to 580	Psychic Immortality (WIL)
581 to 582	Psychic Invisibility (WIL)
583 to 584	Psychic Kill (WIL)
585 to 586	Self Image Projection (WIL)

Psychic Manipulative (PSYM)
587 to 588	Belief Attack (WIL)
589 to 591	Calm Attack (WIL)
592 to 593	Control Attack (WIL)
594 to 596	Emotional Attack (WIL)
597 to 599	Hallucination Attack (WIL)
600 to 601	Pain Attack (WIL)
602 to 604	Physiological Control (WIL)
605 to 606	Psychic Defense (WIL and AWR)
607 to 609	Suggestion (WIL)

Psychic Sensory (PSYS)
610 to 611	Clairsentience (AWR)
612 to 614	Mediumship (AWR)
615 to 619	Mind Reading (AWR)
617 to 619	Precognition (AWR)
620 to 622	Psychic Sense (AWR)
623 to 624	Psychometry (AWR)

Tech (TECH)
625 to 629	Anonymity (INL)
630 to 634	Bomb Disarming (INL)
635 to 638	Chemical Analysis (INL)
639 to 643	Copy Protection (INL)
644 to 648	Data Pirating (INL)
649 to 652	Denial of Service (INL)
653 to 657	Internet Browsing (INL)
658 to 662	Jellynailing (INL)
663 to 667	Linework (INL)
668 to 671	Mental Programming (INL)
672 to 676	Microelectronics (INL)
677 to 681	Nanobot Programming (INL)
682 to 686	Nanoengineering (INL)
687 to 690	Network Protocols (INL)
691 to 695	Network Security (INL)
696 to 700	Operating Systems (INL)
701 to 704	Payphones (INL)
705 to 709	Production Chemistry (INL)
710 to 714	Programming: AI (INL)
715 to 719	Programming: Application (INL)
720 to 723	Programming: Virus (INL)
724 to 728	Programming: VR (INL)
729 to 733	Robotics (INL)
734 to 737	Secondary Nanotech (INL)
738 to 742	Smart Chemicals (INL)
743 to 747	Sniffing (INL)
748 to 752	System Crashing (INL)
753 to 756	System Prowling (INL)

Thief/Espionage (THIE)
757 to 762	Alarm Systems (AWR)
763 to 768	Auto-Theft (INL)
769 to 774	Disguise (CHM)
775 to 780	Escape Artistry (AGY)
781 to 786	Forgery (INL)
787 to 791	Impersonation (CHM)
792 to 797	Lock Picking (AGY)
798 to 803	Pocket Picking (AGY)
804 to 809	Prowling (AGY)

Sociological (SOC)
810 to 814	Corporations (INL)
815 to 819	Fashion and Beauty (INL)
820 to 824	Foreign Language (INL)
825 to 828	History: City (INL)
829 to 833	History: World (INL)
834 to 838	Kalor Language (INL)
839 to 843	Law: Basic (INL)
844 to 848	Law: Business (INL)
849 to 853	Law: Clowdian (INL)
854 to 858	Law: Criminal (INL)
859 to 862	Law: International (INL)
863 to 867	Law: Tech (INL)
868 to 872	Law: Tort (INL)
873 to 877	Legends (INL)
878 to 882	Oratory (CHM)
883 to 887	Social Work (INL)

Street (STRT)
888 to 892	Animal Training (CHM)
893 to 898	Card Counting (INL)
899 to 904	City Knowledge (INL)
905 to 909	Drug Resistance (WIL)
910 to 915	Gambling (INL)
916 to 921	Graffiti (INL)
922 to 926	Herbal Medicine (INL)
927 to 932	Hypnosis (CHM)
933 to 938	Light Sleep (AWR)
939 to 943	Mechanics (INL)
944 to 949	Moneysaving (INL)
950 to 955	Needles (AGY and Combat)
956 to 960	Plumbing (INL)
961 to 966	Poison Tolerance (END)
967 to 972	Seduction (CHM)
973 to 977	Sleight of Hand (AGY)
978 to 983	Street Drugs (INL or AWR)
984 to 989	Tracking (AWR)
990 to 994	Trading (INL)
995 to 1000	Wilderness Survival (INL)

Sample NPC Archetypes (continued)

Artist

Core Attributes: INL, AWR, CHM

Core Skills: Graphic Design, Music, Visual Arts, Photography, Storytelling

Core Equipment: Spray Paint ($20), Digital Camera: Cheap ($5), Instrument: Acoustic ($20), Phonebook Armor ($5), Videocamera: Cheap ($40), Mini-Blowtorch ($350), Finger Writer ($850), Digital Camera: Professional ($500), Instrument: Electronic ($150)

Hacker

Core Attributes: CHM, INL, AWR

Core Skills: Operating Systems, Internet Browsing, Sniffing, Cryptography, Network Protocols, System Prowling, Microelectronics.

Core Equipment: Port Scanner ($5), 10 Caffeine Pills ($5), Trojan: Spy ($10), Denial of Service Program ($20), Dagger: Throwing ($49), Palmtop: Communicator ($100), Code Breaker: Older ($100), Maxin ($50), Computer Repair Tools: Portable ($25), Palmtop: Linework ($200), AutoProjectile ($650), Laptop: Used ($400), Code Breaker: Latest ($1000), Laptop: Military ($2000)

Catburglar

Core Attributes: AGY, AWR, INL

Core Skills: Prowling, Lock Picking, Alarm Systems, Pocket Picking, Climbing

Core Equipment: Lock Picks: Homemade ($5), Shiv ($2), Fingerless Gloves ($2), Lock Picks: Professional ($50), Rope and Grapple ($75), Motorcycle Outfit ($125), Bolt Cutters: Folding ($100), Nightvision Goggles: Cheap ($25), Micro Tentacle ($200), Lock Breaking Kit ($225), Electronic Ears: 3D ($550), Mini-Blowtorch ($350), Climbing Pads ($1000), Quiet Cloak ($2000).

"WINNER"

An introductory adventure for level 1 PCs.

Synopsis

Len, a mildly-retarded worker just won the lottery. On Monday he is going to get the money. In the meantime, he invites the PCs to a small party in his apartment. Word has gotten around and people have shown up at the party hoping to take advantage of the winner, some in a subtle way and some in a very blatant way. One guest wants to force Len to become addicted to drugs. One guest will try to poison Len's girlfriend and blackmail Len with the cure (not realizing that Len does not yet have the money). Another guest wants to seduce Len and replace Len's current girlfriend.

PC Introductions

The easiest way to get PCs involved is for them to know Len and to be invited to the party by Len personally. PCs might be neighbors, coworkers, or people that Len happens to see on the street a lot. When Len sees the PC he will tell the PC that he just won the lottery and is having a party at his place on Saturday at 6 to celebrate. PCs have many motivations to come: they may find Len likable and want to please him by coming to the party, they may worry for Len's safety (especially since he is going around telling everyone he sees that he's rich) they may want to get on Len's good side in hopes that he will give them something, or they may just go for the beer and snacks.

When they get to the party determines what stage of the action they are in. If possible, it is a good idea to let the PCs mingle and get to know each other before starting the action. Hopefully when they see Len's life turn to shit they will decide to try to help him out.

NPCs

Len Smalls
(Mildly Retarded Worker and Lottery Winner)

Level 0 Worker

Attributes- AWR 3, AGY 7, CHM 4, END 7, INL 1, SPD 7, STH 8, WIL 6, BLD 3, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- Half caucasian, half asian. In his mid-thirties. Len has short black hair, a round face, is slightly pudgy, has short-stubby features. He wears jeans and a large T-Shirt.

Social Status- Len just quit his position as a full-time employee of Food By The Pound, a local fast food restaurant. He is friendly and outgoing and well liked by his coworkers, neighbors and many other people he knows around the neighborhood. Len just recently won the lottery and if he can get to the lottery office in Queens on Monday he will have $200,000 per year put in his bank account for 5 years.

History- Len was born in the city. He was born with a mild developmental disability but he never needed special care or education. He graduated from highschool and when he turned 18 he moved out on his own. For more than a decade he has worked as a fast food worker, with only a few token pay raises and no promotions. For years, Len has spent a dollar every day to buy a lottery ticket. Last Thursday after work he scratched off a ticket in the liquor store near his apartment and found he had won a one million dollar prize.

Personality- Unless they give him a reason not to, Len is very friendly to everyone he meets and treats everyone like a good friend. He always stops to say hi to everyone, whether they are gang members or homeless people. Len has been hurt by people who have abused his kindness and trust, but instead of becoming cynical he has mostly forgotten about those events. Although his life is fairly happy, Len has always fantasized about what it would be like to be rich and live in some beautiful private city.

Motivations- Len wants, more or less, whatever corporate media tells him to want: a wife and family, a big home in a nice neighborhood, a nice car, vacations in the Pacific, etc. Len thinks that now that he has wont he lottery he will finally achieve those dreams. As soon as he gets the money he wants to move to a nice place in a nearby private city. He loves his girlfriend and wants her to move in with him. He is planning to ask her to marry him.

Methods- Len has found that honesty, friendliness and hard work have gotten him most of the things he's needed in his life. He has never faced a serious threat to his life (or the lives of the people he loves) and if faced with such a threat he will quickly give in and do anything he's told.

Typical Attack- If forced to fight, Len will lash out with his fists. However, since he doesn't have any practice fighting he will suffer a -4 penalty to all strikes. He would make a ½ blunt damage strike at AGY (7) + STH (8) -4 (unskilled) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 14).

Carrie Nguyen (Len's Girlfriend)

Level 0 Worker

Attributes- AWR 6, AGY 5, CHM 5, END 8, INL 3, SPD 9, STH 2, WIL 6, BLD 2, BDY 2, INCY 4.

Appearance- Short, fat, asian features, short curly brown hair. Wears a grey sweatshirt and jeans.

Social Status- Carrie used to be a fast food worker (and coworker of Len's), but now she receives welfare and spends most of her day watching VR movies. She is mostly a shut-in, she only leaves the house to visit Len and only when he will accompany her. She is Len's girlfriend and has few other friends or family in the city.

History- Carrie was born in the city to shut-in parents. When she turned 18 she started working in a fast food restaurant (because she could not figure out the welfare paperwork). She met Len there and has been his girlfriend for several years. A few months ago she had an argument with her boss and she quit. She finally figured out how to get on welfare and now lives as a shut-in.

Personality- Carrie is scared of most people in the city. She thinks that the majority of people out on the streets are either dangerous or looking to take advantage of people. She fears the city and the people in it and she want to leave as soon as possible. She has very poor self-esteem (she thinks of herself as ugly) and the main way she knows how to assert herself is to complain. She likes Len because he is a nice guy and because she doesn't fear he will leave her for a more attractive woman.

Motivations- Carrie thinks it was a bad idea for Len to have a party. She fears that someone at the party will try to hurt them and she fears that something might happen to make them lose the money they've won. Carrie wants to leave the city with Len as soon as possible. Now that he is rich she wants to pressure him in to marrying her.

Methods- Carrie tries to get her way by pouting, complaining and acting grumpy. Unfortunately, Len is too busy being happy about the winnings and trying to make it a nice party to notice. If confronted with actual danger she will try to run away, hide behind Len, or curl up in to a ball.

Margaret "Star" O'Dell (One-Woman Pusher Gang)

Level 3 Pusher

Attributes- AWR 15, AGY 14, CHM 5, END 9, INL 11, SPD 9, STH 13, WIL 16, BLD 5, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- Star is in her thirties, Caucasian, tall and muscular. She has straight black hair to her back, small round sunglasses, bright-red lipstick, pale skin, black trenchcoat (with long sleeves covering gloved hands), black sweater and black leather pants. She has a very serious expression on her face, and when she smiles it is slow, deliberate and predatory looking.

Social Status- Star has been selling drugs for nearly ten years and became a pusher for the Drug Lords as soon as they consolidated. Star has earned a fairly large section of turf and is one of a minority of pushers who do not want or need a pusher gang. Star is also one of a minority of pushers who are allowed to sell Trace. Star is feared and respected by the addicts in her turf, thought of as a ruthless killer when pushed but typically a fair and reasonable person.

History- Star was born in a small inner city near Washington DC. She ran with a gang of bullies and robbers. In the late 2060s she spent some time in prison, where she learned to fight and learned about the city's drug scene. She moved to the city and quickly established herself as an independent drug dealer. When the Drug Lords consolidated in 2075 some of her contacts became Kings and she applied for a job as a pusher. The Drug Lords are wary to give turf to single individuals, but her king already knew that Star could take care of herself.

Personality- Star is a loner, she thinks most people are hopeless losers and are a liability to work with. She would rather be respected than liked. She demands respect from those around her and will pick fights with anyone who mouths off to her. She has no remorse, even for the weak and innocent, and will readily torture and kill anyone who stands in her way.

Motivations- Star is in the drug biz to become the biggest badass on the block. The money she makes is just a means to buy more armor and weapons. She heard about Len's winnings and thinks she's found an easy way to significantly increase her income. Len's apartment is not in the turf that has been assigned to her, and she knows she is breaking the laws of the Drug Lords and will face punishment is caught, but she figures it is worth the risk. She knows she can intimidate the pusher gang who works this area in to keeping silent.

Methods- Star will come to the party, pretending to be an invited guest. Once inside she will give Len a small box wrapped up like a present. Inside is a syringe pre-filled with Trace. She will ask Len "aren't you going to try your gift?" with an obvious threat in her voice. If implied threats don't work, Star will get very specific in her threats, threatening to kill Carrie and other guests. If threats don't work, she will start hurting people and she is not afraid to kill everyone at the party other than Len. When Carrie starts getting sick, Star will get very angry that someone is interfering with her activities. She will threaten to kill whoever poisoned Carrie. She will not let Len leave the apartment or call an ambulance until he has taken the Trace. Once she has seen Len inject the Trace she will leave.

Special Equipment- One dose of Trace in a Syringe, Single Shot Gun (FR 3 ft. MR 50 ft. Damage: 5 bladed), Boot Blades (spring loaded, +2 bladed damage to a kick) covered with Drake Pain Juice (10 aggregate damage distracting pain with each strike), Vital Armor (AR 1 (7 vs. vital strikes) PR 7 bladed 5 blunt), Kevlar Vest (AR 5, PR 6 bladed, 1 blunt, AGY penalty already figured in), Shield: Arm Guards (+4 to parry). $200 in cash.

Special Skills- Boxing (2), Kickboxing (3), Needles (2), Street Drugs (3).

Typical Attack- At the first sign of trouble she will trigger the blades on her boots and pull the gun out of her coat. She will make a Wing attack against the most immediate threat at AGY (14) + INL (11) + 1d20 -1/3 ft. vs. 20 (or 1d20 +5 -1/3ft vs. 0). The wing will do 2½ bladed damage. Next she will make a Wing kick (with her boot bladed) at whoever comes near her, at INL (11) + AGY (14) +12 (skill) +1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 + 17 vs. 0). The wing will do ½ blunt damage, 1 bladed damage and the person being kicked must save vs. pain at an aggregate 10 difficulty per kick. Star will defend herself by Parrying with her armored forearms at STH (13) + AGY (14) +8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 + 10 vs. 0). If Star is reduced to 0 BDY or 2 BLD she will try to flee.

Mandy Lowe
(Len's Coworker and Would-Be Seductress)
Level 0 Worker

Attributes- AWR 11, AGY 10, CHM 8, END 3, INL 7, SPD 4, STH 4, WIL 7, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- In her 20s, mixed race, thin, bad posture, short red hair in a pageboy cut, inexpertly applied makeup, bad complexion, tight black miniskirt and a padded bra. Anyone with the Fashion & Style skill will be able to tell that she is trying to look sexy but has no idea what she's doing.

Social Status- Many Lowe works the graveyard shift at Food By The Pound, she has recently been promoted to supervisor. She has worked with Len before and he considers her a friend.

History- Mandy was born in the city. She always wanted to leave but couldn't pass the tests to get in to a corp or gated community. After spending several years trying to pass the tests, she gave up and started working part-time at a fast food place.

Personality- Mandy has little control over her impulses: she spends money as soon as she gets it, she gets in fights and she talks about people behind their backs. She has little sympathy for other people, but she pretends to because she wants to be liked. Since Mandy gave up trying to get in to a gated community or corp she has few ambitions, she lives from day-to-day just trying to get by.

Motivations- Mandy doesn't like the city: she thinks it is dangerous and dirty. She thinks that she can get out of the city if she can break up Len and Carrie and become Len's new girlfriend.

Methods- As soon as she was invited to the party, Mandy decided to try to seduce Len. She went out and bought a black dress and a padded bra, and bought a vial of pheromones from a black market trader. She does not think of herself as being very attractive, but she thinks that if she can get close enough to Len for him to smell the pheromones he won't be able to resist her. Her goal is to get him alone and have sex with him, then tell Carrie to try to break the two up.

Special Equipment- Outfit: Clubwear (+2 to seduction rolls), Pheromones (+8 to seduction rolls). $50 in cash.

Typical Attack- Mandy Lowe will try to get out of any situation by trying to seduce a male she thinks can help her and then begging for help. Mandy has a seduction roll of CHM (8) +2 (outfit) +8 (pheromones) +1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 vs. 2). The difficulty will go down if the person she is seducing has had a few beers. She also has a passive seduction roll of 1d20 vs. 12.

Kim Junghee
(Innocent Elderly Korean Immigrant and Husband)
Level 0 Shut-In

Attributes- AWR 15, AGY 5, CHM 7, END 4, INL 10, SPD 3, STH 4, WIL 8, BLD 2, BDY 2, INCY 4.

Appearance- Small elderly Korean man with grey hair, wearing a plaid sweater and wearing corduroy pants. He is quiet and keeps his hands folded in his lap.

Social Status- Kim is the husband to Kyon, he is a US citizen, he receives welfare (and money from his children). He is a neighbor of Len. His English is fairly poor. They rarely leave their apartment.

History- Kim was born in Korea, he worked as a bureaucrat in a government office in Seoul. He married Kyon when he was 18. He survived the Freedom Wars by staying out from underfoot of the gangs and armies. After the Freedom Wars some of their children immigrated to the US and got jobs. They paid for Kim and Kyon to move to the US and gain citizenship. Their children live in gated communities and corps and send them money to supplement their public assistance.

Personality- Kim is friendly, observant. His English is poor and he doesn't always understand what is going on, but he thinks he is capable of telling good people from bad people. Kim's only vice is a small gambling problem: he spends up to half of the couple's income playing cards games on the internet. Kim is a Buddhist, but doesn't do much more than keep a little shrine and burn incense occasionally.

Motivations- Kim and Kyon don't really like leaving their apartment, but they felt it was polite to come to Len's party. They are happy for Len and don't want to see anything bad happen to him.

Methods- Kim will sit on the couch next to his wife, observing the party, not saying much unless someone talks to him first. If things look dangerous he will want to leave, but will not leave without Kyon.

Special Skills- Foreign Language: English (2), Gambling (2).

Kyon Junghee
(Innocent Elderly Korean Immigrant and Wife)
Level 0 Shut-In

Attributes- AWR 8, AGY 6, CHM 5, END 6, INL 14, SPD 7, STH 5, WIL 10, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 3.

Appearance- Elderly Korean woman with a round face and a kind smile, grey hair in a bun. She wears a green dress with a floral pattern.

Social Status- Kyon is a shut-in, she spends most of her time reading and keeping the apartment clean while her husband plays card games on the internet.

History- Kyon was born in Korea, married Kim when she was only 16, worked briefly as a nurse, retired and came to the US.

Personality- Kyon's English is not as good as Kim's and she lets him do most of the talking. She tends to take a maternal, supportive role when dealing with younger people, especially younger Koreans. She likes to brag about her children being in corps and gated communities.

Motivations- Kyon thinks Len is a nice person and only wants the best for him. She treats Carrie much like a daughter, giving her little gifts and compliments whenever she sees her. Like Kim she will hang back and observe the party, trying to help out whenever she can. When Carrie gets sick Kyon will keep Carrie's head up so she does not choke.

Methods- Like a mother, Kyon will attempt to comfort Len and Carrie by holding them and saying softly that things will be okay. She has medical skills, but knows nothing about exotic poisons and has no equipment. She can only advice that someone call an ambulance. If she, Kim, Len or Carrie is physically attacked she will take out her pepper spray and try to blind the attacker.

Special Equipment- Pepper Spray (Very Easy Blinding Strike (victim can make a Very Easy Parry by closing his or her eyes) partially blinds (-7 to actions/reactions) must save vs. Distracting Pain (30) and if the victim breathes he or she will suffer from severe nose and throat pain, coughing (-10 END) and Vomiting (20)).

Special Skills- First Aid (1), Pharmacology (1), Diagnosis (1).

Typical Attack- Kyon will make a blinding strike with her pepper spray at INL (14) + AGY (6) +8 (very easy blinding strike) +1d20 vs. 30 (or 1d20 vs. 2) and then will try to run off.

Toby Mars (Young Kid and Poisoner)

Level 0 Kid

Attributes- AWR 6, AGY 13, CHM 10, END 7, INL 6, SPD 10, STH 5, WIL 4, BLD 2, BDY 1, INCY 4.

Appearance- Part black, part Indian, a kid of about 12, shaggy black hair, green polo-shirt and blue-jeans.

Social Status- Toby is a neighbor of Len's. He lives with his father, who psychologically dominates him and controls every aspect of Toby's life. Toby spends his days acting as a servant to his father.

History- Toby never knew his mother. He grew up locked inside with his father, who taught Toby to be his servant. When Toby is not doing things for his father, he spends his time playing VR games.

Personality- Toby is a friendly and energetic kid, a little bit shy. Right now he is very nervous and will stutter when he talks. Toby does not yet have much of an idea of what his goals are in life. He does what his father tells him to and tries to stay on his good side.

Motivations- Toby has been told by his father to come to the party and poison Carrie so that Toby's father can blackmail them. Toby likes Len, doesn't know Carrie very well, but is afraid of his father. He will do what his father told him to. If he thinks he's been caught he will admit what he's done and blame it on his father.

Methods- Toby's job, as dictated to him by his father, was to arrive early at the party and offer to help. He brought some snacks to microwave and serve. He also takes over serving food and drinks and taking away used plates and drink bottles. He is supposed to put poison in to Carrie's food or drink. He will continuously ask "can I bring you a beer" until Carrie says yes, at which point he will go in the kitchen and put the poison in the beer when nobody is looking. When things start going badly, Toby will try to run away and if that doesn't work he will curl up in a corner and cry.

Special Equipment- In his pocket is a small plastic vial containing a selection of poisons put together by a Drake.

The Poison

Designed to work slowly, to be curable but not to be something the local emergency room would have a cure for.

Appearance: White powder in a small clear-plastic vial. Garlicky odor.

Administration: Put in food or drink.

1x Effects: Within 45 minutes: vomiting (20), vertigo (20), fever. Within 2 hours: unconsciousness (20), vomiting (30), weakness (-10 STH, SPD). Within 4 hours: coma (30), pulmonary arrest (30). Within 8 hours: pulmonary arrest (40), cardiac arrest (30). Even with emergency room medical care, the victim will not survive past 8 hours without the cure.

Treatment: When the cure is injected the effects will lessen slowly and disappear within 4 days.

Peter Mars
(Toby's Father and Extortion Scheme Mastermind)

Level 1 Cop, Level 1 Shut-In

Attributes- AWR 10, AGY 9, CHM 10, END 12, INL 9, SPD 6, STH 10, WIL 4, BLD 3, BDY 5, INCY 4.

Appearance- Tall, middle aged, part black and part Indian, mustache, short black hair with some grey in it, wears a grey sweater and black slacks.

Social Status- Ex-police officer, shut-in and VR addict. Peter is Toby's father and controls nearly everything the boy does.

History- Peter worked in the city police department. He was mostly corrupt and lazy and he quit when the Night Shift came in and started making trouble. He has raised his son since he was an infant and has trained his son to do whatever he says without question.

Personality- Peter dislikes almost everyone he meets. He is quite selfish and has taught himself not to feel compassion for anyone around him. He only understands two relationships: controlling or being controlled. He rules his son with an iron fist, reacting with anger and threats to any back-talking or attempt to assert his own opinion. Peter is an alcoholic who drinks every day.

Motivations- Peter feels that people only get what they are willing to take, and when he heard about Len's winnings he immediately started thinking up schemes to take some of that money. Unfortunately, he only heard about the winning through Toby. He thinks that Len already has the money and can be easily blackmailed to give it up.

Methods- Peter will wait in his apartment, trusting that Toby will find a way to poison Carrie. At 6:32 he will figure Carrie must be poisoned and he will use a pay internet service to make an anonymous vidphone call. The service will disguise his voice and appearance, making him look like an animated skeleton. He will explain that Carrie only has a few hours to live. He will say that the hospital will not be able to figure out what the poison is or get access to the antidote in time to save her. He will say that he will give Len the antidote if he transfers $500,000 to an overseas bank account (he will give instructions on how to do it). He will say that upon receiving the money he will call back and tell Len where to find the antidote (he has hidden it inside a drain pipe on the side of the apartment building). If someone explains to him that Len does not have the money, Peter will lower the amount he is asking for, but he will not take nothing (he has already spent several hundred on the poison, the anonymous call and the bank account).

Special Equipment- Taser (range 0-1, 3 electrical dmg).

Special Skills- Internet Browsing (1), Money (1), City Knowledge (1), Self Defense Weapons (1).

Typical Attack- Peter will avoid leaving the house, and if someone tries to break in he will wait in ambush with his taser. He will make a pain/stun attack at INL (9) + AGY (9) +4 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 3). A person who is hit by the taser will have to save vs. unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 30), will have to save vs. Cardiac Arrest (END+1d20 vs. 15).

Timeline

Without intervention by PCs, things will play out as follows:

Fri, 7:12PM: Len stops by the liquor store on the way home from work to get a lottery ticket.

Fri, 7:14PM: Len discovers he's won the lottery.

Fri, 7:45PM: Len calls the lottery office in Queens, makes an appointment for Monday.

Fri, 7:50PM: Len calls work to tell them he's quitting.

Fri, 8:00PM: Len starts calling people to invite them to a party.

Sat, 4:15PM: Len goes to the liquor store to get chips and beer, invites everyone he sees.

Sat, 4:50PM: Len and Carrie start setting up for the party.

Sat, 5:10PM: Toby arrives.

Sat, 5:40PM: Toby poisons Carrie's beer.

Sat, 5:42PM: Carrie drinks the poisoned beer.

Sat, 5:50PM: Mandy arrives.

Sat, 5:58PM: Kim and Kyon arrive.

Sat, 6:20PM: Star arrives.

Sat, 6:25PM: Star gives Len his "present".

Sat, 6:27PM: Carrie gets sick.

Sat, 6:32PM: Phone call from Peter (in disguise) demanding money be sent to overseas account.

Sat, 6:45PM: Len injects the Trace.

Sat, 6:50PM: Len takes Carrie to the hospital.

Sat, 10:08PM: Carrie dies.

Sat, 11:20PM: Len arrives back home.

Sat, 11:25PM: Mandy goes to bed with Len.

Possible Outcomes

Star's Plan- Star wants to use the threat of violence to make Len use and become hooked on Trace. Star is operating outside of her assigned turf (a crime in the eyes of the Drug Lords) so she will be unwilling to run to the Drug Lords for help if the PCs are able to chase her off or kick her out. If the PCs kill Star, though, the Drug Lords will come looking for revenge, despite the fact that Star was operating against their rules. If the PCs do kill Star, their best chances for survival are if the Drug Lords do not find out that Star was murdered. It is unlikely that anyone at the party would go blabbing to the Drug Lords, but if the Drug Lords find her body in the area they will question everyone until they find someone willing to talk.

If Star sees Len shoot up the Trace (or thinks she is seeing him shoot up the Trace), she will be happy and leave. If Len shoots up then he is looking at a life-long addiction. Without PC intervention he will not be able to resist withdrawals through the weekend, he will do more and even after he gets the money he will not be brave enough to check himself in to a drug treatment center. If the PCs help him avoid using during the weekend, he can use his money to check in to a treatment center and be more-or-less back to normal within a few weeks.

Peter's Plan- Peter's plan has one fatal flaw: he wants Len to give money that he doesn't have. Peter will not give up the antidote to the poison until he gets at least some money (PCs might be able to talk him down to a few thousand if they convince him that it will not work any other way). Len and Carrie only have a few hundred in savings, so Len would have to get money somewhere else. His best bet would be to find a loan shark. A loan shark will demand massive interest and will require quite a bit of collateral (especially if they learn that Len will soon be rich enough to pick up and leave the city). A loan shark might be convinced to take Carrie as collateral, will keep her for the weekend and only give her back after receiving up to ten times what they loaned out.

Probably the best thing that can happen is if the PCs discover Peter's identity and confront him. Toby will give up his father if he feels physically threatened, and Peter will give up the antidote if he feels physically threatened. The PCs just need to figure out that Toby was involved. If the PCs guess that Carrie's drink was poisoned, it will be easy to surmise that Toby (who has been handling drinks all night) is the logical suspect.

Mandy's Plan- Mandy's plan is the simplest of all: get close to Len, let him get turned on by her, then convince him to go somewhere private with her for sex. Len doesn't have much willpower and if nothing else was going on she would probably succeed. She would use the fact that she and Len had sex to destroy Len and Carrie's relationship. She would confront Carrie with the fact that she and Len had sex, and Len would be unable to deny this. Carrie would get mad and leave and Mandy would stay with Len.

The problem with Mandy's plan is that Len is unlikely to think about sex while fearing for Carrie's life or being coerced in to using street drugs. Mandy will continue to try to get close to Len, whatever happens, but will wait to make her move until she sees an opportunity. One opportunity would be if Len uses the Trace. Sedated and euphoric, it would be easier for Mandy to convince him to forget about his problems and go in to the other room with her. The other opportunity would be if Carried died. Mandy would stay to "console" Len and would probably spend the night in his bed.

Mandy's biggest weakness is that she is a wimp. If a PC figures out what she is up to, it will be no problem for the PC to chase Mandy off. If threatened, Mandy will leave and not come back.

Rewards?- There is some possibility that PCs may be rewarded for helping Len in his time of crisis. There are several factor involved here: The more time the PCs spend helping Len, the more likely he will be to reward them. Also, if Len sees the PCs put themselves in physical danger, or if the PCs get injured trying to help Len, he will be more likely to give money. If Carrie is still alive and with Len when he gets his money, she will try to convince him that the PCs helped him only out of selfish motives and that they don't deserve any money. The more selflessly and heroically the PCs acted, the less likely Carrie will be to completely sway Len. Finally, the PCs may be able to use their persuasive powers to talk Len in to giving them a reward. PCs might even be able to get Len to promise to give them money (in exchange for help), a promise which he might or might not keep once he is out of the city.

When Len is out of the city he will not want to come back for anything, and he will probably tell PCs they can take anything from his place they can. Len doesn't have anything special: some furniture, some dishes and silverware, a low power computer and some clothing that the PCs might be able to hock for a few hundred dollars. The best case scenario is that Len sends the PCs checks of up to $500 each.

Experience Points

Use the following table to keep track of how many experience points each player gets.

	Player:	Player:	Player:	Player:
Stayed Alive (1 XP)				
Len and Carrie Do Not Become Addicts (7 XP)				
Carrie Lives (4 XP)				
Len and Carrie's Relationship Survives (4 XP)				
Player Notices "Of Mice and Men" Reference (1 XP)				
PCs Made Friends (5 XP/ea.)				
Personal Growth (5 XP)				
Good Roleplaying (2 XP)				
Clever Plan (1 to 5 XP)				
Worked Well as Group (2 XP)				
Worldview Success (2 XP)				
Personal Ideal Success (2 XP)				
Split Up Group (-5 XP)				
Made the World a Worse Place (-1 to -5 XP)				
Player Character Death (-10 XP)				
Total:				

"CHOO-UHY"

Player Information

Saving people is a drug. To actually genuinely save someone makes you feel so powerful and good that you'll be hooked from the first hit. The problem with this drug is that it's so hard to find. Once you start looking for people to find you'll see that most people can't be saved. Most people are their own worst enemies, and you can't save someone from themselves, not with a knife, not with a handout, not even with love.

Synopsis

PC's are asked by Sexologists to get in to a secret brothel where immigrant women are kept prisoner. PCs must meet with a pimp, convince him that they are legitimate customers, and be escorted (blindfolded) to the brothel. If the PCs try to save the women, they will find that the women do not speak English and have been brainwashed to believe that anyone trying to take them away only want to torture and kill them. PCs risk being ambushed and killed by knife wielding women.

Player Introductions

A Sexologist and ex-lover will come knocking on one of the PC's doors in the middle of the night. He or she will want urgent help. He or she will explain the situation briefly:

The Sexologists have spent months trying to track down a secret brothel they know is operating in the city. Young immigrants from some Asian country were smuggled in to this country on false pretenses and upon arriving they were imprisoned in the brothel and forced to work as prostitutes. Brothel owners of this type typically keep girls ignorant and scared, telling them things about the city around them that make them afraid to try to escape.

The Sexologists have finally figured out where brothel employees meet potential customers. Customers meet an employee in a warehouse, if he trusts them he blindfolds them and takes them to the brothel. The Sexologists desperately want to try to get someone in the brothel to try to figure out the location or free the girls. However, the brothel keepers seem to know many Sexologists by sight. They are afraid that if they send in some Sexologists and one is recognized, the brothel keepers will move their customer-meeting location. Thus, the Sexologists need to get a group of non-Sexologists willing to help them out. The Sexologists will have an army ready to attack if the PCs can tell them where and how they can attack without hurting any of the girls. At this point, the Sexologist asks if the PC will help and if the PC knows anyone else who might be willing to help.

If PCs already know each other, this is the point at which the PC should call his or her buddies. If PCs do not know each other, each one should be invited separately. Individual Sexologists may ask PCs, or PCs may be asked to go by gang elders.

NPCs

Harold Anderson
(Brothel Employee, Leads Customers to Brothel)

Level 1 Freelancer

Attributes- AWR 12, AGY 10, CHM 8, END 7, INL 11, SPD 9, STH 14, WIL 6, BLD 4, BDY 5, INCY 4.

Appearance- Half-middle eastern and half-caucasian, round slightly-tinted sunglasses, short bleach-blonde hair with wavy lines shaved in it. Wears a olive military jacket and black-leather pants.

Social Status- Harold is an employee for the owners of the brothel. He makes $50 a night by waiting in the warehouse and guiding customers to the drop-off point.

History- Harold grew up in the city, he tried a little bit of drug dealing but could never make a profit (he did too many of the drugs he used). He tried several schemes to make money but mostly lived on welfare. An old friend of his (Vice) gave him a job working for the brothel.

Personality- Harold is bright, sociable, creative, but he is a flake and a drug user. He has few friends that he hasn't betrayed and when people forgive him he just uses it as an excuse to abuse their trust more. He is an extrovert who enjoys saying things that upset or disgust people. He considers himself a very good judge of character. He isn't really: he knows how people will respond when he says different things, but he is too concerned with his own needs to care about the desires and motivations of others.

Motivations- Harold gets paid a nice wage to lead legitimate customers to the brothel and keep illegitimate customers out. He has no particular loyalty to the brothel and the owners other than the money he gets.

Methods- Harold tries to use his "people sense" to sniff out people who don't seem like they would want to go to the brothel. If someone makes him suspicious enough, he refuses to take them (and will later tell Tom and Vice, who will probably move the meeting spot). He "tests" people using a small device (really just an old piece of electronics he found in the trash). The test is a bluff, an attempt to make fake-customers do or say something suspicious. Before taking anyone to the brothel he pats them down to find and remove any weapons or communication devices.

Special Equipment- One Tomahawk and 3 Throwing Daggers on his belt, Phonebook Armor under his clothes (AR 5 PR 2 blunt 2 bladed, AGY penalty already figured in). $120 in cash.

Special Skills- Knife Throwing (1)

Typical Attack- Harold gets +2 to initiative from his Knife Throwing skill. In combat, Harold will attempt to back away from the enemy so he can use ranged weapons against them. He will strike first with his Tomahawk at INL (11) + AGY (10) +4 (skill) -1/3ft. vs. 25 (or 1d20 - 1/3ft vs. 0). A successful strike will do 4 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6). Next he will attack with his throwing knives (at 1d20 -1/ft. vs. 0) with 2 bladed damage. As a reaction he will jump out (at SPD (9) + AGY (10) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 6).

Tom Choy
(Brothel Co-Owner and Cambodian Speaker)

Level 1 Pimp

Attributes- AWR 9, AGY 8, CHM 12, END 14, INL 7, SPD 13, STH 10, WIL 7, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 4.

Appearance- Asian, mid-twenties, handsome, spiky black hair, wears a red-and-black checkered sweater, leather vest and grey slacks.

Social Status- Tom is one of two co-founders of the brothel. He brought in criminal contacts and a knowledge of the Cambodian language. Tom takes the evening shift in the brothel. Tom is the only Khmer speaker that the girls know and thus their only source of information about the US.

History- Tom's family immigrated from Cambodia when he was seven. Tom's family was involved in organized crime in Cambodia and it ran a number of protection, loan sharking and gambling scams on the city's population of Cambodian immigrants. Tom's family knew and kept contact with criminal contacts in Cambodia. By the time Tom was an adult, the city's crime scene had changed too much for his family and they had all retired to a life as wells. Tom dabbled in protection, loan sharking, gambling, prostitution and drug sales, but never made as much money as he had hoped. When a Cambodian contact approached him looking to sell several young girls, Tom sought out his friend Vice to invest the money. Together they paid to have the girls smuggled over and set them up in the brothel.

Personality- Tom grew up believing that women are here solely to serve and pleasure men and that it is okay to beat up a woman who don't follow orders. Tom was taught that sympathy is feminine and weak. Tom considers himself strong, willful, dangerous. He likes to use amphetamines but will not use anything harder (like God Killer) for fear of becoming addicted. For Tom, the only thing worse than being weak is being poor, and he likes to flaunt the money he makes (even though in personal affairs he is a very careful spender).

Motivations- Tom is responsible for keeping the brothel running. He takes care of the customers and his lies keep the girls from trying to escape. Tom would rather keep on the girls' good sides, but he is not afraid to beat them up if they give him trouble.

Methods- Tom's primary methods are lying and threats. When those don't work he waits until the person has his or her back turned and then attacks, surprising the person and then beating him or her senseless. He rarely kills: he prefers to have someone alive who is afraid of him.

Special Equipment- Tom has a Stick With Nail he carries with him and keeps nearby. $75 in cash.

Special Skills- Foreign Language: Khmer (2).

Typical Attack- Tom will typically make a Pain/Stun Attack with the Stick With Nail at INL (7) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 10) then while the opponent is stunned he will make normal strikes (at STH (10) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 7) doing 3 blunt, 1 ragged damage (pierces armor as 4 bladed). As a reaction he will parry at STH (10) + AGY (8) +1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 7).

Maury "Fish-Head" Markopoulos
(Brothel Guard and Thug)

Level 1 Thug

Attributes- AWR 7, AGY 12, CHM 3, END 8, INL 7, SPD 7, STH 16, WIL 7, BLD 4, BDY 5, INCY 4.

Appearance- Mixed race, early thirties, pronounced nose and jaw with a large mouth (making him look a little like a fish), brown skin, curly brown shaggy hair, wears motorcycle leathers and carries a skullcrusher.

Social Status- Fish-Head is a thug for hire, working for whoever pays him the most. His current full-time gig is with the brothel. He lives in the brothel and only leaves for a few hours a day.

History- Fish-Head grew up in the city. His parents were very poor (they were off-and-on welfare) and neglected Fish-Head and his siblings. Fish-Head grew up suffering from malnutrition. Fish-Head ran with a kid gang from a young age and used his size to steal from other children. As Fish-Head grew older he was involved with a smash-and-grab burglary group, and when that broke up he started doing business as a for-hire thug. He had done work off-and-on with Vice, who offered him his current position at the brothel. Fish-Head recently found out that he has cancer and will die in about three months. He hasn't told anyone yet.

Personality- Fish-head is quiet, contemplative, likes to fantasize. He speaks little and when he does speak he leaves as much as possible implied and unsaid. He is quick to anger and very cruel. He enjoys getting angry and hurting people. With the girls he is gentle, almost kind. This is partly because he doesn't want to damage the merchandise and partly because he secretly wants them to like him (although he knows this is self-delusion, that there's no way they could like their captor). He spends most of his time these says thinking about what it will be like to die of cancer.

Motivations- Fish-head is paid a small salary, but his main payment is room and board in the brothel and free sex with the girls. Maury isn't sure what to think about his impending death but he has decided that he should try to enjoy himself as much as he can in his few months left.

Methods- Fish-Head doesn't know how to do much of anything except beat people up or threaten to beat people up. His first reaction in any confrontation is to pick a fight. He likes mangling and crippling people – he especially enjoys breaking bones with his bare hands.

Special Equipment- Motorcycle outfit (no helmet, AR 7 PR 3 bladed 1 blunt), Skullcrusher (does 3 blunt damage and pierces as 6).

Special Skills- Street Fighting: Armed (2).

Typical Attack- Fish-Head will make a crippling attack with the skullcrusher. He will move slowly in to range (1-2) and will swing at an opponent's knees at STH (16) + INL (7) +8 (skill) + 1d20 vs. 30 (or 1 + 1d20 vs. 0). Once opponents are down on their knees he will take his time, walking around them, taunting them, hitting them with wings until they fall down and then breaking all their bones.

Savorn Sen (Eldest of the Captive Immigrant Girls)

Level 1 Sex Worker

Attributes- AWR 11, AGY 9, CHM 6, END 9, INL 12, SPD 10, STH 7, WIL 11, BLD 4, BDY 4, INCY 6.

Appearance- Late teens, Cambodian, straight black hair in a crudely cut bob, pale skin, skinny, uneven teeth, wearing a light-green cotton summer dress.

Social Status- Savorn is the eldest of the girls in the brothel and usually the most mature. If anyone will act as the representative or leader of the girls it will be Savorn, but only if she is pushed.

History- Savorn was born in a small, poor village near a minefield in Cambodia. She tried to save money whenever she could, but her family was always getting sick or injured and she was always paying for medical care. Then a stranger came to town offering her a job in America. She would have to pay a percentage of her wages to pay for the trip to America, but after a few years she would be free and could send money back to her family. Savorn was wary but her family pressured her to go (in part because the stranger was offering cash up-front). Savorn was put in the belly of a cargo ship with other young girls. When she arrived in America she was stuffed in a small speedboat and taken to shore, where she was put in to a van and driven to the city. By the time she became aware what her "job" would be, she was stuck in a strange country where she didn't speak the language, under lock and key and guarded by a big burly guy. She has been living and working in the brothel for about a year and has never once tried to escape or send for help.

Personality- Savorn's personality today is very different from what it was in Cambodia. In Cambodia she was gregarious, funny, could spend hours hanging out and talking with friends and family. Today she is quiet, wary, nervous. She never takes any chances. She would rather let others act than make a decision herself. She keeps her eyes downcast and speaks softly.

Motivations- Everything she knows about this country is what Tom told her. She knows that he isn't protecting her best interests, but she believes that there are people who want to hurt her more than Tom.

Methods- Savorn's primary strategy for survival is to do as she's told and try not to upset anyone. She will not try to escape the brothel with the fear of an evil gang out to mutilate and kill her (see p.444). If she thinks someone is trying to kill her (or another one of the girls) she will slip the switchblade out of her pocket and attack.

Special Equipment- Switchblade (0 range, 1½ bladed damage, easy slash, easy wing, easy vital strike).

Typical Attack- She will typically attack in a group with the other girls. She will step in, then make a wing with the switchblade at INL (12) + AGY (9) +4 (weapon has an easy wing) +1d20 vs. 20 (or 1d20 +5 vs. 0). As a reaction she will do a jump-out (at SPD (10) + AGY (9) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 6). If she is alone and cornered, she will make an extended vital strike at INL (12) + AGY (9) +5 (extended) +4 (weapon has an easy vital strike) + 1d20 vs. 35 (or 1d20 vs. 5) and -10 to the next reaction.

Phil "Vice" Warner (Brothel Co-Owner)
Level 2 Pimp

Attributes- AWR 9, AGY 8, CHM 5, END 11, INL 13, SPD 8, STH 13, WIL 16, BLD 4, BDY 5, INCY 3.

Appearance- Caucasian, mid-thirties, light brown hair cut short and a thin beard, tall, large frame, permanently furrowed brow, wears a black suit and a tie with naked women on it.

Social Status- Once a very powerful pimp, Vice is now the co-owner of the brothel. He brought in money and knowledge of the city's sex industry. Vice works the day shift in the brothel. He will come in some time in the morning unless someone calls him with a problem before that.

History- Vice was born in the city. Vice's parents were shut-ins and he ran away from home as a teen. He quickly developed a God Killer addiction, along with his girlfriend, and he pimped her to make money. As he entered his mid-twenties he quit using (mostly) but kept pimping. He added more and more girls to his "stable" until he was one of the most successful pimps in the city. When the Sexologists started their war on pimps he tried to fight them (and was severely injured in one battle). Eventually he decided to go underground. He was looking for a project to invest his money in and his friend Tom Choy told him about buying girls from Cambodia. Vice helped pay for the girls, helped set-up the brothel and helped spread the word among the community of johns. Vice told Tom to tell the girls that if they left the brothel, a vicious street gang would torture and kill them. When one of the girls got a bad venereal disease, Vice saw this as a good chance to make sure the girls believed the story (by killing the girl and blaming it on the "street gang"). When he saw that the girls were willing to fight to stay in the brothel, he decided to give them all knives.

Personality- Vice thinks that people are all ruled by some weakness. People are basically afraid and seek some form of comfort, even if that comfort ends up hurting them much more than confronting their fears. To Vice, the reason some people use God Killer is the same reason some people seek out sex with prostitutes and is the same reason that prostitutes are willing to stay with abusive and exploitative pimps. Vice knows he is no different: he sometimes indulges in God Killer or sex with the girls. Vice does think he has the advantage of understanding people and their weaknesses. He thinks he has Tom, Harold and Fish-Head figured out and he thinks he controls them just as much as he controls the girls. Vice speaks in a slow, patronizing manner as if explaining something obvious to an idiot.

Motivations- Vice started off pimping to make money for God Killer. Now he lives a comfortable lifestyle and needs pimping to keep that lifestyle going (and to prevent him from having to do any real work).

Methods- Whenever he meets someone he tries to figure out what they are afraid of and tries to control them based on that fear. Vice's rule of pimping is to find the weak, make them dependent on you, and keep them weak. The girls are the easiest gig he's done: they don't speak English and are incapable of learning anything about the world around them other than what Tom tells them.

Special Equipment- Combat Knife coated with Drake Blood Poison, Vital Armor (AR 1 (7 vs. vital strikes) PR 7 bladed 5 blunt), $300 roll of cash in his pocket.

Typical Attack- Vice will typically not attack except in self-defense. When he does attack he will wait until the enemy comes in to range and will do an extended strike with his poisoned knife at STH (13) + AGY (8) +5 (extended) + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1 + 1d20 vs. 0) with -10 to his next reaction. As a reaction he will typically make a simultaneous wing attack at INL (13) + AGY (8) + WIL (16) -10 (extended action) +4 (knife has an Easy Wing) + 1d20 vs. 40 (or 1d20 vs. 9). A successful strike with the knife will do 2 bladed damage and within 4 rounds the poison will cause (among other symptoms, see p.144): delirium (-10 AWR, -10 INL), difficulty breathing (-7 END), vomiting, 1d20 BLD damage.

Stewart Gates (Random Brothel Customer)
Level 1 Corporate Employee

Attributes- AWR 7, AGY 5, CHM 12, END 4, INL 10, SPD 6, STH 5, WIL 7, BLD 4, BDY 5, INCY 5.

Appearance- Caucasian, mid-forties, soft, tall, thick grey hair and perfect teeth, green sweatshirt and blue jeans.

Social Status- Stewart is a full-time employee of the Mendel & Jackson corporation. He has been in the corporation since its inception, is the head of a department and makes good money. As a senior employee he is given some privacy as to his personal life (his loyalty checks never include questions like "what do you do on weekends.")

History- Before the Freedom Wars, Stewart worked as a secretary (when he could get a job). After the Freedom Wars, he tried to get in to a gated community but couldn't pass the personality tests. He joined a corporation and with hard work and good organizational abilities he slowly rose through the ranks. His wife left him five years ago (in part because of his use of violent pornography). Since then, he has been visiting the city on weekends and holidays to have sex with prostitutes. A pornography-store employee in the city, who had directed him to prostitutes in the past, told him about the brothel. Stewart liked the idea of having sex with captive young girls and he sought out the brothel. He has visited about ten times over the last several weeks.

Personality- Stewart is not a kind or likeable man, but he is businesslike, calm, fair and well organized. Stewart likes being in charge, it makes him feel good. Any case when he isn't in control makes him uncomfortable. He enjoys pornography because he is in complete control over everything that is happening. This is the same reason he prefers sex with prostitutes and why he sought out the brothel.

Motivations- Stewart wants to have sex with a girl who he has complete control over and leave without getting caught or robbed.

Methods- When he is walking the streets he carries a pepper-spray for defense, but in the brothel he has had it confiscated by Harold. In the brothel he feels safe only because he is a good customer and he knows they won't hurt him because he keeps bringing them money.

Special Equipment- Has $500 in cash hidden in his socks.

Encounters

Preparations- The PCs will meet at a tea-shop in Tea Drinker territory. The place is packed with about a hundred Sexologists with weapons and armor. The tea-shop is about five blocks away from the warehouse.

PCs will be given this printout, which represents everything the Sexologists know about the brothel:

SexRatings User Rating #807

Name: Secret Midtown New York Brothel

Area: Manhattan, NY

Price: $100/hr.

Rating: Five Stars

Description: You have to meet some guy at an old warehouse on the corner of 57th and West End. He makes sure your cool, takes away any weapons or cellphones, blindfolds you and takes you to the place. The place is underground but nicely decorated. They've got a nice selection of girls, all fresh-off-the-boat asians, some are as young as 12 in my estimate. You won't get any backtalk from these girls: they know they'll get beat if they don't make you happy. You can do pretty much anything to them that doesn't leave a scar. All-in-all, if you like captive young Asians this is definitely worth the money.

PCs will also be given money ($200 each, in cash) to pay to get in to the brothel. The PCs will be given two small tracking devices (each only a little thicker than a penny) to hide on themselves, but will be warned that the tracking devices won't work if the PCs go underground. The PCs will be given the number at the shop they can call if they have access to a phone. They are also told that there are Sexologists disguised as homeless people scattered throughout the area and if they can get to the surface and scream for help they will probably be heard.

Anything else the PCs ask for will be given if the Sexologists have it to give. If any of the PCs have the idea of using the Sexual Comentality skill (which lets Sexologists share thoughts with people they have had sex with) the Sexologists will find high-level Sexologist(s) of the appropriate genders and use the skill on any of the PCs willing to participate. The Sexologists do not have any language translation devices or programs with them.

The Test- When the PCs arrive at the old warehouse, the doors to the main entrance will be closed but not locked. Inside the warehouse is lit by dim lightbulbs. There are old cardboard boxes, mostly shredded by rats and humans, and old papers strewn all over the place. There's graffiti, old beer bottles, old cigarette butts and other signs of human presence. At the far end of the building from the main entrance, in plain sight, will be Harold Anderson, sitting at an old wooden desk, with his feet up, reading a book (an old pre-war volume entitled "Modern Explosives").

The first thing Harold will do is pretend to "test" the PCs. He will start with whoever looks least likely to be "in to" paying for sex with young girls. He will start with any female PCs or any PCs that look "clean-cut." He has a small device put together to look like some biometric testing machine. A small gelatin pad is connected by a wire to a small handheld device with an LCD readout. He will connect the device to the forehead of the person to be tested and he will hand the person a faded old magazine with pictures of naked young Asian girls. The PC will be asked to flip through the book while he looks at the readout on the device (making sure nobody else can see it) with a thoughtful look on his face. When he is done he will look up at the person being tested and say "Is there anything you want to tell me?" This is all, of course, a bluff to try to weed out people who don't belong. If the PCs act suspicious (refuse to be tested, start making up excuses, etc.) he will be suspicious and will probably not take them.

If the PCs pass the test (and do nothing else to make them look suspicious), Harold will take them. He demands money up front, at least $100 each. He will ask that they hand over any weapons or communication devices to him. He will pat them down to look for any further weapons. He will then blindfold the PCs and spin them around several times. He will line them up, each with their hands on the other's back. He will go to the front of this train and lead it on the secret route to the brothel.

The Route- The route the PCs will take is one designed so that it is hard to follow, hard to track using tracking devices and hard to remember.

The PCs will walk about 50 ft. and come to some metal stairs, they will slowly walk up three flights, and then walk around a corner, then walk outside and walk on something metal (and slightly bouncy) until they are inside again. The PCs will walk around for about 20 ft., stop while

Harold opens a door, then travel down some stairs in an echoey stairwell. They will travel down 4 stories. They will stop at the bottom while Harold unlocks and opens another door, leads them in to a cold and echoey hallway. The PCs pause while Harold locks the door, then they will start walking a straight path down the hallway. They will walk for about 2 to 3 blocks, then enter a door and walk around in an indoor area that echoes like it might be a car garage or large basement (a moderate AWR check will let PCs smell old motor oil and car exhaust). The PCs will walk up more stairs (one flight) navigate through a twisting maze of rooms, doorways and hallways, some carpeted and some not, before exiting from a heavy-sounding door. The PCs will feel that they are outside briefly (they can feel broken glass and weeds under their feet, feel the wind blowing) but after only stepping a few feet they will open another door. They will walk down a long hallway at a downward angle, for about 40 ft., stop and turn right, open a door, and walk down another hallway for about 15 ft. Then Harold will knock on a door on the right side of the hallway, a gruff voice on the other side of the door will ask who it is, Harold will say "it's me" and there will be the sound of three deadbolts opening. The door will open, the PCs will enter a warm room, with the faint smell of perfume and food inside, the door will close and be locked, and only then will the PCs be allowed to take off their blindfolds.

The actual route: the PCs traveled up to the top of the warehouse building, went across a fire-escape to another building (an old office building), down the fire stairwell to the basement. From the basement, an old passage leads under the street for several blocks to an old abandoned hotel. The passage exits in the garage of the hotel. The PCs are taken up to the first floor of the hotel, led through various hotel offices, and out of an emergency exit that exits in to an alley. They cross the alley and go in to the emergency exit of another office building. In this building a hallway leads down to the basement level, and the PCs will turn to the main hallway of the basement. They stop at the door to what was once a large office that has been thoroughly remodeled (with pirated water and electricity) to be the brothel.

Normal PCs will hear nothing but their own footsteps and breathing as they walk, and will smell nothing but the dust and decay of old abandoned buildings. PCs with enhanced senses may be able to figure out more about where they are. PCs with an enhanced sense of smell will smell old floor wax in the first office building, car smells in the garage of the second (with faint smells of laundry detergent and dry cleaning chemicals from the hotel's laundry which is located nearby), then the old smells of carpet cleaner in the first floor of the hotel. PCs may smell garlic as they cross the alley (someone in apartment building half a block away is cooking something with a lot of garlic). Inside the second office they will smell old paper and ink (there is an old printing and photocopying area in the basement) and more old floorwax smell.

PCs with an enhanced sense of hearing will know that the buildings they are in are truly empty (except in the brothel at the end). They might also hear that the sunken city is farther away (meaning they are heading East, inland). If their hearing is very good they will hear the distant noises of people living in apartment buildings down the block, and maybe an old homeless crazy talking to herself, but nothing nearby.

If anyone thinks to ask, each time they are outside the wind was blowing on their right cheek. If they check with weather reports (or have the Meteorology skill) they will know that the wind was blowing North that evening.

PCs with mapping mental programs or the sense of direction skill (or who can make a Hard roll on the tracking skill) can gain insight in to what direction they've gone and how far they've traveled. Mapping programs will be fairly messed up by being spun around and they will provide a map of where the PCs traveled but with no directions on it. PCs with Math Estimation (or who can make a Legendary Mnemonics roll) should be able to write out a similar map from memory.

Hackers who can get in to the NY City Department of Buildings Net and who can remember the layout of the room they were in can do a search for any building in the area with a room like that in the basement. Depending on how well the PCs can remember the layout and how far they traveled, they should be able to narrow it down to one to ten buildings.

The Brothel- The PCs will first find themselves in a large room (about 50 by 30 feet). The room is lit by old lamps with yellow lampshades sitting on little wooden tables. There are mismatched old couches around the room, with the girls sitting on them. Before the PCs arrived, the girls were talking, brushing each other's hair and eating snacks, but now they are giving their rapt attention to the PCs. The door behind them is metal, has three brand new-deadbolts which lock from the inside (or outside). The door is only un-locked when someone is coming or going, and only Tom, Fish-Head and Vice have keys. Fish-Head locks the door and holds the key. Leading off from the main room are eight wooden doors (two on one wall, four on the other, two on the third). One wooden door has an old blue restroom sign on it, the others have glass windows in them that have been covered with brown butcher's paper. One door leads to a small kitchen area with a sink, microwave and small fridge. The other six doors lead to the bedrooms. These rooms were once small offices, each are about 6 by 10 ft. The rooms are where the girls go to sleep or have sex. There are twin sized folding cots, like the kind someone might get at an army surplus store. The rooms also have cardboard boxes stacked up as dressers where the girls keep their few personal items.

Stewart Gates, a customer of the Brothel, is in one of the rooms with one of the girls, and PCs can hear him moaning (the girl is quiet) from behind one of the doors. He has paid for an hour and will stay for the whole hour (about another 45 minutes).

From this point, Harold will leave to go get new customers. Tom will negotiate with the PCs, he will expect the PCs to choose which girls they want and take them each to a bedroom. If the PCs want to all go in the same room with a girl (or multiple girls) that's fine with Tom. When the PCs are done, Tom will then blindfold them and lead them back to where they started from. Fish-Head will wait patiently, sitting at a wooden chair by the door, waiting for any trouble.

The Girls- There are 9 girls, they range in age from 13 to 19. They are all from small, poor villages in Cambodia. The girls depend on each other for emotional support, think of each other as family, and will fight to defend each other.

Since the girls arrived in the US, Tom Choy has been telling them that they should never leave the brothel. He has told him that the entire area is ruled by a powerful street gang, and that this street gang resents any economic competition. He says this gang is devious, cruel and deadly, and will kill any of the girls it gets a hold of. The girls were not sure whether they believed this story until a few months ago. One evening, when Tom and Vice were not there and Fish-Head was in the bathroom, a client grabbed one of the girls and dragged her out of the brothel. Fish-Head chased after and several minutes later he returned with the girl's savagely mutilated dead body. The girls were told that the man was a member of the enemy street gang. Since that day, the girls have believed wholeheartedly that they are in terrible danger from any stranger who tries to get them to leave the brothel. What the girls do not know is that the whole abduction and murder was set up by the brothel owners. The brothel owners got rid of a girl who had contracted a bad venereal disease and made the girls more dependent on them than ever.

The girls all have knives (switchblades) and have been training themselves on how to use them. They keep their knives hidden on their person (usually in pants pockets) and when they are forced to disrobe they keep their clothing nearby. If any person tries to make them leave the brothel, they will all attack. The girls hate what they do, they live in fear of the brothel owners and clients, but they are also afraid of the outside world.

Possible Outcomes

The primary problem that PCs must recognize and deal with is that the girls will fight against anyone trying to take them from the brothel. If the PCs simply send in the Sexologists to rescue the girls without any preparation there will be a bloodbath: several Sexologists and a few of the girls will be badly injured before the Sexologists can even retreat.

On the other hand, if the PCs leave and the brothel owners have some clue that their location has been discovered, the brothel owners will try to take the girls and hide them. They have several places scouted out that they can get to without being seen (including a room in the upper floors of the old abandoned hotel).

Gaining the Girls' Trust- None of the girls speak any English (beyond knowledge of a few sexual terms), they all speak Khmer, the official language of Cambodia. If the PCs have any sort of translation device they can speak to the girls, figure out what they are afraid of, and try to talk them out of that fear. If the PCs do not have the ability

to speak Khmer, they will have to communicate through gestures and actions. If they start by brutally murdering Tom and Fish-Head, this will not make the girls less fearful.

Time Restraints- PCs only get the time they have paid for (up to two hours each). If it is obvious that the PCs are not there to have sex with the girls, Tom will try to figure out what's going on and will probably demand that the PCs leave. If the PCs acted weird in any way, Tom will probably grill the girls after the PCs leave. If Tom is too suspicious, he will call in Vice and will take the girls and hide them. The PCs may try to leave and come back again some other time, but they will only be let back in if they fooled the brothel employees in to thinking they were legit customers. If the PCs wait more than two days, Vice will discover that the meeting location has been posted on the internet and he will change it.

Aftermath- The Sexologists are the cleanup crew here. They will give medical care for the girls or PCs and will take the girls to a safe place. They will try to teach the girls English and get them real jobs. Eventually they will try to induct the girls in to their belief system (which most of the girls will find disturbing and will leave). A few of the girl might go home, but most will stay in the city and become part of the city community. Some may eventually join the ranks of the gangs and groups that the PCs belong to. It may be interesting to give PCs updates on the girls every once in a while, just to show how the PC's action have long-lasting consequences.

The Sexologists will most likely try to figure out where Tom, Vice and Harold live and rob their homes. The Sexologists have no intention of rewarding the PCs monetarily for helping free the girls. They may let the PCs keep a bit of money to replace broken equipment or pay for medical care, but they will insist on everything else being given to the girls to help them set-up new lives. Instead of a monetary reward, the Sexologists will be grateful to the PCs and will tell their lovers all around the city how great the PCs are. If the PCs got the girls freed without being hurt, and if they didn't haggle trying to get a reward, the praise of the Sexologists will be worth more than any monetary reward. The Sexologists have the ear of people all over the city, including those with money and power. Praise from the Sexologists might even be enough to overcome a Bad Reputation disadvantage.

Experience Points

Use the following table to keep track of how many experience points each player gets.

	Player:	Player:	Player:	Player:
The Girls Are Freed From Enslavement (20 XP)				
PCs Made Friends (5 XP/ea.)				
Personal Growth (5 XP)				
Good Roleplaying (2 XP)				
Clever Plan (1 to 5 XP)				
Worked Well as Group (2 XP)				
Worldview Success (2 XP)				
Personal Ideal Success (2 XP)				
Girl or Sexologist Was Seriously Inured (-1 XP/ea.)				
A Girl or Sexologist Was Killed (-5 XP/ea.)				
Split Up Group (-5 XP)				
Made the World a Worse Place (-1 to -5 XP)				
Player Character Death (-10 XP)				
Total:				

Appendices

GLOSSARY OF GAME TERMS

#D#- A code for rolling dice, the first number means the number of dice rolled and the second number is the denomination of the dice. 2D6 means that you must roll 2 six-sided dice and add the values.

Action- In combat, anything the character initiates (as opposed to a Reaction). An action could be anything from a strike (a fighting action described in the rules) to reading a book as combat rages.

Adventure- A story characters play in, with a beginning, end, conflict, drama and a chance for the characters to succeed and a chance for them to fail and perhaps die.

Armor Rating (AR)- A numeric rating of the amount of the character's body a piece of armor covers. One is the smallest amount and twenty is coverage of the entire body. A strike must have a success greater than the armor rating in order to hit an unprotected portion of the victim.

Attributes- Numeric ratings for each character that enumerate their abilities in mental, physical and other areas. Although base attributes are relatively stable over time, events can temporarily change any of them.

Bladed - Damage that cuts or pierces flesh such as a knife or pick-axe. Does damage to Blood Points.

Blunt - Damage that crushes flesh, such as a club or punch. Blunt damage subtracts first from Body Points, then when (they are gone) it does double damage to Blood Points.

Chance Action- An action that the GM determines is heavily influenced by chance (a 1 on the 1d20 roll will always fail, a 20 will always succeed). Typically a spur-of-the-moment activity.

Character- A character is a fictional person created by a player or GM. The character has his/her own personality, past, characteristics, experiences and life.

Character Class- A character creation option that describes the character's place in society. Character Class sets the character's income, the costs to buy skills and may also give special plusses, skills, equipment and disadvantages during character creation. Character class can change during game-play.

Character Creation- The process of describing a character before game-play starts. Points are used to buy attributes, skills, advantages and disadvantages. Equipment is also bought.

Damage- A rating of the capacity of a weapon to do damage to humans. Specifically, it is damage which will move a person progressively closer to being dead.

Deliberate Action- An action that has no automatic success or failure (as a Chance Action does). This is typically a well-considered action that leaves as little as possible to chance.

Difficulty- The rating of the difficulty for anything a character attempts to do. To succeed, a character must make a roll of the applicable attribute plus 1d20 and get a result higher than the given difficulty. Typical difficulties: Easy (10), Moderate (20), Hard (30) and Legendary (40).

Discipline- A system of study (usually, but not always associated with a character class) that sets a character's skill costs and the effects of level advancement.

Easy- A difficulty rating of 10 for an attribute + 1d20 roll (or -4 difficulty when dealing with weapon specific difficulties).

Experience Levels- As a PC does more he or she gains more experience, and through experience and practice the character becomes more powerful. The system of Experience Levels is an easy system for rating this growth. Characters start out at an experience level of 1 and as they do more and experience more they gain experience points and raise experience levels.

Experience Points (XP)- As a PC completes each adventure the GM assigns them Experience Points based on their performance in that particular adventure. Each adventure should have a checklist of things PCs can do to gain or loose XP. XP can be spent at the end of an adventure to buy skills and to raise attributes.

Functional Range (FR)- A unit of distance in which a projectile weapon suffers a -1 penalty. For instance, if a weapon has a functional range of 3 ft., the character is at -4 to hit a target 12 ft. away.

Game Master (GM)- The Game Master is a player but does not have a PC. The GM is an impartial intermediary between the game as it appears on paper and the game as played by characters. The GM is the universe, he or she decides what happens for whatever action the players take based on his or her knowledge of the game universe.

Hard- A difficulty rating of 30 for an attribute + 1d20 roll (or +4 difficulty for weapon specific difficulties).

Incapacity- When a PC is at 0 END or 0 INCY and can no longer stand, initiate communication or make any roll.

Legendary- A difficulty rating of 40 for an attribute + 1d20 roll.

Maximum Range- For a projectile weapon, this is the actual range that the character can not do damage beyond (as opposed to Functional Range).

Moderate- A difficulty rating of 20 for an attribute + 1d20 roll.

Non Player Character (NPC)- This is a character. Can be a friend or an enemy, both or neither. Has a personality and intelligence, but is not a player character. He or she is controlled by the GM. Mostly they are tools to help the plot along.

Player- The player is the real human being that participates in the role playing game as a character.

Player Character (PC)- A character created by and controlled by a player. It is through the character that the player plays the game. A character is a participant in the adventure.

Protection Rating (PR)- A numeric rating that describes how much damage a piece of armor is capable of protecting from. Any damage that hits the armor has the Protection Rating's worth of damage removed from it.

Reaction- Something a PC can do once in a combat round in reaction to being attacked (e.g. dodge).

Roll- A dice roll with an attempt to get the highest number possible. An "agility roll," for example, is the character's AGY plus 1d20 with an attempt to get higher than the difficulty for the given action.

Role Playing Game (RPG)- A game where people play fictional characters (roles) having adventures together. Players narrate what their characters do and the GM narrates what happens in response.

Save Vs.- A roll made of 1d20 plus appropriate attributes in an attempt to avoid something that would otherwise happen, such as falling down or catching a disease.

Scenario- A scenario is a series of adventures linked together by a common plot element or group of PCs (much like a book trilogy).

Simultaneous- When a character reacts to being attacked by making an action of his or her own (e.g. let someone punch you, but stab that person at the same time).

Skill- A level of training or knowledge that allows the character to do something they would be otherwise unable to do. The majority of skills are INL based (roll 1d20 + INL + any plusses from having more than one level in the skill), yet there are skills based on other attributes.

Skill Roll- A roll of 1d20 plus the appropriate attribute plus four for every level the character has in the skill above the first.

Split- When one action or reaction is turned in to two, at +10 difficulty to each (e.g. do a split action jump and strike).

GLOSSARY OF CITY SLANG

Biscuit: adj., sexually attractive (example: 'that guy's accent is biscuit.').

Black: adj., a prefix used to denote anything which is illegal or below board (e.g. black market).

Borg: n., a suffix used to denote something is unnatural or has been replaced by technology (e.g. Skin-Borgs wear armor all the time).

City, the: n., the island of Manhattan.

Death Borg: n., 1. a bomb implant set to explode when the owner dies, 2. a person who has such an implant.

Downtown: adj, southwards, towards the area known as downtown (street numbers decrease).

Golem: n., a human body with a mental program instead of a human mind.

Gutterpunk: n.,1. a style that incorporates punk, tribal and homeless elements, 2. a person wearing that style.

Hole, the: n., Central Park, a large condemned park in the middle of the city.

Indie: n., a person with some source of income better than public assistance.

Madrugada: n., from Spanish, the time of day after midnight and before dawn.

Mod: n, modification of a human (e.g. genetic mod).

Pounder: n., a gang of homeless people that intimidate, bully and rob other homeless people.

Punky: n., a term used to refer to an inferior or younger person. E.g. "listen punky, you have a lot to learn about the city."

Skin: n., high-tech, skin-tight armor.

Street Family: n., a large extended family of homeless people, often acting much like a gang.

Street Person: n., a respectful term for someone who has no dependable legal habitation (aka homeless).

Unborn: n., a person born in the US, on the streets, without a birth certificate and unable to gain legal employment or public assistance.

Uptown: adj., northwards (street numbers increase).

Well: n., a person on public assistance (or one who lives a similar lifestyle with a similar income level).

Wildern: n., a person who survived childhood on the streets alone.

GLOSSARY OF TECH TERMS

Admin: n., administrator, an account for a person with complete control over a computer.

AI: n./adj., artificial intelligence or a system which uses artificial intelligence.

Amicus: n., an operating system created primarily for VR design.

Application: n., a computer program used by a computer user.

Backdoor: n., a security hole left in a system to ensure re-entry.

Biofeedback: n., a system that gives people immediate feedback about internal bodily states so they can learn to control them.

Code Breaker: n., a program that breaks encryption schemes.

Copy Protection: n., techniques built in to data to prevent piracy.

Data Card: n., a small card that holds data, the most common data medium.

Data Key: n., a small key-shaped device that holds a small amount of data.

Denial of Service: v., an attack designed to slow or crash a server by sending it many false requests.

Desktop: n., a non-portable personal computer.

Encryption Strength: n., how hard a given encryption scheme is to break.

Firewall: n., the sum of systems designed to prevent unauthorized entry in to a network or computer.

GPS: n., Global Positioning System, a system that lets electronic devices know where they are and what direction they are facing.

GuildOS: n., an operating system, popular among hackers and pirates.

Homework: n., research done by hackers prior to trying to hack in to a computer.

Hotcoded: n., data stored in electronic form so it can not be copied.

Information Smuggling: v., hiding data within ordinary things (e.g. a music recording).

Jack: n., a small implant in the hand that lets mental programs interact with machines.

Jellynailing: n., forcing a computer to run a program that would not normally run on that computer.

Legacy: adj., pertaining to old, currently unused technology.

Mainframe10: n., an operating system typically used for running servers and databases.

Media: n., pictures, sound, video and full-sense recordings.

Mental Installer: n., a device that uses RCNS to rewrite neural connections in a human brain.

Mental Program: n., artificially created neural connections in a brain that act like a computer program.

MMUs: n., a unit of measurement of the amount of "free space" in a human brain that mental programs can be put in.

Nanobots: n., self-reproducing robots designed atom-by-atom.

Nanotech: n., any technology based on nanobots or devices created by nanobots.

Net Site: n., A collection of information, data files, games, etc. publicly available on the internet with a graphic or VR interface.

OpenCert: n., one of several commercial operating systems that follow set standards.

OpenFree: n., a free operating system designed for normal people to use.

OpenMicro: n., an operating system designed for use on small portable computers.

Operating System: n., a program that lets a user interact with other programs.

Palmtop: n., a portable computer designed to be held with one hand and manipulated with the other.

Pirated: adj., data that was illegally copied and disseminated.

Power: n., a measurement of the memory and processor speed of a computer.

Predator Nanobots: n., nanobots spread throughout the globe that hunt down and destroy other nanobots.

Public Key: adj., utilizing encryption technology that lets anyone send an encrypted message to anyone else by using their publicly available encryption key.

RCNS: n., Radiochemical Neural Stimulation, stimulation of neurons by means of smart-chemicals and radio-beams.

Secondary Nanotech: n., any technology that utilizes high tech materials built in a lab by nanobots.

Server: n., a computer devoted to serving out data to other computers.

Smart Chemicals: n., complex human-made chemicals that react in a complex way to different stimuli.

Sniffing: v., spying on traffic traveling through a network node.

Social Engineering: v., conning people in to giving up information that will help hackers.

Suite: n., a selection of related programs together in a package.

Trojan: n., a program that looks like something benign but performs actions on behalf of the hacker.

Trust: n., a relationship between computers where access on one computer gives access on the other.

Virus: n., a self-reproducing malicious program that "hides" inside other data.

VR: n., Virtual Reality.

Workstation: n., an office computer used by an individual (as opposed to a server).

ZB: n., a measurement of data size.

RANDOM BUILDING TABLE

Commercial/ Major Ave.	Financial	Industrial	Residential: Well	Residential: Indie	Run Down/ Skid Row	Building
01-02	01-01	01-01	01-03	01-05	01-03	Apartment: Abandoned Brownstone (4)
03-04	02-02	02-03	04-06	06-11	04-06	Apartment: Abandoned Elevator (4)
05-06	03-04	04-04	07-09	12-17	07-07	Apartment: Abandoned Highrise (4)
07-07	05-05	05-05	10-12	18-19	08-09	Apartment: Abandoned Projects (4)
08-09	06-06	06-07	13-15	20-22	10-12	Apartment: Abandoned Walkup (4)
10-11	07-07	08-08	16-23	23-28	12-15	Apartment: Brownstone
12-34	08-08	09-09	24-31	29-33	16-22	Apartment: Commercial Frontage (1)
35-36	09-10	10-10	32-34	34-40	23-23	Apartment: Doorman
37-38	11-11	11-11	35-39	41-45	24-24	Apartment: Elevator
39-40	12-13	12-12	40-42	46-51	25-25	Apartment: Highrise
41-41	14-15	13-13	43-50	52-53	26-26	Apartment: Projects
42-43	15-16	14-14	51-58	54-56	27-28	Apartment: Walkup
44-45	17-21	15-16	59-59	57-57	29-29	Bank: Abandoned (4)
46-48	22-22	17-17	60-60	58-58	30-34	Church
49-54	23-24	18-18	61-61	59-59	35-35	Department Store (1)
55-60	25-27	19-19	62-63	60-60	36-37	Department Store: Abandoned (4)
61-63	28-29	20-20	64-64	61-61	38-38	Hotel: Abandoned Luxury (4)
64-66	30-31	21-21	65-65	62-62	39-39	Hotel: Luxury
67-67	32-33	22-23	66-70	63-63	40-54	Hotel: Skid Row
68-68	34-35	24-37	71-71	64-64	55-56	Industrial Complex
69-69	36-37	38-50	72-72	65-65	57-58	Industrial Complex: Abandoned (3)
70-71	38-39	51-56	73-75	66-69	59-63	Loft Building (5)
72-72	40-41	57-57	76-76	70-71	64-64	Mansion
73-73	42-43	58-58	77-77	72-73	65-65	Mansion: Abandoned (4)
74-76	44-58	59-60	78-78	74-74	66-66	Office Building (2)
77-79	59-75	61-63	79-80	75-75	67-68	Office Building: Abandoned (4)
80-82	76-80	64-65	81-82	76-77	69-70	Parking Structure: Abandoned (3)
83-84	81-82	66-67	83-84	78-78	71-78	Rubble (3)
85-86	83-84	68-68	84-89	79-84	79-79	School Building
87-87	85-85	69-69	90-90	85-85	80-80	Skyscraper
88-88	86-86	70-70	91-91	86-86	81-81	Skyscraper: Abandoned (4)
89-90	87-88	71-75	92-92	87-87	82-84	Storage Units
91-95	89-90	76-76	93-93	88-88	85-89	Theatre: Abandoned (3)
96-96	91-92	77-77	94-95	89-93	90-90	Townhouse
97-97	93-94	78-78	96-97	94-97	91-93	Townhouse: Abandoned
98-98	95-96	79-80	98-98	98-98	94-96	Vacant Lot (3)
99-99	97-98	81-89	99-99	99-99	97-97	Warehouse (5)
00-00	99-00	90-00	00-00	00-00	98-00	Warehouse: Abandoned (3)

(1) Random Commercial Use

01-01	Antiques
02-02	Appliance Repair
03-04	Appliance Sales
05-06	Art Gallery
07-07	Auto Parts
08-09	Bail Bonds
10-13	Bar
14-15	Barber/Salon
16-16	Carpet
17-17	Childcare
18-19	Beauty Supply
20-21	Clothing
22-22	Clothing (Trendy)
23-24	Coffee Shop
25-26	Discount/Outlet Store
27-27	Dojo
28-29	Drug Store
30-30	Dry Cleaning
31-31	Employment Agency
32-33	Furniture
34-40	Grocery
41-42	Grocery (Imported)
43-43	Health Club
44-44	Health Food
45-45	Home and Garden
46-46	Kennel/Pet Grooming
47-48	Laundromat
49-53	Liquor
54-54	Locksmith
55-56	Massage Parlor
57-58	Minimart
59-59	Office Space Hourly Rental
60-61	Pawn Shop
62-63	Personal Electronics
64-65	Personal Security
66-67	Personal Transport
68-69	Pet Store
69-72	Porn Shop
73-73	Psychic Services/Training
74-82	Restaurant (Fast Food)
83-84	Restaurant (With Bar)
85-86	Salon
87-88	Shipping/PO Box
89-90	Storage Lockers
91-94	Tattoo/Piercing/Body Mod
95-97	Thrift Store
98-98	Wedding Chapel
99-00	VR Rental

(2) Random Office Space Use

01-04	Abortion Clinic
05-07	Accountant
08-11	Bankruptcy Clinic
12-15	Crypt
16-19	Dentist
20-22	Detective Agency
23-28	Doctor's Clinic
29-34	Escort Agency
35-37	Funeral Home
38-43	Government Agency
44-47	Grade School
48-51	Home Repair/Remodeling
52-55	Land Management Company
56-59	Law Office
60-63	Pest Control
64-67	Plumbers
68-77	Porn Studio
78-85	Private Security Office
85-88	Real Estate Company
88-91	Therapist
92-97	Utility Service Office
98-00	Veterinarian

(3) Random Abandoned Space: Open

01-08   Garden- Reroll if this is a place that gets no light. Homeless people have broken up the ground and grow plants, some are food plants but the majority are medicinal and recreational herbs.

09-19   Graffiti Mural- The walls in or around this space are covered with huge graffiti masterpieces, each having taken hundreds of cans of spraypaint.

20-26   Homeless Graveyard- Homeless people have broken the ground with hammers, buried their friends and relatives, and put makeshift crosses and memorials over them. Homeless people, typically older ones, stop by every day or so to keep the site clean.

27-39   Homeless Lounge- This is a public place for homeless people to hang out and relax (while still keeping an eye on their environment). It is not owned by anyone and anyone can hang out here, though there are some regulars. The people who hang out here have set up old lawn chairs and couches to sit on, old trash cans to provide lighting and heat, old refrigerators (not running) may even be used to keep food and drinks cold.

40-44   Immigrant Compound- A mostly insular immigrant community has set up barbed wire fencing around this place and live in small shacks manufactured from whatever materials they could find. The center of the compound is a communal area where people living there hang out and spend time together. The immigrants do not let people in to their compound without special permission and if anyone tries to invade the compound they will rush the person with long pointed sticks.

45-50   Pounder Compound- Pounders live here, sleeping in derelict cars and hanging out on old couches and chairs. The compound is surrounded by a barbed wire fence. See p.372 for more on pounders.

51-60   Shantytown- Homeless people live here in small shacks they have built. The shanty town has a sort of community that kicks out people who cause a lot of trouble. The compound is open and anyone can come in.

61-68   Trash Pile: Fresh- Street People (and a few landlords who don't want to pay for garbage removal) have been dumping their trash here. The garbage is fresh, it reeks and the pile is infested with rats.

69-74   Trash Pile: Old- People used to dump trash here, but have stopped. The place is filled with waist-high piles of trash. Organic materials have all been consumed by rats, insects and microorganisms. Anything of value has been removed by scroungers.

75-00   Unused- Nobody has a set use for this place. People might sleep or hang out here occasionally, and there is some graffiti, old beer bottles and cigarette butts lying around.

(4) Random Abandoned Space: Closed

01-05   Addict Trap- Addicts live here and have built traps to catch unwary explorers so they can be robbed. Typical traps include holes in the floors that people can fall through and holes in the ceiling that rocks can be thrown through. The traps are, by necessity, poorly lit.

06-06   Brothel- Looks normal from the outside, but behind reinforced doors and boarded-up windows the place is clean and cozy. There are comfy couches and beds. Pirated electricity (or a small generator) feeds electric lights. 1 in 10 chance the sex workers here are being held against their will.

07-11   Burned Out- The building has suffered from a fire. It smells acrid and bitter. Inside, everything is black and brittle and rains blackened pieces down on the slightest touch. People walking here get black smudges on their shoes that leave tracks.

12-14   Cult- A small cult has taken over this abandoned space. They live and worship here, typically only leaving to recruit new members.

15-17   Drug Manufacturing- A Drug Lord manufacturing team has taken over this space and have set-up complicated contraptions on small folding tables connected by rubber tubing. Buckets full of toxic waste are strewn about and greasy stains cover the walls and ceiling. 1 in 6 chance that the place is almost too toxic to work in and the manufacturers are thinking of moving.

18-22   Drug Sales- A pusher gang has taken over this space and local addicts know to come here to buy drugs. Addicts also do their drugs here and almost every available space has a homeless addict, high on drugs, curled up in a semi-sleeping state.

23-25   Flooded- The interior of this place has several feet of water. It is dark murky, has pieces of trash and human or animal waste floating in it. Basement areas, if there are any, are completely underwater.

26-30   Gang Hangout/Lookout- Gang members have taken over this place and use it as a hangout. From windows on the upper floors they look out over their gang turf. The walls are covered with gang graffiti and messages cut in with knives. Old folding chairs, old drink and food containers and cigarette butts show the human presence.

31-35   Graffiti Mural- Every bit of the interior is covered with one or more writers' artistic masterpiece.

26-28   Mauler Addict Den- Animal-like Mauler addicts sleep here in a huddle among scraps of old paper and cloth that they pull over themselves for warmth. They relieve themselves in the corners of the building and the place reeks terribly. During the day the pack goes out and prowls, only the wounded and sick stay behind.

29-33   Squatters: Addicts- A group of addicts spend their evenings here. Typically they have blockaded almost all the entrances and people must enter by crawling through a small hole. The addicts have done almost nothing to make the place habitable: it is cold, dirty, dark and filled with trash and used drug paraphernalia. If they are lucky, the addicts have old bug-infested mattresses to sleep on.

34-38   Squatters: Crazy- A mentally ill homeless person lives here. He or she is probably paranoid and has spent a lot of time securing the area with barricades, traps and hidden sleeping places. There may be bizarre altars or graffiti versions of the crazy's unintelligible ramblings.

39-43   Squatters: Street Family- A member of a large and successful street family has taken over and lives in this place. Outside it look normal, but inside it is more luxurious than many well apartments. The space has well-conceived furniture, heating and lighting systems and decorations. The place either has pirated running water or plastic buckets (some have clean water in them; others are air-tight and are used for waste). A makeshift fireplace provides heat and warmth. Members of the homeless family can be found here 24 hours a day and will defend the house against robbers. During the evenings people play old-fashioned acoustic instruments to create a pleasant background noise.

44-48   Squatters: Street People- Street people who aren't in a family live here. Typically, these places are nicer than where addicts live but not as nice as where street families live. Some homeless people keep their places clean, others let them fill up with trash until they are forced to move out.

49-53   Trash Pile: Fresh- Street People (and a few landlords who don't want to pay for garbage removal) have been dumping their trash here. The garbage is fresh, it reeks and the pile is infested with rats.

54-58   Trash Pile: Old- People used to dump trash here, but have stopped. The place is filled with waist-high (or higher) piles of trash. Organic materials have all been consumed by rats, insects and microorganisms. Anything of value has been removed by scroungers.

69-97   Unused- Nobody has a set use for this place. People might sleep or hang out here occasionally, and there is some graffiti, old beer bottles and cigarette butts lying around.

98-00   Wild Dog Den- A pack of dogs sleep here and the place is littered with old feces.

(5) Random Warehouse/Loft Use

01-45   Abandoned- Roll on the Random Abandoned Space: Open table (3).

46-53   Apartments- The space has been converted in to trendy loft apartments, popular with artists, technophiles and others who enjoy having a large space.

54-57   Art Studio/Gallery- Artists rent this space where they create artwork at night and show and sell it during the day.

58-59   Boarder Hangout- Pipes for skaters were built here at some point before the Freedom Wars. Nowadays, Boarders have broken in and practice their stunts here.

60-63   Crypt- A city mortuary service uses this space for storing bodies in. Most of the bodies are stored in airtight plastic crypts with brass-covered engraved plates showing the name of the deceased. There is no heat or air conditioning and few lights.

64-70   Document Storage- Boxes of documents printed on old paper are stored here. The boxes are typically kept by people who don't care enough about the documents to scan them in and store them digitally, but have some legal obligation to keep the documents around. Rats have chewed holes in most of the boxes. Explorers have opened the boxes and tossed papers around looking for anything interesting.

71-85   Garage- Old vehicles are stored here by people who own them but don't really care about them. These are gasoline powered vehicles that haven't been started in decades and most wouldn't be able to run.
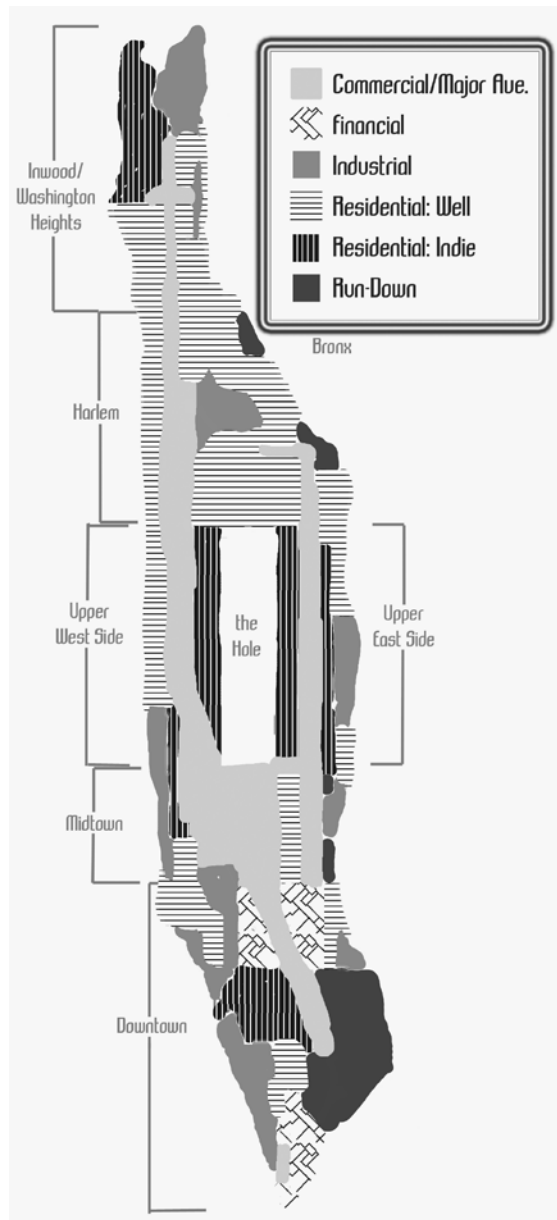
76-82   Industrial Storage- Products from a nearby industrial complex are stored here. It might be boxes of machine parts, barrels of chemicals or old train cars full of unwanted manufactured products. People have broken in but have found nothing worth carrying out.

83-87   Light Manufacturing- A corporation has taken over and has set up large industrial machines here. They are run and maintained by Workers and they churn out industrial products 24 hours a day. The machines are noisy and spew pollution in to the sky.

88-93   Miscellaneous Storage- Someone has sold storage space to private individuals. Stored here are things that people don't really care about but are afraid to throw away. Small cubicles or old metal shelves are packed high with a motley assortment of boxes filled with all kinds of crap. There is some minimal security.

94-98   Nightclub- Every night the owners have live music or a DJ spinning tunes and a bar sells alcohol.

00-00   Underground Fight Ring- A black market trader has taken over this abandoned space and runs fights here in the evenings. People pay a small cover to get in and bet on fighters doing battle (sometimes to the death) in a makeshift ring or cage.

Legend:
- Commercial/Major Ave.
- financial
- Industrial
- Residential: Well
- Residential: Indie
- Run-Down

Inwood/Washington Heights, Bronx, Harlem, Upper West Side, the Hole, Upper East Side, Midtown, Downtown

RANDOM WEATHER TABLE

Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	
01-04	01-03	01-04	01-12	Frost (cold and dry)
05-09	04-05	05-09	13-21	Hailstorm (cold, pelting hail)
10-13	06-24	10-13	22-22	Heatwave (very hot)
14-24	25-36	14-24	23-26	Mild Weather (not too hot or cold, nice breeze)
25-32	37-48	25-32	27-30	No Breeze (pollution builds up in city)
33-41	49-54	33-41	31-34	Rain: Heavy (constant soaking downpour)
42-51	55-64	42-51	35-39	Rain: Light
52-61	65-71	52-61	40-44	Rain: Very Heavy (streets flood)
62-64	72-72	62-64	45-53	Snow: Heavy (foot deep snow on the ground)
65-68	73-73	65-68	54-63	Snow: Light
69-70	74-74	69-70	64-73	Snow: Very Heavy (nearly impossible to travel)
71-73	75-77	71-73	74-79	Thick Fog (visibility less than 20 ft.)
74-80	78-86	74-80	80-86	Thunderstorm (lightning strikes tops of skyscrapers)
81-89	87-93	81-89	87-93	Tornados (windows break)
90-00	94-00	90-00	94-00	Windstorm (strong wind sends trash flying)

RANDOM STREET ENCOUNTERS

001-067 Addict: Hustling- An addict looking to say or do anything to get money for drugs.

068-100 Addicts: Muggers- A small team of addicts looking to beat up and rob someone.

101-113 Animalistic Mauler Addicts- A pack of brain damaged Mauler users looking for the weak and wounded to eat.

114-126 Animalists- 1d6 members of the Animalists gang.

127-132 Arcadians- 1d4 members of the Arcadians gang.

133-145 Black Meds- 1d6 members of the Black Med family.

146-157 Bleeders- 1d4 members of the Bleeder gang.

158-167 Boarders- 1d6 Boarders doing tricks or racing through the city.

168-195 Children- 1d4 kids hanging out or walking down the street.

196-223 Children: Kid Gang- 3d4 kids in a kid gang.

224-228 Colin- A normal looking person prowling the streets for victims.

229-238 Cornerpunks- 4-8 people who hang out on the street corner.

239-249 Crackers- 1d4 Crackers, most likely hacking in to a paycomputer or peddling pirated data.

250-305 Crazy- 1 in 20 chance will have something against the PCs. 1 in 20 chance bizarre body mods.

306-333 Cultists- 1d4 cult members out recruiting.

334-342 Cultists: Lumens- 1d6 members of the Lumen cult, out recruiting.

343-346 Dead Body- A recently murdered person with no valuables.

347-351 Dragons- 1d4 members of the Dragons gang. 1 in 20 chance of running in to the Wild Hunt.

352-361 Drakes- 1d4 Drakes, most likely peddling poisons.

362-371 Drug Lord Employees- 1d4 employees, most likely on their way somewhere, heavily armed.

372-393 Eccentric- An elderly eccentric, 1 in 6 chance will want to engage PCs in conversation.

394-399 Fire- A building is on fire. People are running in and out trying to grab valuables.

400-404 Freaks- 1d6 Freaks. 1 in 6 chance they will try to do their act for money.

405-423 Freelancers- 1d4 Freelancers (not currently acting as Security Guards).

424-427 Gambler- A small side-alley card or craps game being led by a Gambler.

428-437 Gang Fight- 4-6 members of one gang doing battle with 4-6 members of another gang.

438-438 God Killer Rampager- Angry, screaming, belligerent, megalomaniacal God Killer OD.

439-445 Good- A Good Drug Dealer, will most likely try to sell the PCs drugs.

446-458 Humankalorie- 1d6 members of the Humankalorie gang.

459-478 Hummingbirds- 1d8 Hummingbirds. 1 in 6 chance they have a boom-box and are dancing.

479-479 Hungry- 1 member of the Hungry.

480-480 Hunter- A hunter out on the prowl. 1 in 10 chance he or she will target the PCs.

481-484 Immortals- 1d6 members of the Immortal gang.

485-492 Insomniacs- 1d4 Insomniacs, most likely looking for someone willing to hire them.

493-522 Jack- Will do or say anything for some spare change, will follow PCs around and bug them.

523-526 Keepers- 1d4 members of the Keeper family.

527-539 Math Addicts- 1d6 members of the Math Addicts gang.

540-542 Mem Junkies- 1d4 members of the Mem Junkies gang.

543-573 Mugger Gang- A group of 4-6 young God Killer addicts looking to beat up and rob someone.

574-576 Needle Punks- 1d4 members of the Needle Punks gang.

577-578 Neo- A person visiting from a neocultural commune.

579-598 Night Shift- 1d4 Night Shift officers on patrol, looking for criminals.

599-599 Night Walker- Currently broadcasting a live net show of his or her experiences.

600-603 Omniscients- 1d4 members of the Omniscients gang.

604-618 Orphans- 1d4 members of the Orphans gang, 1 in 20 chance they will have kids with them.

619-624 Plague Infected Person- Delirious, infected with a deadly and highly contagious disease.

625-645 Pounder Gang- 3d4 pounders looking for street people to intimidate and rob.

646-649 Purists- 1d4 members of the Purist gang.

650-705 Pusher Gang- A gang of 3-6 pushers out selling drugs and looking for new addicts.

706-711 Riot- People smashing windows and looting, private security and night shift trying to stop them.

712-725 Risen- 1d6 members of the Risen gang.

726-733 Roofers- 1d6 members of the Roofer gang.

734-741 Runner- A runner on his or her way to deliver a package or message.

742-742 Sat Jumpers- 1d4 off-duty Sat Jumpers.

743-765 Security Guard- A security guard guarding a nearby property, will want to the PCs to leave.

766-767 Sex Worker: Child- A pre-teen prostitute out looking for johns.

768-770 Sex Worker: Male- A prostitute out looking for johns.

771-774 Sex Worker: Female- A prostitute out looking for johns.

775-784 Sexologists- 1d4 Sexologists, 1 in 6 chance one will try to seduce a PC.

785-884 Shut In- Very nervous, on a rare trip outside (most likely for a hospital visit).

885-891 Street Preacher- Shouting about his or her religion to anyone who comes by.

892-896 Tea Drinkers- 1d4 members of the Tea Drinker gang.

897-906 Thieves- A group of 1d4 thieves out casing houses or shoplifting.

907-912 Thief: Pickpocket- With Pocket Picking (3), will try to pick on of the PC's pockets,

913-915 Trader- 1 in 4 chance he or she will try to sell something to the PCs.

916-916 Utopia Child- 1 in 10 chance he or she will try to befriend the PCs.

917-927 Visitor/Tourist- Most likely here visiting family or seeking sex workers.

928-929 Volunteer- An Indie doing homeless outreach work.

930-932 Water Rats- 1d4 members of the Water Rats family.

933-942 Wild Dog Pack- 2d4 hungry wild dogs looking for the weak or wounded to eat.

943-999 Winos- 1d8 Winos, mostly intoxicated.

000-000 Y1- A lone Y1, 1 in 6 chance he or she will want to hire PCs.

RANDOM NPC PERSONALITY AND BACKGROUND

Indie	Well	Street	
			Values
01-09	01-05	01-24	Wants to survive and avoid pain.
10-33	06-20	25-33	Wants to enjoy life.
34-42	21-35	34-51	Wants to be a good member of his or her community/social group.
43-67	36-60	52-70	Wants to help people and make the world a better place.
68-81	61-75	71-75	Wants to achieve something heroic or memorable.
82-86	76-85	76-94	Wants to have a family and children.
87-95	86-94	95-98	Wants to be a good member of his or her religion.
96-100	95-100	99-100	Wants to discover something about the universe that not everyone knows.
			Family
01-08	01-07	01-13	Family dead.
09-11	08-17	14-26	Grew up without a family.
12-19	18-34	27-29	Hates family and never speaks with them.
20-34	35-40	30-28	Family lives outside of the city, is friendly with them.
35-49	41-47	29-30	Family lives outside the city, doesn't speak to them often.
50-68	48-53	31-32	Family lives outside the city, NPC keeps his or her lifestyle secret from them.
69-81	54-75	33-34	Family lives inside the city, NPC keeps his or her lifestyle secret from them.
82-94	76-91	35-36	Family lives inside the city, doesn't like the NPC's lifestyle.
95-95	92-93	37-49	Family lives inside the city, are understanding of the NPC's lifestyle.
96-99	94-99	50-99	Family lives inside the city, most live by the same lifestyle as the NPC.
100-100	100-100	100-100	Family lives in the city, are members of an enemy group/gang.
			Drugs
01-07	01-07	01-08	Abstains, thinks everyone else should too.
08-15	08-14	09-16	Abstains, thinks some people should be allowed to use drugs.
16-22	15-22	17-24	Abstains, thinks drugs should be legalized.
23-34	23-33	25-32	Uses drugs, but only when they are useful.
35-42	34-40	33-41	Uses drugs for entertainment, but never "hard drugs."
43-56	41-52	42-49	Uses drugs as entertainment and an escape.
57-63	53-63	50-67	Uses drugs every night, whatever the NPC can get a hold of.
64-70	64-71	68-69	Uses drugs to try to improve himself of herself.
71-83	72-83	70-77	Addicted to drugs, trying hard to quit.
84-100	84-100	78-100	Addicted to drugs, satisfied with being an addict.
			Gangs
01-13	01-07	01-13	PC does not belong to a gang, does not like gangs or gang members.
14-26	08-13	14-26	PC does not belong to a gang, thinks some gang members are good people.
27-38	14-20	27-38	PC does not belong to a gang, admires gangs and gang members.
39-47	21-31	39-47	Belongs to a gang, agrees with the gang's ideology.
48-56	32-43	48-56	Belongs to a gang, feels the gang is like a family.
57-65	44-54	57-65	Belongs to a gang, has good friends in the gang.
66-74	55-66	66-74	Belongs to a gang, sees it as a temporary scheme for mutual self-defense.
75-82	67-77	75-82	Belongs to a gang, sees it as a life-long scheme for mutual self-defense.
83-91	78-89	83-91	Belongs to a gang, wants to become a leader and gain great power.
92-100	90-100	92-100	Belongs to a gang, isn't sure if he or she will stay or can stay loyal.
			Gender/Orientation
01-35	01-35	01-32	Male, heterosexual.
36-40	36-40	33-38	Male, bisexual.
41-45	41-45	39-45	Male, homosexual.
46-47	46-47	46-52	Male, transsexual.
48-50	48-50	53-53	Male, abstinent.
51-85	51-85	54-84	Female, heterosexual.
86-90	86-90	85-90	Female, bisexual.
91-95	91-95	91-97	Female, homosexual.
96-98	96-98	98-99	Female, transsexual.
99-100	99-100	100-100	Female, abstinent.
			Sex
01-23	01-23	01-18	Wants monogamy, no kids.
24-46	24-42	19-42	Wants monogamy, with kids.
47-65	43-65	43-60	Wants to sleep around, no kids.
66-83	66-83	61-83	Wants to sleep around and be an only parent.
84-96	84-97	84-97	Wants to indulge a sexual fetish.
97-100	98-100	98-100	Wants to engage in sexual violence or exploitation.
			Corps/Gated Communities
01-03	01-03	01-04	Too young to join a corp or gated community.
04-05	04-14	04-14	Too poor to join a corp or gated community.
06-08	15-25	15-25	Too mentally unstable to join a corp or gated community.
09-11	26-37	26-37	Too uneducated to join a corp. or gated community.
11-12	38-36	38-89	Unborn or illegal alien, so can't join a corp. or gated community.
13-27	37-48	90-91	Was in a corp. or gated community but was kicked out, looking to return.
28-39	49-59	92-93	Was in a corp. or gated community but was kicked out, plans to stay in the city.
40-42	60-71	94-95	Not interested, too many responsibilities and connections in the city.
43-65	72-77	96-96	Not interested on political grounds.
66-87	78-84	97-98	Not interested on philosophical/lifestyle grounds.
88-100	85-100	99-100	Not interested, thinks a corp. or gated community would be boring.

Indie	Well	Street	
Violence			
01-03	01-02	01-03	Pacifist, will not use violence under any circumstances.
04-25	03-18	04-22	Avoids violence but will defend self or another.
26-38	19-34	23-38	Doesn't want to be violent, but is because of bad temper or has mental problems.
39-56	35-51	39-51	Picks fights for fun and to express anger.
57-73	52-67	52-67	Uses violence as a tool for solving problems and defeating enemies.
74-83	68-84	68-84	Violent criminal, uses violence to help make money.
84-100	85-100	85-100	Uses violence, but only against people who are weaker and when there is no chance of getting caught.
Ancestry			
01-32	01-32	01-34	Several ethnic backgrounds, unable to distinguish any particular one.
33-34	33-34	35-36	Mostly or wholly Asian.
35-35	35-36	37-37	Mostly or wholly Native American.
36-51	37-51	38-56	Mostly or wholly African.
52-84	52-84	57-81	Mostly or wholly Caucasian.
85-94	85-94	82-95	Mostly or wholly Hispanic.
95-96	95-96	96-97	Mostly of wholly Middle Eastern.
97-98	97-98	98-98	Mostly or wholly Pacific Island native.
99-100	99-100	99-100	Mostly or wholly Indian.
Culture/Nationality			
01-42	01-38	01-29	Raised in America by "ordinary" Americans, has no feeling of heritage.
43-56	39-59	30-53	Raised in America by "ordinary" Americans, pride in heritage and ancestry.
57-76	60-76	54-67	Raised in America by "ordinary" Americans, doesn't know his or her heritage.
77-78	77-78	68-71	Raised in America by an immigrant community.
79-80	79-80	72-75	Raised in America by a minority group (e.g. carnies, amish, fundamentalist Christians), has rejected that group's lifestyle or beliefs.
81-82	81-82	76-78	Raised in America by a minority group (e.g. carnies, amish, fundamentalist Christians), adheres to that group's lifestyle or beliefs.
83-84	83-84	79-80	Born and raised in a 1st world, English speaking country, has obtained US citizenship.
85-87	85-86	81-82	Born and raised in a 1st world, English speaking country, here on a legal visa.
88-89	87-88	83-84	Born and raised in a 1st world, English speaking country, in the country illegally.
90-91	89-90	85-86	Born and raised in a 1st world, non-English speaking country, has obtained US citizenship.
91-92	91-92	87-88	Born and raised in a 1st world, non-English speaking country, here on a legal visa.
93-94	93-94	89-90	Born and raised in a 1st world, non-English speaking country, in the country illegally.
95-96	95-96	91-92	Born and raised in a 2nd or 3rd world country, has obtained US citizenship.
97-98	97-98	93-94	Born and raised in a 2nd or 3rd world country, here on a legal visa.
99-100	99-100	95-100	Born and raised in a 2nd or 3rd world country, in the country illegally.
Body Modification			
01-20	01-15	01-13	Has modifications, regrets it.
21-41	16-29	14-26	Has modifications, is happy with them.
42-61	30-44	27-39	Has modifications, wants more.
62-76	45-63	40-54	Doesn't have modifications, plans to get some soon.
77-85	64-81	55-77	Doesn't have modifications, would get some if he or she could afford it.
86-100	82-100	78-100	Doesn't have modifications, doesn't ever want any.
Style			
01-12	01-05	01-02	Subdued Bollywood style.
13-23	06-07	03-04	Extreme Bollywood style.
24-37	08-09	05-05	Corp/Mod style.
38-48	10-17	06-13	Subdued Goth style.
49-59	18-28	14-22	Extreme Goth style.
60-68	29-38	23-80	Homeless/Grunge style.
69-78	39-79	81-88	Old School Gang style.
79-90	80-89	89-92	Straight style.
91-100	90-100	93-100	Mix of styles (roll again twice).
Self Improvement			
01-11	01-09	01-06	NPC doesn't think anything needs to change.
12-22	10-19	07-19	NPC doesn't think positive change is possible.
23-32	20-28	20-26	NPC is deeply ashamed of his or her behaviors, wants to change.
33-43	29-48	27-47	NPC can't stand lifestyle, desperately wants to change it.
44-54	49-57	48-53	NPC wants to expand knowledge and interests, become more well rounded.
55-65	58-67	54-59	NPC wants to achieve great power or talent.
66-75	68-76	60-73	NPC wants to overcome some mental illness or serious personality flaw.
76-86	77-91	74-84	NPC wants to become a better member of his or her community/group/gang.
87-100	92-100	85-100	NPC wants to become more experienced and wise.
Fear			
01-08	01-08	01-13	Greatest fear is being tortured.
09-21	09-20	14-20	Greatest fear is a disfiguring disease.
22-30	21-28	21-33	Greatest fear is being a drug addict.
31-38	29-36	34-41	Greatest fear is never being loved.
39-46	37-49	42-54	Greatest fear is dying without having helped anyone.
47-54	50-56	55-61	Greatest fear is giving up on life.
55-62	57-64	62-69	Greatest fear is slavery.
63-75	65-77	70-77	Greatest fear is becoming disabled.
76-84	78-85	78-85	Greatest fear is going insane.
85-92	86-92	86-92	Greatest fear is being responsible for something horrible happening.
93-100	93-100	93-100	Greatest fear is having his or her terrible secret exposed.

RANDOM CITY PROBLEMS

01-06 Bad Pollution Day- The air is still and the smoke billowing from the city's factories hovers over the city. The cloud (p.384) begins to grow, eating some but not all of the pollution. The city is dark all day. As it gets worse, people will experience asthma then more serious problems. Eventually, the city government will put out an alert that everyone should stay inside. Everything outside becomes grimy and oily from exposure. The air smells bitter and acidic, anyone outside without at least a cloth will begin to cough and choke and could die.

07-14 Bad Weather- Depending upon the time of year, this could be a heat wave, a snowstorm or a torrential rainstorm. It is quite difficult and dangerous for anyone to do anything and most people try to stay home. Many Street People will die.

15-19 Big Fire- Several city blocks are ablaze. All of the Night Shift fire-division's resources are devoted to trying to contain the fire (and thus fires in other part of the city are left unchecked, arsonists are having a party). Smoke drifts across the city. Thousands of people have been made homeless and shut-ins are wandering the city in a daze, unsure where to go and easy prey for addicts and muggers.

20-24 Big Gang War- Several large gangs are engaged in fighting, meaning there are thousands of young gang members out on the street looking for a fight. Huge war parties can be seen walking down the streets. The city hospitals are choked with wounded. Looters follow the armies, stealing whatever they can in the chaos of battle. Many shops have closed their doors. Smart people avoid the subway, knowing it will be the scene of many bloody confrontations.

25-26 Earthquake- A large earthquake has rocked the city, destroying many buildings. The worst hit are the old condemned buildings that homeless people live in. Power and internet is out over most of the city, much of the water supply has been contaminated by sewage, there are fires everywhere that the Night Shift can't keep up with. Fires at industrial plants spill toxic smoke in to the air. Addicts and thugs all over the city are looting. Homeless shut-ins are wandering the streets in the thousands. Some have banded together for self-protection and to fight off looters. Other have joined in on the looting. The city hospital is so choked with wounded that it has tuned the parking lot in to a triage. The state government is doing whatever it can to restore order, including sending the national guard in to distribute food. Increased chance of a plague outbreak, increased chance of rioting.

27-31 Garbage Strike- A noxious smell fills the streets, piles of garbage keep getting bigger and overflow on to the streets. Rats are going crazy and incidences of bites increase.

32-36 Internet Outage- NYR-LAN, the city's biggest internet service provider, is down. Most cellphones still work, and some Indies and government offices still have service, but otherwise the city is left without communication and entertainment. Smash-and-grab burglars, knowing that few shut-ins can call the police, are going on a spree. Shut-ins are pacing their apartments nervously, starved for human contact and entertainment and unable to order grocery delivery. If the outage goes on long enough they may arm themselves with steak-knives, drink some alcohol for courage, and leave their apartments. If enough people are out on the streets, a riot is likely.

37-40 Kidnapped Child- Some Indie child has gone missing, making VR news state wide. The NYPD day shift has been forced to get off their butts and help the night shift look for the kid with help from the FBI. There is a reward on the kid which means that many Freelancers and other assorted people are out looking for the kid.

41-44 National Guard Maneuvers- The National Guard has taken over some part of the city with no legal habitation (typically some place in the Bowery). They've chased out all the homeless people and they are doing combat simulations.

45-49 No Subway Service- The subways have stopped running, Major avenues have crowds of people walking across the city. Many people stop going to work and most restaurants and shops are understaffed or closed. Young teens take this opportunity to explore the subway tunnels. Small chance of rioting.

50-54 Plague- A massive plague just exploded in the city. The CDC has ordered a quarantine lockdown and is flying around in helicopters ordering people in to their homes. The city is waiting to see how bad things get and the city hospital is gearing up for being overrun with patients. From here this could become a plague that only kills a few and goes away in a few days or it could become a plague that terrorizes the city for weeks and kills hundreds.

55-60 Power Outage- A power outage has struck the city. Bored VR Addicts are leaving their homes for the first time in weeks. Shops have closed their doors and brought down steel gates. The longer the blackout lasts, the more the chance of rioting.

61-67 Riot- Almost anything can spark off a riot, from bad weather, to a utility outage. Every once in a while they will happen for no specific reason – a group of people start smashing windows and grabbing things and everyone else joins in. The Night Shift might be able to put the riot down, or a huge riot might leave a streak of destruction through the city before the National Guard puts it down.

68-73 Serial Killer- Over the last few weeks people have been finding the corpses of people raped, murdered and mutilated by a serial killer. Amateur profilers and the Night Shift are at all the crime scenes and local gangs are patrolling the streets.

74-78 Sewage Overflow- For a several block area the streets have raw sewage flowing. Basements are flooded and people living in below-ground apartments have been left homeless. The stench can be smelled halfway across the city.

79-82 Spree Killer- Someone with a gun has snapped and is going around shooting people. The Night Shift are out looking for the person and will call in the National Guard when they find him or her. Most everyone else who has heard about the spree is staying off the streets. Businesses and offices are closing.

83 Tidal Wave- An off-shore earthquake has caused a massive wall of water to travel through long-island sound and explode through the Harlem and Hudson Rivers. Cities on Long Island are the worst hit and they are getting all of the state and federal aid. In the city, the streets are flooded, a few houses near the sunken city have been knocked down, many people are homeless and wandering the streets.

84-88 Trucker Strike- The truckers who bring food (among other things) in to the city have gone on strike. The grocery stores are running out of food, especially since many entrepreneurs are buying up all the food, hoping to sell it back at a significant markup if the strike goes on much longer. Grocers are upping their prices and a few are driving outside of the city in personal automobiles to buy food and bring it back. Street People will suffer the most, since people will be throwing out less food. Wells and Indies will usually be able to survive for some time on old cans and packages of ramen noodles in their cabinets.

89-93 Violent Crime Spree- A bunch of teens on a God Killer binge have decided that they can get away with running around the city raping, killing and stealing. They spend whatever they steal on God Killer, fueling this sleepless, fearless, thoughtless rampage. Such rampages do not last long: the kids will soon be tracked down by the Night Shift or will try to attack a group of people that they can not beat.

94-97 Visiting Politician- A politician is making a tour of the city, perhaps visiting shut-ins or doing something else to publicly feign support for the city's voters. The politician has a security detail (Secret Service if they are a big enough politician) but since they can't bring guns in to the city they have the National Guard ready to come in if there is a problem. Security knows the route the politician will take and is going ahead to clean up any potential dangers or embarrassments.

98-00 Welfare Payments Late- Budget problems or computer errors have caused public assistance payments to not be made. As this goes on, people will become more and more desperate. Fridges will empty, VR service will stop, landlords will start trying to evict people. Day by day, the chance of rioting will increase.

RANDOM PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Indie

01-05   **Bad Breakup**- The PC was dating someone briefly and just broke it off, the other person is not taking it well.

06-09   **Bill Mixup**- The PC received a bill for an outrageous amount on one of his or her utilities. This is obviously some sort of computer error but it will take hours on the phone to clear it up and in the meantime the PC may have utilities turned off.

10-12   **Broken Bone**- One of the PC's arms or legs is in a cast, and will be for 2d6 weeks.

13-17   **Cold or Flu**- The PC is suffering from a bad cold or flu and is at -4 INL, END, AGY. The more the PC exerts himself or herself, the worse the cold or flu will get.

18-24   **Computer Not Working**- The PC's computer is broken in some way that the PC does not have the skills to repair. The PC can't access email or voicemail until the problem is fixed.

25-29   **Crazy Stalker**- Every time the PC leaves his or her house, a homeless mentally ill person follows the PC around screaming angrily at the PC.

30-33   **Credit Card Hacked**- Some hacker has been using the PC's credit card. The PC has to make a bunch of phone calls to cancel the card and sort out purchases made by the hacker.

34-37   **Dental Problem**- The PC is distracted by a painful dental problem (20 difficulty distracting pain) and has a hard time eating. The earliest dentist appointment the PC could make was for 1d4 days from now.

38-41   **Forced to Move**- The PC has suddenly been forced to move, either because he or she was evicted by a landlord or because health inspectors condemned the apartment. The PC only has 48 hours to get his or her stuff moved or they will be thrown out on the streets (where Street People will steal anything of value).

42-46   **Friend in Crisis**- A friend of the PC's is having some personal crisis related to drugs or mental health.

47-51   **Friend/Relative Died**- A close friend or relative of the PC's just died, the funeral will be tomorrow.

52-65   **Gang War**- (Reroll if the PC is not in a gang.) The PC's gang is in a major war, with both sides sending war parties to try to kill each other. The PC will be expected to go to war and is danger when he or she is on the streets.

66-72   **Hangover/Withdrawal**- The PC just did too many drugs and is suffering from bad after-effects, including headache and nausea. (If the PC abstains, the drugs were taken accidentally or against the PC's will).

73-76   **No Heat/Air Conditioning**- Just as the city is getting dangerously cold or hot, the PC's heating or air conditioning has been lost.

77-80   **Noisy Neighbor**- The PC's neighbors start fighting every time the PC tries to go to sleep. PC currently suffering from 1 day's sleep deprivation (see p.64).

81-83   **Plumbing Problems**- Much of the PC's personal possessions have been damaged by flooding in his or her apartment and the PC must leave the apartment to either get fresh water or to use a toilet.

84-86   **Problem Coworker**- Reroll if the PC does not have a job. The PC's job is in jeopardy because a coworker is trying to get the PC in trouble in order to raise his or her own position. The PC needs to pay special attention to everything going on at his or her work or risk being fired.

87-92   **Robbed**- The PC's apartment was broken in to while he or she was out. Anything of value the PC had at home was stolen, including the PC's major appliances and any good clothing.

93-96   **Tear Gassed**- The PC was hit by some teargas recently (most likely the PC was just in the wrong place at the wrong time) and is suffering from ill effects. For the next 24 hours the PC will cough a lot, will be a little wheezy (-3 END) and will have painful bloodshot eyes (10 difficulty distracting pain).

97-00   **Visit From Relatives**- (Reroll if the PC has no relatives) The PC's family are demanding to come visit the PC.

Well

01-05   **Bad Breakup**- The PC was dating someone briefly and just broke it off, the other person is not taking it well.

06-09   **Bill Mixup**- The PC received a bill for an outrageous amount on one of his or her utilities. This is obviously some sort of computer error but it will take hours on the phone to clear it up and in the meantime the PC may have utilities turned off.

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13-17   **Cold or Flu**- The PC is suffering from a bad cold or flu and is at -4 INL, END, AGY. The more the PC exerts himself or herself, the worse the cold or flu will get.

18-24   **Completely Broke**- All of the PC's money is either gone or tied up in something, meaning the PC has zero pocket cash for things like food and riding the subway. The PC will get money in time to pay his or her rent.

25-28   **Crazy Stalker**- Every time the PC leaves his or her house, a homeless mentally ill person follows the PC around screaming angrily at the PC.

29-31   **Cut-Off**- The PC has suddenly lost public assistance (due to a paperwork error) or his or her job (fired). The PC has 1d30 days to get back on public assistance or get a job or will end up on the streets.

32-36   **Dental Problem**- The PC is distracted by a painful dental problem (20 difficulty distracting pain) and has a hard time eating. The earliest dentist appointment the PC could make was for 2d6 days from now.

37-41   **Forced to Move**- The PC has suddenly been forced to move, either because he or she was evicted by a landlord or because health inspectors condemned the apartment. The PC only has 48 hours to get his or her stuff moved or they will be thrown out on the streets (where Street People will steal anything of value).

42-46   **Friend in Crisis**- A friend of the PC's is having some personal crisis related to drugs or mental health.

47-51   **Friend/Relative Died**- A close friend or relative of the PC's just died, the funeral will be tomorrow.

52-61   **Gang War**- (Reroll if the PC is not in a gang.) The PC's gang is in a major war, with both sides sending war parties to try to kill each other. The PC will be expected to go to war and is danger when he or she is on the streets.

62-67   **Hangover/Withdrawal**- The PC just did too many drugs and is suffering from bad after-effects, including headache and nausea. (If the PC abstains, the drugs were taken accidentally or against the PC's will).

68-72   **Infestation**- The PC's apartment is infested either by rats or cockroaches. The PC can barely sleep because of all the things scurrying around and the pests have gotten in to half the PC's food.

73-77   **No Heat/Air Conditioning**- Just as the city is getting dangerously cold or hot, the PC's heating or air conditioning has been lost.

78-81   **Noisy Neighbor**- The PC's neighbors start fighting every time the PC tries to go to sleep. PC currently suffering from 1 day's sleep deprivation (see p.64).

82-86   **Plumbing Problems**- Much of the PC's personal possessions have been damaged by flooding in his or her apartment and the PC must leave the apartment to either get fresh water or to use a toilet.

87-93   **Review Appointment**- The PC has a videophone appointment for a meeting where the PC must convince a review board that he or she needs public assistance.

94-97   **Robbed**- The PC's apartment was broken in to while he or she was out. Anything of value the PC had at home was stolen, including the PC's major appliances and any good clothing.

98-00   **Tear Gassed**- The PC was hit by some teargas recently (most likely the PC was just in the wrong place at the wrong time) and is suffering from ill effects. For the next 24 hours the PC will cough a lot, will be a little wheezy (-3 END) and will have painful bloodshot eyes (10 difficulty distracting pain).

Street Person

01-06   Bad Breakup- The PC was dating someone briefly and just broke it off, the other person is not taking it well.

07-12   Broken Bone- One of the PC's arms or legs is in a cast, and will be for 2d6 weeks.

13-19   Cold or Flu- The PC is suffering from a bad cold or flu and is at -4 INL, END, AGY. The more the PC exerts himself or herself, the worse the cold or flu will get.

20-26   Dental Problem- The PC is distracted by a painful dental problem (20 difficulty distracting pain) and has a hard time eating.

27-33   Forced to Move- The PC has suddenly been forced to move from the abandoned space he or she was using. The PC has all of his or her worldly possessions in a shopping cart and needs to scout out and set up a new place to sleep for the night.

34-40   Friend in Crisis- A friend of the PC's is having some personal crisis related to drugs or mental health.

41-47   Friend/Relative Died- A close friend or relative of the PC's just died, the funeral will be tomorrow.

48-54   Gang War- (Reroll if the PC is not in a street family.) The PC's family is in a major war, with both sides sending war parties to try to kill each other. The PC will be expected to go to war and is danger when he or she is on the streets.

55-61   Hangover/Withdrawal- The PC just did too many drugs and is suffering from bad after-effects, including headache and nausea. (If the PC abstains, the drugs were taken accidentally or against the PC's will).

62-68   Infected Injury- The PC had a deep cut that became infected. The PC suffers from the infection on p.81 at 1x.

69-74   Parasites- Something the PC ate is living in the PC's digestive system causing many digestive problems as well as fever and weakness (-4 END). The infection has a disease progression rating of 20 and a progression speed of 24 hours.

75-80   Ruined Clothing- The PC's only good outfit just got ruined, until the PC can find a new one he or she must go around half-clothed or in clothing that is badly ripped or stained with an awful smelling substance.

81-87   Sick Relative- A close relative of the PC is very ill and the PC is required to take turns (along with other relatives) caring for this relative.

88-93   Tear Gassed- The PC was hit by some teargas recently (most likely the PC was just in the wrong place at the wrong time) and is suffering from ill effects. For the next 24 hours the PC will cough a lot, will be a little wheezy (-3 END) and will have painful bloodshot eyes (10 difficulty distracting pain).

94-00   Unwashed- The PC has been unable to find a place to bathe for several days (or has been too busy to bathe) and smells quite bad. The PC is at -10 to seduction rolls and if he or she takes bladed damage is at -7 to save vs. infection.

RANDOM POCKET CONTENTS

Indie (roll five times)

01-03	Nothing
04-08	$2d20 worth of drugs (with necessary drug paraphernalia)
08-16	$4d20 in cash
17-19	Breath Mints
20-26	Cellphone
27-31	Cigarettes and Lighter
32-36	Condoms
37-41	Digital Camera: Cheap
72-44	Hip Flask filled with Alcohol
45-52	Housekeys
53-59	ID, Bank Card
60-64	Keychain Flashlight
65-66	Lock Picks: Professional
67-71	Palmtop Communicator
72-73	Religious Icon
74-76	Single-Shot Gun
77-81	Swiss Army Knife
82-88	Switchblade
89-96	Taser Gun
97-00	Telescoping Baton

Well (roll four times)

01-08	Nothing
08-13	$2d6 worth of drugs (with necessary drug paraphernalia)
13-21	$3d20 in cash
22-25	Breath Mints
26-32	Cellphone
33-37	Cigarettes

38-44	Condoms
45-50	Crate Cutter
51-55	Digital Camera: Cheap
56-58	Hip Flask filled with Alcohol
59-66	Housekeys
67-74	ID, Bank Card
75-79	Keychain Flashlight
80-81	Lock Picks: Professional
82-84	Palmtop Organizer
85-86	Religious Icon
87-89	Ripper
90-92	Shiv
93-95	Swiss Army Knife
96-00	Switchblade

Street Person (roll three times)

01-13	Nothing
14-21	$1d20 worth of drugs (+ necessary drug paraphernalia)
22-30	$1d6 worth of cash
31-40	Cigarettes and Lighter
41-48	Condoms
49-57	Crate Cutter
58-63	Hip Flask filled with Alcohol
59-72	Lock Picks: Homemade
73-78	Razorblade covered with Drake Blood Poison
79-83	Religious Icon
84-91	Ripper
92-00	Shiv

Shut-In (roll three times)

01-10	Nothing
11-24	$4d20 worth of cash
25-30	Breath Mints
31-37	Cellphone
38-52	ID, bank card, housekeys
53-62	Kubotan
63-75	Pepper Spray
76-85	Personal Sonic Alarm
86-90	Religious Icon
91-00	Taser

Addict (roll two times)

01-50	Nothing
51-60	$2d6 worth of change
61-80	$3d6 worth of drugs (+ necessary drug paraphernalia)
81-90	Crate Cutter
91-00	Shiv

Crazy (roll three times)

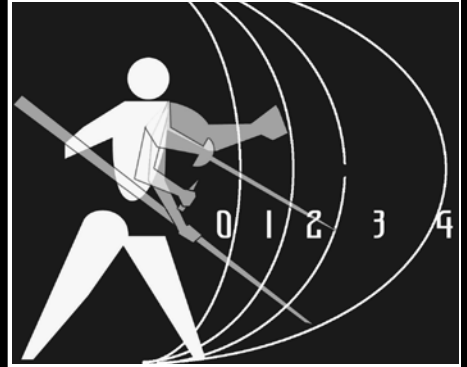|	
01-15	Nothing
16-23	$1d6 worth of change
24-32	Cigarette Butts
33-41	Dried Leaves
42-51	Half-Eaten Food
52-61	Old Paperback Book (with strange notes in margins)
62-69	Razorblade covered with Drake Blood Poison
70-79	Religious Icon
80-92	Shiv
93-00	Wad of Bloody Toilet Paper

FATES WORSE THAN DEATH

CONCEPT

Legal Name _____ Age _____   Character Class _____
Street Name(s) _____ Gender _____   Socioeconomic Class _____
Player Name _____ Orientation _____   Home Neighborhood _____

Worldviews	Ideals	Appearance
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Advantages		Disads	
_____ _____		_____	_____
_____ _____		_____	_____
_____ _____		_____	_____
_____ _____		_____	_____

ATTRIBUTES

Base   Current   Plusses/Minuses

AGY ____ ____ _____

AWR ____ ____ _____

CHM ____ ____ _____

END ____ ____ _____

INL ____ ____ _____

SPD ____ ____ _____

STH ____ ____ _____

WIL ____ ____ _____

Health Attributes

BLD ____ ____ _____

BDY ____ ____ _____

INCY ____ ____ _____

SKILLS

Skill	Attribute	Type	Levels	AV
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___
_____	_____	____	OOOOOO	___

EQUIPMENT

Weekly Income/Costs

$____/wk. for _____   _____   _____ $____ on person

$____/wk. for _____   _____   _____ $____ in bank

$____/wk. for _____   _____   _____ $____ hidden@home

$____/wk. for _____   _____   _____ $____ hidden_____

$____/wk. for _____   _____   _____ $____ hidden_____

$____/wk. for _____   _____   _____ $____ hidden_____

$____/wk. for _____   _____   _____ $____ held by_____

$____/wk. for _____   _____   _____

ADVANCEMENT

Skill Costs: ATH___ BIO___ CMBT___ CRTV___ INFO___ INTL___ MIL___ PSY:X___ PSY:M___ PSY:S___
TECH___ THIE___ STRT___ SOC___ Special_____

Unspent XP_____   Total Earned XP_____   Levels/Disciplines_____

FATES WORSE THAN DEATH

Combat Sheet for _____

ARMOR

Armor Name	AR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	PR	Penalties
_____	O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O	____	_____
_____	O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O	____	_____
_____	O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O	____	_____
_____	O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O	____	_____
_____	O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O O	____	_____

COMBAT SKILLS

Skill	Levels	Actions/Reactions
_____	____	_____
_____	____	_____
_____	____	_____
_____	____	_____
_____	____	_____
_____	____	_____
_____	____	_____
_____	____	_____

UNARMED

Punch Dmg _____ Kick Dmg _____ Unarmed Plusses_____

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Miscl = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon_____ Dmg_____ Range____ Pierces As_____

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Miscl = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____

Weapon_____ Dmg_____ Range____ Pierces As_____

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Miscl = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____

PROJECTILE WEAPONS

Weapon_____ Dmg_____ FR____ MR____ ROF_____

Pierces As_____ Clip Holds_____ Ammount of Ammo _____

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Miscl = Total -1/FR+1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____

Weapon_____ Dmg_____ FR____ MR____ ROF_____

Pierces As_____ Clip Holds_____ Ammount of Ammo _____

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Miscl = Total -1/FR+1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	____	____	____	____	_____
_____	____	____	____	____	_____

COMBAT RANGES

COMBAT MODIFIERS

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

ACTIONS

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 25+area in ft.
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Stike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Stike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

REACTIONS

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Subway

Industrial Complex

Turf Border

0   0.5   1 mile

0   0.5   1 kilometer

City Orphanage

New York City Urgent Care Clinic

Police Headquarters

The Pond

Guggenheim Museum

Metropolitan Museum of Art

Rail Yard

Yeshiva University

Bronx

Upper

16TH ST

Bleeders

1ST AVE

3RD AVE

Humankalorie

PARK AVE

5TH AVE

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR BLVD

Orphan

MALCOLM X BLVD

ADAM CLAYTON POWELL BLVD

10TH ST

Harlem River

GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE

FREDRICK DOUGLASS BLVD

Main Addict

CENTRAL PARK W

Flamingo

Birds

COLUMBUS AVE

165TH ST

Purist

AMSTERDAM AVE

Skin

Dogs

135TH

BROADWAY

Immortal

WEST END AV

181ST ST

BROADWAY

RIVERSIDE DR

HENRY HUDSON PKWY

145TH ST

Hudson River

Harlem

Upper

Inwood/
Washington
Heights

Inwood Hill

Cloisters

Trinity Cemetary

Columbia Medical Center

Club Champion

Columbia University

Riverside Church

Ritz Tower
St. Bartholomew's Cathedral
St. Patrick's Cathedral
Grand Central Station
Chrysler Building

Painted Rock Bar

Empire State Building

Madison Square Park

Flatiron Building

China Town
Criminal Court's Building
Satelite Repair Corporation Office
Old City Hall
Wall Street
Human Services Group Office

Upper East Side

Brooklyn

Insomniacs

Dowry

Drakes

Omnisents
2ND AVE
86TH ST
59TH ST

Dragons
LEXINGTON AVE
MADISON AVE

Risen
42ND ST

Mem Junkies
23RD ST

MANHATTAN BRIDGE

the Hole

BROADWAY
FULTON ST.

Needle Funks

Red Light District
50TH ST

Homosexual District

BROADWAY

Technophile

Alchemists
8TH AVE
9TH AVE

Arcadians
72ND ST

Ten Drinkers

Freaks District
34TH ST
10TH AVE
11TH AVE

Lexologists

West Side

Midtown

Downtown

HOLLAND TUNNEL

Met/Lincoln Center/Philharmonic

Inter-Continental New York Hotel
Essex Hotel
Plaza Hotel

Port Authority Bus Terminal
Times Square
New York City Public Library
Madison Square Garden
Macy's

New York City Central Hospital

Christopher Street

N.Y.U.
Washington Square Park
Subway Service Center

Workin' Late Bar and Grill

Weapon Specific Difficulties

Very Easy (-8 difficulty)

Easy (-4 difficulty)

Hard (+4 difficulty)

Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

Improvised Weapons

Slashing Weapons : 1 bladed damage, -8 to actions <u>except</u> pain/stun, blinding and slash.

Poking Weapons: ½ point bladed damage, -8 to actions <u>except</u> blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

Blunt Weapons: 1 to 3, -8 to any actions with these weapons <u>except</u> strike and pain/stun.

Combat Modifiers

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

Actions

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 25+area in ft.
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Strike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Strike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

Reactions

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

Character Creation in Brief

Step 1 - Character Concept: Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

Step 2 - Personality Variables: Choose 3 Personal Ideals and 3 Worldviews.

Step 3 - Attributes: Split 80 points between 8 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Step 4 – Socioeconomic Class: Choose from Street Person, Well or Indie. Then choose a subtype within that class.

Step 5 - Choose Character Class: Depending on socioeconomic class, choose the PC's place in city society.

Step 6 - Choose Skills: Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by character class.

Step 7 - Buy Equipment: Available money set by character class.

Step 8 - Bonus Characteristics: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages must be balanced out by disadvantages.

Step 9 – Character Advancement: Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

Spending BP/XP

1 Bonus Point = 1 Attribute Point = 10 XP

3 Bonus Points = 1 Health Attribute Points = 30 XP

1 Bonus Point = 3 Skill Points = 2 XP

For Street People: 1 Bonus Point = $125.

For Wells: 1 Bonus Point = $250.

For Indies: 1 Bonus Point = $500

Sample Difficulties

0- Automatic Success

5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)

10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)

15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)

20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)

25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)

30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)

40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

City Knowledge (INL)

Easy (10)- Figure out whose turf the PC is on by looking at graffiti -or- Navigate by finding common land marks.

Easy/Moderate (15)- Find the closest black market trader to the PC's home.

Moderate (20)- Figure out what turf the PC is on by looking at the cross streets.

Moderate/Hard (25)- Recognize the leaders of every city street gang by sight.

Hard (30)- Give any information listed anywhere in the PC Groups chapter -or- Recite the complete subway timetables.

Hard/Legendary (35)- Recognize, and tell the exact location of, some random alley by a photograph.

Legendary (40)- Figure out where in the city the PC is by smell alone.

Psychic Modifiers

Manipulation Rolls

Manip. target remotely:	-1/ft.
Everyone in range effected:	+10

Sensory Rolls

Touching the source:	-0
Sensing remotely:	-1/ft.
Being in a crowd:	-1/4 people

Modifiers to Code Breaking

Small Sample Size -5

Large Sample Size +5

Knowing what encryption software was used +5

Knowing what type of data is encrypted +5

Using old code breaking software -1/month

Having part of the unencrypted message +5

Cryptography Success

-50: > lifetime of universe.

-40: 10,000 years.

-30: 100 years.

-20: One year.

-10: One month.

0: One week.

1: One day.

3: One hour.

5: 30 minutes.

10: 30 seconds.

20: One second.

30: Instantaneously.

Successful Homework Results

(roll on 1d100):

01-20: Physical location of the system or network and what physical security measures protect it.

21-40: Location on internal network (+10 to Network Protocol rolls to find system)

41-60: The type of system, software running on it, and security setup. (+10 to Finding a Hole)

61-80: The composition, skills, habits and policies of the network security team. (+10 to any opposed rolls vs. system security)

81-00: Information about the internal structure of the company (+10 to any further social engineering rolls).

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	END
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL
Shock	END

Conversions

1 ft. = 0.36453 m. or ~ 1/3 m.

1 mi. = 1.6093km. or ~1½ km.

1 lb. = .4536 kg. or ~½ kg.

1 m. = 2.74311 ft. or ~2.75 ft.

1 km. = .62131 mi. or ~2/3 mi.

1 kg. = 2.2046 lbs. or ~2 lbs.

Other Types of Damage

Burn: When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:
-BLD damage (1 point per point of burn damage).
-Pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 10/point of damage).
-Physiological Shock (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage).
-Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/point of damage).

Cold: Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Crippling Damage: ½ damage will make a hand unusable or badly damage a foot. 1 damage will make an arm or leg unusable. See Crippling Attack (p.78) for more.

Dropped Objects: Do blunt damage = weight (divided by 10 lbs) times number of stories. E.G. 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage.

Electricity: When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:
-Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.
-Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)
-Heart Attack (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage), see Symptoms/Effects (p.65).
-Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

Explosion: Explosions can do one, two or all three of the following:
-Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)
-Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)
-Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

END Damage: Some toxins to END damage. Every point of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

Falling: 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft). Armor cannot protect from this damage.

Heat: Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1st failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

Hunger: For every two days without food: -½ BLD, -4 END.

Radiation: For every point of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (unless bone marrow transplants are given). Strong likelihood (25% per point of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

Ragged: Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.81). For each point of ragged damage taken, PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

Skidding: For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

Sleep Deprivation: For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions at (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen: PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). The PC can not regain pooled END by resting. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

Thirst: ½ BLD damage per day.

Drug/Poison/Disease Effects

Anterograde Amnesia (INL): Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

Cardiac Arrest (END): 1 BLD damage per round.

Coma (END): Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

Delusions (WIL): Believes without reservation some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

Dysphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by unhappiness/ depression and unable to initiate any activity.

Euphoria (WIL): Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

Hallucinations (WIL): Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

Headache (WIL): -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

Insomnia (WIL): Sleep deprivation damage as 1 night without sleep.

Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL): Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

Panic (WIL): Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

Paralysis (WIL): Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

Pulmonary Arrest (END): 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

Retrograde Amnesia (INL): Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

Seizures (WIL): Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible of physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

Shock (END): END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

Stupor (WIL): Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

Sudden Amnesia (WIL): Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

Unconsciousness (END/WIL): Unless specified otherwise, lasts 1 round per point of failure.

Vomiting (WIL): -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

Timeline

2030- Hacker's Guild forms.
2040- 92% of world's businesses owned by three large corporations.
2041- Neural Restructuring Technology ("Mental Programming") discovered.
2043- Riots in NY over conditions of the working class.
2045- India Chemical Fire Disaster drastically increases global warming.
2045- First HDNA Virus outbreak in SE Asia.
2046- God Killer invented.
2046- Psychic energy receptors in brain first discovered.
2049- Ghosts discovered by scientists.
2050- Mason Marks assassinated, massive rioting.
2050- Freedom Army bombs major govt. and corp bldgs.
2050- Freedom Army gains control of many nations, including most of US.
2051- Forced registration of psychics in Freedom Army controlled territories.
2051- Freedom Army experiments with genetically enhanced soldiers.
2052- Freedom Army discovers existence of Clowdian aliens.
2053- Freedom Army closes off subways and sewer tunnels.
2053- City Rebel factions meet.
2054- Freedom Army creates nanobots, rebels release predator nanobots.
2054- City rebels bomb and sabotage Jeffrey Hernandez' satellite. Tide of war turns.
2055- Last Freedom Army soldiers flee New York.
2055- International Restoration Committee forms.
2055- First post-Freedom War corporations founded.
2057- Nuclear cleanup of Manhattan ends, homeless refugees shunted to city.
2058- Utopianist movement begins.
2059- Final drawing of national boundaries.
2060- Restoration Committee disbands.
2060- Internet working steadily again.
2061- First non-medical mental program approved by FDA.
2061- Cloud City founded.
2063- Gated Communities become popular.
2065- Restoration Committee disbands itself.
2065- Consumer full-immersion VR fantasy worlds become popular.
2073- Peak of the "Old Times" of powerful drug gangs in the city.
2074- Colin begins reproducing.
2075- Drug Lords consolidate, drug gangs decline, "new gangs" begin to form.
2075- Colin discovered.
2078- Trace introduced by the Drug Lords.
2080- Present Day

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